



*The* HISTORIC COLUMBIA RIVER HIGHWAY

STATE TRAIL PLAN - WYETH TO HOOD RIVER

PREPARED FOR:

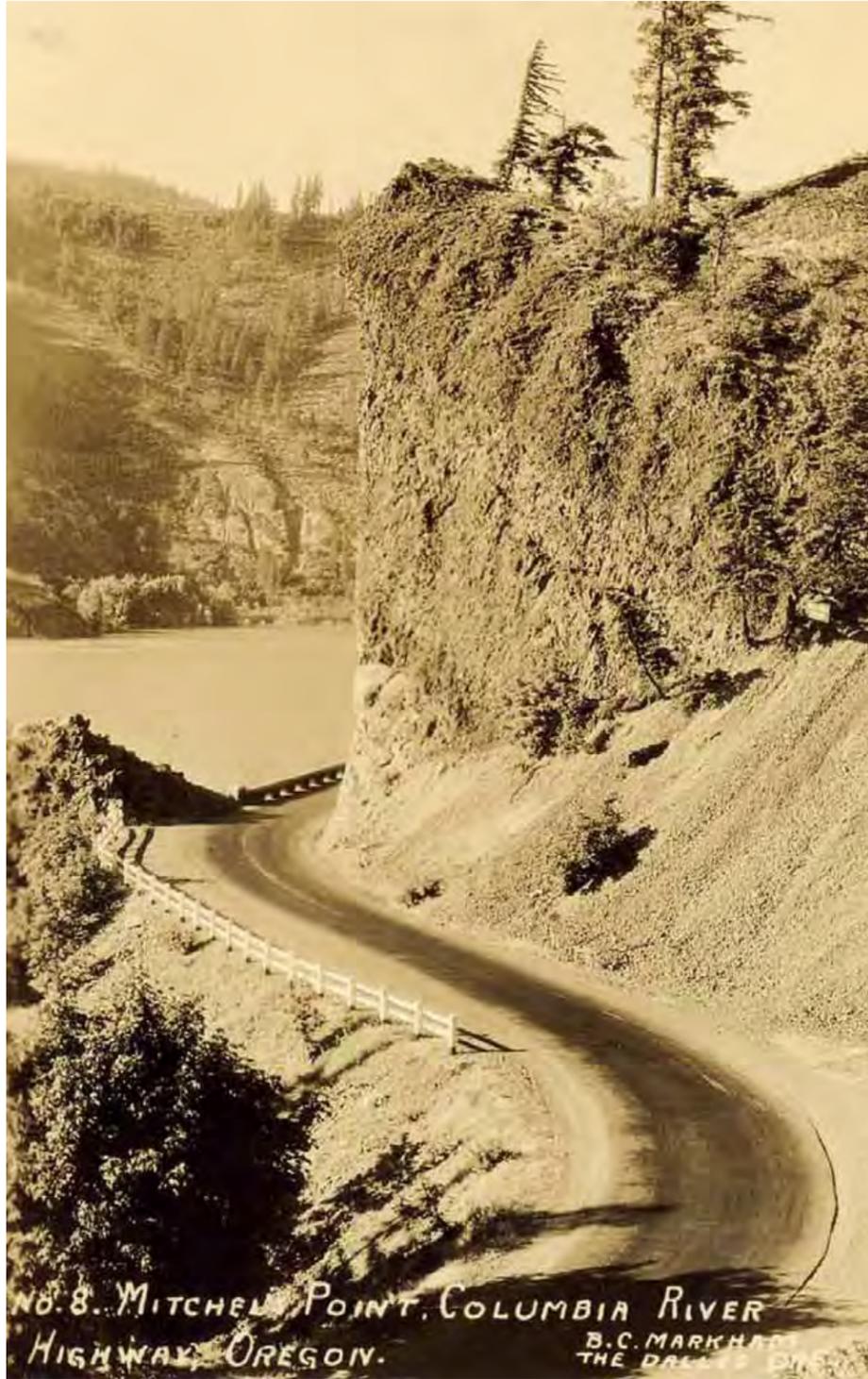
OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PREPARED BY:

QUATREFOIL, INC.  
PORTLAND, OREGON

WINTER 2010

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



## IN COORDINATION WITH:

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT

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GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

