

# Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 5, 2014

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Agenda Item: 10a

Information

Topic: 2014 First Day Hikes

Presented by: Chris Havel

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## Background:

Sleeping late, watching football bowl games and finishing the last remnants of holiday food are traditional — although lazy — New Year's Day activities. To combat this "laziness" and get people outdoors, *America's State Parks* began sponsoring First Day Hikes in all 50 park systems across the country. The effort began in 2012, "to promote State Parks and promote starting off the year right with a healthy, outdoor active lifestyle" ([www.americasstateparks.org](http://www.americasstateparks.org)). First Day Hikes are hikes offered on January 1 each year, and originated in Massachusetts over 20 years ago.

Oregon State Parks offered 7 organized First Day Hikes in 2012, the first year of the national program, and in subsequent years have increased the number of hikes offered and visitor participation. In 2013, Twenty-five (25) parks offered hikes with 426 total participants across the state.

Day-use parking fees were waived at all participating state parks as a way to encourage visitors to get out and hike on January 1. Many hikes were interpretive presentations focused on local wildlife, plants, geology, or history, but this year's offerings also included a "bring your own horse" hike/ride and a "zombie apocalypse" outdoor survival hike.

This year, thirty (30) hikes in twenty-eight (28) different parks were offered, and all of them were resoundingly successful. A total of 943 hikers completed 2,155 miles of trail on January 1, 2014, including some horses, "zombie apocalypse" survivors, and more. Each participant also received an OPRD 2014 First Day Hike pin for the second year in a row, which is fast becoming collectible for park visitors.

## Media and Promotion:

The success of OPRD's 2014 First Day Hikes is a direct result of the excellent partnership between CARD, who was responsible for promotion and advertising, and Park Staff, who scheduled, planned and led the hikes.

Publicity for this year's First Day Hikes included:

- Banners and flyers sent to all parks that requested them, as well as 1,000 First Day Hike pins for distribution.
- One statewide and 28 local news releases sent on behalf of all parks hosting First Day Hikes. (Approx.40 news stories).
- Some parks also reached out to their local communities with information.
- Oregonstateparks.org website feature story and two Your Parks Go Guide (2,243 followers) stories.

- Facebook status updates (8) on Oregon State Parks and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department pages to 5,790 followers
- Twitter updates (8) to 14,743 followers
- Photos posted on our Flickr account (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/orstateparks/sets/72157639492114574/>) and America's State Parks account (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/2014firstdayhikes/>)

Results and Looking Ahead:

Through fog, snow, sunshine, and clouds, Oregon State Parks delivered the highest quality visitor experiences to kick off the New Year. Participating Parks included:

<u>Coast</u>	<u>Valleys</u>	<u>Mountain</u>
Beverly Beach	Champoeg	Cottonwood Canyon
Bullards Beach	Devil's Lake	Emigrant Springs
Milo McIver	Elijah Bristow	Iwetemlaykin
Cape Lookout	Historic Columbia River Hwy	Smith Rock
Crissey Field	L.L. "Stub" Stewart	
Fort Stevens	Luckiamute Landing	
Jessie Honeyman	North Santiam	
South Beach	Oswald West	
Sunset Bay	Rooster Rock	
William M. Tugman	Tou Velle	
	Tryon Creek	
	Valley of the Rogue	
	Willamette Mission	

Based on the overwhelming success of First Day Hikes, it is anticipated that the number of parks/hikes offered in 2015 will continue to increase. The new Visitor Experience section of Integrated Park Services will assist in the expansion and First Day Hikes next year and beyond, supporting Park Staff and CARD. First Day Hikes are now looked forward to and have become a new tradition for many park visitors, and will hopefully be an active, fulfilling start to the New Year for years to come.

**Prior Action by Commission:** None

**Action Requested:** None

**Attachments:** First Day Hikes News Release

**Prepared by:** Vera Vollbrecht



*Nature*  
**HISTORY**  
*Discovery*

## News Release

Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2014

### Media Contact:

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### Free guided First Day Hikes return to state parks on Jan. 1

Salem, OR – The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) invites the public to ring in 2014 by participating in one of 30 guided hikes to take place in state parks on New Year’s Day. This is the third year that OPRD has participated in First Day Hikes, a nationwide initiative sponsored by America’s State Parks ([www.americasstateparks.org](http://www.americasstateparks.org)) to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and celebrate the New Year by getting out for a walk in a state park. Last year, more than 420 people participated in First Day Hikes in Oregon.

