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Dedicating the Mitchell Point Tunnel

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News Release



Dedicating the Mitchell Point Tunnel

Public invited to preview the newest section of State Trail Nov. 16

Nov. 8, 2024

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HOOD RIVER – ODOT, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and project partners are dedicating the new Mitchell Point Tunnel as part of the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail Saturday, Nov. 16.

The tunnel segment includes 1.5-miles of the Historic Highway State Trail perched above I-84 and carved through 655 feet of a basalt mountain that overlooks the Gorge. The new Mitchell Point tunnel is reminiscent of the historic, 1915 tunnel with five arched windows overlooking the Columbia River.

The dedication event offers the public an opportunity to preview the Mitchell Point Tunnel before it opens. The goal is to complete the work by the end of the year, but the finishing touches on this section of trail are weather dependent and could extend into 2025.

"Constructing a tunnel through Mitchell Point 100 years ago was an amazing feat of engineering, and re-constructing it today was not a simple task either," ODOT Region 1 Manager Rian Windsheimer said. "I'd like to thank Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, U.S. Forest Service, Western Federal Lands, Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway, Travel Oregon, the Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee, our contractor Crestline Construction, and my team at ODOT for their fine work. Mitchell Point Tunnel is once again the remarkable monument builders of the original Historic Columbia River Highway envisioned, and it will soon be open for future generations to experience."

Event Details

- Date: Saturday, Nov. 16, 2024
- Time: Remarks and ribbon cutting at 11 a.m.
- Where: At the Mitchell Point Tunnel, accessible for the event only via transit, shuttle or bike/hike from Viento State Park, located off Interstate 84 Exit 56, 8 miles west of Hood River. **No parking will be available near the tunnel.** (Details below)



Getting to the dedication

Take Transit:

- Take the [Columbia Gorge Express](#) operated by Columbia Area Transit from Gateway Transit Center, Cascade Locks or Hood River.
 - All Eastbound Columbia Gorge Express buses from Gateway Transit Center, Troutdale and Cascade Locks (run by CAT) will drop off at Mitchell Point on Saturday, Nov. 16. [See bus schedule information.](#)
 - From Portland, take the 8:50 a.m. bus from Gateway Transit Center to make it in time for remarks and ribbon cutting. Estimated arrival at Mitchell Point Tunnel is 9:50 a.m.
 - Tickets one-way are \$10, for a total of \$20 for a round trip. Alternatively, [Gorge Passes are \\$40 per year](#) and valid for this trip.
 - From Hood River or points east of Hood River, take the event shuttle. Details below.
- The last two westbound Columbia Gorge Express buses to Portland depart Hood River at 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., arriving back at Gateway at 5:10 and 6:40 p.m. respectively.

Free Event Shuttle:

- Starting from 9:30 a.m., free event shuttles will run from Viento State Park (I-84 east Exit 56) and CAT's park and ride at 224 Wasco Loop, Hood River.
- The last shuttle from the event will run to Hood River at 3:30 p.m. and return to Viento State Park. The last two westbound Columbia Gorge Express buses to Portland depart Hood River at 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Shuttles will circulate continuously and will arrive about every 15 minutes.
- Shuttles are free to ride and there is no parking fee.

Bike and Hike:

- Bike to the end of the Historic Highway State Trail from Viento State Park and walk the final 0.7 miles. Free and hosted bike racks will be set up at the end of the existing trail segment. Bikes are not allowed on the temporary unimproved trail that links the existing State Trail to Mitchell Point.

Drive and Shuttle or Hike:

- Limited parking is available at the Viento State Park day-use lot on the north side of I-84. From I-84, take Exit 56 to Viento State Park where signs will direct visitors to the parking area. From here, you can catch the shuttle or walk 2 miles on the State Trail and 0.7-miles on a temporary unimproved trail that links the existing State Trail to the Mitchell Point trail head.
- Free shuttles will drop off/pick up between Viento State Park and 224 Wasco Loop, Hood River between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.
- Once parking is full onsite, the next closest location is about 6 miles west on I-84 to Wyeth Trailhead at Exit 51 where additional parking may be available to access the event via bicycle to transit.

About the project and the Historic Highway State Trail

Since 1987, ODOT, OPRD and partners have been working to preserve, enhance and reconnect the 73-mile Historic Columbia River Highway. The sections for car-free recreation are called the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail.

Construction on the Mitchell Point Tunnel began in 2021, under a Federal Highway's Western Federal Lands contract led by Crestline Construction based in The Dalles. The project was funded by the Federal Lands Access Program.

The 1.5-mile Mitchell Point Tunnel Trail segment does not yet fully connect to a trail segment on either side. When it opens, there is a small parking lot accessible from I-84 east Exit 58. There is no westbound exit to Mitchell Point or parking on the east side of Mitchell Point.

On the west side of the tunnel, construction for the 0.7-mile gap between Viento State Park and Mitchell Point is anticipated to begin as early as 2026 and when complete, will make approximately 9.5 miles of car-free trail. In the meantime, a pedestrian-only walking path will be available using Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Wygant trail and a delineated shoulder along I-84, which will be open until construction begins to connect the two segments.

On the east side of the tunnel, the final trail segment will extend from Ruthton Point toward Hood River, crossing underneath I-84. The segment is currently in the design phase, with one of four smaller sections funded for construction. Construction of the first phase is anticipated to start in 2026. There is no parking or connection to Mitchell Point Tunnel from the east side.

Media resources:

- [Project website](#)
- [HistoricHighway.org](#)
- [Mitchell Point Makers](#) five-part short video series
- [Photo album](#) (download high resolution photos)
- [2024 Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail Progress Report](#)
- [Trail segments map](#)

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