

Coast Trails!

Newsletter of the National Coast Trail Association / PO Box 2491, Eugene, OR 97402 / Projects 2018/2019

Oregon Coast Trail planning process continues forward

County Solutions begins stakeholder meetings, Oregon State Parks begins public outreach

Salem, OR – The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), a statewide organization representing Oregon counties through sharing information and developing consensus, is a key partner in facilitating the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) planning process. Through their County Solutions program, implementation of phase I began in Sept. 2017 with stakeholder outreach, preliminary project organization and prioritization for development of trail gaps. Awarded a \$100,000 Travel Oregon grant in July 2018, AOC began to execute phase II in Nov. 2018 by convening initial stakeholder group meetings for the south, central and north coast regions. This phase continues during 2019, involves developing work groups and sessions to develop and identify the best alternative solutions for each trail gap, plus work to develop statewide capacity to coordinate segment-specific trail work.

The Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD) began their first phase of the Oregon Coast Trail planning process in Oct. 2017 with their "Assessment and Scoping" phase focused on collecting information about the gap type, including both "hiking experience" and route gaps, and also identified potential design concepts that will apply to future OCT segment planning. OPRD also hosted three public open houses in Coos Bay, Tillamook and Portland in December 2018 for public input regarding the current trail conditions, gaps both in the trail and in the user experience, and to share information about the next steps to complete the Oregon Coast Trail Action Plan. The second phase, "Segment Alignment Alternatives," starts in February 2019, and will explore design alternatives for each identified gap. Draft results and recommendations will be shared in a series of public open houses in Fall 2019. The last phase in the planning process, "Final Recommendations," will culminate in 2020 with an Oregon Coast Trail Action Plan with how to move forward to close trail gaps.

(Info: Travel Oregon, OPRD) Visit OregonCoastTrailPlanning.com

Governor makes the OCT plan an official OR Solutions project

Provides facilitation to bring people together to plan and leverage resources to fill in the gaps

Salem, OR – A significant development in Nov. 2018 for the Oregon Coast Trail planning process was the designation letter issued by Gov. Kate Brown stating that "... Oregon Solutions is ideal for helping to establish the governance structure for finalizing an action plan and moving forward with implementation." Oregon Solutions, a state program that works with Oregon communities to implement solutions to local problems, has been coordinating closely with OPRD, OR Dept. of Trans. (ODOT), OR Coast Visitors Assoc. and AOC'S County Solutions program since 2017. Oregon Solutions completed a phase one assessment earlier in 2018 and can now move forward in an official capacity to focus on facilitating a "statewide" group to develop a more comprehensive plan for the entire trail. Read designation letter, learn more, visit . . . ORSolutions.org/osproject/Oregon-Coast-Trail

(NOTE: Our 2017-18 newsletter stated the Oregon Coast Trail Plan bill that became law originated and was initially advocated by Dan Hilburn and Connie Soper. However, Ann Hanus, a Chemeketans' outdoor club member, was also part of the initial core group formed to write and lobby this bill in the Legislature.)

The Corvallis-to-Sea Trail is finally finished . . . on paper



Gary Chapman (left), Robert Sanchez Image: Andy Cripe, Mid-Valley Media

Corvallis, OR -- The paper trail is complete. Now all that remains is to finish the work on the ground. It's been 15 years since the Corvallis to the Sea (C2C) Trail Partnership was formed with the idea of creating a hiking, biking and equestrian path through the Coast Range to connect the Willamette Valley city with the Pacific Ocean. The project's not done yet, but after the signing of a special use permit from the Siuslaw National Forest on November 7th, 2018, the end is in sight.

The permit, which is good for 20 years, allows the nonprofit C2C Trail Partnership to construct, maintain and operate the segments of the route that traverse Forest Service land. Given the agency's ever-shrinking trail budget, Siuslaw National Forest Supervisor Robert Sanchez said the sort of volunteer-driven collaboration that got the project to this point may have been the only way to get it done.

Gary Chapman, C2C Trail Partnership president, noted that the trail's genesis dates back to 1974. Early efforts by the Siuslaw National Forest, Bureau of Land Management and other agencies to get the project off the ground all fell short. The idea being revived in 2003.

But with Chapman leading negotiations with landowners and hundreds of volunteers pitching in to clear brush, build trail, draw maps and post signs, the project moved slowly yet steadily ahead. In 2015, following an exhaustive environmental assessment, Siuslaw National Forest officials granted the first special use permit for a trail segment on Forest Service land. That led to the opening of the eastern half of the route, a 30-mile segment from the confluence of the Willamette and Mary's rivers in downtown Corvallis to the Big Elk Campground in Harlan, in 2017. After this week's signing of the new permit, the effort can move into its final phase.

About a dozen people were on hand for the permit signing, and they were in a mood to celebrate, whooping and clapping as Sanchez and Chapman put their signatures on the official documents. But Chapman brought them back to earth with a reminder that a bit more effort remains before the C2C project crosses the finish line.

(Original story by Bennett Hall, Corvallis Gazette-Times (CG), this edited version and image used with permission. Search story headline above for full article online. Original story is continued, edited, on the back page under "Finishing the C2C Trail . . . On The Ground")

Trail Development

Working for Recreation & Public Access

Reroute, Restore, Reopen, Build: OCT Projects



OREGON COAST TRAIL

Ecola Point to Indian Beach trail section of 1.5 miles, closed for two years due to landsliding, will be re-routed. Planning is being finalized pending a geotech review, construction potentially beginning in 2019.

