

South Lincoln County: Hike-Bike-Paddle Map

THEME: A project to map all the non-motorized trails traversing 20 miles of coastline and 300 square miles of land and water in South Lincoln County creates a more compelling and accessible visitor destination that also benefits a strong base of local users. The map exists in print and digital form.

PROJECT IMPACT: The digital mapping project was completed in 2014, and is available [online](#). Since 2015 is the first visitor season in which the map is available, the impact on visitation is not yet known. However, concurrent with the mapping project, new trails and trail improvements that have long been in the works have also been completed. There has also been a much-cited impact on collaboration, as echoed by the Port of Alsea's Maggie Rivers: "The biggest change has been more active collaboration between Waldport, Yachats, the Port of Alsea and Seal Rock. We are all working on projects together and already thinking beyond those to what's next—it's more proactive now. We used to collaborate because we had to, now it's because we want to."

PLACE: South Lincoln County is located between the Coast Range and the Pacific Ocean along the central coast of Oregon. With an approximate area of 300 square miles, the landscape is diverse, from the steep 800 foot high Cape Perpetua headlands on its southern coast to wide flat beaches, estuaries and off-shore haystack rock formations to the north. The Alsea and Yachats Rivers create bays in Waldport and Yachats. Inland, the land rises swiftly into the Coast Range. While most known for its extraordinary coastline, the most dominant feature of the landscape may in fact be its forested nature. The vast majority of land in all of Lincoln County is forested, and in South Lincoln County, the vast majority of land is part of the Siuslaw National Forest.

South Lincoln County includes two incorporated cities: Waldport and Yachats, and well as two unincorporated communities, Seal Rock on the coast, and Tidewater inland. The total population of this area in the 2010 was 8,313. Tourism is a major driver of the regional economy in Lincoln County, and particularly in South County's smallest incorporated community, Yachats (population 690), where 87% of the municipal budget depends on revenue from local lodging tax. In larger Waldport (population 2033), tourism supports just a half of a percent of the municipal budget, primarily because its tax base is more diverse and there are relatively few places to stay overnight in the community. Historically and today, the two communities have different relationships with the tourism sector as a result. However, through the Rural Tourism Studio, the communities are actively collaborating around tourism.

STORY: South Lincoln County has had a number of trails related projects and committees for many years that tapped the energy and desire of local people for a variety of trail experiences. The best known to visitors include the Amanda Trail which climbs to the Cape Perpetua summit, traces the forced march of a blind Coos woman; and the Historic 804 trail which parallels the coast along an old highway right of way: Both resulted from many years of local advocacy and labor.

The idea of coordinated development and promotion of a coherent trail system for South Lincoln County has also been in play for many years, to build connections between trails and to build visitor awareness of the inland recreational sources away from the more crowded coast areas.

When the Rural Tourism Studio began, there was already significant, but separate work ongoing to further develop and promote the trail system, including:

- Connecting the 804 trail in Yachats with the inland ridge trail system. This new trail, the [Yaxaik](#) (pronounced Ya-hikh') Trail, is named in the language of the original native inhabitants, and interpretive signage telling their story is being installed along the trail. The Forest Service, local members of the Oregon State Trails Advisory Council, Yachats and South Coast Trail Committees, private citizens and businesses (Overleaf Lodge, Gerdemann Botanical Preserve, Touchstone Gallery, Earthworks, etc) enabled many easements across public and private lands. The Jobs Corps and local Trails Committee led the trail improvements. The project took six years to implement, culminating in a June 2013 [trail dedication](#).
- Expanding the [Alsea River water trail](#) system, first by adding access in the Beaver Creek Natural Area, and continuing to work on expanding the water trail inland upriver, in collaboration with the Alsea Fisherman's Association. This requires strong partnership with the primarily private land owners along the Alsea River, and capital investment because many existing launches are in disrepair. The National Park Service has provided technical assistance grants for water trail development and mapping.
- Strengthening and expanding the [Kayak Shack](#), a student operated business coordinated through Waldport High School and the Port of Alsea that offers seasonal guiding and equipment rentals.
- Developing a gravel bicycling trail and a bicycling event to promote (related story on the Oregon Coast Gravel Epic)

