

**NEW TRAIL:** For some it was a first outing in the woods

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Stevens. “I appreciated the Forest Service effort to create a trail in Sisters where people with a variety of disabilities can hike together and enjoy the outdoors. It was fabulous to ride up together on the new accessible bus from Oregon Adaptive Sports. Transportation can often be a barrier for many of us to enjoy recreation, so this was a perfect day.”

Sharlene Wills was another of those to take advantage of the new trail project.

“I was one of the blind participants on that memorable June day-hike near Sisters that presented us with a truly accessible trail for folks with different needs,” she said.

“I want to thank John (Schubert), again, for all his efforts,” Wills said. “It is a lovely trail, both scenic and easy to navigate, while still letting one have some good exercise. I fully enjoyed going with a group of people, but I also truly loved being able to do the whole trail by myself, with my guide dog.

“So often, we blind folks must rely on sighted guides in order to hike or bike; and,

though Oregon Adaptive Sports, among other groups, provides us with wonderful volunteers, it really means a lot to many of us to be able to independently do some of these things such as hiking. So the effort made on this particular trail is truly appreciated.”

“ I appreciated the Forest Service effort to create a trail in Sisters where people with a variety of disabilities can hike together... — Nancy Stevens

The new trail is a one-mile loop that includes the Whychus Overlook at its midway point. The surface of the trail is highly compacted fine gravel, and a concern has recently arisen about unauthorized bicycle use on the special surface. Damage to the surface can cause problems for the users for whom the trail is intended.

Amy Racki, the Forest Service’s recreation team leader for the Sisters Ranger District, confirmed that the trail is posted as being not for bikes.

“We want to keep the tread surface nice so people that require mobility assistance have the opportunity to enjoy the trail,” she said. “If bicyclists brake hard or maneuver quickly, it degrades the tread surface. This is a hiker-only accessible trail — no bicycles, no horses.”

Stevens talked about how important it is for people with accessibility issues to have the opportunity to use such a trail.

“Some of these folks haven’t really had much experience outdoors. For one of the guys in a wheelchair, this was his first outing in the woods since his accident.”

Unfortunately, there are few such opportunities in the forests, and Racki has already seen evidence of bicycle traffic on the trail. She wants people to be aware of the use restrictions in order to make sure that this unique trail does not suffer damage as the result of improper use.

To reach the roadside parking lot and trailhead for this accessible trail and overlook, simply head south on the Three Creek Road (Elm Street in town) for a little over five miles. The turnout is near the summit of Peterson Ridge, on the right-hand (west) side of the road, just a short distance beyond the five-mile marker.

# Merkley applauds Kaine vice presidential pick

By Kristena Hansen  
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — As Oregon’s Democratic and Republican delegations were crisscrossing the country to and from their parties’ national conventions Friday, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine was named as Hillary Clinton’s vice presidential running-mate.

It’s unclear whether the selection of Kaine will appeal to progressives from places like Oregon, which is expected to favor Bernie Sanders on the Democratic convention floor in Philadelphia this week after the Vermont senator defeated Clinton in Oregon’s May 17 primary.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley — who supports Clinton but is the only member the U.S. Senate to endorse their colleague Sanders — told The Associated Press that Kaine is an “excellent choice” but party progressives have concerns about some of his leanings, namely his recent vote in favor of fast-tracking the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

“Tim Kaine is enormously

capable ... very powerful intellect and very easy to work with,” said Merkley. “But there are issues that we would love to have him be in a different place on.”

Sanders began bowing out of the race weeks ago as his chances slipped and he has since been helping rally more forces against GOP nominee Donald Trump. Both parties are now wrestling to bring Sanders’ progressive supporters into their folds ahead of November.

A similar dynamic is at play in Oregon, often deemed “Bernie Sanders country” by the electorate while its elected politicians lean more with Clinton. It’s why more than half of Oregon’s 61 delegates are pledged to Sanders, who won almost 57 percent of the vote in May, and most of its 13 superdelegates, who can vote however they please and are often high-level politicians, are supporting Clinton.

Merkley, one of those 13 superdelegates, says Sanders’ vision is being “woven” into Clinton’s platform, so progressives will eventually come around.

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