

Cascade Head Scenic Research Area

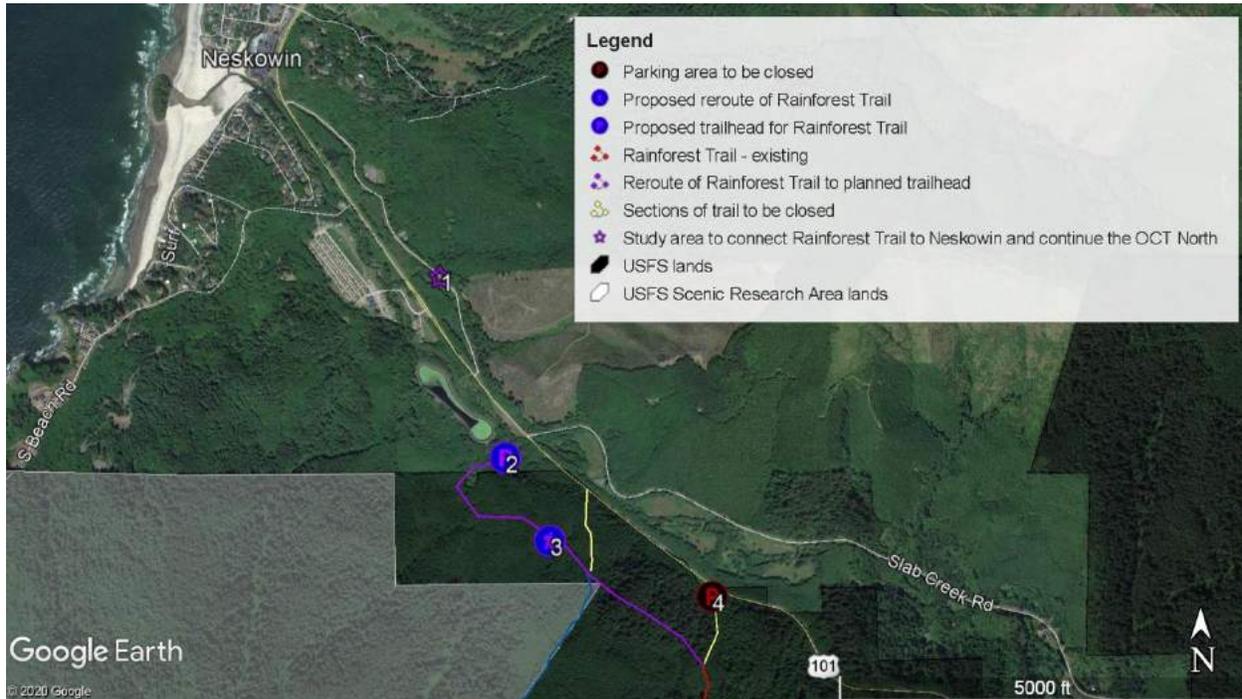
PRELIMINARY – DRAFT

Recommendations for Trail & Access

NOTE – The following actions are proposals only and are not final recommendations. This document is intended to be used to get feedback on these preliminary (draft) recommendations. It is not a plan or final proposal.

Trail & Access Recommendations #1-4

Neskowin Area



#1 Connect the Oregon Coast Trail to Neskowin

Work with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), United States Forest Service (USFS), the sewer district and private landowners to determine best way to connect the Rainforest Trail (Oregon Coast Trail) to Neskowin. This will allow for OPRD to continue the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) northward, create a contiguous route for through hikers and give Neskowin residents a direct connection to Cascade Head Scenic Research Area (CHSRA).

Lead entity = OPRD

Partners = USFS, ODOT, Neskowin Regional Sanitary District & private landowners

#2 Develop a new parking area for the Rainforest Trail

Create a parking area on the Neskowin side of the Rainforest Trail (Trail #1310) and the Falls Ridge Trail (currently unmaintained). The current parking area is small and has poor vehicular access from Highway 101. A new parking area on USFS lands immediately adjacent to the sewer district site would allow for a safer and larger parking area to serve the needs of locals and visitors as well. This parking area could accommodate up to 15 vehicles.

Lead Entities = USFS

Partners = ODOT, OPRD & Neskowin Regional Sanitary District

#3 Rename Trail #1310 to the Rainforest Trail & reroute the northern end

The existing Trail #1310 is currently named the Cascade Head Trail. This is confusing to many visitors because they expect the trail to take them to the meadow at the true head/point of Cascade Head. Instead, the trail takes them north/south within the coastal forest without even a viewpoint of the ocean or Cascade Head. This trail should be renamed to Rainforest Trail to reduce the confusion.

A reroute at the northern terminus of the Rainforest Trail (USFS Trail #1310) will avoid the existing limited capacity parking area (#4) and allow for a safer parking area (#2). This proposed reroute will also connect the unmaintained Falls Ridge Trail and The Rainforest Trail (which serves as the OCT) so that both trails would connect to the new parking area (#2).

