



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Volunteers prepare to deliver boxes stuffed with food and household supplies for families in need at American Legion Post 168 on Friday in Cannon Beach.

Community: The American Legion is the only service organization in Cannon Beach

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and Shorewood Apartments and other Cannon Beach households.

Since 1977, American Legion Vice Commander Don Boehm has organized the program and shopped for food. The program began when someone donated \$5,000 for Christmas baskets.

"We've carried that on," Boehm said. "We're here for the community. We wish to thank all the people who donate and make it known that we appreciate their support."

Volunteers Stacie Gilligan and Heidi Lent have coordinated the food baskets for about seven years.

"It takes us about a week to get it done," Lent said. "It's very necessary. The American Legion is the only service organization in Cannon Beach, so it felt natural for them to take this on."

Some items are donated



Lyra Fontaine/The Daily Astorian

Mirian Luna, daughter Silvia Avila and son Christian Avila volunteered for the Cannon Beach American Legion's Christmas Basket Program for the first time this year.

by community members, food banks or local businesses like Bruce's Candy Kitchen. The rest is purchased by the post's charitable account, which comes from donations and proceeds from fundraisers. It cost about \$3,500 to \$4,000 to fill the food baskets, Gilligan said.

Police Chief Jason Scher-

merhorn — assisted by 12-year-old son Jackson — said the officers help with the program each year.

"It's such a good partnership," Schermerhorn said. "This is one of those things that officers love to do, and it's great for people to see a different side of the police officers. We're actually doing

what we want to do, which is help people, and we appreciate the legion for keeping us involved."

Siblings Silvia and Christian Avila volunteered for the Christmas basket program with their mother, Mirian Luna.

"I have time and I want to help," Christian said. "I've always lived in Elk Creek so I've experienced this from the other perspective ... I feel like we kind of took it for granted. This doesn't happen everywhere else. I think it's a sigh of relief for the parents. They will buy one or two things for each child, but having this much more to bulk up what's under the Christmas tree really helps."

A volunteer firefighter, Silvia said she decided to volunteer because she enjoys helping others.

"It's what we do in the fire department," she said, "and Christmas is my favorite holiday."

Land battle: 'What does the federal government know about what's going on around here?'

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But now, the forest commissioners say, the government is tightening access to the same natural resources by closing roads and curtailing logging and other industries that allowed previous generations to be self-sufficient.

The commissioners feel they lost, by the stroke of a judge's pen, a tool voters gave them to fight back.

Kim McKrola, a local, voiced the concern of many: "I would think we should have more say, because what does the federal government know about what's going on around here?"

With 1,700 residents, John Day is Grant County's biggest town, named for a fur trapper who in the early 1800s survived being robbed of everything by American Indians but trekked with a compatriot to safety. The second longest free-flowing river in the continental United States also bears Day's name.

Created by voters in a ballot measure 14 years ago, the forest commission was tasked with determining the fate of public lands, which comprise 66 percent of the county's 4,529 square miles.

Sympathy for the cause

Hours before the meeting at the Squeeze-In Restaurant & Deck, forest commissioner Jim Sproul drove his pickup up a canyon and into the Malheur National Forest.

"My great-grandfather came here in the 1870s. He started the Humboldt Mine," the 64-year-old said. A pin on his cap proclaimed support for Sheriff Glenn Palmer, a sympathizer of the refuge occupiers' cause.

Sproul looked at skeletal trees killed by a 2015 fire that burned 43 homes and more



AP Photo/Andrew Selsky

A cow stands on a ranch outside the Malheur National Forest near John Day. The armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters caused a sensation and global headlines, but a quieter and perhaps more important struggle is being waged by those trying to use the levers of power, and not firearms.

than 172 square miles. He blamed the U.S. Forest Service, saying it let the forest grow too thick, allowing the blaze to crown and become a "huge fireball." Sproul wants the agency to open more burned areas for loggers to salvage trees.

At the Squeeze-In, commission members voiced more complaints.

"You're missing the point," growled Commissioner Mike Smith from beneath the brim of his cowboy hat. "The point is, they want to make it so you can't make a living in rural Oregon, so you have to leave."

Others nodded assent. Commissioner Dave Traylor said he suspects the government and environmentalists want to create a 200-mile-wide corridor from Canada to Mexico, with only animals present and no humans.

Federal officials say no such plots exist.

District Ranger Dave Halemeier noted the Forest Service has increased its transparency.

"We meet with the public before we even have an idea of what we want to do in an area," Halemeier said in an interview. "Historically, we'd

come up with a plan and then present that plan, and now the public's involved in developing that plan."

Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin said he had productive talks with a forest commissioner about modifying rules for gathering firewood, but faced hostility at commission meetings.

"It was difficult to engage because they wouldn't share information," Beverlin said. Mark Webb, whose petition for judicial review led to the commission's dissolution, said he felt it was growing too close to Palmer and his "increasing belligerence toward federal government."

