Ecotourism Outreach on the Oregon Coast
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INTRODUCTION
Between 2000 and 2015, tourist spending along the Oregon Coast increased from $1.4 to $1.8 billion (Visit the Oregon Coast). As the need for messaging and advertising that not only promotes tourism but demonstrates a commitment to keeping the environment clean and healthy, the Oregon Coast holds a crucial role in the tourism industry. The Oregon Coast is known for its beautiful scenery, diverse wildlife, and coastal areas. However, tourism can also have negative impacts, such as environmental abuse and overuse. In late August 2015, state officials had to begin placing advisory signs along Highway 101 in attempt to call illegal parking (Beach Connection), as well as making several statements pleading with tourists to pick up their trash. Throughout the 10-week Coastal Tourism internship, we created a short series of videos that promote eco-tourism in Tillamook County and surrounding areas. The guiding objective of the project was to make viewers aware of how important the environment is to coastal areas and to form a personal connection.

We created these videos for two clients: the U.S. Forest Service and Tillamook County Wellness. Both organizations focus on health: the U.S. Forest Service aims to maintain the beauty and health of the country’s forests and TCW strives to create a healthy and empowered community.

PURPOSE
All three of the videos produced for this project served their own purpose. The “Oregon is Home” video portrayed the connection between humans and nature. This relationship is influenced by the fact that people take pride in their environment. The Daily Walks video illustrated simple walks along the Oregon coast to inspire the public that building a healthy daily habit in the outdoors does not have to be complex. The intended audience for this video was the general public within Tillamook County, as starting healthy habits are not restricted to a certain population. The “Every Kid Outdoors Program” video targeted other organizations that offer the same program. The video served the purpose of informing the public about how to get the program pass, where to use it, as well as inspiring other locations that use this program to promote it in similar ways that increase awareness.

Why should you care? Why promoting ecotourism and inspiring others to increase time outdoors matters to you? The answer is the five main components of this project either directly or indirectly affect you.

The first theme is community, which, in the project, has the power of connection and emotion as it holds influence on the decisions people make. In the case of the project, it is to treat the environment with care and enjoy the outdoors more. If one person is doing that, eventually the number increases due to influence.

The second is the economy. People will be happier to support an ethical economy that holds the interest of the environment, which in turn leads to more successful marketing.

The third is the programs. This summer’s project focuses on the clients, U.S. Forest Service, and Tillamook County Wellness, and ways to promote their organizations in a way that shows their values, environment, and human health. The videos produced have been shared on social media and websites leading to the potential of more programs being created and other organizations to consider incorporating this work.

The fourth is the environment. This project focuses on how the economy and environment may coexist; this is ecotourism. The Oregon Coast’s environment holds importance because its beautiful features attract tourists. Keeping it alive and well ensures the lasting connection between humans and nature.

Finally, there is inspiration. Specifically, the Every Kid Outdoors program encourages fourth-graders to get outside and have fun. The curiosity that comes from exploring the outdoors will hopefully inspire future generations to continue the connection between humans and nature and advocate for the environment better than previous generations.

RESEARCH
Ecotourism is an environmental education and sustainability managed industry (Pfrieger, 2016), involving management and economy. The U.S. Forest Service and the government in terms of laws and regulations that advocate these lands are the main drivers of management.

Interview preparation had three steps: Review the storyboard and goal of the video, Gain background knowledge of the person being interviewed, and Format informative and purposeful questions. Before each interview, research was conducted on the position, background and affiliations of the person in question, which helped decide where to place the interview shots throughout the video. Questions sought thoughtful and complete answers, which aided in forming informative content. Yes and No questions were avoided. Questions were beforehand to allow for preparation and forgetting important content.

The main method used during filming was the “rule of thirds.” For every desired piece of footage, get a tight, medium, and wide shot. For example, filming a couple holding hands, a tight shot would consist of just their hands, a medium shot would be their hands and bodies, and a wide shot would be their bodies and the background. This provided a wide range of content to cut and form into the desired outcome.

As the content ages on multiple platforms of social media, the goal to promote ecotourism and wellbeing will grow to reach more and more people over time. With sharing social media, this work has the potential to influence a broad audience. The videos will further promote them on neighboring organizations’ websites.

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CONCLUSION
The project produced three videos for our clients, the U.S. Forest Service and Tillamook County Wellness. The videos have been posted on social media via both clients. In time, sharing the videos will further promote them on neighboring organizations’ websites.

Suggestions for future replications include involving the public in the filming process and interview residents who would provide more relatable content in the videos.

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Fieldwork involved gathering footage, conducting interviews, editing, and logo making. Collecting footage required traveling along the Oregon coast and meeting with multiple Forest Service employees for interviews and consultation. Video editing was done via Adobe Premiere with help from Brian Holst, U.S.F.S. interpretive specialist, and IGNITE Motion Pictures owner/cinematographer/editor Nathan Holstedt. Final projects were reviewed by Brian Holst, U.S.F.S. Interpretation and Lands Staff and mentor Trac Merritt, and Cynthia Leonard, Marine Studies Initiative Internship Coordinator.

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