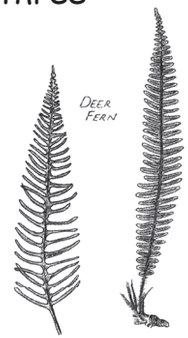
New River ACEC

Four sites make up New River ACEC: Storm Ranch, Floras Lake, Fourmile Creek, and Lost Lake.

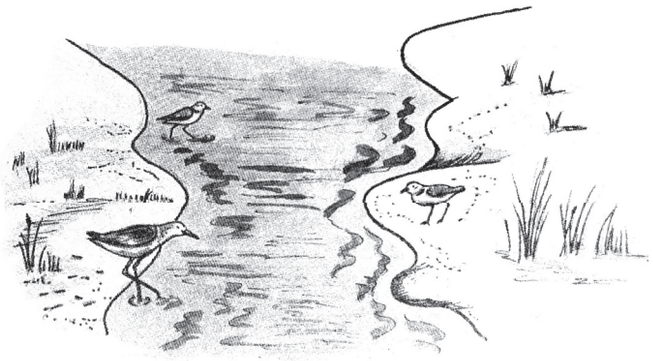
The Storm Ranch portion has three miles of trails for hikers, horses, and bicyclists. The Nature Center, containing interpretive displays and information, is next to the parking lot along with restrooms and drinking water.

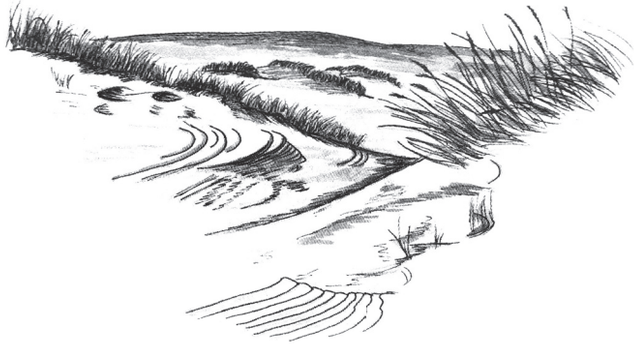


Boaters may launch at the end of River Road, open to vehicles from September 15 to March 15.

While at New River, please remember:

- Pets must be leashed at all times.
- Stay on the trails to avoid harming plants and animal habitat.
- Collecting plants, including mushrooms, is not allowed. Keep the area pristine.
- Move quietly to improve your chances of seeing wildlife.





What Is An ACEC?

New River is a 1200-acre Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Special management is required by ACECs to maintain diversity and quality habitat for native communities of plants, birds, animals and fish. New River ACEC also provides protection for cultural sites and offers educational, interpretive, and recreational opportunities to the public.

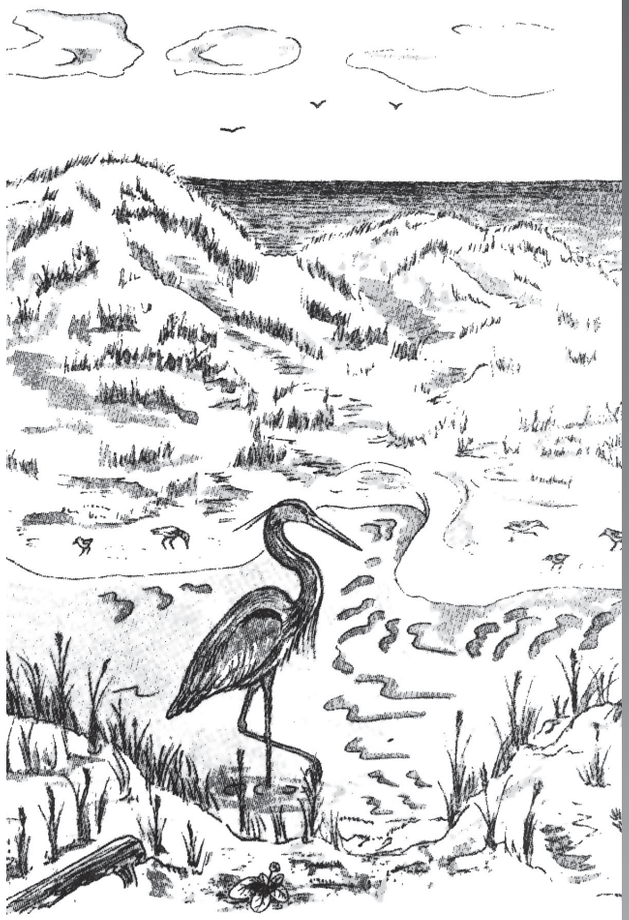
If you are interested in volunteering at New River, reserving the Nature Center, bringing a school group, or learning more about New River, please contact:

