



Oregon Coast Trail Beach Walking Discovery

by Regina Reiter
August 10-September 13, 2019

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Preface

I grew up in Ohio, the land of cornfields, fossils, and low hills. I threw stones into rivers, canoed on rivers and lakes, and walked in many streams. The first time I remember visiting the ocean was around ten years old on a day trip with my family to a beach in Maine. It was cold and rocky! Beaches didn't figure in my life much. I can dig up memories of a handful of beach visits after that cold dip in Maine; a couple of trips along the Florida Keys with friends and colleagues during college; a brief stop at Cape May to introduce my 6-month old son to the surf in 1972.

My beach visits got more regular for ten years starting in the mid-1990's when we joined my husband's family for a week every summer on the beautiful beach of Cape San Blas, Florida. One summer, my husband and I walked the 8 miles to the tip of the cape, slept out and then walked back to the rental house the next morning. These trips gave me a deeper connection to the beach. I also took a few walks on the beach of Charleston, South Carolina, where one of my brothers lived. There, I enjoyed the warmth of the beach.

So, before my 60th year, I had played in the surf of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf. Oh yes! And there *was* one walk on the beach of the Pacific Ocean! In 2008, I had stepped into California for my very first time at the San Diego airport. I was on my way to Campo to start hiking the Pacific Crest Trail! Before starting our walk, my hiking partner John

and I stayed a few days with my brother and his family in Vista, California. One evening, we went to the beach! That was my introduction to the Pacific Coast! I added a few more beach visits within the past few years since my son moved to Charleston, SC. I've visited his family there and also rented a beach house for my immediate family on the North Carolina coast.

Now, I live during the winter in the desert, east of San Diego, California. Several times during the season, my partner, John, and I visit the beach. A favorite visit was to the beach at San Elijo State Beach where we watched a total lunar eclipse. We walked the beach through the entire eclipse, still watching as the moon set with just a tiny bit of earth shadow on its face as the sun rose. On other visits to the beaches in southern California, I have enjoyed studying the smooth pebbles covering the sand, finding a complete rainbow of stones, marveling at the diversity of rocks that compose the rugged shore.

Until this walk on the Oregon Coast Trail, however, all these beach visits have been short ones. Typically, they would last just a few hours. The main activities were to play in the surf, dig in the sand, lay out in the sun for a short time, then leave. Sometimes there would be walks of maybe an hour or so, but always we would turn around and go back!

Last spring, while walking on the beach at Torrey Pines State Park, north of San Diego, I thought, "What if I could keep walking and not turn back? What if we could walk all day, like on our other long trails – the Appalachian Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, and others – then camp out on the beach or go up into a town to sleep in a hotel? The next day, we would continue walking. How much of the entire Pacific coast could we walk? Would we be stopped by private land, rocky outcrops, rivers, bays?" I mused for the duration of our walk that day and then let the idea go.

It was John who brought it up again early this past summer when we were throwing around ideas for taking a walk in August. He said, “What about the Oregon Coast Trail? In Oregon, all the beaches are open to the public and the state parks support this trail as a route all along the coast. It’s about 400 miles long and mostly completed.” He had been researching it while we visited my mom in Ohio. Well, we decided to do it and I decided to keep a journal about it! Keep reading, and you’ll get a feel for our journey.

Introduction

For this ebook, I’ve basically copied and pasted the blogposts I made during our journey on the Oregon Coast Trail, from August 10th through September 13th, 2019. I didn’t change much from the original posts which were written in several styles. Some are more prosaic than others. Some are chronological lists of a day’s events. Some elaborate on a certain theme. Some encompass several days.

One essential aspect of all my journeys is the unfolding of an Inner Journey within each Outer Journey. My Outer Journey includes logistics, food, and observations of weather, plants, animals, and geography. It’s all the physical aspects of my walk and its success is measured by the accomplishment of our goals. It’s logged in miles and days and is comprised of the objective facts of our itinerary.

My Inner Journey, in contrast, is all the juicy, emotional, and subjective stuff that’s going on as the miles unfold! This is the part of my journeys that I relish, cultivate, notice, and cherish. My Inner Journey is expressed in quotes like

“It’s not about the miles, but the smiles.”

“Success is the journey, not the destination.”

“Everything happens for a reason.”

As I've added trails, years, and miles to my log of walks, now totaling over 10,000 miles and eight long-distance trails, I've developed specific ways to fulfill my Inner Journey. As you read my journal, you'll see this aspect of the journey revealed and explored. When it seems appropriate, I share with you the specific transformational tool that I use in addressing the inner that has come up. In general, the tools I use to cultivate and nourish my Inner Journey are from Colin Tipping's *Radical Forgiveness*, which I use regularly in my own life and share as a certified Radical Forgiveness coach with my clients in my business, Forgiveness Walks. I encourage you to click on the links and use these tools yourself in your own Inner Journeys, whether on trails or in other venues. If these tools intrigue you, I am at your service for coaching you in creating your own fulfilling journeys, both Outer and Inner.

For now, though, relax and enjoy my journal of discovering the beaches of Oregon on the Oregon Coast Trail and, as my sister, Claudia often suggests:

"Take what's useful and leave the rest!"

Journey to the Oregon Coast Starts Today!

Posted on [August 10, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 10, 2019

We're headed to Oregon!

Today, John and I will wrap things up in Ohio and begin our cross-country drive to Oregon. John has been researching the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT), learning that it's quite different from the Eastern US trails we've walked!

- It's relatively level
- It goes through or near towns frequently
- Many state parks along the way have sites for hikers
- It frequently follows a road
- It's along the coast, which means *beach walking!*

We still have to choose our gear. We'll probably take the free-standing tent rather than my all-time favorite tarp because it will set up more easily on the beach. We're also discussing whether to take a stove. It could be difficult to find canister fuel, although the tiny stove itself is lightweight and easy to carry, so we might just have it in reserve. We're counting on having lots of wind, so will be sure to have our wind shirts or rain jackets. I'll keep you posted on our other gear choices!

One gear item I'm sure to take along is the [waist pouch](#) I wear every day! It contains my phone, credit cards, tiny art supplies, toothbrush, pocketknife and a fairly long list of essential items that I want safely at hand!

I'm hopeful that connectivity will be good, so I'm dreaming up all kinds of ways to connect with you while we journey down the coast! Stay tuned! We might just be able to be together virtually to:

- [Play Satori!](#)
- [Walk with Singing Hearts!](#)

- Do the Thirteen Steps together!

Stay tuned for updates from the road – and the beach!

Oregon Coast Trail: Underway

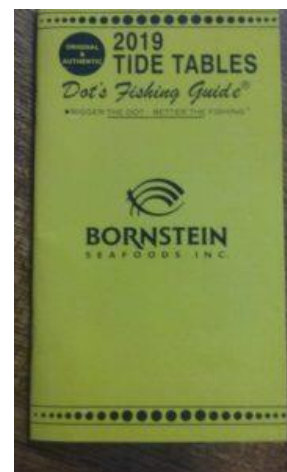
Posted on [August 16, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 14, 2019

Our first three miles of the Oregon Coast Trail is a shakedown for the rest of the trip.

The Fort Stevens State Park staff who registered us for the Hiker Biker Site said we could park our van there for the extent of our trip! They are really supporting us as hikers, including providing a secure parking space for the whole month we'll be on the trail! As we wandered around the back lot behind the employee area where we understood we could park, a smiling park staff said, "Can I help you?" She excitedly pointed us to the correct spot, delighted to have Oregon Coast Trail hikers. She also answered our query about where to get a tide table, a necessity for hiking the coast, with directions to Bornstein's Fish Market, "the place with the best tide table – and good food too!"

We found it, checked out our campsite, shopped for afternoon snacks at Fred Meyer in Warrenton, then packed our packs. From the van, I joined a group mastermind call with my mentor, [Connie Ragen Green](#), then we drove back to the campground. About 2 p.m. we started walking.



1 Favorite Tide Table book on the northern coast.

The northern terminus is 3 miles north of the campground, so we headed that direction. The flat beach walking went quickly, and we reached the South Jetty about 4 p.m.



2Our journey starts by walking north on the beach in Fort Stevens State Park

“Look!” John said. “Elk!” They were on the beach, just where we had climbed the dunes to walk to the jetty! They stayed for just a minute, then dashed back up the dune. Perhaps this is a good totem for our walk, a symbolic beginning for our month-long walk!



3South Jetty of the Columbia River, northern terminus of the Oregon Coast Trail



4One of our first Oregon Coast Trail posts

At 4:30, we started south, our official hiking direction! We took an alternate route back to the campground, however, lured by the mystique of walking on the dunes. 2 miles of sharp grass later, we now know that we prefer a beach walk.

7 p.m. saw us back at the campsite for our last night sleeping in the “Old Gold Van”, my grandson’s name for the faded Honda Odyssey that serves as our transportation and rv. Simple as it is, it feels like home.

One amusing feature of our spot was its proximity to the campground trash compactor! We were happy that campers did stop visiting it after dark, so we didn't have to hear the whirring, crunching machine through the night!

Morning brought time for an oatmeal breakfast and a last check of our gear. I decided to carry both my new sandals and my trail runners, not sure if one choice can accommodate the varied terrain we'll encounter on this walk. I'll keep you posted on that!



5We slept in our van, across from the trash compactor!

Our walk away from the campsite and van parking was slowed by making new friends; one of the best features of hiking. At the campground, four cyclists from around the world chatted. The couple from Australia said, "Please come stay with us in Perth! People here have been such fabulous support! We want to return the favor!" At the Park employee area, we chatted with the folks there, verifying our parking spot and getting a friendly sendoff and requests for my blog address. Well, if you're reading this, you've got it! I'll post when I can, with both good connectivity and a clear brain for writing. Walking days are usually so full of sensory and emotional experiences as well as physical expenditure that I'm ready to rest and sort things out at the end of the day! Thanks for reading! I'll do my best to keep you apprised of my outer and inner journeys!



6Classic landmark of Fort Stevens State Park is the wreck of the Peter Iredale

Oregon Coast Trail: First Full Day

Posted on [August 15, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 15, 2019

I walked all day along the beach and didn't have to turn back.

