

Music Festival directors resign in dispute

Artistic director disagrees with board's statements

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Music Festival's board of directors has resigned en masse, citing "unresolved differences" of opinion with Artistic Director Keith Clark about the nonprofit

organization's direction and leadership structure. Managing Director Carol Shepherd has also resigned.

The shakeup comes after the music festival had its most successful year with a series of critically acclaimed classical music concerts in June. The festival hit the \$100,000 mark in ticket sales for the first time.

Over the past year, the eight-member board had been trying to "professionalize" the festival, said Linda Magee, the former executive director of Chamber Music Northwest, a consultant for the festival.



Keith Clark

The board hired Magee to make the organizational structure more like that of other performing arts nonprofits. This included hiring Shepherd as a year-round managing director.

After the board implemented these changes, Clark allegedly expressed an intention to separate from the festival and form an alternative program for 2016 with a new board chosen by him and some of the musicians.

Clark, who co-founded the festival in 2003, informed the board in a letter he did not intend to make public that he would continue the festival "as a European-style artist-led company, rather than one dominated by a non-musician board."

"This is not about who's right and who's wrong, and the board understands that Keith Clark wants to go a different direction," Magee said in a statement Monday. "I think they made the best decision, after looking at the only options open to them."

Rather than see Clark jump ship, however, the board "felt instead it was time to step aside and allow the formation of a new team of leaders, rather than let the organization try to

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Fire danger closes Ecola Creek reserve



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The Ecola Creek Forest Reserve is closed to the public because of high fire risk in the area. Signs hang from gates located on the property.

Cannon Beach isn't taking chances with dry summer

By DANI PALMER
EO Media Group

'In my opinion, we're very lucky to not have had any forest fires yet.'

— Brant Kucera
Cannon Beach city manager

CANNON BEACH — Wanting to escape the city, a hiker makes his way to Ecola Creek Forest Reserve for a walk through the woods, but instead finds the entrance blocked. "Land closed to public entry due to high fire danger," reads a posted sign, by order of the city manager.

The Oregon Department of Forestry may have Clatsop County's fire warning level set at moderate, but Cannon Beach isn't taking any chances.

"We've always closed it down at some point during the year because there's definitely points in time it gets dry," City Manager Brant Kucera said.

Cannon Beach purchased the first 120 acres of the reserve in 1999, and the rest in 2009, according to the North Coast Land Conservancy.

This year, closure of the 1,040-acre forest reserve came early — right around Independence Day — following the ad-

vice of the Oregon Department of Forestry and Cannon Beach Fire and Rescue.

Also closed is Cannon Beach's South Wind site, 58 acres reserved for "essential" city facilities east of Highway 101.

Cannon Beach Fire Chief Mike Balzer said his department's recommendation to close the reserve early this month was based on dry weather conditions and the influx of Fourth of July holiday visitors.

Fireworks and dangers from campers or transients building campfires in commercial timber areas were also matters of concern, Kucera said.

Typically, the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve closure occurs in August or September.

"It's been very dry, very early," Kucera said. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

Lack of rain

According to Clinton Rockey, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Portland, the Cannon Beach area has only received about .02 inches of rain this month, around .66 inches below normal. Rockey based his estimate on Astoria and Seaside data, and added that Astoria had .73 inches of rain in June, 1.82 inches below normal. All of Clatsop County has been dry.

"The light showers we have don't really do anything," Balzer said, adding it would take significant rain to reopen the reserve. "It could be awhile."

Last year, Ecola Creek closed for about three weeks, Public Works Director Dan Grassick said.

Kucera said Cannon Beach would need at least half an inch of precipitation in one rain event to open Ecola Creek Forest Reserve back up this year.

"There's not much chance of that happening soon," Rockey said.

In the meantime, Kucera said officials want to safeguard the public and protect forestlands and wildlife. There's also the issue of liability.

If a fire started in the city-owned Ecola Creek Forest Reserve and spread to commercial timberlands, Cannon Beach could be held liable. The person who started the fire, even if accidentally, could also be held accountable for firefighting costs.

So any who pass that red sign and are discovered on the property will likely be fined for trespassing, Kucera said.

"In my opinion, we're very lucky to not have had any forest fires yet," he added.

Seaside aspires to boost boundaries

New school may come with boundary expansion

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — Adding four sites to grow Seaside's urban-growth boundary by about 200 acres was a key topic of the July 7 Planning Commission meeting

Along with the other potential sites, commissioners focused on the South East Hills area, south and east of Seaside near Wahanna Road. The land is considered suitable for development because of easy access, potential for diverse land use and a location near about 30 acres that is suitable for a school site.

"We're not ready to do that today, but I certainly want to acknowledge the idea of having school facilities and enabling them to grow up into that area," planner Don Hanson said.

Hanson is a principal and director for HLB Otak, Inc., a Seaside-based engineering and consulting firm hired by Weyerhaeuser, which owns much of the land under consideration.

"Our City Council is very interested in having that land," City Planner Kevin Cupples said. "If you wait until you run out and then you're trying to scramble in order to do that, then that's not good planning."

Managing growth

The process to expand Seaside's

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'Blight' begone

Astoria council hears Heritage Square timeline

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Contaminated soil piled in a pit at Heritage Square should be hauled away after Labor Day, but the timeline for having the downtown property ready for redevelopment is wobbly.

City staff tried to reassure the Astoria City Council Monday night that the assessment and cleanup of the former Safeway lot is only a few months behind and could still be completed by the end of the year.

New samples being taken starting today could decide how much soil has to be trucked to a special-purpose landfill in Hillsboro and a hazardous waste disposal site in Arlington and how much can be used as fill locally. The tests could also determine the extent of contamination under a parking lot in the northeast corner of the block.

The city has tried to keep the assessment and cleanup under the \$400,000 received in a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency brownfields grant.

"There's still a lot of ifs and maybes," City Councilor Cindy Price said.

Price called the hole off Duane Street a "tremendous blight" and

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Good, bad, Goonies

30th anniversary celebration brought attention, hassles

By MCKINLEY SMITH
The Daily Astorian

The success of the 30th anniversary celebration of "The Goonies" in June contrasted sharply with the reality of living in the Uppertown neighborhood that is home to the Goonies house, the Astoria City Council heard Monday night.

An estimated 12,000 to 15,000 people came to Astoria in June for the anniversary of the 1985 adventure comedy, a boon to brew pubs, restaurants, shops and hotels.



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Participants bare their bellies and do the Truffle Shuffle during the Farewell to John Warren Field concert and film screening event June 6.

Skip Hauke, the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, told the City Council the anniversary celebration generated worldwide media attention.

The chamber's consultants have calculated there were 212 broadcast, print and online media stories on the

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