Closing the Gap: Upcoming State Trail Construction

Under Construction 2017-2018: Wyeth to Lindsey Creek

Shellrock Mountain 1920s
The highway once skirted the formidable Shellrock Mountain. Old timers once jeered that a road around Shellrock could not be “did” but they were proven wrong.

Shellrock Mountain Upcoming
Impressive engineering is required to hold back Shellrock Mountain and squeeze in a trail behind the existing wall protecting Interstate 84. This will be a huge improvement over the existing 4’ shoulder on I-84.

Summit Creek Viaduct Upcoming
A new viaduct (a bridge over land) has been designed to connect the abandoned highway segments. The viaduct will blend with the Gorge’s natural landscape and the design draws upon the iconic structures found along the Historic Highway.

The new viaduct will also provide resting places to enjoy the spectacular views.

Mossy Road
A thick carpet of moss currently blankets the old highway. This beautiful section of old highway will be reconnected and restored as a state trail.

Lindsey Creek Bench Cut
Rock blasting will be required to create space for the State Trail between the hillside and I-84. The rock cuts and a new stone wall will help the trail blend in with the surrounding landscape.

In addition to design and construction funding for the Mitchell Point Crossing, funding has been secured to complete the engineering for the remaining four miles of State Trail between Viento State Park and the City of Hood River. This includes the remaining survey, resource inventories, geotechnical investigations, laying out the trail alignment and designing the walls and bridges. This work will provide the information needed to complete the necessary permitting and provide the project with detailed cost estimates. However, construction funds for these final segments still needs to be secured.

State Trail Gets Ready for Construction

Today we are faced with the question of how to get across Mitchell Point to reconnect the Historic Highway as a State Trail. The Federal Lands Access Program funds will allow us to determine the most appropriate design alternative to get around, or through, this rocky outcropping and to construct the crossing. This year we will be making progress toward the design! Is a new Mitchell Point Tunnel in our future or perhaps it’s a new viaduct? The engineering work is starting to answer this question so we can start construction in 2020.

Right: Mitchell Point Tunnel was closed in 1953 because of increased vehicle size, rockfall hazards, and to make room to build I-84. Far Right: Mitchell Point today provides opportunities for many vistas.

Legend
- Drivable
- State Trail Complete
- Future State Trail (Funded)
- Future State Trail (Funding needed)

\[1920s \quad \text{Upcoming} \quad 1920s \quad \text{Upcoming} \quad 2020 \quad \text{Funded} \quad \text{Complete} \quad \text{Future State Trail (Funded)} \quad \text{Future State Trail (Funding needed)}\]
More Funding Needed

When the engineering and permitting are complete, the project proponents will seek construction funds to finally reconnect the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail. With the engineering complete and permits in hand the State Trail will be “shovel ready;” meaning that project is ready to be bid out to a construction contractors. “Shovel ready” projects are more attractive to prospective funders. ODOT and the project proponents will seek the remaining funding (approximately $22M) to complete the reconnection of the Historic Columbia River Highway.

Remember

The Historic Columbia River Highway is one of the most significant roads in our nation. Constructed between 1913-1922 as America’s first scenic highway, the Historic Highway soon became known as the “King of Roads” an engineering marvel.

Restore

By the early 1950s, the initial construction of the water-level route through the Gorge obliterated many sections of the old highway leaving what remained as abandoned and disconnected. Much work has been done over the last 30 years since the passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act to restore the America’s greatest highway to its 1920s splendor.

Reconnect

The reconnection of the remaining four miles of Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail will create a “King of Trails” allowing pedestrians and cyclists to experience the Gorge car-free.

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In coordination with:

“Let us meet in The Dalles on June 7, 2022 to dedicate the completely restored and rebuilt Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail, with cyclists from across the nation and around the world to join us for a ride to Troutdale.”

Former Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski
June 7, 2016 at the 100th Anniversary of the original Multnomah Falls Dedication

The Historic Columbia River Highway & State Trail Progress Report 2017

For more information visit: www.HistoricHighway.org