

# Planting: Overall, the group had about 16,000 violets

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coexist with all the other native dune prairie plants in the area.”

In 2014, a bag of Corvallis-grown violet seeds was sent to the North Coast Restoration Partnership's temporary native plant nursery in Tillamook. A group of young men from Camp Tillamook, an Oregon Youth Authority facility, filled thousands of plastic plug containers with seeds.

The seedlings spent most of 2014 and the winter of 2015 at the nursery, where they were exposed once again to the coastal environment. In July, the conservancy collected thousands of the burgeoning shoots and brought them back to the organization's Circle Creek property near Seaside to continue maturing in time for fall planting.

On Clatsop Plains, approximately 9,000 violets were placed at two sites owned by the land conservancy — Neacoxie Forest and Reed Ranch — and one site owned by the National Park Service — John B. Yeon Scenic Corridor. The conservancy is planting the violets into plots treated last fall by an excavator that removed topsoil.

“We waited a year after the treatment to give the little violets an extra year to grow and develop their roots,” Reich said.

Overall, the group had about 16,000 violets. The remainder were planted at the conservancy's Surf Pines property and are going to be planted later at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge on the Long Beach Peninsula, Reich said.

## Partnership continues work on project

The conservancy is in the second year of a five-year North Coast prairie restoration project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. The primary goal of the project is to boost the native prairie ecosystem being lost primarily to development, Reich said.

A factor in restoring the



North Coast Land Conservancy Associate Director Jon Wickersham (left) oversees volunteers from Seaside High School who helped plant early blue violets on Clatsop Plains.

habitat is bringing back the Oregon silverspot butterfly population. Clatsop Plains and the Long Beach Peninsula used to teem with butterflies of that species but they haven't been seen since the 1990s, Reich said. They were listed as threatened in 1980. The closest remaining population is at Mount Hebo. The partners said they believe that is because the environment on those prairie lands has changed. Some violets remain, but not enough to support a robust butterfly population.

“If we can restore the habitat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be able to re-introduce the butterfly to the North Coast,” Reich said.

The conservancy is managing the coastal prairie habitat

using strategies such as planting native plants and removing invasive species, the most prevalent of which is Scotch broom.

“All of the coastal prairie habitat has been invaded at some level, and we need to keep on top of it because it quickly shades out native prairie species,” Reich said. The group seeks volunteer help for its occasional “broombuster” events.

After the violets are planted into the research plots, the Institute of Applied Ecology in Corvallis will monitor them in the spring and make recommendations for adaptive management. Meanwhile, the group is seeking funding for treatments and plantings on a larger scale, Reich said.



Seaside High School students Whitney Westerholm (left) and Brittany West share a laugh while volunteering with the North Coast Land Conservancy.



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

District Attorney Josh Marquis speaks during a Jessica Smith hearing in May.

## Death penalty: Case went through four trials

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“It's the end of a very long journey and it's a journey that Ron (Brown) made with me,” Marquis said.

### Death penalty in focus

Marquis, a proponent of the death penalty, said the Guzek case was the first death penalty case he prosecuted that went to trial. The experience put the idea of seeking the death penalty into focus for him.

“It's one thing to support the death penalty and discuss it in the abstract way. It's another thing to do it in the concrete,” Marquis said. “When you stand in front of a jury and say, ‘That man deserves to die.’ It's a tremendous moral responsibility.”

Guzek, 46, was 18 when he and two other accomplices murdered Rod and Lois Houser in their Terrebonne home. A jury convicted him of aggravated murder in 1988 and the death penalty a year later. The case was retried three times on appeal.

After four trials, 48 Deschutes County jurors all voting guilty and millions of dollars spent, the Oregon Supreme Court affirmed the ruling Friday to not allow a

fifth trial.

The Supreme Court's decision marks the end of the state's criminal case against Guzek, Marquis said. There is a slight chance Guzek could attempt to appeal the death penalty sentence.

“I will never stand in a courtroom with Randy Guzek again,” Marquis said.

### Close relationships with the family

Over the quarter century since the murders, Marquis said, he and Brown developed close relationships with the surviving members of the Houser family.

