

# Coast Trails!

Newsletter of the National Coast Trail Association

Projects 2013/2014

## Banks to Tillamook rail/trail concept moves forward

Initial process has already involved meetings, a preliminary feasibility study & public input



Segments of 86-mile rail/trail concept (Image courtesy of Walker Macy)

Tillamook, OR – Realizing the vision of a trail stretching 86 miles from Banks to Tillamook for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians using the *Port of Tillamook Bay (POTB)* railway corridor has been and continues to be an evolving process since an initial group began exploring the idea in 2012. State Senator Betsy Johnson and Representatives of *Tillamook County, POTB, Tillamook County, Cycle Oregon, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)* have all been part of the effort, and today the *Salmonberry Coalition*, a steering committee involving public and private partners, continues to move the “Salmonberry Corridor” project forward.

Besides initial meetings, a significant development with support from *OPRD, ODF, and Cycle Oregon* was a high level preliminary feasibility study done by *Walker Macy*, a planning and design firm, to provide an overview of the nature and scale of the challenges that may face trail development along the rail corridor. In early 2013 the *Coalition* received the final draft study which led them to the conclusion that while a significant amount of work is needed to develop such a trail, the project should continue to move forward.

*OPRD*, with financial support from *Cycle Oregon* and *ODF*, prepared for a more in-depth planning effort which started in 2013 and continues into 2014. It has involved getting public input to evaluate the trail's potential in more detail; identifying community and neighbor concerns, the resource values of the surrounding landscape, and alternatives for trail development. The result will be a draft master plan expected by September 2014 that will include summaries of the assessments, public input, the resulting values and desired benefits of the trail corridor, and final recommendations for its development.

This unique 86-mile recreational opportunity steeped in history, natural beauty and adventure, can connect urban and rural Oregon – the Portland area to the Coast – while tapping into a wide network of existing recreational trails and facilities, educational opportunities and heritage sites. (Edited from *Salmonberry Coalition website/OPRD sources*)

Visit [SalmonberryCorridor.Wordpress.com](http://SalmonberryCorridor.Wordpress.com) for more details

## New Depoe Bay area trails closing central coast gaps

Forgarty Creek to Boiler Bay, Little Whale Cove to Rocky Creek trail sections completed

Depoe Bay, OR – The *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD)* built two new *Oregon Coast Trail* sections north and south of Depoe Bay during 2013. The *Forgarty Creek to Boiler Bay State Park* and *Little Whale Cove* segments now offer scenic vistas formerly unavailable and a safe hiking route to the west of Hwy 101.

*Forgarty Creek* and *Boiler Bay State Parks* are now connected by the newly built trail segment located just west of Highway 101. Access begins within *Forgarty Creek State Park* by crossing under the Hwy. 101 bridge above the creek itself, and then along an existing pathway out to the beach and then south. The new trail at the sound end of the bridge takes one up to and then along the highway right-of-way, eventually bringing the hiker out onto state park land to the west with ocean views. Located in a natural forested setting, it now provides hikers both with a safe and quality recreational coastal trail experience. It finally weaves in and out within the highway right-of-way beside the road but not on it as it continues south eventually connecting into *Boiler Bay State Park*.



The *Little Whale Cove* trail segment initially follows a utility right-of-way and then continues behind the highway guardrail on the westside to connect the south end of Depoe Bay with *Rocky Creek State Natural Area*.

Both trail segments can be connected through Depoe Bay by hikers walking along the existing sidewalk south into town, and then after crossing the town's Hwy. 101 bridge, accessing the old coast road to the right within a quiet residential area, then left up Beach St.



The new trail linkages built in the Depoe Bay area, and the one planned from Cape Foulweather to Seal Rock (see story on back) continue to close gaps on the central coast. They will essentially allow hikers to continue their treks without walking directly on Highway 101 all the way from Gleneden Beach south of Lincoln City to Yaquina Bay in Newport.

“Actions speak louder than words,” says *National Coast Trail Association* executive director Al LePage, “and these new trail connections in Depoe Bay illustrate both the success and commitment of the *Oregon Parks and Recreation Department* to dedicate the kind of resources needed to complete the *Oregon Coast Trail*.”

(Above base maps courtesy of the Oregon Department of Transportation)

# Trail Development

## Working for Recreation & Public Access

### Field Work Success: Campsites, Water & Links

Initial field research by the *National Coast Trail Association (NCTA)* during Summer 2013 for the *Oregon Coast Trail 2021: Final Connections, Logistics Strategy* plan successfully discovered potential campsites and water sources needed to make the trail doable, plus some new trail solutions to connect it.