Last Spring, while walking on the beach in San Diego, I wondered what it would be like to just keep walking along the coast, all the way to Washington. Today, on our first full day on the coast of Oregon, I got a taste of that! I liked it! Of course, this beach, from Fort Stevens State Park to the town of Seaside, may be unique with its pure brown sand and no shells or rocks. I wore my new sandals and enjoyed them as I walked in and out of the surf. I did have a break-in issue with abrasions on the second toe of each foot. I taped them up with the sports tape in my pack, which isn't as good as the self-stick gauze. I'll have to get some. This is exactly the reason I decided to carry two pairs of shoes! I haven't decided which is best for the mixed terrain of this walk. I switched to my trail runners and socks for the last couple of miles. They were so much better on the dune and for the two miles of road walk through Seaside.

On the beach, we found whole sand dollars, huge driftwood tree trunks, little crustaceans with rounded shell backs and a single sharp digger, and lots of dead crabs. (Note: I learned from the Fort Stevens park staff that these were not dead crabs but crab moltings.) Ravens and seagulls picked them apart. All day we walked closer toward the silhouette of distant cliffs. Is that Tillamook Head, our destination for tomorrow? If so, it's about 15 miles away. I'm aiming to do at least one simple drawing each day as a deepening exercise on this walk. Today, I chose the Tillamook Head prominence in the distance for my subject. Most of the beach today, from the Pete Iredale shipwreck where we started, to the south end of Sunset beach past 10th Ave in Gearhart, the beach is open to vehicles. There weren't a lot of vehicles passing us until afternoon. As long as we stayed next to the surf, we didn't have any issues with them. I was glad to be walking, though and not concerned about getting stuck! About 6 p.m. we walked up to the Seaside Hostel, our resting spot for the night. The \$99 price for a private room seemed steep until we realized the true value of the place –

use of the kitchen, fresh lettuce and onions from the garden, a quiet sitting room, and the company of other guests. Oh, and pancakes for breakfast in the morning!



Sketch of Tillamook Head



Tillamook Head, our destination for tomorrow!

Oregon Coast Trail: Tillamook

Posted on August 17, 2019 by Regina Reiter

August 16,

The landmark we had approached for two days was now underfoot. Rounding the ridge of Tillamook Head we heard a wondrous sound. Here, within the cathedral of spruce and fir, a chorus of sea lions resonated! Ocean and forest meet!

As we climbed the forest path of Tillamook Head, generously and thoughtfully preserved by Marie Louise Feldenheimer in the 1970's, I recalled other forests of majestic trees I have walked – Washington on the Pacific Crest Trail, Joyce Kilmer in Tennessee, Mt. Rogers in Virginia, even the tiny 60-acre Wesselman Woods in Evansville, Indiana. In all of them, the ancient trees, wide and tall, filled me with awe at the ability of plants to grow so huge! We rounded the ridge to the surf side and there I experienced something none of these other forests had provided – the barking of sea lions! A little way out from shore, is a rock capped with a light house. With my binoculars I can just barely make out the movement of the silhouettes of sea lions.

Our walk to the Hiker camp atop Tillamook Head took another 30 minutes, ending our 8 miles from Seaside at about 6 p.m. A couple of other women were already there.

We opted to pitch our tent in the forest instead of sleeping in one of the shelters, which were fine as shelters go, but dark. The tent feels like home!

That gave us time to take the short walk to the overlook to the rock hosting the sea lions. Perfect place for my sketch of the Tillamook Lighthouse on its rock!



Oregon Coast Trail: Visitors

Posted on [August 19, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 17, 2019

Fourth day on the trail.

We got out from the Hiker camp on Tillamook Head at the leisurely hour of 9 a.m. It was raining oh so lightly. We took off our rain jackets, even! Our morning walk continued another two miles through the forest, descending to the beach at Ecola State Park. The trail going north from Ecola State Park is gentle and wide, a good one for a day hike to Tillamook Head. By contrast, the connecting trail to Cannon Beach, our next one, is closed! Washed out, I understand. That means a two-mile road walk on the state park road. I think we chose the busiest time to walk there-10 a.m. on Saturday morning! We hugged the left side and tried to be visible to drivers. Success!

We reached Cannon Beach through the slot between two rocks at Chapman Point just before 11 a.m. The tide was out enough that the water between the rocks was just thigh deep. Exciting!



7 The slot at Chapman Point

This was perfect timing for our rendezvous with my friend, Wendy. We had been arranging to meet up since she heard I was coming to Oregon to walk. Amazingly, she and her friend, David, arrived at the exact Cannon Beach access we would reach 15 minutes later. Her final call for our rendezvous went like this:

“Hello, Regina! Where are you? Between Chapman Point and Haystack Rock? Do you see a blue tent? I’m standing next to it. Yes!!! I see orange on a backpack! Yes!! I see you waving! I’ll let David know you’re here. He can park the truck.”

Within a minute we were hugging our hellos. I’m remarking on this because meeting up with someone like this so smoothly on a trail is quite an accomplishment. I had wrapped my orange poncho on my pack to show up better. It worked!

David and Wendy walked with us for three hours. The first leg was through town to get across Ecola Creek (later we found out we could have forded it). We passed a pub. None of us wanted to eat more than we wanted to walk, so we skipped the pub and headed for the beach. We enjoyed each other’s company, Wendy and I catching up with life events since we last saw each other seven years ago and then diving right in to explore current challenges in our lives. John and I took turns getting acquainted with David. Walking on a beach was a great venue for that! We shared the beach with plenty of other visitors but were rarely distracted from our own company! Haystack Rock made a good backdrop for Wendy’s favorite photo – mid-air leaping! John and I both took several series of continuous action shots which yielded a few good keepers.



Too soon, we reached the end of Cannon Beach where John and I would head back up into the forest. There was a Mo’s Restaurant just off the beach, large enough to accommodate their large crowd of hungry beachcombers. We got a perfect table outside and enjoyed our

lunches, both vegetarian and fish. After lunch we said our goodbyes, knowing we'd stay in touch, and walked in opposite directions. Our next stop was Fresh Foods to buy just enough food for supper and lunch tomorrow. Frequent town visits are a feature of this trail that contrasts with other long trails. For instance, on the Pacific Crest Trail, most towns are 100 miles apart! We pick up cheese/1 onion/ 2 Bell peppers/cookies/2 pears/one pack of tuna/ice cream. The ice cream gets eaten immediately; the rest goes into our packs. Our walk out of Cannon Beach takes us up another mountain into Oswald West State Park. The trail begins at a wooden suspension bridge. It's deceiving because it's sturdily built of lumber, but still sways on its cables!



As evening falls, we're still walking through tall trees on soft earth, now high above and parallel to Highway 101. At 7:30 I ask John about our destination for the day. Listening to the description from our OCT guidebook, I suggest that we stop sooner rather than later, since it sounds like there's no camping allowed once we cross the highway. John reluctantly agrees since we still have an hour 'til sunset and we immediately duck into the woods where there are many small, flat spaces among the trees. This is our first undesignated campsite. We can't tell how far we are from US101, but it's a good sleeping spot! It's 7:30 p.m. and we have just enough time to cook our fancy dinner of sautéed onion, pasta, broccoli, and cheese before dark. We can carry this fresh food because we only need to carry a couple of days of food!

Oregon Coast Trail: Water Shuttles

Posted on [August 21, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 21, 2019

“\$40 cash would make that happen!” I heard the voice on the phone say. John was arranging a shuttle across Netarts Bay with Zach at Big Spruce RV. This would be our third water shuttle in three days on our walk of the Oregon Coast Trail. It was 1 o'clock in the afternoon and Netarts was about 8 miles away. Not bad. We could make it. What John and Zach had arranged was a site for the night at his RV park and a shuttle across the bay in the morning, about a quarter of a mile boat ride. That was great because having a known place to camp plus the shuttle were two essential services we needed!

This business of water shuttles is something new for me on a long-distance trail, except for the Kennebec River ferry on the Appalachian Trail in Maine. That one, however, requires nothing of hikers but to show up at the riverside during operating hours with the small fee in hand. On this trail, we must call and schedule our rides, once we find out whom to call. John has gotten names from [Dayhiking Oregon Coast by Bonnie Henderson](#).

Our ride from Zach was at 7:30 a.m. on our eighth day. He was able to run the shuttle just before his crabbing customers rented that boat for the day. (No, I did not say “crabby” customer!)

Our first water shuttle had been easier! That one, provided by Jetty Fisheries at the Nehalem River Jetty, had us finding landmarks like on a treasure map. John called them the day before and I heard the voice say, “Come to the river side of the bay and look for the American flag. Then, you’ll see the little yellow building. Across the river from there, you’ll find a couple of tall posts. That’s where you call us, and we’ll come over and get you.” Worked like a charm! That morning, which was our sixth day, we walked two miles down the trail from Nehalem State Park, where we had camped the previous night, to the North Jetty of the Nehalem River. As we left the trees along the dune and reached the channel flowing between the bay and the ocean, we looked inland and saw the flag! We walked toward it and when we could make out the buildings, we saw the small yellow shed on the

dock. Picking up our pace along the beach we soon saw three bleached tree trunks, sticking up out of the ground like flagpoles. One was emblazoned with streamers and a pirate-themed flag. And, just as planned, John called, and within ten minutes, our captain motored over the 100 yards to pick us up. He dropped us off at the Jetty Fisheries dock where we could see their bustling business of selling crab dinners and renting out boats. In the store, we paid our \$20 shuttle fee and bought some snacks. Success!

Now, you're wondering why we'd go to the trouble of hiring these shuttles? Well, this one saved us a 5-mile road walk around the bay. This way was lots more fun as well, and kept us walking along the beach, not the road!

The second shuttle we took, thanks to John's research, was easy and smooth as well. In the crabbing town of Garibaldi, he called the Garibaldi Marina, a private marina that serves the public. John had arranged a 10 a.m. shuttle with them for \$30. We arrived in Garibaldi before 8 a.m. having left our campsite at Barview Jetty County Campground by 6:30 a.m. Instead of walking on the road, we followed the railroad bed and found that safer and much more scenic.

