

Next Gemwalker jaunt set for Sept. 6 in Florence

Join the Yachats Coastal Gems for the Three Lakes Year-round Event in Florence on Sept. 6.

Walkers will meet at the Commons in Yachats at 9 a.m. if they want to carpool to Florence, or meet at The Sportsman, 249 Highway 101 in Florence, at 9:45 a.m. to register.

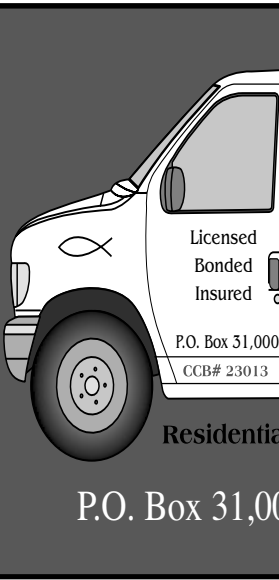
This 10K route includes a variety of environments and walking surfaces. This walk is basically flat ground with some uneven surfaces and is not appropriate for wheel-chairs or strollers.

September is usually the best weather of the year on the Oregon Coast, but no guarantees. Come prepared for whatever the weatherman delivers.

As always, leashed pets are welcome on walks, but be sure to bring water and clean up materials for pets. A sturdy 6-foot leash (non-retractable) is required.

On Wednesday, Sept. 7, The Gems will hold its monthly meeting and potluck dinner at the picnic shelter behind the Commons in Yachats.

For more information, visit www.yachatscoastalgems.org.



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ENJOY SUN, SAFE BOATING LABOR DAY WEEKEND

Labor Day Weekend is one of the top three boating weekends of the year on many Oregon lakes and rivers, attracting thousands to the banks and warmest water of the season.

To keep things fun and safe, the Oregon State Marine Board suggests taking the time to plan your water getaway and take home the following pointers:

- Don't drink and boat. Boating is a great social activity, but the Marine Board encourages boaters and persons floating on the waterways to leave the alcohol on shore; it's safer for everyone.
- If arrested for Boating Under the Influence of Intoxicants (BUII), violators can be fined up to \$6,250; can lose boating privileges for up to three years and even serve jail time.
- Consumption of intoxicants on many Oregon waterways is up, and so are accidents involving alcohol. So far this year, 10 people have lost their lives in recreational boating incidents, many of which involve drugs and alcohol.
- Know your waterway. "Be familiar with your surroundings and always keep watch where you are going," says Ashley Massey, Public

Information Officer for the Marine Board. "Stumps, dead-heads and sand and gravel bars can appear out of nowhere with water depth changes. Start out slow and get your bearings."

"Water levels around the state are very low which means sand and gravel bars may feel like they appear out of nowhere."

- Know what rules apply. "There are all types of watercraft on the market; some are considered boats and others are pool toys. Boats are designed differently, and by state law, have specific equipment requirements, such as having enough properly fitted life jackets and a sound producing device, like a whistle."
- "Attach the whistle to your life jacket and you're set."
- Those who plan to float the river should keep in mind that pool toys are designed for use in a swimming pool. They have no directional control and puncture easily in rivers.
- "If you are planning a relaxing float, do so in a watercraft designed for the river; one which won't easily puncture and comes properly equipped with a paddle so you can maneuver away from obstructions," says Massey
- Wear your life jacket. Each boat (including kayaks, inflatable boats and canoes) must have a properly fitting life jacket for each person on board and at least one sound producing device, like a whistle.

Life jackets need to be in good shape and readily accessible — not under a hatch or in its packaging.

All youth younger than 13 must wear a life jacket when in a boat that's underway.

U.S. Coast Guard statistics show that over half of all boating fatalities occur with small boats on calm waterways, in shallow water and sunny conditions. Ninety percent of boat-

ing fatality victims this year were not wearing a life jacket, on par with Oregon's average of 85 to 90 percent over the last 30 years.

- Sit on the seat. The growth of wake surfing is luring many people to ride on the swim platform, stern, sides and the bow of unenclosed boats. The stern can be a dangerous place for exposure to carbon monoxide and a prop-strike safety hazard.
- It is illegal to ride on the bow, decks, gunwales or transoms of a motor boat when the boat is underway. Sitting on designated seat cushions is the safest place to be — especially when the boat is towing someone.
- Slow down and keep a sharp lookout. Know the boating regulations for your area of operation. Always obey the "slow no-wake" buoys or signs; boaters are responsible for their wake.
- Remember to slow down within 200 feet of a dock, launch ramp, marina, moorage, floating home or boathouse, pier or swim float. Be courteous with paddlers who are also sharing the waterway.
- Wakes can easily swamp low-freeboard paddle craft.
- Don't allow your wakes to generate negative attention from other boaters, property owners and possibly result in a citation.
- Carry your boater education card. All boaters operating boats over 10 hp need to have a boater education card. Youth ages 12-15 who operate a powerboat 0-10 hp alone must carry a boater education card.
- When operating a powerboat greater than 10 hp, youth must be supervised by a card-holding adult age 16 or older. When operating a personal watercraft, the supervising adult must be 18 or older.
- Educated boaters are much less likely to be involved in

boating accidents because they know the "rules of the road."

- Carry your aquatic invasive species prevention permit. For registered motorized craft, your boat registration and current decals act as proof of payment into the program.
- For non-motorized watercraft 10 feet long and longer, such as canoes, kayaks, sailboats, paddleboards and inflatable rafts, the operator needs to physically carry a permit when out on the water. The cost is \$7 for non-motorized craft and can be purchased through any ODFW field office or licensing agent.
- Permits are valid until Dec.31 of the year issued.
- Tyvek tags (waterproof permits) are sold through the Marine Board's online storefront and various Marine Board permit dealers. Tyvek tags are \$5 for the annual permit and \$10 for a two-year permit.
- This program is self-funded and permit fees support aquatic invasive species detection, decontamination, signage and education materials for boaters.
- Marine officers will be on the water to assist boaters and help keep the waterways safe. The top violations so far this summer involve collisions, not having life jackets, failure to carry a boater education card and aquatic invasive species permit.
- Other violations involve reckless operation and drugs and alcohol impairment.
- "Boating is the best escape, and a long weekend before heading back to school and other responsibilities makes it even better," Massey says. "Just remember to prepare, and plan so you can have the best time out on the water, playing."
- For more information about equipment requirements, regulations and ideas on where to boat, visit www.boatoregon.com.

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