

Sawmill and Tribal Trail Points of Interest

A. North Bend - Points of Historic Significance

1. Site of Simpson's sawmill and shipyard, the original North Bend company town. (See signs.)
2. Site of 1922-36 ferry service between North Bend and Glasgow (see sign.) At low tide walk north to a pebble beach for another view.
3. Plaque honoring Gahakkich – one of many Coos Tribal villages that dotted the bay area for thousands of years.
4. Ferry Road Park ball field, site of North Bend's 1902 pavilion – the town's community center for two decades.
5. Unusual view (from below) of McCullough Bridge. Built as Coos Bay Bridge in 1936, renamed in 1947. At 5,888 feet long, largest bridge on the Oregon Coast when constructed.
6. (no post) The Coos Historical and Maritime Museum – book and gift shop.
7. Oregon's "Merci" boxcar. After WW2, the grateful French sent each state a boxcar filled with gifts.
8. North Bend's original (1903) baseball park. Other towns each fielded a team and competition was fierce.
9. Landmark Church opened in 1910 as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. The oldest original church in North Bend.
10. Pony Slough mudflats. Twice daily underwater but platted (by 1906) as the Steamboat Addition to North Bend and sold to unsuspecting buyers.
11. Remnant pilings from 1907 wooden bridge that connected North Bend to Bangor and the Reynolds Lumber Company sawmill.
12. Sixteenth Street (Pony Slough) Bridge. North Bend's worst early auto accident (1914) killed 5 when an auto, avoiding a small child, crashed through the railing to the tidewater and mud.
13. Old county road, established in 1859, used 16th street in what is now North Bend and much of what is now Lakeshore Drive in Empire.
14. In the first half of the 20th century two cranberry bogs were located a short distance southwest of here. Three more cranberry bogs were situated further to the north and northwest.

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Subsequent posts are in Coos Bay/Empire.

15. Near Empire Lakes (June 1914) masked men, rifles pointed, stopped and held up five autos, taking valuables. Lyle Chappell recognized bandits' voices - Claude Allen and Ed Wilson's.

B. A Sampler of Native Plants & Trees: Coos, first peoples', food, clothing, etc. These posts are in John Topits Park (Empire Lakes Park.)

16. Pacific Rhododendron - roots carved into shinny balls for a native game similar to field hockey.

17. Cattails - leaves and stems for basketry, pounded stems used as diapers. Roots eaten, cooked or raw.

18. Silverweed – roots edible when cooked, usually in earth oven. Taste similar to sweet potato.

19. Ocean Spray – straight, strong wood for arrow shafts and other tools, especially digging sticks. Seasonal blooms indicated elk fat, time to hunt.

20. Willow – shoots for baskets and inner bark sometimes used in weaving. Seasonal fishing aid - when willow blooms, herring run.

21. Shore Pine - for pitch. Tree sap warmed, mixed with seal oil, patched canoes. Pitch for handles and wrappings. Roots tie bundles of dried salmon.

22. Douglas Fir – spear fishing, fish weirs, meat-drying racks, backboards for cradle boards. Branches, wetted, used in funeral cleansing rituals.

23. Berries - huckleberry (evergreen and red), salmonberry, blackberry, thimbleberry, salal. All berries enjoyed fresh, many dried and pounded into cakes for winter. Blackberry leaves for tea. Evergreen huckleberry roots carved into shinny balls for native game resembling field hockey.

24. Western Red Cedar – very important. Provided housing, canoes, baskets and clothing. Whole trees carved for canoes. Planks, carved with elk horn, split from fallen or live trees. (Two or three planks came from a mature tree without killing it.)

25. Sedge, slough - grows along water, common at low elevations, used for skirts and berry baskets.

26. Western Hemlock – bark made dark dye for cedar & maple. Fishnets were dyed making them tough for fish to see. Hemlock for fish weirs, the heavy wood stayed put.

27. Sitka Spruce – wood light and strong, roots for baskets and lashings, occasionally for canoes.

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C. Empire Points of Historic Significance

28. To your right is Brown's Hill (elevation 97 feet). "Pilot's Lookout," likely used by Capt. James Magee (1880s). From a tree, he spied incoming ships beyond the North Spit dunes (see also #35).

28. (also) Directly ahead is the Southern Oregon Company's waterfront sawmill site, 1885. The "Big Mill" was 400-foot long, built on 364 Port Orford cedar pilings. Vacant years before Louis Simpson purchased it (1927). 1930s Menasha owned, leasing to others. Cape Arago Lumber Co. final occupant. Razed 1980.

29. Coos Indian village – Intesich - site. Then Henry H. Luse's sawmill (1856-1883) site. Luse dominated Empire's economy over 25 years with mill, shipyard, store and vast timber holdings.

30. Major Morton Tower House (1869, expanded 1892). As customs collector (1902-14) he reportedly used the parlor for unofficial customhouse.

31. Empire schools (1866-1959) site. The 1866 school burned 1919. Replaced by Empire Grade School (renamed Market Street School); torn down 1969.

