

Coast Trails!

Newsletter of the National Coast Trail Association

Projects 2014/2015

Oregon Coast Trail becomes official "State Scenic Trail"

Designation enhances marketing, promotion, signage and potential funding, other benefits

Salem, OR – Fifteen segments of the *Oregon Coast Trail* were designated "Oregon Scenic Trail" during 2014 by the *Oregon Parks & Recreation Commission*. The agency's *State Trail Designation* program was established in 1971 as part of the *Recreational Trails Act* to help promote both Oregon's exceptional scenic beauty and its excellent outdoor recreation opportunities.

The *Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)* hosted open houses in Coos Bay and Lincoln City during April 2014 to seek public comments on the proposed trail designation. The *Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council*, a group appointed to advise both the *Commission* and *Department* on subjects related to non-motorized recreational trails – and that reviews applications for scenic trail designation – used the comments gathered to assist in their final recommendations.

The *National Coast Trail Association (NCTA)* attended the open house in Lincoln City and submitted official written input fully supporting and strongly encouraging official state scenic trail designation to all proposed segments to realize the many benefits associated with it. These include being identified as being among the elite Oregon recreational trail experiences; displaying iconic signage (*above image*) indicating the state designation and status; receiving enhanced marketing and promotion by *OPRD* and other entities; increasing awareness of trail for tourism, fund-raising and volunteer recruitment; providing economic stimulus for local communities; and potential eligibility for more points in various grant programs scoring criteria.

The *NCTA* also offered that such designation could also potentially enhance the quality of life for both visitors and residents; develop another resource for local economic stability and diversity; provide for overall health through exercise and directly experiencing nature; offer close-to-home recreation opportunities and access essentially anywhere along the coast; connect communities, recreation sites, and other destinations and/or to other significant trails, such as the envisioned *Corvallis-to-Sea Trail* or the *Banks-to-Tillamook rail/trail* concept, and thereby move the state closer towards realizing a truly interconnected statewide recreational trail system.

The *Ecola Trail*, *Cape Falcon Trail*, *Cape Lookout Trail*, *Humbug Mountain Trail*, and *Cape Sebastian Trail* are some of the specific trail segments that were designated.

"Since *Oregon Scenic Trail* designation is meant to provide access to scenic resources of superlative quality and splendor, articulating the essence of what is Oregon," notes *NCTA* executive director Al LePage, "I'd suggest, in the friendliest way possible, that you go take hike on at least one of them soon!"

(Article directly incorporates online information & graphic from *OPRD*)



Trails Symposium comes to Portland, Oregon May 17-20

International Trails Symposium offers unique opportunities to learn about trails in 2015

Portland, OR – *American Trails* hosts the 2015 *International Trails Symposium* in Portland from May 17-20 at the Oregon Convention Center. The *Symposium* is the premier opportunity for the worldwide trails community to communicate and experience an inspirational and educational conference with internationally prominent speakers, a state-of-the-art trail-related exhibit hall, plus informative interactive mobile workshops. This year's theme, "Solutions for Success" addresses every aspect of trails, greenways, and water trail "blueways."

American Trails is also partnering with the *Professional TrailBuilders Association* to offer a series of hands-on sustainable trails workshops focusing on important skills and techniques for sustainable design, planning, construction, and maintenance of trails for all types of trail user groups in all types of environments. These workshops will also create a sustainably and professionally built "Legacy Trail" for Portland.

A *Public Awareness Day* event with free admission from 12 to 5PM on May 17 provides everyone with the opportunity to visit exhibitors and learn about the Symposium and trails around the state and country. This event is being done in conjunction with the *5th Annual Metro Trails Fair* where local groups will have information tables, give presentations, and offer workshop activities for all ages, too.

Al LePage, director of the *National Coast Trail Association*, as one of the *Symposium* planning partners, will offer a mobile workshop highlighting their involvement and the development of the *Oregon Coast Trail*, *Fort-to-Sea Trail* and *Lower Columbia River Water Trail*.

(Article directly incorporates online information & graphic from *American Trails*.)

Visit AmericanTrails.org for more details and registration

NCTA Twentieth Anniversary

Reconsidering Bylaws for a New Generation

Portland, OR – The *National Coast Trail Association (NCTA)* turned twenty years old on November 22, 2014, the date of its original incorporation, and our bylaws had the foresight to know things change over time. Concerning "Amendments" they state in part as follows:

"The *NCTA* shall on its 20th anniversary . . . publish in its principal publication . . . an article promoting the idea of Thomas Jefferson that each new generation should reconsider the document they are currently operating under. . . in the case of the *NCTA* it is these bylaws which are being referred to for suggested reconsideration by the current new generation . . ."

Given this mandate and advice of a nonprofit law attorney to revise the bylaws, one primary task for the new board in 2015 is to review, propose changes and move the process forward to amend them.



