

BIG COASTAL CAR CAMPING AND DAY HIKING TRIP AT CAPE BLANCO

July 26-28 (M-W), 2021

Co-Leaders: Elisabeth and Cory

Participants: Cory & Greg, Tysen & Diane, Elisabeth, JoAnn, Barb, Rosalie

REPORT

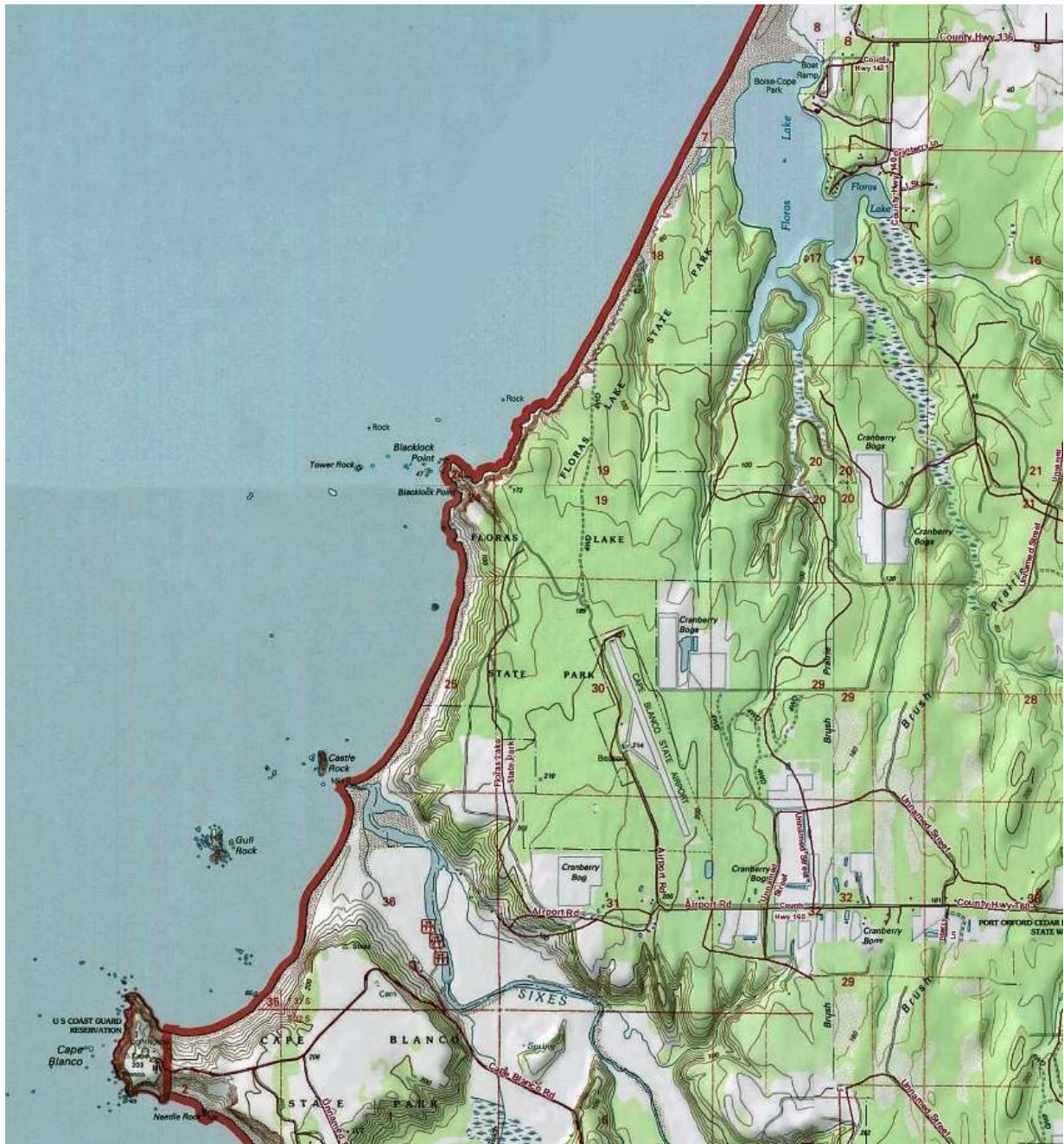
Our group of eight enthusiasts proved to be a flexible group of independent spirits. We had break out subgroups for different types of hikes, and enjoyed sharing as we gathered in the campground. Thankfully, our campsites were near one another.

