



Oregon Trails 2005 - 2014: "A Statewide Action Plan"

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) is now half way through the 2-year Statewide Trails Planning process. Thanks to our Trails Plan Steering Committee Members, we now have an official title for the final planning document, *Oregon Trails 2005 - 2014 "A Statewide Action Plan."* This title is intended to emphasize the vital role that the plan's implementation strategies will play in addressing top statewide trail issues over the course of the 10-year planning cycle.

As part of the planning effort, OPRD staff recently completed a series of 18 regional "recreational trails issues workshops" across the state. We would like to thank all those who participated in these valuable workshops. A primary objective of the workshops was to identify the top trails issues in each of the six trails planning regions. This workshop process identified the *need for non-motorized trail connectivity* as the top statewide non-motorized trails issue. Recreation providers reported that trail connectivity involves making connections between urban and rural trails, public facilities, parks and open space, state and regional trails to community trails and communities. In addition, workshop results identified that increasing non-motorized trail connectivity would result in better use of the state's existing non-motorized trail infrastructure.

Request For Non-Motorized Trail Inventory Assistance

Now that the need for non-motorized trail connectivity has been identified as a key statewide issue, our challenge is to properly address the issue in the Oregon Trails Plan. Towards this end, OPRD and Oregon State University (OSU) have developed a method for collecting trail inventory data from non-Federal public sector recreation providers across the state to identify future opportunities for connectivity. The inventory is designed to identify non-motorized of:

- "Statewide Significance" connecting major destinations such as communities and natural, cultural or historic sites of statewide or national significance;
- "Regional Significance" connecting regionally significant sites, are multi-jurisdictional, multi-use and that connect to national, state, or other regional trails; and
- "Local Significance" making important community connections to local destinations (within the community boundary) such as public lands, parks, town centers, neighborhoods and schools. Here we will be looking for a limited number of your key "user significant" trails or high-use trails providing the greatest benefit to the public.

By January 1, 2004, all state agencies, special park and recreation and port districts, county and city park and recreation departments and tribes which reported non-motorized trails in the 2001 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Inventory will receive a letter requesting that they report non-motorized trails of special significance within their jurisdiction. OPRD strongly urges all public providers to assist in this important effort by completing the inventory surveys for your agency. The information that you will provide will be used for statewide planning purposes and to determine funding priorities for trail-related OPRD administered grant programs.

Progress Report

There is considerable progress to report on since our last newsletter. The *Oregon Trails 2005 - 2014 "A Statewide Action Plan."* includes the following primary planning components: 1) a statewide trails planning website; 2) identification of regional and statewide trails issues; 3) a set of goals, objectives and strategies for addressing top statewide issues; 4) a statewide trail user

survey and 5) a statewide trails inventory. Below is a progress report on these important planning components.

1. A Statewide Trails Planning Website

The statewide trails planning website now includes a wide variety of information related to the trails planning process including:

- Current and past planning newsletters ! Lists of top regional & statewide trails issues
- Steering committee member lists and meeting minutes ! Lists of all issues comments gathered in workshops
- Regional issues workshop information ! A description of the trails inventory process

The trails planning website is located at <http://www.prd.state.or.us/trailsplanning.php> .

2. Identification of Top Regional and Statewide Trails Issues

During the September round of Trails Plan Steering Committee meetings, committee members voted on the final set of top regional and statewide issues for motorized, non-motorized and water trails. Final lists of top regional and statewide trails issues are now available at http://www.prd.state.or.us/trailsplanning_regional_issues_summaries.php .

3. A Set of Goals, Objectives and Strategies For Addressing Top Statewide Issues

A brainstorming session during the September Steering Committee meetings was used to develop ideas for addressing top statewide trails issues. Following the meeting, OPRD staff used these comments to develop an initial draft set of statewide goals, objectives and strategies for the Motorized, Non-Motorized and Water Trails Plans. These goals, objectives and strategies were developed to provide recreation decision makers across the state with long-term direction for resolving the top statewide trails issues. Steering Committee members are currently being asked to review and comment on these initial drafts before the materials are posted on the trails planning website.

4. A Statewide Trail User Survey

The University of Oregon's Survey Research Laboratory (OSLR) is in the process of conducting a statewide telephone survey of trail users. The purpose of the survey is to assess the needs and opinions of Oregon's citizens as they relate to trail recreation opportunities and management. The survey's unique design will provide statistically reliable results for each of the three user groups (motorized and non-motorized trail users and non-motorized boaters). Since most non-motorized boaters will not have used or know about water trails, a two-part survey design has been developed. The water trails survey will start out with general non-motorized boater questions such as frequency of participation, preferred waterway type, barriers to participation and so on. Next, the survey interviewer will describe the Oregon water trail concept and ask respondents to answer a series of questions designed to assist managers in developing additional designated paddling routes in Oregon. In a few weeks, the OSLR will begin the process of telephoning a random sample of Oregon households to result in 800 completed interviews of recreation trail (motorized and non-motorized) users and non-motorized boaters. Final survey reports will be posted on the trails planning website in May 2004.

5. A Statewide Trail Inventory

Oregon State University's Forest Engineering Department began work on the statewide trails inventory in July 2003. The trail inventory process is designed to gather information about existing and proposed motorized (off-road trails at the state's 40 Designated OHV Management Areas and snowmobile trails) non-motorized (trails of statewide, regional and local significance) and water trails. A detailed description of the inventory is available at

http://www.prd.state.or.us/trailsplanning_inventory.php