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = OPRD & Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar volunteer non-profit

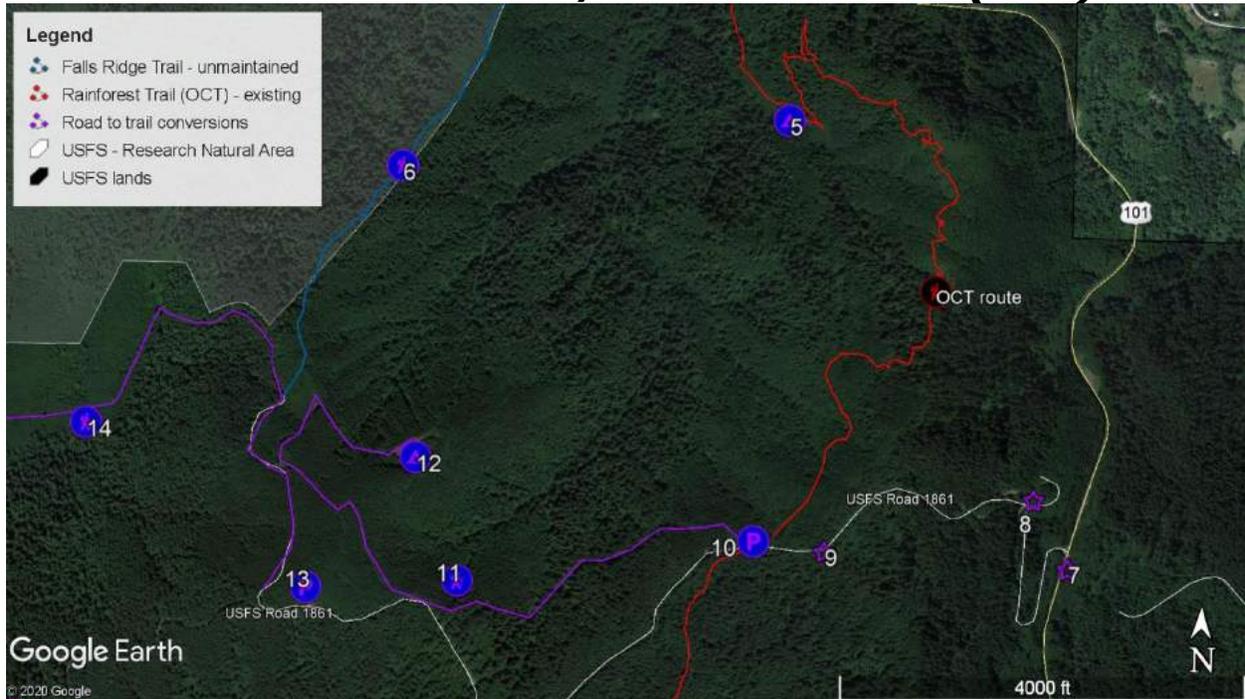
#4- Decommission the existing parking area for The Rainforest Trail

This parking area has dangerous access/egress to Hwy 101 and does not allow for adequate vehicular parking. Once a new trailhead (#2) and reroute (#3) are constructed, this parking area should be closed and section of trail leading to this existing parking area obliterated to prevent unwanted parking here.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = OPRD & Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar volunteer non-profit

Trail & Access Recommendations #5-14 *The Rainforest Trail/USFS Road 1861 (East)*



#5 Potential Hiker-only camping on The Rainforest Trail

Currently, there are no camping sites within CHSRA. This poses a problem for through hikers on the OCT. This location along the northern half of The Rainforest Trail is well suited for hiker-only camping including access to water. One to three campsites could be developed here. More study will be needed to find the best suitable location. The USFS and OPRD could partner to site and fund the camp.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = OPRD

#6 Re-open the Falls Ridge Trail

The Falls Ridge Trail runs parallel to The Rainforest Trail (#1310). Currently, this trail is 1.25 miles long, is not maintained and is mostly impassable. Much of the alignment is on an old logging road descending along the top of Falls Ridge. This trail should be re-opened. Towards the northern (Neskowin side) end of Falls Ridge, the trail becomes exceedingly steep. This section(s) should be studied for potential reroutes to keep the grade reasonable and to reduce future maintenance costs. If re-opened, a loop would be created with Falls Ridge Trail and The Rainforest Trail.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit trail organization

#7 Improve intersection of USFS Road 1861 & Hwy 101

Signage leading drivers to CHSRA and The Meadow at Cascade Head should be installed on Hwy 101. This signage could also serve to warn motorists there is an intersection ahead. The intersection of Hwy 101 and USFS Road 1861 should be improved to allow for safer egress. An easier and less expensive improvement to this intersection would include installing a “Pork Chop”, which would force traffic to only turn right when exiting Road 1861. A longer term and more expensive fix would include a dedicated turn lane for both directions of traffic on Highway 101. This would require widening the roadway.

Lead entity = ODOT & USFS

Partner = Tillamook County & TNC

#8 Potential future CHSRA entrance both

If use increases dramatically, there may be a need to install an entrance booth that would allow for more direct visitor interaction and to sell NW Forest Passes. An entrance booth could also serve as a means of disseminating information on trail closures, management activities and fire danger. A gate and adequate turn-around could be installed here in case there is a need to close USFS road 1861.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = TNC

#9 Open USFS Road 1861 year round

USFS road 1861 has needed a road closure to protect sensitive avian species. This particular species has been de-listed and it is believed that opening the road for traffic year round will not negatively impact this particular bird. The USFS will consult with the US Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife to analyze the opening of this road to year round traffic. This recommendation would allow the USFS Road 1861 to become the primary access point for vehicles to the meadow at Cascade Head and the trails that start and intersect this road.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = ODFW and TNC

#10 Develop a parking area at the intersection of USFS road 1861 & The Rainforest Trail

There is an existing small pullout at the intersection of The Rainforest Trail (Trail 1310) and Road 1861. It is recommended to enhance this pullout to create a parking area with room for 4-6 vehicles.

