

A Letter from the President



Ah, Springtime.

The cold weather has left, the rains subsided and the upper elevation trails have opened up. This means the

beginning of our trail maintenance season. From all indications this year looks to be a heavy year for trail repair. Not so much for damage due to rain, but the heavy snowfall we had in February resulted in a fair bit of downed trees. You will see our members working to clear the vegetation on any number of trails, including the watershed trails and the Pacific Crest Trail. In addition, we have recently worked with Jeff McFarland of the Parks Department to open a new upper section of the BTI trail. This section replaces the steep section at the top that was difficult for walkers and bikers. I should also take the time to mention that the Southern Oregon Mountain Bike Association (SOMBA) spent many ours working on this section as well.

A few words about our guest column in the newsletter: Ian Nelson is our Regional Representative of the Pacific Crest Trail Association. He has been very proactive at bringing the opportunity to adopt a section of the trail to us and is a constant reminder of what trail advocacy is all about. As you can well imagine, Ian faces all sorts of issues in his 560 mile section, issues that have been around as long as the trail itself. He reminds us that permission, easements and reroutes can take lots of time, and that just a gentle nudge over a long period of time will eventually get the job done. Your board gets very impatient at the lack of progress on some of our key trail systems. That being said, our duty is to provide the means necessary to make willing landowners provide a usable trail system. We are here to advocate, advise and to administer as needed to promote trails and trail usage.

Origins of our Ashland Trails

Ever wonder how a particular trail came to be or how it got its name? We wondered this too and did a little digging (so to speak) and came up with some interesting information. This article explores some early area trail creation and use while the article starting on page 3 explores some trail name origins.

Beginnings: Indians and Fur Trappers

Shasta Indians apparently established themselves in an area near Lithia Park and Latgawa Takelma and/or Dakubetede tribes set themselves up in the higher elevations of the Ashland Creek watershed. It is certainly possible that some of our present trails are derived from prior Indian use.

In the early 1800s, British and American furtrappers killed beavers along Ashland Creek. It is likely that these trappers created trails along various parts of Ashland Creek or used previously-made Indian trails.



We know who built this trail, but what will we call it?

Miners and Mills

The discovery of gold in 1851 in nearby Rich Gulch (Jacksonville) brought a large influx of newcomers, many of whom took advantage of the 1850 Donation Land Claim Act. Among those was Abel D. Helman, who, along with a few others built the first sawmill along Ashland creek. Helman and his mill owner partners must have undoubtedly explored some of the area and begun to create trails for logging and to create a flume to harness the water power of Ashland creek. Helman's business was called Ashland Sawmill after Helman's original home in Ashland, Ohio. Shortly after building the sawmill, Helman and others also built a flour mill to provide the increasing population with wheat flour and the newly created town became Ashland Mills.

Shepherders and Yet Another Mill

Shepherders began grazing in the area as early as 1853, when 1700 sheep were brought to the Rogue River Valley. Responding to the need for processed wool, the Ashland Woolen Mill was erected, once again using the water power from Ashland Creek using a flume and wooden pipe. Shepherding and the continued trail use along

New Trail above Park: Rich's Trail?

This winter AWTA worked with Ashland Parks & Recreation to build a connector trail between Ashland Loop Road and Glenview Drive. The project was designed to improve safety, control erosion, and meet the Master Trail Plan goal of increasing trail connectivity. The new eighth mile trail is on City of Ashland land above the Public Works Street Department's asphalt recycling pit and storage area on Glenview and connects the TID Ditch / Cottle - Philips Trail system to the reservoir end of Lithia Park as well as forming with the BTI trail a nice walking loop, mostly on trail.

To address trail user safety concerns, work crews from the Job Council's Forestry Program and the Lithia Boys Home built three hundred feet of wood pole fencing in two sections along the cliff top above the storage pit. A gate was put in the upper fence section to allow the fire department to continue to use the area for rescue training.

The trail bed was cut and log curbing installed by AWTA volunteers. Geologist reports were taken in to account in the design and construction of the trail which included a wood bark surface and in some sections use of geo textile and gravel with adequate water bars for erosion control. Neighbor concerns were also addressed in the final trail placement. Ponderosa and Sugar pine were also planted by AWTA volunteers on one of our trail work-days to provide additional future neighbor view screening and help with erosion control.

The upper end of the trail starts just before the bend in the Loop Road where it begins its descent to Glenview Drive. The lower end is located next to the asphalt pit's south fence near where the BTI trail joins Glenview.

