

OUT OUR BACK DOOR

By Tom Baake

YOUR GUIDE TO FUN ON OREGON'S SOUTH COAST!



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Old Coast Road Ramble Makes For Fun Excursion

By Tom Baake

Most visitors to Humbug Mountain State Park near Port Orford check out the challenging trails to the top of the mountain, but fewer folks know about the nearby section of Old Coast Road that offers fun hiking and biking as well as some impressive coastal views.

Closed to vehicles, the Old Coast Road trail begins (or ends, depending on your direction of travel) in the campground at Humbug Mountain State Park, and rambles up and along for 2 miles before reconnecting with US 101 about 3½ miles south of Port Orford. Along the way you can check out massive old trees, fern-shaded creeks, interesting slices of ever-shifting coastal geology, a plethora of botanic and biologic specimens, a perfect picnic table location – and did I mention the views?

Speaking of views, before we get going on this trek, I must discuss the trails up 1756-ft Humbug Mountain, since they draw many visitors. The mountain itself is a bit of a geologic wonder – it's one of the highest on the coast to rise right out of the ocean -- and hasn't seen much logging, so it's a rare and special place for a hike. The first half-mile of the 3-mile push to the top is definitely the toughest. The trail splits about a mile along, so it's possible to make a loop.

Humbug Mountain is deeply forested right to its tip-top, so there isn't much of a seaward view, although you can contemplate the vista to the south, down to the Frankport rocks and Neskie Beach and beyond.

Best views are from the West Trail, which you've presumably taken either going up or coming down. There are benches that offer nice views of the ocean, and northward to Port Orford and Cape Blanco.

Old Coast Road

The trail on the Old Coast Road doesn't rise nearly as high as those on adjacent Humbug Mountain, but it begins a gradual climb as it leaves the near-sea level location of the state park campground, which is 4 miles south of Port Orford on US 101.



A lone picnic table perches on a grassy knoll above Humbug Mountain State Park south of Port Orford. Visit it along the Old Coast Road trail that begins in the park.

The Old Coast Road is gated-off and marked by Oregon Coast Trail signposts, with adjacent parking places. The trail is open for day-use and access is free.

The narrow, still-paved onetime highway follows the contours of the slopes above the state park, with traffic noise on US 101 competing with the sound of rushing creeks and squabbling bluejays. The trail swings north and crosses an impressive-looking footbridge, then heads west again through wooded slopes dominated by manzanita and tanoaks. Tantalizing views of the ocean peek through the trees.

Small rockslides on adjacent steeply-rising hillsides reveal cross-sections of strata – crumbling sandstone layered in places with deep red clay and harder rocks. Even the pavement is crumbling in places, yet other stretches still sport a double yellow line down the middle of the road.

Passing a big redwood water tank for the campground, the road continues to rise to its high point at a bit under 1 mile. A picnic table placed on a little grassy promontory is the perfect place to take it all. The glittering, restless ocean seems to stretch away endlessly, mingling into the horizon in a distant haze where the sea meets the sky.

The beach seems far, far below, while closer at hand, Humbug Mountain looms hugely, cloaked in

deeply shadowed forest.

From the picnic place, the road swings north, negotiating gravel sections and a few more ups and downs before beginning a gentle descent. Glimpses of Port Orford come into view. About a quarter-mile from the top, a sign indicates a side trail leading to a viewpoint. The path leads up and through a picture-perfect stand of wind-sculpted pines. A deep, soft layer of pine needles covers the trail, muffling footfalls and lending a sort of hushed reverence to the place.

Yet another spectacular view is revealed, with a strategically-placed bench from which to ponder it all. The coastal bluffs here have given way to gently rolling grassy hills that stair-step down toward US 101 a few hundred feet below, then fall more abruptly just beyond onto the shoreline. Right offshore are ancient seastacks, some just barely above water, others more monolithic, all weatherbeaten and scarred veterans of eons of storm-driven oceanic gnashing.

Returning to the Old Coast Road, it continues an easy descent through a corridor of tall firs. Highway sounds still boom up from US 101, but there's a sense of calm on this upper old road. It's like having your own beautiful private parkway through the woods.

And what's this? Another picnic table. Although I must admit not situated in a spot nearly as spectacular as the other one. Nevertheless, a nice touch, and a good place to pause one last time, because not far beyond is the north end of the trail, marked by a gate and trail signs. Just around the corner is US 101.

Some ambitious bicyclists who like to make loops choose to go left (S) to return to Humbug Mountain State Park on US 101 (which is also the Oregon Coast Bike Route). That route involves a little climbing, but all in all less than returning on the Old Coast Road. Although personally I'll trade a bit more uphill for the tranquility of a return ride on that little private parkway.

Plus I can pad up through the pine needles again and revisit that view.