In Garibaldi, we found picnic tables all around the public parking area. A shaded one was a perfect place to cook our oatmeal for breakfast. Afterwards, we walked along the block next to the marina and found the office for Garibaldi Marina. We checked in with Jeff who agreed on our ten o'clock time. We had plenty of time to walk to the local market and pick up our food for the next couple of days. We included half a cantaloupe, which we ate at one of several tables installed around the docks. What a pleasant town for us!

Right at 10:00, we're sitting in the boat with life vests buckled, ready for our shuttle. 15 minutes later, Jeff is ready to go back to the marina, only delayed by Rose, one of his Labrador dogs who fancied playing on the sand on the far side of Tillamook Bay more than riding in the boat with Jeff. We say our goodbyes, then happily walk off to the beach side of the spit, giving us a far more scenic walk than an 18-mile road walk around the bay. What we missed by taking the boat shuttle was the famous tour of the Tillamook Creamery! That could wait, we figure!

One caveat for the Garibaldi Marina service, though, might make a hiker consider going southbound. John asked, "How do you pick up someone from the south side"? Jeff's answer? "We don't!"

Oregon Coast Trail: Rain Day

Posted on [August 21, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 21, 2019

7:56 Zach drops us off by boat on the Netarts Spit. We walk the beach, wondering when the forecasted rain would start. It's overcast and raining oh so slightly. We're the only walkers on the beach today and my mind wanders to the rhythm of my feet.

This is our eighth day of hiking and I have noticed some inconveniences – I'm tired from our long days of walking, ready for a rest day; my sandals aren't working so well because they rub a couple of my toes raw. I wrap them in gauze tape which helps; It's windy today and it's starting to rain making walking a little uncomfortable.

As I walk, though, I notice the immense and surprising beauty of this beach – frothing surf, constant waves, soft, smooth sand, forested ridges giving way to grassy dunes where the indigenous Netarts people lived, sand dollars in various pieces inviting me to see if I can make a collage forming a whole sand dollar.

All of these inconveniences dissolve in the presence of the captivating beauty!

We walk on.

I notice that the mid-morning sun occasionally pierces the cloud veil to my left while ahead the white mist of rain blankets the beach.

Something tumbles along the sand. A creature? No, a tuft of the grassy-bladed seaweed. Tumbling seaweed? Who would have imagined?

9:12 I spy a smooth, bleached log resting in the deep sand back from the surf and from the firm sand where we walk. Time for a snack. “Look! A rainbow!” John says. How can I feel anything but contentment? It’s a complete rainbow arching above the ocean straight out in front of me!

9:45 We walk on. Now, it’s rainy and windy. It’s warm, though, so I’m comfortable, realizing that most people probably limit their beach walks to clear days, missing this remarkable sensory experience! We’re getting closer to the end of this beach now. We meet the first other walkers of the morning. They’re holding their shoes, walking barefoot.

10:25 we reach the end of the beach at the base of Lookout Cape which makes a steep, insurmountable wall in our path. We climb up the dune and walk through the campground to find the Hiker Biker site at Lookout Cape State Park. According to our guidebook, this one is the favorite of hikers.

We look at the Hiker Biker site. There are at least 16 sites with tables and small patches for tents, all carved out among small evergreen trees and thick shrubs. There’s the charging station with cubic metal lockers equipped with usb connections. So far, the Oregon State Parks have all had these. What a nice feature!

We waited to check in ’til noon, when the rain started in earnest. We crawled into our tent and napped. In about thirty minutes, water was coming through the tent floor! I laid out the poncho for an extra layer. “Why didn’t we choose the site with the grassy spot?” I lamented. I took a walk around to look at the other sites. As it turned out, our tent was on one of the few dry spots in the whole Hiker Biker camp! Even the grassy spots were inundated! The cleared spot at our site where we had first considered putting our tent was now a three-inch puddle!

5:00 p.m. The consistent rain seems to have stopped, although it’s still cloudy and drippy outside. We’ll stay put! It’s nice to have had this rainy day to rest – and do some catching up on journaling!

Oregon Coast Trail: Road Walking

Posted on [August 26, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 22/23, 2019

"I'm going to call this Horrible Hill!" says John as we pace up the hill on the shoulder of US101. He must not be using Regina's Meet the Mountains Technique, I thought. It wasn't the elevation change bothering him, though, it was the threat of zooming trucks veering over the white line on the narrow shoulder. I agree, road walking is not fun, and this stretch bothers me too. It's 2 p.m. on a Friday between the beach towns of Neskowin and Lincoln City. We were on a 4-mile stretch of the Oregon Coast Trail where there's no trail. The official route follows the U.S. highway. This is one of the "gaps" proposed to be filled by 2020.

Our memories were still fresh of the 6-mile road walk the previous evening. The pang of that four-hour road walk was raw because we had missed our chance at getting a boat ride across the Neskowin River to skip it. Both of us had hoped the other one was asking the boaters for a ride when neither was. We did have the chance to talk about that while we walked along the busy two-lane highway, though.

Today's walk is similar. Sometimes there's a shoulder. Often, there's not. Often the road curves so drivers can't see us. It's not safe. We persist. "How can they call this a trail when there's no place to walk?" I grumble silently, sometimes out loud.

An hour into the walk, we see a mowed hay field we could cut across. It's a private farm, but we decide to risk trespassing to get a break from the road. Squish! Down in the ditch of tall grass that we must pass through, John steps in a creek. I get to miss that. The field is lumpy, but it's safer than the road. We rejoice that fifteen minutes' walk takes us safely back out to the road. Another hour it's dusk and we reach the return to the beach. We walk north toward Porter Point, where we *could* have been dropped by boat. We meet a man walking with his dog, off leash as is the custom on the coast. He launches immediately into his story of just having strewn his wife's ashes on the point. We listen empathetically as

dusk deepens, graciously taking on the role of witnesses to his grief. He tenderly shares that this is where they had often walked and had chosen together to have her ashes spread. He talks about being with her in hospice and her stay there. I can relate somewhat since my recent experience standing night watch in hospice with Colin Tipping just seven weeks before. It's getting dark, and he still has almost a mile to walk back to the beach access, so he wraps up his story and saunters on south. With softened hearts, we walk a little further north, then find a spot for our tent next to a big log, tucked beyond the tide line in the dune grass. The roar of the ocean surf is a welcome respite from the roar of the traffic.

On Friday's walk between Neskowin and Lincoln City, up Horrible Hill, we got a break a couple of miles in. The official trail turned off into Cascade Head Scenic Research Area. We started out with 1.5 miles on the Forest Service Road, then turned off on dirt trail through the lush, green rainforest. I'm sad to say, though, that I was so caught up in my grumbling about having to walk 3.7 miles through the forest then another 3.5 on the road to reach our hotel goal for the night, 7.2 more miles and it's already 4 o'clock, that I pay only slight attention to the forest.

Our Victim Story builds when John, thinking I'm not waiting for him as I'm charging ahead athletically to the goal, catches up and says, "I'm thinking of getting off in Lincoln City and going to get the van. Then, I'll do car support for you so you can finish the trail."

I'm stunned! He's the one who is focused on completing any trail he does! I hold my tongue for a minute, then say, continuing my pace, poking my trekking poles into the ground to dissipate my frustration, "I hear what you say, and I have no response!" My terse remark has wisdom behind it. I know that quitting a long-term plan on a bad day is unwise. But I now know that John is uncharacteristically wavering, and I won't fuel the doubt!

"What if we just stop this march and camp in this forest?" I muse to myself. I start looking for a flat spot. The forest is impenetrable with underbrush and no camping is allowed (Which is another rant about newly formed trails!). Fifteen minutes later, with probably another forest mile to go, I see an opening! Thick moss blankets little patches of flattish ground. "What if we stop here for the night?" I suggest. "I have no plan anymore," John says dispassionately and follows me off the trail.

Our spirits are uplifted during that respite of quiet green. The towering trees, dripping with Spanish moss, catching dappled golden patches of evening sunlight soothe my resentment. I rest, running the words of The Thirteen Steps to Radical Forgiveness through my head. Am I willing to see perfection in this situation? Is there an opportunity to learn and grow here? Yes. I let Spirit do the work of providing a suggestion of how.

At 3 a.m. I wake up still thinking. I listen to the tracks from Walk for a Singing Heart. Barbara's songs and the three exercises shift my perspective to openness to a new way of seeing the road walking and of being in the road walking. I don't know exactly what that will look like. I don't have a clear plan, but I acknowledge that I probably have more choices in this situation than I had realized. I sleep again and wake up, still in awe of this amazing forest and emboldened by our willingness to rest here.

Saturday provides a clean slate!

Oregon Coast Trail: Stamina

Posted on August 26, 2019 by Regina Reiter

August 24, 2019

I awoke with gratitude for being in the quiet green spaciousness of the Cascade Head rainforest. Our choice to stop our forced march to the Sea Echo Motel in Lincoln City and sleep in this forest was a good one! This is what we needed! The stop also broke up our road walk on US 101 into two days instead of one very long, arduous one! With my spirit renewed by a night in the woods, I could bolster my courage and tolerance and walk on the road again. We still had 3.7 miles to go to Lincoln City, where we could shop at Safeway and return to the beach for a short walk to Devil's Lake State Park Campground. We got away from our camp at a leisurely 8:40 a.m. We still had an hour's walk in the forest. This time, I paid attention to its beauty!

About 9:30 we reached US 101, resuming our walk on the shoulder. An hour later, John noticed Clancy Road, which Bonnie had noted in her Dayhikers Guide as a short cut to the beach. We followed the road about 20 minutes to her cryptic description of a gate, then a trail, but stopped short of walking through private property. We simply weren't willing to

do it! We retraced our steps on Clancy Road, picking a handful of ripe blackberries on our way, and got back on US 101. At least we had tried!

