

Police department tries out a new K-9 officer

'Gunner' is proving more capable than his predecessor, known as 'Cash'

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The Cannon Beach Police Department's second attempt to find the right K-9 officer has yielded a 2-year-old male chocolate Labrador named "Gunner,"

who started working with his handler, Officer Josh Gregory, in late December.

Though he has yet to be certified, the 70-pound dog, which the department picked up in Red Bluff, Calif., came pretrained to sniff out cocaine, heroine, methamphetamine and ecstasy, Gregory said.

Because some states have legalized recreational marijuana, and citizens nationwide possess medical marijuana cards, K-9 officers in many states no longer get trained to hit

on marijuana, Chief Jason Schermerhorn said.

Once Gunner has completed his narcotics training, he will start search-and-rescue training with Tami Schultz, of Clatsop County Search and Rescue, making him a "dual-purpose" K-9 officer.

He will be the only narcotics dog at a Clatsop County law enforcement agency since the county sheriff's office lost its narcotics dog early last year

"Gunner," a narcotics and search-and-rescue K-9 officer-in-training, makes himself comfortable in the Cannon Beach Police Department with his handler, Officer Josh Gregory. Gunner's predecessor, Cash, a 2-year-old Belgian Malinois, didn't complete the training.

See K-9, Page 11A

ERICK BENDEL PHOTO



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYSTACK ROCK AWARENESS PROGRAM

The white goo on the severed end of a dead sea star's limbs told HRAP Coordinator Samantha Ferber that the limb loss was the result of the wasting disease, not predation.

Sea stars making a comeback after deadly epidemic

'Densovirus' may be responsible for sea star wasting disease

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The worst of the sea star wasting disease epidemic that decimated sea star populations along the West Coast during the past 19 months appears to be over at Haystack Rock — at least for now.

Most of what's left are the juvenile sea stars that somehow survived the pathogenic onslaught that killed off more than 90 percent of their fellows during the 2014 beach season, according to Haystack Rock Awareness Coordinator Samantha Ferber, who recorded the death toll at three sites.

"Now that we're past the peak of the disease, we're starting to see that, across the board, sea stars don't have as severe symptoms," Ferber said. However, this may be because the sea stars that *did* show the most severe symptoms have all died out, she noted.

A fall survey that Ferber

conducted with HRAP volunteers at and around Haystack Rock found that younger, smaller sea stars tended to fare better than older, larger ones.

- Of nine recorded ochre sea stars on Haystack Rock's south wall, the only three that showed wasting signs had a radius (measured from the middle of their body to the tip of their longest limb) larger than 40 millimeters.

- Of 21 recorded ochre sea stars on the east boulder at the Needles, 14 showed wasting signs; the three sea stars with a radius smaller than 40 millimeters showed no signs. (While these numbers demonstrate that not all larger sea stars became infected, they add evidence to the claim that the smaller ones tended not to become infected.)

- Of 24 recorded ochre sea stars on the north boulders, the only five that showed wasting signs were larger than 40 millimeters.

Though Ferber and her team looked at all of the sea star species at Haystack Rock, they were only able to find ochres and six-rayed sea stars. Since the disease hit the rock last spring, "we have not seen a single sunflower (sea star)," a species that used to be seen in the tide pools during lower tides, she said.

On Jan. 20, HRAP will conduct another survey, which rates the disease status of individual specimens (with "1" meaning mild and "4" meaning severe). Ferber sends the results of these quarterly surveys to MARINE (Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network), a consortium of universities and government agencies that monitors the ecology of rocky intertidal areas along the West Coast.

'Falling apart'

Before the wasting disease arrived in Cannon Beach last spring, it had already wiped

See Wasting, Page 11A

BACK to the BEGINNING



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Public works employees Kirk Anderson, left, and Paul Phillips, right, place the NeCus' Park sign atop its base near Fir Street. Dick Basch, center background, vice chairman of the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes, enjoys the moment, along with Diane Collier, the tribe chairwoman; Jan Siebert-Wahrmund, a Cannon Beach resident; and Robin Risley, a member of the city's Parks and Community Services Committee.

