The Sutherland Trail Ribbon Cutting: A New Trail opens in Klamath Falls

Klamath Falls, OR. — October 31, 2017 — Klamath Falls has a new walking trail for families to enjoy thanks to the collaboration of several community partners.

Located next to the Klamath County Vandenberg campus, the new trail is named in honor of Marilynn Sutherland, a former long-time director of Klamath County Public Health, who first envisioned a walking path connecting the Foothills Trail with the Vandenberg campus.

Facilities at the Vandenberg campus include Klamath County Public Health offices, Community Corrections, Developmental Disabilities, and the Detention Center.

The Sutherland trail provides a safer route for clients to use when walking to the County buildings when accessing services by obviating the potentially dangerous practice of walking on the side of Vandenberg Road. Also, the trail encourages staff in the nearby county offices to be more active and healthy by walking during work breaks, adopting the Blue Zones Project principle of moving naturally.

Sutherland’s vision of a trail spurred partnerships and action. The Klamath County Commissioners granted permission for the property to be developed as a trail. In order to create a beautiful and manageable trail, Klamath Trails Alliance (KTA) handled the design and training for the trail builders. Kevin Jones, a dedicated KTA member, designed a three-fourths mile “lollipop” trail that connects the Vandenberg campus with the trail along Foothills Boulevard with an easy loop in the middle. The Oregon Department of Transportation permitted the county use of ODOT land for part of the trail.

With permissions granted and the trail mapped out, the hard work cutting the trail began. Community Corrections dedicated several work crews to build the trail. In all, 229 crewmembers worked for 31 days on the trail, putting in nearly 57,000 hours to make it complete. The crew created a 6-foot gravel trail that winds through trees and offers incredible views of Klamath Falls. Blue Zones Project helped procure trailhead and way-finding signs.

“This is an amazing collaboration among community partners that brought about a wonderful asset that can be enjoyed for years to come” said Jennifer Little of Sky Lakes Medical Center.

Commissioner Kelley Minty Morris said, “These are the kind of partnerships that return value to the community without allocating tax dollars. It’s a true win-win. Projects like this add value to our efforts to continue making our community more attractive.”

A celebration of this partnership and the official opening of the Sutherland Trail begins at 10 a.m. Monday, November 6, at the trailhead next to Klamath County Public Health, 3314 Vandenberg Road. Light refreshments will be served. The public is invited.

Photo caption: The new Sutherland Trail on the south face of the hillside overlooking Crater Lake Parkway near the Klamath County Vanderberg campus offers a pet-friendly option for families to enjoy.