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New Gorge trail section to be dedicated Sept. 14

New 1.6-mile trail means bicycles can go from Troutdale to Cascade Locks off of I-84

A critical piece of the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail will be dedicated Saturday Sept. 14 and open the way for pedestrians and cyclists to travel from Troutdale to Cascade Locks without using Interstate 84.

The dedication ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. at the McCord Creek Bridge and will be the centerpiece in a celebration marking completion of the of the 1.6-mile segment of the trail between John B. Yeon State Park and Moffett Creek.

The event will include the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and remarks by state and local officials involved in the project.

The trail will be open to the public all day Saturday Sept. 14 for the dedication ceremonies and will be open Sunday Sept. 15 for a biking event but will remain closed for general use until Oct. 31. Through September and October, workers will be paving, finishing walls, landscaping and installing the safety railing along I-84.



The new 76-foot McCord Creek Bridge on the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail

The \$8.1 million project will open the final link in a 34-mile scenic bike ride from Troutdale to Cascade Locks on 26 miles of the Columbia River Historic Highway and 6.5 miles of shared use path on the State Trail. Ultimately, the trail will extend to Hood River although the design and funding sources are still under study.

The new 1.6-mile trail segment includes:

- A new 12-foot wide paved path accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, walkers, hikers and wheelchairs.
- A distinctive new 76-foot long pedestrian bridge over McCord Creek designed to reflect the artistry and craftsmanship of the original highway design.
- A new picnic and rest area with restored views of Beacon Rock.
- A link with U.S. Forest Service Trail 400 connecting to Elowah Falls.

- Another ADA accessible section of the trail.

In 1987, the Legislature set in motion the restoration of the Historic Columbia River Highway, which was completed in 1922 as America's first scenic highway. By the 1950s, many sections of the road had been abandoned or demolished for what eventually became Interstate 84.

ODOT has been working on the project with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the State Historic Preservation Office, the U.S. Forest Service, the Federal Highway Administration, the Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway, Travel Oregon, and the Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee to restore and reconnect the highway.

With the new segment, 62 of the original 73 miles of Historic Highway linking Troutdale with The Dalles are open to motor vehicles or to bikes and pedestrians.

To reach the ceremony:

Driving:

- Parking will be available at I-84 exit 35, the Ainsworth exit, with shuttle busses to the site. The ceremony will be at the McCord Creek Bridge, a walk of a quarter mile from the shuttle drop-off.

Bicycling:

- Parking will be available in downtown Cascade Locks, I-84 exit 44, which is a six-mile bicycle ride to the McCord Creek Bridge or to the Toothrock Trailhead at exit 40, a three-mile bike ride to the McCord Creek Bridge.

The dedication will be part of three days of activities in Cascade Locks marking the centennial of the 1913 start of highway construction. The Cascade Locks festival will include a bike rides, an arts show, a car show, food and a walk over the Bridge of the Gods. For more information, go to www.HighwayRevived.com.

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