

3 > CLATSOP COUNTY TODAY AND PROJECTED: DEMAND FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

The active support and wise use of our underutilized recreational lands and facilities can play a key role in creating a community that encourages healthy growth – socially, physically and economically.

> Present Situation

Clatsop County is well-known for its rich history and wealth of natural resources. From the beaches of the Pacific Ocean and waters of the Columbia River to the lushly forested Coast Range, the spectrum of opportunities for outdoor recreation is among the finest in the state.

This is a keen advantage for residents and visitors, and is a major reason many choose to live here, including a higher-than-average number of retirees and people of middle age and beyond starting a second career or small business.

Traditionally, Clatsop County’s economy was dependent on products and activities associated with its renewable natural resources. Although not as prominent as they once were, seafood, forest products and agriculture continue to be important industries.

A workforce analysis by the Oregon Employment Department for February 2003 showed approximately 24% percent of the total private employment in leisure and hospitality and about 12.8% percent in natural resources and mining, wood product manufacturing and paper manufacturing.

Large numbers of tourists visit during the summer months, fueling a significant portion of Clatsop County’s economy. Highways 26 and 30 provide access to Portland and the



New homes swamp coastal communities to south ...

“More than 5,300 units or building lots have been approved for development, according to a survey by *The Oregonian* ...

“With it come daunting implications for coastal communities as they stare down the need to expand boundaries and build roads, sewer and water facilities while confronting a growing housing affordability problem and pondering how an influx of part-time residents might change the civic culture.”

Sample numbers of residential lots or building permits approved in 2005 or planned for development in the near term:

Gearhart	102
Seaside	29
Cannon Beach	26
Manzanita	30
Rockaway Beach	147
Lincoln City	1,918
Depoe Bay	91
Florence	249
Bandon	494
Brookings	1,061

*From The Oregonian
Oct. 23, 2005*

Sources: County and city planning and building departments

Willamette Valley, while Highway 101 connects the county to the rest of the Oregon coast and southwest Washington.

**“Next great Destination:
Astoria”**

Sunset Magazine
in a feature article
January 2006

**“The fastest growing epidemic
in America is obesity. We’re
getting fatter as a nation,
putting on an average of one
pound a year ...**

**“We need to apply some of the
lessons learned from tobacco
control to obesity control and
prevention – especially the
power of education and
community-based
approaches.”**

Susan Blumenthal
Former U.S. Assistant Surgeon
General
March 8, 2004

**“In the last 20 years, the
percentage of adolescents
who are obese has tripled and
the percentage of overweight
children between ages 6 and
11 has doubled.”**

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention

**Adult obesity
rankings at a glance:**

1. Mississippi
2. Alabama
29. Washington
31. California
36. Oregon
37. Idaho
50. Colorado

While Cannon Beach and Seaside have long been vacation destinations, Astoria has achieved “destination” status. An increasing number of cruise ships stop in Astoria to enjoy its history, retail services and cultural attractions. The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial and creation of the Lewis & Clark National Historical Park are expected to significantly increase tourism long-term.

The area’s recreational opportunities are likely to continue to attract a growing number of visitors. Balancing growth with livability issues is a challenge for many coastal communities. For example, Cannon Beach is considering whether to expand its urban growth boundary after years of limiting growth.

Clatsop County’s recreational assets are as important to the physical health of its residents as they are to a healthy, growing economy. Much has been made in the media, and deservedly so, of health issues related to sedentary lifestyles. It is especially disturbing to note that the most rapid rise in obesity nationally is occurring among children and adolescents. Not only does this threaten the lifelong health of individuals, many of its costs fall on taxpayers and the insurance-buying public.

To Oregon’s credit, it is the only state not to see gains from 2002-04 in the number of obese residents, holding steady at 21% in a new study out in 2005 from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. Interest in walking/hiking, bicycling, swimming and other activities, shown in our local survey, plays an important role in keeping our community healthy. With our higher-than-average population of aging baby boomers and retirees, lifelong fitness should be encouraged.

Although the state as a whole did not show a rise in obesity, there is room for improvement. Oregon’s obesity ranking falls just below the median compared to the rest of the nation. We

can and must do better, and our recreational resources are one of the best means by which to do it.

