

# Hood's iconic Timberline Trail to reopen in 2017

By ZACH URNESS  
(Salem) Statesman Journal

SALEM — One of the most spectacular trails in the United States — and perhaps the most iconic pathway in Oregon — is scheduled to reopen in full by the summer of 2017.

The Timberline Trail, a 40-mile circuit of Mount Hood, has been partly closed since 2006 when a debris flow destroyed a bridge and washed out a large swath of trail near Eliot Glacier field.

The washout forced hikers to either navigate to a more difficult crossing or simply cut their trip short.

The U.S. Forest Service announced last week that the trail would be rerouted and a new crossing created this summer, with the hope of getting hikers on the restored pathway by 2017.

Forest engineering specialists determined that a permanent bridge at the old location wasn't feasible, so have opted to relocate the section of trail, the federal agency said.

"We're thrilled to begin work on rerouting this trail to the new location so that crossing this area is safer for hikers," said Claire Pitner, east side recreation manager for Mount Hood National Forest. "The 1.5 mile reroute will minimize exposure to loose boulders which otherwise could pose as hazards for hikers."

Timberline Trail #600 is the only "round the moun-



In this photo taken in 2013, a trio of hikers travel the Timberline Trail around Mount Hood. The Timberline Trail, a 40-mile circuit of Mount Hood, has been partly closed since 2006 when a debris flow destroyed a bridge and washed out a large swath of trail near Eliot Glacier field.

Eric Gjonnes /Statesman-Journal via AP

tain" trail on Oregon's tallest mountain, but hasn't been fully connected for the past decade.

Forest Service employees said finding a sustainable solution was difficult given the mountain's unstable geology of loose rock and melting

glaciers. The cost was also an issue, given Timberline Trail has been rerouted many times in the past due to similar problems.

The planned crossing will be below the previous bridge at location more protected location, but officials warned that there would still be the

possibility of the new route sustaining damage in the future.

"We tried to locate the trail so that it would be minimally impacted on an annual basis by changes in glacial flow, but we have to keep in mind that the ground on Mount Hood is

constantly changing," Pitner said. "We are doing our best to provide a safer crossing that will remain in the same location for many years to come."

The project will be completed by forest staff working with volunteers and contractors, Pitner said.

## Climate change clues found in plants

By KYLE SPURR  
EO Media Group

ASTORIA — The National Parks Service is partnering with citizen scientists to track when plant species flower, leaf out or set seed. The way plants grow gives clues to changes in the environment and the impact of climate change.

"Plants, as we know, have the most sensitive biological responses to climate change," said Nancy Fernandez, a climate change intern with Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. "They are sensitive to temperature change and precipitation."

Fernandez discussed plant responses to climate change during a talk last week at Fort George Lovell Showroom in Astoria.

As a native of California's Central Valley, Fernandez said, she has seen firsthand drought conditions and plants blooming earlier each spring.

"Plants have been seeing this for a long time, longer than we have," she said.

Using data gathered by volunteer monitors, Fernandez showed how the start of spring has been coming earlier across the country than in centuries before.

"All of this is problematic because it's causing mismatches between pollinators, plants, insects," she said.

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park has partnered with San Juan Island National Historical Park to study the impacts of climate change.

At San Juan Island, Fernandez and others are studying the endangered island marble butterfly.

Only about 100 of the butterflies are left on the island. Researchers are finding that when the butterfly larva comes out of its egg, it is expecting to eat a certain flower. However, the flower is blooming earlier than before, making it difficult for the butterflies to eat.

"How many are we losing that could potentially survive?" Fernandez said.

### Project Budburst

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park is inviting the public to help monitor and report plant activity at the park and around Clatsop County. Data collected will help the park learn how plants are responding to changes in the



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Nancy Fernandez, a climate change intern with the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, speaks during the Nature Matters talk at the Fort George Brewery in Astoria recently.

environment.

