



# Why The Long Distance Trail?

By Paul Cannard

Our trail continues its eastward climb beyond Silver Star and Bluff Mountain peaks. The trail is fast approaching 50 miles in length on the way to becoming a premier long distance trekking trail in the region. One can begin to reflect on the benefits which might derive from this spectacular 300 mile trans-gorge route.

Recently, the Clark-Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department hosted a successful "Trails Symposium" attended by hundreds of activists. The goal was to establish a strategy for the county's urban trail system for the next 30 years and beyond. As the development of the Discovery, Waterfront and other trails have demonstrated, the community has eagerly embraced the concept of a regional trail system. Political, environmental and business groups have joined together to promote a network of interconnected trails to promote health, improve livability and even help ease congestion. It is now possible to enjoy these "ribbons of urbanity" for periods of 15 minutes or for several hours at a time. It is a great time to be a trails advocate in our area!

But what of the long distance trail experience? What can one gain from spending a day or a week or longer discovering new landscapes and enjoying the secrets of the wilderness? It is apparent from the success of the nation's great long distance trails, such as the Appalachian, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Crest trails, that there is an ever growing segment of our population that is responding to the experience of

"hitting the trail" for extended periods of time. For some, they are trekking the trail for the same reason Sir George Leigh Mallory climbed a mountain—"because it is there." Still others may have in mind why we are celebrating the Lewis and Clark Bi-

Centennial in 2005 and 2006. A sense of discovery and adventure moves these hikers. We remember that the Voyage of Discovery was primarily the first great long distance trek in our country's history.

However, it can be said there is something more that can occur during the longer hiking experience. While we are all social beings with an overriding need to connect with others through personal interactions, both one on one and institutionally, there are times when the solitude which one experiences on a back pack can recharge the mind and lift the soul in special ways. There is the

sweet feeling of accomplishment as you complete a strenuous effort to top a ridge or conquer a pass. The simple beauty of a discovered leaf or distinctive flower in full bloom, the stunning scene of a great vista encountered, or the magnificence of a deep forested glen with large and small creatures, are all free for the enjoyment of the long distance hiker. While not all of us are able or may have interest in undertaking these long hauls through nature, most of us just believe that their very existence brings joy to the human spirit. Our work is a valued effort and will pay dividends for generations to come.



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# President's Message

By Larry Swatosh



Larry Swatosh  
CTA President

ANNUAL REPORT 2005—The year started traditionally with a winter strategic planning retreat. The thing that was different was that we adopted a much simpler approach to our planning process. Rather than having our Strategic Plan being a large document, we tried to distill things down to a single page outlining our mission statement and identifying our long and short term goals. A more important change was the development of **action sheets**—a single page that assigns responsibilities and sets deadlines. I think this process has met with some mixed success. The immediate problems identified as requiring action were membership development, board development and office staffing. Volun-

teers have been found to help out in the office, but the biggest office problem was the condition of our computer system. Most of the solutions to this situation have been identified but not all of them are currently implemented.

Certainly a major feat for the year was the public recognition event put on for the National Recreation Trail designation for the expanded Bells Mountain Trail. The event was well attended and gained us a good deal of publicity. It also marked possibly our two biggest donations ever—a \$2,000 cash donation from the Bank of Clark County and a \$1,600 in-kind donation of advertising from *The Columbian* newspaper. We also received numerous smaller donations for decorations, gifts and food. Two other positive outcomes from this event were a great editorial on the Chinook Trail Association in *The Columbian* by Greg Herrington and an outstanding article on the trail itself in *The Oregonian* by Terry Richard.

Our observance of National Trails Day in June was

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## Thank You All . . .

The beginning of a new year seems to be an appropriate time to thank some of the many individuals, firms, foundations and organizations who have added to the success of the Chinook Trail Association. REI was one of the first firms to step up with a sizable grant to assist us in forming the organization. They further helped by providing a list of patrons for us to use for the first mailing to solicit memberships.

Three foundations have been noteworthy of support. SWIFT provided funds on several occasions which assisted in the construction of the first mile of trail built on Kloochman Butte connecting DNR and USFS lands in the Silver Star area, as well as assisting in the purchase of tools and supplies for our youth work programs. The Southwest Wash-

ington Foundation has assisted us with funds to equip our youth work corps as well as general equipment purchases. The foundation was a significant contributor of funds to purchase materials to build the barrier-free Hadley Trail at Beacon Rock State Park and the 1,000-foot barrier-free Cedar Creek Falls Trail at DNR Cold Creek Campground. Major support was offered by the Meyer Memorial Trust assisting with the purchase of most of our power equipment and hand tools. In addition, the trust provided the major portion of funds for the Ellen Davis Trail. SEH America constructed the bridge crossing Burnt Bridge Creek on the Ellen Davis Trail.