HOOD RIVER COUNTY

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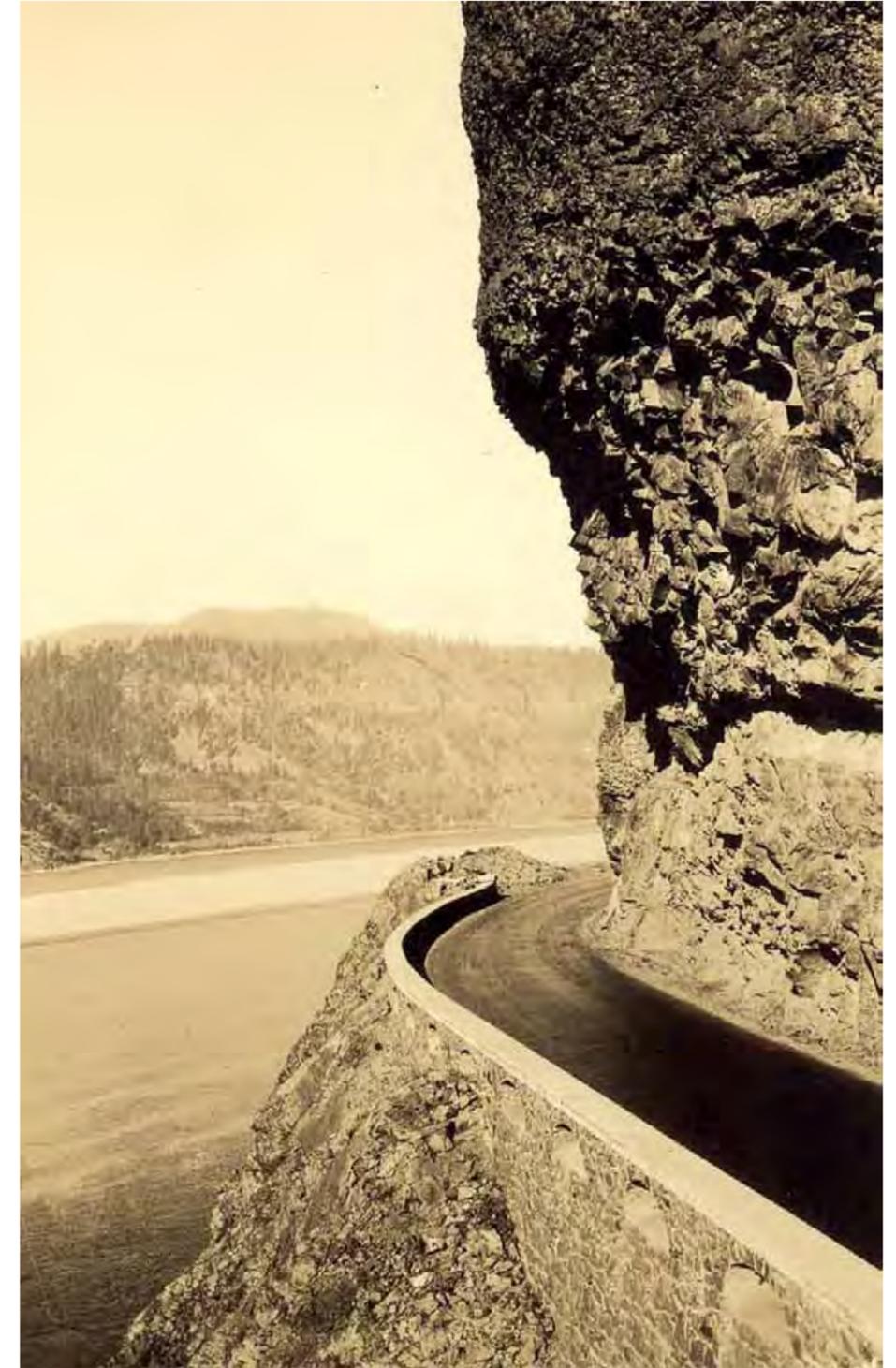
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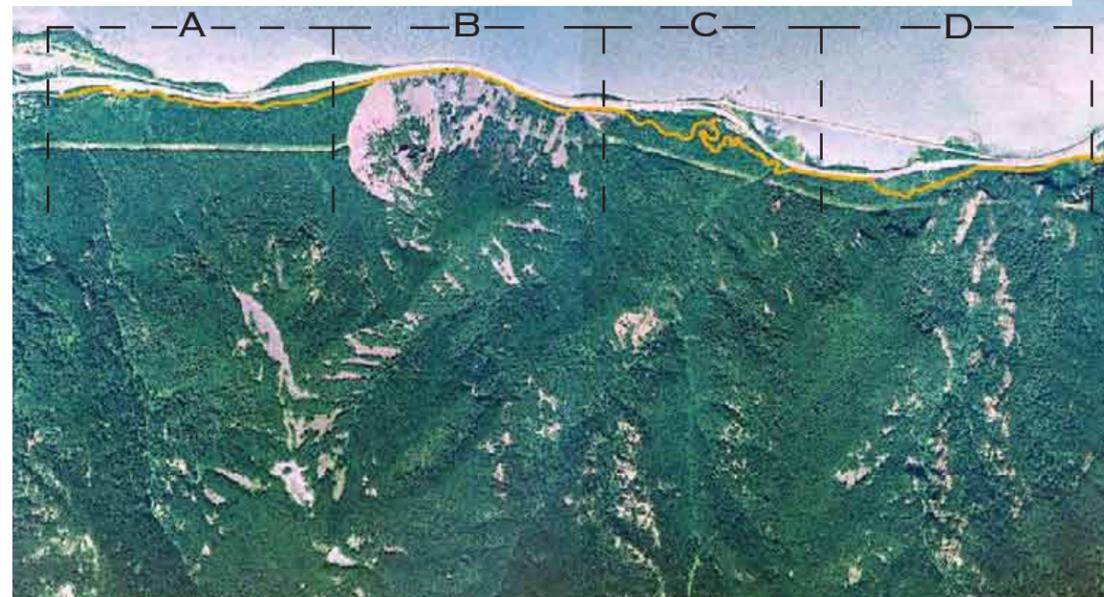
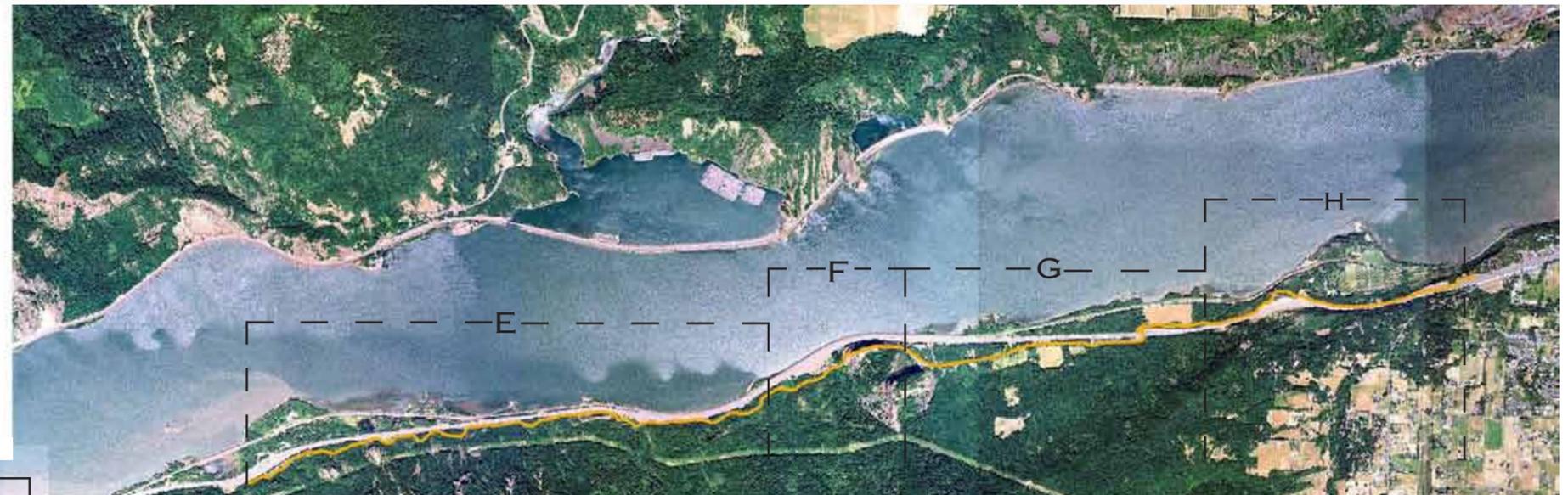