At 11:25 we passed the Neotsu Post Office. Across the street I spied a golf course. “Maybe we could walk along the edge and avoid some of 101,” I suggested. We tried it and boldly started walking along the golf cart road toward the south side of the golf course. No one seemed to mind. A few minutes later, we heard, “What are you doing here?” A man wearing a white hat lettered Chinook Winds Resort pulled up in his golf cart. “Good! Someone who can direct us!” I called cheerfully. “We’re trying to stay off 101 and get over *there!*” I pointed to the next busy intersection. “Well, you can’t be here! Keep moving! Golfers are coming!” He snapped. We kept moving. Another golfer came along and we asked him for clearer directions. He gave them kindly, and we walked directly through the course on the cart road and out into the neighborhood, freed again from 101 for half a mile. Within ten minutes we reached Safeway, a safe place for us to be. There, we knew we were welcome to shop and eat a tasty lunch of guacamole, red pepper, lettuce, and fresh strawberries. Then, we shopped again for our food for the next 24 hours.

At 1:45 we were back on the road again, looking for the beach access at the Chinook Winds Casino. We found it quickly, along with the noisy rock band and crowd enjoying a car show. We ignored all that and headed to the beach! Two hours later, we ambled through the beach crowds to leave the beach at D River, “The Shortest River”, according to the signs, and walk north for one last bit on US 101 to the entrance to Devil’s Lake State Park Campground. Soon, we were all set up at the Hiker Biker site, with four others. We had arrived so early, I had time to shower and wash out my clothes!

We were still hiking, undefeated by the challenging road walking on US 101! John made no further mention of his idea to leave the trail. I was glad I had made no response to his frustrated threat yesterday.

Oregon Coast Trail: Whale of a Day

Posted on August 31, 2019 by Regina Reiter

August 25, 2019

On which we walked big miles, made a big leap in our thruhiking style, and saw some really big creatures!

Let me expound by adding a few more words or phrases to the words above, like in one of those grammar games! We walked something like sixteen miles, starting our day at 5 a.m. at Devil's Lake State Park and ending at 7:30 p.m. at Beverly Beach State Park. We made a big leap in our thruhiking style by catching the Lincoln County bus to skip four miles of walking on US 101 between Taft and Gleneden, making our day's trip miles jump to 20. And, for our first time on this trip and over several hours of our day, from Boiler Bay south to Cape Foulweather, we saw whales – Gray Whales! Mostly, we saw the spouts of water sprayed from whales, and sometimes the backs of whales, to the tune of about 20 sightings in four to six spots along the coast. We just caught a glimpse of one whale between two houses as we walked down residential Coast Street in the southern streets of Depoe Bay. It was a whale of a day!

Other highlights include:

- Walking into the sunrise on the beach. We had to walk 3 miles down the beach to the bus stop in Taft to catch the 7:30 a.m. bus. A blessing, really.
- Meeting a winter resident of Palm Springs, CA (near us in Borrego Springs) at the park in Gleneden as we cooked our oatmeal and kale breakfast after our 7:30 a.m. bus ride.
- Stopping for “the best of the best” latte at Pirate Coffee in, guess what, Pirate Cove! I’m not a good judge of coffee, but it was a nice stop on a windy day!
- Visiting the Oregon State Parks Whale Watching Center in Depoe Bay where we saw more whales and I got an idea for an activity for the Visitor Center at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park where I’ll be from October through May.
- There was a stretch of road walk along Otter Crest Drive that actually had a dedicated pedestrian/bike lane, a single one-way lane for cars, signs identifying bikes and

walkers, *and* a 20-mph speed limit. We felt gratefully accommodated in the transportation corridor for three whole miles!

- Several stretches along US 101 today had dirt trail built off the shoulder, sometimes behind the guardrail or through the nearby vegetation. We noticed that it coincided with a utility line. We were grateful that we could share that space! In one of my many Radical Forgiveness moments of this journey, I noticed the irony of celebrating a powerline.
- I was tired and cranky on our last 2-mile beach walk of the day, but grateful to reach Beverly Beach State Park to find the nice storage boxes with receptacles for phone charging in the Hiker-Biker campsite. Another irony of hiking all day – too worn out to fully integrate the beauty I came to enjoy!

This was our 12th day on the Oregon Coast Trail, 138 miles from our starting point.



Boiler Bay, Sighting our first grey whales



Taft, OR Historic District at dawn



Whale Cove Overlook where we saw whales and harbor seals too!

Oregon Coast Trail: Bridge

Posted on [August 31, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 26, 2019

My notes for today tell the story of this pleasantly short day, a good follow-up to yesterday's long walk!

10:44 After hot breakfast and showers, we're leaving the Beverly Beach Campground escorted by Jack, a 7-yr old who rode by me on his bike several times while I waited for John to finish his shower. On his second trip past me, Jack proudly announced that he had been given permission to ride around the campground on his own. I celebrate those of us with the courage to meet strangers. I depend on them regularly!

11:00 On the beach. I notice that the pebbles are of different colors than north of here, more golden ones.



Golden Pebbles south of Beverly Beach, Oregon

11:27 There's a thin waterfall dropping from the top of the dune here!

11:57 Willets, not just gulls

12:21 End of beach walk



Beach north of Yaquina Head, Oregon. As usual, we must exit the beach here to get around the cape.

1:00 headed up to US101 for a short walk on the road.

1:20 back on beach for four miles! We see lots of people on the beach as we enter Newport. It's windy. Tailwind.

3:09 end of beach. (we missed Wal-Mart! John thought we would see it from the beach, but we were already past it when he checked Google maps. We needed a new fuel canister!)

4:15 To get over the bay at Newport we had to cross the bridge to South Beach. The bridge was a challenge with keeping my balance in the wind!



Newport, OR Bridge

4:43 shopping at South Beach Grocery and South Beach Fish Market. The two businesses collaborate. With a low fuel canister and limited stock at the store, we decide on getting a salmon burger and fries at the fish market for immediate consumption. We buy cheddar cheese, bean dip, vanilla wafers, garlic, banana, tortillas, peaches potato, an onion, and garlic.

5:44 done at grocery

We cut through behind the Toyota dealer and through the private camp to a trail at the boundary of the state park and the camp. Walk all through the park to registration and Hiker-Biker site. First time in a corral! (The designated sites are surround by timber fencing) Receptacles in charging station, yay!

6:30 all set up at site 4AB

Oregon Coast Trail: Seal Rocks

Posted on [August 31, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 27, 2019

This day had similarities to yesterday, with a few variations in the details of food and campsite services. We had beautiful beach walking, some awesome rocks, not so much road walking, and early evening arrival at the Beachside State Park Hiker-Biker site.

My notes for the day:

7:20 away from camp at South Beach

8:40 stop to cook breakfast on beach; Potatoes onions garlic cheese

10:36 shoes off. In close view of Seal Rocks cliffs. I've been trying my three variations of footwear for beach walking: sandals, barefoot, shoes and socks. All have pros and cons. The sandals work if I wrap my toes in sticky gauze. Bare feet feel great for a couple of hours until they feel tired. Shoes are the most supportive but they get wet unless I carefully dodge the waves.



Lovely Seal Rocks captivate my attention



The waves crash high over Seal Rocks

11:16 talked with a family from Washington State. They were curious about our walk.
11:40 lunch at Seal Rocks before going up off the beach to get around them. Lunch break

included a quick drawing of Seal Rocks. It took just a few minutes to get around this time, and we were quickly back on the beach.



Seal Rocks Closeup

12:10 leaving beach again for walk on US101 to NW Coast drive. Back soon, this time for a couple of hours.

2:15 off beach at Bayshore Beach Club, Access #67B. We rest in the shade nearby an elegant pool, feeling the awkwardness of the homeless next to the rich. We walk on Westward Dr to Bayshore Dr to the beach on a bay. We have to cross another bridge, over the Alsea River. We can't tell if we can get up the dune right at the bridge. We ask a woman walking her dog. She thinks we can. She's right! There's a good trail winding up the hill next to, not through the KOA, with its No Trespassing signs. The trail goes right to a park with steps up to the bridge. This one is like the Newport Bridge – without the wind today! We are soon across and looking for our route to Ray's Food Place, a half-mile away.

3:31 At Ray's we engage our two-visit strategy. We are hot and hungry, so we get something to eat immediately. This time, it's a box of greens, an avocado, and a tangerine. John goes for a 1.5 qt juice blend. The store has a welcoming section of tables at their deli.

We cross the street to Ace Hardware to search for a canister. They have an empty shelf where our product would be. No luck! However, the clerk digs in the cash register for something else we need – a safety for John's button, which just popped off.

Back at Ray's, we buy no-cook foods: Fritos bean dip, ramen, cheese, pears, red pepper, avocados, blueberries.

5:30 leave store, walk down the beach for an hour or so and exit at an access to Beachside State Park.

7:05 Beachside State Park has a Hiker-Biker site conveniently located next to the registration office and bathroom. Alas, there's no charging station. There is an outlet in the bathroom nearby. These are sites in the woods with tree cover and shrubs. I hang our food bag on a branch near our table. The Registration is closed when we arrive, so I dip into my stash of 10, 5, and 1-dollar bills to make our \$16 fee. We heat our ramen with the dwindling fuel and hang our food bags in a nearby tree. No other hikers or bikers arrive.

Oregon Coast Trail: Amanda

Posted on [August 31, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 28, 2019

Although I have been disappointed by the road walking along 101, my suffering pales to that of Amanda, the Yachats woman, and the thousands of others, who were cheated out of their homeland here. Her people were tortured, some were murdered, some forced to walk along the lava rock coast to an encampment. It would have taken great foresight to preserve a natural coastal corridor for our trail, yes. Even better would have been to ratify the treaty in 1855 giving the original people their twenty-mile wide coastal area.

Today's walk took us off US101 for several trail miles. Trail advocates have arranged for several miles of the trail to wind around between the coast houses, vacation homes, and resorts. The route is called the 804. On this day, it was well-populated with day walkers enjoying the cliff lands, staying back from the edge where signs warned of fragile cliffs, and a memorial reminds us that two "strong young men" had been swept off to drown by a "sneaker wave". We stayed back and watched the crashing surf billow over the rocks.



The 804 Trail



Stay back!