This parking area would allow for hikers to access Trail 1310 and the planned Tie Trail (#11).

Lead entity = USFS

#11 Convert old roads to create The Tie Trail

There is an old logging road that starts at the existing pullout (#10) at the intersection of Rainforest Trail and USFS Road 1861. The Tie Trail would allow hikers to avoid walking USFS 1861 road and tie the OCT route (Trail 1310) with the potential hiker-only camp (#12) located near the top of Falls Ridge Trail (#6). It would also create a larger loop connecting Falls Ridge Trail and The Rainforest Trail. As stated above, this trail would utilize an old logging road and would be about 1.3 miles in length.

Lead entity = USFS

#12 Potential Hiker-only camp

There is a borrow-pit near the top of Falls Ridge Trail (#6). This area could serve as a hike-in only camp for through hikers on the OCT. As mentioned in recommendation #5, CHSRA does not currently have any campsites for through hikers. The USFS should partner with OPRD to study, site and fund one or more of these hike-in only campsites. 1-3 campsites could be developed here. There is no running water but a hand pump well might be able to be installed here. This camp could be accessed via maintenance vehicle on the existing old road (NF-122) off of USFS road 1861.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = OPRD

#13 – Create a parking area for Falls Ridge Trail

This recommendation is to create for a parking area for 4-10 vehicles at or near the intersection of USFS Road 1861 and NF-122. This parking area could serve hikers walking Falls Ridge Trail (#6) and the proposed Chitwood Ridge Trail (#14). A locked gate should be installed on the NF-122 road just past the parking area which will prevent vehicles from driving along the proposed Chitwood Trail or the potential hiker-only camp (#12).

Lead entity = USFS

#14 – Construct the Chitwood Ridge Trail

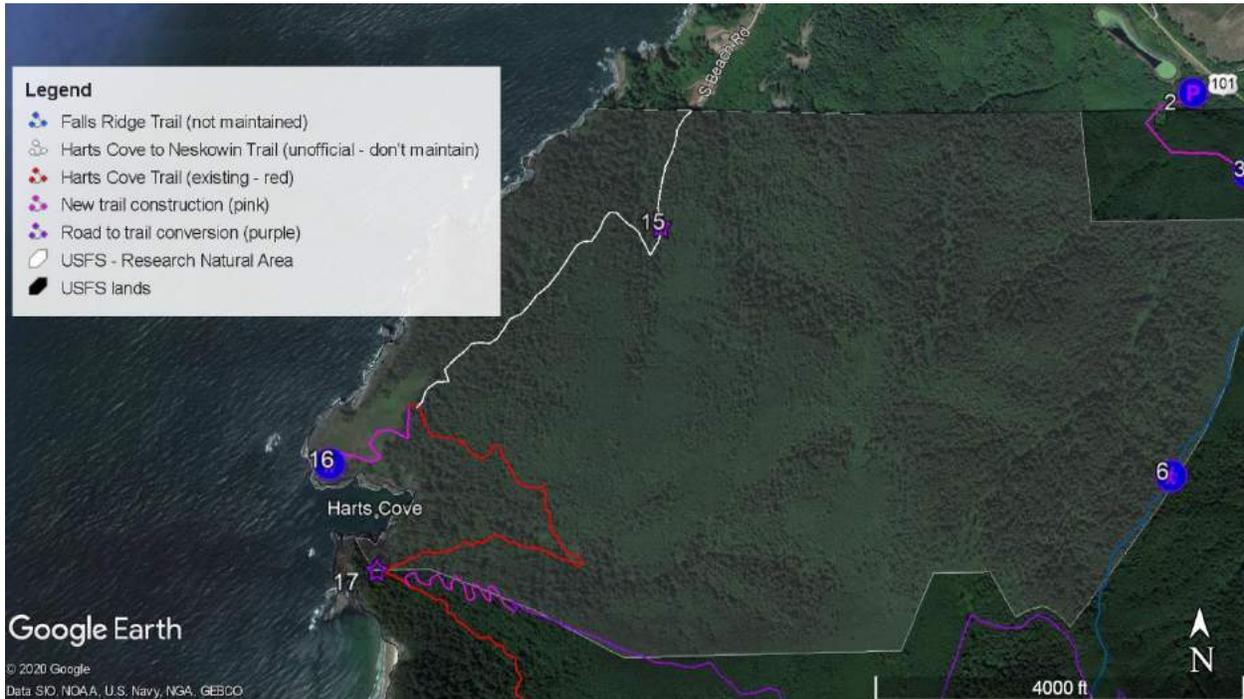
This trail would branch off of Falls Ridge Trail and utilize an existing old logging road along a ridge paralleling Chitwood Creek. The trail would then need to be constructed from the old road (top of the ridge) down to the existing Harts Cove Trail. Approximately 1.25 miles of the trail would be on old logging road and ½ to 1 mile of actual trail would need to be constructed depending upon where this section was sited.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit trail organization

Trail & Access Recommendations #15-17

Harts Cove Area



#15 Leave the Harts Cove to Neskowin Trail unmaintained

This trail does not have legal access to South Beach Road and the town of Neskowin for the public. Until this changes, this trail will be left unmaintained. It will not be obliterated because researchers from the Neskowin Crest Research Natural Area (RNA) utilize this trail to get to their research plots. If legal through passage to Neskowin or Highway 101 can be obtained, this trail could be formalized and receive maintenance.

