

HERE COMES THE SUN, LITTLE DARLING PLEASE PRACTICE PATIENCE & KINDNESS AT THE COAST

By Brook Wyntergreen,
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The Beatles couldn't have sung it better and as we are able to see more smiles returning to the maskless faces, we ask that patience and kindness continue to be given to our workers, business owners and anyone else who chooses to continue to mask up. It's mid-June, 68% of adults in Oregon have received their first, if not second, dose of the vaccination. "It truly feels like there is a light at the end of the tunnel. But things will not be returning to 'normal' any time soon. As you are likely aware, the CDC announced that fully vaccinated people can now go maskless in most places. That's all well and good but as you can imagine, this announcement caught our small businesses completely off guard. It puts them in the extremely unenviable position of playing vaccination police and there have already been several confrontations locally over this issue. The bottom line is small businesses all over Oregon have the right to decide how they want to handle the mask issue. Our business community has decided to keep their mask requirements in place, for their safety and yours. Please respect that decision and offer them your support, not your scorn," instructs Dan Haag, Director of the Manzanita Visitors Center.

"With great power, comes great responsibility," Stan Lee and Spiderman proclaim.

Most super heroes choose to wear masks and now our business owners have been given the power to decide if masks are required or not on their premises. Because this onus has shifted from government agency to local business owners, it does not mean the intention behind the mask requirement has shifted. There are many reasons to mask up. Consider that your situation may not be the same as someone else's.

- People may have cancer
- People may have autoimmune diseases
- People may have unvaccinated children at home
- People may have high-risk loved ones they are protecting
- People may have asthma and have realized over the last year that their symptoms are alleviated by a mask outdoors
- People may be unvaccinated

"Let's not question why someone is wearing a mask. Maybe they just feel better doing so," Nan Devlin, Executive Director of Visit Tillamook Coast requests.

**"I can walk down the street,
there's no one there**

**Though the pavements are one huge crowd
I can drive down the road, my eyes don't see
Though my mind wants to cry out loud,
I feel free," Pete Brown & Jack Bruce relate.**

We are being given the freedom to go outside without masks, stay inside in larger groups, move about without fear of harming ourselves or others – it has been a long time coming and the sense of urgency to explore new places and faces is huge. But please remember to curb this enthusiasm with humble patience because not all wheels are back in motion. "Coastwide, we are experiencing an extreme labor shortage. There are a ton of job openings and not nearly enough applicants. This, in turn, puts a huge strain on our businesses' ability to operate... If lines are longer at your favorite coffee shop or restaurant, please keep this in mind and practice patience. It takes far less energy than becoming angry," Haag reminds us.

And lastly, in this ode to sunshine, freedom, and kindness, it would be remiss not to address the importance of protecting the delicate ecosystem of the Oregon Coast through the nostalgic words of **John Denver, "Country road, take me home, to the place that I belong."** As the words on Visit Tillamook Coast's website describe, "we've cared for our forests, farmlands, beaches and waterways for generations. It's in our DNA, and we bet it's in yours, too. We welcome your visit, and we hope you'll become a temporary local while here." tillamookcoast.com/caring-for-our-coast.

Please take the Tillamook Coast Pledge

While visiting our coast, we ask you to consider taking our pledge of Caring for Our Coast. Print it, write it down, keep it in your backpack, and feel free to remind others to take the Pledge along with you.

1. **I promise to be respectful of people and safety when enjoying the Tillamook Coast's forests, farmlands and beaches.**
2. **I will make my own memories, but not my own trails.**

If you see someone masked after the CDC/IDPH removed masking requirements for fully-vaccinated people, please remember:

- People may have cancer
- People may have autoimmune diseases
- People may have unvaccinated children at home
- People may have high-risk loved ones they are protecting
- People may have asthma and have realized over the last year that their symptoms are alleviated by a mask outdoors
- People may be unvaccinated

Please be kind.

3. **I will be responsible with fire on the beaches, in campgrounds, and any other designated fire areas.**
4. **I will heed cautionary signage. If it says "Do not go past this point!" – I won't. Double pinkie promise on this one.**
5. **I will enjoy the slower pace of beach life.**
6. **If I cannot find a parking spot, I will not invent my own. Same goes for restrooms.**
7. **When playing at the beach, I will be mindful of sneaker waves and logs. I will NEVER turn my back on the ocean. Ever.**
8. **I will PACK IN reusable containers and PACK OUT all of my trash.**
9. **I will respect wildlife by managing my own pet(s), and not disturb any native plants or animals.**
10. **I will use my turn signal often, my car horn seldom, and my middle finger never.**
11. **I pledge to always care for our coast.**

"At the end of the day our Tillamook Coast communities are like so many others around the country. We are struggling to keep up with shifting guidelines and continuing to pivot and adapt. Like you, we are all tired – tired of masks, tired of Covid, tired of being tired. There is no magic button we can push to fix any of the issues mentioned above. But we are pushing forward, nonetheless," Dan Haag reassures.

As we roll in to summer, as the ice slowly melts after a long and lonely winter, as the sun comes, remember to be patient and be kind, and that George Harrison says, "it's alright".

We will be sharing South County destination management news each month in the Pacific City Sun. The topics covered and uncovered in this monthly column are written with an objective to illuminate the critical role of destination management for South Tillamook County. Below are key definitions.

Sustainable tourism can be defined by three words: people, place and profit. It is tourism that takes full account for its social and environmental impacts, as well as current and future economic benefits. The goal of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development is a positive experience for both local residents and the visitors. For South County locals, this means enjoying a thriving community; jobs for hundreds of people; places to gather and connect with neighbors; and protection of natural resources, all with an emphasis on minimal impact and a call for stewardship.

That's the ideal, of course, but it requires commitment from municipalities, the tourism industry and the community to make responsible decisions that protect people, place and profit. And it takes an understanding from the visitors that sustainable tourism is important to the community.

Sustainable tourism leads to the definition of **destination management**: it is about coordinating actions with the goal of controlling the economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of a specific tourism region, which is carried out by local authorities and tourism stakeholders in partnership, following principles of good governance. It considers all the elements that make up a tourism destination, including local residents, businesses, attractions, amenities, access and messaging.

Destination management does not mean inviting more visitors – it means effectively managing those who have already arrived.

For more updates, please visit the website at <https://tillamookcoast.com/southcounty> and our Facebook page: South County Destination Management.

Questions? Contact Brook Wyntergreen at brook@tillamookcoast.com

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