Later, another trail wound up a steep hill on the east side of the highway. The signs admonished us to respect this private land where we had permission to walk on [“Amanda’s Trail”](#) to Cape Perpetua. Along the way, we visited the statue commemorating Amanda, the Yachats woman who had been forced away from her daughter and white, unmarried spouse when the cavalry came to drive off the native people in the 1850’s. No one knows if she lived or died, but her story reminds us of the genocide our America has perpetrated more than once. Now, the concrete image of Amanda is adorned with beaded necklaces and a crown of ferns and flowers. We talk somberly about the topic as we climb the rest of the mountain to another period

monument at the crest of Cape Perpetua – a CCC rock shelter.



Cape Perpetua Rock Shelter: window to a gray sunset

By this time, it’s late afternoon, and we still have a few miles to go to the Cape Perpetua Campground. The overlook is suddenly rain, dark, and windy so we don our rain jackets and hats. Twenty minutes later, we’re peeling them off because it’s dry and warm below! We learn that this effect is peculiar to the high elevation spruce forest that traps moisture that drops off the trees like rain!

We descend quickly, and soon drop off into the USFS campground, our destination for the night. We see the Hiker-Biker site listed and head for it. However, we meet the campground manager on our way. He takes our ten bucks and we walk back to site #11, unusually far from the entrance, but closer than our other option, site #29A!

To our dismay, though, Site #11 is literally a blocked car slip with a picnic table on it next to a ten-foot wide strip of grass. Although we look at other sites, we decide to stay there, grumbling about the layout. I held my tongue, but wanted to say, "We come without a car, so we get to *BE* a car and have our table in the parking slip." I add this to my growing list of quandaries for the makers of this trail. Just what are/were they thinking hikers are like? I sleep with my hat pulled over my eyes to block out the headlights that go by during the night. It's yet another chance for me to do The Thirteen Steps to Radical Forgiveness. Grateful for the tool, I choose peace.



Parked table at site#11

Oregon Coast Trail: Tunnel

Posted on [September 1, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

August 30, 2019

"I simply won't walk through the tunnel," I said. "I will ask at the parking area until I get a ride."

That's what I had said about the tunnel cut through the mountain on US101 just south of Heceta Head. It would be our challenge for the day, and the only place I flatly refused to walk on the Oregon Coast Trail. Oh sure, I didn't *like* walking any of the stretches of 101, but this one seemed outright suicidal! Bonnie's guidebook said, "just make sure there are no motorhomes coming when you walk through." Say what? There were RVs every twenty seconds! We also heard about that there's a button that hikers could push that turned on a flashing light that warns drivers that a bike was in the tunnel. But how long did it flash? Long enough for walkers to get through? My decision was to stand firm on my "no walking" stance. I was confident that I could meet someone who would give us a ride.

In fact, I had done just that the evening before at the Carl G. Washburne State Park Campground! At the bath house I had met Rachel, who admired our adventure. She had said, "I would gladly take you tomorrow morning – *if* we were staying here tonight." They were headed to the campground from which we had just walked, Rock Creek. Her response certainly encouraged me that others would find our request reasonable. We got an early start, taking the campground road out to 101 and crossing over to the trail to the beach. I was stunned to see the highway completely quiet! It was 7:45 a.m. and there were simply no cars on the road! "Now, *this* is the Oregon Coast Trail I would like!" We knew the quiet would soon end and we chose to walk on the trail to the beach. At the trailhead, we noticed a bus schedule posted that indicated a bus leaving from this entrance to Washburne Park at 9:20 a.m. and 12:20 p.m. "So, this bus can be a backup if we don't get a ride!"



US 101 was empty at 7:45 a.m. Now, I like that!



We had half an hour or so on the beach until we found the fluorescent green sign with a black number indicating an access point. This one was for The Hobbit Trail, conjuring up visions of lush greenness. That was basically true, as we climbed up into the spruce forest, laced

with ferns, getting a long view of the beach we had just walked about 30 minutes earlier.

We headed for our next landmark, the Heceta Head Lighthouse, which first appeared *below* us like the cap of a carnival tent.



Heceta Head Lighthouse: First Glimpse

We visited the lighthouse for a while, I making use of the time chatting about birds with a woman studying the rocks below through binoculars, and casually mentioning that our challenge for the day was to find a ride through the tunnel. “We’d gladly give you a ride *if* we were going south.” She assured me. “We can do this!” I rejoiced. Meanwhile, John had been searching on Google and found a taxi in nearby Florence that could pick us up if needed. We had *another* backup.

A half hour walk took us easily down the hill to the lighthouse parking area. I surveyed the people and decided to ask the man striding solo down the lighthouse path toward the parking lot, keys in hand. He responded to my inquiry with a quizzical look and a non-English dismissal. “Not that one”, I chuckled, undiscouraged. “There are plenty of people here!” I noticed a woman wearing an orange safety vest.

She approached *me*, handing me a clipboard. “I’m Tara, from the Cape Perpetua Cooperative. Would you please take my survey?” she asked. “Sure!” I replied, then added my own declaration about needing a ride through the tunnel. “Well,” she said. “I’ll be here another twenty minutes or so, then I’d be happy to take you through the tunnel!” Done! That was easy! We had our ride, and a very interesting one at that. We learned more about the partnerships supporting environmental and trail issues along the coast and helped her a little too; to understand what an obstacle this tunnel is! I felt like we had met a colleague,

not just another tourist! Oh, and as we departed her car at mile marker 181, where the trail returned to the beach, John said, “We crossed the halfway mark – in your car!”



That's the tunnel! Not as long or as dark as I had imagined, but still formidable!



The Tunnel Overview

Although our tunnel ride was the logistical highlight of our day, there were a few more memorable moments during our 6-mile beach walk that ended at the North Jetty in Florence, Oregon.

- The next few miles of beach were protected for snowy plovers which meant *no dogs!* We met no dogs – or people!
- We had entered the sand dunes area, now seeing sweeping and rolling dunes! Beautiful!



Sand Dunes south of Heceta Head

- I saw a blue heron in the surf!
- Ravens and vultures were picking on a skeleton. A seal! I hadn't thought about it before, that seals are carnivores. What sharp canine teeth!
- While sitting on a driftwood log snacking, we watched an Osprey *dive* straight down into the surf and come up with a fish!
- We met a northbound backpacker out for the weekend, the closest we've come to another OCT hiker.
- We reached the North Jetty, then Rhododendron Drive into Florence, at about 2:30. That gave us plenty of time to reach the Post Office where we had our second maildrop containing our dehydrated favorites hummus and sweet potatoes, plus replacement toiletries and journal paper. Soon, I was upset about the narrow shoulder and fast cars zooming by. With two more miles to go, I made the bold move of calling a cab, threatening our "thruhiker" status by not walking all the miles. I shrugged, John grumbled, but he did take the ride.
- At 3:45 we were checked into the Vista West Hotel, maildrop in hand, at "the crossroads of Oregon" as John calls this intersection of US101 and 126 to Eugene.

And now, I'm writing this at 10 p.m. on Saturday night, August 31st after a full day of rest and reflection. Our hotel is a block away from Safeway, where we've shopped twice, and near True Value Hardware *and* Dollar Tree. We've got a full fuel canister and have indulged in epsom salt soaks, soothing our aching feet and John's rare blisters.

This rest day also gave me the chance to watch the livestream of a very special event – the Celebration of Life for my teacher of Radical Forgiveness, Colin Tipping, who passed away on June 28th. It was a reverent and heartfelt event. I'll watch the 90-minute program again, I'm sure! I invite you to watch as well, to learn about his endearing contribution to humanity and his vital legacy represented by Radical Forgiveness, the healing technology that he authored and taught, leaving several hundred coaches like myself trained to carry on this effective work – while he guides us in spirit during this next pivotal time in humanity.

Watch the recording here:

[Colin Tipping Celebration of Life](#)

And now, on to the southern half of the Oregon Coast Trail!

Oregon Coast Trail: High Tide

Posted on [September 2, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

September 1, 2019

Our hotel rest stop was a welcome break and a sort of new beginning for the rest of the trip. We took an entire day off at the Villa West Hotel, at the crossroads of US101 and 126 in Florence, Oregon. We stayed until checkout time at 11.

John's willingness to take a taxi out of Florence, skipping a few miles of roadwalking, and even a little forest walking, made today a delightfully easy day! Well, mostly, anyway. The

cab driver dropped us off at the Wax Myrtle Trailhead, 3/4 mile from the beach. Yes, there were wax myrtle trees on the route!

We got there right at noon. A half hour later, the trail ended at the beach, beginning our 4-hour beach walk as the tide came in. Incoming tide means that the surf encroaches further up the shore, covering the firmer sand that's easier to walk on. I decided to walk barefoot, which is fine for an hour or so, then is tiring. We had a little excitement for choosing a driftwood log just surfside to a tidepool that was filling. We had to grab our packs and dodge the water when a high wave crept up to our log! A few miles down the beach we had to cross a river that flowed into the ocean. As an inlander, I rarely have thought about what it really looks like when a river flows into the sea! I've gotten familiar with it on this trail, as we've seen many – from trickles to wide bays. This one is about twenty feet wide and shallow. We could simply wade across, although I got a little nervous when it crept close to the bottom of my pack.



Where we crossed the Tehkenitch River

Twenty minutes later, we reached Access Point 115A and turned off to Three-Mile Lake, our day's destination! This is when the "mostly" easy qualification came in! To get to the lake, we had to traverse the half mile of dunes between the beach and the lake. That was slow going in the deep, loose sand! I used my Meet the Mountains Technique to make it easy, even though these were not actually mountains! The constantly shifting sand gave

shifty resistance to each step, though, so I was glad for my stepping and breathing practice. (You've got this, right? If not, I'll give you the link, so your mountain – and dune – climbing can be easy! <https://forgivenesswalks.com/ReginaMeetsMountains>) We did not like the looks of the camping around the lake, so turned north on another trail and found a sweet wooded campsite with a perfect distant view of the ocean and sunset! At only 5 p.m. we're all set up and relaxing. No waiting for six days to summarize the day!