Lead entity = USFS

#16 Formalize a trail through the Harts Cove Meadow

Visitors attempting to get a view of Harts Cove and the ocean are creating a web of trails through the meadow at Harts Cove. A formalized trail leading to a viewing platform should discourage the majority of this activity and reduce the impacts from these user made trails. The viewing platform would act as the destination for hikers which could dissuade them from getting close to the cliff edge and further reduce impacts to the natural resources here. Interpretative panels here could focus on the marine life of Harts Cove, Cascade Head Marine Reserve, Neskowin Crest Research Natural Area and the history of this area.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve & Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

#17 Enhance the bench & viewpoint above Harts Cove

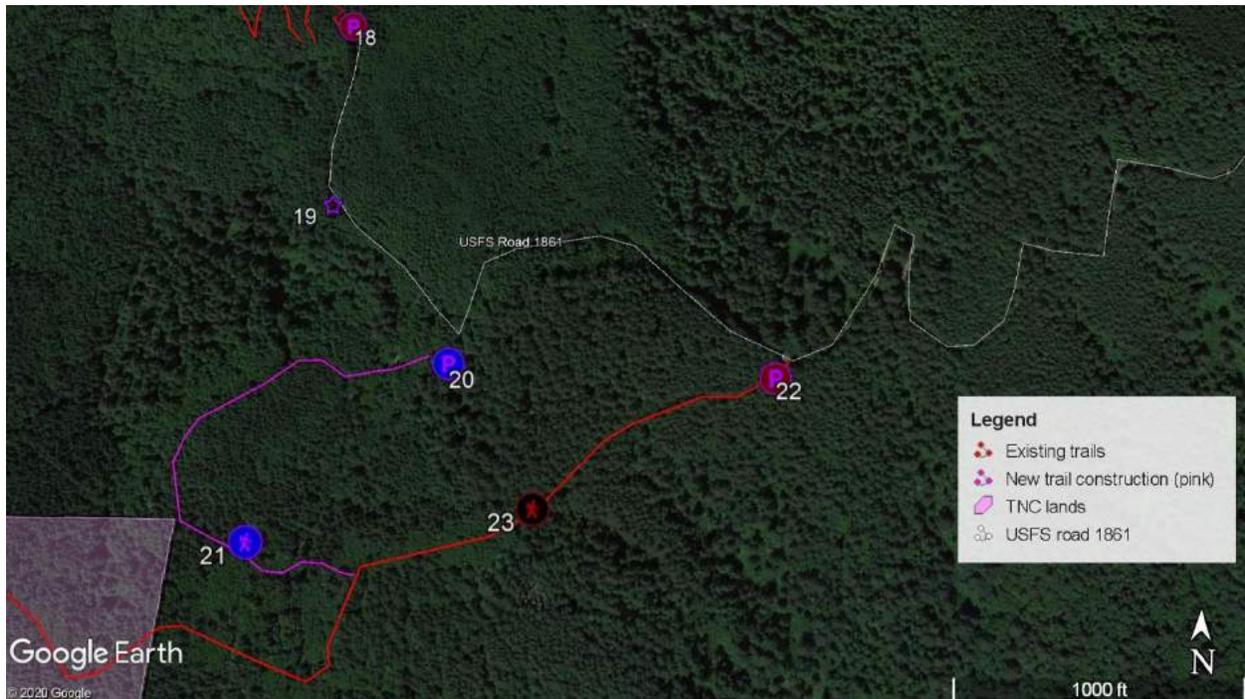
The bench and viewpoint above the south end of Harts Cove has become overgrown. Brushing the view, reconstructing the bench and installing fencing will protect the resources, enhance the aesthetics and protect visitors.

Lead entity = USFS

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Trail & Access Recommendations #18-23

Upper Cascade Head Trailhead Area



#18 Maximize parking at the Harts Cove Trailhead

Currently, the end of USFS Road 1861 serves as a turn-around and trailhead for Harts Cove Trail. There is room for about 4-5 vehicles here. The parking can be redesigned here to maximize the number of vehicles that can be parked here.

Lead entity = USFS

#19 Install a gate to allow for road closure to Harts Cove Trail

A gate should be installed between the proposed new Upper Cascade Head trailhead (#20) and the parking area for Harts Cove. This would allow the proposed trailhead for the Upper Cascade Meadow Trail (#20) to serve both trails when visitation is low. It would also help the volunteer host at the new trailhead (#20) to better monitor the parking here. This section of road in question is approximately 1/3 of a mile.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = TNC

#20 Create a large trailhead/parking for the Upper Cascade Head Trail

This proposed trailhead would have 20+ parking spots, a toilet and a volunteer host. It would serve as the main trailhead for the Cascade Head Meadow and should be signed and marketed as such. It could also serve as a parking area for Harts Cove Trail during times of low visitation.

