



Origins of the National Trails System

By Daniel M. Ogden, Jr.

On September 16, 1966 Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman issued Trails for America, a report on the "Nationwide Trail Study" which had been undertaken by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in response to President Lyndon B. Johnson's Natural Beauty Message of 1965.

In his 1965 message, President Johnson said, "The forgotten outdoorsmen of today are those who like to walk, hike, ride horseback, or bicycle. For them we must have trails as well as highways. I am requesting, therefore, that the Secretary of the Interior work with his colleagues in the Federal Government and with state and local leaders and recommend to me a cooperative program to encourage a national system of trails."



As Assistant Director for Planning and Research of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, I served as chairman of the four-person Steering Committee which conducted the study. Joining me were Hamilton K. Pyles, Deputy Chief of the Forest Service; Theodore L. Swem, Assistant Director for Cooperative Activities of the National Park Service; and Eldon F. Holmes, Chief of the Recreational Staff, Bureau of Land Management.

Our report recommended legislation to establish a nationwide system of trails composed of four general classes: National Scenic Trails like the Pacific Crest and Appalachian trails; federal park, forest and other recreation trails; state park, forest, and other recreational trails; and metropolitan area trails.

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Remembering George Propstra

By MarCine Miles

GEORGE PROPSTRA, a man whose good will and good deeds surpass his time on earth, went for a hike on the Chinook Trail in September of 2004. In his wheel chair he traversed the bridge leading to Cedar Creek Falls, and helped evaluate handicapped access at this location.

George was accompanied by Don Cannard and MarCine Miles, who enjoyed both the pleasure of his company, and the tutorial he gave, when he understood the vision of the Trail, on selling and managing the future development of the Chinook Trail.

George and Carolyn Propstra did so much good for this community. We praise George and remember him with respect, however it would have been wonderful to have a few more trips on the Chinook Trail with him. He brought really excellent biscotti that he had baked for his hiking partners.



George Propstra evaluates handicap access on the access bridge to Cedar Creek Falls.

President's Message

By Larry Swatosh



Larry Swatosh
CTA President

CTA ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2004

In February of 2004, we held our annual retreat to look specifically at goals for the year and generally at the possibility for improvements in CTA operations. We adopted a more focused approach on our most immediate problems, having taken a broader

look at our goals in 2001, when we drafted a strategic plan for CTA. We discussed a number of things but determined to emphasize two items in particular: an increase in our general membership and attempt to broaden the base of the Board of Directors. We felt we needed to have some new "blood" to hopefully bring new ideas and to try to recruit board members from Oregon and Skamania County, where much of future trail development will be taking place.

We have experienced some success in recruiting new members with a major mail-out in the summer. But the search for board members goes on. We have established contacts with Columbia Land Trust and Southwest Washington Foundation to help get us leads on prospective members but so far we have not fulfilled this goal. We have an immediate problem in that our elected secretary and tool steward (Bob Scullin) has taken a leave of absence for eight to nine months while he constructs a new beach house on the Oregon coast. He will be back, but in the interim, we could use a volunteer to act as secretary pro-tempore. We would welcome offers of assistance or ideas for some help. *[See note at bottom.]*

We hit a small rocky patch last spring when the State Fish & Wildlife informed us we would have to vacate the office space they had provided for us for several years *free of charge*. Fortunately, we were able to find new quarters at the Columbia Springs Environmental Education Center on the old Evergreen Highway. We owe our thanks to the F&W Service for their past generosity and to CSEE for stepping up when we were in need.

Our annual National Trails Day event in June was a success with over 50 folks showing up to work at the Cold Creek Campground. It provided the chance to work on one of the last small segments of the Bells Mountain Trail, to do some campground trail maintenance, and to show off some of the Bells Mountain trail features to people participating with CTA for the first time.