**THE HISTORIC COLUMBIA RIVER**

**HIGHWAY** was constructed between 1913 and 1922 as America’s first scenic highway. It served thousands of travelers and took full advantage of the Columbia River Gorge’s natural beauty, to become known as the “King of Roads”. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the initial construction of a water level route that would become Interstate 84 obliterated many sections of the highway, leaving what remained as abandoned and disconnected highway segments.



Historic Photo at west side of Mitchell Point.



*“Tourists want three things; a good road to drive on, something worthwhile to see, and something worthwhile to eat.... We cash in, year after year, on our crop on scenic beauty, without depleting it in any way.”*

Samuel Hill



Lindsey Inn - An example of the Roadhouses that once lined the Historic Highway.

The Historic Columbia River Highway is one of the most significant historic roads in the nation. The design of the road solved major engineering challenges and was an aesthetic triumph of its time. One of its most important consequences was its influence on the National Parks Service’s scenic parkways which were beginning to be developed across the country. Additionally, the Highway is noted for its attention to design details and construction techniques, including rustic guard walls, guard stones, bridges, and retaining walls, resulting in an iconic style.

The overall design of the Historic Columbia River Highway was as important as the details of its construction. This includes the alignment of the road and its relationship to the geology and geomorphology of the Gorge. The Highway was laid out to be interesting to drive, with graceful curves and changes in grade. It unrolled before the driver as a dynamic sequence of views, vistas, and scenic “events” such as waysides, fountains, and waterfalls.

**TRAIL SECTIONS:**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| A - WYETH TO SHELLROCK MT.        | F - MITCHELL CK. TO MITCHELL PT. TUNNEL      |
| B - SHELLROCK MT. CROSSING        |  |
| C - SHELLROCK MT. TO LINDSEY CK.  | G - MITCHELL PT. EAST TO RUTHTON PT.         |
| D - LINDSEY CK. TO STARVATION CK. | H - RUTHTON PT. TO RUTHTON PARK, HOOD RIVER. |
| E - VIENTO TO MITCHELL CREEK      |  |





Mitchell Point gas station and motel around 1950, now gone.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 directed the State of Oregon to connect these abandoned highway sections as a pedestrian and bike trail. Then, in 1987, the Oregon Legislature directed the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) “to preserve and enhance existing portions of the Historic Highway and plan for reconnection of this scenic route as a State Trail”. Since the 1987 legislation, ODOT has been charged with working with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Travel Oregon to maintain, enhance and restore the Historic Columbia River Highway. These efforts are ongoing. Today, the remaining segments of the Historic Columbia River Highway receive over 2 million visitors per

year. Its attractions are icons of the Pacific Northwest (Vista House, Multnomah Falls, Rowena Crest). The Highway’s restored drivable portions maintain the 1920’s appearance. However, numerous sections of the old Highway between Wyeth and Hood River remain disconnected.

Much work has been accomplished since 1987 and 62 of the original 73 miles of the HCRH are now open to travel either by motor vehicle (Historic Highway or connecting county roads) or by foot and bicycle (State Trail). As of 2010, 10.5 miles of State Trail have been completed and 1.65 miles are funded and in final design, linking a number of isolated segments

of the HCRH. An additional eleven miles await reconnection. The Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee and the Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway have jointly spearheaded an effort to restore and reconnect the Highway and advocate for the completion of the State Trail by 2016, the 100th anniversary of Lancaster's masterpiece.

