

Earl's Diary - Tuesday - July 15, 2014

To all my Loyal Readers, wherever you may be:

Today is the second sightseeing day (of three) that I have set aside while here on Oregon's coastal area. As usual, I can tell you the weather is most unpredictable!

My destination for today is the town of Reedsport which is about 50 miles north of Bandon. My travels yesterday took me through Reedsport but I didn't stop for sightseeing. Today I will see what I can see.



Notice the fog bank coming close to the shore.

Highway 101 traverses coastal Oregon for twenty-six miles through Coos Bay, then another 26 miles to Reedsport. Just before reaching Reedsport, a view point looks out on Winchester Bay. A drive through the trees ends at a Coast Guard station. The light-house is located adjacent to the station family living area. In my humble opinion, not a very picturesque sight! Oh well, it is what it is!



Notice the top of the lighthouse peeking through the trees.



Umpqua River Lighthouse

Originally this was the first lighthouse in the Oregon territory. It was built in 1857 near the mouth of the Umpqua River. It was undermined and destroyed by flood in February, 1861. It was rebuilt in its present location in 1891.

Elevation: 165' above sea level

Visibility: 19 miles seaward

Signal: 2 white flashes followed by 1 red

It's now a long way from the Umpqua River!



A look at the sand dunes



I wanted to get a flavor of the Oregon Sand Dunes - Reedsport being the middle point of the Oregon Sand Dunes National Recreation Area. I continued the drive down toward the beach. Soon I arrived at Winchester Bay, a conglomeration of RV parks and ATV sales and rentals. On an impulse urge, I took a road that was labeled "Dead End". I would go as far as the end to see what I could see. It turned out to be a five mile paved drive through lots, and lots of sand dunes. Every once in awhile turnouts announced "staging areas for ATV's"



Around every bend in the road was another “photo op”. I couldn’t resist the temptation to pull over and take a shot! To my wondering ears came sounds of “zoom, zoom” and “vroom, vroom”. Nary a vehicle was I spotting. I guess they were off traversing behind some sand dune. When I came to the end of the road, I realized why all the noise! It was a state park for ATV’s. Well, dah! I should have guessed.



The sun was trying to peek out as layers of fog swept through.



Finally! Some vehicles were spotted!

No wonder there was so much noise. Notice ALL those people AND ATV’s?





After turning around, I made one more stop at a beach parking lot and took a short walk to see what else I could see. Guess what? More sand!



The Oregon Dunes are a unique area of windswept sand that is the result of millions of years of wind and rain erosion on the Oregon Coast. These are the largest expanse of coastal sand dunes in North America. Some dunes tower up to 500 feet above sea level, providing numerous recreational opportunities including off-road vehicle use. The dunes stretch approximately 40 miles north from the Coos River in North Bend to the Siuslaw River, in Florence.



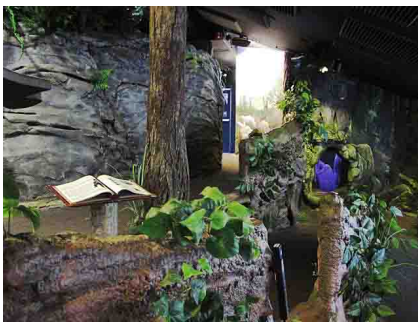
I had seen enough sand, so it was off to Reedsport and a visit to the Umpqua Discovery Center.



What do you need to know about the Discovery Center? The idea for the Lower Umpqua Center was generated as a result of the City's efforts to revitalize the failing economy of the City of Reedsport.

Once inside the Umpqua Discovery Center on Reedsport's riverfront, you enter an exciting new world. The exhibits occupy two wings of the building. In the natural history wing, Pathways to Discovery, visitors are taken along on a simulated outdoor adventure. First, there's the estuary at sunrise in the fall. This is followed by the deep forest in winter at mid-day, where you can slide into the bear cave and learn about hibernating bears. Next you enter the weather station, listen to storm stories from the past, and learn a wealth of information from the OMSI exhibits on rain, wind, and atmosphere. Your journey will continue to a high mountain meadow on a spring afternoon, and then to a summer sunset in the dunes.





In the Time cultural history wing the adventure begins with the Kuuich Indians and early explorers, such as Jedediah Smith. Listen as the early pioneers tell stories about life in a tidewater town and watch videos of how logging was done in the past. There is also walk through the fish cannery and tidewater town. The combination of genuine historical artifacts and high-tech sound and light will heighten an appreciation of the experience.



The exhibits are built on multiple levels with gradual slopping walkways and stairs. Visitors are encouraged to visit each display.

This is an extremely well done discovery center and well worth the \$8 admission. I spent at least 2 hours going through, and enjoying every minute.

Of course my impulse buying filter was securely in place so the requisite gift shop was out of luck with me.



On the riverside boardwalk area at the back of the center were several nice views of the Umpqua River.



Onward to the next sight - -



Just 3 miles east of Reedsport is the Dean Creek elk viewing area. I arrived there about late lunch time. To my dismay, the animals were in the very back part of the field. I suppose it was nap time!



I knew I couldn't pass up another opportunity, so the plan was to head back in to town for a bite of lunch, then come back to see if the herd also had hunger pangs.



This is what my telephoto lens captured - -



About an hour later I returned to find a group still relaxing.



I had been forewarned to drive a little farther down the road for more possible sightings. Sure enough, a small group of males were out feeding their faces!





I was happy that I had returned to gather some of the pictures you have seen. I would have missed them if I hadn't returned.

It was getting a little late and time to return to Bandon. Fortunately the driving time for this day was only about an hour each way. I was home (in The Peanut) by 5:00.

Where did I have lunch? Whoa! There IS a DQ in Reedsport!



While traveling back to Bandon, I once again passed through Coos Bay. Just before entering North Bend and Coos Bay, I stopped at an overlook to snap a few pictures of this picturesque mile long bridge.



I also turned on a side road for a short sightseeing adventure. What I saw was more sand dunes!



It was a wonderful day of sightseeing adventure. The sun was out and bright which made for a good photography day. Thanks for coming along with me today. Tomorrow I will be in Coos Bay/Charleston to visit Shore Acres State Park. Until then, bye for now - - Earl

