

Begin the Process

Hanson, Cannon Beach and the Ecola watershed

In March of this year the Association brought watershed ecologist Rich Nawa to Clatsop County to meet with county residents concerned about several south county watersheds. Rich knows the north coast watersheds, having done extensive work in the Salmonberry drainage of the Nehalem. The Association noticed Rich through his work at OSU's Oak Creek Lab. Rich's work with Chris Frissell, Bill Liss and J. Ebersole at the Oak Creek Laboratory of Biology stands as a major advance in understanding the effects of logging and road building on fish habitat and fish populations.

Unfortunately, much of their work goes unacknowledged.

Recent "improvements" in riparian protection adopted by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) completely fails to address the major issue facing forestry in Oregon's Coast Range: slope stability and road effects during major storms through the delivery of sediment and bed load (rock & gravel) into streams from non-riparian areas. This is the 500 lb Gorilla ODF and the industry refuse to see. The failure to recognize upslope instability and road effects during major storms is why the industry says **the Coast Range is the best place in the World to grow trees** and the Coast Range Association says **the Coast Range might be the worst place to cut trees**.

In spite of all the problems with Coast Range timber harvesting and the protection of salmon, we believe there can be a tremendous forest products industry. However, a sustainable forest products industry will be a much transformed one. The forestry of the future is not the forestry being practiced by Hanson, Georgia Pacific or Longview Fiber. The challenge before Hanson, as they sit down with the City of Cannon Beach, is to demonstrate their willingness to practice the forestry of the future now, before it's too late.

The industry says:
"The Coast Range is the best place in the World to grow trees."

The Coast Range Association says:
"The Coast Range might be the worst place to cut trees."

Slope instability and road failures during major storms causing the delivery of sediment and bedload (rock & gravel) into streams is the 500 lb Gorilla ODF and the timber industry refuse to see.

Today the task before us is saving the present salmon stocks and the best remaining habitat. The Ecola watershed is one of the best, having been recognized by the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) as "critical" to the salmon's survival. It is fortunate that almost the entire 10,000 plus acres of the Ecola watershed are owned by one company, Hanson Natural Resources. They have a choice and a decision to make regarding the future of the Ecola salmon stocks. Hanson needs to acknowledge what is known about road building, north coast geology, and logging as to their effects on salmon. One company, Hanson, is responsible for the watershed and only one company, therefore, is accountable.

In March, after Rich had finished his visit to the county, the Association asked him to recommend what measures should be taken to insure an appropriate forestry by Hanson in the Ecola watershed. We want to present those recommendations as the City of Cannon Beach enters into this remarkable dialogue over the fate of the Ecola Watershed.

The recommendations are as follows:

- 1) Begin efforts to acquire control of forested wetlands intermingled with Ecola Creek in order to prevent the logging low gradient valley floor areas.
- 2) Initiate a process for identifying the upslope hazard areas. A geologic investigation of slope stability hazard is needed, especially for hazard areas that could result in chronic or catastrophic landsliding. This study would be a refinement of the Engineering Hazard Map for the Cannon Beach Quadrangle produced by the Oregon Department of Minerals & Geology. Such a study would take a detailed, site specific look at the entire Ecola watershed. Slump-earthflows and headwalls need to be mapped along with recent and historic landslide activity. Roads must not be built on the toes of slump-earthflows.

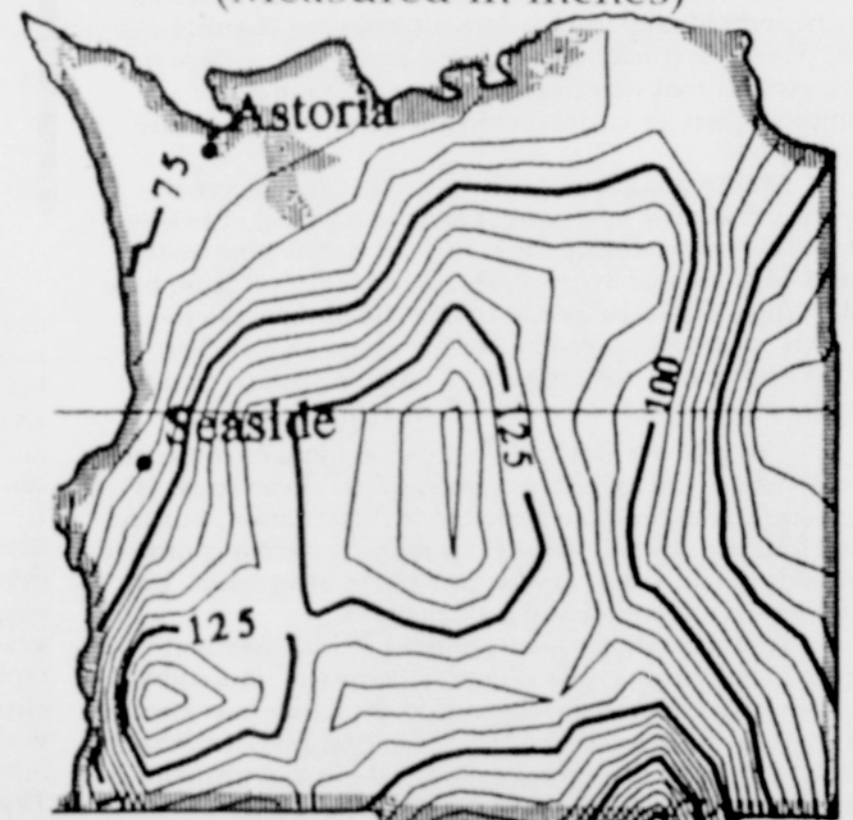
3) The City should investigate installing automated water quality monitoring devices in Ecola Creek to make real time data available at city hall. A long-term baseline data set could be established to evaluate future ecological trends. Automated temperature gauges should be placed near the mouth of East Fork of Ecola Creek and West Fork of Ecola Creek and at other locations. Interpretation of turbidity data is difficult without flow data. Stream flow could be measured below the city's water intake. It is recommended that the U.S. Geological Survey establish a stream flow gauge and keep the records. Most likely, funding would have to be provided by the City of Cannon Beach. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality could lend assistance on the installation of temperature and turbidity monitors.

In addition to the above Nawa recommendation for the watershed, the Association would add recommendations regarding the forest ecosystem and wildlife habitat. The Coast Range Association's 1992 study, by Reed Noss,

Conserving Oregon's Coast Range Biodiversity, identified a great need for Sitka Spruce & Hemlock late-successional forest in the near-ocean portion of Clatsop County. We believe it would be advisable to link any Ecola lower watershed conservancy for fish and viewshed with broader terrestrial reserve needs. Possibly linking protected areas with those of the 800 acre Clatsop State Forest lands.

It is the hope of the Coast Range Association that under the new State of Oregon Northwest Area Forest Plan (which includes Clatsop State Forest) an opportunity for addressing late successional habitat concerns will present itself. Of course, all speculation regarding the conservation and protection of biological values in the Ecola basin is dependent on the current land owner Hanson Natural Resource Co.

Normal Annual Precipitation (Measured in inches)



COAST RANGE ASSOCIATION

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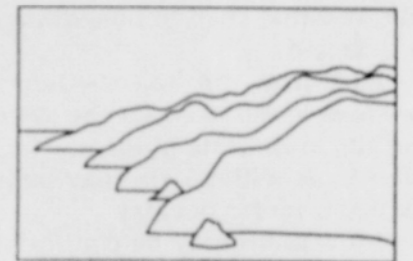
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