Trail Development

Working for Recreation & Public Access

Completion of Oregon Coast Trail 2021 Plan

The *National Coast Trail Association* expects to finish their *Oregon Coast Trail 2021: Final Connections, Logistics Strategy* report by April 2015. This report will be submitted to the *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD)* and represents the organization's final recommendations not only to complete the trail by *OPRD's* 2021 target date, but also to provide the designated primitive campsites and toilet facilities needed to make the trail logistically doable along its entire length. (Image/OPRD)



Advocacy for OCT Backpacker Campsites

The *National Coast Trail Association* upon completion of their *Oregon Coast Trail 2021* plan in 2015, intends to immediately begin to implement it by promoting the recommended primitive campsite locations, which are already on public lands within existing day-use state parks, to become officially recognized by the *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department* as "backpacker-only" campsites to serve the logistic needs of long-distance overnight hikers.



Corvallis-to-Sea Trail Process Moves Forward

A significant advance occurred in 2014 for the envisioned *Corvallis-to-Sea (C2C) Trail* when the *Siuslaw National Forest (SNF)* removed two liability conditions from the Special Use Permit they are requiring for the *C2C Trail Partnership* to build and maintain a trail route over their lands. The Partnership thus applied for the permit but the US Forest Service limited it to the 32-mile eastern half of the proposed 65-mile trail route. However, the permit signing is still on hold as of January 2015, awaiting completion of the environmental assessment process to determine any potential impacts of trail routing on *SNF* lands. The *National Coast Trail Association* continues to provide input to the *Partnership* to realize their vision.

(Article uses information & trail logo of the *C2C Trail Partnership/C2CTrail.org*.)



Education

Promoting Coastal Trails to Everyone

Redesign NCTA Website, Update OCT Website

The *National Coast Trail Association (NCTA)* main website, *CoastTrails.org*, was first launched in 1999 and needs a major overhaul; its successful *OregonCoastTrail.info* "sub-website" needs to be updated for the 2015 hiking season. Since the latter website focuses on providing the kind of basic information long-distance hikers and backpackers need to know to use the *Oregon Coast Trail* its update is planned during Spring 2015. The main website not only needs to be redesigned literally from a 20th to 21st-century website during 2015, but also its vision, mission and goals need to be revisited both in terms of the organization's current path and future direction.

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Conservation

Taking Action for Coastal Preservation

Input to preserve Bandon State Natural Area

Negotiations for a land exchange between *Bandon Biota*, a company associated with *Bandon Dunes Golf Resort*, and the *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD)* regarding the *Bandon State Natural Area (BSNA)* have been ongoing since 2011. Under the final exchange proposal 280 inland acres of the 878 acre property would be traded to *Bandon Biota* as part of a future 27-hole golf course. *OPRD* would gain 111 acres of adjacent oceanfront property, 97 acres of wetland property on the *Coquille Spit*, \$300,000 in cash to control an invasive plant on *OPRD* land, \$450,000 to satisfy a federal grant match to acquire 11 acres on the coast at *Whale Cove*, and \$2.5 million to purchase an as-yet unidentified major new state park.

The *National Coast Trail Association (NCTA)* submitted written input to the *Commission* with the aim to preserve *BSNA* in its entirety and to maintain and potentially enhance the values of conservation for wildlife and recreation for future generations. The *NCTA* noted that given the significant amount of money being offered in the revised proposal – along with the same properties that had been first offered and turned down by the *Commission* in the original proposal – that the final proposal essentially represented a "sale" of state park land versus a true land exchange. Also, that if approved, such an action would create an unacceptable precedent since it would undermine the intent of *OPRD's* own current land exchange policy, and could thereby negatively impact the preservation of any state park land in the future.

In April 2014, however, the *Commission* did approve the final proposal with a vote of 4-2, apparently deciding the overall proposal met *OPRD's* land exchange criteria of providing an "overwhelming public benefit" to the state park system.

But now the proposal involves the *Bureau of Land Management (BLM)* since the *BSNA* land in the exchange was originally deeded to the state on condition the land be used for "public parks purposes only" and this use must be changed to "outdoor recreation" to allow a golf course. It is certain that *BLM* can take no such action without a full environmental review of the proposed action, and will not make any decision on an *OPRD* application until the *BLM Resource Management Plan* revision process is completed in 2016. Thus, the future development of a golf course on *BSNA* lands remains uncertain.

(Article incorporates online information from *OPRD* & *Oregon Coast Alliance*.)

Input to protect Bayocean Spit from EcoResort

Bay Ocean LLC submitted an application to *Tillamook County* in Fall 2014 for a Conditional Use Permit to build an "eco-resort...a seasonal, luxury camping resort for guests...with ecotourism principles." The *Tillamook County Community Development Department* in its staff report recommended denial of the application, and voluminous testimony was submitted by local residents and the *Oregon Coast Alliance* detailing the many insurmountable problems to development. The *National Coast Trail Association* also provided written input arguing the permit not be granted since it would not satisfy one review criterion. Specifically, that the associated habitat loss and increased number of people would both substantially impair the existing quality recreational experience and potentially limit and prevent the use of surrounding properties for recreation by *Oregon Coast Trail* hikers and backpackers. The initial November 2014 hearing before the *Tillamook County Planning Commission* was packed with opponents, but the applicant was not present, and the hearing is now rescheduled for January 2015.

(Article incorporates online information from the *Oregon Coast Alliance*.)

