

News Release

Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept.

For Immediate Release

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Media Contact:

Chris Havel, Director's Office, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Desk: 503-986-0722 // Cell: 503-931-2590

Meeting will share information about possible recreation changes on Nehalem Spit in 2013

Manzanita OR – The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) will host an informational meeting at the Pine Grove Community House in Manzanita, Oregon on January 24, 2013, from 6-8 p.m. to answer questions about proposed recreation changes on the Nehalem Spit coming in 2013. The changes -- keeping dogs on leashes on the southern portion of the spit during part of the year -- are driven by Oregon's commitment to provide habitat for western snowy plovers, a shorebird.

Western snowy plovers are native to the Oregon coast and are protected by both the federal and state law. Plovers currently nest on the Oregon coast from Lane County south, and on Midway Beach in Washington state 40 miles north of Astoria. Their numbers are slowly increasing; an estimated 290 adult plovers live in Oregon now, a record high since monitoring began in 1990.

Under the Endangered Species Act, if plovers begin nesting in a new area, beach closures could be required to protect plovers wherever the birds nest. Instead of allowing plovers to affect Oregon's public beaches in this unpredictable way, OPRD took a different approach. After a substantial public comment period, the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted the Habitat Conservation Plan for Western Snowy Plovers in 2010. Under the coast-wide plan, if plovers nest in an area **outside the designated recovery spots**, the individual nest will be protected, but the beach will remain open to the public.

To protect recreation on the ocean shore and help the plover at the same time, OPRD worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to focus habitat management on a few designated spots on the north coast such as the Nehalem Spit. In 2013, park staff will ask visitors to voluntarily keep dogs leashed (see attached map) on a portion of the beach. This voluntary change would become a requirement in 2014, and is necessary for Oregon to comply with the habitat plan. The area is already close to driving, and that rule will continue. OPRD will eventually improve plover habitat in one spot on the south spit, but no recreation changes are proposed there. Several options will be opened for discussion at the meeting. The January 24 meeting is a chance to hear more and ask questions about the proposed changes.

More information is online at <http://tinyurl.com/oregonplovers> . The meeting will be held at the Pine Grove Community House at 225 Laneda Avenue in Manzanita, Oregon, 503-368-7463.

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