(Discover lots of other great hikes with Tom Baake's go-to guidebook, "Out Our Back Door," available at bookstores, visitor centers and www.scod.com/guidebooks.)

FEBRUARY Health News

Fighting The Five Most Common Foot Woes

(ARA) - From eating better foods to getting an adequate amount of sleep and exercise, we're a very health-aware society. So why is it that many Americans routinely overlook one of the cornerstones of good health?

While nearly 70 percent of Americans say they want to be healthier five years from now, just 51 percent recognize that foot health can be a key to achieving that goal, according to a survey from the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA).

"Nearly eight in 10 adults have experienced some type of foot ailment in their lives. Yet despite the pain, close to three in 10 do nothing about it, simply choosing to live with their pain," says Dr. Michael King, a podiatrist and president of APMA. "Meanwhile, more than half of those surveyed said they had endured foot pain at some point in their lives but have not sought treatment from a podiatrist."

So what are the five most common types of foot problems and what causes them? Here are some tips



Do you know what the five most common types of foot problems are and what causes them?

from today's podiatrists:

* Nail problems are one of the most prevalent foot woes in both men and women. These problems can range from ingrown toenails to fungal infections. Ingrown toenails - a condition in which the corners of sides of a nail dig painfully into the soft tissue of the nail grooves - is the most common form of nail problem. To avoid ingrown toenails, trim nails straight across and don't dig into the corners. If a toenail becomes infected, see a podiatrist immediately for treatment. Those with diabetes, peripheral vascular disease and other circulatory disorders should seek a podiatrist's care on a regular basis to help prevent complications.

* Sweaty feet and foot odor are two foot conditions that are often experienced together. While stinky feet are definitely embarrassing, feet that sweat excessively can lead to other foot problems, even creating an environment conducive to the development of athlete's foot. Closed shoes make feet sweat, but in the winter you can't avoid wearing them. Instead, practice good foot hygiene. Wash feet daily with soap and water, keep shoes and socks dry, and choose socks that wick away moisture. Change shoes and socks regularly and consider rubbing cornstarch or applying antiperspirant directly onto the soles of your feet.

* Pain in the ball of the feet - Nearly one-third of adults have reported pain in the balls of their feet. Pain in this location can be caused by over-exertion, injury or ill-fitting shoes. To avoid, always wear well-fitting, supportive and activity-appropriate shoes when walking, running or engaging in other physical activity. If necessary, replace the insoles that came in the shoes with ones that provide additional cushioning.

* Heel pain - This type of pain can have many sources, including weight gain, excessive foot flattening, muscle imbalance, injury or even improper footwear. To kick heel pain to the curb, always be sure to warm up and stretch properly before and after exercise. If wearing high heels, opt for heels that are no more than two to three inches in height. For persistent pain, treatment can range from prescribed orthotic devices and medications to cortisone injections, physical therapy and rarely, surgery.

* Bunions - A bunion is an enlargement of the joint at the base of the big toe. Treatments range from self-remedies such as using a bunion pad around the bony prominence, to ice packs to reduce the swelling, and

avoiding shoes that could irritate the bunion and even make the problem worse. For persistent pain, see a podiatrist for a full range of treatment options.

"While foot problems are common, that doesn't mean people should be resigned to living with pain," King says. "Consulting today's podiatrist can help people feel better sooner, and get back to living healthier lives."

American Red Cross Blood Drives For February 2012

The Red Cross has scheduled blood drives at the following locations. Please call 1-800-Red Cross (1-800-733-2767) to schedule your donation appointment (Note the alternate numbers listed for certain drives).

PLEASE NOTE NEW LOCATIONS FOR COOS BAY AND NORTH BEND COMMUNITY DRIVES

Feb 7: 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Bandon Community: Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 355 Oregon Ave. 1-800-733-2767

Feb 7: 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. Coquille Community: 115 N. Birch: Coquille Community Building 1-800-733-2767

Feb 9: 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Myrtle Point Community: Maple School, 413 C Street. 1-800-733-2767

New Location: Feb 9: 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Coos Bay Community: Red Lion Hotel, 1313 N. Broadway Dr. Coos Bay 1-800-733-2767

New Location: Feb 16: 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. North Bend Community: Church of Christ, 2761 Broadway Ave. North Bend 1-800-733-2767

Feb 20: 12:00 – 6:00 p.m. Reedsport Community: Masonic Temple 626 Winchester Ave. 1-800-733-2767

Feb 21: 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. Powers Community: Powers Baptist Church 990 1st Ave. 1-541-439-3685

Feb 28: 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Gold Beach Community: Curry Showcase 29392 Ellensburg Ave. 1-800-733-2767

Feb 29 : 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Brookings Harbor Christian Church, 777 5th Street (Harbor) 1-800-733-2767

March 1: 10:00 am – 3:00 p.m. Brookings Harbor Christian Church, 777 5th Street (Harbor) 1-800-733-2767