

THE AMANDA TRAIL STORY (Short version)

by Joanne Kittel

(The following is a short summary based on a much more detailed account that bears the same title.)

The 3.2-mile Amanda Trail runs from the south end of Yachats Ocean Road to the top of Cape Perpetua. Its story begins in 1984 when Loyd Collett, a ranger with the Siuslaw National Forest, planned a trail to run north from the Cape Perpetua viewpoint down towards Yachats. This trail would complete the section of the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) through the Cape Perpetua Scenic Area. Collett came across the story of Amanda, a blind Coos woman who in the mid-19th century was cruelly forced to march barefoot over Cape Perpetua to the Alsea Sub-agency prison camp near present-day Yachats. He named his planned trail in her honor.

In 1986, Joanne and Norman Kittel bought the 27-acre property lying immediately north of the Cape Perpetua scenic area, on the east side of Highway 101. They too wanted to play their part in extending the OCT through their property. After many bureaucratic obstacles were overcome, the trail through the scenic area and the Kittel property was completed in 1997. Construction was a collaborative effort involving many organizations and individual volunteers. A key part of the trail was the bridge across the Amanda Creek, on the Kittel property close to its southern edge. The bridge was supported on stone-filled gabions and was built at zero cost.

There were more obstacles to negotiate before the final section of the trail, from the north side of the Kittel property through to Yachats, could be built. That was done in 2009, completing the Amanda Trail 25 years after Collett first planned it.

In 2003, George Copage donated the Amanda Statue, created by Sy Meadow, to the trail. It was located next to the creek, close to the old bridge. A fiberglass replacement bridge was built in 2011. Then, in 2015 a massive mudslide, originating in a clearcut, destroyed the bridge and the statue. The current high-level suspension bridge was opened in 2022. A replacement statue (the artist originally made three of them) was donated to the trail and installed in a more secure spot in 2016. There is now a large, open gathering area with seating at the site of the statue. The gathering area, with its interpretive signs, and the suspension bridge are popular destinations for visiting hikers.

The annual New Year's Day Peace Hike, a 4.5-mile round trip from Yachats to the Amanda Gathering Area, originated in 2012. At the gathering area there is a ceremony involving Yachadians and representatives of local tribes. This ceremony has been important in providing a degree of reconciliation between the tribes and the local community. The Peace Hike has grown in popularity over the years and now attracts over 200 participants.

The play, *Amanda Transcending*, tells the Amanda story. Written by Connie Bennett, it has been performed on several occasions in Yachats and Eugene.

The Amanda Trail and its associated events owe their existence to the contributions of many organizations and individuals. Some of them are listed below.

Organizations: Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI); Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (CTSI); City of Yachats; Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD); Siuslaw National Forest (SNF); Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA); Lincoln County; Angell Job Corps; View the Future (VtF), a local non-profit; the Yachats Trails Crew; the Yachats Ladies Club; Polly Plumb Productions.

Individuals: Loyd Collett, SNF; Pete Bond, OPRD; Joanne and Norman Kittel, landowners; Sy Meadow, artist; George Copage, Beth Cook and Joan Wikler, statue donors; Don Whereat, CTCLUSI; Doc Slyter, CTCLUSI; Robert Kentta, CTSI; Phyllis Steeves, SNF archaeologist; Lauralee Svendsgaard, first chair of Yachats Trails.