The completion of the Bells Mountain segment of the Chinook Trail represents one of the greater accomplish-

ments of the CTA. It all started like so many projects—as a line on a map. In 1998, Don Cannard worked with Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation to write a grant to IAC to fund this project. CTA had to commit \$150,000 of man-hours of work to satisfy this grant. Ted Klump and Bob Scullin assisted on this. Roger Anderson oversaw the CTA volunteer effort. The Parks Department supervised, administered the funds and conducted the design work and the construction/contract administration.

A major delay was encountered with the adoption of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Moneys we had hoped to see used for the "bricks and mortar" part of the project wound up being spent on studies and documentation necessary for ESA approvals. Some good came out of the delays to the project when the commercial contracting went into a bit of a slump. When the bidding for the two major steel prefabricated bridges was scheduled, commercial contractors were somewhat desperate for work so consequently we received *very* favorable bids. This allowed us to use some of the funding budgeted for these bridges to hire construction crews from the Honor Camp to do a few of the many wood frame bridges.

In the fall of 2003, we decided to explore the idea of submitting the Bells Mountain Trail segment for recognition as a "National Recreational Trail." We formed a subcommittee and decided the application process looked reasonable and the trail certainly seemed worthy of the designation. The committee's work was summarized in our completed application, which was beautifully assembled by Marcine Miles and her son Morgan.

We will once again be establishing our priorities at our annual retreat this winter. I'm sure we will be emphasizing efforts to the east in Skamania County and to the south in Oregon, but in addition we must be looking at a major Clark County element of the trail. The segment that will parallel the Lewis & Clark/Chelatchie Prairie Railroad will need a good deal of coordination and, as yet an unknown amount of construction work.

Note: Since the presentation of this report at the annual meeting, we have elected Walt Hillemann to the Board of Directors and he has generously agreed to assume the roll of secretary pro-tem. Thank you Walt.

Next Issue

Look for the following articles in our next issue: trail work parties, spring and summer; hiking opportunities; and National Trails Day events scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 2005.

2005-06 Clark Trails & Bikeways System Update

By Kelly Puntenev

As Vancouver and Clark County prepare to commemorate the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery expedition in 2005-06, and celebrate the journey's great legacy of nation-building and exploration, our community faces a number of important opportunities and challenges. The Vancouver/Clark Parks and Recreation Department will partner with Clark County's Transportation, Planning and Health Departments to update the Clark County Trails & Bikeways System Plan of 1992. Years of foresighted planning and dedicated vision have paid off with many new trail projects either complete or in progress. These projects are revitalizing the face of the Columbia River Waterfront. They are showcasing the abundant plant and animal life on Salmon and Burnt Bridge Creeks. They are accessing the impressive and long-neglected natural features of the East Fork of the Lewis River. And through the successful Conservation Futures Program they are preserving thousands of acres of green space for future generations.

At the same time, unprecedented growth is pushing our urban and suburban landscape ever farther into Clark County, and health issues related to sedentary lifestyles are being recognized as local and national problems. On the positive side, the number of Clark County residents who are walking and cycling increases every year, thanks in part to our steadily growing, world-class walking and

bicycling network. But the statistics are clear: in Clark County and throughout the United States, our society is facing a steady, profound rise in the rate of obesity and poor health related to physical inactivity, especially among children. This document is intended to be provided as an important tool to guide the community to make decisions today to preserve land and opportunities that will insure that Vancouver and Clark County will be recognized as a place where walking, bicycling and active living are truly a part of everyday life for many, many years to come. The new plan and vision for the future is a fitting legacy to our county's namesake of 200 years ago: Captain William Clark and his partner Meriwether Lewis.

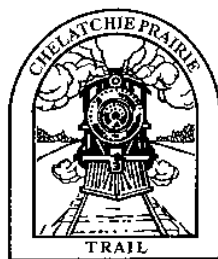
Editor's Note — The proposed 30-mile Chelatchie Prairie Trail cutting diagonally through Clark County will be a part of the 2005-2006 Clark County Trails & Bikeway System. This proposed trail will make it possible to walk, jog or bicycle from Vancouver Lake to Siouxon Park on Yale Lake, connecting Frenchman's Bar, Discovery and Ellen Davis Trails and the proposed Chelatchie Prairie Trail. What an exciting prospect! What can you do as an active citizen? Participate in the planning process by taking an active role in the Chinook Trail Association and other outdoor groups endorsing these activities.