The Milepost 2016 Reconnection Projects identified specific improvements that will be required to allow total reconnection of the Historic Highway, creating a continuous picturesque trail through the Gorge. The Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail Plan further refines this work by picking up where this plan

left off. This State Trail Plan divides the remaining 11 miles into eight distinct segments (this planning effort does not include Milepost Reconnection Projects 1 and 1a). The eight project segments are concentrated between Interstate 84’s Wyeth interchange (I-84 / Exit 51) and the West Hood River interchange (I-84 / Exit 62), all within Hood River County. The projects are described from west to east. Each segment includes a brief project description, site photos, illustrated proposed trail alignment with primary construction elements, and a project cost estimate. Cost estimates are based on preliminary conceptual designs and not final engineering documents. These estimates assume construction in 2014, and include a substantial contingency.

Once complete the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail will provide Oregonians and visitors from around the world access to many of Oregon’s underdeveloped State Parks, open up extraordinary views to undiscovered waterfalls and the majestic Columbia River, and allow visitors to discover first hand the fascinating history of the Gorge and its famed Columbia River Highway.

*The Interstate came through and they blew the old tunnel in,  
And Highway 30 disappeared as though it had never been.*

*But back in the brush that covers the land a stone foundation lies,  
Where once stood the roadhouse joint, now gone from mortal eyes.  
And Mitchell Point is a rest stop now, just a turn-out on the road,  
And only a few remember how the roadhouse lights once glowed.*

Excerpt from “The Roadhouse Joint at Mitchell Point”  
A song written by Michael Tenney - 2002



Historic photo of Mitchell Point Roadhouse.



Historic Milepost at Ruthton Point.



Mitchell Point today.

