

# CASCADE LOCKS: MARINE PARK TRAIL



## SPRING 2021 OUTREACH SUMMARY

### Overview

The purpose of this phase of outreach was to understand the current use and community interest in Marine Park in Cascade Locks. An electronic survey asked respondents to comment on the following topics:

- How they currently use Marine Park.
- What they value most about Marine Park.
- Their vision for the future of Marine Park.

The survey was open from May 24 to June 11, 2021. During this time, 83 people started the survey, with a nearly 100% completion rate. JLA Public Involvement staff also conducted two stakeholder interviews during this time to expand on the survey questions, as well as conducting an interview with an ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) employee focused on the historic and environmental aspects of the park. Responses from the interviews are called out separately from the survey data.

### Outreach Overview

The project team publicized the survey in the following ways:

- Postcards sent to 810 addresses (97014 mailing route)
- Sharing the link on the ODOT-hosted webpage
- Emails to key stakeholders
  - 2 emails to ODOT's I-84 and Historic Highway mailing list (3,500 recipients).
  - Inclusion in Historic Highway e-newsletter.
- Emails(?) / Other?
  - Included in Port Report Newsletter, physically mailed to 740 addresses and emailed to 187 subscribers.

Stakeholders were identified for interviews to ensure a range of viewpoints and perspectives were considered along with the general outreach. Stakeholders represented the following groups/viewpoints:

- History.
- Past and present use by Warm Springs, Nez Perce, Yakima, and Umatilla tribes.
- Local residents.

- Recreational users.

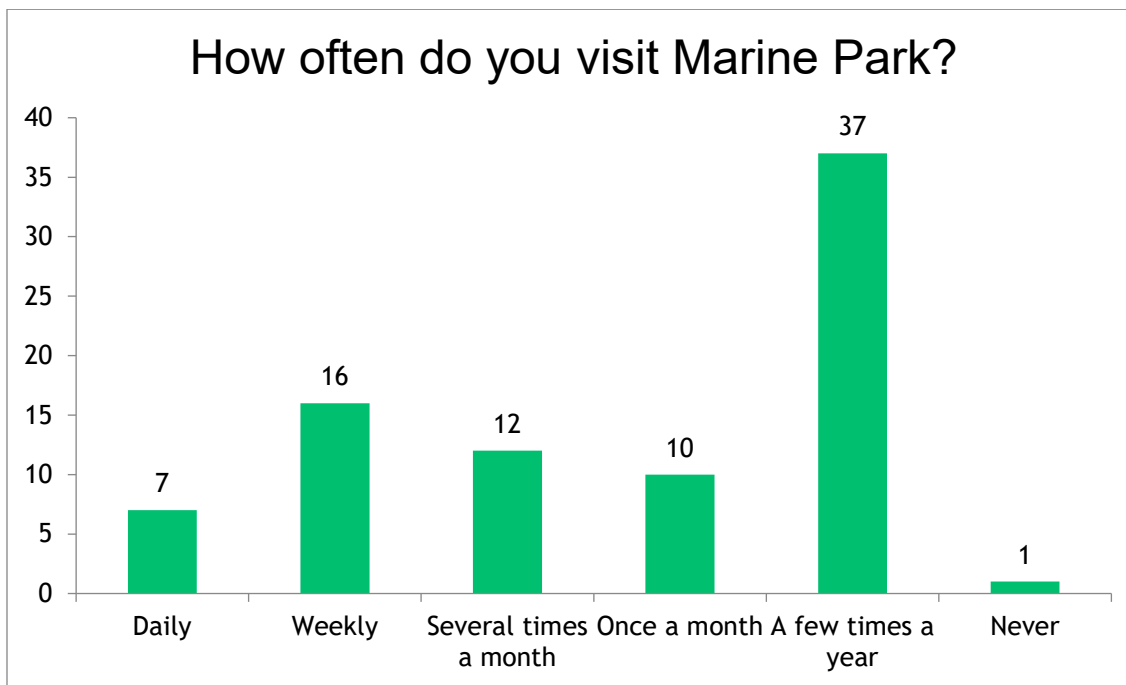
## Themes and Takeaways

The next section shares more detailed information from each of the questions, including themes that arose from the survey and stakeholder interview responses.

