

Stand by Me and Other Movies Filmed in Cottage Grove

By Katy Vaughn

The 1986 movie Stand By Me was filmed partly in Cottage Grove on the railroad track around Dorena Lake. The film is based on a short story by Stephen King. Actors Wil Wheaton, River Phoenix, Jerry O'Connell, Corey Feldman, and Kiefer Sutherland made up the star studded line up. Stephen King has said that this film was the best **adaptation** of any of his works and director Rob Reiner considers it to be the best film he ever made.

The scene where the boys cross a railroad bridge to start their adventure was shot at the Mosby Creek trailhead of the Row River Trail. Other scenes were shot on the tracks near Harm's Park and along Layng Creek. One DVD version shows Dorena Lake in the background on the cover. The bulk of the movie was filmed in Brownsville and Veneta also hosted scenes.

This was the last movie filmed on the Oregon, Pacific and Eastern railroad tracks. The tracks were a boon to filmmakers over the years because the short line was scenic, had little traffic, and was privately owned. This made it easy to schedule shots and clear the tracks of other trains. The line was **converted** to a paved path in the 1990's as part of a rails to trails project.

One of the most unusual uses of the tracks was as a stand-in for South Africa in the 1973 film Lost in the Stars. The film was an adaptation of Alan Paton's novel Cry the Beloved Country. The scene was supposed to be filmed in Jamaica, but a railroad strike prevented that from happening. A number of actors and extras stood on a platform build along the tracks on Layng Road to singing "Johannesburg" as they saw a young Zulu off on his trip to the big city. Engine number 5 of The Goose was painted to be a South African & Eastern steam engine for the film.

The Disney film "Chester, Yesterday's Horse" was filmed in the Cottage Grove area in 1971. The film was about a logging horse who was being replaced by new-fangled logging balloons. Chester lived in Eagle Point with his nearly identical stablemate, Rubin. Chester was selected as the lead because of his better **temperament** and his ability to jump. Rubin did get to be his stand-in though. Local filming sights included the Bohemia Sawmill, the Bohemia logging balloon, and the Blue Goose steam excursion railway.



(L-R) Wil Wheaton, River Phoenix, Jerry O'Connell, and Corey Feldmen.





Kristin Borg (in hat) and Kate Hudson on the set of Ricochet River

legendary track coach Bill Bowerman.

Cottage Grove's **vintage**, small-town vibe attracted production crews searching for an authentic looking slice of yesterday. The largest film to use our 60's era feel was Animal House, the subject of next week's mini-lesson. Two other movies had scenes filmed on Main Street. The 1998 Steve Prefontaine biopic, Without Limits, used the block of Main Street between 5th and 6th as a stand in for 13th Avenue in Eugene circa 1970. The film starred Billy Crudup as Steve, and Donald Sutherland as

The 1998 coming of age film, Ricochet River, had Cottage Grove standing in as fictional logging town, Calumus Grove. The movie was one of actress Kate Hudson's first film roles and also featured Free Willy actor Jason James Richter. Ken Kesey had a cameo as a high school sports announcer. The Old Town Club Tavern stood in as a diner, scenes were filmed along Main Street, on the Coast Fork River, and at the old Cottage Grove High School baseball field.

Cottage Grove resident Kristin Borg played Kate Hudson's character as a young girl. She shared some of her experiences with us of being a small-town kid playing in a Hollywood film. She remembers having to get her make-up redone numerous times because she kept chasing grasshoppers between takes, and how important she felt when the crew drove a long way to get her favorite snack of squeeze cheese and crackers. She loved trying to keep up with the teenagers on the set, and followed them out on the rocks in the water and fell and cut her knee. An Oregon kid, she thought it was no big deal, but the entire medic team came rushing out as if she had broken a bone.

Discussion Points

1. Why did Cottage Grove and surrounding areas attract movie directors?
 2. What type of movies, or plots, would be ideal to film in Cottage Grove today? Which locations would be ideal for the movie?
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Vocabulary

Adaptation: make suitable for a new use or purpose; modify; a movie, television drama, or stage play that has been adapted from a written work, typically a novel

Converted: cause to change in form, character, or function.

Temperament: a person's or animal's nature, especially as it permanently affects their behavior

Vintage: of old, recognized, and enduring interest, importance, or quality; Classic

