INTERESTING PLACES

SOUTH JETTY TO SEASIDE—MILEPOSTS (M.P.) 0 TO 16

Between the mouth of the Columbia River and Gearhart all of the Coast Trail is on the beach. There are no sources of fresh water on this section of the trail, so be sure to carry what you’ll need. The South Jetty was constructed (beginning in 1884) by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide a stable, deep channel for ships crossing the Columbia River Bar. Within Ft. Stevens State Park (open to the public with camping all year) are many points of interest, including: Battery Russell, a World War II gun emplacement, inland at M.P. 2.5; the Peter Iredale, remains of a schooner wrecked in 1906, at M.P. 3.5; and Coffenbury Lake, a good swimming hole, inland at M.P. 4. Just south of Ft. Stevens State Park is Camp Riley (M.P. 5.5) where the Oregon Military Department occasionally conducts training exercises, during which time the beach is closed to the public. For information on closures you may call them at Salem, 378-3903, or Camp Riley, 861-3835. At the city of Gearhart (M.P. 15), the trail turns inland in order to go around the Necanicum River Estuary (M.P. 16). It parallels U.S. 101 on the highway shoulder into Seaside, where it follows city streets to the first beach access.

SEASIDE TO CANNON BEACH—M.P. 18-30

From the southern edge of Seaside the Coast Trail ascends Tillamook Head in Ecola State Park. It follows the route taken in January 1806 by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition when they went to Cannon Beach to salvage oil and blubber from a beached whale. The steep cliffs on Tillamook Head are unstable, so you should be very cautious when approaching drop-offs to get a picture or a “better view” (M.P. 21-29). Tillamook Hikers Camp is at M.P. 24.5, 4 miles from the trailhead at Seaside.

Shell mounds at Indian Beach indicate a long occupancy by native Americans (M.P. 26). Late-comers are attracted more by the scenery and the surfing than by the shellfish. Another beautiful spot on the trail two miles south of Indian Beach is Ecola Point (M.P. 28), popular with picnickers and beachcombers. The town of Cannon Beach near the southern edge of Ecola State Park is becoming a center for arts and crafts, music workshops and theater (M.P. 30).

CANNON BEACH TO MANZANITA—M.P. 30-52

Going south from Cannon Beach, the Coast Trail follows the beach to the town of Arch Cape. You should have a tide table (free at coastal Chambers of Commerce) in order to time your passage of Silver Point (M.P. 32.5), Humbug Point (M.P. 33) and Hug Point (M.P. 34) during a period of low water. It is dangerous (or impossible) to walk around these small headlands at the higher tides. Hug Point has the remains of an old wagon road which was cut into the rock during the days when the beach was the only coastal highway.

At Arch Cape (M.P. 36) the Coast Trail turns inland at Leech Avenue and goes under U.S. 101 one block south, along Webb Avenue to Third Street, then south across Arch Cape Creek and into Oswald West State Park (M.P. 37). For five miles, the trail traverses old coastal rain forest (Sitka spruce, western hemlock, sword fern) to Cape Falcon (M.P. 42).

From there the trail rounds Smuggler Cove and parallels Short Sand Beach, where there is a State Park Campground (M.P. 44). From the south end of the beach the Coast Trail follows the route of an old Indian trail (over one hundred years old) up the hill to Nehalem Bay (M.P. 46). This is the area where Spanish treasure supposedly was buried and where mysteriously marked rocks are said to point the way to the cache. The trail crosses U.S. 101 and climbs to the top of 1700-foot Nehalem Mountain (M.P. 49) from which (on a clear day) there is a magnificent view of the coastline. The trail descends the south slope of Nehalem Mountain to U.S. 101 and temporarily follows the highway shoulder 1.6 miles to Nehalem Road, where it turns westward to the beach at Manzanita (M.P. 52).

MANZANITA TO BARVIEW—M.P. 52-64

Just south of Manzanita lies Nehalem Bay State Park (M.P. 53), with camping facilities, long sand spit and large estuary (Nehalem Bay). If ferry service has been pre-arranged with a marina operator (Jetty Fishery, Nehalem, 368-5746), the hiker proceeds southward 4.5 miles along the beach to the southeastern end of the Nehalem Sand Spit where the ferry can be hauled by voice or other signal. The fee for this service must be negotiated with the boat operator. The alternative to the sand spit-ferry route is to walk from Manzanita around the estuary on the shoulder of U.S. 101. On this seven-mile stretch, the highway passes through the towns of Nehalem, Wheeler and Brightman.

The Coast Trail continues on the beach past the towns of Manhattan Beach (M.P. 59) and Rockaway (M.P. 61) to Barview County Park (M.P. 64) which has camping facilities.

If you leave a car parked more than one day near the trail be sure it is in a safe place and the authorities are notified.

For Further Information Contact:

RECREATION TRAILS COORDINATOR
STATE PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION
525 TRADE ST. SE, SALEM 97310

NOTES

The Coast Trail within the State parks is for hikers only.

Carry water with you on long beach stretches.

Be prepared for rain and wind.

Use a tide table—pass headlands at low tide.

If you must swim in the icy water, pick an in-coming tide and swim with another good swimmer. If caught in a riptide, swim parallel to the shoreline to get out of it.

Make camp well above high tide and be careful with fire.

Logs in the surf will crush you if they get a chance—avoid them.

If you carried it in, you can carry it out.

Never turn your back on the ocean!