



Celebrating Wilderness Pacific Crest Trail Style



The Mt. Hood National Forest joined forces with staff from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area, and the Pacific Northwest Forest Service Regional office to provide an information booth at the 2014 Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) Days Celebration held on September 6, 2014 at Thunder Island in Cascade Locks, OR. The celebration featured trail advocacy organizations, outdoor recreation gear companies, and volunteer organizations all centered around educating people on outdoor recreation skills, and raising awareness around the many outdoor recreation opportunities in the area with a special emphasis on the PCT and Wilderness.

“We had great representation from employees, students, and interns from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Columbia River Gorge NSA, Regional Office, Mt. Hood National Forest, and Timberlake Job Corps,” said Jen Wade, Recreation Manager for the Mt. Hood NF. “The event drew visitors who love trails, hiking, backpacking and wilderness realizing the fact that the PCT is not just for the local region but for the entire international community.”

Roughly 1,000 visitors attended the event. The three Forest Service booths offered information about fire prevention and safety, recreation opportunities and, Wilderness ethic activities and other information.

“The cross saw contest was a definite highlight. It drew a crowd who we could teach about the primitive skills and equipment used to protect Wilderness character while maintaining trail access,” said Wade. “We had great feedback from the public and everyone was very excited to see the Forest Service at this event.”

All three forest units have the privilege of managing portions of the Pacific Crest Trail. But, as Lisa Northrop, Forest Supervisor for the Mt. Hood NF, explains, the PCT wouldn't be what it is today without the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who are passionate about its maintenance.

“We all benefit from the dedication of the volunteers the Pacific Crest Trail Association recruits, coordinates and trains in order to maintain our trails,” Northrop said. “This event gave me and other Forest Service employees the opportunity to interact with forest visitors who love Wilderness and are interested in seeing it preserved.”

A special tribute to a Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) volunteer took place during the event.

“Winston Rall presented an award to a long-time PCTA volunteer, David “Underbucker” Roe. He contributes greatly to preserving Wilderness and maintaining trails and access through his leadership in the crosscut saw program,” said Wade. “Its volunteers like these that inspire others to help manage the trail.” David was presented with a vintage crosscut saw that was engraved with the following statement, “For his devotion to bringing vintage saws back into appreciative hands and inspiring a new generation of Wilderness Trail Stewards.” David has devoted untold hours to lead the development of the PCTA saw program, in searching for and reconditioning vintage saws, and training volunteers in the care and use of saws and all the tools that are used in trail maintenance.

The Mt. Hood NF is committed to protecting trails like the PCT as well as Wilderness. The Mt. Hood also provides opportunities for a multitude of other recreational opportunities ranging from rafting to bird watching to winter sports. To plan your next adventure in the woods, visit our website, www.fs.usda.gov/mthood.