Sunset from Three Mile Lake Campsite

Oregon Coast Trail: Osprey

Posted on [September 4, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

September 2, 2019

Labor Day Holiday...*in which we hiked over a dune, walked the beach, got picked up by a boat, shopped at two convenience stores, a bakery, and a fish cannery, then walked a road to end the day at a state park Hiker-Biker site.*

We started at a wooded campsite near Three-Mile Lake, half a mile from the beach, east of the dunes. The walk back to the beach seemed shorter than yesterday's crossing! We

walked south on the beach at low tide, making for quick and easy walking on firm sand. Most of our three hours of beach walking was in solitude, with no vehicles, nor even dogs allowed. We walked along dunes where Snowy Plover meeting grounds are protected.

The surf pounded and turned its rainbow of shades from gray to green as the sun climbed in the clear sky, sparkling on the smooth surfaces of curling waves. A bank of clouds on the western horizon glowed slightly pink, adding another band of color to the landscape's palette.



Color bands

The sand was so smooth that I could keep my gaze on the distant gray band marking the end of our beach walk, moving my feet as on a treadmill, noticing only slight changes in scenery – dunes on my left, surf on my right, gray horizon ahead. Only when I looked down could I tell that I was indeed moving forward on the sand, stepping past stones, broken shells, pieces of crab molting, feathers, and the footprints of birds. A moving meditation!

Osprey, flying over the crashing surf, dove, aborted their dive, hovered, dove again, coming up with a heavy catch. It seemed to take a lot of energy for them to gain enough height to fly away with their prey. One flew over us, a long, ropey object dangling from its talons. Snake?

That doesn't seem right. The bird gathered the rope into its talons, as John realized that its catch was probably an eel!

At the southern end of the beach, we abruptly climbed the huge, jagged black rocks of the North Jetty of Winchester Bay. We could call the Winchester Bay Charters for a shuttle across the Umpqua River, saving us a long walk around the bay! We walked along the soft beach and called from the end of the jetty. Twenty minutes later, a boat pulled close, but not close enough to board. The captain was waving us around! It turned out that we had to bushwhack about two hundred yards upriver, around and through fallen trees and dune grass, to reach the spot he could land. John picked his way through with dry feet. I relinquished my dry feet and waded in the water beyond shore. The captain waited patiently for the ten minutes it took us to clamber through the vegetation. When we got close to "the big stump" he had originally described and we had not seen he called, "I'll pull in, then you need to jump aboard quickly. John hopped up into the bow. "Wait there!" Travis, the captain called. "I have to come back in!" He repositioned the boat. I heaved my pack up, but had trouble hoisting myself up the four feet to the bow. Made it! With John hauling me up by my pants and me tumbling into the bow. An unglamorous entrance to be sure, but just another adventure on the Oregon Coast Trail!



Where we thought our boat would arrive!

We spent a couple of hours in the fishing town of Winchester Bay, eating pizza at Beck's Store, buying fresh bread at the Sourdough Bakery, cheese and ramen at the Pelican Plaza

Market. There were no tuna packets available, which makes sense in a place where boats are hauling in fresh-caught tuna every day! The market owner suggested we try the Sportman's Cannery and get some local fish. We found it and walked out of town about 5:00 with a can of local tuna and a little packet of smoked salmon!

Tonight, we're camped at Umpqua Lighthouse State Park where we met our first Oregon Coast Trail hiker! She's hiking south like us, having just started in Florence which we left yesterday. We had fun talking with her about other trails and dehydrated food. And, she's doing an impressive thing, too – carrying a “pack raft” to navigate the bay and river crossings! Amazing!

Oregon Coast Trail: Double Day

Posted on [September 6, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

September 3, 2019

We got up at 4 a.m. anticipating a grueling 16-mile beach walk through ATV land. We cooked our oatmeal and stored it in our Ziploc bowl to eat later. We drank tea and coffee. That put us two liters of water ahead so our combined 6 liters could keep us safely hydrated until we reached our next known fresh water source at

We were ready at 5 a.m. We decided to take the road around rather than the short climb over the dunes to get to the beach access. On the road in the dark, patches of light danced in a directional rhythm on the treetops. The lighthouse! Its crystal lenses sparkled. Its radial rays of light beamed out in a moving pattern. No International Dark Sky compliance here!



Umpqua Lighthouse 5 a.m.

90 minutes' road walk on the secondary road leading to the ATV Staging Area took us to the beach access. We had encountered no vehicles! We commended ourselves for our early traverse!

At the parking area there was an unexpected water spicket. We drank and filled a liter of water, giving us a fresh start of six liters between us for the rest of the walk to Horsfal. (in the desert, I would carry at least a gallon per day, but thought the cooler temps here would minimize dehydration).

The next five and a half hours were delightfully filled with southbound beach walking with an outgoing tide. Patchy clouds promised a colorful sunrise, the first hint being a thin band of pink on the western horizon.



Western Sky Color at Sunrise

To our surprise, though, no color show appeared. The sky simply got light and gray. It wasn't until the sun was a good hand's distance above the dunes that we noticed its white disk behind thinning clouds.



Sun disk in the gray sky

Through the morning, the sky show continued as portions cleared to blue then clouded up again. Under our feet, the path of interesting beach trinkets provided a continuous guessing game of shapes – shells and sand dollar pieces, ribbons of seaweed, ropes of kelp. And our first starfish!



Starfish

We were on the closed stretch of the beach for a while, meeting only gulls and flocks of tiny sandpipers that moved in unison, and a few osprey in flight.

Halfway through we crossed Ten-Mile Creek. We had reached this point a lot sooner than we had thought we would! We had to wade across in the swift knee-deep water. I took my shoes off, then kept them off for walking in the surf which was now in incoming tide.

This is the section where the ATVs drove. However, to our enjoyment, less than ten shared our beach walk! Their tracks were getting smoothed out by the tide, which soothed my judgment about their marring the beauty of the beach.



Tide erasing the tracks on the beach

At 12:30, John spied the sign for Access 115, Horsfal, where we would leave the beach! We had walked our supposed 16 miles in 7 hours! The wooden boardwalk with an observation deck at the crest of the dune made a perfect lunch spot to eat our hummus stuffed into one of the “bread bowls” we had purchased in Winchester Bay the day before. Next stop was our camp for the night – Bluebill Campground, just down the road!

Ahh. But John had been hatching another itinerary! He had another adventure to add to our day! He realized that with half the daylight left, we could walk a beautiful stretch of coast separate from the rest – Cape Arago (air’-uh-go, an Oregonian instructed. “If you say air-ah’-go, we can tell you’re not from here!”)

To get to this three-mile coastal cliff walk, we called Yellow Cab for a 15-minute ride into North Bend, one of the few large coastal cities. We had Vicki drop us off at Safeway to resupply our vegetables. We requested a “timed pickup” for 4:15 to continue our shuttle to Cape Arago. Our new driver took us all the way beyond Charleston to the observation area at Cape Arago, about a 30-minute ride (only \$15!). Our driver was glad she had taken us

because she had never been to the point on Cape Arago before. “I believe it’s time for me to be off-duty now. I’m going to stay here for a bit!” She proclaimed after we got out.



The first thing we noticed was the barking of sea lions! A hundred, maybe, lolling on the sharp rocks offshore. We wondered if they were Stellar or California Sea Lions, not figuring that out from the interpretive sign at the overlook.

Then, we walked back up to the point and were mesmerized by whale spouts for another half hour!



Cape Arago Whale Watching Site

We still had the day's second mission to accomplish – walk the trail down the Cape to Sunset Bay State Park! The trail sign said 2 1/4 mile, but it seemed farther and more complicated as we followed the edge of the bluff through the woods. Along the way we passed through Shore Acres State Park, the former estate of an early 20th century businessman who had started the local logging companies. He had purchased 1600 acres along the coast and built a beautiful house and botanical garden. Sadly, his wife died young and the house burned down just a few months later. He remarried, built another house, had financial troubles in the Great Depression and moved away. The place was used as officers' quarters during WWII, then eventually given to the State Parks. That second house is gone as well, but the Parks have rebuilt the gardens complete with pools and bridges.

The walk, though scenic with views over the jagged rocks and wildly crashing surf, rising like geysers above the craggy rocks, took us over two hours, including our final steep descent to the beach.



Crashing Surf

After going down one more deadend path leading to an overlook instead of continuing along the coast, John found a narrow trail that wound precipitously down the cliff and behind some cottages to Sunset Beach. We guessed where the Park entrance might be, found it, then entered the campground just before dark.

The Hiker-Biker Site at Sunset Bay State Park was located towards the middle of the campground and already occupied by three other tents – bicyclists. There was still room for us, though, and we set up on the fine gravel surface. We had two challenges to address – finding an additional charging station since the two receptacles offered were taken (what were they thinking to provide 2 outlets for four sites?!), and to find someone with a can opener for our can of authentic Winchester Bay Albacore tuna.

Both puzzles were solved by a quick visit to the Camp Hosts, just at the next campsite! Cam offered me a spot on his electric box to plug in my wall charger. I'd get one battery charged anyway.

The tuna was excellent, together with rice noodles and broccoli. I decided to borrow one of the outlets from the campers who had their battery pack plugged in. I could put theirs back when we went to bed. I need not have been so micro-managing because they came over soon and took their charger out! The woman said, "Hi! I think we saw you in Safeway!" Oh right! I remembered her too. In the Safeway in North Bend I kept meeting the same woman in different aisles. Funny, she recognized me!

I made a second trip over to the camp host to ask if there were food storage boxes. “No.” he replied. “The only thing that might bother your food would be crows in the morning.” We trusted his wildlife acumen and put our food bags in our tent and hit the sack!

Our “two-adventure” day had finally ended!

Oregon Coast Trail: River Crossings

Posted on [September 10, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

September 4-6, 2019

Three days, in which we walked into the night toward a lighthouse, stopped briefly at a County Park, camped near a river to cross at midnight, stopped briefly at a State Park, walked another six miles on beautiful beach and finally rested at a hotel in Port Orford.

I'll bundle these three days because they flowed together in an unusual -and exhausting- stretch of walking outside my circadian rhythm. There were rivers to cross at low tide which didn't happen at convenient times. Ironically, this was the longest stretch of undeveloped beach along the Oregon Coast. We saw just a handful of other hikers and marveled at uncountable and varied scenes of coastal beauty on the beach for three days!