Cape Blanco Campground is beautifully laid out, with campsites and some cabins clustered around the bathroom and shower facility (which was very clean and had hot water). The rich flora and canopies of trees afforded privacy and quiet spaces, supplied with picnic table, fire pit, water, and electricity. No bear to worry about, but a racoon opened Elisabeth's cooler and climbed in to enjoy some yogurt and make off with her naan, leaving some dirty footprints. Alas, the cooler spent the rest of the stay in the car. Our only challenge was the extraordinary wind, amplifying the chill. While we were able to dress warmly, the necessary counterpressure against the wind was just short of exhausting. The 'silver lining' was breathing crystal clean coastal air in summertime. Tysen and Diane also faced a challenge in erecting their 9'x12' tent, which sleeps six, in the 10-25 mph wind. With the help of the others, it was erected, staked down and even tethered to a camping table to keep it from being blown over during the night.

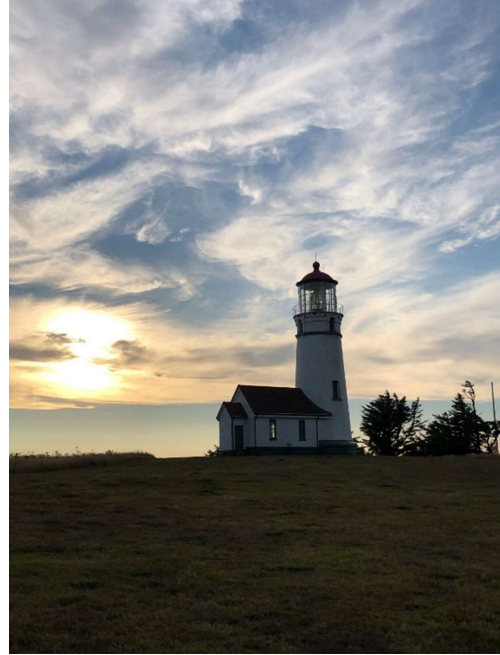
We enjoyed some walks on the Cape: A trail to the Lighthouse from the campground across a vast 'wilderness' of dry grassy terrain; breakfast on the beach or bluff to take in the views out to sea; and strolls in the dark and dense woods that Barb proclaimed the 'scariest' and we wouldn't have been surprised by a Hobbit popping out to greet us. There are other trails in the camp environment, such as to Hughes House (now closed), along the bluff above the south shore, along the north bluff or on the north beach (at lower tides) all the way to the Sixes River. The heavy winds inspired us to pick hikes off the Cape in the Floras Lake State Park.