Cape Lookout, Cape Falcon & Neahkahnie Mountain trails will be undergoing major restoration and bridge repairs through a Recreational Trail Program grant of \$162,000. The plan is being finalized pending required reviews with work on a total of 6.8 miles expected in 2019.

The Siuslaw National Forest plans to reopen the Oregon Coast Trail over Cascade Head. Damage from a 2008 storm closed the trail, and their application for a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant was recommended by the RTP Committee and approved by the OPRD Commission, November 2018. The project will involve heavy restoration work to cut out and retread a 2.5 mile section of trail. Total project cost is \$100,000, with a Forest Service grant request of \$80,000; the remaining match of \$20,000 being provided by NW Youth Corps, Forest Service funds, and volunteer labor. Funding authorization is anticipated from the OR Dept. of Transportation and U.S. Dept. of Transportation's Federal Hwy Admin. in Spring 2019.

Cape Foulweather trail section to Devil's Punchbowl State Park has been an evolving project relative to planning and design, especially given steep slopes along both sides of the existing roadway. Relative to future trail development all along the ocean side of the road, it has already been paved to increase its width. Proposed elevated deck construction, to connect paved areas to address steep slopes and provide access for hikers and cyclists, requires a geotech study to be completed as one of the next steps to complete this gap.

Neahkahnie Mountain to Manzanita trail section, funded through an RTP grant to the City of Manzanita of \$95,833, the required 20% match being met by volunteer labor, will now continue forward pending all necessary planning, reviews and agreements. Construction potentially begins in 2019. *See related story under "Conservation"*

Finishing the C2C Trail . . . on the Ground



Over the next year and a half, beginning in November 2018, volunteer crews will construct about five miles of new trail in the Siuslaw National Forest. That will be the final link in the chain of asphalt paths, city streets, old logging roads and singletrack hiking tread that make up the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail. The finished route – tentatively scheduled to open in the spring of 2020 – will run roughly

60 miles from downtown Corvallis to the Pacific Ocean at the Ona Beach State Park unit, about seven miles south of Newport. It will be open to horseback riders and bicyclists as well as hikers, although some stretches will require alternate routes for horses and bikes.

Source: *CG-Times*, Image is official C2C Trail logo, Visit C2CTrail.org

OR Coast Bike Route, OCT "Overlap" Input

Planning to identify improvements for the Oregon Coast Bike Route (OCBR) is being developed by ODOT. Improvements along sections where the bike route may coincide with the Oregon Coast Trail has the potential to be more efficient and cost-effective to enhance safety and access for cyclists and hikers by identifying these areas. So the NCTA submitted a detailed "overlap" input report to ODOT in Feb. 2019.

Education

Promoting Coastal Trails to Everyone

"Outdoor Recreation Day" Advocacy at Capitol

National Coast Trail Association (NCTA) executive director Al LePage, participated in the Oregon Trails Coalition's (OTC) first-ever lobbying event, part of a joint effort with Outdoor Recreation, in Salem on February 12th, 2019. Advocates gathered for inspiration, information, training, networking and meetings with individual legislators' offices. The focus for OTC was to restore and preserve trails funding in Connect Oregon (funding for transportation infrastructure) relative to enacted HB 2017, and on supporting HB 2083 to keep trails funding with OPRD, and with the removal of the sunset clause. The NCTA is an Oregon Trails Coalition organizational member. Learn more, visit OregonTrailsCoalition.org



Redesign and Launch New NCTA Website

The National Coast Trail Association (NCTA) main website, CoastTrails.org, first launched in 1999, will be redesigned literally from a 20th to 21st-century website, and its vision, mission and goals need to be revisited in terms of the organization's purposes, updated strategic plan and potential future directions. It's expected to launch during 2019 to better serve our members, the organization, and its visitors. Visit our successful OregonCoastTrail.info "sub-website" focusing on providing basic information that long-distance hikers and backpackers need to travel the Oregon Coast Trail; its annual update to be done during Spring 2019.

Conservation

Taking Action for Coastal Preservation

Land Preserved Offers New OCT Gap Solution

A significant development both for conservation and for an Oregon Coast Trail connection from Neahkahnie Mountain to Manzanita was the acquisition in September 2018 of 111 acres of land by the Lower Nehalem Community Trust. It also fills in a significant gap along the northernmost 60 miles of the coast. Connie Soper, hiking author and Oregon Coast Trail advocate, has been working on this gap as a volunteer for the City of Manzanita from initial grant writing to get funding to supervising the project. She realized the potential opportunity existed to re-route the trail from a significant portion of the original ODOT right-of-way proposal through the now preserved forested natural area further east, and successfully worked with the Trust to achieve that goal. Learn more about the Trust, the story behind the acquisition and the OR Coast Trail at NehalemTrust.org

Putting Wildlife in the Oregon Coast Trail Plan

Protecting the Oregon Coast Trail corridor is one goal of the National Coast Trail Association (NCTA). One strategy to sustain wildlife is to protect biodiversity within the areas through which it travels, and an important wildlife conservation management strategy is developing wildlife corridors. The Oregon Coast Trail has that very potential, especially north and south, so the NCTA will also advocate to include wildlife in the plan so the trail and it's corridor can serve both people and wildlife. Wildlife crossings such as tunnels under Hwy 101 could address safety issues at hiker highway crossing areas, and signage to educate and minimize impacts from hikers, dogs, motorists, and campers are examples of how to include wildlife in the plan. *Learn more online, search "Wildlife Corridors" and "Wildlife Crossings."*