On the 4th of September, our 22nd day on the trail, we awoke at Sunset Bay State Park to the calls of ravens. Although the camp host had said there were crows, the guttural croaks, in contrast to the crow's high-pitched and definite “caw”, tells me they were ravens. This explains why they might pilfer campers' food from the tables, as the camp host had warned the night before. Ravens are relentless scavengers of convenience! Our food, however, was safely untouched by raven beak.

We were out by 8 a.m. headed to a path through the forest out of the park. It climbed steeply to a ridge because we were leaving the beach -headed *north*! We had to get back to

Charleston to position ourselves for our next southbound beach walk. From Charleston, we took our third ride with Yellow Cab back to the North Bend Safeway. That's the stop for the Curry County Transit Coastal Express, which whizzed us 27 miles down US 101, over a highway bridge with no space for pedestrians, to the Ray's Food Place in Bandon. We shopped, first for something to eat immediately, then for food to pack out for the next two days. I wanted soup to eat, but they didn't serve it in their hot bar. John asked the deli clerk about soup. She kindly offered to heat up whatever packaged soup we bought from the store! We bought a box of sweet potato curry, a deli sandwich, and a couple of hard-boiled eggs for a warming meal in their snack area. I sought out the manager to thank his staff for that personalized service!

From Ray's we walked through historic Bandon for a mile or so, then clambered over some big rocks to the beach. Our goal was to cross the mouth of the New River at low tide, which was at 11:30 p.m. Huge rock stacks loomed near the beach and we wove our way around and between them over low dunes swept by wind and sand. The fine brown sand we had grown accustomed to walking on had turned to coarse, black sand that gave way with each step.



Coarse black sand on Bandon Beach

We kept walking; into sunset, past sunset, into darkness. Without our headlamps on, the waxing crescent moon was the only light – besides the Cape Blanco lighthouse, that is. It flashed dimly, some 15 miles away. Soon, even the moonlight was hidden behind clouds, leaving the whitecapped surf as the only contrast with the dark beach. I kept my sluggish pace going with determination to reach the river crossing at its unknown distance. To trick my mind to keep going, I paced myself to walk all the way to that lighthouse before

stopping. That worked and I didn't get tired, just kept walking, listening to the surf and focusing on doing deep, rhythmic breathing.

At 9 p.m. we reached a flow of water towards the ocean! "This must be the mouth of the New River!" John said. It's tricky because this river, only about a century old, flows north, parallel to the surf and 20-50 yards in. Sometimes, new mouths form. Although low tide was still a few hours away, the river was just knee deep and easy to cross. We kept walking. I had thought we would camp soon after this crossing, but John kept going. And going. He said there was a hiker camp in this section, but he didn't know its distance.

The bank was steep, the sand soft, the walking cumbersome, the darkness deep. We walked near the surf because the sand was the firmest there. The problem was that waves would sneak up. I had put my shoes back on for easier walking, although I had given in to walking in the water. One wave leapt up and soaked my shorts though, and I cursed, exasperated with this interminably long night walk. One thing I've confirmed about myself on this trip is that I rely on regular meals and sleep. Although I think I'm good at tolerating whatever happens, my impatience bursts out when that last straw gets piled on. That soaking was my last straw this time. "Let's stop here and camp!" John relented. We stomped up the beach through deep sand. We stomped past the line of markers for the protected plover nesting zone and we set up the tent in the dune sand well away from the tide line. It was only 10 p.m. but I was glad to end that night walking.

Next morning, September 5th, we resumed our beach walk. In just an hour we saw a post on the dune that clearly said, INFORMATION in vertical letters. We climbed up the shifty sand and read it. "It's the BLM hiker camp!" John said. "We would have missed this last night! I'll mark it on my map."

About 1 p.m. we reached the next landmark at Flores Lake, a beautiful, marshy area with a county park and campground. "What if we stay here and get to the Sixes River for *tomorrow's* low tide instead of the one at midnight tonight?" I suggested, appealing to my sleepiness and attraction to this location. It could provide soothing subjects for drawing and painting. I was thrilled with the sight of a marsh hawk gliding over the lake edge.

"That won't work because of the bus from Port Orford, letting us skip the longest road walk section. It only runs Monday through Saturday." John gave me the news, the first I had

heard of the bus schedule. We ate the soup we had skipped last night and refilled our water bottles, discovering that John had lost his liter bottle during the night walk. This was inconvenient, but not dire. We still had five liters capacity. We walked back out to the beach. Resigned, I particularly noticed how unpleasant it was slogging through the loose sand of the approach road, keeping comments to myself.

The afternoon provided another several hours of determined beach walking, broken by an hour on a woodland trail over Blacklock Point, a jagged black headland jutting out into the ocean, winged by golden cliffs of sediment, topped with windblown spruce pointing south. I savored the firmness of the soil beneath my feet and reminded myself to enjoy the beauty, which I could not deny.



Golden sandstone cliffs

Soon, we were back out on the beach, this time touring a whimsical museum of driftwood sculptures and collectibles. Every size, shape, and wooden caricature, from huge roots and trunks to tiny sticks and tokens, littered the sand and grass ledge for the rest of our evening walk!



Huge Root Sculpture



Tiny wooden tokens

What a delight for my imagination! I could spend days of drawing time studying the patterns and textures of these wooden forms! Alas, we had another destination and I kept my pencils stowed. We were headed to Sixes River, known to be either shallow and easily crossed on a sandbar or formidable and requiring a retreat to the road. We checked it out about 6 p.m. and found that the 8ft high tide made the crossing have a “formidable” description. We camped nearby and set an alarm for 11:45 p.m.



Beach camp near Sixes River

In the dark, we revisited the crossing by headlamp and found it easy! We quickly forded the twenty-foot wide outflowing stream that was just knee deep. Mission accomplished! John wasn't quite sure how far it was to the trail up to Cape Blanco State Park. We walked; another night walk of unknown length. Thirty minutes in, I said that I didn't really want to walk without a clear time and destination. John snapped back, "OK! We'll stop here!" I explained that I was willing to walk for another fifteen minutes, but John stubbornly stopped.

It was easy setting up the tent again in the sand because I had packed the long sticks that I had used for stakes at our first sand camp that night. They worked better in the deep sand than our short metal ones.

At first light the next morning, September 6th, we packed up again, this time to continue south on the beach toward that lighthouse on Cape Blanco, now just short of a mile away! In the morning light, it was easy to find the trail up the cape to the lighthouse road, then walk another 3/4 mile to the Cape Blanco State Park campground.



Cape Blanco Lighthouse at dawn

I was so grateful John had not insisted on walking that whole stretch in the night! From the Sixes River crossing to the campground was 2 1/2 miles!

Once again, this would be a good resting spot, but we didn't stop! There was that bus to catch in Port Orford tomorrow and it was still about eight miles away! We ate our oatmeal, took lukewarm showers, packed up and walked out of the park. The beach between Cape Blanco and Port Orford really was beautiful, but I was tired! I did my best to pay attention to the wind carved cliffs, the blue water, and the rainbow colors of smooth stones which now graced the beach.



Now there were pebbles of rainbow colors!

Mostly, I kept walking, silently forging my way through the soft sand. Walking barefoot for a while helped refresh me.

John had called and reserved a room at the Sea Crest Motel, so at least we had a destination. We got into Port Orford at about 12:30 and made our way from the beach access into town, headed for Ray's Food Place. On our way, though, we walked past a place called Golden Harvest Herban Farm. "Let's see what they have." They had a fine selection of prepared food, a salad bar, and ice cream. We feasted on the best meat loaf ever, a piece of quiche, a cup of barley soup, and a fantastic salad, topped off with carrot cake and ice cream. The unique flavors were ones I would not have picked out in the grocery store and they made me feel vibrant and festive!



A delicious stop, right on our way!

I made a second purchase to carry out and eat in the hotel: cauliflower curry soup and second helpings of meatloaf, quiche, and salad. We didn't even need to go to Ray's today!

We made two more stops, conveniently located between Golden Harvest and Sea Crest Hotel: The Post Office and the Food Co-op. At the Post Office we talked with the clerk about how inconvenient it was that our maildrop package we had sent to General Delivery had been returned to California. The clerk in Astoria, where we had mailed our three packages

on August 14th, had told us the P.O. holds packages for 30 days. Ours was held for only 15. After several minutes' discussion, he agreed that we had not been served as expected and assured us that he would ameliorate this inconsistency in implementing the new 15-day hold policy. Then, he refunded our postage for that package! That felt good!

At the Co-op, we did some reconnaissance on what we could buy during tomorrow's resupply. We got plenty of ideas! We also got a sampling of some irresistible radish kim-chi from the Korean woman who supplies it at the Co-op. We bought a pint of it, and even gave her canning jar back after dumping the kim-chi into an empty bag from our food bag.

Now, we were ready for that hotel room! We walked to the southern edge of Port Orford past Battle Rock, another monument to America's brutal displacement of the original people, and then continued south on US101 another quarter mile to the Sea Crest Motel with its twenty rooms. The owner had said over the phone that we could have a room with a fridge. In person, we learned that the room with a fridge had a shower, not a tub. We asked more questions and learned that he *did* have a room with a tub and that he could move the fridge into that room and that he could *also* bring in a microwave. On occasions like this, after camping for five nights, we considered all these items to be necessities. Although we were a little surprised that we had to ask for them, we appreciated his accommodation! Within minutes of entering the room, beautifully decorated with locally made patchwork quilts like the ones he had for sale in the lobby, the owner hauled in a mini-fridge and microwave. Now, we were set up for our nineteen whole hours of rest!

I was ready for it!

Oregon Coast Trail: Port Orford Revisited

Posted on [September 13, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

September 13, 2019

There are many aspects of this particular journey that are different than my other long walks – the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Benton MacKaye Trail, and others.

One of those is what piques my interest today. Generally, I have walked each trail once, in a single direction. By contrast, we have now actually traveled the length of the Oregon Coast trail *three* times! We're staying in the same Sea Crest Motel in Port Orford where I made my last post an entire week ago! Let me explain with a brief recounting of our week's itinerary.