Palena and Associates assisted in the very beginning with our membership expansion program. Glen Lamb, Nancy Russell and the

Bill and Katheryn Byrd Foundation made sizable contributions to CTA. Bobbie Nelson of Vista Type continues to provide valuable advice about our newsletter and other publications. Phil Durkee shows up at many of our functions taking pictures to document the events for our picture library and publications. Clark and Skamania counties, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service, the Interagency for Outdoor Recreation, Washington State Parks, and the City of Vancouver have been integral components of the many partnerships CTA has formed over the years.

Our thanks to these and the many other individuals who financially and with contributions of time have made the Chinook Trail Association a viable trail advocate organization in our region.

# Annual Meeting Recap



President Larry Swatosh reviews the year 2005.



Clark County Commissioner Steve Stuart discusses trails with Roger Anderson.



Terry Richard is recognized for walking the newly designated 30-mile Chinook Trail and writing an outstanding article.



Marcine Miles receives Founders Award given for activities achieving the designation of National Recreation Trail for the completed 30-mile Chinook Trail in Clark-Skamania counties.



Rex Derr and wife Anne Derr pose with Don Cannard.



Rex Derr, Director of Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, receives photo of Hardy Falls.

# A Brief History of the Chinook Trail Association

By Margaret Zuke

The Chinook Trail Association was formed in 1988 and received 501c3 status in 1989. The goal of CTA is to see the three-hundred-mile Chinook Trail planned and constructed. The founders envisioned the Chinook Trail would loop the Columbia River Gorge, at rim top wherever possible.

Chinook Trail representatives were invited by the Forest Service to Wind River in 1990 to chart the proposed trail. In attendance were USFS personnel from the Wind River, Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood and Columbia districts as well as the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the Gifford Pinchot and the Region Six office. At the end of the day the proposed Chinook trail was a line on the map. The



proposed trail is in the Oregon State Trails Plan for the Columbia River Gorge and in Washington State's Trails Plan.

The CTA recently completed the seven-mile Bells Mountain Trail. This trail project was funded by an IAC grant in partnership with Clark County. A portion of the local match was \$150,000 of CTA volunteer effort. The completed 30-mile trail system connecting Lucia Falls County Park with Bluff Mountain by way of Silver Star Mountain received the coveted National Recreation Trail status in 2005.

CTA is the steward for the backcountry trails at Beacon Rock State Park. This included stabilizing a 200-foot landslide area, the construction of six bridges, replacing inadequate culverts, and rerouting and building over two miles of trail along Hardy Creek. CTA laid out, conducted assessment work, and constructed Bells Mountain, Ed's and Kloochman Butte trails. CTA received a "Certificate of Appreciation" from the Chief of the Forest Service for its work constructing and maintaining these trails on Forest Service lands. CTA also laid out and constructed two 1,000-foot barrier-free trails on WDNR and Beacon Rock State Park lands.

Since our inception, CTA has made a special effort

to work with youth in our trail building efforts. We have partnered with selected Boy Scout troops and Eagle Scout candidates. Educational Service District 112 provided nine Summer Youth Employment teams funded through the Private Industry Council of Southwest Washington. The Northwest Service Academy partnered with CTA by providing twelve teams working for a week and camping with CTA members on fieldwork.

CTA was successful in receiving two National Recreation Trail Restoration grant awards through IAC for a portion of this work and future trail work in Beacon Rock State Park. CTA has received grants supporting our work from the Meyer Memorial Trust, SWIFT, the Southwest Washington Community Foundation, SEH America, WP Fuller and the Lower Columbia River Estuary Restoration Group. CTA is currently a major partner with USFS and WDNR in the project to eliminate vehicular traffic on Silver Star.

The Chinook Trail Association is governed by a volunteer board, produces a newsletter, sponsors National Trails Day events, conducts celebratory events upon completion of trail building projects and conducts numerous trail building and maintenance work parties. CTA maintains those trails the association has constructed.

## *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.**

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# Cherry Orchard Trail Work Party

Chinook Trail Association and the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge are joining forces for a Saturday, February 11th work party. This will be the first one of the year for us and should be a whopper. We will primarily be cutting vegetation intruding into the pathway. All participants are asked to bring their favorite pruners or loppers. There may be some tread work needed and CTA will provide those tools if erosion control is needed.