The Bureau of Land Management
Coos Bay District Office
1300 Airport Lane
North Bend, Oregon 97459
541-756-0100

BLM/OR/WA/GI-13/038+1792 (13-0106)

New River Trail Guide

BLM
Coos Bay District



Natural history of the area and details of the trail system at Storm Ranch

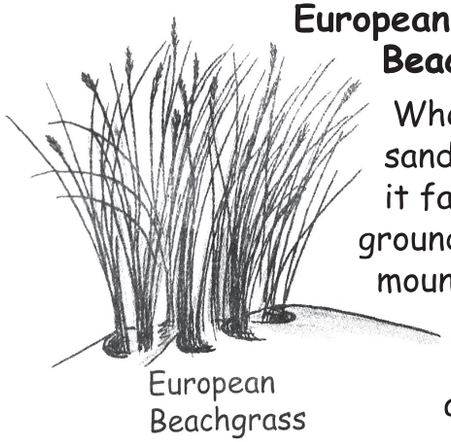
Origin of New River

In 1890 a storm brought unusually heavy rain and wind. The outlet of Floras Lake, just south of here, became blocked by sand. Flood water flowed into a low channel just east of a low dune paralleling the beach, the "foredune." So began a river heading north, following this low place until finally reaching the sea. A "New River" was born.

New River Today

New River is in constant change. High water causes the river to push further north until a low spot in the foredune allows it to reach the sea. Some years the river grows a few feet, some years a quarter mile.

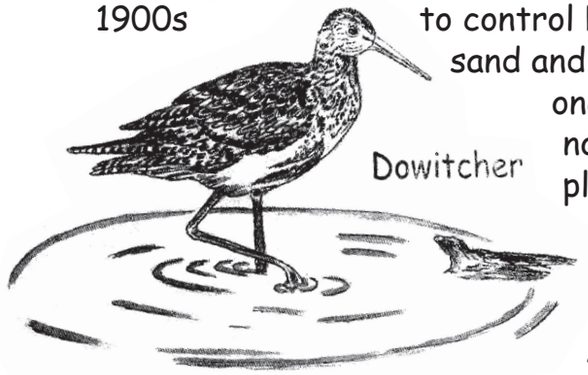
High river water combined with high tides may cause the river to breach the foredune and form a new river mouth. Sometimes when flood waters back up into nearby pastures, local farmers and the BLM create a breach to drain the land. The river may then flow backward!



European Beachgrass

European Beachgrass

When blowing sand hits plants, it falls to the ground. The mound of sand created becomes a dune if the process continues. Low dunes along the beach built from native plants are frequently destroyed by high winds or water. European beachgrass has such an extensive root system, and grows so vigorously, that its foredunes may be 30-feet high. It was planted in the early 1900s to control blowing sand and is only one of 75 non-native plants found in New River ACEC.



Dowitcher

New River's Attractions and Riches

Here is one of the last remaining wild places on the Oregon coast. Active dunes still blow inland and become stabilized with native pines, salal and huckleberry. Forests on old dunes contain wetlands with sedges and skunk cabbage and hide lakes inhabited by the Northwestern Pond Turtle. Woods of towering waxmyrtles contrast with open sandy areas of ancient manzanitas. Meadows kept open by the BLM hold rare native plants. Lichens and mosses grow from the ground to the tops of the trees and ferns are everywhere.