### How often do you visit Marine Park?

A little over 50% of respondents (45 respondents) visit the park at least once a month. The other half of the survey respondents (45% or 37 respondents) visit a few times a year.

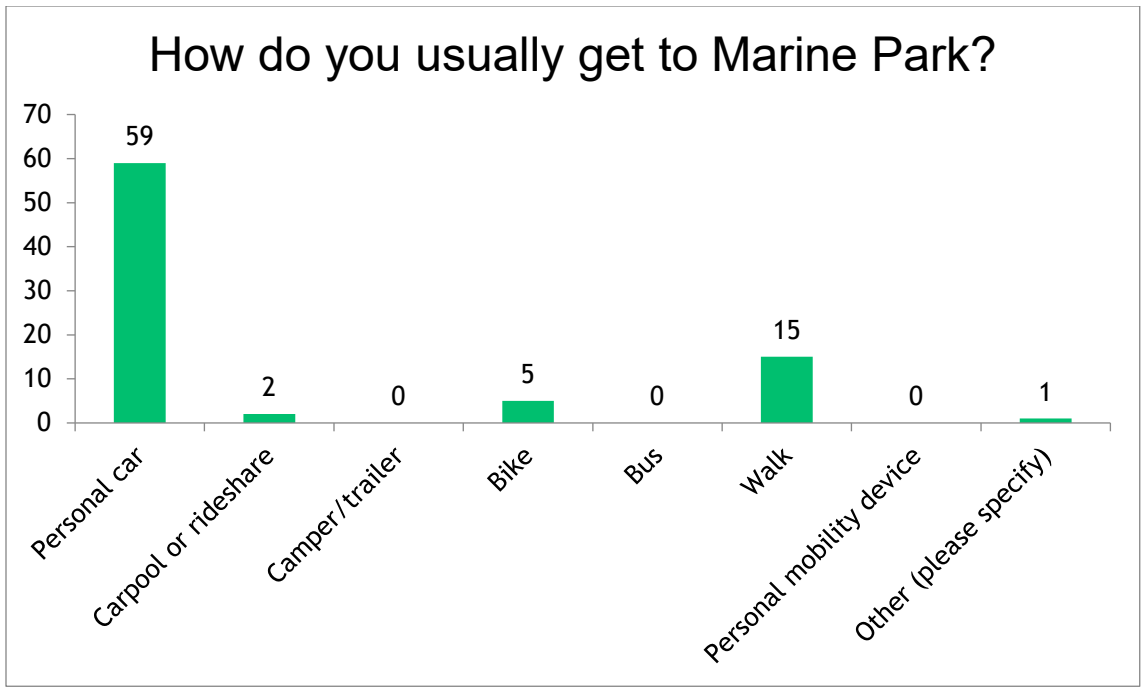
Both stakeholder interviewees were residents. One shared that they use the park about once a month and the second shared they go at least twice a week.



### How do you usually get to Marine Park?

Most respondents (72% or 59 respondents) get to Marine Park using a personal car. A few people reported walking (20%) or biking (6%). Of the people surveyed, none accessed the park using public transit. This was not a multiple-choice question, so one person responded with “other” and wrote in: “car, bike, and walk.”

Both interviewees shared that they drive to Marine Park. They both live within biking/walking distance, but each has reasons for driving – one walks their dog around the park, the other has a child with disabilities who cannot navigate the steep terrain to enter the park.



