

House Bill 3322

Sponsored by Representative LEVY E

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Designates February 12 of each year as Rogue River Trail of Tears Day.

Requires State Parks and Recreation Department to study options for creating memorial to commemorate Rogue River Trail of Tears. Directs department to submit findings to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to parks and recreation not later than September 15, 2024.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to the Rogue River Trail of Tears.

3 Whereas Indigenous people inhabited southern Oregon for thousands of years before European
4 settlers arrived; and

5 Whereas for centuries, Indigenous people in southern Oregon remained largely unaffected by
6 America's westward migration; and

7 Whereas in the early 1850s, the world of these Indigenous people was suddenly and violently
8 upended when the discovery of gold and the opening of the territory to white settlement brought a
9 surge of miners and settlers; and

10 Whereas a fierce and bloody conflict, the Rogue River War of 1855-1856, raged throughout the
11 region; and

12 Whereas prior to the war, an estimated 9,500 Indigenous people lived in the region where the
13 Rogue River War was fought, but after the war fewer than 2,000 survivors remained; and

14 Whereas following the war, the U.S. government forced tribes in the region to cede their an-
15 cestral lands, and federal troops forcibly removed the Indigenous inhabitants to reservations created
16 in the Oregon Coast Range; and

17 Whereas in what became known as the Rogue River Trail of Tears, the Indigenous survivors of
18 the war were marched hundreds of miles north and west from a temporary reservation at Table
19 Rock in southern Oregon across rough terrain to the newly created reservations; and

20 Whereas many observers of the brutal march recorded the immense physical and psychological
21 suffering of the Indigenous people, and the path of the march was marked by bloody footprints; and

22 Whereas many Indigenous people died during the march from cold, hunger and disease; and

23 Whereas similar forced marches befell the Indigenous people of the Umpqua and Willamette
24 Valleys, as well as several bands brought along the coastal trail from Port Orford to Siletz; and

25 Whereas despite being one of the most shameful episodes in Oregon history, the Rogue River
26 Trail of Tears remains largely forgotten today; and

27 Whereas it is necessary that we acknowledge the atrocities of the past to begin healing the
28 wounds created by them; and

29 Whereas the State of Oregon has never formally recognized the Rogue River Trail of Tears; now,
30 therefore,

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

2 **SECTION 1. February 12 of each year is designated as Rogue River Trail of Tears Day.**

3 **SECTION 2. The State Parks and Recreation Department, in consultation with the**
4 **Commission on Indian Services, shall study the appropriate location and design for a me-**
5 **morial to commemorate the Rogue River Trail of Tears. The department shall submit a re-**
6 **port in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, and may include recommendations for**
7 **legislation, to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to parks and re-**
8 **creation no later than September 15, 2024.**

9 **SECTION 3. Section 2 of this 2023 Act is repealed on January 2, 2025.**

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