

Astoria sees forest through trees



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Trees are shown in a forest near Bear Creek in the Nicolai-Wickiup watershed. Hemlock is the dominant species of tree in the watershed. Trees act as carbon sequesters, take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and storing the carbon as they grow.

City stands to receive new revenue through carbon credit project

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

In an innovative trade-off, Astoria has agreed not to aggressively harvest timber in the Bear Creek watershed over the next decade in return for carbon credits that could help industrial polluters offset carbon-dioxide emissions that contribute to climate change.

The city is partnering with The Climate Trust, a Portland nonprofit that would purchase the carbon credits. Utilities with fossil-fuel driven power plants pay the trust to find projects that offset pollution and meet the requirements of Oregon's landmark emission standards law.

By committing to a less aggressive timber harvest at Bear Creek, Astoria could receive about \$358,750 in carbon credits after expenses this year and about \$130,000 annually for the next nine years. The first year has the most significant potential value because it is based on the city's existing inventory of timber, while the value for the following years is tied to growth.

"We commit to harvest less than what we could and we then can monetize that," said Michael Barnes, the city's consulting forester.

Carbon-dioxide emissions are the most prevalent greenhouse gas from human activity and are tied to global warming. The ocean, soil, atmosphere and forests act as carbon "sinks" that absorb more carbon than is released, so preserving forests can help store carbon and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

The Climate Trust was created to help achieve Oregon's landmark 1997 law that set standards for carbon-dioxide emissions at power plants. The trust's projects have



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Mike Barnes, the city's consulting forester, stands next to a spruce tree in the Nicolai-Wickiup watershed Tuesday.

'We commit to harvest less than what we could and we then can monetize that.'

— Michael Barnes
Astoria's consulting forester

led to an estimated 2 million tons of emission reductions, the equivalent of the annual greenhouse gas emissions from 421,000 passenger vehicles.

"One of the things that's appealing about this project is it's providing a financial incentive to decrease the harvest in an area that's really providing clean drinking water to the city of Astoria," said Mike McKee, The Climate Trust's senior project analyst for forestry.

McKee said there would be "greater attention paid toward conservation, and clean water, and forest health. And that's a really appealing thing on a local scale, because that's going to translate for the citizens of Astoria and the people in the community."

"On a larger scale, this is a harder concept to explain ... but trees sequester carbon. So these trees that aren't being cut are going to pull carbon dioxide out of the at-

mosphere that, theoretically — at the most simple level — (is) being emitted by the Oregon utilities that are essentially paying through The Climate Trust to have these carbon offsets retired."

The Astoria City Council approved the project with The Climate Trust in December.

The city already harvests less timber than it could from the 3,700-acre Bear Creek watershed to help protect the drinking water supply.

Based on a 3 percent annual growth rate, Barnes said the city could harvest about 3 million board feet a year and not deplete an inventory of about 100 million board feet of standing mature timber.

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coast
weekend

Meet the winners



INSIDE

'Sounds like a utopia'

Commission OKs Clatsop Vision 2030 Together

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted the Clatsop Vision 2030 Together, a \$30,000 initiative to explore the county's long-term goals and aspirations, at its regular meeting Wednesday night.

Approval of the initiative comes nearly two years after the commission first pursued the visioning project. In that time, the county hired Portland-based consulting firm Zenn Associates and held multiple community meetings and workshops.

The result of compiling the community's input led to a Clatsop Vision 2030 Together final draft which offers plans, policies and actions for Clatsop County and other community organizations in six focus areas: Arts, Culture and History; Health, Safety and Resilience; Environment, Natural Resources and Recreation; Education and Learning; Community Planning and Development; and Economy and Jobs.

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'Fake IRS agents' scam locals

By NATALIE ST. JOHN
EO Media Group

Here's one more reason to dislike tax season: The Internal Revenue Service says they've seen a recent surge in phone scams involving fake IRS agents. They believe the problem will only intensify as millions of Americans prepare their taxes over the coming months.



Police say at least one local person has already fallen prey to the scam.

According to a press release from the IRS, citizens all over the U.S. have reported aggressive and threatening phone calls from scam artists who impersonate IRS or U.S. Treasury staff. The scam artists tend to

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Cannon Beach Food Pantry opens in new spot

Volunteers slammed with customers from the get-go

By ERICK BENGEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — Uncertainty hung in the air Wednesday afternoon as Cannon Beach Food Pantry volunteers awaited their hungry customers at the pantry's new site, the westside portable of Cannon Beach Elementary School.

What if word of the pantry's move hadn't reached everyone? What if some customers couldn't find the loca-

tion? What if families had to go a whole week without full fridges and cupboards just because they missed the memo through no fault of their own?

Such questions soon evaporated. Long before the doors opened at 3 p.m., dozens of customers had already lined up outside, some with young children in tow. Within minutes, the pantry volunteers in the packing room found themselves slammed.

"We wondered if we would have the people come, and 'Holy smokes!'" Judy Woody, a volunteer, said. "We haven't had a day like this in a long time: consistently busy, with large orders, too."

Last weekend, the pantry — which has served people

who live and work in Cannon Beach since April 2009 — relocated from the Cannon Beach Bible Church to the elementary school, which closed in June 2013. Almost a year ago, the church, whose congregation has grown substantially in recent years, notified the pantry that it had until Jan. 31, 2015, to set up shop elsewhere.

After months of scrambling for a new space, the Seaside School District offered to lease the former library portable to the food pantry, rent-free, last September. The pantry will have 90 days to vacate if the district chooses to sell the property.

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ERICK BENGEL —EO Media Group

From left, Cannon Beach Food Pantry volunteers Barb Knop, Duncan Fenison, Judy Wood and Judy Mace check customers' shopping lists and fill out orders in the packing room of the pantry's new location. The Seaside School District is leasing Cannon Beach Elementary School's former library portable to the pantry, rent-free.