**What do you normally do when you visit Marine Park? (check all that apply)**

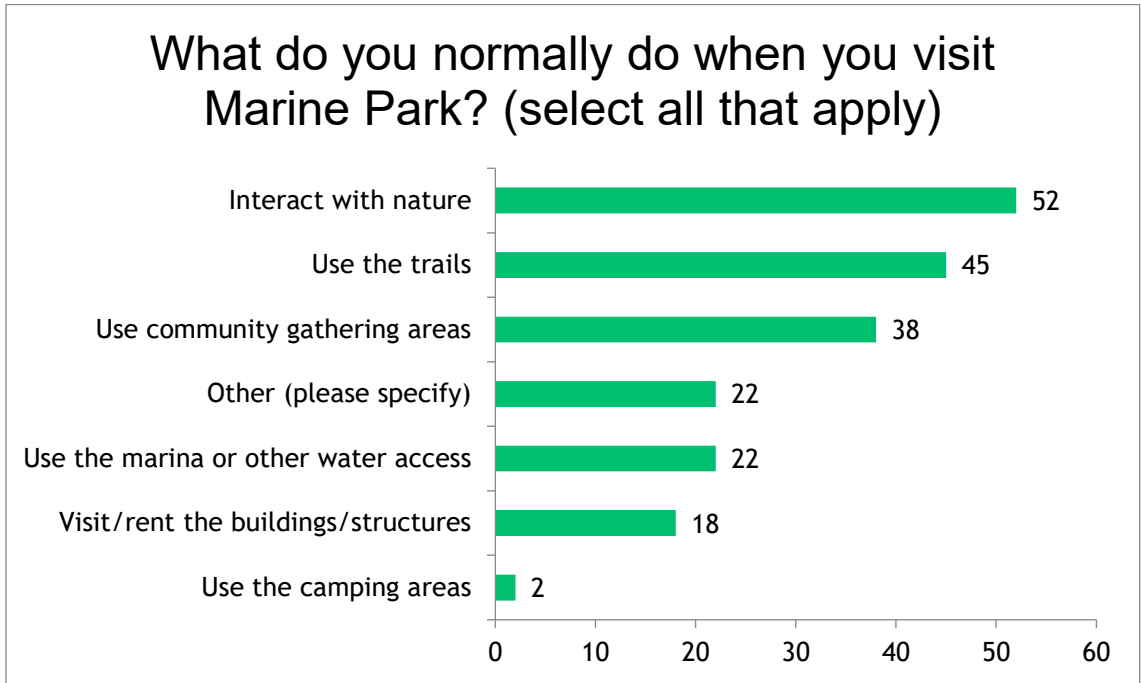
The most common response to this question was “interact with nature,” with 52 respondents selecting this option (64%). This was followed by “use the trails” (54% or 45 respondents), and “use the community gathering areas” (46% or 38 respondents). Only two respondents reported using the camping areas.

Many respondents wrote in other things they do when they visit the park. These answers included:

- Playground (6).
- Go to thunder brewing/the pub (2).
- Fishing/fish from the wall.
- Go to meetings.
- Locks cafe.
- Paddling.
- Easter Egg Hunt.
- Play Disc Golf.
- Visit the stone element's that continue throughout the historic corridor.
- Running.
- Walk on Thunder Island.
- Walk dog.
- Walk the venue.
- Sit and enjoy the surroundings, watch birds, etc.
- Watch geese and overlook the river.

- Would use the trails but don't due to them being disjointed.

The interviewees answers were similar, including dog-walking, visiting nature, the Sternwheeler Café, the Easter Egg hunt, picnics and other events, and the playground.



### How long do you usually spend at Marine Park when you visit?

Almost half of respondents (48% or 39 responses) reported spending a few hours at Marine Park when they visit. A little over a quarter of respondents (27% or 22 responses) reported only spending an hour at the park when they visit and about 18% (15 responses) said they spend half a day.

Both interviewees reported spending between 30 to 90 minutes during their visits to Marine Park.



