

Seaside Mill Ponds plan unveiled to the public

Project is the start of city's natural history park

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media

SEASIDE — Acquiring more property for parking may be improbable at this point, but extending a walking trail, removing invasive species and building some bird blinds at the developing Mill Ponds Park is as easy as holding a few community work days, according to the city's Estuary Technical Committee.

The committee recently presented and received public feedback on its draft plan for the park at a public forum.

The Mill Ponds project is a component of a larger scheme to create a citywide park system, called the Necanicum Estuary Natural History Park Project. The ultimate concept is to make Seaside "a city within a park," said Jeremy Goldsmith, the city's AmeriCorps intern and

planning assistant and a member of the Estuary Technical Committee.

Starting with the Mill Ponds, the city will work on the Necanicum Estuary Natural History Park project systematically in phases, he said.

To comply with the community's desire to keep the park's development minimal, the plan is to make it a natural history park that is "a learning environment as much as a place to go," said committee member Justin Cutler.

A draft plan for the park that breaks its development into four phases was created by the Estuary Technical Committee, which is overseeing the project. It is composed of representatives from local organizations such as the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, North Coast Land Conservancy, National Park Service, Necanicum Watershed Council, Seaside Visitors Bureau and the Seaside School District.

"This is Seaside's chance to say, 'this is what we want to do to reclaim this property,'" said committee member Scott



KATHERINE LACAZE — EO Media Group

Katie Voelke, the executive director of the North Coast Land Conservancy, far right, helps young participants discover natural treasures during a family fun activity put on by the conservancy last summer.

Tucker, the superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

The first phase, as proposed, includes completing and cleaning up the trail that circles the largest pond, removing some invasive species and building a handful of bird blinds at a few prime locations. A small shoulder and grassy area just south of the city's recycling center would become temporary parking. The phase also includes an emphasis

on creating a designated blackberry-picking area, an activity that is valued by the community according to feedback received so far.

Because of its simple components, the phase could be completed quickly and easily with small donations and a community effort, Cutler said.

The second phase involves improving the road leading into the park and creating a parking space and gateway further

south, which would increase the park's handicap-accessibility. The city's infrastructure, including the Prom and the recently completed dock at Broadway Park, has given Seaside the potential to become "a Mecca for older adults" or people with physical disabilities to visit, live and thrive, Cutler said. With an improved road and parking area, the Mill Ponds Park could become a part of that.

Birders' concerns

Some people raised concerns about whether having traffic further down into the area would be conducive for bird watching.

Parking needs to be available somewhere, Cutler responded. He asked people to submit their suggestions for places they believe would be appropriate for parking.

In the proposed third phase, the park would get a pit toilet, picnic tables, an observation tower, a shelter, a nature-based play area and a historical interpretation center. The committee sees the park as being a place for school children and families to visit.

"If we don't help the next generation learn the importance of birding, the importance of play, the importance of the natural environment, we're going to lose it," Cutler said.

The fourth phase — which Cutler said is "a hope and a prayer, honestly" — includes the possible acquisition of property adjacent to the Mill Ponds that could be used for parking. To acquire the property, Cutler said, the city would need willing sellers and funds.

So far, no funding is available for the park project. Creating a plan is a prerequisite to receiving funds, Cutler said. "This is step one in a very long process," he added.

"We want to have a plan to help coordinate that effort (to receive funds) and make sure we're going in the same direction," Cutler said.

The technical committee will meet to discuss the public comments received and compile the information for the Seaside Parks Advisory Committee. The public can provide comments on the project by emailing jgoldsmith@cityofseaside.us.

Abold: He was commended for his 'outstanding performance'

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"This included several highly dangerous search and rescue cases that required proficiency in craft, calm under pressure, and technical acumen in the most extreme conditions."

"Petty Officer Abold is commended for his outstanding performance of duty and esprit de corps," Travers continued. "His meritorious service has upheld the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard."

The award puts Abold in the running with other top-honored enlisted members of the Coast Guard in the agency's Seattle-based 13th District, essentially the entire Pacific Northwest.



Contributed photo

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Shane Abold, left, a member of the team at U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment, was named Enlisted Person of the Year for Sector Columbia River. Shown presenting the award is Capt. D.J. Travers, sector commander.

Recording: One party was recording with everyone's prior authorization

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Marquis said he does not believe he's "ever spoken to Ms. Widdop," although he's spoken to people who haven't identified themselves by name but have claimed to be on one side of the recall election or the other and asked about this case in particular. He does believe, however, Sweet was one of several people who called him.

"The answer doesn't get different for different people," he said.

Oregon law

One-point conversations, such as over a telephone, can be taped without prior authorization of both parties, but it is generally illegal to tape person-to-person conversations without all parties being informed, according to Oregon law. Even law enforcement officers must inform individuals if they are making a recording of their interaction, Marquis said.