Specifically, the park is asking people to keep watch on 10 plant species. The species include red alder, Oregon crabapple, Sitka spruce, edible thistle, salal, evergreen huckleberry, salmonberry, wapato, Pacific silverweed and skunk cabbage.

Carla Cole, natural resource program manager at the park, said the 10 plants are culturally and naturally significant to the park. Lewis and Clark described and journaled about the same plants two centuries ago.

Tracking plants at the park is part of a national effort called Project Budburst. The project encourages people to get outside and observe how plants change with the seasons. Observations can be shared online at [www.budburst.org](http://www.budburst.org), where the data will become a part of an ecological record.

"Project Budburst is a wonderful way to carry on the tradition of scientific observation and discovery handed down to us by America's first great naturalists, Lewis and Clark," Cole said. "It is exciting that we will be observing the same plants they recorded for the first time here over 200 years ago in their elk skin journals, but we will be using smartphones and the Internet."

### Bioblitz 2016

Later this spring, Lewis and Clark

National Historical Park plans to, again, call on citizen scientists for BioBlitz 2016, a national event where volunteers at various national parks work together to identify as many species of plants and animals as possible.

Over two days on May 20 and May 21, local volunteers and students will go out around Netul Landing and identify every living thing they come across, with a focus on pollinators such as birds, bats, insects and plants. Lewis and Clark National Historical Park previously hosted a BioBlitz event in 2012 out in the Clatsop Plains.

A Jumbotron will be set up at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., during the two-day BioBlitz to showcase each national park's findings. What is found in Astoria may be broadcast on the Jumbotron at the nation's capital.

Collecting the data of plants and other species is an initial step in understanding the long-term changes to the environment. It's a piece of the puzzle to know how climate change is occurring, Cole said.

Another goal of the Project Budburst and Bioblitz is simply to get people outside and in their national parks.

"The mission is to get people outdoors," Fernandez said. "We want to connect you to a place. It doesn't matter if it's a national park or if it's a park down the street or in your backyard."

## ODFW pioneer license no longer free

BEND (AP) — Jerry Brown, of Bend, did not know about the change to Oregon's pioneer hunting-and-fishing license until he went to pick one up shortly after the start of the new year.

Brown, 76, learned the license from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for longtime state residents now costs \$6 per year. It had been free from 2000 to 2015.

"I thought it was strange after all this time to change it," he said.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife offers pioneer licenses, good for hunting and fishing, to people age 65 and older and who have lived in Oregon for 50 years.

The new fee will increase the number of paid residents who are licensed hunters and anglers, and that will allow the state to get more federal funding, said Michelle Dennehy, spokeswoman for the agency in Salem.

"Basically, we are trying to get more federal funds, and that is based on paid licenses," she said.

In 2015, the state had 58,000 residents with pioneer licenses, Dennehy said. People who picked up the free license and then paid for a deer tag, combined angling tag or other additional privilege counted as paid-resident license holders, according to the agency. Those who did not, did not count. For each of these people, the Department of Fish and Wildlife missed out on collecting \$14 in federal funds, \$7 for sport-fish restoration and \$7 for wildlife restoration.

This totaled about

\$250,000 per year, according to the agency. The amount was expected to keep going up as the population ages and more people become eligible for the pioneer license.

By adding a fee for the license, the Department of Fish and Wildlife hopes to capture more federal money.

"It is an important revenue stream for the agency," Dennehy said.

The state has charged a fee for the pioneer licenses before, according to an email from Dennehy. The state established the pioneer license, initially as separate hunting and fishing licenses, in the 1940s after World War II and originally charged 50 cents for each license.

By the 1990s, the state had combined the licenses and had a sliding fee scale based on the age of the purchaser. From 1992 to 1999, the high price for the license was \$12.

The current \$6 pioneer license comes with a free Columbia River Basin Endorsement, required for anglers fishing for salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in rivers draining into the Columbia River, according to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The rivers include the Deschutes and John Day, and the endorsement typically costs \$9.75.