Visit OregonCoastAlliance.org for more detailed information on both *Bandon State Natural Area* and *Bayocean Spit*

The annual election of board members, in accordance with the National Coast Trail Association's existing bylaws, requires the general membership to vote for their election. The following candidates have submitted the following statements in this regard for your consideration. The ballot, which appears to the right, needs to be received by January 16th to be counted. Thank you for your hopeful participation in the 2015 board election.

Candidate **Benjamin Ward**, Portland, OR

I have been a long time supporter of the National Coast Trail Association (NCTA), and Oregon, my home for the last 34 years, has a gem in its beach access law (golden anniversary in three years), quite different than in New England where I grew up. So, what originally attracted me to the organization was its focus on enhancing everyone's access and use of our great coast with its work on the Oregon Coast Trail. Through NCTA's work and the efforts of like-minded people, organizations, agencies and coastal communities, coastal access and preservation is now better than in the past. Of course, NCTA's efforts have not been limited to the Oregon coast, also working on important trail issues in Washington state and elsewhere. Likewise, I feel I shouldn't limit my NCTA support to yearly financial contributions. While I am not new to participation on boards (congregation, alternative school program), this would be my first with a non-profit. Any board benefits from multiple skill sets -- and my strongest is as a lifelong engineer -- is a tendency to focus on problem solving and attention to details. If elected, I will carry out my responsibilities, attend to the organizations current needs, and work on any structural changes required for its future health.

Candidate **Kristen Leibelt**, Portland, OR

I'm a long-time member of the National Coast Trail Association, and have followed the organization's progress over the years with great interest.

I strongly support the primary tenets of the organization: to promote trail development, to provide education aligned with coast trails and to support conservation of those environs. I believe in the organization's actions for equal public access to beach and coastal areas as critical components to the success of their efforts to "Keep the coast for everyone."

I would like to further express my support in the upcoming year by serving as a board member of the National Coast Trail Association.

Candidate **Mary Ann Schmidt**, Portland, OR

I believe it's important to provide access to our coastlines through recreational trails, public access, and the preservation of natural and historic environments.

The National Coast Trail Association has played a role in providing this kind of access through their projects relative to trail development, education and conservation. Links or access to coastal areas need to be maintained or enhanced rather than being lost by land use changes, such as from development. Protection of the trail corridor can also mean the preservation of the natural environment through which it travels, ultimately establishing a kind of coastal greenway. The organization also has a role to play in advocating for the preservation of unique natural habitats and special places of cultural or historic value.

I also appreciate how this organization operates at a grassroots level and supports the efforts of the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department to build and maintain portions of the Oregon Coast Trail.

My work experience includes over 20 years as an environmental educator in both the public and non-profit sectors. My passion is field-based learning and community engagement, and I have worked with K-12, undergraduate, and graduate students. I have served for 17 years on the board of the Oregon 4-H Center, which is managed through the OSU Foundation/4-H Foundation. In addition I am the retired director of both the Student Watershed Research Project and the Environmental Professional Program at Portland State University. It would be a privilege to serve on the board of the National Coast Trail Association.

NATIONAL COAST TRAIL ASSOCIATION 2015 OFFICIAL BALLOT

CANDIDATES

Please **vote for three** Board Members by marking an "x" in the adjacent boxes

Benjamin Ward

Kristen Leibelt

Mary Ann Schmidt

*Please print and mail this ballot
which must be received by January 16th to the . . .*

**National Coast Trail Association
PO Box 11045
Portland, OR 97211**

THANK YOU FOR VOTING!

**OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
19th ANNUAL MEETING
National Coast Trail Association
General Membership Meeting, 9-10AM
First Quarterly Winter Board Meeting, 10AM-Noon
Saturday, January 17th 2015
Tryon Creek State Park, Nature Center Room
11321 Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard
Portland, OR 97219**

A Personal Note from the Director . . .

First, thank you to all who have continued to support the organization over the years, without your individual contributions we simply couldn't have carried out our mission of "Keeping the Coast for Everyone."

Next, on a personal note, the last two years have been very challenging for me personally, plus I'm in a major life transition. The death of my mother in May 2013, a sister under my care and my beloved feline companion both almost dying later the same year (both fully recovered in spring 2014), plus visits to my aging father, who died in October 2014, were among some of the more significant challenges. I've also been devoting time to exploring new ideas and creating experiences related to what my work may become in the next decade and beyond, plus downsizing for an expected move to Lane County in Spring 2015.

This meant my "work" became focusing on both my family and myself as a priority during 2014, and although time-sensitive projects were attended to for the organization, others were put on hold. The most significant project, which will be our top priority in early 2015, is finally writing the *Oregon Coast Trail 2021* plan, funded in part by a *Meyer Memorial Trust* matching grant. The deadline for this project has been already been graciously extended by the *Trust* a few times now given everything.

Finally, therefore, I especially want to ask for your understanding in this regard, but also emphasize that the organization intends to continue its work, and in Oregon, towards someday realizing the dream of a complete *Oregon Coast Trail*. Sincerely, Al LePage, Executive Director, NCTA