

Chapter **

COUNTY-WIDE PUBLIC RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The vast majority of outdoor recreational lands within Lane County are national forests, managed by the Department of Agriculture-U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Other federal land management agencies in Lane County include the Department of the Interior-Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). State agencies, city park departments, special recreation districts, schools, utilities, and private providers, and Lane County, also manage recreational facilities.

Familiarity with all public recreational resources in the county is important to place Lane County's role within the larger picture and assess Lane County Park needs. Lane County facilities are described in detail, in Chapter **. An overview of relationships and connections among recreation providers and other organizations that focus on outdoor resources is in Chapter **.

Federal Recreational Lands

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Federal lands comprise approximately 48%, or 1,422,659 acres¹ of Lane County's land base, making the Forest Service (USFS) the largest land manager in Lane County. The Willamette National Forest spans the Cascade Mountain Range along Lane County's eastern boundary and beyond. Significant USFS recreation attractions within Lane County include portions of the Three Sisters, Waldo Lake, and Diamond Peak Wilderness areas.

The Siuslaw National Forest on the Oregon coast crosses multiple counties as well. In Lane County it includes the Cummins Creek and Rock Creek Wilderness areas, and the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA), which extends for 40 miles along the coast and is the longest dunal area in North America. Cape Perpetua Scenic Area straddles the Lane/Linn county line to the north. On the County's southern coast is Siltcoos Lake. The well known Siltcoos Canoe Trail extends three miles from the lake to the Pacific Ocean.

Both national forests are popular destinations for day and overnight use, hiking, fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, wildlife appreciation, and other outdoor pastimes. USFS lands provide some of the most extensive trail systems to be found in Lane County, and outstanding opportunities for solitude in an undeveloped, remote setting. The Willamette National Forest also allows snowmobiles and the ODNRA allows all terrain vehicles in designated areas.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management Eugene District oversees approximately 287,515 acres² of land in Lane County, or 10% of the county land area. BLM lands have historically been managed for timber production, livestock grazing and mining. More recently the agency has placed greater emphasis on recreation and habitat restoration. In the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area, BLM worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Eugene, and The Nature Conservancy, to restore approximately 450 acres of wetlands within the Amazon Creek basin in west Eugene, out of a total of 1,340 acres that is managed by BLM in the Amazon Creek basin. The project includes overlooks for wildlife viewing, and an educational and interpretive center. BLM also partnered with many other entities to acquire and develop the 16 mile Row River multi-use trail, a rails-to-trails project that runs along the Dorena Reservoir from Cottage Grove to Culp Creek. The Willamette Water Trail is a recent BLM initiative that involved mapping 35 river miles with navigational hazards, safe launch sites, and camping sites.

¹ State of Oregon Geospatial Data Clearinghouse website, November 2006

² Ibid

BLM's Clay and Whittaker Creek overnight and day use recreation areas are approximately 40 miles west of Eugene in the Coast Mountain Range. BLM also operates campgrounds east of Cottage Grove at Sharps Creek, and at Hult Pond, a 40 acre reservoir in north-central Lane County.

Shotgun Creek is a 260 acre BLM site with 24 miles of off-highway vehicle trails and 20 acres of developed day use facilities, including a lodge available for weddings and other special events. Other BLM day use areas include Lake Creek Falls near Triangle Lake, and four boat launches on the McKenzie River. Taylor Landing is on the south side of the river near Deerhorn. Silver Creek and Rennie's Landing are near the community of Nimrod. BLM also manages Martin Rapids park on the McKenzie River.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for nine dams and reservoirs in Lane County. They include Blue River, Cottage Grove, Cougar, Dexter, Dorena, Fall Creek, Fern Ridge, Hills Creek, and Lookout Point. When full, the dams total approximately 24,167 water acres, and are surrounded by approximately 19,000 acres of land³. In addition to serving as flood protection and water supply facilities, the reservoirs, and surrounding marshes and lands provide an abundance of wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. The USACE manages several overnight and day use facilities adjacent to the reservoirs, and also partners with other agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Parks and Recreation, and Lane County, to provide recreation facilities on reservoir lands. As described in Chapter **, Lane County manages six parks on USACE lands adjacent to Fern Ridge and Dorena reservoirs.

NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS AND SCENIC DRIVES

Three national scenic byways traverse Lane County's coastline and national forests. On the west coast, Highway 101 is designated the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway. A portion of Highway 126, and Highway 242 in eastern Lane County are part of the McKenzie Pass-Santiam Pass Scenic Byway loop. The southern section of the West Cascades Scenic Byway, also known as Aufderheide Memorial Drive, extends north from Highway 58 at Westfir, along the Wild and Scenic North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River, to the McKenzie Highway (Highway 126) at the community of Rainbow.

Diamond Drive outside of Oakridge near the base of Hills Creek, is a partially paved Scenic Drive that will eventually extend to Highway 138, near Diamond Lake in Douglas County. In 2005, the U.S. Forest Service completed paving 55-miles of former logging roads linking Cottage Grove and Oakridge, Lane County's most recent Scenic Drive. Both of these Drives are in high elevations, closed to motor vehicle traffic in winter months, and not suitable for recreational vehicle traffic.

NATIONAL SCENIC AND RECREATION TRAILS

The north-south Pacific Crest Scenic Trail traverses Lane County's eastern boundary in the Cascade Mountains on Wilderness Area lands continuing on across the United States and beyond. The lower elevation Fall Creek and McKenzie River Trails are designated as National Recreation Trails.