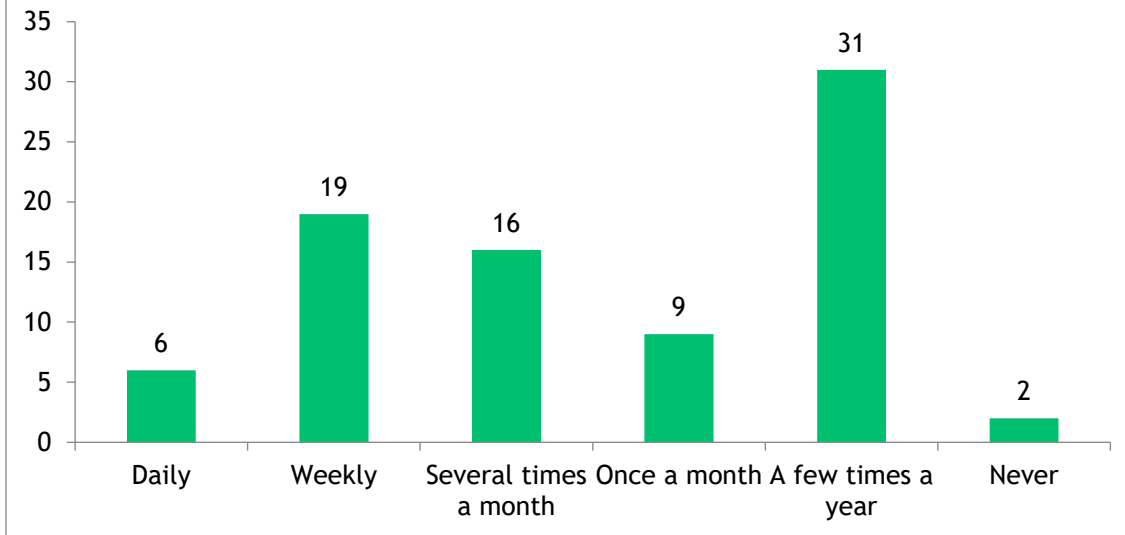
**How often do you see yourself using the Marine Park Trail in the future?**

Most respondents (37% or 31 respondents) saw themselves using the Marine Park Trail a few times a year in the future, with almost a quarter (23% or 19 respondents) envisioning using it weekly and 20% (16 respondents) envisioning using it several times a month.

One of the interviewees shared that they would be more likely to use the trail in the future if it is level terrain, which would be accessible to their child with disabilities. This would be a great form of exercise and give them an opportunity to get out of the house and visit nature.

The other interviewee said if the trail were paved, they would use it daily as a running trail. They also shared the following ideas to increase usage: paving instead of gravel would mean youth who skateboard, bike ride and use electric scooters could ride on the path; dog stations with dog waste bags and trash cans are needed; more benches are needed; a paved trail would be a good place for vendors to set up during the PCT Trail Days.

## How often do you see yourself using the Marine Park Trail in the future?

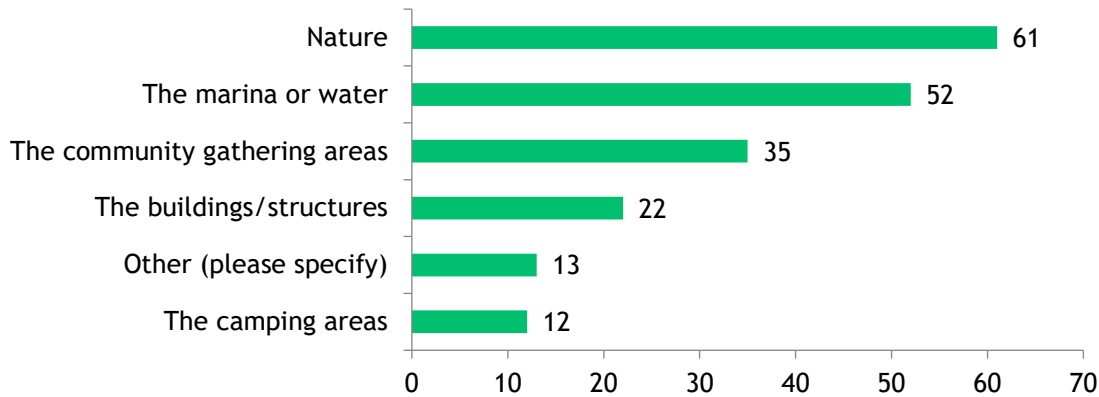


### If there was an accessible trail in Marine Park, which destinations would be most important to have on the trail? (Select up to 3)

Most respondents (75% or 61 responses) to this question selected “nature” as the most important destination on the future accessible trail in Marine Park. This was followed by “the marina or water,” with 64% of respondents (52 responses), and “the community gathering areas,” with 43% of respondents (35 responses). Several respondents shared these additional comments:

- Would love to see a trail along the river down to the business district area.
- Adding a trail in the already crowded park is insane.
- It's unclear to me where this trail will be, so it's hard to answer.
- Thunder Island.
- Playground.