That being said, his office has not and would not file charges in

this instance because one party was recording with everyone's prior authorization.

"I wouldn't submit that charge, and the reason I wouldn't is because one of the defenses would be, 'Hell, everyone around that table knew they were being recorded,'" he said.

He would not, however, advise someone to behave in that way because it is not in conformance with the law.

Widdop said that was not the impression she got from Sweet, who "was really concerned because he was the one who did the recording."

"I wasn't at fault with this anyway, because I hadn't done anything," she said.

She agreed she did not talk to Marquis.

Sweet confirmed he talked to the district attorney.

Sweet said he "may have told (Widdop) that there was no problem here," which was what he took away from his conversation with Marquis. His understanding, he said, was that this was not a prosecutable offense.



ERICK BENDEL — EO Media Group

Andrea Mace, executive director of the Cannon Beach Arts Association, makes jewelry, like these necklaces, out of Czechoslovakian pressed glass. Her work is on display and for sale at the Cannon Beach Gallery.

Mace: 'We really have it good on the North Oregon Coast'

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Shortly after Mace's one-woman show, the association board and gallery committee hired her as executive director. At this point, "I've worn all the hats that we have to wear," she said.

As director, she's mounted more than 80 shows and worked with thousands of artists from across the Pacific Northwest. This, she said, is the best part of her job and keeps her plugged into the art world.

Mace's friendship, for example, with Hillsboro-based artist Carl Annala — whose paintings recently bedecked the gallery walls in a joint exhibition with Cannon Beach's Peter Greaver — gives her ongoing insights into the Portland-area arts scene.

"I've met some really fascinating people," she said.

Freelance writer

Mace, 42, grew up on Washington's Kitsap Peninsula, across the Puget Sound from Seattle. Following graduation from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, she moved to Oregon in 1993. After 22 years on the North Coast, "(I) definitely consider myself an Oregonian," she said.

She initially moved for a summer waitressing job but "fell in love with the area and have found myself here ever since," she said. Now a Cannon Beach resident, Mace has also lived in Arch Cape,

'I think you have to find your niche in this area. You have to be creative in how you make a living and approach your lifestyle in this area if you're not already retired.'

— Andrea Mace

executive director of the Cannon Beach Arts Association

Wheeler, Elsie and Manzanita.

Discovering the arts association (founded in 1986) and volunteering for gallery shifts as a docent became a "nice thing to have in (the) rhythm of my life — not being a total hermit/recluse-artist," she said, smiling.

Visual arts and fine crafts, like basketry and jewelry-making, tend to dominate Mace's body of work. She studied under the late Royal Nebeker when he chaired Clatsop Community College's art department.

Her "first passion," however, is writing, she said. For several years, she supplemented her income by freelancing for The Daily Astorian, Coast Weekend, HIPFISH Monthly and other local publications.

Whatever her topic, it was important to her that she wrote regularly, which is good advice for virtually any artist working in any field: "You have to have a practice. You have to do it every day, whether you feel it or not," she said. The muse may be present, but "it's not about the muse, it's about the practice ... having something you

come to every day and build on."

Quality of life

Mace and her partner, Jonathan Tate, have a 6-year-old son, Emelio. Last winter, the couple took over a local eco-friendly window-washing business, now called Tate's Window Services. When she isn't greeting patrons at the gallery, Mace often helps Tate scrub down downtown Cannon Beach. "That's been really great for us. I think you have to find your niche in this area," she said. "You have to be creative in how you make a living and approach your lifestyle in this area if you're not already retired."

Mace's affinity for the natural environment has kept her on the North Coast. She takes advantage of the temperate climate, toiling away in her English cottage-style garden in front of her picturesque 1920s-era cabin on Harrison Street, she said.

"The quality of life is so great that, when you leave, you realize, wow, we really have it good on the North Oregon Coast," she said.

The gallery — which has occupied its current space for 20 years — might have greater foot traffic if it operated in downtown, where, for commercial businesses, "I'm sure it's like ground zero; it's the spot to be," she said. "But I like being a little bit out of the craziness of downtown."

And with the gallery situated near Gower Street's public beach access, just a short walk from Haystack Rock, she spends a good deal of her life watching people from around the world enjoy the beach — from European families to Buddhist monks in full regalia.

As a Northwesterner, "the natural world really inhabits a big part of my character and my soul, but I take it for granted, too," she said. "And when people come here for the first time, the impact it makes on them is very noticeable and impressive."

She always hopes that visitors take their experience of Cannon Beach back to their urban or suburban lives, she said — and remember the feeling that "the natural world is full of wonder, and we should protect it and save it and relish it."

— Erick Bengel

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