Oregon’s Sentinels

Oregon’s coastal lighthouses are visible links to the past—towering monuments to Oregon’s maritime heritage and to the hardworking people that kept the lighthouse beacons lit. Although unoccupied since the arrival of modern technology, these classic structures stand as a testament to the history of Oregon’s rugged coast.

Most of Oregon’s lighthouses were designed and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1870 and 1896. They were erected on prominent headlands or near major estuaries to support commercial fishing and shipping along the Oregon coast. The lighthouses were originally managed by the former U.S. Lighthouse Board, with the U.S. Coast Guard taking over stewardship duties in 1939.

After installing automated beacons in the 1960s, the Coast Guard began transferring its lighthouse holdings to other government agencies. All nine of Oregon’s surviving lighthouse stations have been added to the National Register of Historic Places. They are visited by more than 2.5 million people each year.

Experience the Past

A ked by interpretive displays, historical accounts and a little imagination, you can learn what life was like for the workers who lit the way for mariners navigating Oregon’s perilous coastline. Climb to lantern or tower watch rooms and experience the panoramic sights once enjoyed by the light tenders from their perches high on the cliffs. Hear the sounds of seabirds, wind and waves that accompanied their isolation as they worked through the night to prevent ships from running aground on the rocks.

Most of Oregon’s lighthouses offer scheduled tours. See the reverse side for more information, or call the State Parks Information Center at 800-551-6949.

Year-Round Recreation

Many of Oregon’s lighthouses double as excellent wildlife viewing areas. They are great places to spot sea birds, seals and migrating Gray whales.

If you’re touring lighthouses, check out (or stay at!) a nearby state park. See the map on the reverse.

Lighthouse Helpers

If you’d like to learn more about Oregon’s lighthouses and help with preservation and education efforts, you will be welcomed by any of these nonprofit organizations:

- U.S. Lighthouse Society, Oregon Chapter
  Phone: 415-362-7255
  oreon.uslhs.org

- Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses
  787 lighthouse Dr. #7, Newport, OR 97365
  Phone: 541-574-3100
  yaquinaLights.org

- Friends of Cape Meares Lighthouse and Wildlife Refuge
  P.O. Box 262, Netarts, OR 97143
  Phone: 503-842-2244
  capemeareslighthouse.org

- Cape Blanco Heritage Society
  P.O. Box 1132, Port Orford, OR 97465
  Phone: 541-332-0521
  capelanceheritagessociety.com

- Coquille River Lighthouse Keepers Foundation Inc.
  P.O. Box 21, Bandon, OR 97411
  Phone: 503-802-5750
  oronsstateparksfoundation.org

- Oregon State Parks Foundation
  Oregon Lighthouse Campaign
  600 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 1600, Portland, OR 97204
  Phone: 503-862-5750
  OregonStateParksFoundation.org

Printed on recycled paper.
Please do your part for the environment.
Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Tillamook Rock has a 52-foot-high tower and stands 153 feet above sea level on a basalt rock inlet. Its exposure to fierce storm waves gave it the nickname—‘Terrible Tilly.’ Commissioned in 1881 to guide ships entering the Columbia River, it was replaced by a whistle buoy in 1957. At one time, it was used as a columbarium, a storage place for ashes of the deceased.

There is no public access to Tillamook.

Cape Meares Lighthouse
This lighthouse stands 177 feet above the ocean, yet its 56-foot tower is the shortest on the Oregon coast. First illuminated in 1878, it was decommissioned in 1953. Visitors to the tower can view the original 1869 Fresnel lens. Nearby trails lead to two of sea bird nesting sites, sea lions and migrating whales.

The lighthouse is open daily 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Passage fees are $5 per person. Lighthouse tours are held daily during July and August only. Tours may be reserved ahead of time via recreation.gov.

Yaquina Bay Lighthouse
Yaquina Bay (yuh-KWIN-yuh) Head stands 212 feet above sea level. At 52 feet, its tower is the tallest on the Oregon coast. Yaquina Head was first illuminated in 1879. Today it continues to aid navigation. The lighthouse is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May through September. There are no formal tours, but park hosts are available to answer questions. The lighthouse tower is closed to the public due to safety concerns.

For more information call Cape Lookout State Park at 503-842-3182.

Yaquina Head Lighthouse
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Yaquina Bay Lighthouse
Yaquina Bay Light is 150 feet above sea level. It was first illuminated in 1879. Today it continues to aid navigation. The lighthouse is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May through September. There are no formal tours, but park hosts are available to answer questions. The lighthouse tower is closed to the public due to safety concerns.

For more information call Cape Lookout State Park at 503-842-3182.

Umpqua River Lighthouse
Umpqua stands 100 feet above the ocean on an islet just off Cape Arago Point. Its light is powered by solar and wind energy. It was decommissioned in 1996. The lens sits 196 feet above the ocean. Yaquina Bay was re-lit and recognized as a privately maintained aid to navigation by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1996. This 56-foot tower is the shortest on the Oregon coast.

Self-guided tours are free; donations accepted. The lighthouse is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March through October. Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is the only lighthouse on the Oregon coast that is maintained by a single lightkeeper.

For more information call Yaquina Bay Lighthouse at 541-547-4146. A state parks day-use parking permit or Oregon Pacific Coast Passport is required.

Cape Arago Lighthouse
Cape Arago stands 100 feet above the ocean on an islet just off Cape Arago Point. Its light is powered by solar and wind energy. It was decommissioned in 1996. The lens sits 196 feet above the ocean. Yaquina Bay was re-lit and recognized as a privately maintained aid to navigation by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1996. This 56-foot tower is the shortest on the Oregon coast.

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Cape Blanco Lighthouse
Cape Blanco Lighthouse at 250 feet above sea level is the only lighthouse on the Oregon coast that is still in service. It was decommissioned in 1970 to aid shipping generated by gold mining and the lumber industry.

Daily guided tours are offered 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April through September (closed Tuesdays). For more information call Cape Blanco State Park at 541-552-0774.

Yaquina Bay Lighthouse
Yaquina Bay Light is 150 feet above sea level. It was first illuminated in 1879. Today it continues to aid navigation. The lighthouse is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May through September. There are no formal tours, but park hosts are available to answer questions. The lighthouse tower is closed to the public due to safety concerns.

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