Lady Fern

Look for these features while on the trails. Remember, tread lightly and leave no trace.

Before New River

Evidence of large Indian villages from 8,000 years ago hides beneath the sand and forest. Archaeological digs show that recent ancestors of Siletz and Coquille Indians adapted to huge changes in the area. This was a large estuary providing abundant seafood, but was destroyed by a 30-foot wall of water from a tsunami in 1700.

It wasn't long before blowing sand blocked stream outlets to form lakes and marshes. Forests grew, harboring abundant elk and deer. Eventually blowing sand and fires claimed the forests.

By the time New River formed, the area was all open dunes and wetlands.

TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

River Road

River Road leaves the parking lot and ends at New River boat ramp. This gravel road is always open to foot, bicycle and horse traffic, but closed to vehicles from March 15 to Sept. 15 (a sensitive time for breeding wildlife and young). River's edge is an excellent place in spring and fall to watch thousands of geese and shorebirds following New River on their migration. The road is nearly flat, wheelchair accessible, and takes about 15 minutes to walk.

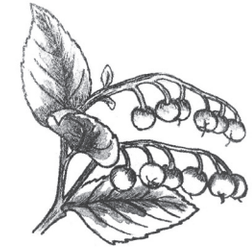
Muddy Lake Trail

Begin East Muddy Lake Trail from River Road. Forest quickly gives way to a large meadow where the trail splits to Old Bog Trail. East Muddy Lake Trail continues to a viewing platform on the edge of a freshwater lake. Benches provide a place for quiet viewing. Continuing on, the path becomes West Muddy Lake Trail as it heads toward the ocean. A short boardwalk protects wetlands beneath. Soon a side trail, NEW RIVER LOOKOUT, winds through open pine forest to a sandy river viewpoint. The river is usually quite wide here; look across for birds on the far bank.

Salal

River Road and Muddy Lake

Trails combined form an easy, varied 45-minute loop, all wheelchair accessible.



Old Bog Trail

This trail branches off East Muddy Lake Trail and climbs a small sandy hill through a patch of kinnikinnick. There is a bench at the end to rest and view what remains of one of the oldest cranberry bogs on the coast, planted in 1915. Wild and domestic cranberries were crossed to produce a new variety grown here. Old Bog Trail is a 20-minute round-trip hike. A leisurely walk combining the above trails takes about an hour and a quarter.

North Trail

Starting north of the parking lot, this trail borders the old corrals of Storm Ranch. Notice the ancient manzanitas with peeling red bark. Their urn-shaped flowers attract hundreds of hummingbirds traveling north in the spring. A 10-minute walk leads to the start of the RIDGE TRAIL loop.

Ridge Trail

Following the top of a stabilized dune, this trail is soft sand beneath pine needles. Soon a switchback begins descent and the trail becomes enclosed with rhododendrons. It dips and climbs several times, ending at the intersection of Huckleberry Hill Trail and North Trail. Notice the enormous waxmyrtles on this 15-minute loop.