> Demographics

Clatsop County is home to an estimated 36,340 residents, according to figures released in 2004 by the U.S. Census Bureau. This represents an approximate 2% increase since the last U.S. Census in 2000.

The county’s major population centers are along or near the coast. About one-third of the population resides in unincorporated areas. Growth rates have been greatest in the vacation destination, Cannon Beach, and the city of Warrenton, which has a large land area and annexed Hammond in 1991. Astoria had slight negative annual growth in the 1990s but that trend has reversed.

Clatsop County has a lower percentage of youth under 18 than the rest of Oregon, but more residents over 45. The number of persons 65 years and older moving to Clatsop County between 1990 and 2000 was nearly 3% greater than the state average.

Net personal income in Clatsop County gets a higher-than-average boost from transfer payments by government and businesses. Examples are social security, veterans benefits and pension plans. During the 1969-2003 period, earned income in Clatsop County grew by 94.2%. Property income increased by 191.8%, while transfer payments rose 301.4%. The share of Clatsop County's personal income from transfer payments is above both the national average and Oregon’s average (see sidebar).

The population remains less diverse than the state as a whole, although minorities have increased since 1990. About 93% of the county’s population identified themselves as white in Census 2000, compared with the statewide average of 86.6%. (As a caveat, note that racial data from the census is self-

Population of Clatsop County’s five incorporated cities in Census 2000:

Astoria	9,813
Seaside	5,900
Warrenton	4,096
Cannon Beach	1,588
Gearhart	995

Annual Growth - Cities

	<u>'90-'00</u>
Astoria	-0.3%
Seaside	1.0%
Warrenton	4.3%
Cannon Bch.	2.7%
Gearhart	-0.3%

	<u>'00-'03</u>
Astoria	0.3%
Seaside	0.8%
Warrenton	1.6%
Cannon Bch.	1.1%
Gearhart	1.5%

Source: *Portland State University Population Research Center*

Transfer Payments as Percent of Total Personal Income in 2003:

United States	-14.6%
Oregon	-15.6%
Clatsop County	-19.0%

Source: *U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis*

reported. Respondents decide with which racial and ethnic group they want to be identified.)

Since 1970, the county has gained over 7,800 residents. However, growth between 1990 and 2000 was 13.4% less than the state of Oregon as a whole according to Census 2000.

Finally, it should be noted that population figures represent permanent residents. The population swells to in excess of 80,000 on summer weekends with vacationers drawn by the scenery, mild weather, small-town atmosphere and wealth of recreational opportunities. The number of visitors can be many times more than that on special-event weekends such as the August Hood to Coast Relay, the largest relay event in North America, which ends in Seaside.

> Planning Area

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Clatsop County has a total area of 1,085 square miles – 827 square miles of land and 258 square miles of water. The latter represents 23.74% of the county’s total area. This includes a large area within the Columbia River.

Land ownership in Clatsop County

<i>Private</i>	88.1%
<i>State</i>	9.8%
<i>Federal</i>	1.3%
<i>County</i>	0.8%

Land ownership within Clatsop County is primarily private. More than 80% of the land is forested, and much of this is privately owned industrial forest land. At present, the major private timber landowners are Weyerhaeuser Company, Longview Fibre and Hampton Affiliates.

> Natural Features

Clatsop County's location in the northwest corner of Oregon offers a spectacular mix of physical features. The terrain is mostly mountainous timberland, bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean and on the north by the lower Columbia River.

Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce, hemlock and red alder are the primary tree species in the forests. The silt loam bottomlands of the Columbia and its tributary rivers, the adjoining hills and coastal plain with its dunes and bog lands are home to most of the population and offer rich agricultural lands. While harvesting on small woodlots makes up 40% of agricultural sales, dairy and beef are also major-revenue agricultural resources.

Coastal weather patterns supply ample rainfall for agricultural production and forest vegetation, and for feeding numerous coastal foothill streams. Clatsop County has a temperate, marine climate, with rainy winters and moderate summers. Precipitation occurs mainly from October through April.

“Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. We need hours of aimless wandering or spates of time sitting on park benches, observing the mysterious works of ants and the canopy of treetops.”

Maya Angelou

> Benefits of Recreation and Open Space

National Recreation and Park Association: “The benefits are endless.”

