

## **BCHO at the Oregon Outdoor Recreational Summit 2024**

**This** year's Recreational Summit had a focus on inclusion supporting different approaches and experiences of people with a variety of backgrounds and interpretations. Our BCHO booth had a LOT of interest and activity with participants inquiring about what we do and how to partner with us. The 'Hoofin IT' video which Pam Lehto, Betty Applebaker, Casey Hufstader, Cody Hufstader, Jean Clancey, Becky Hope presented was WELL received with a FULL room of participants who clearly wanted more information about our work and how the horses factored in with trails.

We made many connections and expressed our interest in the projects which the other participants shared regarding recreating in the outdoors. This included Reimagining Outdoor Recreation in urban areas with children of ethnic backgrounds that have felt left out of recreating and now have a program (in the Portland area) to canoe, bird watch and more. The Treaty Tribes (original stewards of the land) are wanting to be asked first at the beginning of lands decisions instead of toward the end. Encompassing forward thinking ideas to get people out in the forests was represented by organizations that enable handicapped individuals to use specially built, heavy-duty wheelchairs which are pushed and pulled by volunteers over challenging terrain (like Smith Rock) so that these individuals can recreate and enjoy the outdoors. Also in urban areas, bicycling groups have been formed to help show mentally and physically disabled children how to bicycle. Opportunities for alter-abled people, teenagers and the BIPOC community were also presented. We were introduced to an adaptive trail bike that is non-motorized and is pulled by a team of people.

A few of us from Emerald, as well as other chapters, attended this year's Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summit, which is organized by Oregon Trails Coalition. It took place in early December at the Sunriver Lodge. The attendees to the Summit came from a diverse group of recreation professionals, outdoor recreation and education program providers, travel and tourism groups, land managers, natural resource scientists and public agency staff, policy makers, conservation and stewardship professionals and volunteers. Alter-abled people, teenagers and the BIPOC community were also represented. The goal is to provide networking opportunities, talks on important issues of the day, and educational opportunities for all Oregon trails users.

BCHO hosted a breakout session with our video called 'Hoof'n It' (reference above) to a standing room only crowd. Trail Keepers of Oregon joined the presentation with information on their trail ambassador program which puts ambassadors at heavily used trailheads. After our BCHO video, Cody Hufstader answered questions from the audience. As a 6<sup>th</sup> generation packer who has been leading pack strings since the age of six, he did an excellent job representing youth as well as our BCHO contributions overall. He also gave a terrific explanation of the difference between horses and mules! We also hosted a table set up with pictures of BCHO activities, brochures, and staffed by members to answer questions. This table was set up in the main in the Lodge and so gave us excellent exposure to all Summit attendees. And – oh joy – at the table next to us was a representative from Green Trails Maps. Great, accurate maps!!

Another session focused on the work being done to repair fire damaged areas in the Mt Hood, Willamette and Umpqua National Forests. The Forest Service has a national initiative called "Reimagine Recreation." The Forest Service is partnering with the National Forest Foundation which is chartered by Congress to restore and enhance National Forests and Grasslands.

We were shown a video on the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail, part of which has a new tunnel through Mitchell Point, connecting western segments of the historic trail to The Dalles and Mosier River. This is a 73-mile-long trail open to pedestrians and bikes.

### **FACTS REGARDING THE SUMMIT**

- There were over 365 attendees
- 16 BCHO/BCHA/OET members attended
- Multiple opportunities to connect with other groups to add to each other's knowledge

- College Kids doing Solitude Monitoring in Small Wilderness near Portland
- Randy Rasmussen, BCHA public lands representative at the National level, made many national contacts at this meeting due to it being in Bend and tele commuting.
- Travel Oregon has given 5.5 million in Grant funding for outdoor projects

#### CONTACTS MADE

- Amanda Wallace, Jerry Norquist NWYC
- Blue Mountain Land Trust Barbara Hetrick Trail Crewleaders
- TKO: Trail Ambassador Program Idea: CV Program fundraising and Training
- RTP grants
- Land Tawney, former CEO of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Many Outdoor Retailers
- Green Trails Maps (contact made for person from Eugene to talk to our horse group)

#### UPCOMING NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

- Key Issues: Federal Renewal of GAOA funding
- Refund the Explore Act
- Owyhee National Monument,
- Utah Lawsuits. Will want to write Senators Merkley, Ron Wyden.

#### STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES WILL BE:

Recreational Immunity law sunsets end 2025, need to make it permanent, currently LC (Legislative Concept) 2357. To be submitted by Senator Floyd Prozanski.

- Recreational Liability: Causing insurance costs to go up. Currently 100% on the Outfitter, support some bill making some of the liability/responsibly on the person recreating. See- [www.protectoregonrec.org](http://www.protectoregonrec.org)
- Transportation Measure 2025: #1 goal \$50 Million Oregon for community parks, paved trails, ADA, Multi-use Paths in Oregon
- Oregon Conservation Corp Funding SB 762 Youth Work Force Development
- RV removal Funds for abandon vehicles
- Wildlife Crossings for roads
- Trails Day at Salem to promote Recreational Immunity legislation

#### List of Sessions at the Oregon Recreational Trails Summit

- Creating Sustainable Outdoor Recreation for People with Disabilities
- Commit to Planet Inclusion and Adventure: The Outdoorist Oath Workshop
- Summit Welcome and Opening Plenary: What's Joy Got to Do with It?
- Community Connections: Biking Between and Through Central Oregon Cities
- Different Approaches, Same Goal: Two Strategies of Wilderness Stewardship
- Changing Dynamics of Outfitter Guides
- **Empowering Diverse Communities & Overcoming the Baby Nature Gap in Outdoor Recreation**
- Imagine a vibrant Oregon where every person, no matter their background or ability, feels the joy of Oregon's beautiful outdoors, the confidence to explore, and the freedom to be themselves outdoors. In this session, you will hear from Lestarya Molloy, CEO/Founder of Fridie Outdoors.
- Statewide Outdoor Recreation and Trails Plans: What have we learned and where do we go from here?
- Hiicijilicix - They are returning home: Rethinking Recreation for Tribal Youth
- Developing, Growing and Sustaining Water trails for People & Wildlife
- Research, Marketing and Outreach to Diverse Communities

- General Session: The Future of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon: State Legislative Outlook
- General Session: Oregon Recreation Community Updates
- Elevating Access to Oregon's Adaptive Mountain Bike Destinations
- Transit to Trails: Celebrating Access to the Outdoors Via Public Transit
- Reimagining Recreation: Collaborative Recovery in the Pacific Northwest
- Outdoor Industry Partnerships and How to Engage
- Big Ideas in Outdoor Recreation
- BIPOC Trail Network Affinity Luncheon
- Cultivating Mindfulness Through Nature
- Connecting Communities: Agency, Non-profit, and Community Collaboration Shaping the Mosier to The Dalles Trail
- Responsible Recreation: Respecting Wildlife
- Trailblazers in Green Careers: Cultivating Youth Environmental Leaders and Outdoor Professionals
- Piloting a Volunteer-Powered Model for Profiling Inclusive Trails
- E-Bikes: Managing Change Across Jurisdictions, Trail Types, and E-Bike Classes
- Gravel Cycling: Oregon Coast Case Study
- The Oregon Brand in the Outdoor Industry: Bridging Industry and Education

BCHO made a lot of connections and opened a lot of eyes how horses and mules contribute considerably to trails accessibility. By continuing to show up to these outdoor events, we are getting the message out that horses still have a valuable contribution to outdoor recreating and accessibility now and into the future.

Submitted by Jean Clancey, Kim Zemek, Melanie Kate-Mason, Casey Hufstader, Becky Hope