Huckleberry Hill Trail

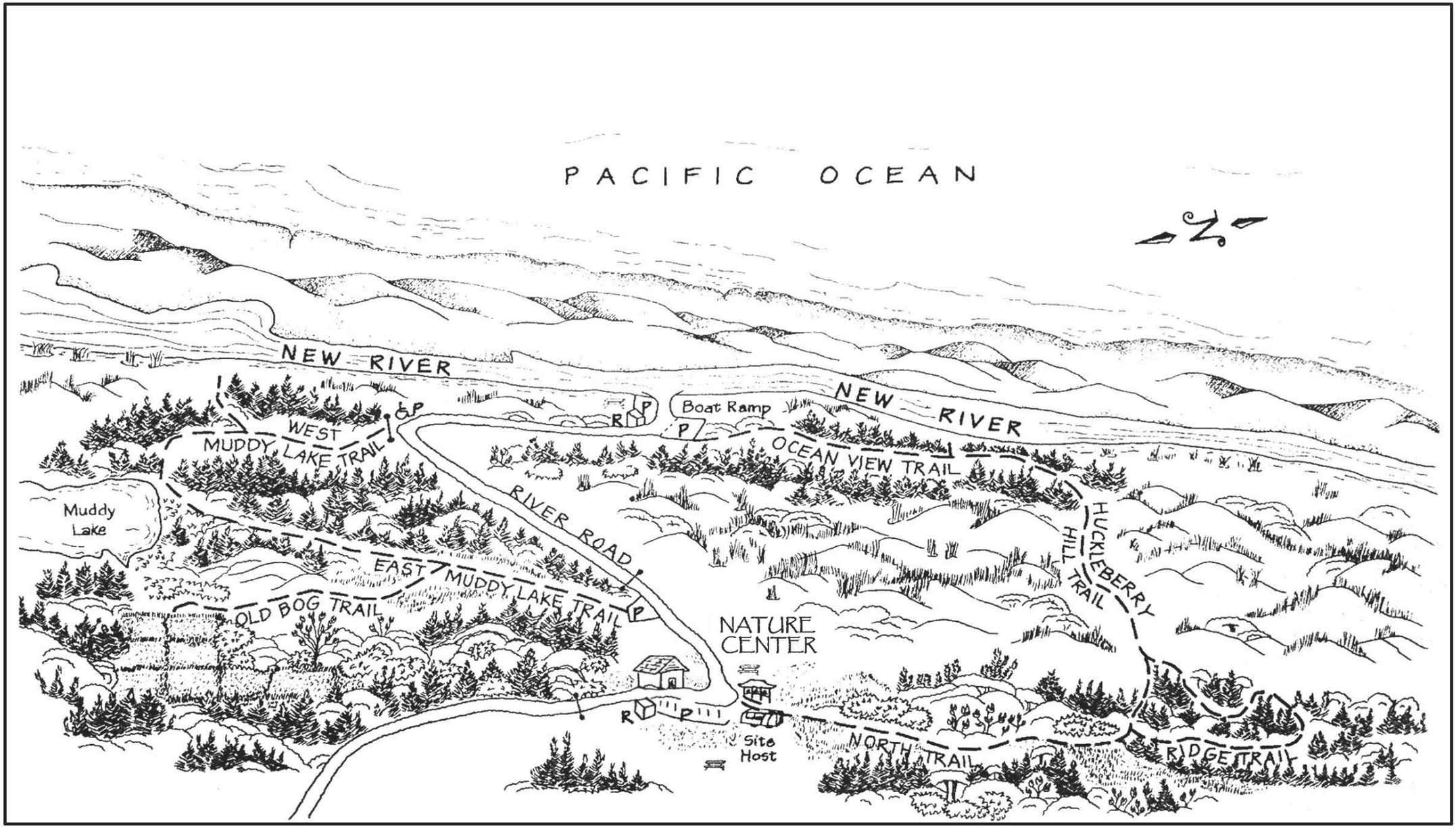
Sand presents a more challenging hike up and down the vegetated dunes, but some of the best views are from this trail. Blowing sand encroaches on small pines at the top of these barely stabilized dunes. Low spots on the trail may be flooded in winter. Switchbacks and sand stairs end the 20-minute hike to begin the Ocean View Trail.

Ocean View Trail

Sometimes completely enclosed overhead with tall waxmyrtle, this trail is wide and flat. A side path marked OVERLOOK provides a view of the river, foredune, and ocean beyond. Ocean View Trail is a 15-minute walk connecting Huckleberry Hill Trail and River Road.

An easy pace beginning North Trail and returning River Road takes about an hour and a quarter.

Welcome to New River



LEGEND: P - Parking &P - Handicapped Accessible R - Restroom - Picnic Area - Gate - Trail - Road