If USFS Road 1861 is opened year round (#9), this proposed trailhead will likely become the most popular trailhead in the northern half of CHSRA as it is the shortest and easiest way to get to the Cascade Head Meadow. It is hoped that this new trailhead will greatly reduce congestion and impacts from trail visitation at Knight Park/Three Rocks/Savage Road area.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = TNC

#21 Construct a tie trail from the proposed parking (#20)

Once the new trailhead is constructed (#20), a sort section of new trail will need to be completed connecting the new trailhead (#20) to the existing Upper Cascade Head Trail. This trail would become the main route for the Upper Cascade Head Trail. This trail is needed to connect hikers from the proposed parking area to the upper meadow.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = TNC, Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit

#22 Convert the existing parking area to ADA compliant

Once the new Upper Cascade Head Trailhead (#20) is developed, the small existing parking area should be retrofitted to make it ADA-friendly. It should be denoted and signed as handicapped-only. An ADA bathroom should be installed here as well.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = TNC

#23 Make Upper Cascade Head Trail ADA compliant

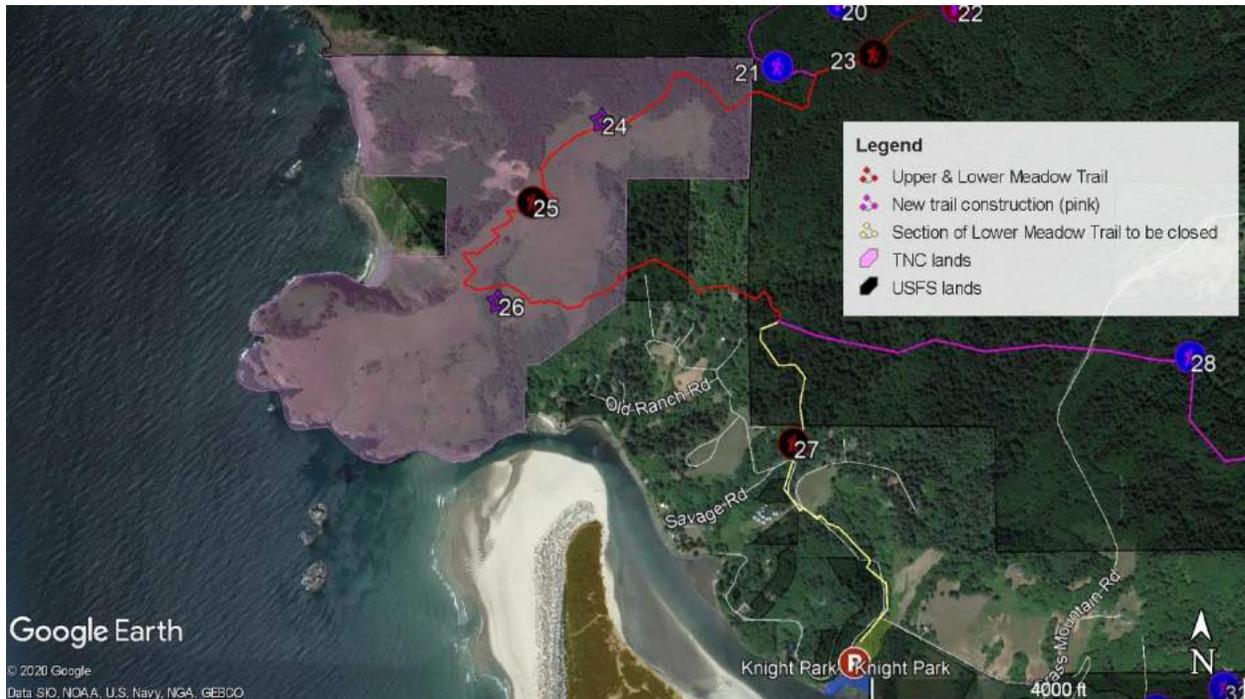
The existing trail to Upper Cascade Head should be modified to be ADA compliant and lead visitors of limited mobility from the ADA parking area (#22) to the Cascade Head overlook viewing platform (#25). The trail will likely have to be turnpiked/elevated in spots and a woodchip or crushed compact gravel surface will likely need to be installed. As long as the conversion to ADA compliance does not negatively impact the meadow and the species that frequent it, the ADA portion of the Upper Cascade Head Trail should go to the key overlooks/viewing platforms (#25).

Lead entities= TNC & USFS

Partner = Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit

Trail & Access Recommendations #24-27

Cascade Head Meadow Area



#24 – Study best spot for formalized overlook(s) of Cascade Head & Meadow

A formalized overlook could help deter wandering and unsanctioned trail creation. An overlook platform could provide an enhanced view. In addition, interpretation about the meadow and its restoration efforts, how TNC became stewards of the meadow and Roosevelt Elk could help to educate the public but also attract them to the viewing platform and reduce wandering on the meadow. A second viewpoint should be studied to the west and/or north of the meadow. This would further reduce wandering around in the meadow and cliff exposure. All overlooks should be made ADA compliant if it does not adversely affect the natural resources.

Lead Entity = TNC

Partner = USFS & Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve

#25 Reroute or repair incised sections of the trail in the Meadow

The portion of the Cascade Head (TNC) Trail that climbs the meadow has degraded and become incised. It should be assessed to see if trail reroutes or repairs are needed. The instillation of steps and check dams will likely help to make this section more enjoyable to hike and easier to maintain.

Lead Entity = TNC

Partner = USFS & Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit

#26 Create a viewing platform at the lower meadow

The Lower Meadow Trail has an excellent view of the Salmon River, the Pacific Ocean and the lands south towards The Thumb. Constructing a viewing platform here is recommended and will serve as a good vantage point for those that hike up from the Three Rocks Road area and don't want to hike up to the top of the meadow.