City hopes to turn NeCus' park site into cultural center

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The newly minted NeCus' Park sign that the public works department set up at the edge of Fir Street the morning of Dec. 31 means much and more to the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes.

Resembling a traditional Clatsop-Nehalem canoe floating on water, its prow pointed resolutely toward the ocean, the sign symbolizes and celebrates the indigenous village named "NeCus" that once prospered in the area prior to colonization, according to tribal members.

"NeCus" — which, the tribe believes, was founded near the mouth of Ecola Creek at the Cannon Beach Elementary School site — roughly translates to "where the tide flows swiftly out."

The park covers the city-owned north portion of the school site. When the Seaside School District closed the school in June 2013, the parcel became the property of Clatsop County, which then gave it to the city of Can-

non Beach. The city hopes to purchase the south portion of the site from the school district and, one day, transform the full property into a Clatsop-Nehalem interpretive center.

Until then, however, the city is making do with a public park, which now has its own sign that Dick Basch, vice chairman of the tribe, lovingly called a "showpiece."

"It's just wonderful. It's really exciting," said Diane Collier, chairwoman of the tribe, as the public works crew secured the sign to its base before a crowd of about a dozen locals.

'Only the beginning'

Designed by Susan C. Walsh, a Nehalem-based artist who owns Manzanita Sign Company, the sign is meant to bring the Clatsop-Nehalem "brand" back to the area, she said.

Walsh carved the letters herself in her studio with a chisel and mallet. Both the 10-foot-long sign and its base were milled from a cedar log from Tillamook.

Though the physical labor involved in shaping the wood took Walsh about

a month to complete, the signage project, which involved the parks and community services committee and the design review board, began at the end of last June. Walsh collaborated with Tracy Sund, a street specialist with public works, and Dick Basch, who sent her photos for inspiration.

The whole project cost \$4,800, according to Jean Rice, the city's finance office manager.

"It was a labor of love, just like all these kinds of projects," said Sund, who supervised the installation. Once the sign had been mounted, Roberta Basch, Dick Basch's wife and culture adviser to the tribe, uttered a ceremonial prayer, blessing the city's relationship with the tribe, the ancestors who lived at the site long ago and, of course, the site itself — what it was, what it is and what it may become.

"This is a new time for all of us," she said. The formal christening of the site, she added, represents a first step toward restoring the Clatsop-Nehalem presence in Cannon Beach. "This is only the beginning."

Breakers Point dune grading proposal attracts overflow crowd

Proposed project would move almost 74,000 cubic yards of sand onto beach

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

More discussion on a proposal to grade the sand dunes at Breakers Point is planned during the Cannon Beach Planning Commis-

sion meeting Jan. 22.

The Breakers Point Homeowners Association is applying for a conditional use permit that would allow fore-dune grading west and south of its condominium development. The dunes are 46 feet high in some areas, blocking the homeowners' oceanfront views and spreading sand onto their properties, said Bruce Francis, the property manager. "You have to physically shovel it away," he said.

But opponents, including north end resident Lisa Fraser, are asking, "Is it worth the views of a few to reshape the

entire north end of Cannon Beach?"

After roughly two and a half hours of public testimony in December, when the City Council chambers overflowed with those wishing to speak on the issue, the planning commission voted to continue the public hearing to its next meeting.

Those in favor

Breakers Point homeowners discussed their reasons for wanting the dunes graded.

"When I first moved here, I could see Haystack Rock from my window. Over the

years, my view has dwindled to seeing some sky," said Fran Carey, who has lived at Breakers Point for more than 20 years. "The sand is so high, I am unable to have access to the beach, and (during) any storm I have blowing sand on my windows and my patio."

The dune grading project entails removing up to 73,400 cubic yards of windblown sand trapped by European beachgrass and depositing the majority of it in the intertidal zone; the rest would go into the Ecola Creek Estuary.

See Dunes, Page 11A

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