

February 25, 1972

Mr. David Talbot
State Parks Superintendent
Oregon State Highway Commission
Salem, Oregon

Dear Mr. Talbot:

I surely hope that the Cape Kiwanda situation will be resolved in the near future and to the advantage of the State of Oregon.

I noticed today's Oregonian article regarding the Kiwanda problems which of course was a repetition of what you told me on the phone. It of course will add fuel to the fire and create more pressure on all parties involved.

I feel that if the Cape should be sold, there is apparently a danger it will fall into the hands of land developers which would be one of the most tragic events that could occur on our Coast. As you are aware, there is no coastal area in America that compares with the colorful beauty of the Cape and it surely should remain available for public enjoyment. It should be preserved in the State Parks System whatever the cost may be.

Unfortunately, lives will probably continue to be lost as a result of carelessness at Kiwanda, just as there is an ever-increasing number of fatalities resulting from boating accidents off our coast and as accidents occur in other popular recreational areas with the tremendous increase in popularity of outdoor living. Under State Park supervision, hazardous activities and resulting drownings might be reduced at Kiwanda. I mentioned to you on the phone that many years ago State Photographer Jim Young and I pursued the possibility of creating a State Park at Kiwanda at the same time we also urged creation of a State Park at Smith Rocks in Central Oregon. Unfortunately land acquisition at Kiwanda was apparently even more of a problem at that time than it is now.

Kiwanda definitely deserves to become a State Park, and I hope that some arrangements may be made whereby it will achieve that status.

Sincerely,

RA ir

Ray Atkeson

August 12, 1974

Mr. John E. Lilly
Perks Recreation Technician
Oregon State Highway Division
Highway Building
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Mr. Lilly:

Enclosed is a photo map on which I have altered present fencing and included suggestions for other protective measures I feel should be planned for Kiwanda.

I too, am sorry the meeting cannot be held. I will again offer my suggestions and observations in this letter to accompany the map.

I believe that photographers like myself are more familiar with the cape and it's hazards than most other people. Of course Mr. Mason is better qualified to suggest geological hazards. However I have visited the Cape countless times since 1930 and on many of those visits I have spent several hours observing surf action as well as near accidents which have occurred while I've been taking photos.

I contend that obvious danger on the main cliff will in itself make visitors more cautious, whereas the bowl appears deceptively safe. Its obvious to those familiar with the area that the long deep chasm on the north is very dangerous because of slipping sand and overhanging rim of unstable sand and vegetation. The present trail out to the western portion of the cape is dangerous because it is cutting away above an overhanging cliff which will eventually break away.

The bowl where ten lives have been lost certainly needs every protective and warning device possible installed. Signs stating that a score of people have lost their lives at that spot, plus some kind of fence around as much as possible of the bowl should be installed located about as I've indicated. Fencing of the sand slope close to the bottom may be impractical but the north and south sides can be fenced. Explanatory signs should be placed at strategic points.

I feel that the present fence is the worst possible solution to Kiwanda's problems. It completely destroys the wild beauty of the cape which Governor McCall and Dave Talbot stressed should be preserved. It serves only as a frustration as it supposedly prohibits access to all the beautiful areas of the cape.

Mr. John Lilly

All visitors who climb the slopes intent on enjoying the beauty of the colorful sandstone cliffs and coves are naturally very indignant upon seeing the fence. Older folks return to their car with a feeling of frustration. Young folks almost invariably go over or under and are apt to express their indignation in acts of daring which they might not otherwise indulge in. I've seen it occur. The present fence is not only an eyesore and frustration, it also resembles too closely prison or concentration enclosures as visitors make their way through the restricted corridor into the pen it forms.

As those familiar with the cape know, the bowl is most dangerous because of the slick scum which often forms over the gently sloping sandstone and the "sneaker" waves that sweep over the slipping point into the bowl. I've seen several young folks slip on the slick slope and come very close to going into the surf. I've also seen the big waves sweep up around other people standing on that point. The south rim of the bowl is also treacherous when soil is wet or the edge in the vegetation area can slip away.

The low bench at the bottom of the south peninsula is awash during high tide which automatically halts access when there is that danger. The surf isn't treacherous here because of the large flat area. Photographers use this area a great deal to photograph wave action and the spectacular scene to the northeast. I've never seen or heard of any one encountering trouble here. However a warning sign should be placed at the bottom of the gully which is the approach to this flat table.

The present trail used as access to the farthest west should be closed. It is dangerous. A new trail could be angled to the northwest up the gully slope then west through the dense vegetation to give access to the outer cape where the finest views of the cove are enjoyed. The south rim of the outer cape should be posted and perhaps an attractive fence installed. A warning sign should be placed on or near the highest point. Heavy surf frequently sweeps over the cliffs to the south of this high point.

A low safety fence and posting should be placed on the sandstone slope on the extreme northwest tip of the outer cape. A person could slip and slide down that slope where it becomes steep.

Sanitary facilities are needed. Perhaps in the small grove of vegetation through which the main trail passes to the gully and outer cape. Camping or fires should not be permitted. The picturesque trees are being vandalized.

The main cape which presented such spectacular scenic beauty viewed from the outer cape could be posted with two or three warning signs in the depression behind the rim. Such signs should be effective and inobtrusive.

If feasible I would like to see the north fence moved up into the vegetation and a viewpoint constructed. Possibly a platform on deep set posts or pipes. The chasm is a spectacular sight that should be available for viewing from a safe platform. The fence should shut off closer access to the edge of the chasm and stop all traffic to the narrow knife edged sandstone peninsula on the north side of the cape

Mr. John Lilly

Post signs also. This about sums up the thoughts regarding necessary development and protection.

Your earlier letter mentioned the fact that local residents seldom climb to the top and explore the cape. A natural situation because of a lack of interest. Those who enjoy the scenic beauty have probably visited it many times in years past. Most of the residents are interested to a greater extent in the dory fishing and tourist business which is why they live there.

I consider Cape Kiwanda the most photogenic area on the American coastline, west or east (before fencing). Hundreds of photographers have spread its fame around the world via slide and movie shows, photo contests and through pictures published in national publications. The wild beauty should not be destroyed or made inaccessible but there should be some measures for safety developed by the Parks Department.

Sincerely,

Ray Atkason

RA/m



OREGON STATE HIGHWAY DIVISION

HIGHWAY BUILDING • SALEM, OREGON • 97310

TOM McCALL
GOVERNOR

F. B. KLABOE
Administrator of Highways

December 27, 1974

TO: PUBLIC MEETING PARTICIPANTS

RE: Cape Kiwanda State Park Master Plan

Your input at the October meetings was helpful in developing the revised master plan for Cape Kiwanda State Park as recently adopted by the State Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

The land use proposals of the plan are the same as presented at the public meetings due to general citizen support. Other plan revisions or recommendations include:

- I. Revise and improve the visual appearance and safety aspects of portions of the existing fence along the present location.
- II. Establish a pedestrian safety zone or route along the beach south of the Cape to reduce conflicts in the dory launching area.
- III. Allow day-use only at the Miles Creek use area.
- IV. Prohibit motorized vehicles on the large sand dune area.
- V. Work closely with Oregon Hang Glider Association to develop appropriate park rules and regulations for hang gliding at Cape Kiwanda.
- VI. Delay consideration of closure of McPhillips Beach to vehicles pending continued observation of public useage and needs.

Your assistance and interest at the public meetings on the master plan were appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Richard I. McCosh, Supervisor
Parks Master Planning

RIM:cf