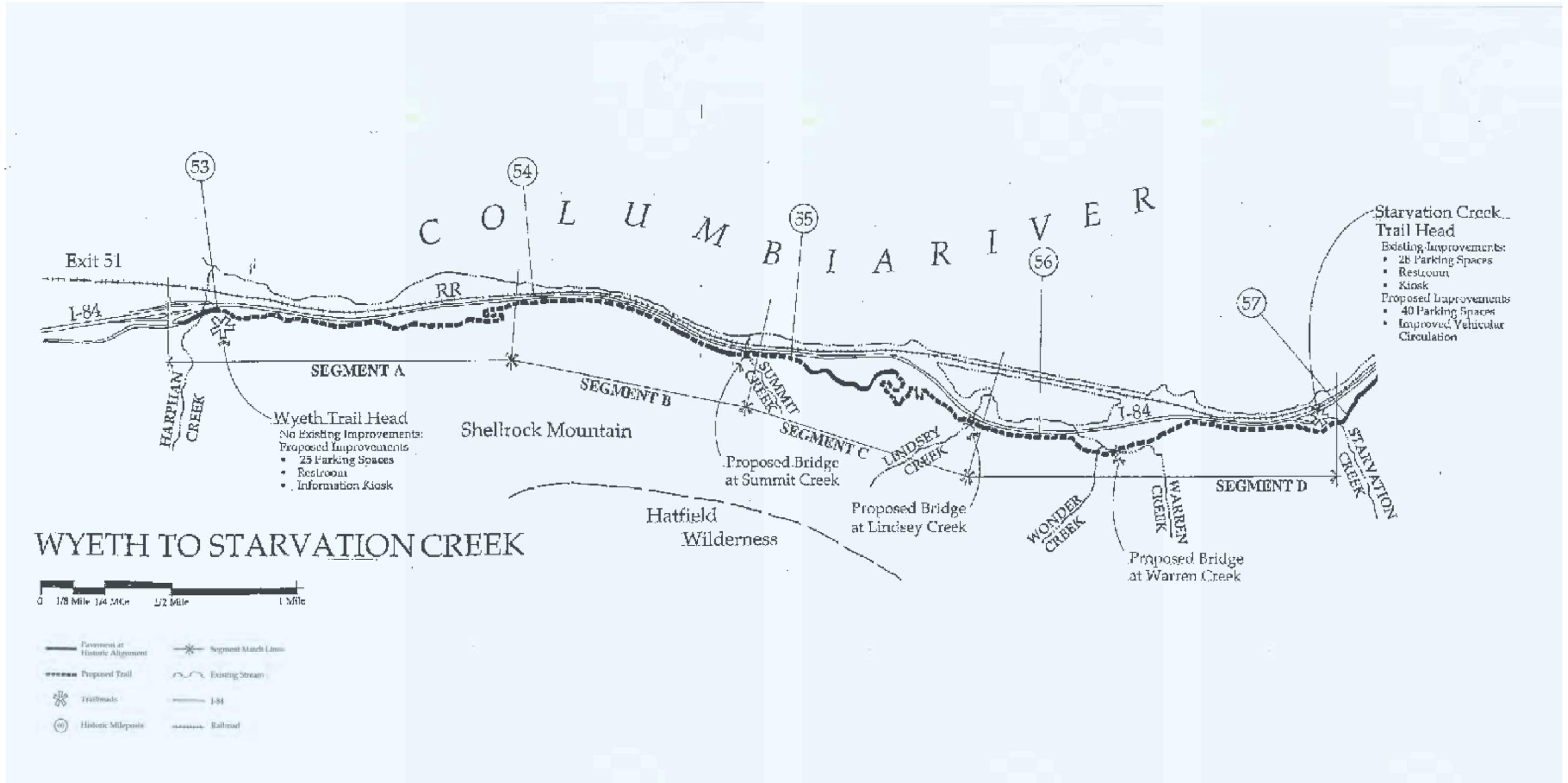


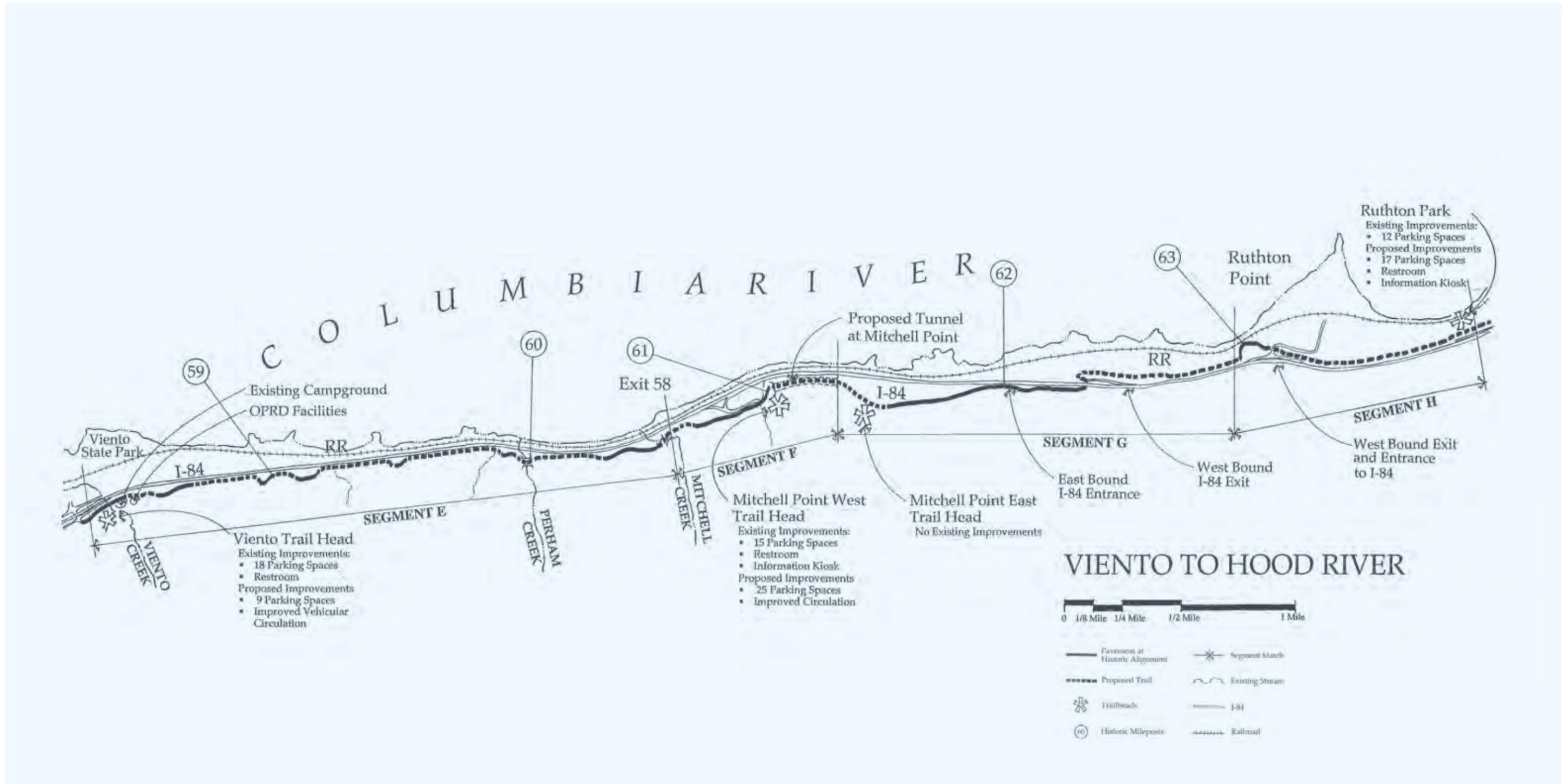
View from Ruthton Point.



Cyclist on the Highway.





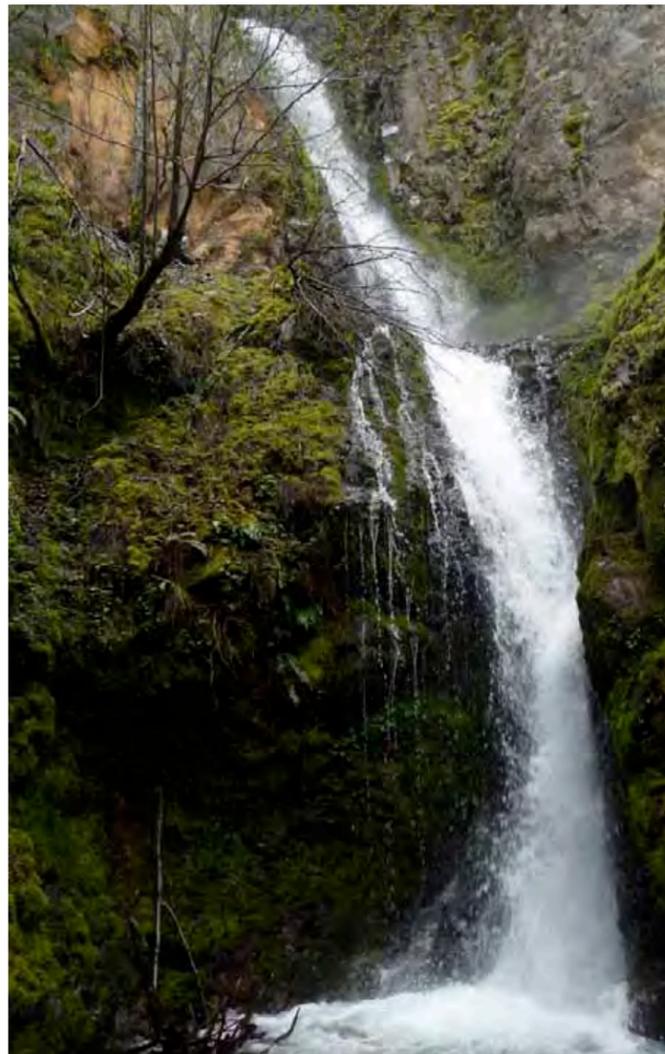




**PROJECT SCOPE:**

The Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail Plan was a joint planning effort undertaken by the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area US Forest Service and Hood River County to provide a clear plan for the trail reconnection through the Gorge. This plan assists the partnering agencies in the following:

- **Determines the appropriate size and location of auxiliary facility development such as parking lots, overnight camping, and restrooms**
- **Jumpstarts the environmental permitting and engineering process**
- **Assesses the consistency of the proposals with requirements of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Act**
- **Develops funding and partnering opportunities**
- **Updates and refines the cost estimates for trail and facility development**
- **Provides a detailed action plan listing project priorities, agency responsibilities, and associated resource levels, phasing and partnering opportunities**



Hole-in-the-Wall Falls.

above: Mitchell Point Tunnel.



Looking east from Mitchell Point.

**DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:**

The design philosophies listed below were used to enhance the design of the State Trail and facilities.



**CAPTURE THE BEAUTY**

The scenic appeal of the Gorge has always been at the forefront of design of the Columbia River Highway. As Samuel Lancaster told the Oregon Journal in 1915, “On starting surveys our first business was to find the beauty spots, or those points where the most beautiful things along the line might be seen to best advantage, and, if possible, to locate the road in such a way as to reach them.” Lancaster’s vision is carried out in the proposed alignment of the Historic Highway State Trail.

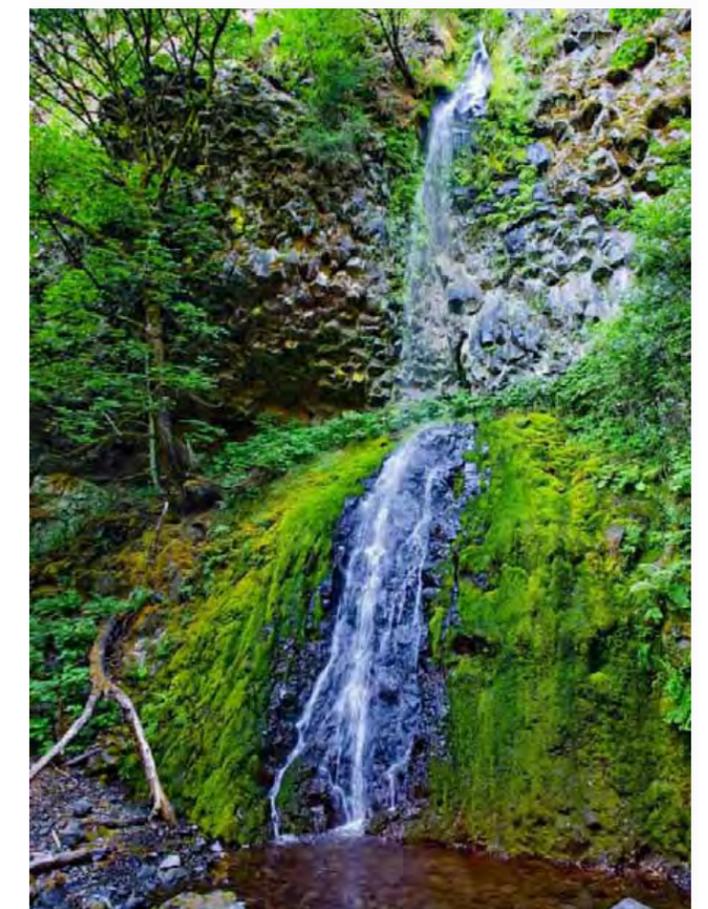
The first order of business in developing the State Trail Plan was to complete an opportunities and constraints analysis. The analysis was the result of extensive field work and a comprehensive GIS database.



View from Ruthton Point.

**RESPECT THE DESIGN OF THE EARLY HIGHWAY DESIGNERS**

Building roads in the Columbia River Gorge has always been a challenge. The Historic Columbia River Highway was an early-twentieth century technical and civic achievement, successfully mixing sensitivity to the natural landscape with ambitious engineering. The route has gained national significance because it represents one of the earliest applications of cliff-face road building as applied to modern highway construction, but the foremost reason for its construction was Samuel Hill and Samuel Lancaster’s vision of building a scenic highway above the Columbia River to rival the great roads in Europe.



Cabin Creek Falls.



