



Visit Tillamook Coast donates four beach wheelchairs to high-demand areas, part of tourism's equity to outdoor access program

December 23, 2020. Tillamook, Oregon. As part of their strategic commitment to outdoor access, Tillamook Coast Visitors Association (Visit Tillamook Coast) has delivered four beach wheelchairs to three high-demand beach areas in Tillamook County: Manzanita, Rockaway Beach and Pacific City. The chairs will be available to the public, at no cost, through Manzanita Visitors Center, Troxel's in Rockaway Beach, and Kiwanda Hospitality in Pacific City.

Manzanita, which receives one chair, has offered beach wheelchairs for several years, but a chair in their stable was beyond repair after more than 10 years in service. Troxel's, which gets one chair, began offering the service in 2019, but the chair they have now (purchased by Troxel's) was not enough to meet demand. Pacific City, has not previously had beach wheelchairs available to the public, receives two chairs.

"When our budget was drastically cut this fiscal year, we thought we might have to put this program on hold," said Nan Devlin, executive director of Tillamook Coast Visitors Association. "Fortunately, we received \$10,000 in a COVID-relief grant from Travel Oregon to help with our operational costs, so that freed up just enough funds in our budget to go ahead and purchase these beach wheelchairs."

TCVA's destination management strategic plan includes helping improve outdoor access for people of all abilities. This was especially important to Devlin, whose late mother suffered from Parkinson's Disease.

"Being at the Oregon Coast, being on the beach, was a family ritual. It's where we had our best times growing up," said Devlin. "As my mother's mobility decreased with Parkinson's, it became harder and harder for her to walk on sand. I saw and felt her disappointment and sadness, and fear of falling. I know firsthand how important it is to individuals with mobility issues to enjoy the coast in meaningful ways."

In choosing equity partners, TCVA looked for beach accessibility, high visitor counts, ability to respond to requests for the chairs, and partners who could maintain the equipment. The chairs were purchased from Debug Mobility Products, a company recommended to TCVA by Seaside's tourism organization for the chairs' long-lasting quality and the company's customer service. For more information, visit www.beachwheelchair.com

“With our close proximity to beach access at Cape Kiwanda, and seven days a week staffing, we volunteered to manage the beach wheelchairs, making them available to both locals and visitors,” and Kiwanda Hospitality’s CEO, Jim Prinzing. **To reserve a beach wheelchair in Pacific City, email adventures@headlandslodge.com**

“Our one chair was sometimes too small for people to sit comfortably, so this new chair gives us a way to accommodate more adults as well as children,” said Victor and Jenn Troxel, co-owners of Troxel’s store, located across the street from the Rockaway Beach wayside. **To reserve a beach wheelchair in Rockaway Beach, call or text 541-418-2842 or email rockawayrocks@gmail.com**

“The demand for beach wheelchairs is quite high in Manzanita, and when one chair could no longer be repaired, we weren’t sure what we would do. So getting this new chair will help us help others more often,” said Dan Haag, manager of Manzanita Visitors Center. **To reserve a beach wheelchair in Manzanita, call 503 812-5510.**

TCVA’s other equity in outdoor projects are in the planning stages and will go forth when more funding becomes available to the organization. For more information, contact Nan Devlin at nan@tillamookcoast.com

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