On September 7, we walked out of this motel just at 11:00 a.m. and made a second stop at the Food Co-op where we bought delectable foods for the next few days – dried mangos and pears especially! We walked another half mile to Ray's Food Place to wait for the Coastal Express bus for an hour ride south to Gold Beach, arriving at another Ray's in Gold Beach a little after 2 p.m.

It was just a short walk down 5th Place and past the local airstrip to the beach. Soon, we caught sight of Cape Sebastian where we would leave the beach. I made sure to let my family, and grandson Sebastian, know we'd be hiking there! Clouds hovered over its distant peak, suggesting a lurking dragon, a suitable intrigue for a three-year-old.



There's a dragon up there for sure!

We reached the base of Cape Sebastian in less than three hours, after walking Gold Beach, suitably named for its treasures of tiny agates mixed in with the array of smoothed pebbles. Finding the post marking the trail up the cape presented another treasure hunt. I had pulled out my binoculars to find it in the distance, almost hidden in the grass.

A beautiful, well-graded trail wound up Cape Sebastian through ancient spruce trees dripping with Spanish moss. Whimsical, handmade signs pointed our way.



Whimsical signs point the way

Just on cue at 1.7 miles we found the “good spot for a bivouac” noted in Bonnie Henderson’s Day Hiking Oregon Coast. It was only 6 p.m. but we didn’t think we’d find a better campsite, so we stopped! The site also included a view with a bench. Watching the setting sun reflecting on the ocean, I reveled in sketching and painting my view of Cape Sebastian. The ground softened by a spruce needle cushion provided a luxurious resting spot for the night.



My quick painting of Cape Sebastian

Sunday, September 8th offered walks through three habitats. First, we completed the 5-mile traverse of Cape Sebastian, through the majestic spruce-hemlock forest, along the cliffs of convoluted rocks at the base of the cape, then down an eroded ramp, scaled with a rope,

to regain the beach. All my senses were nourished, from the carpeted texture of the path, the scents of spruce, the vibrant colors of shrubs, mushrooms, and even the beautiful and threatening poison oak, to the sonorous quiet with muffled surf in the background.



Poison Oak flashes its red color

We walked the beach for a stretch, then climbed over the dunes and out to the road, crossing the wide Pistol River on a bridge. Then, we re-entered the forest for our third habitat of the day. A beautiful and thoughtfully preserved stretch of coast called the Samuel H. Boardman Scenic Corridor welcomed us hikers with a good 16 miles of trail that follows the ins and outs of the coastline, up and down from road to beach and from road to bluff's edge.



*One spectacular section of the Samuel Boardman Scenic Corridor
was Indian Sands, a dune atop the bluff*

We knew we would be camping along the trail that night, even though no official camping is available. We had started looking for a flat spot. The steep, thickly vegetated forest offered none.

Just before dusk, we reached a feature called “Secret Beach”. We had read that it might be a place to camp. Two things negated that for us. First, there was the tide. I didn’t think I would sleep well on the narrow beach listening to the surf, worrying that it would inundate my tent! Secondly, we realized this beach was not secret at all! There was a well-used trail leading away to the road! The first people we had met on the trail all day were here! It was a wedding party taking pictures! The bride was deftly clambering up the bank, gathering folds of her white dress around her arm.

We hiked on, back up the bluff. Our willingness to move on was rewarded with the discovery of a cleared viewpoint, just big enough for our tiny tent, within twenty minutes south. We had a scenic view directly above Secret Beach that was safely distant from the surf. We slept well, even as the first drops of rain started falling during the night.



Just enough clearing for our tiny tent!

On Monday, September 9th we walked through the forest of the Samuel H. Boardman Scenic Corridor during our first full day of rain. This would also be our last day of trail walking! In short, it was a fulfilling day of beauty, with rain adding a zestful touch of refreshment.

Late in the afternoon, we left the forest, reading on a plaque that Samuel Boardman was the founder of the Oregon State Parks system. What a fitting honor that this wondrous corridor had been dedicated to him on the eve of his retirement from the Parks!

A short road walk led us into Brookings, where we found a welcome bike path for our last mile to this day's end at Harris Beach State Park. We easily found the registration kiosk where we paid to stay at the Hiker-Biker site, grateful that the Oregon State Parks provides these special sites for campers without cars.

In the morning of September 10th, John made a few calls to locate a nearby car rental place. We had just one more section to reach the California state line, the official southern terminus of the Oregon Coast Trail. The plan he devised was to continue walking 2 miles south into downtown Brookings, catch the northbound bus 100 miles to Coos Bay, rent a car there, drive north to Fort Stevens to retrieve the "Old Gold Van", drive back to Coos Bay to return the rental car, then drive back south and walk that last bit of the trail. Got it?

Well, that's what we did! By 3 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10th, we had taken our hundred-mile bus ride, watching ten days' walk melt before our eyes, and rented a 2019 Chrysler Pacifica van. By 8 p.m. we had retraced another two weeks' walk and checked into the same campsite where we had slept on our very first night at Fort Stevens, completing two traverses of the trail in 28 days – and 7 hours!

Next morning, on September 11, with somber reverence for the day, we drove the hundred yards or so to the protected lot where the Old Gold Van had been parked for a month. We knew we'd have to jump start the battery. Opening the hood also revealed that a month had given a couple of mice ample time to get comfortable there. They wouldn't leave!

In an hour, we were headed south, driving separate vans with John in the mouse van. The next two days were focused on our third traverse of the Oregon Coast Trail! This time, we stopped at certain spots we had missed on foot:

- * Tillamook Creamery
- *The Three Capes Scenic Loop to Netarts, Sand Lake, and Pacific Beach
- *The 6-mile hike on the Harts Cove Trail on Cascade Head
- *The Elk Viewing Area in Reedsport
- *Seven Devils Beach
- *Bullards Beach and the Coquille River Lighthouse

Midway through the day, just before the side trip to Seven Devils Beach, we stopped in Coos Bay to shop for food, fulfill John's official interview call for his seasonal job at Anza-Borrego

Desert State Park, and return the rental car. No mouse sightings in the Old Gold Van had occurred. Maybe John's laying of dryer sheets throughout the van had driven them out. Maybe they were now moved into Wax Myrtle Campground where we had stayed the night before.

What impressed me with this part of the journey was how quickly we had covered the trail by car, yet how shallowly we had experienced the true nature of the coast this way! The road rarely gave us views of the beach where we had so deeply experienced the surf, the sand, the rocks, and the sky during our walk. By car, each of the stores, trailheads, and road stretches that had been such vital resources and landmarks for us while walking, were insignificant blips along the road!

After a short visit to the Coquille River lighthouse, which we had glimpsed from Bandon Beach on Day 12 of our walk, we hopped into the Old Gold Van together and drove to Port Orford, destined for a second stay at Sea Crest Motel while watching the Democratic Debate. Twelve days of walking evaporated in forty minutes of driving, my mind quickly reviewing the rich details we had relished while walking!

Which brings me to the present day of September 13, a lucky Friday for me, being one of those people blessed to have the 13th as a birthday. We were lucky to get to stay in a hotel with an ocean view one night before the full moon! At 4 in the morning I watched the moonlight shining on the ocean. At 6 a.m. we watched the almost full orange moon set into the western ocean horizon.

Oregon Coast Trail: Finale

Posted on [September 13, 2019](#) by [Regina Reiter](#)

September 13, 2019, 6:45 p.m. Finished! We crossed the Oregon-California state line on the beach at Crissey Field State Park. There was no marker. John looked at Google Maps. We situated ourselves so the little blue dot hovered over the line. Done!



This log straddles the state line!

To get here we had returned to the bus stop across the street from the Fred Meyer store in Brookings, where we had caught a bus a few days ago on our van retrieval mission. That's the furthest south we had been until today. From that point, John navigated to a couple of beaches he had found either in Bonnie's book or by studying Google Maps. Even though the "official" trail followed the road pretty much all the way to Crissey Field State Park, a few miles south, John wanted to catch these few more beaches. We turned on side streets a few times and walked in Chetco Point Park, then McVay Point, and finally Crissey Field State Park.

At Crissey Field, we walked past the Visitor Center, which was closed. That meant we couldn't sign the Oregon Coast Trail register and pose for thruhiker photos with the staff. We contented ourselves with striking a victory pose next to the park sign. Behind the visitor center we walked across a wide strip of driftwood, then out to the beach. We walked north for a hundred yards or so, then turned south for the final quarter mile of the Oregon Coast Trail. We were both captivated by the colorful, smooth pebbles and pocketed a few of our favorites as souvenirs.





As close as it gets to a finish marker!

We snapped some photos, then turned east into the dune, taking the trail back to the park road and to our car. Done!



Celebrating our journey's completion

Afterword

The Oregon Coast Trail journey had encompassed 31 days and some 375 miles between the Columbia River and the California state line. We don't have a good accounting of how many miles we actually walked, but I'm not so concerned about that. Since that first bus ride out of Lincoln City, I had recharacterized this walk from a through *hike* to a long-distance *journey*. I am satisfied that we fulfilled the intention of the creators of the Oregon Coast Trail by walking, boating, and driving the Oregon coast along their route!

With little fanfare, we hopped into the Old Gold Van and drove south on our favorite road – US101! Soon, we crossed the state line into California, snapping photos of both the Oregon and California signs. It was dark by the time we reached Redwoods National and State Park and drove the winding road back to Mill Creek Campground. To our surprise, even though it was a Friday night, we easily found a vacant site and pulled in. We couldn't fit the bulging envelope that held the coins and paper bills that comprised our campsite fee into the slot, so we just held onto it. Sure enough, in the morning, a ranger bedecked with both National Park and California State Park patches, came collecting. We thanked her for coming around, saving us an early trip to the entrance station!

We still had a few days to drive the entire length of California, headed to Borrego Springs, just a few dozen miles north of Mexico, so we took another walk! Alas, this was just a mile-long loop through a grove of redwood trees near the campground. Feeling far from the beach and the Oregon coast, we turned our thoughts and plans to our future – our sixth season working in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. And that, dear readers, is a tale yet to unfold!

Thanks for reading!

Regina Reiter

September 29, 2019