Map of Port Orford, Cape Blanco and Floras Lake



Topo Map of Cape Blanco, Floras Lake State Natural Area & Floras Lake



Cape Blanco Lighthouse



View north from Cape Blanco Lighthouse



View south from Cape Blanco Lighthouse



Panoramic View from Lighthouse looking East



Beach on south end of Campground



Historic Hughes House in Cape Blanco State Park



Driftwood Art



The Flora of Cape Blanco State Park



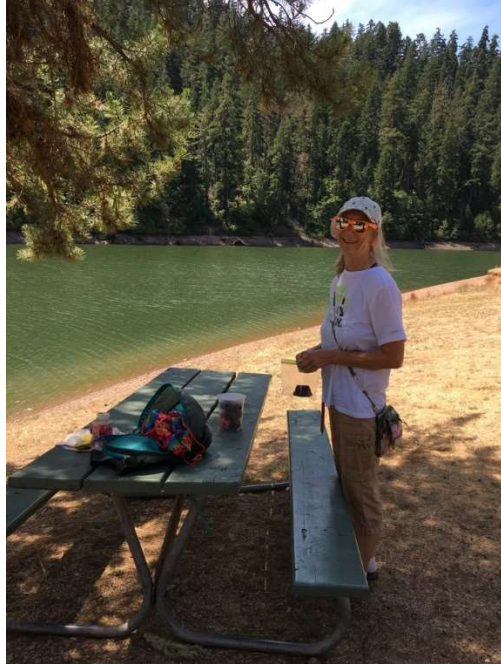


BIG Hikers heading to the Lighthouse from the Campground

Monday:

Our separate journeys to the Cape varied:

Greg and Cory stayed at Bullard's Beach State Park which is just north of Bandon. Barb and Rosalie stopped enroute to Cape Blanco for a picnic lunch at Ben Irving Reservoir, just a short drive from highway #42. It is a delightful area that Bernadette and Barb discovered last year. JoAnn and Elisabeth visited Port Orford for fish & chips on the wharf and a walk around the Lifeboat Park. Barb and Rosalie stopped in Bandon for a stretch break and then proceeded to Port Orford Heads State Park to visit the Coast Guard's Lifeboat Park. All four of us were fascinated by the 'unsinkable' lifeboat on display. It was built in 1946 and used for rescue missions until 1970 on this most rugged, windy stretch of the Pacific coast. Tysen and Diane drove straight to the Cape. In the evening after supper, we gathered around one of the picnic tables to visit and enjoy some treats and a 'nightcap' of choice. We shared ideas about hike options on our full day. Interests and ideas varied, so decisions deferred until the next morning.



Rosalie at Ben Irving Reservoir on way to Cape Blanco



Port Orford Harbor



US Coast Guard Self-Righting Lifeboat (Port Orford)



Port Orford Coastline looking North



Port Orford Coastline looking South



Barb at Port Orford Heads State Park

Tuesday:

Cory led Greg, JoAnn, Rosalie, and Barb on the 9-mile hike from the Cape Blanco Airport to Floras Lake and around to the Orange Bluffs and Blacklock Point, then back to the car at the airport. Most of us had done this hike one-way from Floras Lake to the airport with Mary Kwart last year, the day of the Almeda fire. It was a lovely stroll in the forest and impressively windswept on the cliffs and Blacklock Point. We started out from the airport intending to go to Blacklock Point but got curious about Floras Lake and satisfied all our disparate interests by going on up to enjoy our friends and watch the intrepid windsurfers!

Tysen, Diane and Elisabeth drove to Floras Lake for a long walk on the beach between the windsurfers on the lake and the ocean waves, separated by a modest stretch of sand dunes. Elisabeth continued alone up onto the Oregon Coastal Trail to intersect with the trail leading to the Orange Bluffs and Blacklock Point. Returning from the Orange Bluffs, she met Cory's group making their loop around and back southward. Elisabeth's trek was 4.7 miles, getting back to a spot near Floras Lake with cell coverage to join her OLLI Council meeting.

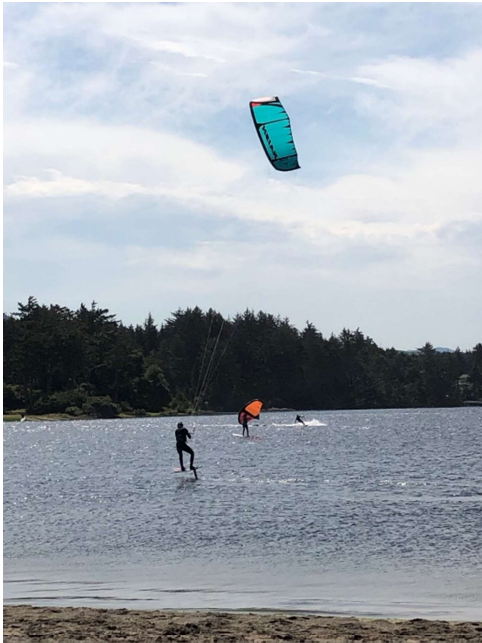
That evening we convened around another picnic table for our potluck supper, centered around the main course of large fresh prawns supplied by Tysen and Diane. As always, the dishes provided by all were beautiful, tasty and healthy. Again, discussion about possible hikes the next day were 'all over the map' (so to speak) with a group full of preferences and ideas. Humbug Mountain, the New River, the Redwoods via the Boy Scout Tree trail or Hiouchi Trail. So, we 'slept on it' for decisions in the morning.