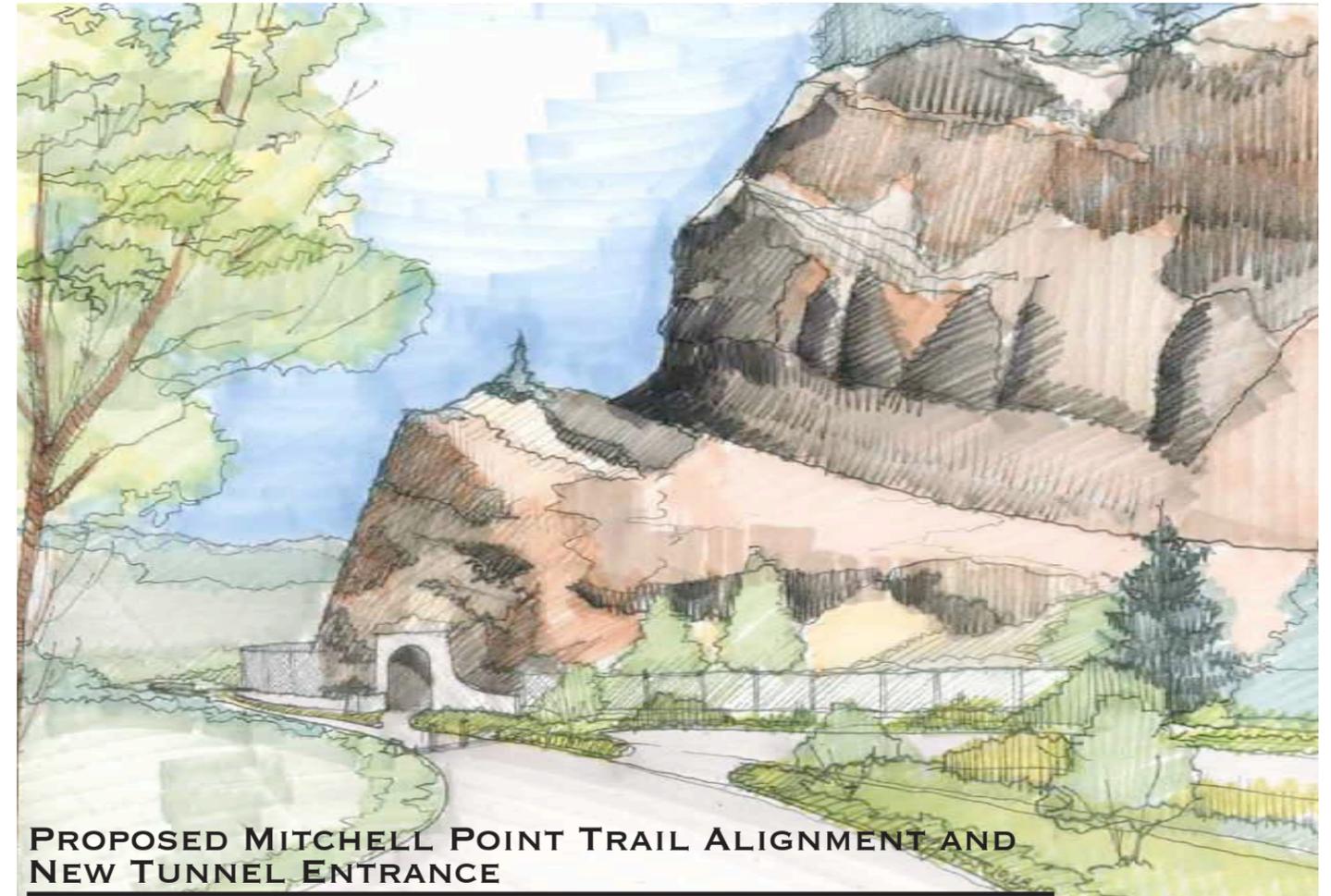
Today, as we plan and design the trail alignments described in the 2016 Reconnection Strategy, it is important to consider how Samuel Lancaster would have approached the similar design challenges. During the development of the 2016 Milepost Reconnection Strategy, the Historic Highway Advisory Committee would often ask rhetorically, “What would Lancaster do?” This simple question provided guidance to the design team, encouraging them to respect and interpret the design philosophy of the early Highway designers. With this in mind, the following guidelines were developed:

- Modifications to sections of original highway should be as minimal as practical. Wherever uncovered pavement is in reasonable condition (acceptable for a modern day cyclist), it shall be protected and used, without an overlay, as part of the State Trail experience
- Where character defining features reflect the historic period, the model year (year of significance) for the Highway is 1924. The historic condition of the Highway in that year has been used as the standard for decision making and design of new elements. New element design should be compatible and harmonious with this period
- Furthermore the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation should be utilized to inform design decisions

**CONSIDER THE USER’S EXPERIENCE**

The Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail is designed as a multi-use trail attracting cyclists, runners, walkers and hikers. User mix includes everyone: slow moving families and hikers to fast and experienced recreational cyclists. Maintaining good sightlines and minimizing tight curves along long downhill grades (that create significant speed differentials) is necessary to reduce user conflicts. A maximum grade of 5% is preferred. The State Trail Plan identifies those instances where a maximum of 8% is required for short distances.

In all instances it was important to place the trail alignment as far as practical from the shoulder of I-84. In several instances, because of the Gorge’s steep topography, there is little room for a new trail. In these instances it was necessary to site the Trail parallel to Interstate 84.



**PROPOSED MITCHELL POINT TRAIL ALIGNMENT AND NEW TUNNEL ENTRANCE**



*Rockfall along I-84.*



*Historic glass slide of Highway near Viento.*



*Highway details.*



*Construction of Highway at Lindsey.*



**HISTORIC COLUMBIA RIVER HIGHWAY STATE TRAIL PLAN TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Approximately 11 miles of Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail remain to be reconnected through the Columbia River Gorge between Wyeth and Hood River. This plan divides the remaining 11 miles into eight distinct segments. The projects are described from west to east. Each segment includes a brief project description, site photos, illustrated proposed



**A - WYETH TO SHELLROCK MOUNTAIN**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: 1.2 MILES

2014 COST: \$3.6 MILLION

- New Trailhead at Wyeth, parking for 25 vehicles, restroom, bike parking, and picnic areas
- Views of Shellrock Mountain
- Connections to USFS Wyeth Campground, and future mountain bike area on the Wyeth Bench
- Connections to Columbia River via the Wyeth Day Use Area

trail alignment with primary construction elements, and a summary of project cost estimates. Cost estimates are based on preliminary conceptual designs and not final engineering documents. These estimates assume construction in 2014, and include a substantial contingency.

