

## *Celebrating Joanne Ruoff In Poetry*

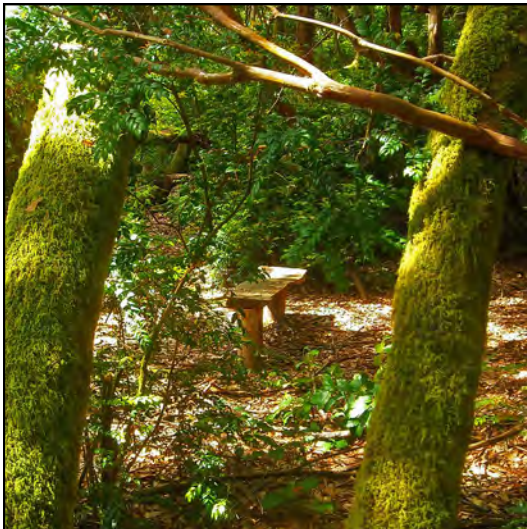
This trail of Joanne's dreams is her ongoing legacy.  
We mustn't forget Joanne's passion for our trail,  
We must remember her work to carve out the path  
Ignoring set-backs and walking toward a goal.

Joanne Ruoff was a beloved member of the Port  
Orford community.  
She was a dedicated firefighter, a true and giving  
friend.  
She saw beyond the mundane and saw beauty to  
be shared  
With delighted hikers of the world.

At every site we hear the echoes of the bagpipes,  
We remember the line-up of fire vehicles,  
We can see her carefully folded uniform,  
We see the sad faces of firemen saluting her,  
For whom the bell tolled.

But most of all we remember her involvement in  
community.  
As a member of the Watershed Council, she  
developed the trail map.  
She shared her hopes with Parks and Recreation,  
She worked powerfully within the system.  
We can't forget.

*Phyllis Johns*



*A Port Orford Cedar shows the impact of natural forces.*

**Caution:** This is a nature trail and as such walkers need to be prepared for uneven surfaces and other possible natural hazards (such as poison oak) that may be encountered. This pathway is not fully accessible for people with disabilities, nor are there restrooms or water along the route.

### **How to Find the Nature Trail**

Follow Highway 101 into Port Orford. Turn West onto 14th Street. Turn right, as the drive becomes Lakeside. Proceed about one block. The Nature Trail sign is on your left, and parking is available along the East side of Lakeside Drive next to Buffington Memorial Park.

In Appreciation ... Many organizations and individuals have contributed to the success of this Joanne Ruoff Memorial Nature Trail. Here are some that merit special recognition:

*Port Orford Watershed Council.  
Port Orford Parks Commission.  
City of Port Orford.  
Poet Phyllis Johns.  
Photo Editor Steve Thompson.  
Umpqua Bank.*

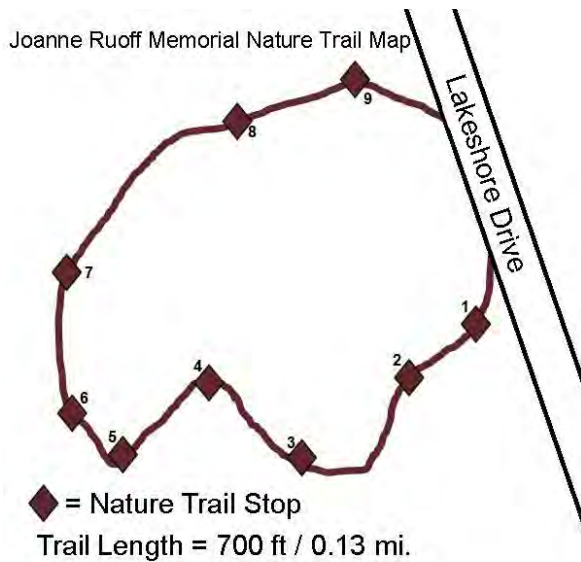
## *Welcome to the Joanne Ruoff Memorial Nature Trail*



This very special section of mature coastal temperate rainforest is a sanctuary designed to welcome all who sojourn in the remote area known as the Wild Rivers Coast. Here, your spirit will be rejuvenated. Here, there are opportunities for contemplation, serenity and appreciation of nature. Here, in this seemingly untouched plot of earth, you can be bathed in the wonders of the natural world and rewarded with an inner peace and joy.