State Recreation Facilities

OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) manages both overnight and day use parks that are generally near state highways and provide access to exceptional scenic vistas. OPRD's mission is to "Protect and provide outstanding natural, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational sites for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations." OPRD has a particularly strong presence on the Oregon coast, providing public access to the spectacular rugged landscape along Highway 101. Views of the ocean, lush forests, tide pool

³ U.S Army Corps of Engineers (December 2006)

exploration, fishing, and marine wildlife viewing are a few of the attractions for millions of visitors to the coast each year, and state parks are a favorite destination. Among the many coastal state parks in Lane County are Neptune, Strawberry Hill, Carl G. Washburne Memorial, which provides camping facilities, and Heceta Head Lighthouse State Scenic Viewpoint.

The 522-acre J. Honeyman Memorial State Park contains a large campground situated between two coastal lakes and the sand dunes south of Florence. Darlingtonia Botanical Wayside is an 18-acre state park dedicated to the protection of a rare carnivorous plant species found nowhere else in the state. OPRD also operates a Dive Park near the north jetty on the Siuslaw River.

An extensive, state-maintained trail network connects many state parks and other coastal attractions along the beach and inland forests.

OPRD is in the process of purchasing approximately 80 acres of foreclosed, subdivided dunal land from Lane County, for open space, natural resource, and scenic resource protection, along the Siuslaw River estuary in Glenada.

In eastern Lane County along and near Highway 58, OPRD lands total approximately 1,462 acres. At 847 acres, Elijah Bristow Park is the largest state park in this area. It provides picnic facilities, a boat launch, natural areas, and extensive trails. This park is a primary destination for equestrian trail riding. Cascara Campground, located on the south shore of the Fall Creek arm near Fall Creek Reservoir's inlet, is the only park with camping facilities in the planning area with the exception of the Group Camp at nearby Fisherman's Point. The 43-acre park is a popular weekend destination in the summer that includes boating facilities, a swimming area, a playfield, and a small shop.

Jasper, Dexter, Lowell, North Shore, and Winberry, all state parks within the Middle Fork Willamette area, were formerly Lane County parks that were part of a large parkland exchange in the late 1990's to increase operational efficiencies for multiple agencies.

The recently adopted Willamette River Middle Fork State Parks Master Plan provides for additional state recreation facilities in this area. Among them are primitive campsites to serve Willamette River Water trail paddlers, at Elijah Bristow and Jasper Parks, as well as new trails and an equestrian staging area. Willamette River floodplain restoration is also a priority for Elijah Bristow and other parks.

In north Lane County, Washburn Wayside is on Highway 99. Alderwood Wayside is west of the community of Cheshire on Highway 36.

Scenic Bikeways

OPRD recently established and is working to implement a statewide system of Scenic Bikeways. The Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway enters Lane County from Linn County to the north and terminates at Armitage Park, a Lane County Park.

The Calapooya Mountains Scenic Bikeway is a route being planned across Lane County's central area and will extend to Oakland in Douglas County.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) mission is "to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for enjoyment by present and future generations." ODFW manages the Leaburg Dam fish hatchery and interpretive center on the McKenzie River. The hatchery is a popular educational destination.

Lane County has long provided routine maintenance for ten boat launch sites on lands owned by ODFW along the McKenzie and Siuslaw Rivers, Lake Creek, and Mercer Lake.

Regional and Local Recreation Providers

EUGENE WATER AND ELECTRIC BOARD

The Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) provides recreation facilities and protects wildlife habitat in the McKenzie River Valley, in conjunction with its hydroelectric facilities in the area. Waterfalls and lakes are accessible from hiking trails developed near these facilities. EWEB's Carmen and Smith Reservoirs both have boat launches.

A popular fishing destination is 40-acre Leaburg Lake created by EWEB's Leaburg Dam. The adjacent Lloyd Knox Water Board park has large group day use facilities including volleyball courts, a softball field and horseshoe pits, available free by reservation. EWEB is also developing a trail system near the McKenzie River within the utility's power canal system, including interpretive displays and overlooks.

PORT OF SIUSLAW

Port of Siuslaw facilities provide a variety of recreational opportunities, both commercial and public, near the Pacific Ocean and 22 miles upriver in Mapleton. The Port was established in 1906 to foster resource-based regional and local economic development. In recent years the tourism industry has steadily grown in relative importance, especially on the coast, and the Port has placed a corresponding greater emphasis on recreational facilities and services. The 102-site Port of Siuslaw Campground is a public facility accommodating both recreational vehicle and tent camping near the heart of Old Town riverfront district in Florence. The Port also operates a 51-slip recreational marina and the Florence public boat ramp at this location. The facility provides paved parking, public restrooms/showers, and picnic areas, along with a marine fuel dock and waste pump-out station. Nearby is the Maple Street Landing and Transient Dock, the only public facility in Florence for the transfer of fish product from boats to delivery trucks, and for public transient moorage. The Port also maintains a public transient dock, restroom, and day use park in Mapleton.

As discussed in Chapter **, the Port is fostering creation of the Siuslaw Estuary Trail System, a hike-bike-paddle trail network connecting numerous recreational facilities.

CITY PARKS AND DISTRICTS

Most incorporated communities in Lane County have city parks. With populations that are by far larger than other cities in the county, the City of Eugene and Springfield's Willamalane Park and Recreation District have the largest park systems, at approximately 3,150 acres and 680 acres, respectively. City parks generally consist of a combination of community parks and centers, smaller neighborhood-based parks, linear (trail) parks, and natural area parks. Playing fields located on school district properties are not included in the above mentioned acreage, but are an important component to community recreation opportunities.

The River Road Park District serves North Eugene and provides a wide spectrum of urban recreation and exercise facilities and services, including art and exercise classes and community events. The Blue River Parks District manages a 20-acre park for this unincorporated community.