

## **Crown Zellerbach Logging Road Project Background and History**

### **DRAFT**

Columbia County initiated efforts to purchase the old Crown Zellerbach Logging Road in 1993 for the purpose of converting it to a public trail. Initial discussion/negotiations at that time were primarily between Mike Sykes (former County Commissioner) and Keith Klecker (Chief Forester for the Cavenham and Hancock Forest Management). The discussions between Sykes and Klecker in 1993 involved a property trade for the first 7 miles of the logging road from the City of Scappoose to Chapman. The two parties were unable to work out an agreement and a deal was never negotiated.

The County continued to try to maintain open talks for the purchase of the logging road throughout the 1990's, but these efforts were hampered by a succession of owners. Once or twice progress would be made, but right in the middle the property would change hands and the negotiations had to start all over again. Finally, the prospect of County ownership came back to life in the late nineties, largely due to the efforts of Keith Klecker and the current Commissioner, Tony Hyde, who had taken over the project from Mike Sykes.

An appraisal was completed and both parties agreed to a final price, and in early 2004 County Staff applied for and were successful in obtaining grants from the Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon State Parks for the purchase of the trail. During this time Hancock sold an approximate 3-mile portion of the logging road on the Vernonia end to Weyerhaeuser. Commissioner Hyde discussed the trail issues with Weyerhaeuser and Weyerhaeuser agreed to donate the right-of-way to the County for trail purposes. The Port of St. Helens agreed to donate the water connection for the trail with the donation of Chapman Landing in December of 2005.

Columbia County completed the purchase of the of the 17-mile Crown Zellerbach Logging road from Hancock Forest Management in December of 2004. In 2005 Columbia County hired Northern Resources Consultants for the purpose of coordinating two public meetings. Public meetings were held in the City's of Vernonia and Scappoose. The results of these meetings revealed and documented public interest and concerns over the following opportunities and issues:

#### Opportunities:

- Regional walking, hiking, biking and equestrian facility.
- Economic development in the form of tourism.
- Opportunity to educate the public about Columbia County's logging and timber history.
- Connection to the Vernonia-Banks Linear Trail and the Stub Stewart State Park in Washington County.

Issues:

- Mitigating adjacent property owner issues
- Mitigating traffic and other conflicting uses with easements that cross the trail to various private property owners.
- Coordination of logging operations with the adjacent tree farms.

In the spring of 2005, Columbia County decided it was time to prepare a planning document called a 'Development Concept Plan' for the trail. That plan would lay out the community vision, goals, and objectives for the trail and would provide detailed information on how the trail would be developed and managed. The planning would occur through a public process that would seek to involve all interested stakeholders. Columbia County submitted a grant application to the National Park Service<sup>1</sup> for technical planning assistance to prepare the concept plan and help organize a public involvement component. The grant application was successful and planning began in the fall of 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance' program of the National Park Service provides non-financial grants of technical planning assistance to communities working on local conservation and recreation projects. Assisting local communities achieve their conservation and recreation goals allows the National Park Service to achieve its stated mission of extending the benefits of conservation and recreation to the nation and world.