

OUTDOOR RECREATION TOURISM STUDIO PROJECT OUTCOME REPORT

PRESENTED BY WASHINGTON COUNTY VISITORS ASSOCIATION



Introduction

In the summer of 2017, the Washington County Visitors Association (WCVA) developed a Destination Development plan through the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP) to host a regional community-based tourism studio in western Washington County and parts of Columbia County.

A tourism studio is a program through Travel Oregon that helps communities brainstorm, prioritize and develop successful project ideas around tourism. Travel Oregon offers a rural studio, agritourism studio, and an outdoor recreation studio.

Through multiple brainstorming sessions with various community leaders, it was discovered that our region was connected through many trails, specifically, the Tualatin Valley Scenic Bikeway (TVSB), Banks-Vernonia State Trail, and Crown-Zellerbach Trail, which connected the two counties together in a way not taken advantage of prior.

To capitalize on the economic impact of bike tourism through these trails, an Outdoor Recreation Tourism Studio application was completed, and a regional steering committee was identified to lead the project forward.

The WCVA became the local network manager to complete the tourism studio application, convene the steering committee, and work with Travel Oregon. The WCVA had allocated funds through the RCTP plan to implement the studio and projects following.

At the beginning of 2018, Travel Oregon approved our region for an outdoor recreation tourism studio to be completed in the spring. Thus, began the preparation for a two-day studio to be hosted in May 2018.

Overview of the Tourism Studio:

In May 2018, a two-day Outdoor Recreation Tourism Studio was hosted to bring together proponents in the industry from Washington and Columbia counties.

This tourism studio, hosted by Travel Oregon, brought 40 stakeholders together to learn and discuss the outdoor recreation opportunities in the region. The goal was to provide more of an understanding of the economic impacts of cycling tourism, the elements of a cycling destination, and the current cycling assets in the Greater Tualatin Valley.



Through the studio, Travel Oregon and the facilitators developed a cycling tourism strategy for the Greater Tualatin Valley steering committee to implement. The strategy included three priority action items:

1. Identify “best of the best” routes.
2. Enhance cycling amenities.
3. Implement regional wayfinding.

Outcome of the Studio:

Of the action items that were established from the outdoor recreation tourism studio, two action teams were prioritized and formed to execute route and bike hub development. Community stakeholders volunteered to be on an action team to help each project develop the steppingstones for success.

Action Team #1’s mission was to identify and catalogue the “best of the best” paved and gravel routes in the Greater Tualatin Valley suited to attract bicycle tourists from around the globe. For this action team to succeed, three objectives were identified:

1. Identify 7 to 10 “Best of the Best” paved and gravel routes.
2. Create a Ride With GPS (RWGPS) tourism and ambassador account to highlight the developed routes.
3. Add and create cycling content, such as trip ideas and itineraries, to tualatinvalley.org.

By utilizing our local cycling expert stakeholders, we brainstormed and mapped various potential routes that were categorized by difficulty which was measured by distance and elevation. The goal was to have at least a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 paved routes. By the end of the project, we had gone above and beyond our goal with 9 new routes in addition to the already popular and well-known Banks-Vernonia State Trail and Tualatin Valley Scenic Bikeway.

Those paved routes are:

- Family Friendly Banks-Vernonia State Trail
- Columbia County Challenge
- Forest Grove to Coast Range Tour
- Henry Hagg Lake Loop
- North Plains Farms & Forests Tour
- North Tualatin Valley Car-Free Ride
- West Tualatin Valley Tour
- Western Tualatin Valley Car-Free Loop
- Wine Country Ramble