More than a popular slogan, this has become the rallying cry throughout the U.S. and Canada for the transformation in thinking about parks and recreation that has taken place since the early 90s.

The benefits “movement” was born largely out of competition for scarce public funds – a stress that has increased over the years. It became obvious to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) that there was a need professionally to move beyond “fun and games” and make it clear that parks and recreation play a vital role in the health and well-being of individuals, families, neighborhoods, communities and the environment.

“Active recreation travelers average \$442 per party per trip, passive travelers spend \$342 and other travelers spend \$245 per party per trip; as a whole travelers spend close to \$123 per day.”

Travel Industry Association of America (TIAA), General Tourism Trends in Oregon, 2000.

Recreational lands and open space offer a wealth of benefits that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and from all walks of life.

Health and Wellness. Recreational lands provide excellent opportunities for walkers, joggers, bicyclists and equestrians; many are accessible to people with disabilities. Almost everybody can enjoy the healthful benefits of fresh air, exercise, reduced stress and potential weight loss.

Safe, Clean Transportation. Trails are an essential component of recreation, providing safe, scenic routes to and from work, school, shops, parks and other community facilities. Trails in and around urban areas have the potential to reduce dependence on cars and relieve congestion on highways and streets.

Plant and Animal Habitat. Recreational lands and open space host native plants and animals, including some endangered species. Mushroom picking, hunting, clamming and birdwatching are popular activities among residents and visitors, requiring habitat to be protected and preserved. Travel corridors for breeding and foraging are needed to keep flora and fauna populations healthy.

Economic Development. Recreational lands are attractive to companies seeking to do business in Clatsop County. Employers today recognize the economic benefits that recreational activity provides, such as greater productivity and potentially lower health care costs. For homeowners, the presence of nearby parks, trails and open space increases property values.

Tourism. Recreational opportunities encourage tourism and give visitors reason to stay in our area longer, bringing more dollars into the local economy. Unspoiled beaches, natural forests, hiking trails, camping facilities and waters for fishing and boating are a magnet to visitors. See Appendix S for an estimate of the economic impact of visitors to the county according to the Oregon Tourism Commission.

Water Quality and Flood Control. Recreational lands managed as natural areas can function as a buffer for wetlands and rivers, leading to improved water quality. They also act as a sponge, absorbing and reducing storm water runoff to minimize flooding. This reduces the need for costly flood control measures.

Cultural and Historic Preservation. Cultural resources located on recreational lands – such as historic buildings (the Lindgren cabin) and heritage trees (the largest Sitka spruce) – provide the community with a sense of place and cultural continuity. People become more aware of their roots and take pride in their heritage when they can visit archaeologically and historically significant sites.

“Nature-based tourism (travel and recreation for the appreciation of nature and the outdoors) is...growing at 30% annually and involving non-consumptive activities such as bird and other wildlife watching, hiking and backpacking, nature study and photography, boating, biking, camping and picnicking, and allied activities”

Travel Industry Association of America (TIAA), General Tourism Trends in Oregon, 2000.

“The four (Oregon) counties where travel-generated earnings comprise more than ten percent of the total earnings are Clatsop, Curry, Lincoln, and Tillamook”

Oregon Travel Impacts, 1991-2005p, Oregon Tourism Commission

Oregon Travel Spending for Clatsop County by year:

2000:	\$306
2001:	\$320
2002 :	\$326
2003 :	\$324
2004 :	\$338

(\$Millions)

Oregon Travel Impacts, 1991-2005p, Oregon Tourism Commission

Clatsop County Travel Impacts 1991-2004, see Appendix S

> Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

In 2002, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department completed a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2003-2007 for Oregon. The outdoor recreation habits of 4,400 Oregonians and 800 residents from California, Washington and Idaho were surveyed in this study.

The plan constitutes Oregon's basic five-year strategy for outdoor recreation. It provides the state with an up-to-date regional information and planning tool serving as the basis by which all Oregon recreation providers (state, federal, local and private) are able to:

- Catalogue and rank their recreation needs.
- Obtain funding through partnerships and grants.
- Clarify their respective roles.

The guidance provided by the SCORP report influenced the process followed by the Task Force and the presentation of its findings.

