



Photos by Carolyn Hoard

**CLOCKWISE: The Airport Dike Trail features views of the Astoria Bridge. James Cook and his brother's dog, 'Trask,' pose before walking along the Airport Dike Trail. The Airport Dike Trail.**



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The 4-mile roundtrip trail curves around alder woods and the fenced airport on one side, with marshes and the Lewis and Clark River on the other. The turn-around point is by Youngs Bay Bridge, where the Lewis and Clark River flows into the bay of the Columbia River, then the Pacific Ocean. Some folks walk here to watch U.S. Coast Guard helicopters and other aircraft take off and land.

The views are expansive including Astoria, the Astoria Column, the Astoria Bridge and the Youngs Bay Bridge. On a clear day, one can see Saddle Mountain and the Oregon Coast Range to the east.

An extensive variety of birds may be seen along the trail during various seasons

including loons, pelicans, cormorants, herons, egrets, geese, ducks, raptors, gulls, shore birds and swallows. Come spring, red-winged blackbirds and marsh wrens will be singing, claiming their territories among the cattail marshlands that border the path. In winter, many ducks can be seen, as well as an occasional bald eagle. Since the river is tidal, there are times when waterfowl can be seen resting on sandbars. A detailed list at the start of the trail lists out commonly seen birds.

"The Warrenton Waterfront Trail System began as an idea in 1994 and has been ever improving through the ongoing efforts of the City of Warrenton and the Warrenton Trails Association, now Northwest Coast Trails Coalition," said Nancy Claterbos, public works secretary



for Warrenton. "Three large grants from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department have enabled the city to pave most of the trail from S.E. 3rd St. to N.W. 13th, Carruthers Park to Enterprise Street, and most recently the DeLaura Beach Trail."

The trail is maintained and mowed regularly by Warrenton's Public Works Department, Claterbos said.

"The most recent addition to most of our trails have been the dogipot stations which are greatly appreciated and maintained weekly by the city," Claterbos said.

The city is applying for Oregon Department of Transportation grants to connect various trails within the Warrenton Waterfront Trail system to Fort Stevens State Park, Claterbos said.

"The trail from N.E. 1st to N.W. 13th is our most utilized leg of the trail system and sees a great deal of use when the weather is cooperative," Claterbos said.

Soon the marsh will fill with bird songs. The trail is beautiful and quiet, making it worthwhile to enjoy year-round.