If there was an accessible trail in Marine Park, which destinations would be most important to have on the trail? (select up to 3)

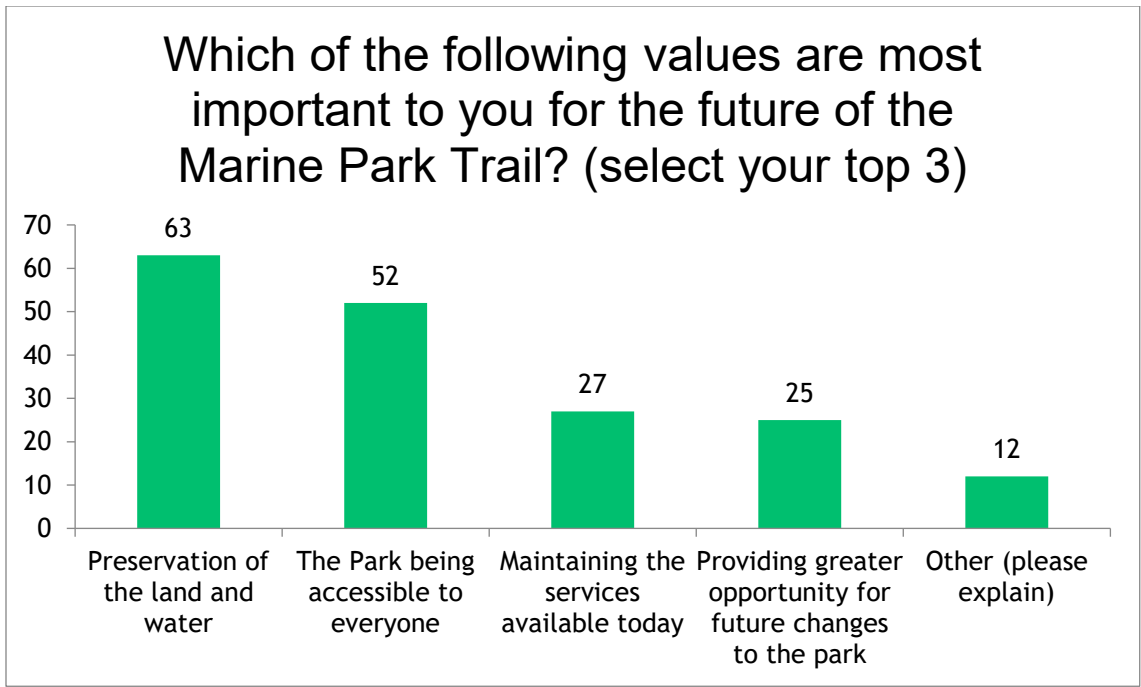


### Which of the following are most important to you for the future of the Marine Park Trail? (Select your top 3)

Preservation of the land and water was the most important value (75% or 63 respondents). This was closely followed by making the park accessible to everyone (62% or 52 respondents).

Twelve respondents chose to write in other important values. These included:

- Improved waterfront access (boat launching site improvement, a trail that follows the river east or west, continued sailing venues) (3).
- Interpretation of the park's remarkable history, history explained and preserved (2).
- Respect and space for locals (2).
- Careful planning to provide safe trail access near the disc golf course.
- Cascade Locks is going to be recognized as the "center" of the gorge by more visitors. As a result, it will represent the gorge to those visitors. You should leverage the great scenery, the history of the area, and make it VERY people friendly. The new parking process reflects poorly upon the Marine Park experience.
- Connectivity to the other routes nearby for bikes and pedestrians.
- Easy access from town. I'm hoping this is the pedestrian bridge from the post office that was talked about.
- Would appreciate stone elements pulled throughout connecting to the historic Columbia River gorge scenic highway trail stone elements like starvation and Wyeth creek for example. stone seat walls, steps, curbs, etc.



**Additional comments from stakeholder interviews**

The following are summarized comments and direct quotes from the stakeholder interviews.