The completion of the SCORP report allowed the state to maintain its eligibility to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). (The state has received approximately \$235 million from the fund during the last 40 years.)

To allocate LWCF monies in an objective manner, a set of *Open Project Selection Process* criteria were developed during the 2003-2007 Oregon SCORP planning process (See 2003-2006 Oregon SCORP, Appendix J). The Oregon Parks & Recreation Department uses these criteria to evaluate statewide LWCF grant proposals.

Regional recreational trends and issues reported by recreational providers in SCORP have implications for Clatsop County. For example:

- Recreational providers consistently report that the recreational infrastructure in Oregon is aging and needs rehabilitation. Recommendation was made to focus rehabilitation priorities on sites and facilities that satisfy current recreational need and ensure long-term performance.
- The public is asking land managers to place more emphasis on preserving existing vegetative communities and wildlife habitat systems. People want quiet, natural places where they can go to recreate and renew.
- Information and education are in greater demand.
- People are taking shorter trips closer to home due to less disposable leisure time. The increase in gas prices since SCORP was adopted has also reinforced the desire to limit travel by visiting nearby destinations.
- There is an increased emphasis on regional recreation planning. Rural communities are becoming more interested in collaborating with managers and recreation providers with the aim of diversifying their economies, while maintaining their quality-of-life values.
- Recreation providers report a significant increase in water-based recreation activities. The latest non-motorized boating numbers for Oregon state show a 138% increase from 1987 to 2002.
- Recreational trails are important to Oregonians. The growing number of diverse land and water trail users requires planning to provide additional trail facilities including inter-connected opportunities where appropriate.

Nationally, there are significant recreational trends that are a match for Oregon.

For example:

- *Camping is the number one outdoor vacation in America.*
- *Biking vacations rank as the third most popular outdoor vacation activity, following camping and hiking.*

SCORP examined and presented the recreation utilization data collected in a variety of ways:

Recreation Activity: Statewide

Table 1 below shows the percent of Oregon’s population that participates in various recreational activities. Nearly three out of four Oregon households surveyed participate in some type of outdoor activity:

Table 1 – Participation Rate by Activity

Activity	% of Pop. that Participates**	Total Annual Trips (OR)
Trail & off-trail activities	39.0%	14,744,923
Motorized recreation activities	12.8%	4,751,472
Road or street activities	58.5%	103,903,728
Snow-related activities	7.5%	2,212,796
Fishing, crabbing and clamming	27.9%	9,550,422
Boating activities	20.4%	4,734,151
Swimming or beach activities	34.9%	10,850,854
Nature study activities	31.2%	37,595,297
Hunting or shooting activities	13.7%	5,976,196
Camping activities	27.6%	4,834,071
Picnicking and sightseeing activities	45.5%	12,412,549
Outdoor sports and games	40.1%	36,056,353
All outdoor activities	73.7%	247,622,813

** From The Research Group (TRG) calculations

Table 2 below lists the ten most popular recreational activities of Oregon residents.

Table 2 – Top 10 Outdoor Activities – State Residents

Activity	Estimated Annual User Days* (Millions)
1. Running/Walking for Exercise	49.2
2. Walking for Pleasure	47.7
3. Birdwatching	18.7
4. Nature/Wildlife Observation	17.6
5. Sightseeing/Driving for Pleasure	12.3
6. RV/Trailer Camping	11.0
7. Golf	9.6
8. Using Park Playground Equipment	8.8
9. Bicycling	7.4
10. Ocean Beach Activities	6.0

* A user day is one instance of participation in a single outdoor recreation activity by one person.

Recreational Activity: Residents Within the Region

In its study of recreation trends, SCORP divided the state into 11 planning regions. Region 1 consists of Clatsop, Tillamook and Lincoln counties, and approximately 1/5 of Lane County (the coastal portion). While it includes an area larger than Clatsop County, the Region 1 findings provide insight into types of recreation taking place in the north coastal region.

SCORP Region 1:
Clatsop, Tillamook
and Lincoln
counties, and
approximately 1/5 of
Lane County (the
coastal portion).

