

Tillamook County



Land of Cheese, Trees and Ocean Breeze

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**Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Testimony on Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Budget
March 3, 2015**

Co-Chair Representative Dan Rayfield
Co-Chair Senator Richard Devlin
Representative Brian Clem
Representative David Gomberg
Representative Jodi Hack
Representative Julie Parrish
Senator Michael Dembrow
Senator Bill Hansell

My name is Mark Labhart. I've been a Tillamook County Commissioner for eleven years and currently sit on the Board of Directors and Legislative Committee of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). I'm here today representing the Association of Oregon Counties and in particular to talk about collaboration between the Counties and State Parks (OPRD). In summary, the collaboration is good and continues to be under the leadership of your Parks Director Lisa VanLaanen.

As some of you may recall during the 2013 Legislative Session there was a redistribution of the RV registration fees between the state and counties. Part of the direction given by the Legislature was that there should be an improved working relationship between the Counties and OPRD. We developed a Declaration of Cooperation through an Oregon Solutions process. There were also several budget notes prepared by the Legislature. I'm here to report that those budget notes are being implemented by your state agency.

One budget note directed that there be a review of grant programs and revenue sources that address state and county parks infrastructure needs and develop an equitable sharing of resources.

Another budget note directed that we both identify gaps in service provision and develop more efficient ways to deliver services, marketing, and recreational opportunities. We are creating regional recreation coalitions around the state consisting of staff from local government recreation providers and the counties Oregon Parks Association (OPA). The final budget note directed that we identify parks that could be more efficiently managed and result in a net savings if managed by another jurisdiction.


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Some specific examples of how we have worked together to implement the state's direction.

- AOC, OPA and OPRD have held regional recreational collaboration meetings around the state to start the dialogue about how to partner on managing outdoor recreation around the state; that could include operational functions, marketing, transfer of, or management of property. One was even held in my county of Tillamook with very positive results. The second round of these meetings will happen in 2015.
- Ocoho Lake in Crook County (after 20+ year management agreement) at the request of Crook County, state parks is transferring the property to Crook County for them to own, manage and maintain.
- Cascadia (at the request of Linn County) OPRD is in the process of transferring Cascadia State Parks to Linn County.
- Bowers Rock (Linn County has also requested that OPRD look at the transfer of Bowers Rock to Linn County)
- We are exploring the possibility of transferring Tillamook County's Whalen Island County Park to OPRD which borders the State's Whalen Island Natural Area or visa versa.
- Sharing resources with many recreational providers on statewide recreational diversity and inclusion work.
- Sharing professional services-reservations, planning, marketing, engineering, etc. with local recreation providers across the state
- The newest partnership that I'm quite excited about is the Salmonberry Rails and Trails Project. State Parks and ODF took the lead in working with the Port of Tillamook Bay, Tillamook County, Washington County, local cities, Cycle Oregon and others to develop a Concept Plan for building a trail from Banks to Tillamook over the Coast Range along the Port's rail line. The Concept Plan is well done thanks to the leadership and work of Lisa's staff at OPRD and contractors. A governing organization has been agreed to. Tillamook and Washington County have agreed to a 50% cost share funding for staffing a state position to help lead the implementation effort. OPRD and ODF would fund the remaining 50% if you support it through the budget process. It's a multi-year effort to build this trail but it has a lot of momentum behind it from a lot of folks. If it was not for State Parks leadership we would not be where we are today and I can't thank them enough.

We continue to build relationships to partner and strengthen the statewide recreational opportunities for generations to come.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide this testimony and be happy to answer questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark G. Albert". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Tillamook County Commissioner