Many of us have come to call this Rich's Trail since Rich Vanderwyst was very instrumental in its creation.



What will we call this trail?

continued from page 1

Ashland creek for hydropower continued the expansion of trails well up into and above the Ashland watershed.

Preservation Efforts

The publication in 1864 of George Perkins Marsh's "Man and Nature: The Earth as Modified by Human Action" spurred awareness of the Ashland watershed as an important source of water to be protected.

Efforts by William Gladstone Steel and John B. Waldo to establish protection of Crater Lake and large parts of the Cascade range eventually led to legislation to allow the President to proclaim "forest reserves." Ashland was one of two communities in the West to petition for the forest reserve designation.

In 1893, President Grover Cleveland set aside nearly 18,500 acres of Ashland watershed for protection.

The designation probably didn't mean much to the cattle and sheep grazing in the upper watershed, but it probably enhanced awareness of the area and may have led to more exploration.

More Mining

In about 1908, an Ashland storekeeper named Lamb built a ridge-top wagon road to his gold mining operation above Ashland. Traces of the old Lamb Wagon Road can still be found parallel to the lower section of Forest Service Road 2060 along the Lamb Mine trail. Other mining activities near Ostrich Peak led to a smattering of roads and trails in that area.

More Recent Trail Creation

In the '80s, mountain bikers began to link old trails and create new ones. Some of these (Alice in Wonderland, BTI, and others) became city-sanctioned and improved by the Ashland Parks and Rec. department, while others have remained more controversial (e.g., Time Warp and No Candies) with occasional efforts to block these trails by the understaffed Forest Service.

The City of Ashland significantly extended the White Rabbit trail network near the city and added many other trails as well, while the Forest Service linked various roads in the watershed, e.g., Horn Gap trail, East-View and many others.

Ashland Trail Names

How does a trail get a name? This question arose recently after AWTA helped create a short new trail above Lithia Park (see page 2). The resulting inquiry led to an exploration of the origins of trail names all over the watershed. Here are some of the results:

1. Alice in Wonderland - this very popular trail was named by early mountain bikers in the '80s. Up until about 5 years ago there was a long section of the trail that got very narrow and was entirely encircled by a thick growth of manzanita. The result was like riding through a tunnel that got smaller and smaller as you twisted your way through the roller coaster turns. Riders had to duck and get very low on their bikes to avoid the overhead branches. It was not uncommon to see a nylon helmet cover hanging from one of these branches, as they were commonly snatched right off the helmet, unbeknownst to the rider until he got home. Tink "down the Rabbit Hole" and it's not a great leap (fall?) to Alice in Wonderland.

By the way, the namesake section of this trail no longer exists as it was replaced by the house at the top of Mountain Avenue.

2. White Rabbit - named by now-retired Forest Service recreational specialist Phil Ackermann. He was instrumental in the design and building of the White Rabbit trail system and chose the name to fit in with the existing Alice in Wonderland theme. Trails include Queen of Hearts, Mad Hatter, March Hare and Cheshire Cat.

3. Marty's Trail - named by its builder, mountain biker Marty Cochrane, this trail descends from 4 Corners to the Toothpick trail. Cochrane has had a hand in building many watershed trails.

4. BTI - named by its team of builders who were the owners and staff of the then Ashland-based bicycle parts company *Bicycle Technologies Incorporated* (hence

Guest Column

Ian Nelson
Pacific Crest Trail

Representative

Working as the Pacific Crest Trail Association's Regional Representative for Northern California and Southern Oregon is hardly a job, it's a life-style. I am incredibly fortunate to work on behalf of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, and with the hundreds of volunteers who contribute thousands of hours annually to caring for the Trail. The PCTA is committed to protecting, preserving, and promoting the PCT. To that end, my position entails everything from supporting our volunteers, working alongside foresters to protect the viewshed, and visiting Congress in Washington DC to advocate for the Trail.

My region of the PCT extends from Crater Lake National Park in the North to the PCT's crossing of CA hwy 70 in the South. This section of the PCT encompasses 560.2 miles of trail as it traverses two National Parks, one BLM District, four National Forests, and two California State Parks. Since I started this position as PCTA's first regional representative in January of 2005, I have been building strong working relationships with the various agency partners in my region. The PCTA has a Memorandum of Understanding with all of the aforementioned agencies that identifies PCTA as the major private

partner in management of the PCT.