Table 3 below shows the percentage of Region 1 residents who participate in the 11 most popular recreational activities. Both these data and the data collected by the Task Force in its survey (see sidebar, page 11) show the popularity of walking/hiking, beach activities, nature/wildlife observation and fishing among area residents.

Table 3 – Percentage of Region 1 Participating in Recreational Activities (11 most popular)

Sightseeing/driving for pleasure	44%
Walking for pleasure	41%
Beach activities	36%
Visiting cultural/historic sites	31%
Running/walking for exercise	30%
Nature/wildlife observation	29%
Collecting (rocks, plants, mushrooms, etc.)	28%
Picnicking	24%
Fishing from a boat	24%
Bird watching	22%
Fishing from shore	21%

Data extracted from SCORP Table 3.5

Recreational Activity Trends: Estimated Demand by Destination Region

SCORP estimated the demand for 30 recreational activities in 2002 compared to demand in 1987. These data are expressed as user occasions for the **destination regions**, in contrast to the home regions of the respondents reported above. Table 4 gives these data for Region 1:

Table 4 – Changes in Recreation Participation in Region 1 (1987-2002)

Recreation Activity Types	1987 User Occas.	2002 User Occas.	Change 1987-2002	% Change 1987-2002
Trail & Off-Trail Activities				
Day Hiking	550,399	993,897	443,498	80.6%
Horseback Riding	107,989	150,428	42,439	39.3%
Backpacking	179,571	56,301	-123,270	-68.6%
Motorized Activities				
Four Wheel Driving	340,808	353,381	12,573	3.7%
ATV Riding (3 & 4 Wheeler)	474,464	578,267	103,803	21.9%
Motorcycling	144,948	163,630*	18,682	12.9%
Snowmobiling	0	0	0	0.0%
Dune Buggy Driving	9,676	48,964*	39,288	406.0%
Snow Related Activities				
Downhill Skiing	0	0	0	-
Sledding or General Snowplay	0	5,388	5,388	-
Fishing Activities				
Fishing From a Boat	1,189,028	1,198,193	9,165	0.8%
Boating Activities				
Power Boating (Ocean, Lake & River)	917,262	461,059	-456,203	-49.7%
Water Skiing or other Towing Sports	68,162	8,379*	-59,783	-87.7%
Non-Motorized Boating (Ocean, Lake & River)	549,767	298,894	-251,073	-45.7%
Sailing	20,254	0	-20,254	-100.0%
Windsurfing	8,310	64,647*	56,337	677.9%
Swimming & Beach Activities				
Swimming in an Outdoor Pool	398,602	630,151	231,549	58.1%
Beach Activities Including Swimming (Fresh & Salt)	3,306,923	6,041,082	2,734,159	82.7%
Nature Study Activities				
Nature/Wildlife Observation	1,417,282	1,797,447	380,165	26.8%
Outdoor Photography	1,297,541	460,141	-837,400	-64.5%
Hunting Activities				
Big Game Hunting (Rifle)	475,203	250,611	-224,592	-47.3%
Hunting: Waterfowl, upland birds & small game	19,958	70,142	50,184	251.4%
Big Game Hunting (Bow)	25,402	25,144	-258	-1.0%
Camping Activities				
RV/Trailer Camping	1,994,422	3,728,795	1,734,373	87.0%
Car Camping with a Tent	729,796	348,762	-381,034	-52.2%
Boat Camping	44,672	190,546	145,874	326.5%
Horseback Camping	47,862	42,899*	-4,963	-10.4%
Picnicking & Sightseeing Activities				
Sightseeing/Driving for Pleasure	3,119,456	2,410,370	-709,086	-22.7%
Picnicking	1,358,640	637,321	-721,319	-53.1%
Train or Bus Touring	38,058	10,350	-27,708	-72.8%

*Fewer than 10 observations

SCORP Table 4.6

The Task Force had concerns about a few of the levels of change reported in this table, specifically "Fishing from a Boat" (0.8% increase) and "Non-motorized Boating" (45.7% decrease). After consultation with OPRD staff, the Task Force decided that the statewide figures for these activities (44.3% increase and 137.9% increase) were more representative of these activities in Clatsop County.

In addition, no mention was made of surfing, which is a popular activity but was not represented in the survey.