What they value most:

- The natural attractions. The way the entrance forces you to look across the river and interact with nature. “It is kept in a natural, pristine state.”
- The Marina, the beach and the cove.
- “I just like sitting there.”
- The sternwheeler.
- The playground.
- The size – it’s big enough to do a concert or movies in the park. Hood River does movies in the park at one of their parks, but otherwise this is unique feature for our area.
- Contract with the river cruises has been positive. Brings business to town and local enjoy looking at the boats.

Concerns about the Marine Park Trail:

- The project team needs to be inclusive of residents’ needs. “People don’t always think about those of us who live here.”
- Preservation of the natural beauty. Who will handle cleaning up litter along the trail?
- Goose poop.
- Need dog-waste stations with doggy bags.



- Having good signage – Hood River has a good example along their waterfront park.
- Include cultural touchpoints – Hood River has art installations that highlight local artists
- More benches are needed, especially in scenic areas. More ADA friendly picnic tables.
- Concerned about people taking shortcuts and creating a user path in the middle of the natural/forested areas. Especially around venue spots on Thunder Island – need to prevent users from deviating away from the trail and into those areas while they are in use.
- Need lockable bike racks so you can leave your bike and walk around/get into the water and not worry about leaving your bike.
- Would be nice to have water fountains, especially if more people are using the trail for recreation. There is no public access water on the east part of the island.
- Make sure it doesn't infringe on the Native fishing rights near the dock.

Where should the trail go or not go?

- Prioritize the bike trail going underneath the railroad bridge and straight, then past the playground. Convert the gravel path to a paved trail and network that along the river away from the road. Having bikes and cars on the narrow roads at the same time will cause congestion. Keep the path near scenic areas where you have a nice view.
- Near the Sternwheeler it is trickier because you must share a narrow road. Seems like it would be safer closer to the railroad – the other side has a steep slope and a bicycle could slip into the marina.
- Plan for the future and have it be well-connected, with an eventual bridge over the railroad.
- Trail could go along the parking lot where the road goes down to the boat ramp but keep the trail within scenic view of the river – maybe by having it at a different level than the road.
- Having a loop where most of the recreational activities are since that's where most people seem to spend the most time.
- Generally, keeping it close to where the existing roads are, but do it in a way that's natural and closer to the waterfront than those roads.

Additional comments:

- The five miles along the Hood River Marina Trail would be a good model. They have stations along the trail with placards describing the about native plants and then those plants are right there to look at.
- Would be nice to have interactive stations along the trail – exercise stations that tell you to do jumping jacks, or with props you can use. Enhance it in a way so that it's not just for walking or riding.
- Placards could also share information about geological formation changes, weather, history of Native cultures in the area. Could support Native artists in the Gorge/Cascade Locks area.
- Keep history in mind – there may be funding to build a pedestrian and bike path on the Bridge of the Gods. We will see more bicyclists coming in from Washington who then continue onto the Historic Columbia River Highway. The Park could have information about the highway and the new trails that will be designed in the future.

- Most people head straight when they enter the park, instead of turning right or left. If they aren't from the area, that's where they perceive they're supposed to go.
- There is an opportunity to develop more areas on the east side to make it more attractive. If you're going to put a trail, put it on the SE side of the island and not the NE side so it isn't directly next to the wedding venue areas.
- Would be good to encourage more bike use in town, and maybe eventually have a bike rental service. This would connect the city better.
- People are excited about this!

Who else should we talk to?

- Val Stepanchuk – downwind champion paddler. Does community events, teaches youth kayaking, bike repair, can speak for cyclists.
- Kirsti Walter – runs summer camp for youth and uses the park a lot for those.
- Cathy Fallon – City Council.
- Bernard Seeger – former city administrator, bicyclist.

### What else should our team know when planning the future trail?

Thirty-three respondents chose to answer this open-ended question. They had varied responses, but the most common themes were the need for a safe, accessible path over or under the railway; excitement about the trail, especially if it could connect through town; concerns about maintenance of the trail/park – goose poop, bathroom access, etc.; and ideas about how to incorporate environmental, historical, and cultural learning experiences along the trail.

