

Yachats Annual Peace Hike:
A Commemoration of Resilience and Remembrance

Each New Year's Day Yachats hosts the annual Peace Hike. This meaningful event honors the legacy of the indigenous peoples who endured immense suffering under government-sponsored genocidal policies during the 19th century.

A Time for Reflection and Education

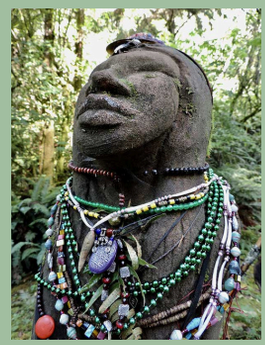
The Peace Hike commemorates the tragic history of the Alsea Subagency (1860–1875), highlighting the story of Amanda, a blind Native American (Coos) woman who in 1864 was forcibly separated from her daughter and marched barefoot with other captives over 80 miles of rugged terrain to the Alsea Subagency prison camp in what is now Yachats.

This annual gathering serves as a solemn remembrance of those who lost their lives and a recognition of the resilience of their descendants, many of whom participate in the event each year.

The Peace Hike invites all to reflect on the atrocities faced by the Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, and Alsea Peoples and to deepen an understanding of this painful history. For additional learning about this atrocity, we invite you to:

- Watch the video "*The Genocide of the Alsea Subagency*", narrated by Patricia Whereat Phillips, Miluk Coos, and the late Chief Donald Slyter of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians: www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6D-wkqXGy0.

- Read the yaxaik Indians and the Prison Camp Years https://www.viewthefuture.org/indigenous-history



History of the Peace Hike and its connections with the Amanda Trail

The Peace Hike was originated by Lauralee Svendsgaard, 'Past' Yachats Trails Chairperson, who, in 2009, was deeply touched by many tribal members' poignant responses to the creation of the Amanda Trail and Amanda Statue.

It took 25 years to complete the Amanda Trail, involving collaboration with a number of public agencies, organizations, and volunteers who learned about this devastating local history.

Working collaboratively, a forever monument was created for people to walk through, sit with, and reflect on so such horrors do not happen again. It's taken time to earn the trust of a number of tribal members, elders, and leaders.

The Amanda Trail, third Amanda bridge, and Gathering Area are carefully preserved in perpetuity with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

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In 2011, Lauralee organized the first Peace Hike. Joined by the late Chief Doc Slyter, Hanis Coos, Lauralee explained,

"The Peace Hike is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and a call to remember and learn from the past while making a solemn commitment by each of us to find that place of peace within us, and to vow to let that power direct our actions in the new year."

The City of Yachats proclaimed January 1 as Indigenous Peoples Day in 2018. Despite storms, debris slides, and pandemics, the Peace Hike has endured annually – and we hope till time immemorial.

Sadly, in 2023 Chief Slyter passed on. The Peace Hike continues and is dedicated to his many contributions, including his belief in reconciliation with the Yachats community.

Join the Community of Yachats in Building Bridges between Previously Divided Peoples.

In the past, colonial communities were largely opposed to the tribal peoples and their cultural heritage. Today we are witnessing a shift of community support for the inclusion of tribal peoples and their cultural heritage. Everyone is welcome to join in taking footsteps of peace and building community at this meaningful event in Yachats that is dedicated to honoring cultural history while fostering reconciliation, healing, and unity for the future.

Location and time

The tribal-led ceremony begins at 9:30 AM New Year's Day at the Yachats Commons 501 Hwy.101 N., Yachats. The day will be filled with ceremonies, reflections, and guided trail walks designed to honor the past and bring the community together. Participants have the option to walk a short distance of their choice or walk the 2-mile hike to the Amanda Gathering Area and statue where a second ceremony is held. Those unable to walk can enjoy the ceremony as it continues at the pavilion.

Additional Peace Hike Highlights

- All participants receive a unique, beautifully crafted Peace Hike button designed by local artists.
- Peace Hike Committee members will be on hand at the Yachats Commons to provide guidance, and maps, and to answer any questions.
- Snacks and beverages are provided.

For more information:
View the Future: www.viewthefuture.org
Yachats Chamber: www.yachats.org
Yachats Trails: www.yachatstrails.org