CTA = Rx

By Florence Wager

Have you noticed how walking as a prescription for fitness and good health has been highlighted in the news, as the obesity crisis has reached epidemic proportions in the United States? No surprise: studies show that if trails are available, people will use them. Think of the road between the Quay and Wintler Park along Vancouver's waterfront. Few people walked there and then the Renaissance Trail was built and now even on a rainy day there are joggers, walkers and bicyclers. Remember?

CTA can be proud to be providing opportunities for people to get healthy and to stay healthy, as we build our vision of a 300-mile trail encircling the Columbia River



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Mission Statement

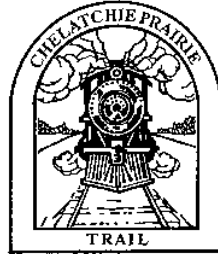
The Chinook Trail Association (CTA):

- Advocates development of a Columbia River bi-state loop trail;
- Cooperates with appropriate local, state and federal agencies to develop this recreational resource;
- Monitors and participates in route selection, design standards, trail development and maintenance in an ongoing spirit of conservation to preserve the natural beauty of the Gorge;
- Provides information and education to develop public support.

Musings About The Chelatchie Prairie Railroad

By Don Cannard

I believe I have always had a romance with what, when I was a boy growing up near the rail line, was called the “Yacolt Railroad.” My family lived a short distance from the rail line, west of old Highway 99 along Cold Creek. On Sunday morning, following the family attending Mass in town, my brother and I would race home to change out of our Sunday best to race to a knoll overlooking the railroad tracks in hope of meeting the 11:00 train from Vancouver puffing its way to Yacolt to bring back lumber from mills along the way. We would wave to the engineer in hopes of his pulling the cord and blowing the steam whistle of the engine. The trains at that time were steam driven. The steam came from the burning of coal. What an accomplishment when we heard the shrill whistle. Not unlike children today who stand by the highway and motion to truck drivers in hopes of getting a horn honked. It was about that time I was into building underground forts. Heat was provided by an improvised stove made out of coffee cans and fired up with coal found along the railroad tracks. Later, during World War II, my mother took a job as a switchboard operator at the nearby JD Ross Complex. She worked graveyard and would walk the tracks to be let in by the guard. Our dog Duke would accompany her and return in the morning to pick her up.



From the railroad’s early days when passenger cars were hooked onto freight trains to when my mom walked to work, the tracks provided an alternative form of transportation. It was along the tracks on Cold Creek that

I was intrigued with the remnant gold sluices I discovered as well as learning about a water ram which drove water up to a farmer’s field. In the days of the Depression before the war there were unemployed who rode the rails to find work. We figured we were a marked family because on several occasions men would drop by to see if we had any work. Mom always had a project, a meal, and a wash basin and washing machine to help the men tidy up a bit. I was

always pleased to have these visitors as they were interesting to listen to and of course they would split the wood for the cook stove saving me the trouble. So it seems natural to promote the building of a trail along the tracks. Upon retiring, I had several enjoyable days walking the line from 78th Street to Chelatchie Prairie with Ellen Davis. That lady did love to walk. We would enjoy a bowl of soup after the walk and have enjoyable conversations. We felt our county had made a wise purchase to preserve the possibility of a trail cutting diagonally across our county for over 30 miles. What an asset! Now we can begin to build it.

CTA = Rx cont'd from previous page

Gorge by way of the foothills of the Cascades east of Vancouver utilizing the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad.

