

# Cannon Beach takes next step to add to Ecola Creek reserve

By R.J. MARX  
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach City Council Tuesday night approved a plan to pursue a grant to partially fund the acquisition of a 28-acre addition to the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve.

The council unanimously agreed to seek the grant administered by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The funds originate from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“We think it’s a good addition to the ECFR because we already adjoin it, the creeks pass through it on the ECFR park,” Project Manager Mark Barnes said after the meeting. “Tonight the council agreed to take the next step.”

The project cost is \$287,514, of which the city’s share would be \$65,838, or 23 percent of the total cost. If the grant application is successful, the state would kick in more than \$75,000, or 27 percent of the project, and the federal government would put in about \$146,000, or about half the project cost. Potential contributing partners include Trout Mount Forestry, Biosurveys LLC, Trout Unlimited, the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, the Ecola Creek Watershed Council and North Coast Land Conservancy which are already engaged in discussion regarding this project. The city may also seek commitments from



Courtesy of Dan Haag  
**A rustic footbridge takes hikers across a stream along a trail in the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve. The City Council has approved a grant request to add 28 acres adjacent to the reserve to protect it from development.**

the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes and the Haystack Rock Awareness Program.

The parcel is owned by Terry and Carmen Swigart. The property’s assessed value hovers at about \$60,000, City Manager Brant Kucera said at a January meeting.

The L-shaped parcel, on the east side of U.S. Highway 101, abuts the 1,040-acre forest reserve and spans Ecola Creek in the lower watershed area of the city’s old treatment plant.

Within the parcel lies an old steel double-culvert in Waterhouse Creek, a fish-bearing

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stream and tributary to Ecola Creek that no longer functions and is a barrier to fish passage. Part of the grant would pay for the culvert’s removal. The parcel would also improve access to the reserve. The property could be partially developed in the future if it is not protected by as part of the reserve.

## Draft proposal

The draft proposal prepared by the city to the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program was presented at Tuesday’s meeting. According to the application, the streams and wetland habitat to be protected by the project include coho salmon and other fish of state or federal concern. Lack of off-channel habitat and large woody debris are limiting factors to the Ecola Creek watershed’s coho population. Coho and winter steelhead — considered a federal species of concern — would both benefit

from protected habitat.

If the grant application is successful, it would provide protection for Ecola Creek wetlands by improving freshwater flows and habitat connections. The plan also includes a proposal to scrape down a road section to adjacent wetlands and to plant spruce and cedar. The project would be owned and managed by the city as a subgrantee of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

The city is in discussion with the Swigarts on the acquisition of the parcel.

The application includes a proposal for education and outreach programs. The restoration would include removal of invasive plants including Himalayan blackberry, English holly and Scotch broom.

“This is the second step of a multistep grant process,” Barnes said. “This is still a draft. Importantly, this is going to be going to the Legislature

with several other grant applications in the package in the next couple weeks.”

Barnes said the proposal would serve to make sure that the application doesn’t come to representatives as “a surprise out of the blue.”

According to Barnes, the tentative budget calls for city costs that would cover staffing and cash costs that may be lost if the grant is unsuccessful. These include reimbursable costs such as survey and appraisal, which would be returned to the city if successful, but not if the grant application was rejected.

Project management is proposed at \$40,560, and the appraisal would cost about \$10,000, according to the draft budget in the grant application.

If the project moves forward, due diligence could begin in 2016 and the project closeout could reach completion by September 2019.

## Nehalem River geology is topic

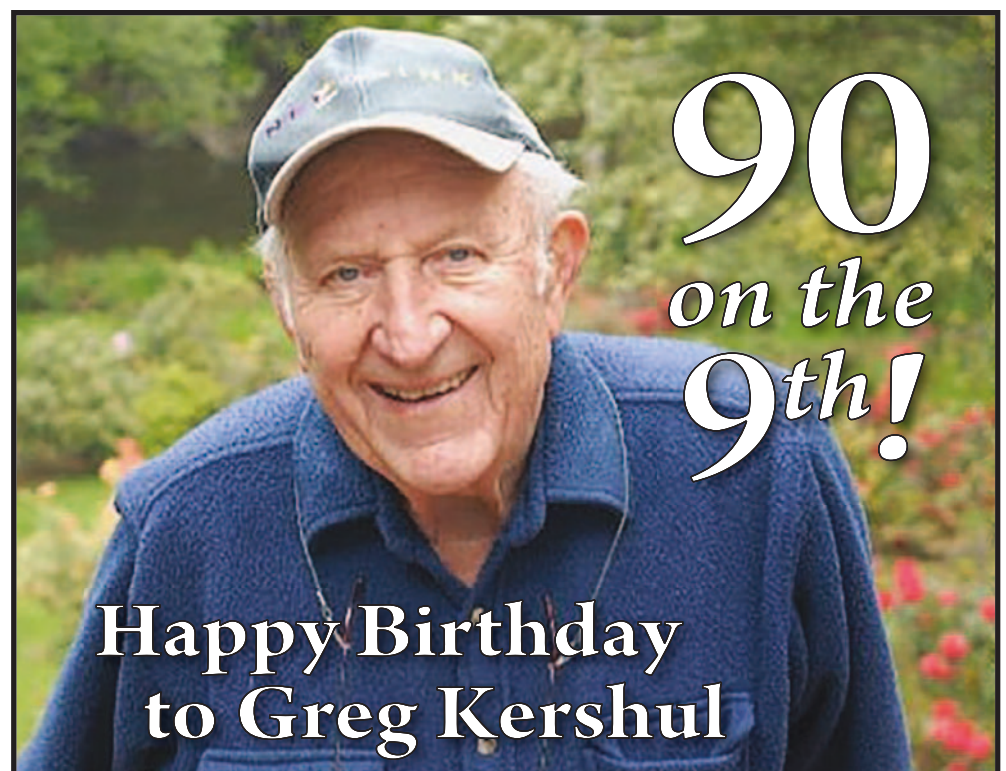
MANZANITA — The Lower Nehalem Watershed Council welcomes U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologist Mackenzie Keith during its upcoming Speaker Series event Thursday at the Pine Grove Community House, 225 Laneda Ave. in Manzanita. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments; the presentation, “Geology Shapes the Character of the Lower Nehalem River,” starts at 7 p.m. The council’s regular business meeting and

project updates will follow.

Keith joined the Oregon Water Science Center geomorphology team in 2009. She received her bachelor’s degree in geology from Oregon State University in 2006, and a master’s degree in geology from Portland State University in 2012. She was a key part of the USGS assessments of Oregon coastal rivers, including the Nehalem River, from 2010 to 2012. Ongoing projects include an assessment of the upstream

geomorphic response to the removal of Marmot Dam on the Sandy River and mapping the floodplain geomorphology on the Willamette River. For information about the USGS Oregon Water Science Center’s research on the coast and around the state, go to <http://or.water.usgs.gov>

This event is free and open to the public. For information, call 503-368-7424, email [LNWC@NehalemTel.net](mailto:LNWC@NehalemTel.net) or go to <http://lnwc.nehalem.org> or [www.facebook.com/lnwc1](http://www.facebook.com/lnwc1)



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