32. Old Tower House, built 1872 in Gothic Revival style, by Dr. Charles W. Tower, brother of Maj. Morton Tower. Tower houses are on National Register of Historic Places.

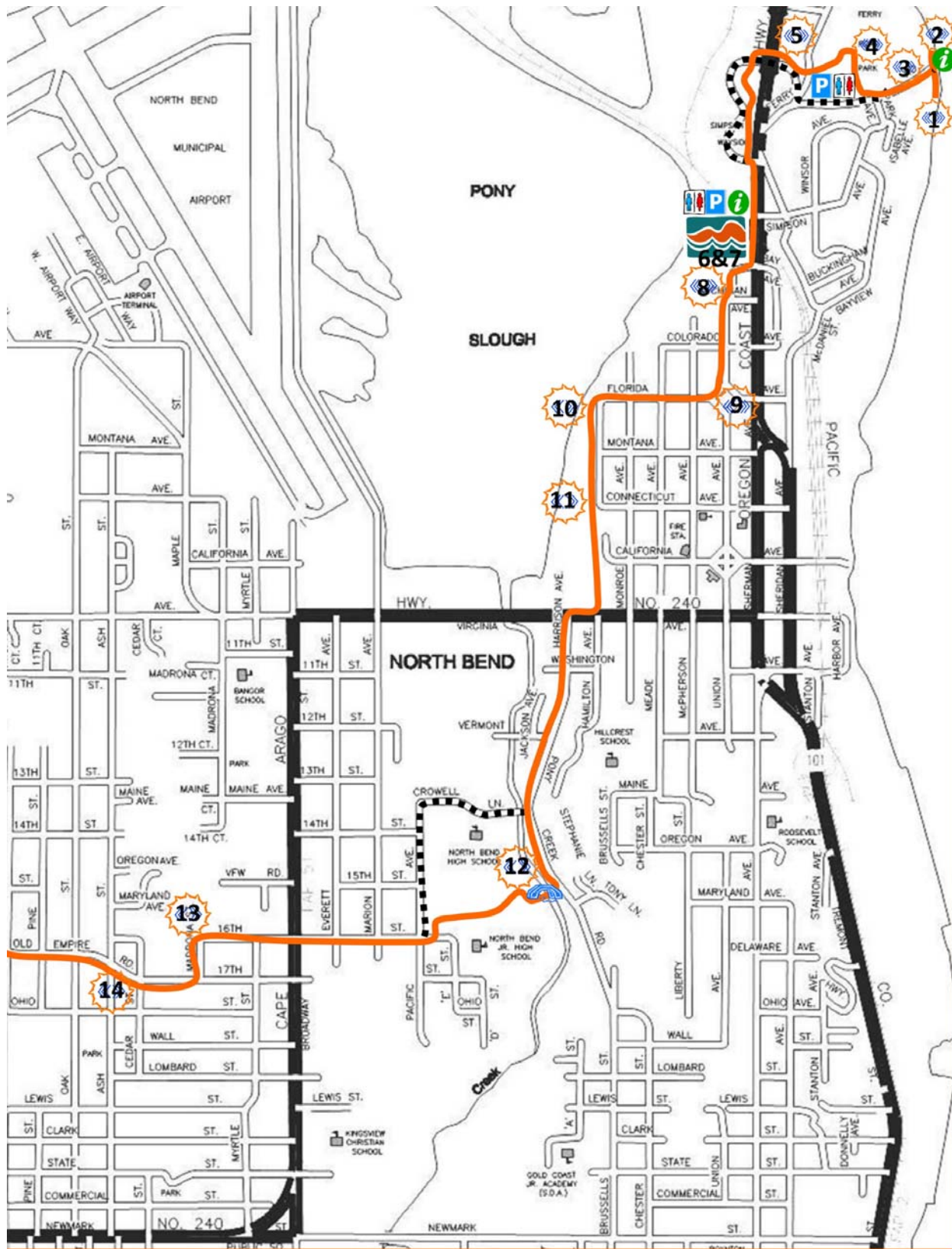
33. Legendary site of "Hanging Tree." Indian Pete, unjustly accused of murder, was lynched here or nearby in a large cherry tree (1854); fort and blockhouse here during Rogue River Indian War (1856); location of Coos County Courthouse & Jail (1872-1896).

34. Hollering Place Wayside - views of bay and North Spit sand dunes. See 1852 *Captain Lincoln* shipwreck marker. Coos Indian village, Hanisich, in vicinity. Hollering Place on North Spit where tribal members, then settlers, would yell across bay for water transport.

35. Capt. James Magee House (1873). Victorian style. Capt. Magee, master ocean and bar pilot, had observation tower on bluff behind house. He'd spot a ship approaching Coos Bay bar, take a tugboat and offer service as pilot – for a fee.

The Sawmill & Tribal Trail ends or begins at Coos Bay Boat Ramp at foot of Michigan. See sign tracing Empire history. The land adjacent is Hollering Place project site. The Coos Bay Boat Building Center, for wooden boats, is next to Hollering Place.

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