Lead Entity = TNC

Partner = USFS & Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve

#27 Close the lower section of the TNC Trail to/from Knight Park

This lower portion of the TNC Trail has maintenance issues and utilizes easements to go through private property. Private residences continually experience parking and issues of people walking in the public and private roadways to and from Knight Park. To reduce safety, trespass and resource damage from the steep and eroded sections of this portion of the trail, it is recommended to be closed once a trailhead (#31, 33 or 35) is constructed and a trail (#28) is created connecting the Lower Cascade Head Trail to The Rainforest Trail (Trail #1310).

Lead Entity = TNC

Partner = USFS & Cascade Head Ranch

Trail & Access Recommendations #28-36 Three Rocks Road Area



#28 Connect the TNC Trail to the Rainforest Trail (#1310)

This will tie the Rainforest Trail (#1310) with the existing Lower Meadow Trail. When a new parking area and trailhead is developed (#31, #33 or #35), this trail will allow the existing lower portion of the Lower Meadow Trail (#27) to be closed and this will become the main Lower Meadow Trail. This trail is estimated to be approximately 2 miles in length.

Lead Entity = USFS

Partner = Sitka Center, TNC & Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit

#29 Develop appropriate non-motorized access to Salmon River

Study where best water trail access points could be located. While not a terrestrial trail, the concept of a paddle trail on Salmon River was mentioned in the community survey, the open house and adjacent landowner workshops.

Partners = Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council, USFS, TNC, Westwind, adjacent landowners & The Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve

#30 Bike/Ped Improvements to Three Rocks Road

It is recommended that partners work with Lincoln County to create a striped bike/ped lane or road-separated trail within the Three Rocks Road right-of-way. This will allow/encourage biking and walking and hopefully reduce motorized traffic on Three Rocks Road.

Lead Entity = Lincoln County

Partner = USFS, ODOT, TNC, adjacent landowners

#31 Potential trailhead on Alder Park Drive This potential recommendation has been dropped due to landowner concerns.

The USFS lands on Alder Park Drive could potentially be used for a trailhead. This trailhead would have room for 35+ vehicles, bathrooms and an on-site volunteer host. If developed, this would be the main trailhead for the Lower Meadow Trail. This trailhead would not be needed if the potential Three Rocks Road trailhead (#33) is developed.

Lead Entity = USFS

Partner = adjacent landowners, Lincoln County & TNC

#32 Connect Potential Alder Park Drive Trailhead to Rainforest Trail #1310 This potential recommendation has been dropped due to landowner concerns.

A connector trail on USFS lands from the potential Alder Creek Drive Trailhead to the Rainforest Trail would be needed if the potential trailhead is constructed (#31). This connector trail would be about a mile in length and should be named the Lower Meadow Trail and connect into the new section of the Lower Meadow Trail (#28).

Lead Entity = USFS

Partner = adjacent landowners, TNC & Trailkeepers of Oregon

#33 Potential Trailhead on Three Rocks Road

This USFS land along Three Rocks Road could be developed with 35+ cars and serve as an alternate trailhead to Knight Park. Bathrooms and an on-site volunteer host would also be located at this proposed trailhead. This trailhead would not be needed if the proposed Alder Park Drive trailhead (#31) was developed.

Lead Entity = USFS

Partner = County, TNC, adjacent landowners

#34 Trail connection from potential trailhead on Three Rocks Road

If a trailhead is built on 3 Rocks Road, a trail connecting the parking area to the Rainforest and Lower Meadow Trail (#28) would need to be developed on USFS lands. It would be approximately 1.75 miles in length. A corner section crossings will be needed so agreement from one or two private landowners may be needed to construct this trail.

Lead Entity = USFS

Partner = TNC, adjacent landowners

#35 Potential new trailhead for Rainforest Trail (#1310)

The small parking lot at the south end of the Rainforest Trail only has room for 2 vehicles and has a problematic entrance at the intersection of Three Rocks Road and Highway 101. A new trailhead on the private lands above the current parking area could allow for 35+ vehicles, a bathroom and on-site volunteer host. This trailhead could also serve the Lower Meadow Trail and could be implemented in place of the other proposed trailheads (#31 & #33).

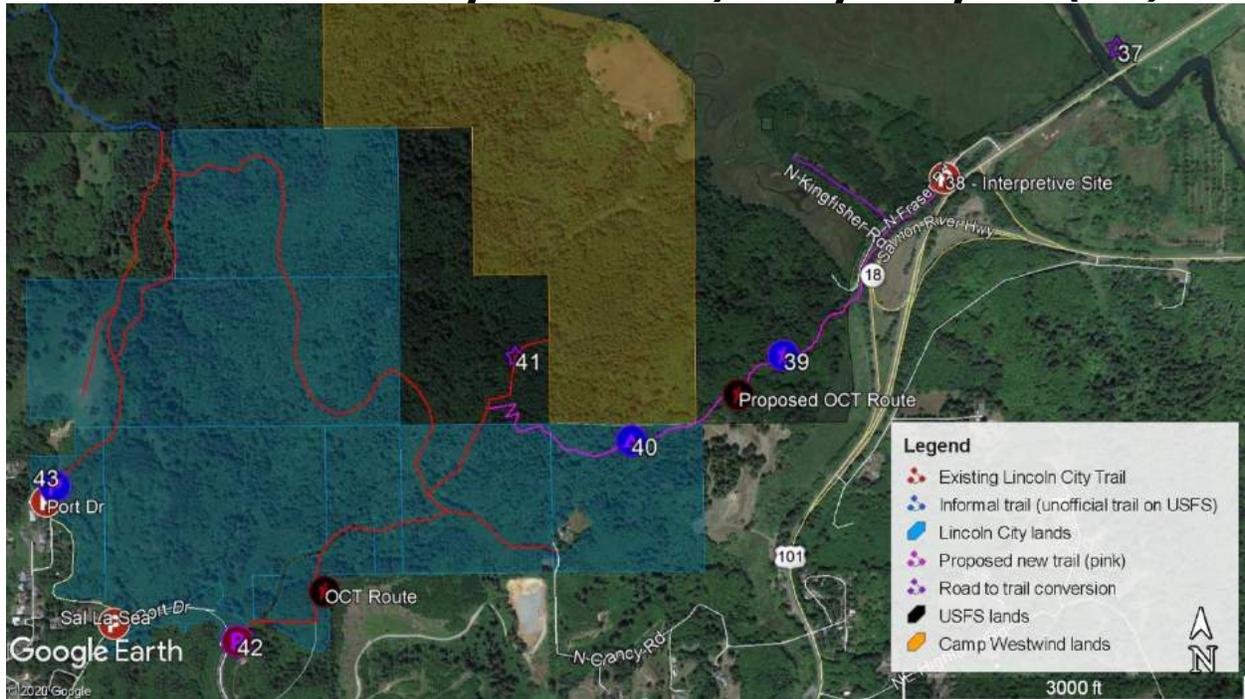
#36 Improve intersection of Highway 101 & Three Rocks Road