While supporting our volunteers, putting together trail crews, and identifying projects is an extremely important and fun part of my job, there are trail protection issues lurking around every corner. Examples include: highway projects, power lines, gas pipelines, and timber operations. The PCTA is certainly not standing up against any and all development, but we are going to aggressively advocate for protection of the PCT and the experience of the user.

Another trail protection issue and long term project that the PCTA and the USFS are engaged in is working to have the entire 2,650 mile length of the PCT be in the public domain. Currently, there are more than 200 miles of the PCT on private lands. Generally, these segments are protected by very limited easements and/or rights of way that protect nothing more than the footpath. The Forest Service in partnership with the National Park Service and PCTA is working to acquire lands containing the PCT. Needless to say, it is a long process but we are slowly making progress.

The PCT and PCTA rely heavily on the volunteer contributions of community based organizations like AWTA. We thank-you for your dedication, passion, and hard work on behalf of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail! I look forward to working alongside you this summer on the PCT and encourage you to spread the word!

AWTA Contact Info:
**Ashland Woodlands &
Trails Association**

P.O. Box 1075, Ashland, OR 97520
541-482-7061
www.ashlandtrails.org

President: Rob Cain
Vice President: Torsten Heycke
Secretary: Emily Zook
Treasurer: Susan Cain
Board Members: John Price,
Rich Vanderwyst

the acronym BTI). The trail was built in the early 90s, but the company later moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, a couple of years after building the trail.

5. Catwalk - This trail, which starts below 4 Corners and connects to Toothpick was built by mountain bikers Jed Fox and Eric Scheehan. Initially called Jed and Eric's trail, it was totally unsanctioned, so Jed and Eric decided to change the name to Catwalk.

6. Mystical - This trail was originally built for the Spring Thaw mountain bike race course and called it the Bank Trail. Perhaps because the trail connects Ostrich Peak with Hitt Road, people began calling it the Connecting Trail. After a few more years, people started calling it Mystical, but no one seems to know the origin of that name.

7. Time Warp - This trail, which starts near the Mt Ashland ski area and wends it way down to Rd 2060, was brought back to life by Marty Cochrane. It was probably originally a sheep-herding or cattle trail.

8. Horn Gap Trail - obviously named after Horn Gap, but Horn Gap was named after a prospector in the area named John A. Horn.

9. BTO Trail - An increasingly popular trail, this unsanctioned path begins just above the road to Reeder Reservoir and connects near the top of BTI. Although partially a play on the BTI name, BTO stands for B*****'s Trail Overdrive.

10. Caterpillar Trail - Caterpillar was built by SOMBA (Southern Oregon Mountain Biking Association) during a weekend IMBA trail building seminar. Various naming suggestions were being thrown around on the last day and Caterpillar seemed to stick.

11. Toothpick Trail - According to Jeff LaLande, the Toothpick trail started out as an un-named foot trail along the downslope-side of the berm of the old (ca 1910-20) Lamb Mine Ditch. Much later, possibly in the 1960s and '70s, the trail may have acquired the "Toothpick" name from the numerous small-diameter Douglas-firs that grew near the trail. The trees were so densely packed, you could hardly walk through them and thus they probably were "suppressed", small-trunked and vertical—like toothpicks.

12. Hitt Road - This road/trail is named after E.P. Hitt. On March 29, 1935 E.P. Hitt and his wife deeded a significant amount of property to the City. The road was apparently originally used for logging.

Credits: Tanks to the following people for their help in this issue's trail origins articles: Steve Johnson and Jeffrey M LaLande (Forest Service), Carolyn Schwendener and Jim Olson (City of Ashland) and Rich Vanderwyst.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, April 28th, 2007

BTI Trail Re-route. Meet at 8:30 at Ashland Parks & Rec.

Saturday, May 12th, 2007

PCT project

Saturday, June 16th, 2007

PCT project

Wednesday, July 4th, 2007

July 4th Parade/booth

Saturday, July 7th, 2007

Trail work on Siskiyou Out Back (SOB) course

Saturday, August 4th, 2007

Mt. Ashland Hill Climb Run

Saturday, August 25th, 2007

PCT project

Saturday, September 22nd, 2007

PCT project

Email Address Change? Tell Us!

Virtually all of our communication is now via the Internet, primarily through email. We believe this will save us time and money, paper and postage. Please tell us if any of this poses a challenge to you. We try our best to limit emails to subjects which concern our membership. We do not sell, exchange, lease or otherwise give out email addresses.



Ian Nelson, PCTA Representative