The *NCTA* expects to complete the draft plan during Fall 2014 and immediately propose to the *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department* – given the proposed campsite locations researched are already public lands in existing day-use state parks – that these specific locations become officially recognized as "backpacker only" campsite areas to serve the logistic needs of long-distance overnight hikers doing sections of, or the entire, *Oregon Coast Trail*. The water sources are already available for filtering and purification when needed, hikers simply need to be informed of their specific location.



Finally, various gaps were explored and two great discoveries were made, one with the potential to solve a real connection challenge south of Heceta Head, the other link an existing non-motorized area already open to recreation at the south end of the *Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area* that takes one off a significant stretch of roadway.

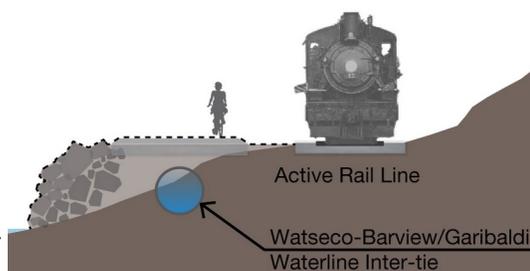


### Cape Foulweather link to be constructed 2016

The *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD)* plans to build a new *Oregon Coast Trail* section consisting of 2.5 miles of natural surface from *Rocky Creek State Natural Area* into Seal Rock literally between Highway 101 and the existing local south access roadway. The plan is to continue along a residential street within the wide shoulder to *Devil's Punchbowl State Park* to connect with the staircase to access the beach south to Yaquina Head in Newport. The design phase is expected in 2015, construction in 2016.

### Supporting Needed Rails-WITH-Trails Linkage

Support for a *Connect Oregon* grant application that would fund the development of a paved trail from Barview to Garibaldi along the ocean side of an active rail line owned by the *Port of Tillamook Bay (POTB)* was submitted by the *National Coast Trail Association* as a letter-of-support in October 2013. This is a very important *Oregon Coast Trail* linkage to complete since it would provide both safe recreational access off of Hwy. 101 and enhance the quality of the trail experience. Heavy competition for funding – combined with feedback that the available "setback" distance between trail users and an active train would be insufficient according to general standards – meant the grant did not get funded. However, *POTB* views developing this trail section – which would use a new waterline project as the base for the paved trail – as one of their highest priorities and sees eventual success in meeting all challenges, funding and otherwise.



Conceptual image above courtesy of Walker Macy

# Education

## Promoting Coastal Trails to Everyone

### Website Successfully Provides Needed Info

The *National Coast Trail Association's* website – launched June 2012 to focus on what long-distance hikers and backpackers need to know to use the *Oregon Coast Trail (OCT)* – now has a high ranking in major search engines and its continuous use also suggests it's accomplishing its intended purpose. Searches for "Oregon Coast Trail" in *Bing, Google* and *Yahoo*, after any paid ads, sees the organization's website ranking third, just after the *Oregon Parks & Recreation Department's OCT* map website and *Wikipedia's* article. Also, given there were over 6,000 "visits" – the number of times a website is accessed – over the last year, this documents the need for such information. The website, updated for 2014, is intended as an ever-expanding work-in-progress that will continue to provide basic information without cost, and eventually offer more detailed information plus our own maps as a benefit of membership or at reasonable cost to the general public.

Visit [OregonCoastTrail.info](http://OregonCoastTrail.info) for more detailed information.

# Conservation

## Taking Action for Coastal Preservation



Image courtesy of Lynda Steiner

### Sand Lake Estuary Becomes a State Park

Sand Lake estuary in Tillamook County is one of only five estuaries on the Oregon coast zoned as "Natural," and an unprecedented opportunity to protect the last vulnerable parcel, the Beltz property, finally concluded successfully. The *Oregon State Parks Commission* directed the *Department (OPRD)* in June 2014 to purchase it for a new state park. The property is a stunning area of estuary, tidal mudflat, open dune, shore pine forest and wetland, with seasonal swamps, dunal ponds, intertidal marsh, and several pioneering communities of rare native dune plants. For the past thirty years many agencies and conservation organizations have tried to purchase the property for conservation, but all attempts failed. However, early in 2014 *Ecotrust Forests LLC* acquired an option on the whole 357-acre property, subsequently purchased it, and the *Commission* directed the *Department* to complete the purchase from *Ecotrust* by August 2014. *OPRD* will manage it primarily for habitat restoration and light recreation, including coastal trails. (Edited from the *Oregon Coast Alliance* website article)

Visit [OregonCoastAlliance.org](http://OregonCoastAlliance.org) for more detailed information.

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