It is recommended to “T” up this intersection to make it safer and easier for vehicles to safely enter and exit Three Rocks Road. This would involve rerouting the alignment of Three Rocks Road so that it becomes a straight line across Highway 101 instead of its current alignment. When this road work is done, the existing culvert and ditch should be improved to allow for fish passage. In addition, a turn lane and a deceleration lane are needed.

Lead entity = ODOT

Partners = Lincoln County, USFS & OPRD

Trail & Access Recommendations #37-43 *Fraser Road Interpretive Site/LC Open Space (east)*



#37 Improvements to Hwy 101 at Salmon River crossing for bike & ped

The Oregon Coast Trail route will go from the southern terminus of Trail 1310 (Rainforest Trail) to the Fraser Interpretive Site. This section of Highway 101 could use bike and pedestrian oriented improvements to make this portion of the OCT safer and enhance the visitor-use experience. These improvements could include widening highway 101 and providing a striped bike/ped lane and making a bike/ped walkway on the Salmon River bridge.

Lead entity = ODOT

Partners = USFS & Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council

#38 Convert old road bed to ADA trail at Fraser Interpretive Site

There is an old road bed just to the southwest of the Fraser Interpretive Site. It could easily be converted to an ADA trail with a viewing platform. Focus of this trail should be to provide views of the Salmon River slough (wetlands) and provide interpretation of the value of these wetlands and the restoration efforts taking place in this area.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = Westwind, Salmon-Drift Creek Watershed Association and Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve

#39 Construct a trail connecting the interp. site to Lincoln City Open Space

A roughly 1 mile in length trail should be constructed connecting the Interpretive Site and the trails on Lincoln City open space. This will be the Oregon Coast Trail connection to Lincoln City. The routing could either be on USFS lands or Camp Westwind property. The best route for trail design is through Westwind lands but this would only be possible with the Camp's approval.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = Camp Westwind, Lincoln City

#40 Potential hike-in only camp

Explore the potential to develop a hike-in camp for 1-3 sites on USFS or Westwind lands to serve the Oregon Coast Trail in the southern portion of Cascade Head Scenic Research Area. This camp would serve as the only camping within the southern portion of CHSRA and could only be accessed by hiking approximately ½ mile from vehicular access. Westwind and USFS should work together to assess the best location for this potential hike-in only campsite(s).

Lead = USFS

Partners = OPRD, Camp Westwind, Lincoln City

#41 Decommission spur logging roads

Old roadbeds that lead to nowhere should be considered for closure to reduce confusion for hikers.

Lead entity = Lincoln City

Partner = USFS

#42 Expand the Devils Lake Boulevard Trailhead

The northern end of NE Devils Lake Boulevard serves as a trailhead for the Lincoln City Open Space Trails leading into the Knoll and Thumb. This trailhead only has 3-5 parking spots. This trailhead should be expanded to accommodate 25+ cars. Expanding this parking area will be critical to reducing trespass and illegal parking elsewhere in Lincoln City. This trailhead should have a bathroom and could have an on-site volunteer. If expanded, this trailhead should be signed and marketed to lead people to here when hiking the Knoll and Thumb Trails.

Lead entity = Lincoln City

Partner = USFS

#43 Potential Parking Area at gravel site off Port Drive (Future)