We've dedicated this small patch of primal forest to Joanne Ruoff, who committed her life to the land and community that surrounded her. She tirelessly labored on behalf of creating wild spaces and making them accessible to all. She was a hands-on person who took charge and assumed responsibility, always with a commitment to excellence. Joanne was a friend to all, whether they were human or flora and fauna. By her actions, she made our hamlet and the world a more caring and enriching reality.

For these and many more reasons, the Port Orford Watershed Council salutes Joanne and dedicates this Nature Trail to her.



**Stop 1:** Enter the trail and you're quickly greeted by wetlands on both sides of the path. They are part of nature's natural laundry which filters and cleans. This low-lying area is home to a diversity of plants, particularly sedges, and provides a refuge for aquatic and terrestrial species, such as frogs and rough-skinned newts.

**Stop 2:** Walking up a slight grade, notice the Tanoak grove to your right. Named for its tannin-rich bark, the bark of this evergreen tree was formerly used in tanning leather before the development of synthetic tannins. You'll frequently find Tanoak in forests like this where Douglas Fir and Pacific Madrone thrive.

**Stop 3:** Travel up another gentle incline and around the Tanoak grove. Sit a spell on the weathered bench to the left, contemplating the long-lived Rhododendrons soaring above you while a Tanoak and Pacific Madrone form an archway over the path ahead.

With their rich red-orange bark, Madrones make a colorful addition to the landscape, especially as their bark peels away in thin strips with maturity, revealing a greenish-brownish-silvery gown underneath.

**Stop 4:** Proceed on, glancing to the right and seeing trees that have been ripped up by their roots during fierce winter storms in years past. Did this extreme damage occur during the infamous Columbus Day Storm of 1962?

**Stop 5:** Continue walking the circular trail and spot a towering Port Orford Cedar on the left. It's one of the giants of the forest, maturing at up to 200' tall in 500 years. There are many such conifers included in this forest plot, some in decay, some in maturity like this one, and some just beginning their journey to reach the heavens. You'll recognize Port Orford Cedar by its bark, which can be 6" to 8" thick on old trees, and is deeply seamed into long, stringy, slender ridges, growing over a distinct, thin but very dense inner bark.

But all is not ideal in the landscape. Invasive plants have infiltrated the primeval forest. Can you find English Ivy encircling the Tanoak close to the Port Orford Cedar?

**Stop 6:** A second bench invites you to rest. Behind you, storm-damaged trees support each other, suggesting a natural Jungle Jim, in contrast to the more resilient and determined trees that have stood firm and straight in the fertile ground during turbulent times. Observe the nearby 37" diameter stump, the remainder of a Douglas Fir that was harvested, probably in the early 1900's, using a springboard and a two-man cross-cut saw.

**Stop 7:** A final bench beckons you to enjoy its cathedral-like setting. Observe the tree snag in front that houses many insects and may furnish dinner for the occasional Pileated Woodpecker and Northern Flicker. On your right is a Pacific Madrone folding across the trail, stretching ever higher to reach the sun.

You won't find too much evidence of their existence, but the forest floor simply teems with life. Chipmunks bounce over the debris

seeking the seeds of the Tanoak, and field mice find abundant opportunity to hide in the plant litter. An occasional skunk, raccoon and perhaps an opossum may call this home. Black-tailed deer wander by frequently.

In the fall, mushrooms fruit on the forest floor, offering a tempting feast to humans and animals alike. Don't be surprised to find edible varieties such as Golden Chanterelles, along with members of the Russula family hiding in the foliage.

**Stop 8:** Glance up and observe the dense forest canopy where mature tree crowns block light from the vegetation below. Towering over the undergrowth are the Tanoaks, which in turn are dwarfed by the real giants of this Nature Trail: Shore Pines, Port Orford Cedars, and Douglas Firs.

The understory is populated by plants such as Sword Ferns, Evergreen Huckleberry, Salal, Wax-Myrtle, Black Twinberry—all of which are acid-loving and classic northwest coastal flora. Here and there a wildflower will pop out of the duff in spring.

**Stop 9:** Our walk into this coastal temperate rainforest is coming to an end. The feathery foliage of a young Port Orford Cedar waves goodbye in the gentle breezes as we leave the trail for Lakeside Drive.



A resident deer inspects the construction of the new trail sign.