

D. L. Anderson

P h o t o g r a p h y

Ecola State Park

Between two of Oregon's more popular coastal communities lies an oasis containing some of the most beautiful scenery along the Oregon coastline.

Directions

From Cannon Beach follow the Ecola State Park signs 2 miles to the Park entrance. Turn left just past the entrance both and follow the road to the picnic area parking lot.

The Trail

Before beginning the hike take some time to walk the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile path to the Ecola Point viewing platform. From here you can look south to the city of Cannon Beach and Haystack Rock. The view north includes the Tillamook Head Lighthouse and allows you to survey the trails terrain down to Indian Beach and back up to your destination at Tillamook Head. As with most of the northern headlands Tillamook Head and the surrounding sea stacks are composed of Columbia River Basalt.

The trailhead is located at the northeast end of the Ecola Point parking area. The trail climbs up and along the fir and spruce covered bluffs. Along the way you will encounter several viewpoints overlooking Sea lion Rock and The Tillamook Lighthouse.

The Tillamook Rock lighthouse, or "Terrible Tilly" as she is known to those who served on her, was completed in 1881, just three weeks too late to save the British ship "Lupatia" that ran aground on Tillamook Head. Built at a cost of \$125,000 the 62 foot high tower housed a first order Fresnel lens which was displayed 130 feet above sea level. Over the years many modifications were made to the structure in order to protect it from the violent storms that frequent the area. On several occasions rocks weighing in excess of 100 pounds were hurled into the lighthouse tower. The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1957. It was purchased in 1980 and converted into the Eternity at Sea Columbarium. In 1994 Congress designated Tillamook Rock a federal wildlife refuge, home to nesting common murrens and cormorants.

After about 1 mile the trail begins to descend toward Indian Beach where it crosses Canyon Creek as you enter the Indian Beach Picnic Area. Picking up the trail on the other side of the picnic area, stay to the left and ignore the old service road on the right. The trail immediately crosses Indian Creek and begins a fairly steep climb towards the headland. After $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles you reach the backpacking camping area and a trail junction. Turn left and after a short $\frac{1}{4}$ mile you come to an old, moss covered, concrete bunker constructed during WWII as a radar installation.

Perched 750 feet above the rocky shoreline, the view extends over the Tillamook Rock lighthouse and far out to sea. During the spring and fall the distinctive spouts of grey whales can be seen as they

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pass the Tillamook Head on their 12,000 mile migration to and from the warm water breeding grounds off Baja and the rich feeding grounds in the Bering and Chuckchi Seas.

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