

Land Conservancy closer to Boneyard Ridge deal

Land trust gets \$524,000 grant from Watershed Enhancement Board

The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — North Coast Land Conservancy recently was selected to receive \$524,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board toward the purchase of Boneyard Ridge, a 360-acre parcel of commercial timberland threaded with salmon-bearing streams on the northeast slope of Tillamook Head.

“Receiving the OWEB grant is a critical step for this amazing project,” NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke said.

Boneyard Ridge is tucked between conserved lands in Ecola State Park and the conservancy’s own 364-acre Circle Creek Habitat Reserve south of Seaside. Purchase of this property will carry forward a legacy that was first envisioned in the 1930s, when the fledgling Oregon State Park system and some very generous Oregon families first created Ecola State Park. The Land Conservancy is helping to advance that vision by creating a connected, conserved region of more than 3,500 contiguous acres stretching from the summit of Tillamook Head to the Necanicum River valley and floodplain, according to a press release.

Its stewardship goal for this property is to allow it to mature into a complex rainforest of the kind that once characterized headlands all



A creek high on Boneyard Ridge.

NEAL MAINE — PacificLight Images

along the Northern Oregon Coast.

Owners of the property are asking \$1.8 million for Boneyard Ridge. To date NCLC has secured \$560,000, including the watershed board’s funds.

“When funders at the state level invest with a half a million dollars, that’s proof you’ve got something special,” Voelke said. “We’re excited to work with our community to raise the rest of the money and conserve the natural and recreational wonderland of Tillamook Head, forever.”

In February, 113 people contributed \$25,231.75 for conservancy founder Neal Maine’s 75th birthday. The donations helped the organization more than double a \$10,000 matching grant challenge from the Mintkeski Family Fund and put about \$35,000 toward the acquisition of Boneyard Ridge.

NCLC is seeking additional funds from a variety of sources, including public agencies and private foundations. The land trust plans to complete

acquisition of Boneyard Ridge by the end of 2016.

Based in Seaside, North Coast Land Conservancy has been working since 1986 to conserve and connect the landscape of the Oregon Coast from the Columbia River to northern Lincoln County. The private, nonprofit land trust works to ensure that this region is a place where healthy communities of people, plants and wildlife can all thrive.

For more information, visit NCLCtrust.org

Astoria budget committee recommends spending plan

No significant changes from draft

By DERRICK DePLEDGE

The Daily Astorian

A city budget committee Thursday night recommended a \$41.3 million spending plan for next fiscal year, up from \$37.2 million this year.

The budget, which is expected to go before the Astoria City Council in June, includes \$10.6 million in general fund spending, up from \$9.2 million.

The new fiscal year starts in July.

Consumers can expect 2 percent increases in water and sewer rates and a 5 percent increase in the surcharge used to help pay for the city’s \$40 million to \$50 million sewer improvement project. The sewer improvements are necessary to reduce wastewater into the Columbia River and meet the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act.

The city projects that the rate and surcharge increases will add \$4.65 to the average monthly residential bill, or \$9.30 in bimonthly payments.

Big-ticket expenses in the budget include a \$500,000 down payment on a new \$880,000

ladder truck for the Astoria Fire Department. The money would come from a \$2.5 million carryover balance the city estimates for the start of the fiscal year.

The city would spend \$250,000 on improvements to the Astoria Aquatic Center, \$80,000 on a new roof for the aging Astoria Public Library, and \$72,000 for weed eradication and re-seeding at Ocean View Cemetery and other park grounds.

The budget committee, made up of the City Council and five appointed residents, did not make significant changes to the draft presented by city financial analysts. But with two new councilors in Zetty Nemlowill and Cindy Price and other new faces, the committee did engage city staff with detailed questions that extended the talks for more than eight hours over four meetings.

The budget committee voted 9-0-1 to recommend the budget. Shel Cantor, a retired engineer who serves on the committee, abstained over his concern that the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, which receives money through the Promote Astoria fund, has not been filing semiannual financial reports with the city as outlined by city code.

Hiker medevaced from Saddle Mountain

WARRENTON — A Coast Guard helicopter crew and local responders medevaced a reportedly unconscious hiker suffering from heat exhaustion from Saddle Mountain Saturday.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew, from U.S. Coast

Guard Air Station Astoria, hoisted the 24-year-old female hiker and safely transferred her to medical personnel at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria.

Coast Guard Sector Columbia River watchstanders received a call from Warren-

ton Fire Department personnel around 6:17 p.m., requesting assistance in transporting an unresponsive hiker.

“With summer rolling in, whether you’re on the water or on a mountain, it’s important to stay hydrated, take breaks

and keep your body cool,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael A. Parrales, a watchstander at Sector Columbia River. “Plan ahead, be prepared and know your limits.”

See the video at <http://bit.ly/1QAbB22>

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