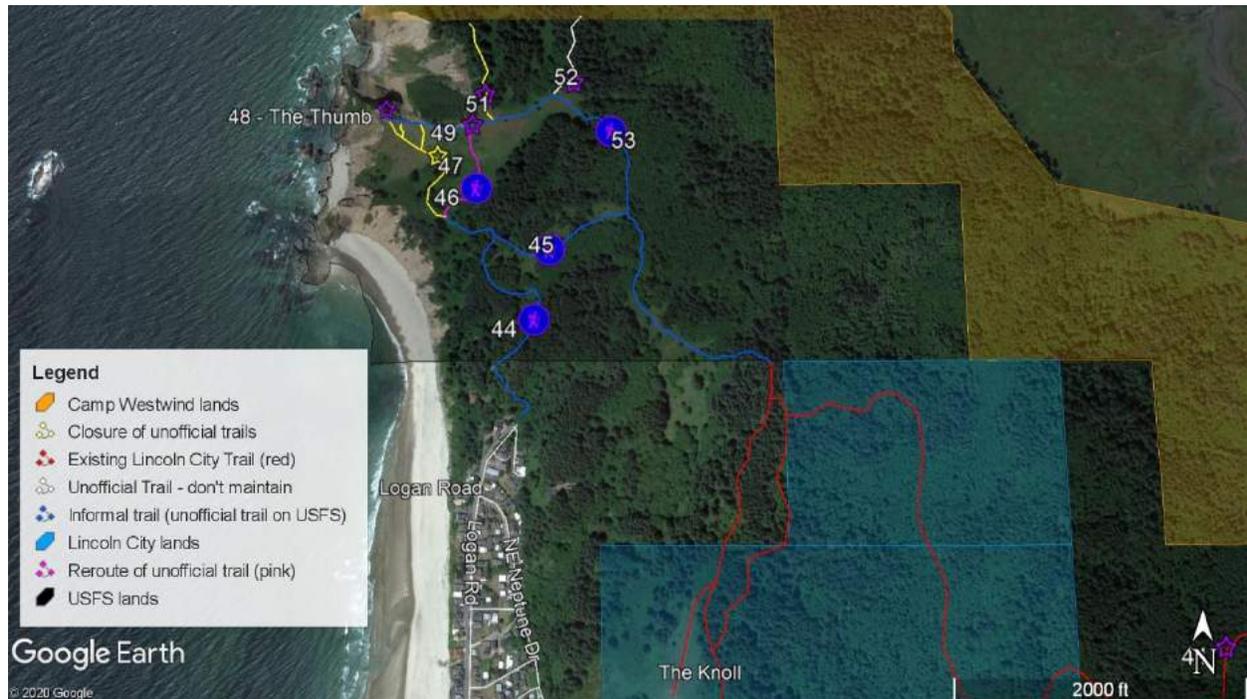
Currently, there is a small parking area at Port Drive but is limited in space and cannot be expanded to accommodate more vehicles. If there is a need to develop more parking, the gravel site above Port Drive could serve as an additional parking area for 6+ vehicles.

Lead entity = Lincoln City

Partners = USFS

Trail & Access Recommendations #44-53

The Thumb & Knoll Area



#44 Formalize the Lower Thumb Trail

Currently, the Lower Thumb Trail is not an official USFS trail. It is recommended that it become one. Trail maintenance should be performed in areas where mud and erosion is an issue. This may include rerouting sections of trail, installing turnpikes, building steps and laying down bark chips or gravel.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = Lincoln City

#45 Formalize the Lower Thumb to the Knoll Connector Trail

Much like recommendation #44, the route that connects the Lower Thumb Trail and the Knoll Trail should be made an official USFS trail. Perform trail maintenance in areas where mud, erosion and steep slopes are an issue.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = Lincoln City

#46 Reroute the Lower Thumb through the meadow below the Thumb

Create a sustainably-designed reroute of the portion of the Lower Thumb Trail that goes through the lower meadow to the Thumb. This reroute will allow for a better designed trail

that will be more enjoyable and easier to maintain. It should lead to the viewing platform (#49).

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = Trailkeepers of Oregon or similar non-profit

#47 Obliterate all user-made trails through the lower meadow

Eliminate the user made steep and loose trails leading across the lower meadow to the Thumb. There are several user made trails that are unsustainable and not enjoyable to walk on. These trails should be closed and a better designed official trail constructed higher up on the lower meadow (#46).

Lead entity = USFS

#48 – Formally name the Thumb as the Thumb

Some people recently started referring to the Thumb as God's Thumb. It has led to confusion. Work with media and tourism entities to continue to name it as The Thumb. Remove all names other than the Thumb from travel brochures, maps, guidebooks and websites.

Lead entity = Explore Lincoln City

Partners = Lincoln City, USFS, Travel Oregon, Oregon Coast Visitors Association

#49 – Construct a viewing platform of the Thumb

An attractive viewing platform overlooking the Thumb and coastline to the north will reduce the desire to walk along the dangerous knife edge trail to the Thumb and enhance the user experience. Interpretive signs about the area including marine life, Cascade Head Marine Reserve, CHSRA and the Biosphere Reserve designations could be installed here. Sign the user made trail along the knife's edge ridge leading to the Thumb as a dangerous cliff hazard.

Lead entity = USFS

Partner = Lincoln City, ODFW and the Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve

#51 – Close this user-made trail leading to Westwind property

This trail is unofficial and encourages trespass on private lands (Westwind). It should be decommissioned and obliterated to prevent confusion and future trespass.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = Westwind

#52 – Leave this user-made trail leading to Westwind property

This user-made trail leading to Coon Lake should be left as unofficial and not maintained. Camp Westwind utilizes this trail for activities with its campers. The trail should be signed as leading to private property and no trespassing. If desired, Camp Westwind can install a gate to help reduce trespass.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = Westwind

#53 Formalize the Upper Thumb Trail

This informal trail leading from Lincoln City Open Space to the High Meadow and Thumb should be formalized and maintained according to USFS standards. This trail should be signed as the main route to the Thumb and marketing and informational materials should lead people to the parking area at the end of NE Devils Lake Boulevard (#42) and eventually onto this trail.

Lead entity = USFS

Partners = Lincoln City and Explore Lincoln City

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