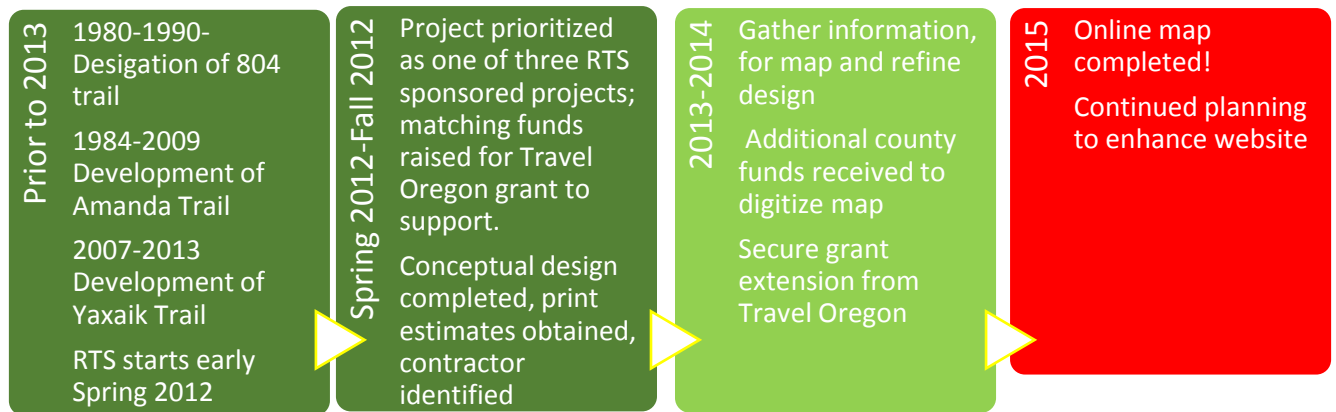
Building upon the deep local constituency for trails, participants in the Rural Tourism Studio helped to connect and amplify their work. As David Locke of the Overleaf Lodge recalls, "the Rural Tourism Studio really highlighted that trails were a key asset of the area, and that we could promote what we had—hiking, biking, kayaking, future equestrian trails- as a unique draw." Furthermore, the asset could be improved because "our trails, while near each other, weren't near each other because they were not connected physically or in our marketing".

The 15 year vision statement for the region that emerged from the Rural Tourism Studio includes "an extensive world-class trail system threads the region together- community to community, rainforest to oceanfront, and activity to activity- providing the infrastructure needed for day and multi-day experiences in the area for hikers, backpackers, trail runners, cyclists and kayakers. Therefore, participants from the RTS therefore joined efforts with others in the community who were already pursuing the idea of a comprehensive non-motorized trail map, including Oregon State Trails Advisory Council member Lauralee Svendsgaard and local historian Joanne Kittel. Together they were able to overcome the myriad of logistical challenges and negotiations for the project.

One of the challenges for the mapping project was managing the tension between desire for community autonomy and branding and the need for consistency with the statewide travel brand. This affected not only the "look" of the final product, but also the distribution plan, pricing and budget. The experience has led to some changes at Travel Oregon to make the process more transparent and smooth for future communities interested in a similar project.

All in all, the South Lincoln County Hike-Bike-Paddle map project is a success story in terms of how community leaders built upon the synergy between projects desired for the local community and projects that would serve as visitor draws. Without this synergy, it is unlikely the communities could have sustained the level of energy, volunteerism, and persistence to see this project through.

TIMELINE



LESSONS LEARNED:

- It creates powerful synergy to meet a local need and a visitor need with same project
- Map design and digitalization projects are complicated and often take longer than estimated. Build extra time into the project schedule.
- Travel Oregon has a style guide for promotional materials, as well as practices for distribution and pricing of materials that receive state funding. And local groups often have their own ideas about style and distribution that are not consistent with those guidelines. Given the experience in this community, Travel Oregon is developing processes and templates/tools that will help communities draw on best practices, facilitate compliance with the Oregon brand, and allow for flexibility to reflect local priorities. The [Willamette River Water Trail](#) website has been pointed out as a good example of a project that reflects all of these goals.
- Integrating project elements that connect with young people in the community builds strong community support and ownership. “Our community is very proud and protective of the Kayak Shack” operated by Waldport High School students, and featured on the map.
- It is great if the planning committee includes people who can break down barriers to collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. For example, a local member of the State Trails Advisory Committee was instrumental in brokering agreements.
- Sources of funding for trail development include the National Park Service Recreation Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, which paid for technical assistance and mapping of the Alsea River Water Trail.

BUDGET:

The cash cost of this project was \$14,500: \$5,000 from Travel Oregon, \$5,000 from local match, plus a separate \$4,500 match from county to digitize the map.

Revenue	Cash	In-kind
Oregon Tourism Commission Matching Grant	\$5,000	
Local match (cities of Yachats and Waldport, Port of Alsea, Waldport Chamber of Commerce)	\$5,000	
25 hours donated Text writing and illustrating (City of Yachats Trails Task Force)		\$1,250
25 hours donated Cartography		\$1,250
Lincoln County (to digitize map)	\$4,500	
Total revenue	\$14,500	
Expenses		
Graphic design and artwork	\$4,900	
Printing	\$4,780	
Distribution/postage	\$ 320	
Map digitalization	\$4,500	
Text, editing, cartography		\$2,500
Total Expenses	\$14,500	

TOOLS/RESOURCES:

Map available online at www.hikebikepaddle.org

[Photos and article about Ya'xaik Trail](#)

Links to other references are included in the text above

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