OPRD will waive the day-use parking fees on Jan. 1 for all visitors to participating state parks that normally require a permit. 28 parks are participating in First Day Hikes this year:

#### *Portland Metro area:*

- L.L. “Stub” Stewart State Park, 9:00-11:00 a.m.—meet at Hilltop Day-use Area picnic shelter
- Milo McIver State Park, 10:00-11:00 a.m.—meet at lower boat ramp of Riverbend Day-use Area
- Tryon Creek State Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 a.m.—meet at Nature Center

#### *Columbia River Gorge:*

- Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail, 10:30 a.m.-noon—meet at Mark O. Hatfield East trailhead
- Rooster Rock State Park, 10:00 a.m.-noon—meet at far east end of parking lot

#### *Willamette Valley/Cascades:*

- Champoeg State Heritage Area, 9:30-10:30 a.m.—meet at visitor center
- Elijah Bristow State Park, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.—bring your horse and meet at equestrian staging area
- Luckiamute Landing State Natural Area, 10:00 a.m.-noon—meet at north trailhead
- North Santiam State Recreation Area, 11:00 a.m.-noon—meet at North Santiam picnic shelter
- Silver Falls State Park, 10:00-11:00 a.m.—meet on porch of South Falls Lodge
- Willamette Mission State Park, 10:00-11:00 a.m. and 12:30-1:30 p.m.—meet at main entrance flagpole loop

#### *Southern Oregon:*

- Tou Velle State Recreation Site, 11:00 a.m.-noon—meet at picnic area A
- Valley of the Rogue State Park, 10:00 a.m.-noon—meet at program area

*Coast:*

- Beverly Beach State Park, 10:00-11:30 a.m.—meet at day-use parking area
- Bullards Beach State Park, 10:00 a.m.-noon—meet at east picnic shelter gazebo
- Cape Lookout State Park, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.—meet at Cape Lookout trailhead parking lot
- Crissey Field State Recreation Site, 10:00 a.m.-noon—meet at cluster sign off of parking lot
- Devil’s Lake State Recreation Area, 10:00-11:00 a.m.—meet at registration booth
- Fort Stevens State Park, 9:00-10:00 a.m.—meet at historic area museum
- Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.—meet at group camp
- Oswald West State Park, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.—meet at South Neah-kah-nie Mountain trailhead
- South Beach State Park, 10:00-11:30 a.m.—meet at day-use area/jetty trailhead
- Sunset Bay State Park, noon-2:00 p.m.—meet at gravel pull-out just south of Shore Acres State Park
- William M. Tugman State Park, 10:00 a.m.-noon—meet at day-use parking lot

*Central/Eastern Oregon:*

- Cottonwood Canyon State Park, noon-1:00 p.m.—meet at Pinnacles trailhead
- Emigrant Springs State Heritage Area, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.—meet at community building
- Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site, 10:00-11:45 a.m.—meet at parking area next to highway
- Smith Rock State Park, 10:00 a.m.-noon and 1:00-3:00 p.m.—meet at welcome center

Many of the First Day Hikes will be interpretive presentations focusing on local wildlife, plant species, geology, or history. Unique hikes this year include a “bring-your-own-horse” hike/ride that will be led by a ranger on a mule, a wild edibles hike, and a “zombie apocalypse” hike focused on outdoor survival skills. Some parks will be offering light refreshments or warm drinks to participants at the completion of the event. To get more details about specific hikes, including directions to the park and a description of the length and terrain, visit [bit.ly/OPRDcalendar](http://bit.ly/OPRDcalendar) online and search for “First Day Hikes” under Event Category.

This year, OPRD is asking participants to share photos of their First Day Hike via social media by using the Twitter hashtag **#ORfirstdayhikes** or tagging “Oregon State Parks” on Facebook. Images can also be emailed to [beth.wilson@state.or.us](mailto:beth.wilson@state.or.us).

OPRD reminds those planning to join a hike on the 1<sup>st</sup> to dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring along water as well as a camera and/or binoculars. In case of inclement weather, each park should be contacted directly to find out about cancellation—phone numbers are available online. For helpful cold-weather hiking tips, visit the American Hiking Society’s webpage at [americanhiking.org/cold-weather-hiking](http://americanhiking.org/cold-weather-hiking), and for road conditions, the Oregon Department of Transportation’s TripCheck website at [tripcheck.com](http://tripcheck.com).

A national news release issued by America's State Parks about First Day Hikes is accessible online via [www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/documents/FirstDayHikes\\_National.doc](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/documents/FirstDayHikes_National.doc). More information about Oregon state parks is available at [www.oregonstateparks.org](http://www.oregonstateparks.org).

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