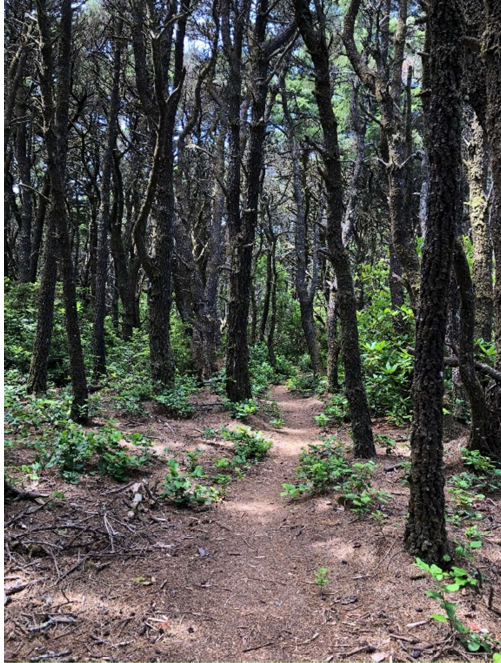
Floral Lake with New River flowing out of it (NE end of Lake)



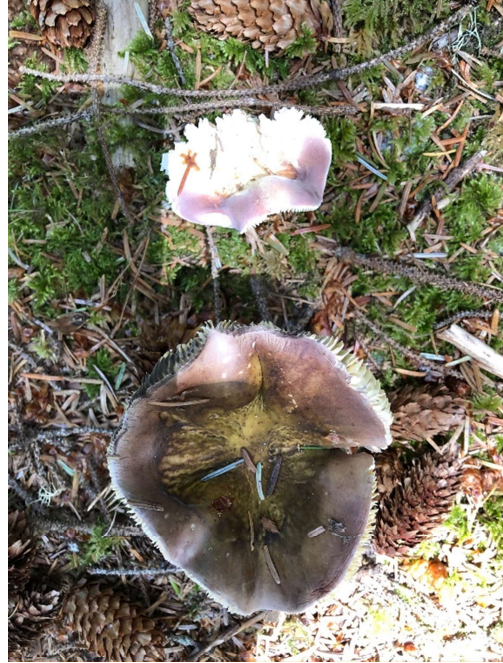
Windsurfer Staging area at north end of Floral Lake



