

Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area

Suggested Activities for School Groups

In addition to our Ranger-Led Programs, Yaquina Head offers a number of other activities described below. Please check with the Education Program Coordinator prior to your visit if you plan on doing other activities listed in addition to a ranger-led program.

The Interpretive Center (*15 to 60 minutes*)

The Interpretive Center is a great place to start your visit and explore Yaquina Head. There are lots of hands-on activities, exhibits, and interpretive displays.

- **Jr. Ranger Program** – A great way for students to explore and learn about Yaquina Head by going on a scavenger hunt and answering questions. Request a copy in advance, or limited copies are available at the Interpretive Center desk. A MSWord template, is available upon request if you wish to modify it to your class level, or to meet learning objectives. (*20 – 30 minutes*)
- **Videos** - Two 15 minute videos about Yaquina Head's history, culture and environment.
- **Exhibits** – The exhibit area is full of great hands-on displays and information about natural and historical information about Yaquina Head and the surrounding area. (*5 – 15 minutes*)
- **19th Century Parlor games** – Games for kids of all ages including graces (ring toss game), jacobs ladder, puzzles, crosswords, checkers, and more. (*5 – 20 minutes*)
- **Picnic tables** are available behind the Interpretive Center. No food or drinks in the building. Ask the ranger to supply a trash bag for your group. Please clean and check the area before leaving.
** Ask at the Information Desk for information and distribute materials including Junior Ranger Programs, Quest booklets, brochures and activity sheets. (Handouts given to adults only.)*

Towards Quarry Cove and Communications Hill

- **Quarry Cove** (Return trips = *20 - 30 minutes from the Quarry Cove parking lot, or 40 - 50 minutes to walk from the Interpretive Center*)

The Cove has had a diverse history. It was used as a rock quarry supplying highway materials for US 101 from the 1920s - 1980s. The Cove was turned into man-made, wheel chair-accessible, tidepools in 1994. Nature, however, had other ideas as ocean sand constantly filled in the area and the “man-made tidepools” were impossible to maintain.

Fortunately for visitors, harbor seals have now claimed the Cove and the area is now a great place to check them out. When the seals are present, students can observe them from the viewing area. However, we ask that visitors consider themselves guests to the animal's home and act respectfully to them, allowing them to remain wild. (If your presence alters wildlife behavior, you are too close.) Please review the attached *Rules and Guidelines* with your students *prior* to visiting the cove.

- **Communication Hill Trail** (30 to 45 minutes round trip)

This trail is a great opportunity for exploring the Sitka spruce and Shore pine forest found on the headland. It begins at the Interpretive Center and leads you to the top of our highest peak for a breathtaking view of the ocean. Students can learn about forest plants and animals along the way from interpretive signs, or go on a ‘*Quest*’ to the top. *Communication Hill remains home to equipment belonging to the US Coast Guard and others. Please stay away from buildings, tanks and other apparatus.*

Towards the Lighthouse

- **Quest** (*45 minutes for each Quest*)

Quests are clue-directed hunts that encourage exploration of natural areas. “Questers” follow a series of word clues and learn about the environment. Once all the clues are found, the secret location is revealed - a box where students can sign their name and get the official Yaquina Head quest stamp. Yaquina Head now has three Quests: Yaquina Head History, Yaquina Head Hills, and Yaquina Head Stewardship. (23 Quests are available in Lincoln County) Ask a ranger for details, or contact: cait.goodwin@oregonstate.edu.

- **Lighthouse** (*20-30 minutes*)

Yaquina Head Lighthouse was first lit on August 20th, 1873 and is still a working lighthouse today. Students, in small groups are able to tour the lighthouse during open self-guided tour hours (12 pm to 4 pm). Rangers and volunteers dressed in historic costumes are there to greet them, answer questions and provide information. Students may climb the 104 steps to the watch room, and then poke their heads up into the lens room to see an original 1st order Fresnel lens in action. Please ask students to use whisper-voices only and respect other visitors who may be present.

- **Wildlife Viewing** (*5-15 minutes*)

The area around the lighthouse parking lot has a number of great lookouts (and displays) for viewing the ocean and wildlife. Birds flock here seasonally by the thousands including brown pelicans, cormorants and common murre. Bald eagles are commonly seen. Gray Whales are best observed migrating December-January and February-March. If possible, bring binoculars.

- **Cobble Beach** (*15 – 60 minutes*)

This volcanic basalt beach is very unique and is a great place to visit at both low and high tides. Have students check the tide chart before arriving. Remember, there are 134 steps down to the beach!

Low tide – As part of the Marine Garden Preserve this is one of the best tidepool spots in Oregon. Students can explore the tidepool area and safely search for sea creatures in adult supervised groups, while being respectful of the Marine Garden. Please dress appropriately for inclement weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Review *Tidepool Etiquette* with your students of the *prior* to reaching the beach.

High tide – Although you won’t be able to access the tidepools, Cobble Beach is a great place to explore, journal and/or draw. Check out how the angular basalt becomes cobble while listening to the tide tumble the rocks to and fro. Go on a “wrack walk,” or scavenger hunt where students explore all the interesting things brought to shore with the tides. Look for Harbor Seals in the water or lying on the rocks.

- **Salal Hill Trail** (*25 to 30 minutes round trip*)

This trail provides a great opportunity for students to exercise and get a great ocean view (*on a clear day*). It involves a short, climb to the top of “the big hill.” Although it is considered steep, it is well-graded and fairly easy to climb. Keep your eyes open for native wildflowers, plants, small mammals, birds and insects.