

ship. And it makes e-bike purchases more affordable for low-income people.

The office settled on the \$1,200 rebate after sending an assessment to the community. Households were more willing to buy an e-bike if it took out a sizable chunk of the price tag, she says, but the office wanted them to at least pay \$200 for the bike to attract serious applicants. The rebate also covers safety equipment, such as helmets and visibility vests.

To qualify for the Corvallis e-bike program, your household income must be less than 80 percent of area median income as set by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development. For an individual in Corvallis, that's an annual income of \$47,600 — for a household of four, \$68,000.

In July 2021, when the office opened the first round of applications, it did so without advertising but still gave out all 15 rebates. Because of the overwhelming number of applications, the office has used a lottery system.

“We kept the application really simple,” Duvall says. “For so many programs, they’re constantly asked to prove how poor they are. And it’s humiliating.” Applicants self-reported their income but they had to prove they were a Pacific Power customer.

Being an economic development office, Duvall says the idea of having the e-bike program was also meant to stimulate the local bike shop economy. The rebate could only be used at four bicycle shops in the Corvallis area. Duvall says Corvallis Electric Bike Shop received most of the rebates, but the other stores in Corvallis have seen an increase in e-bike sales.

The office hasn’t finished collecting data on how the recipients are using the e-bikes, but Duvall says that based on anecdotal evidence, some were already biking in some capacity, and it allowed those who have become unable to bike return to the saddle.

The program plans to distribute 50 rebates — the

office donated staff time to manage the program — and has so far handed out 31 rebates. The office wants to continue the program but needs to find funding to do so, Duvall says.

Duvall says e-bikes aren’t decreasing the number of trips people make on pedal-powered bicycles but instead are being used for errands, and getting people out of cars. And the rebate has helped low income households make that change.

“What’s so popular about this program is that for the amount of money that we’re talking about, it really makes a huge difference. You’re really impacting a lot of people’s lives,” she says. “Anyone else trying to set up a program like that is something we should think about: How many people you can impact.” ■

*Electric Avenue is at 187 E. Broadway. For more information, visit [ElectricAvenueSports.com](http://ElectricAvenueSports.com).*

*To learn more about the Corvallis-Benton Economic Development e-bike grant, visit [YesCorvallis.com](http://YesCorvallis.com).*



# WALKING ON SAND

GET OUT AND EXPERIENCE THE WONDER OF THE OREGON DUNES *By Chandra LeGue*

Oregon’s central coast — from Florence to Coos Bay — was once a vast expanse of moving sand 40 miles long and up to three miles wide in places. Oregon’s dunes are a unique ecosystem, one of the largest of its kind, that formed more than 100,000 years ago. Fascinating, right?

Oregon’s dunes also happen to be one of the best places to get outside to play on the coast. They can be enjoyed in pretty much any season and type of weather, and while parts of the dunes are a favored playground for off-road vehicles, others are quiet, lovely and nearly deserted.

Fifty years ago, back in 1972, 32,000 acres were designated as the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA), managed by the Siuslaw National Forest. But long before that, humans had begun to change this shifting landscape — introducing European beach grass that would stabilize the dunes to hold the shifting sands at bay from Highway 101 and new towns building up along the coast.

Like the century of extensive logging in Oregon’s coastal forests, taming the shifting sands of the dunes

has had major consequences. The imported beach grass held the sand in place as desired, but that meant major shifts in the ecosystem — less moving sand meant more stable dunes and shrubs (both native and invasive, like Scot’s broom) and trees taking root where they weren’t before. Habitat for plants and animals that depended on open sand shrunk, and habitat for shrub-loving critters like the rare coastal marten (a member of the weasel family) expanded.

Recognizing the importance of the dunes ecosystem, collaborative efforts by the U.S. Forest Service, off-road vehicle users, conservationists and Tribes are underway to both preserve the remaining open sand areas and restore the vanishing dunes ecosystem by removing invasive plants and stabilized dunes. (You can help as a weed-pulling volunteer, which runs year-round — check out [SaveOregonDunes.org](http://SaveOregonDunes.org) for more.)

Aside from a home for wildlife, use of the dunes is today focused on recreation, and it is a destination that helps drive the local economy. As such, there are dozens of places to stop, take a walk, camp, watch wildlife, hop

on a sand buggy or launch a boat in the ODNRA along Hwy 101.

Motorized vehicles are allowed (and are popular) in some designated areas of the dunes. I personally like to avoid these areas for more peace and quiet. One of my favorite options is the Tahkenitch Dunes Day Use Area about 14 miles south of Florence, where you can hike across dunes, along a meandering creek, and through young forest where you really get a feel for the changes occurring due to invasive plants.

(Keep in mind that nearly all of these coastal recreation areas require a Northwest Forest Pass, day pass, or state park permit, which cost \$30 a year or \$5 a day.)

My favorite place in the Oregon dunes, though, is the John Dellenback Dunes area, where you can experience the once-vast dunes ecosystem; it’s the largest expanse of open sand left in the ODNRA that is closed to motorized vehicles and bikes. Native plants like lupine, sand verbena and bunch grasses persist here, as do unique butterflies, beetles, frogs and other wildlife that depend on the moving sand environment.

The trail starts just south of the Eel Creek Campground and the community of Lakeside, on the west side of Hwy 101 about 10 miles south of Reedsport. It climbs a sandy path through a shore pine and spruce forest before reaching open sand and tall dunes. Look for wooden posts leading towards the ocean — but don’t be afraid to wander and explore the fascinating sand landscape on your way.

In early spring, the water table can be quite high, and small ponds form in the nooks and crannies of the rolling sand hills. (Stay a safe distance from the edge of these wet areas, as the wet sand can turn to dangerous quicksand in the blink of an eye.)

Got kids? They’ll love running up and down the dunes and exploring tracks in the sand even more than you do.

It’s about 1.5 miles to the ocean, and in the spring, the low-lying forest between the dunes and beach can be flooded. No matter: If you can’t get all the way to the beach, just make your own loop back to where you came from, keeping the prominent tree islands and inland landscape features in sight so you don’t get lost.

If you do make it to the beach, be aware of posted signs requesting that you (and your dogs) stay off the dry sand between the dunes and the beach. The seasonal closure (March 15 through Sept. 15) is to protect nesting snowy plovers — a cute little shore bird that nests in dry sand and has not fared well in the altered dunes landscape. Fortunately, restoration efforts and use restrictions have helped their population stabilize. Please obey posted signage. ■

*For more information visit [FS.usda.gov/main/siuslaw/home](http://FS.usda.gov/main/siuslaw/home) click “recreation” and scroll down to the Oregon dunes..*

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