Every year on his birthday, Marquis said, he still receives cards from the family.

The death penalty sentence was important to the Houser family, according to Marquis, because had Guzek been sentenced to life in prison he could have been released on parole as early as 2017. State law has since changed to make convicted murderers only eligible for life in prison without the possibility of parole, known as a “true life sentence.”

“It's over for me and hopefully it's over for the Housers,” Marquis said.

## Dunes: CREST will help out in the process

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planning goal dealing with dunes and beaches, known as Goal 18. The exception — which allowed property owners in different areas along the beach to grade their sections below goal limits — expired several years ago, according to Planning Director Kevin Cupples.

The task force will provide its services for approximately \$12,100, or a rate of \$60 per hour. Additionally, the city plans to contract with an expert in coastal geology to provide technical oversight.

### The need for updates

The city is considering amendments to provide for dune grading in selected areas to depths between the base flood elevation and four feet above base flood elevation. Currently, any dune grading below four feet above the base flood elevation requires the city to obtain an exception to Goal 18, according to Cupples.

In the past, the city had an exception to Goal 18 to grade the dunes from Broadway to north of 12th Avenue. At that time, a group of property owners along the Prom from about Third to 10th avenues received approval to grade the dunes near their homes and businesses. They continued to do maintenance grading after the initial project.

“Now we're to a point where trying to continue maintenance grading is violating the goal, so we've got to reauthorize the exception or you can't grade down to the levels that you were allowed to before,” Cupples explained.

The Land Conservation and Development Commission will have to approve the exception. The statewide planning goal set the level at four feet above the base flood elevation as “a safety measure,” Cupples said. “It's a matter of protecting the inland areas from potential flooding.”

In order to get an exception approved, the city needs to justify allowing grading below that level and demonstrate that it won't have a negative affect on safety in those areas.

What Cupples believes will help is that portions of the Seaside beach are underlaid by cobblestone, which is added protection.

“Even if you eroded part of your sand away, you still have cobble beach protection, which tends to break up waves pretty well,” Cupples said.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

A foredune grading plan is being developed in Seaside. Here, the dunes just north of 12th Avenue.

### Changes in the future

The city wants the management plan amendments to make grading elevations “dynamic,” so they respond to future changes in the base flood elevation. For instance, if the base flood elevation is lowered in the future, the city's allowed grading elevation would lower automatically to allow for enhanced grading activities, Cupples said. Likewise, if the base flood elevation is heightened, the allowed grading elevations also would heighten, ensuring “the allowed grading elevations would not compromise flood hazard protection,” according to a memorandum presented at the City Council meeting.

Rather than including specific grading depths in the plan and exception based on the current levels, Cupples said, “You want to be able to say, ‘No, if that level goes down, then the grading level will go down along with it.’”

### Managing vegetation

The city plans to clarify what vegetation management options are allowed in different beach areas. Some vegetation management occurs in the southern region of the beach, but the plan did not anticipate the amount of tree growth in that area. The plan needs to specify that the city is “not trying to create an urban forest down there,” Cupples said. “It's supposed to have kind of a semi-open look.”

With so many trees growing in the

area, the dense vegetation offers an opportunity for people to camp overnight, which is against city ordinance and creates a potential fire risk.

Right now, the city allows certain actions.

“When there is an unhealthy spacing of trees, we've allowed it to be taken out, but it's not well explained in the plan that you should be doing that,” Cupples said. “That's what we want to be clarified.”

### CREST to provide scope, goal-setting

Kevin Cupples said the city's Planning Department does not have the staff and resources needed to focus on the process of updating the foredune management plan, at this time. CREST is a council of local governments, of which Seaside is a part, that helps communities with land-use planning, Director Denise Lofman said.

She said it is important to work with the state during the process “to make sure whatever we are creating for Seaside can be approved at the state level, she said. “The state is really interested in making sure properties are protected in addition to dunes being able to be managed.”

Public hearings on the amendments will be June to August. Seaside City Council must approve the amendments before the updated plans and justifications are sent to the Land Conservation and Development Commission.