The leaders of the wildlife refuge takeover were planning to meet with Palmer when officers intercepted them in January. State police shot and killed LaVoy Finicum as he appeared to reach for a pistol.

No militia

Sproul said he had invited takeover leaders Ammon and Ryan Bundy to speak to residents about the Constitution and states' rights, with no ulterior motives.

Gearhart: Foredune management plan could lead to state grants

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Watts advised the city to develop a comprehensive rather than a piecemeal approach to managing the dunes.

"It makes sense to have a comprehensive plan they (homeowners) can bring to you and you can say 'thumbs up, thumbs down,'" Watts said. "Under your current code, you can't do that."

A foredune management plan could also lead to state grants, Watts added. "In order to be eligible for those sorts of grants, you need a code switch."

Forum lineup

Marino has assembled a lineup of arborists, soil experts, along with representatives from the Oregon Parks and Recreation, the Department and Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, North Coast Land Conservancy and others.

"The city and Planning Commission will hear these experts at one forum — these people who have advised and want to engage with the city," Marino said at December's City Council meeting.

Kathleen Sayce, a certified ecologist who assessed

the issue at a fall council meeting, will be among those participating at the forum.

"You will get an unbiased review from her," Marino said. "That is what she does. We're very fortunate to have her."

City Administrator Chad Sweet will set the stage for the forum, and members of the panel will present their views.

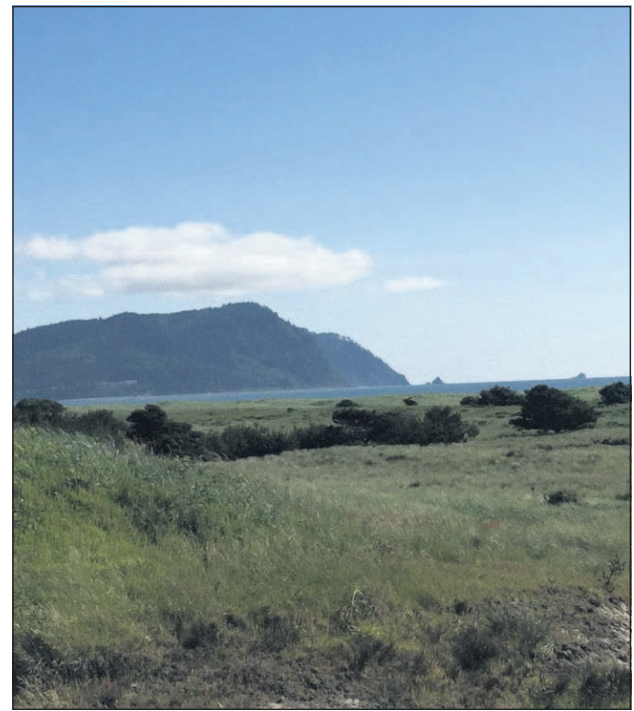
Fire Chief Bill Eddy and Police Chief Jeff Bowman will also participate in the event.

"One thing I'd like from the council is leadership and guidance at the forum," Marino said. "For me the purpose of this is to learn from all these experts. I'm an engineer by training and education, and I believe in finding facts for people to make good decisions."

At their December meeting, city councilors were concerned that this be presented as an informational session rather than a public hearing.

"What we're trying to accomplish at a town hall meeting is different than a 'for or against thing,'" Councilor Sue Lorain said.

Marino said she hopes the meeting will provide enough information for a Planning Commission review in March.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

The Gearhart dunes are the topic of an educational forum Jan. 5.

Heroux: 'We're trying to embrace the rain'

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"We really love it here, but Sam has discovered that fishing is much harder than it is back in Minnesota," Heroux said with a smile. "He gets kind of frustrated, because at home you just put a worm on a hook and you catch 30 different fish."

But she added, he loves Broadway Middle School and being a member of the swim team.

Along with fishing, clamming and crabbing — with guidance from Ruth and Don Swenson from the Hillcrest Inn — Heroux enjoys out-

door photography and tries to incorporate that into their fishing trips. She enjoys swimming at the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District pool, and said she "really likes the small town feel of Seaside."

As for the rain, Heroux said she is trying to adapt.

"I know they told us about the rain, but it's a little more than we thought," Heroux said. "We're trying to embrace the rain — we bought some good rain gear — but sometimes it gets a little bit much. They warned us, but they didn't tell us this much."

THE DAILY ASTORIAN'S CUTEST BABY CONTEST is Back!

If your baby was born between **January 1st & December 31st, 2016**, you can submit your newborn's picture either via email at: **CLASSIFIEDS@DAILYASTORIAN.COM** or drop by one of our offices in Astoria or Seaside and we can scan in the photo for you.

Deadline to enter is Wednesday, January 25th at 5pm
Entries will be printed in The Daily Astorian on January 31st.

Human babies only please!