Windsurfer at North end of Floral Lake



Trail to Blacklock Point
in Floras Lake State Park



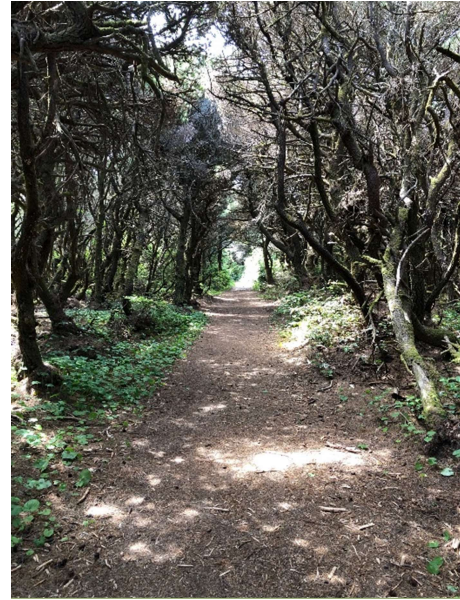
Trail Mushrooms



Tangled and Dense Coastal Forest



Twisted Tree



Trail through Forest near Floral Lake



Diane with Driftwood Art near Floral Lake



Diane near Floral Lake



Snack Break on Dunes between Floral Lake and Ocean



View North showing Floral Lake (right) & Ocean



Scattered Driftwood on Beach



Orange Cliffs at north end of Floral Lake State Park

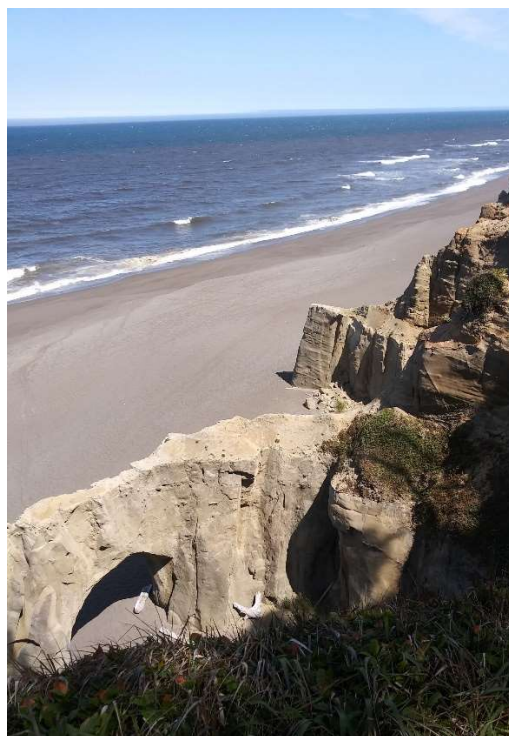


Eagle above Orange Cliffs



On Trail to Blacklock Point





View from Blacklock Point



Tuesday Evening Potluck in front of Tysen & Diane's Tent

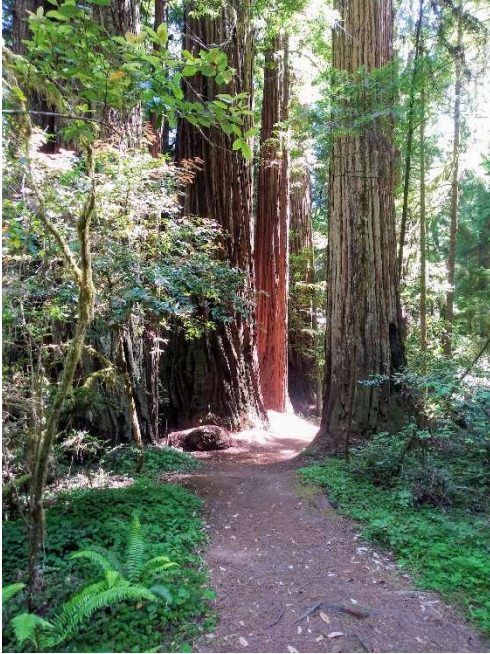
Wednesday:

As part of their 21st wedding anniversary, Tysen and Diane drove to Florence. From there they drove to Eugene, before returning home Friday.

Barb and Rosalie headed north and stopped at Storm Ranch Trail Complex at New River for a 3-mile loop hike after visiting the Nature Center.

Elisabeth and JoAnn headed south to the Redwoods, stopping at Gold Beach Library for a bite to eat and some Rogue Roaster Coffee and wander through a wonderful art display in various media. They then headed for the Smith River and Redwoods to hike a few miles on the Hiouchi Trail.

Cory and Greg stopped for coffee at Tasty Kate's in Port Orford and discussed the wind. Kate declared that what we experienced was mild compared to the usual at this time of year! They then visited Cape Sebastian and enjoyed a fresh fish lunch at Barnacle Bistro, proceeding to the Hiouchi Trail where they met Elisabeth and JoAnn returning to head home. After hiking, Cory and Greg swam in the Smith River to cool off! And then headed home.



Jo Ann in Redwoods



Smith River, Hiouchi Trail