Within the vast autumn landscape of the northern Great Basin, we’ll use prose, poetry, and personal experience to explore the complex and messy relationship of humans and nature in transition. At PLAYA, no other season stirs the soul like fall, a time of warm days, yellowing willows, migrating warblers, and an occasional wisp of snow on the crown of Winter Rim. Field excursions will connect us with transitions on timescales sweeping across sunrises, lifetimes, and millennia. Explore a nearly 15,000-year human occupation of Paisley Caves, climate change in the Great Basin, and the myriad ways plants and animals transition toward winter. Ample individual time is built in for generative writing that connects experience, heart, and mind in this season of flux.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Tom Titus is a biologist, author, runner, forager, father, grandfather, and free-range philosopher. He miraculously corralled divergent paths in music, education, and biology into a Ph.D. and career in evolutionary genetics. For 25 years he taught the University of Oregon course “Amphibians and Reptiles of Oregon.” His teaching and a 2016 PLAYA residency were pivotal for a feature article entitled “Lizard Tales,” which appeared in Oregon Quarterly Magazine. His most recent book, Dancing with an Apocalypse, is a collection of musings in response to the social and environmental upheavals in the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. Tom loves coffee he can spread on toast and writing that makes him laugh and cry, preferably at the same time. He blogs when he feels like it at https://tomtitus.substack.com/

Arrival begins Thursday, Oct. 5 at 2:00 pm

Departure is Tuesday, Oct. 10 by 12:00 pm.

AGENDA:

- **Day 1: Thursday, Oct. 5:** Arrival | 6:00 Meet and Greet Happy Hour provided by PLAYA | Evening walks, reading, and journaling on your own
- **Day 2: Friday, Oct. 6:** Group caravan to morning field excursion (TBD) and writing prompts | Afternoon and journaling, reading, and exploration of the local area on your own | Group Dinner provided by PLAYA
- **Day 3: Saturday, Oct. 7:** Group caravan to morning field excursion (TBD) and writing prompts | Afternoon and evening journaling, reading, and exploration of the local area on your own | Optional group meal at Pioneer Saloon (Saturday or Sunday)
- **Day 4: Sunday, Oct. 8:** Group caravan to morning field excursion (TBD) and writing prompts | Afternoon and evening journaling, reading, and exploration of the local area on your own
- **Day 5: Monday, Oct. 9:** Closing share of thoughts, feelings, and writing | Group Dinner Provided by PLAYA
- **Day 6: Tuesday, Oct. 10:** Depart by noon

**MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT TO BRING:**
- Walking shoes
- Day pack
- Journal
- Personal water bottle (at least 1 liter—I’ll provide a refill jug),
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent
- Hat
- A long-sleeved shirt and bandana are recommended for additional sun protection

*OPTIONAL:
- Camera
- Binoculars

*NO PETS ALLOWED.*