Dennehy said people purchasing the pioneer license come out ahead despite having to pay for what they used to get free.

An adult resident who does not qualify for the pioneer license would pay \$74.75 for the equivalent in combined licenses and the endorsement, according to the agency.

### SKI REPORT

**Spout Springs**  
Tollgate, Ore.  
New snow: 3" this week  
Base depth: Not recorded  
Conditions: Open regular weekend hours

**Anthony Lakes**  
North Powder, Ore.  
New snow: 3"  
Base depth: 62"  
Conditions: Snow showers late week, strong winds Friday

**Ski Bluewood**  
Dayton, Wash.  
New snow: 7"  
Base depth: 81"  
Conditions: Lots of powder off-piste, 24 machine groomed runs

**Ski Fergi**  
Joseph, Ore.  
New snow: unknown  
Depth: 25" at top  
Conditions: Groomed runs, great snow, open Feb. 6-7.

**Mt. Hood Meadows Government Camp, Ore.**  
New snow: 10"  
Base depth: 105"  
Conditions: Powder-topped packed powder groom. Powder, heavy new snow, and wind-distributed powder off piste.

## Beloved eagle recovers from cataract surgery

MEDFORD (AP) — Dave Siddon waited anxiously as Phoenix the golden eagle was put under anesthesia and draped in cloths until only his eye and tail feathers were showing.

"It scares me to death," Siddon said of the cataract surgery the 35-year-old bird was about to undergo in Medford. "I love this bird so dang much. It's like he's my child."

Found by a logger on a remote road while still a fuzzy eaglet, Phoenix has called the Wildlife Images animal center outside Grants Pass his home for decades. He is too dependent on humans

and deeply bonded with Siddon, the center's executive director, to be released into the wild.

Working in a darkened surgery suite at Southern Oregon Veterinary Specialty Center with a light illuminating Phoenix's eye, animal specialty ophthalmologist Dr. Cassandra Bliss began the delicate procedure of cutting into the eye to reach the clouded lens obscuring the eagle's vision.

### Salvage logging proposed in Grizzly Bear Complex

The Umatilla National Forest has proposed logging 250 acres of dead and burned trees from last year's Grizzly Bear Complex of

wildfires that burned partially into Wallowa County.

The project would be located within the Cross Canyon watershed south of the wild and scenic Wenaha River. Reforestation is proposed on 3,900 acres.

The Canyon Creek Complex torched approximately 83,000 acres of the forest, mostly within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area. However, portions of the fires spread onto Forest Service lands on both the Walla Walla and Pomeroy ranger districts.

Public comments on the project are due by Friday, Feb. 19. Written comments should be sent to Walla Walla District Ranger Michael Rassbach. Emailed comments should be sent to comments-

[pacificnorthwest-umatilla-wallawalla@fs.fed.us](mailto:pacificnorthwest-umatilla-wallawalla@fs.fed.us).

For more information, contact Brad Cooper, Pomeroy district environmental coordinator, at 509-843-4626 or [bradleycooper@fs.fed.us](mailto:bradleycooper@fs.fed.us).

### Watershed Enhancement Board awards grants

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has awarded more than \$12.7 million in grants to six partnerships around the state for fish and wildlife habitat improvement.

That includes \$1.6 million to the Upper Grande Ronde Initiative to improve habitat for native salmon and steelhead. Local

partners include the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Grande Ronde Model Watershed and Union Soil & Water Conservation District.

Money also went toward wetlands restoration near Malheur Lake; improving fish habitat on the Upper Deschutes River; and protecting sage grouse habitat across Eastern Oregon.

Funding provided by OWEB comes from the Oregon Lottery and Federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery.

Meta Loftsgaarden, OWEB executive director, said they hope to provide partnerships with multi-year, multi-million dollar investments to scale their work strategically.

### BRIEFLY