

COAST TRAIL: Impact of winter has pushed many off PCT

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would do just that. It would require the state's Parks and Recreation Department to work with other state agencies, local governments and organizations and stakeholders to develop an action plan for the OCT. The plan would detail what is needed to fill gaps in the trail system, and take into account "the concerns of the public and other interested parties."

Meanwhile, a number of people in coastal communities are addressing one piece on their own.

Jeanne Henderson has never seen anything like the numbers of hikers passing by her house now.

Henderson, who is Bonnie Henderson's sister-in-law, lives in Surf Pines between Warrenton and Gearhart. On this stretch of the OCT, hikers are either on the roads or walking the beach. They are hard to miss. When Henderson sees them on the road, she pulls over and offers them a ride to Seaside. They always get in her car, and they all have her sister-in-law's book.

They tell her the same story: They started on the PCT, hit snow, reconsidered their options, heard about the OCT, decided to try it. Many of them plan to go back to the PCT when they're done in Oregon.

Henderson's friend Pat

Wollner has often hosted cyclists passing through the area. During the summer, her house is full most weekends. Henderson didn't quite understand the appeal before. Now, having met so many thru-hikers, Henderson said, "It's killing me not to pick them all up."

She worries about a young Norwegian woman hiking alone — "I'll be fine," the woman assured her. She exchanges texts with Annichiarico, Carpenter, Delgado and Hochadel. They tell her they've reached Newport.

In recent weeks, she has enlisted friends up and down the coast, urging them to let hikers she meets camp in their backyards. One friend was wary at first, but quickly fell in the love with the group Henderson sent her way. When they left, she told Henderson, "I miss my backyard buddies. Send me some more."

Nicole Hampsten, a teacher from California and an experienced backpacker, didn't start on the PCT this spring, but is considering jumping on it once she finishes the OCT. She said the OCT is very different from other long-distance hikes and not linear. While planning how far she'll try to hike each day, Hampsten longs for maps with mileage marked on them — something most available maps lack — and clear signage.

Hiker Andy Gosiak said signage was spotty the entire trail.

"There were about five

signs the whole trail," Gosiak joked.

"There were probably 10," one of his hiking companions Andreas Hoepfler countered. Catching the smile still on Gosiak's face, he added, "No. I'm serious right now."

Still, there are perks.

"We've got beer!" said Hochadel, swinging her pack to show where the beers were tucked into its side pockets as the group hiked out of Arch Cape.

"In glass bottles!" Carpenter added.

On the Oregon trail, thru-hikers don't need to carry much food or water. They can easily resupply at one of the nearby towns. They can indulge themselves, packing things they normally wouldn't carry on a longer slog like the Pacific Crest Trail.

"You get spoiled," said Hoepfler, who came from Austria to hike the PCT and ended up on the OCT.

But Hampsten is beginning to think the PCT hikers are the ones who are spoiled. There are so many resources built around that trail: books, online forums, data, websites, communities. When hikers walk into a town trailing clouds of dust, clothes crisp with a week's worth of sweat, they are a familiar, even expected, sight.

By comparison, the OCT, for all its proximity to civilization, is almost uncharted territory. People stopped Hochadel on Sunset Beach, curious, asking, "What are you doing? Why are you carrying that pack?"

Sisters salutes...

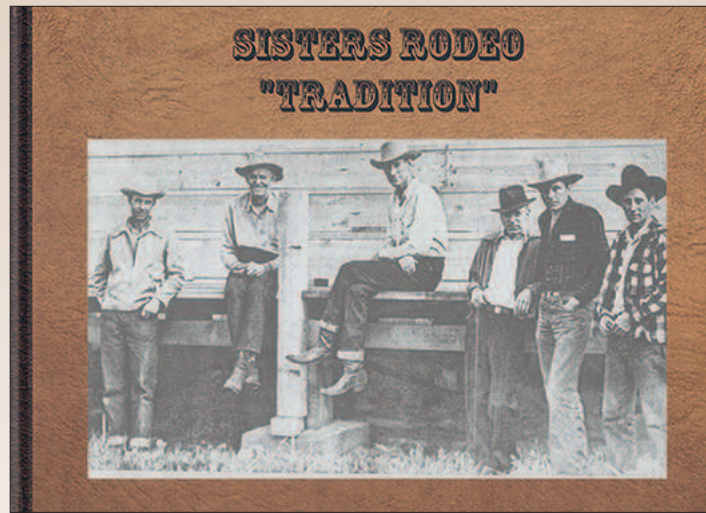


PHOTO PROVIDED

• At a recent city council meeting, Sisters Rodeo President Glenn Miller expected questions from the council about the rodeo and parade. Instead, he was surprised with presentation of a book filled with historical photos of the rodeo, a gift from the City of Sisters.

"We are so thrilled with this book," said President

Miller, adding that the city included photos that the rodeo association doesn't even have. He added, "We have a great relationship with the city, which we hope will continue for at least another hundred years."

President Miller and Sisters Rodeo Association Board of Directors say thank you to the City for this thoughtful gift.

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