



Photos by David Plechl/EO Media Group

LAND OF THE GIANTS

Bringing back the Ellsworth Creek watershed's historic biodiversity and stream health is an ongoing project. "You can't go out and buy it," said Dave Rolph, The Nature Conservancy's director of forest conservation and management. "If you really want an old-growth ecosystem, you have to restore it."

Ellsworth Creek watershed revival breathes life into forest

By DAVID PLECHL
EO Media Group

WILLAPA BAY, Wash. — All along Ellsworth Creek, soldiers were slaying giants. The year was 1918, and the enlisted men were part of the U.S. Army's Spruce Production Division. Their quarry — the thousand-year-old behemoth trees that once towered in our coastal forests.

Cedar and Douglas fir were all knocked down; their enormous timbers would form the backbones and bows of allied ships.

But the most prized carcass of all was that of the great Sitka spruce. Beasts that spent eons rooted in rock and earth, in a strange twist of fate, were split, shaped and formed into lightweight frames for World War I fighter planes.

An account from just after the war describes the urgency of the massive timber-felling effort in the Pacific Northwest:

"No one realized, no one even dreamed that before this single item (aircraft-quality spruce wood) could be produced, an army must be sent to make war in the virgin forests, a vast industrial machine must be built up, and a great story of pluck and grit, of daring and patient resourcefulness must be carved out."

Watershed renovation

Just around the bend from the Willapa Bay Wildlife Refuge, where Ellsworth Slough yawns into the Naselle River, a few dozen weather-worn pilings are all that's left of a Spruce Division's local camp, railroad and processing hub. As successful as the regiment was at waging war on the giants, it was equally hard on the creek, and its heavy footprint remains stamped across the ecological integrity of the entire watershed.

But for the last 15 years or so, The Nature Conservancy has patiently been scooping

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Dave Ryan is on permanent assignment as The Nature Conservancy's lead forester for the Ellsworth Creek restoration project. "We sort of took the watershed out of its natural trajectory in terms of historic succession," he said. As a result, species like Sitka spruce, once plentiful in coastal forests, are now mere "remnants."



The Nature Conservancy has quilted together multiple parcels of former industrial forestland in the Ellsworth Creek watershed for a restoration project of more than 8,000 acres. Hundreds of those acres are dotted with old-growth stands of cedar, Sitka spruce and Douglas fir.

Seaside center set to grow

Convention Center opens reservation books to 2025

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Got a convention in 2025? Now you can book it at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

The City Council gave the convention center approval to move forward with plans for an expansion and renovation project.

"This gives us the ability to open our calendars up to 2020-2025 knowing we have the consensus of the council and mayor, if we are successful in the funding process," said Russ Vandenberg, the center's general manager. "It means the council supports our recommendation to renovate and add additional space to the center."

Costs are projected at \$14.6 million, and could be paid by bonds sold by the city, backed by a 2-percent increase in the city's room tax.

Vandenberg said he not only hopes to recruit larger groups, but to keep current clients.

"They've grown over the last 25, 30 years and we haven't added any space in 25 years," he said.

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Port pushes hotelier on legal claim

Agency insists there never was a signed deal

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria is pushing a Portland hotelier suing the agency over a lease on the Astoria Riverwalk Inn to admit there was never a signed deal to operate the property.

Luke Reese, an attorney for the Port, is asking Param Hotel Corp., the spurned suitor for the hotel, to acknowledge several key facts before a trial early next year.

Param sued the Port in October over claims of local bias shortly after the agency chose Astoria Hospitality Ventures to operate the Riverwalk Inn on a short-term basis. Hospitality Ventures is led by Astoria developer Chester Trabucco and native Astorian William Orr, the head of a seafood processor in Seattle.

The Port Commission in June 2015 voted to have staff work out an agreement to operate the hotel with Param, which had been courting Brad Smithart — the hotel's troubled former operator — since October 2014. Reese claims Param canceled contract negotiations before they were completed, while Param alleges the Port wrongfully walked away from a binding agreement.

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Diverse millennials are no voting monolith

By GILLIAN FLACCUS,
TAMARA LUSH and
MARTHA IRVINE
Associated Press



America's oldest millennials — nearing 20 when airplanes slammed into the World Trade Center — can remember the economic prosperity of the 1990s, and when a different Clinton ran for president. The younger end of the generation — now nearing 20 — can't recall a time without terrorism or economic worry.

Now millennials have edged out baby boomers as the largest living generation in U.S. history, and more than

75 million have come of age. With less than three months to Election Day, the values of young Americans are an unpredictable grab bag. What they share is a palpable sense of disillusionment.

As part of its Divided America series, The Associated Press interviewed seven millennial voters in five states where the generation could have an outsized influence this fall. They are a mosaic, from a black Nevada teen voting for the first time to a Florida-born son of Latino immigrants to

a white Christian couple in Ohio.

These voters illustrate how millennials are challenging pollsters' expectations.

"Millennials have been described as apathetic, but they're absolutely not," said Diana Downard, a 26-year-old voting for Hillary Clinton. "Millennials have a very nuanced understanding of the political world."

America the great

Just 5 percent of young adults say that America is "greater than it has ever been," according to a recent

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AP Photo/Lynne Sladky

Anibal David Cabrera, 31, stands in front of a mural in the Ybor City neighborhood of Tampa, Fla. Ybor City was founded in the 1880's by cigar manufacturers and was a melting pot for immigrants.