The eight project segments are between Interstate 84's Wyeth interchange (I-84 / Milepost 51) and the West Hood River interchange (I-84 / Milepost 62). Along this section, a number of short segments of the abandoned Historic Highway still exist. Wherever possible, the



**B - SHELLROCK MOUNTAIN CROSSING TO SUMMIT CREEK**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: .78 MILES

2014 COST: \$5.4 MILLION

- Views of the Columbia River and Shellrock Mountain
- Interpretation of the history of road building across Shellrock Mountain
- Views of historic wagon road and Historic Highway walls
- Unique habitat and geology associated with the talus slopes
- Relocates rock fall fence away from view of I-84 traffic

Historic Highway is integrated into the State Trail alignment. These old highway segments will not be open to motor vehicles. Upon completion, cyclists and hikers will experience first hand the amazing roadwork accomplished by visionaries of an earlier era.



**C - SUMMIT CREEK TO LINDSEY CREEK**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: 1.2 MILES

2014 COST: \$6.0 MILLION

- Longest existing intact section of Historic Highway
- Great opportunity to interpret the Historic Highway
- Overlooks to original Columbia River Highway
- Trailhead with bike parking, signage, and a rest area
- Proposed bridge over Lindsey Creek



**D - LINDSEY CREEK TO STARVATION CREEK**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: 1.3 MILES

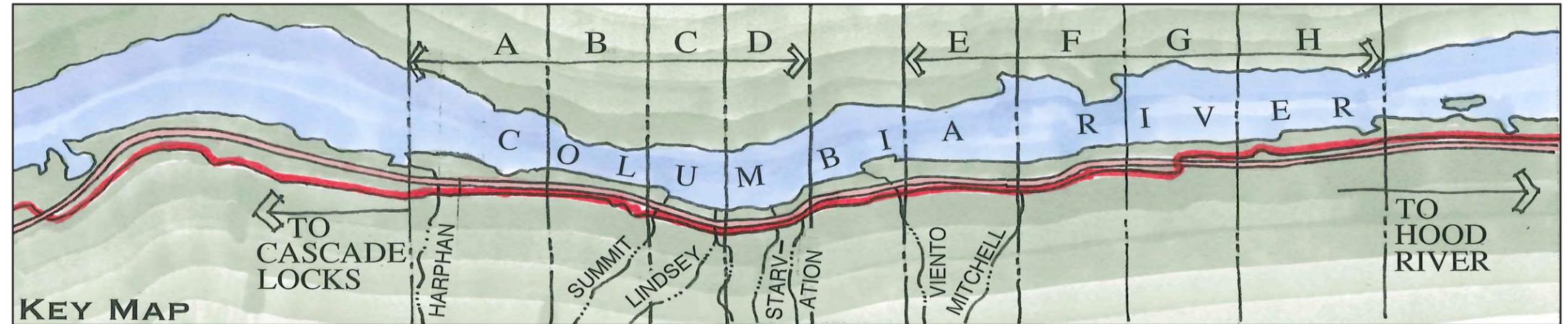
2014 COST: \$5.1 MILLION

- Trail parallels Warren Creek and crosses Warren Creek on a new bridge
- Views and interpretation at Hole-in-the-Wall Falls
- New overlook at Cabin Creek Falls
- Improved parking at Starvation Creek Trailhead
- Mt. Defiance Trail access



**THE SECTIONS ARE:**

- A - Wyeth to Shellrock Mountain
- B - Shellrock Mountain Crossing
- C - Shellrock Mountain to Lindsey Creek
- D - Lindsey Creek to Starvation Creek
- E - Viento to Mitchell Creek
- F - Mitchell Creek to Mitchell Point Tunnel
- G - Mitchell Point East to Ruthton Point
- H - Ruthton Point to Ruthton Park, Hood River



**E - VIENTO TO MITCHELL CREEK  
TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: 2.3 MILES

2014 COST: \$8.4 MILLION

- Improvements to the existing parking lot and trail-head at Viento
- A new bridge at Perham Creek
- Views to the Columbia River
- New water fountain would reflect historic water fountain that was once at Viento

**F - MITCHELL CREEK TO  
MITCHELL POINT TUNNEL**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: .7 MILES

2014 COST: \$14.4 MILLION

- A new 1,200 foot tunnel with windows capturing views to the Columbia River, much like the original tunnel
- Enhanced interpretation of Mitchell Point as outlined in the HCRH Oral History Project
- Improved parking lot for 25 cars

**G - MITCHELL POINT EAST TO  
RUTHTON POINT**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: 1.7 MILES

2014 COST: \$3.2 MILLION

- New viewpoint at Mitchell Point East and restoration of the roadway
- Quarry floor restoration on the east side of Mitchell Point
- Cars and trail users share the Mitchell Point Road, a quaint low traffic road which follows the original alignment of the Historic Highway
- A great section of the original Highway with historic walls and with great views at Ruthton Point

**H - RUTHTON POINT TO  
RUTHTON PARK,  
HOOD RIVER**

**TRAIL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

LENGTH: 1.7 MILES

2014 COST: \$6.0 MILLION

- An improved trailhead for sixteen cars at Ruthton Park in Hood River
- Scenic views of the Columbia River from Ruthton Park
- A new restroom at Ruthton Park
- Improved access to overlooks



**WYETH TO HOOD RIVER**

**• BY 2016**