



Oregon Trails 2005 - 2014: "A Statewide Action Plan"

On November 24, 2004, a draft of the Oregon Trails 2005: A Statewide Action Plan will be available for public review and comment on the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) website. The draft plan can be accessed at the following web link <<http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/trailsplanning.shtml>> by clicking on the heading, *Review the Draft Plan*. OPRD will accept comments until January 7, 2005. Responses can be made directly to Terry Bergerson by email: terry.bergerson@state.or.us or mail to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 725 Summer Street NE, Suite C, Salem, OR 97301-1271, Attn: Terry Bergerson. For those without internet access, the trails plan is also available in a CD format by contacting Tammy Baumann at OPRD by phone: 503.986.0733 or email: tammy.baumann@state.or.us.

A Description of the Plan

Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan constitutes Oregon's basic ten-year plan for recreational trail management. Once finalized, the plan will direct grant awards for federally-funded Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants and the state's All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Grants for development and improvements to motorized, non-motorized and water trails across the state. It will also serve as a statewide and regional information and planning tool to assist Oregon trail providers (local, state, federal and private) in providing trail opportunities and promoting access to Oregon's trails and waterways.

OPRD has taken an innovative approach to statewide trails planning by conducting separate (but concurrent) motorized, non-motorized and water trails planning efforts. As a result, *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan* includes distinct statewide motorized, non-motorized and water trails plans. Each of the three trails plans has a set of core planning components including:

- Trail benefits information;
- Top regional and statewide trails issues;
- Results from the 2004 Oregon Statewide Trail User and Non-Motorized Boater Survey; and
- A set of statewide goals, objectives and strategies for addressing top statewide trail issues.

The motorized trails plan concludes with a set of ATV Grant Program Project Selection Criteria for evaluating motorized trail grant proposals. A substantial number of the total evaluation points available are tied directly to findings from the motorized trails planning effort. In a similar fashion, the non-motorized trails plan concludes with a set of RTP Grant Program Selection Criteria for evaluating motorized, non-motorized and water trail grant proposals.

Oregon is the first state in the nation to undertake a statewide water trails plan. The water trails planning effort has identified three critical factors which pose a serious threat to long-term non-motorized boating access to waterways in Oregon including a rapid increase in participation in non-motorized boating, a lack of legal clarity and understanding of the public's right to Oregon's waterways for recreational purposes and an increasing potential for conflicts between non-motorized boaters and waterfront property owners. To address these concerns, the plan

concludes by proposing a state-administered water trails program intended to develop a statewide system of water trails carefully designed to minimize conflicts between non-motorized boaters and waterfront property owners.

And finally, the plan's appendices contain a variety of useful trails information including a statewide trails inventory project report, additional information from the statewide trail user survey, a trail design, maintenance and accessibility publication list, potential trail funding sources in Oregon and more.

Creating Connections: The Oregon Recreational Trails How-To Manual

Members of the Statewide Non-Motorized Trails Plan Steering Committee believe that evidence of sound trails planning should be a critical factor to consider in evaluating requests for Oregon Parks and Recreation Department administered trail-related grant funding. As a result, the Steering Committees requested that the trails planning effort include a manual to encourage citizens, civic organizations, governments and private enterprise to collaborate more effectively on trail development.

To satisfy this request, OPRD staff developed a document entitled *Creating Connections: The Oregon Recreational Trails How-To Manual*. The manual is intended to provide information and resources specific to Oregon for trail planning, acquisition, construction and management. The document is a modified version of the original publication, *Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails How-To Manual*, published in 1998 by the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership—a cooperative effort of the Pennsylvania Field Office of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and the Conservation Fund. The state of Oregon and OPRD gratefully acknowledges the Pennsylvania Greenway Partnerships' permission to use their publication.

Due to the size of the document, it is not included in the *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan*. The *Creating Connections: The Oregon Recreational Trails How-To Manual* document is currently available in an electronic format at <<http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/trailsplanning-manual.shtml>> or hardcopy by contacting Tammy Baumann at OPRD by phone: 503.986.0733 or email: tammy.baumann@state.or.us.

Final Steps

OPRD is pleased to report that the planning process is on schedule for completion by January 31, 2005. Following public review by trails plan steering committee members, recreation providers, interest groups and the general public, the plan will be submitted to the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission for final approval. After approved, final copies of the plan will be printed and distributed to recreation and trail managers across the state. In addition, an electronic version of the final plan will be added to the trails planning website.

Finally, OPRD would like to all those who have contributed their time, knowledge and efforts thus far to the planning process. Although the Action Plan is nearing completion, we must keep in mind that the ultimate success of the plan rests on the continued support of all stakeholders across the state to actively participate in implementing the plan's strategies.