One section of the proposed trail was impacted recently when a contract was signed between Clark County and the Columbia Basin Railroad to operate the county’s rail line. The new line (formerly known as Lewis and Clark and earlier as the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad) will be known as the Portland-Vancouver Junction Railroad, and while presently the emphasis is to beef up commercial business, a dinner trail and an end-of-the-line business such as a winery, are part of future planning.

One project to keep our eyes on is a challenging rail with trail adjacent to the region’s busiest rail corridor which is undergoing feasibility studies. This piece of trail is the Point Wilson segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail, a rim-top trail encircling the Bay Area. The design and success of this project will be useful in the future as CTA looks to completing the section of trail adjacent to the county’s railroad between Moulton Falls and Vancouver Lake—the Chelatchie Prairie Trail—in cooperation with Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation. Closer to home for a rail and trail facility we have only to look across the river to the Spring-water Trail in Multnomah County.

This is a sixteen-mile abandoned rail line and a three-mile rail-trail. The three-mile rail with a trail running alongside a working railroad shows that the two can successfully exist side by side and provide the community with the services both are intended to provide. This continuous twenty-mile trail has been in successful operation for several years.

Florence Wager is a former board member of the Chinook Trail Association and is currently on the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Commission. She is co-chair to a Healthier Clark County which received a federal grant of several millions to combat obesity and diabetes.

Annual Meeting Highlights



Florence Wager, Dan Ogden, and Kelly Puntney model the new Chelatchie Prairie Trail hats.



Vocalist Mona Warner on guitar and Ryc Williamson on bass provided entertainment.



Margaret Zuk with Service Award presented to her at the meeting.



Fred Rogers, author Molly Gloss, and Susan Saul view an item of interest.

Origins of the NTS continued from front page

The National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543), was signed by President Johnson on October 2, 1968. It established three types of trails: First were the National Scenic Trails of which two, the Appalachian and Pacific Crest were authorized. Several others were to be studied for later inclusion and have since been authorized. Second were the National Recreation Trails, which by 1986 included 501 federal, 9 state, 140 local, and 28 private trails. And third were the connecting and side trails. In Public Law 95-625 November 10, 1978, Congress added a fourth category: National Historic Trails.

The Chinook Trail certainly should qualify for National Recreation Trail status. It provides excellent hiking opportunities near a major metropolitan area and clearly meets the criteria for National Recreation Trail designation.

The City of Vancouver and Clark County also deserve special commendation for their diligent development of metropolitan area trails like the Discovery Trail which have provided an enormous amount of low-cost outdoor recreation near our homes.

Editor's Note — CTA is waiting for final word on the NRT designation for the recently completed 30-mile trail segment from Lucia Falls to Bluff Mountain.

Meet Your CTA Secretary: Walt Hillemann

Walt Hillemann grew up in Southern California in a family that liked to camp and hike the Sierra Nevada which provided the environment for each summer vacation and sometimes winter vacations as well.

“From Yosemite to Mount Whitney, there were more trails and campgrounds than I could ever exhaust. With the Starr Guide as our bible, my father and I hiked the John Muir Trail from Tuolumne Meadows to Mt. Whitney over several years.

“Little Lakes Valley along Rock Creek near Bishop provided great summer camping and wonderful winter Nordic skiing. Luckily, I am married to an outdoors person, so our camping/hiking has continued. At Onion Valley (near Independence, California), I carried one tot in front and one in back as we

hiked the trails there. Soon our three daughters were hiking on their own and now, we expect that they will make hikers out of their kids. Around 1997, a notice in the paper drew my attention to the Dark Divide and the WTA campout there. I learned of the WTA mission, met Fred Rogers and learned about the Chinook Trail Association. My youngest daughter joined me on a WTA work party near Randle a few years ago. Since then, I have enjoyed working on trails, especially with Greg Ball. I hope to have more time for this now and look forward to being helpful to the CTA.”

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Simple Ways You Can Help CTA Right from Your Computer

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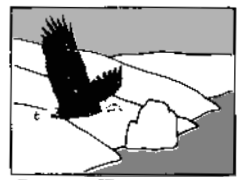
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