SCORP combined the demand estimates with an outdoor supply capacity for each region to develop facility needs. Based on this analysis, SCORP states that the most significant growth in recreation in our region (1987-2002) has been as follows:

Table 5 – Most Significant Participation Growth Activities in Region 1

Rank	Growth Activity	Growth in User Occasions 1987 - 2002	% Growth in User Occasions 1987 - 2002
1	Beach Activities Including Swimming (Fresh & Salt)	+2,734,159	+83%
2	RV/Trailer Camping	+1,734,374	+87%
3	Golf	+670,115	+129%
4	Day Hiking	+443,897	+81%
5	Using Playground Equipment	+219,386	+95%

SCORP Table 4.7

ROLE OF THE COUNTY...

CURRENT ROLE:

Counties acquire and develop parks serving citizens of an area larger than a single municipality but less than statewide. Counties provide a substantial amount of the public sector boating access, and RV and camping related facilities around the state.

...Most county programs would fall in the mid-range of the recreation opportunity spectrum providing developed and semi-developed outdoor recreation opportunities for people in the urban/rural interface. Counties provide a significant amount of the facilities for access to natural resource orientated activities such as camping, hiking, fishing, picnicking, motorized and non-motorized boating, water-skiing, swimming, ATV riding, bicycling, nature study and interpretation.

HOW ROLE MAY CHANGE IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS:

...more urban areas there will be pressure from community and environmental groups to acquire more open space, especially along the urban fringe. This fringe area, more often than not, falls under the jurisdiction of the counties.

...The county's role of providing solely traditional forms of parks will need to evolve. Some counties are already evolving to meet this new role. Benton, Lane and Marion Counties are currently making an effort in this direction.

(Source: SCORP. See Appendix G)

Based on the Demand and Need Analysis, Region 1 is said to have current peak use exceeding supply in golf, hiking trails and fishing from a dock or pier (SCORP, p. J-9). This demand exceeding supply is projected to continue for the same activities in 2007.

LWCF Priorities

Statewide SCORP issues were identified (SCORP p. J-5):

- Major rehabilitation of existing outdoor facilities
- Recreational trails/trail connectivity
- Land acquisition
- Ball fields
- Water-based recreational resources and facilities

SCORP has set the top three Region 1 priorities for LWCF funds (Appendix E – Funding Priorities):

- Funding for additional camping facilities
- Funding for new and rehabilitated river access facilities
- Funding for additional recreation trails (non-motorized)

Projects that address these regional and statewide issues will be given additional priority points in LWCF funding requests.

[Note: Later in the report, it will be shown that the Task Force recommendations address all three of the regional issues and all but one of the state issues (i.e., ball fields).]

Other SCORP Guidelines

Disability information

598 of the 3,741 households surveyed by phone had a household member with a disability. SCORP provides valuable information regarding the type of disability and the type of accommodation that would be helpful. These results and respondents' suggestions are listed in Appendix F.

Role of County Park and Recreation Departments

SCORP carefully delineates the roles of the various public providers of recreation. It describes its current role and how the role may change by 2007 due to a variety of pressures. The county role is described in Appendix G.

> Demand for Trails Today and Projected

Trails are an important component of any recreational plan. They are the physical manifestation of the “connectivity” we envision for our parks and adjacent areas. The demand for trails in Clatsop County and the state is intense and worthy of special attention. One need only look at the miles of user-created trails, often crossing ownership boundaries, to recognize that the public is serious about blazing new trails and taking ownership of its trails. (See sidebar on pages 32-33 for recent trail developments and Appendix H for local area trail maps.)

In its publication (*Creating Connections: The Oregon Recreational Trails How-To Manual, May 2004*), the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) reviews some of the many benefits of trails and greenways (see sidebar).

The state’s “How-To Manual” divides its discussion between land trails, both motorized and non-motorized, and water trails. Demand and utilization data for each category of trail are addressed below along with critical state and regional trail issues.

Non-Motorized Land Trails

According to the recent county Task Force survey, over 40% of respondents listed hiking/walking as their favorite form of recreation. This corresponds well with 2002 SCORP results that showed “running/walking for exercise” and “walking for pleasure” ranked number one and two in the statewide user days survey, far ahead of their nearest competitor, “birdwatching” (SCORP Table 3-3, pp. 3-7 through 3-9).