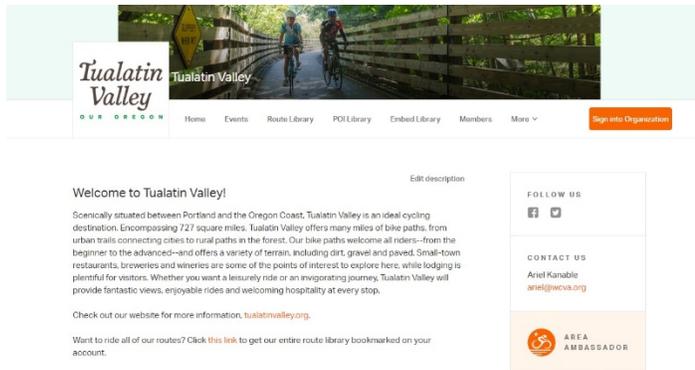
For our gravel route development, our goal was at least a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5. We ended the project with 3 new gravel routes in addition to the popular Crown-Zellerbach Trail.

Those gravel routes are:

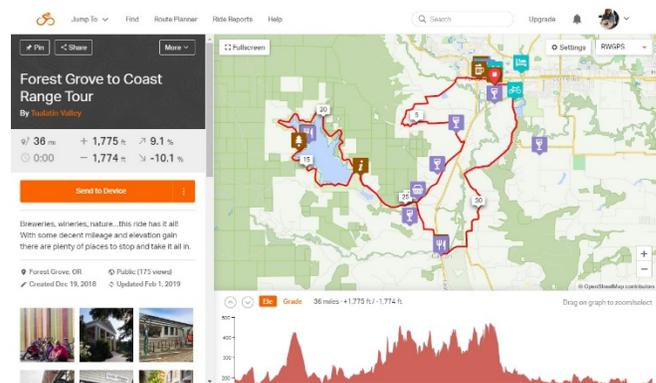
- Reehers Camp Loop
- Tillamook Forest Tour
- Vernonia Coastal Mountain Tour

Ride With GPS (RWGPS) is a local business that develops cycling content geared to cyclists around the world by allowing users to track and document their own rides, keep a log and receive statistics of their rides, and embark on more cycling adventures. Organizations can create a RWGPS Tourism Account that promotes the routes in their destination, provides riders the opportunity to subscribe and receive turn-by-turn directions when following one of their routes.

Each newly developed route was mapped on RWGPS, curated with a route description and filled with points of interest (POI) along each route. When viewed, users can view a map of the route with icons highlighting the various types of POI, a handful of images relevant to the ride and detailed mileage with elevation measurements.



RWGPS Tualatin Valley Tourism Account.



Forest Grove to Coast Range Tour Route on RWGPS.

Four routes on RWGPS are identified as Ambassador routes, which display differently than other routes. These routes were selected by Travel Oregon's Destination Development team due to their uniqueness in ride and location. Due to this selection, these routes will be highlighted and promoted on Travel Oregon's website. Those routes are:

- Columbia County Challenge
- Crown-Zellerbach Trail
- Western Tualatin Valley Car-Free Loop
- Wine Country Ramble

As another way to promote these routes, a cycling centric page, "Cycle Series" trip ideas and itineraries were developed for visitors online at tualatinvalley.org.

Each route had its own landing page with an embedded map from RWGPS and description. The "Cycle Series" trip ideas were produced during February and April of 2019 and highlight the following routes:

- Banks-Vernonia State Trail
- Forest Grove to Coast Range Tour
- North Plains Farms & Forests Tour
- Western Tualatin Valley Car-Free Loop
- Wine Country Ramble

TRIP IDEAS

APRIL 5, 2019 | BY JACKIE LUSKEY | NO COMMENTS

Cycle Series: Wine Country Ramble



Montinore Estate

One of the best ways to see the rolling hills of the northern Willamette Valley is from the seat of your own bicycle. The *Wine Country Ramble* offers a dedicated route that cycles by a dozen fantastic wineries. You can take a pit stop for a vineyard view or even a peek into the tasting rooms (perhaps gear your bicycle so that you can carry-out a few bottles to enjoy post-ride).

For turn-by-turn directions of the trail that you can send directly to your mobile device, make use of *Ride with GPS*. The trail page also includes a

Cycle Series Trip Idea.

