

Why is Everyone Talking About Oakridge?



Once boasted as “The Heart of the Timber Empire”, Oakridge is now known as “The Mountain Biking Capitol of the Northwest”. Oakridge, once decimated by the collapse of the timber economy, is at the tipping point of being a sustainable mountain bicycling tourism destination. The perceived image of the community, both internally and externally, is one of the key pieces of the economic development puzzle. Several locally produced small business have opened to cater to these new visitors. Oakridge continues to work to bring a sustainable tourism economy to its community through the paths and partnerships in our National Forests and

beyond. In recent months, the Oakridge area has made progress toward this goal by participating in the following projects:

IMBA Ride Center: The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) designated Oakridge as one of their first Mountain Bicycling Ride Centers. The Ride Center designation is not necessarily a physical structure but a conceptual idea of a cycling community. Like other IMBA programs it is about pointing out the very best. Oakridge has a particularly great type of mountain biking and IMBA is partnering to help facilitate its continued development. A large part of the Ride Center is to make sure resources continue to be protected. IMBA has assisted in funding projects and continues to create partnerships between agencies and land managers. IMBA has helped to create partnerships that successfully lobbied to get \$400,000 in Federal funding for projects in the Oakridge area. These funds will give critical infrastructure to Oakridge area trails and parks for both visitors and the citizens of the community. IMBA is also assisting to get new trails on the ground to connect and extend trails. This is a continued partnership between IMBA, the Greater Oakridge Area Trail Stewards, the Cities of Oakridge & Westfir, Forest Service, Chamber, Travel Lane County, Travel Oregon and Willamette Pass Resort.



**INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN
BICYCLING ASSOCIATION**

The Greater Oakridge Area Trail Stewards (GOATS) was created to be the group to assist in implementing the Oakridge-Westfir Community Trails Plan. GOATS became a 501(c)(3) “Chapter” of IMBA and operates under but independent from IMBA. This is also a new IMBA program (like the Ride Center) that GOATS has to pioneer/beta test. Although the group is a multi-user trails group, IMBA has allowed us to be in the program. We will be the local voice and connection to funding and projects in Oakridge. GOATS is creating new partnerships to maintain the trails we have and is working to create new trails. This nonprofit’s mission is to protect, create, and enhance quality trail experiences for mountain bikers in cooperation with other trail users in the Oakridge area. In addition, they actively promote responsible trail use, support volunteer trail work, assist land managers with trail management issues, and improve relations among all trail user groups.



Bicycle Skills Parks: In the past year, GOATS, with the support of IMBA, has created two bicycle skills parks in Oakridge and Westfir. In Oakridge's Diamond Park, a track featuring graduated jumps and the rolling terrain of a pump track combined with stunts has been filled with kids who helped build the track. These area kids have become vested in the project and help maintain it. In Westfir, GOATS and IMBA built a similar track in the Westfir Portal that serves as a rest area for travelers on the Cascades Scenic Byway and trail head for the Alpine Trail, widely known as the "crown jewel" of mountain biking in the area.



Canal Trail: The Oakridge-Westfir Trails Plan clearly pointed out the need for nearby trails that could be accessed by a wide variety of users. The proposed three and one half mile Canal Trail was an easy opportunity to utilize some existing service roads paralleling the canal that feeds the historic log ponds in the Oakridge Industrial Park. The project created a partnership between GOATS and several land managers including: the City of Oakridge, Willamette National Forest, Lane County, Oregon Fish & Wildlife and a private land owner. Although a simple trail

to build, this project will prove that GOATS has the ability to create the necessary paperwork and partnerships. The final agreements are nearly ready to sign and the project will be shovel ready in time for a Spring 2010 build.

Pedal Driven: Oakridge will be highlighted in the upcoming documentary film *Pedal Driven* for its ability to create solutions between mountain bikers & land managers and for how mountain bicycling is transforming the community. A trailer for the film can be found at PedalDriven.org and is focused on getting the funding to make this nonprofit film. It will premiere in May 2010. The Oakridge story will be a big part of the film and is half the current trailer.



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