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## Historic Columbia River Highway closing for a mile in restoration project

*Vista House open until Oct. 1 as road and viaduct improvement project begins*

The Historic Columbia River Highway will close Tuesday Sept. 4 through the end of September from Crown Point to Latourell Falls as part of a highway restoration project. This one-mile stretch of road will be closed to all motorized vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

In addition, a section of the highway from Larch Mountain Road to Crown Point will be closed to vehicles longer than 25 feet.

Vista House will remain open through September but will close from Oct. 1 until the end of 2012 while crews restore the 600-foot Crown Point viaduct that encircles the historic 1918 building. Vista House itself underwent a five-year restoration, re-opening in 2005, and will not be involved in the project.



The viaduct and its 29 support columns are deteriorating and, without restoration, the walls could fail and jeopardize the safety of both Vista House and the highway. Without repairs, the road could require weight restrictions, which could keep tourist buses, RV's and other large vehicles off the road.

Work on the project is being done in two phases, the first from July to Dec. 31, 2012 and again from April 1, 2013 until completion by late spring 2013.

Here is the updated closure schedule:

- Sept. 4 to Sept. 30, 2012: The Historic Columbia River Highway from Crown Point to Latourell Falls will be closed to all pedestrians and vehicles, including bicycles, with Larch Mountain Road to Crown Point closed to vehicles longer than 25 feet. Vista House will be open.
- Oct. 1 to Dec. 31: The highway from Larch Mountain Road to Latourell Falls will be closed to all pedestrians and vehicles, including bicycles. Latourell Falls to Bridal Veil Falls will be closed to vehicles longer than 25 feet Vista House will be closed.
- Jan. 1 to April 1: Infrequent lane closures with specific traffic restrictions yet to be determined. Vista House will be open on its winter schedule.
- April 1, 2013: Tentative start date for the final phase of the project, expected to be completed by late spring 2013. Periodic lane closures with specifics still to be determined. Vista House will be open.

The road, now called the Historic Columbia River Highway, opened in 1916. Two years later, Vista House opened at the Crown Point summit 733 feet above the Columbia River. The road was the primary route through the Columbia River Gorge until 1963 when Interstate 80N opened. I-80N was renamed Interstate 84 in 1980.

For more information, go to <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/or/crownpoint>.

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