In addition to the tools, each participant is asked to wear appropriate clothing and boots, and bring work gloves, lunch and drinking water. Poison oak is known to be in the area so wear a long sleeved shirt or jacket. CTA will provide trail treats. We go rain or shine. The trail is moderate in difficulty.

Portland folks will meet at the Park and Ride at N.E. 9th and N.E. Pacific. Cars will depart at 8:30 a.m. and plan to arrive at the trailhead east of Lyle at 10:00 a.m. Clark County folk will meet in the parking lot at the Pendleton Woolen Mills in Washougal. Cars will

depart at 8:30 a.m. and will arrive at the trailhead at 10:00 a.m. The trailhead is located east past Lyle on the Lewis and Clark State Hwy. 14. Travel approximately one-fourth mile after you go through the double tunnels on Hwy. 14 and watch for a wide spot in the road on the north side of the highway. We will depart from the trailhead between 2:00 and 2:30. If you are into overnight trips you might consider making reservations at the Lyle Hotel and spending the night—good food and reasonable rates. Carpooling will take place at the meeting locations. A contribution to defray costs for the drivers would be appreciated.

The Chinook Trail Association is involved in this out of appreciation for the support that the Friends of the Gorge (FOG) and Nancy Russell have provided to us. Nancy and her husband, Bruce, purchased this property to protect it from development.

Leaders for this event are: Kathy Robart, FOG, 1-503-241-3762 extension 106, and Roger Anderson, CTA, 1-360-254-2371. Call for additional information.

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## President's Message

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far less of a traditional “work” party and more of a celebration. This event started with a couple hours of minor trail maintenance. Then following lunch and introductions of guests we rededicated Little Beacon Rock and Hadley trails that were totally rebuilt to outdoor disabled standards. Two special guests were Rex Derr, Washington State Parks Director, and Commissioner McKee from Skamania County. A highlight of the day was a demonstration of the Chinook Trail Association's “Boulder Buster” that we have been using the past few years to assist in trail construction.

In preparing an outline for this annual report I reread what I presented to you in 2004. I think our accomplishments for this past

year were excellent. What initially struck me was that our shortcomings for the year seemed to be the *same old* woes from 2004 and, I suspect, even further back. Two refrains keep repeating—slow progress in membership development and slow recovery in replacing members on our board of directors. As I thought about this for a while, I also remembered and reread something I had seen in a remembrance article for Louise Marshall who passed away this August. Ms. Marshall was the founder of the Washington Trails

Association and she was quoted from recent remarks regarding hikers. She said, “We must get organized. Most hikers are not joiners, but we need to be united behind a movement to be heard.”

I think a lot of our recurring problems are encapsulated in that phrase—*most hikers are not joiners*. I'm sure what we can take from this is that we must work harder in reaching out for new members and new board members to carry our work forward.

## Opportunities for Volunteers

Want to assist the Chinook Trail Association? Here are some areas where help would be appreciated. Trails and hike coordinator, tool steward, working in the office, helping with mailings, newsletter, membership, and writing grants. As you can see, we have a job for every talent.

# Trails Symposium Summary

One of the significant items from the Trails Symposium held on November 4 at Vancouver's Hilton Hotel was the fact that 400 people gathered for a work session after dinner on a Friday evening. Most impressive!

The following people were recognized as our Community Trail Blazers for their service to our community: Dan and Val Ogden, Ray Hickey, Don and Sue Cannard, Frank Funk, Judie Stanton and the

team Bill Dygert and George Simpson.

All of the Clark County commissioners were in attendance as were several City Council members. This portrayed the importance that trails have in the minds of these folks.

Participants sat at tables on which maps and other materials were presented including the recommendations of the ongoing trails advisory committee. From

there, participants worked in small groups and recorded their ideas about where trails should be in our county.

It was a very productive session and we went home feeling that direction was given to the agencies involved. Of particular interest was the amount of time spent discussing the value of the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad right of way. This is going to be a spectacular 30-mile trail and rail running diagonally across the county.

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## CTA Work Parties and Coming Events

**Feb. 11, 2006 . . . Saturday** **Cherry Orchard Trail Work Party**  
Come out and stretch a leg after winter.  
(See article on page 5 of this newsletter.)

**June 3, 2006 . . . Saturday** **National Trails Day**  
Always a fun event. Trail treats and remembrance. Silver Star Mountain area.  
Location may move if snow level is too high.

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