The full list of comments from this question:

#### Connections

- It would be amazing if we could connect the trail through town. It's hard to use Forest Lane to get to town with kids. This is so exciting!
- Please, please, please make an accessible path, bridge, gondola or something over or under the railway to WaNaPa. The tiny multi-shared road under the rail bridge is scary for walking, life threatening for people with wheelchairs and walkers, and far from shops and restaurants for tourists arriving by cruise ship or boat to the marina. Building the (already) planned bridge at Overlook Park to access the Marine Park Trail directly from there! What happened with this project?
- Can it connect with any other bike trails?
- the growling around town is getting louder, you might want to listen up. the park entrance isn't wide enough to add bicycle traffic to the mix.

- Having more access to the trail via the area next to the post office is great. Another foot/bike access point would also be great, but I'm sure this would be too much to implement. Using the current access road is dangerous with the narrow road and vehicle use.
- Accessibility is much needed in our town. We are considering moving because of the lack of available things to do. It is getting better. Thank you!
- I wish they'd build a walking or biking trail the entire length of Cascade locks, preferably close to the river. Like in Stevenson.
- The trails should access other trails in the gorge. Personally, I would like to see a trail from the marina to Herman Creek and to accentuate the old ruins from the boat works.
- Leave room for future trails.

## **Safety**

- Putting bikes on the bridge is dangerous.
- Increasing safety access down to the park for pedestrians is crucial.
- There will have to be security or daily observation on the trails so that they do not become as they are in other parts of Oregon where they have turned into homeless camps.
- Emergency access for injured people. How will crews be able to get to patients in their time if need?
- Please consider adding safer access from Wa Na Pa to the park for pedestrians and mobility devices. Thanks.

## **Trail/Park Amenities**

- It'd be great to encourage more of a stop-and-stay vibe (food carts, memorial benches with a view) to encourage relaxing lingering in this beautiful park.
- I'm unsure if there are dog poop bag stations, but these would also increase use of the park by dog owners and help to keep it more sanitary.
- Cascade Locks is so pretty. There's potential for more recreational opportunities for sure. Biking and walking paths both paved and dirt are great entrance points for that.
- I'd love to see bike access wherever possible.
- Create an amphitheater next to the river for sitting, concerts, or performances.
- Leverage the scenery in this part of the gorge.
- Encourage evening picnics and visits.
- Please develop a beach where kids and families can play and enjoy the water.
- It would be great if the trail could connect to Blackberry beach!
- Would appreciate stone elements pulled throughout connecting to the historic Columbia River Gorge Scenic Highway trail stone elements like starvation and Wyeth creek for example. stone seat walls, steps, curbs, etc...

- Before we plan new things maybe we should be able to maintain the park as is first. It's the end of May and bathrooms still say they are closed for winter. I saw two groups from out of town straight up leave because porta potties were available, yet the restrooms were closed.
- It's best to keep separated bike and pedestrian users.
- Disc Golf course is a valuable resource.
- Water overlooks.

## History/Learning

- Signage to explain the changes to the area over time would be great.
- The interpretation of the locks (the world largest public works project of its time), the reservation, the rocks cutting, and the island has an interesting story that needs to be told. I encourage the design team to review the Cultural Landscape Report there is a treasure trove of info there. Prior to the inundation by the waters of Bonneville Dam, geology and the river shaped the land, created legends among the tribal people living in the area, and created both obstacles and opportunities for the migrants on the Oregon Trail. Tell those stories and more, please! An emphasis on the tribal piece certainly would be in order.
- Having more informational signs along the trail would be great, informing not only cultural and historic information, but also local flora and fauna. When people can identify local species of trees, shrubs, and animals, it helps them feel connected to nature and want to experience it more.
- Explain the fascinating history here. (i.e., The Oregon Pony, Fort Rains/Raines, the "Bridge of the Gods", etc.). Have a kiosk/exhibit that features other aspects, areas, and destinations within the gorge.
- Try to include the history local aspects of the area. Where was the old Indian settlement?

## Community concerns/involvement

- That the Port of Cascade Locks does not care about the people of Cascade Locks and would rather just have tourist.
- We need to make sure CL residents are included. We got pushed out of the beach area by the sailors.
- There are several small groups of older Cascade Locks residents who use the park daily for walking exercise. They use the paved, shaded area that is the current roadway.