Benefits of Trails and Greenways

RECREATIONAL VALUE AND HEALTH BENEFITS

There is a significant health and fitness benefit as most recreational activities on trails involve exercise. This health benefit accrues to the individual and, in the form of reduced health-care costs, to society as well.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND SAFETY BENEFITS

Trails encourage pedestrian and bicycle commuting, thus reducing traffic and congestion on roads, and reducing fuel consumption and its associated pollution. Designated trails strive to define a designated space for human-powered commuters.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Trails attract tourists that bring a direct economic benefit to local businesses.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Trail corridors can become outdoor classrooms where children can observe and learn about their natural and cultural environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

By preserving critical open space that provides natural buffer zones that protect streams, rivers and lakes, trails and greenways can play an important role in improving water quality.

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

Trails have the power to connect us to our heritage by preserving historic places and providing access to them. They can give people a sense of place and draw people to historic and cultural sites.

Blazing New Trails

To meet user demand, there has been a significant increase in trail creation in Clatsop County. Table 13 lists the county's major recognized trails. Noteworthy trail developments over the past few years include the following:

Warrenton Trails Association.

This non-profit organization has been working on a 25-mile loop trail connecting important historical and cultural sites in the Warrenton area (Appendix H – Map). Most of the proposed route is accessible, but not well signed or advertised.

Astoria Urban Trail Project.

The city recently received a grant to map all of the trails within the Astoria area and has identified many miles of shared-use trails that cross multiple ownerships, including the county and ODF. The Astoria Parks Department has gained state recognition for the 1.5-mile Cathedral Tree Trail, the 0.25-mile Column Trail, the 1.5-mile James Street Trail, the 0.5-mile Middle School Trail and the 1-mile Shively Park Trail.

Continued ...

Also according to the state survey, day hiking in our region has experienced an 80.6% increase in user occasions between 1987 and 2002. Horseback riding has increased 39.3% in our region; approximately 6.2% of the population participates in this recreational activity.

As cited on page 31, SCORP 2003-2007 gives one of its top three Region 1 funding priorities to additional non-motorized recreation trails. SCORP (p. 5-4) cites the need for:

- Additional recreation trails near populated areas. This includes acquisition of land or easements for trails and trail connections.
- Off-road bicycle trails in the Coast Range and along the coast, and opportunities for equestrian use.
- Longer trails for multiple-night backpacking trips.

In addition, OPRD has also identified the following top statewide non-motorized trail issues:

- A. Need for trail connectivity within the region providing access from urban to rural trails, connections between public facilities, parks and open space and connections from state and regional trails to community trails.
- B. Need for additional non-motorized trails (for all user types) – especially in close proximity to where people live.
- C. Need for additional funding for non-motorized trail acquisition and development. Potential strategies include allocating a certain portion of state lottery funds; acquisitions of fee title, easements and land exchanges; and ways to allow users to pay for trail facilities and services.

(Oregon Trails 2005-2014: Non-Motorized Trails, OPRD, February 2005)

It is important to recognize that OPRD staff use compliance with the above issues and priorities when evaluating grant applications.

Motorized Land Trails

The recent Task Force survey elicited one response regarding motorized trail activity. According to SCORP 2002 survey data, Region 1 had a slight (3.7%) increase in four-wheel driving since 1988, and a 22% increase in ATV (all-terrain vehicle) riding. When user occasions for these two activities are combined, they almost equal user occasions for day hiking. One can conclude that this recreational activity was under-represented in our local survey; however, it should be noted that our region includes Tillamook County, which has a very large off-road driving constituency on ODF trails.

In OPRD's *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: Motorized Trails Plan*, three major statewide issues are identified:

- A. Need for new trails/managed riding areas, including:
 - Additional public and privately owned OHV (off-highway vehicle) recreational areas.
 - Greater emphasis on developing OHV riding opportunities on private and local government land.
 - Additional OHV opportunities in reasonably close proximity to communities and urban areas
 - Increased diversity of OHV opportunities.
- B. Need for regional interagency coordination/cooperation in trail planning and management, including:
 - Development of a regional approach to motorized trail planning.
 - Standardized statewide OHV management practices.
- C. Need for user education/training (regulatory and safety information) as a means of reducing the number of personal injury accidents involving recreational OHV use.