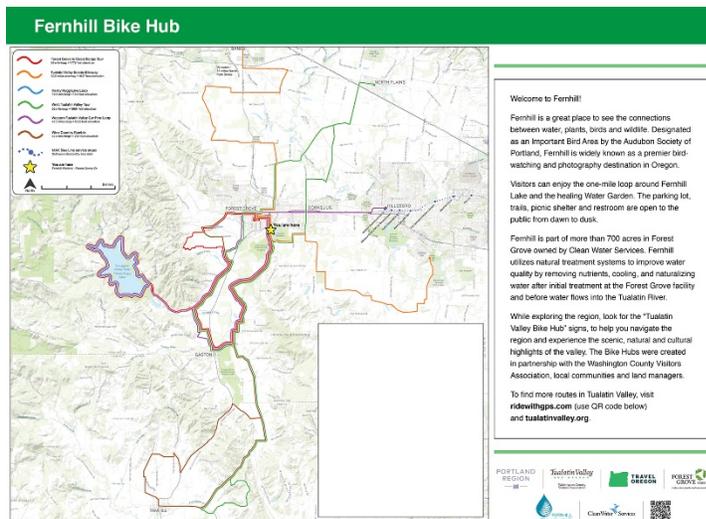
Bikes & Brews (three-day) and Bikes & Birds (two-day) are two existing cycling focused itineraries active on tualatinvalley.org. The following itineraries are scheduled to be produced early 2020:

- Business Traveler's Special
- Two-Wheeled Family Weekend
- One-Week Tour
- Wine Country
- Town and Country
- Three-Day Weekend Gravel Tour

Action Team #2's mission was to develop a Bike Hub design and identify 3 to 5 locations to implement this design suited to provide bicycle tourists with amenities and information. For this action team to succeed, three objectives were identified:

1. Brainstorm "Bike Hub" design.
2. Select 3 to 5 priority locations.
3. Determine implementation strategy and budget.

This Action Team determined the following amenities to be most important to traveling cyclists:



Bike Hub map and information.

- Signage
- Map and information
- Restrooms
- Shelter
- Drinking water
- Food/drink for purchase
- Bike racks
- Bike pump
- Public work stand
- Bench
- Picnic table
- Solar USB charger

A branded community sign and map were created to signify the Bike Hub location and concept.

The beginning goal was to have 3 to 5 Bike Hubs; by the end of the project there was 12 Bike Hubs. These locations were selected based off proximity to the new developed routes and existing amenities (restrooms, water, food, etc.). Not every location has all or the same amenities.



Bike Hubs:

- Banks-Vernonia State Trail
 - Banks Trailhead
 - Buxton Trailhead
 - Manning Trailhead
 - Vernonia Trailhead
- Downtown North Plains
- Downtown Forest Grove (Rogers Park & Plaid Pantry)
- Fernhill Wetlands
- Gaston Lake Stop Grocery
- Henry Hagg Lake
 - Park Entrance
 - Elks Recreation Area
 - C-Ramp Recreation Area
- Downtown Hillsboro*

*Temporary location due to construction at MAX stop, once the new stop is complete Bike Hub will be transferred.



North Plains Bike Hub with Solar USB Charger



Vernonia Bike Hub



City of Hillsboro temporary Bike Hub



Manning Trailhead Bike Hub

Acknowledgements:

The success from the Greater Tualatin Valley Tourism Studio was possible due to dedicated stakeholders, county-to-county partnerships and community passion. The WCVA would like to provide our sincerest gratitude to the following partners in this project:

- City of Banks
- City of Forest Grove
- City of Hillsboro
- City of North Plains
- City of Vernonia
- Clean Water Services
- Columbia County
- Gaston Lake Stop Grocery
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Ride With GPS
- Travel Oregon
- Washington County Parks

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- Howard Sullivan, Forest Grove/Cornelius Chamber of Commerce
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