## Other

- The Park is already crowded.
- I'm wondering why you don't attach or build into your newsletter parking permits for citizens in the community rather than have them come to a hard to access building, I tried today and there was a sign to wait, not what I'd call friendly.

I'd also like to understand how and why the First Nations fishing platforms were removed, what are the costs, and are they ongoing in the form of rent or lease? This was a major problem in the past, how

was it solved and at what cost? And by the way I'm glad to see it done as that makes us more of a Port bringing visitors to town.

- One deterrent I feel is the number of geese and goose feces left behind throughout the year. I know this would require a constant effort to keep them away, but maybe strategically placing some sort of visual barrier (berms?) would deter them from using the marina's grass. From what I know, geese like to have line of site to avoid predators. If they don't have this, they may find somewhere else to congregate. That's my two bits. Thanks for working on this. My family and I are looking forward to visiting the new trail system.
- Please, reduce the goose poop.
- Environmental issues.
- It's good the way it is.

## Interview with ODOT Historian

The following are notes taken during an interview with Bob Hadlow, ODOT Historian.

- A 2004 study on the entrance to the park compared 5 alternatives, including an over and undercrossing. This project stalled out; all the alternatives were going to have impacts on the park. The bike/ped crossing has far less impact to historic resources.
- The Park was nominated for historical plaque in the 1970s.
- In 2008, Barbara Knape did a cultural landscape report, which found there is some historical landscape and buildings. A lot has been changed or gone missing. These reports are available.
- The Port received earmark funds from Greg Walden to improve the crossing (increase the clearing).
- All this work had two goals – both to prevent adverse effects to historic sites and to limit impacts to recreation in the park.
- Hopeful there will be funding to build the overcrossing as that will be a key element for bikes/peds to safely access the park without competing with cars.
- Many hiking trails pass through or nearby – the Pacific Crest Trail as well as the Historic Columbia River Highway. Once that is done you could get all the way to Hood River. Once these are completed, they may improve economy and increase walk-up/incidental traffic to the park.
- Locks/Canals
  - Originally built in 1914, the locks became redundant when the Dam was built in 1936.
  - They were donated to the City of Cascade Locks in 1954 for the purpose of creating a park.
  - They have not been kept in pristine, historical condition; however, we still want to preserve what is left of them. For example, the gates are missing and rocks/walls have been worn down.
  - Had more buildings at the time of construction, but the three houses in the park are most of what is left, as well as the superintendent's garden near the gazebo.
- Which places are most important to the community? What could be an attraction for community?
  - West end - Tribal access to fishing, "in lieu" fishing site.

- Houses are “sacrosanct”: restoration and stabilization of the houses so they look nice from the outside. The museum is an important component.
- Would be nice to have interpretative panels (about the Locks). Think outside of the box – maybe there are ways to access information on your phone while walking the trail.
- Oregon pony statue is historical, but can be moved anywhere in the park, whatever is best for the pony.
- The terrace for the superintendent and historic plantings could be an additional spot to highlight.
- Pavilion – enjoyed by the community, unique building, nice for events.
- Thunder Island – unique and beautiful view
- Business incubator – the brewery might move (or has moved) to WaNaPa and something new could replace it.

## Demographics of Survey Respondents

### Age

Most respondents were between 45-64 (36% or 29 responses) and 25-44 (33% or 27 responses). There were no responses from individuals 18 or under.

### Race/Ethnicity

Most respondents identified their race/ethnicity as white (88% or 70 responses). Four respondents (5%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, three respondents (4%) identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, two respondents (2.5%) selected “Unknown,” and one each identified as “Asian or Asian American” and “Slavic or Eastern European.” Of the four respondents who selected “other,” one wrote in “multiracial.”

### Languages spoken at home

All respondents reported speaking English at home, and three respondents shared that they also speak Spanish at home.

### ZIP code

About half of respondents (51% or 42 responses) were local to Cascade Locks and another 11% (9 responses) were in Hood River. About 10% (8 responses) were from Washington ZIP codes and the rest were from locations along the Oregon side of the Columbia Gorge.