[Note: These goals and objectives are developed in greater detail on pages 47-54 in the above-mentioned publication.]

Blazing New Trails, Continued

Astoria Riverwalk/River Trail.

This 3.5-mile shared-use trail next to the rails on the Astoria waterfront has proven extremely popular with visitors and residents alike.

Oregon Department of Forestry, Astoria District.

ODF is also actively engaged in identifying the many user-created trails that have been created in the Astoria basin, and deciding which should be designated as "authorized." They have also created a horse camp and riding trail in the eastern part of the county.

Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Parks.

Several new trails have been created including the 6.5-mile Fort to Sea Trail, the 2.5-mile Clatsop Loop Trail at Ecola State Park, and the 1.5-mile Netul River Trail along the Lewis and Clark River at Fort Clatsop.

The Gateway to Discovery. *A trail through a 10-acre coastal forest in Seaside, along with a natural history center, showcases the region's natural, cultural and historic resources.*

County Parks Department.

The 1.5-mile Cullaby Lake Interpretive Trail along a coastal wetlands was dedicated in July 2005. An equestrian group has unofficially adopted the DeLaura Beach site. Several miles of trails have been created that are shared with bicyclists and hikers. [Note: Other improvements in trails on county park and recreational lands will be discussed later in this report.]

Water Trails

Benefits of Water Trails

A water trail can help people become acquainted with their river heritage.

People along the river can discover a whole new perspective of both their community and the aquatic environment.

A water trail system with identified launch and landing sites, resting places, maps and safety information can help people traveling on the river find the best places to paddle based on their experience and available time.

An identified trail can help protect natural and cultural resources from degradation by dispersing use and limiting access to sensitive areas. Trail information can provide guidelines for low-impact use.

Trail maps and guidebooks can direct paddlers to local communities for camping facilities, grocery stores, B&Bs and other amenities, helping enhance local economies.

A sense of stewardship can be nurtured through public education and coordinated volunteer activities such as cleanups and water quality monitoring.

An officially recognized water trail can be eligible for regional and national resources and funding.

Source: Lower Columbia Water Trail brochure, Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership (Appendix H)

The publication, *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: Water Trails Plan* (OPRD, February 2005), provides this description of water trails:

Water trails (like other recreational trails) are corridors between specific locations on a lake, river or ocean. Water trails are primarily designed for small watercraft such as canoes, sea and whitewater kayaks, rafts and drift boats. Necessary water trail facilities include a safe place for the public to put in, parking, restrooms, a safe place to take out, and in some cases day-use sites and overnight campsites. Water trails emphasize low-impact use and encourage stewardship of the resource.

This same report noted the growing interest in water trails throughout the state. According to SCORP, power boating has remained at a relatively static level between 1987 and 2002, whereas, non-motorized boating activities have increased 138% during the same period.

The previous Clatsop County Recreational Lands Master Plan listed 19 public and quasi-public boat ramps on the Columbia, Necanicum, Nehalem and other sites (p. 22). The tables on pages 47 and 48 identify boat ramps and water access points in the county.

The SCORP report also established the following Region 1 funding priority:

Funding priority for new river access facilities and rehabilitation of existing river access facilities

- *There is a lack of developed river access facilities for angling, swimming, kayaking and canoeing. In addition, there is a need for rehabilitation of existing river access facilities. (SCORP, 5-4)*

Oregon Trails 2005-2014: Water Trails Plan lists the following statewide water trail issues:

- A. Need to address conflicts between non-motorized boaters and waterfront property owners.
- B. Need for public access to waterways.
- C. Need for adequate and consistent information resources including signs, maps, level of difficulty and water level information, and available paddling information.
- D. Need for safety-related information, user education and outreach.
- E. Need for a dedicated funding source for water trail development.
- F. Need for information describing the social and economic benefits of water trails (pp. 10-11).

Oregon Trails 2005-2014 Water Trails Plan (p. 37) lists the top water trail issues in our region:

1

Need for more public access to waterways.

2

Need for a designated funding source for non-motorized watercraft facility development.

3

Need to clearly address the navigability issue and clearly define to users where they can and cannot exit their watercraft.

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