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OUR VIEW

Voters should approve Warrenton library levy

When Warrenton voters cast their ballots in the November special election, they will be deciding not only whether to continue to tax themselves for the Warrenton Community Library's operations, but essentially whether they want a library at all.

The answer is easy. Without hesitation voters should say "yes" to the ballot measure.

The measure would raise the annual library levy from 9 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value to 33 cents during each of the next five years. The increase would raise an estimated \$933,773 during that period. For a house with \$100,000 in assessed value, that would be \$33 a year, or about 9 cents a day. The jump from 9 cents to 33 cents is large, but the levy amount has not changed in 15 years while operating costs have consistently grown.

Supporters say the money would go toward expanding the library's limited hours, add staff time, pay for an automated checkout system, e-books and other books and materials as well as cover its routine bills. The upgrades will help modernize a library where volunteers and staff still hand-stamp due dates in the backs of books.

Most importantly, without the levy the library will have to cease operations, Warrenton Community Library Board members say.

The levy is the library's main funding source and revenues can only be used for its operations: the salary for the library's two part-time employees, to purchase books, magazines and reference materials and pay rent, utilities, maintenance and telephone bills.

The library also recently moved to a new location, at 160 S. Main Ave., and has seen immediate growth in people using it and in the number of library cards issued since moving. It has more than 19,000 books, audio books and movies available for checkout and there are more than 4,000 library cards that have been issued that are considered current.

"If you look at the numbers alone, our library, just with the new location, has increased in usage and membership," Mayor Henry Balensifer said.

Libraries are one of the institutional hallmarks of any community, and Warrenton residents should ensure it stays that way in their city. They should say "yes" to the library levy.

A cautionary tale for work near wetlands

The Oregon Department of State Lands wants to fine a farmer \$6,000 for alleged violation of state fill-removal laws.

The potential fine seems excessive, particularly to the actual harm — or, more accurately, the lack thereof. But rather a story about fines and punishment, the case serves as a cautionary tale for landowners with streams and wetlands — or anything that can be later so classified.

Kelly Sampson grows hay and nursery stock on 80 acres near Canby, on the banks of Mill Creek.

Sampson recently told the Capital Press, EO Media Group's agricultural newspaper based in Salem, that he noticed a section of the stream bank was eroding, and he decided to plant willow trees to stabilize the soil. He put hay bales onto rocks next to the creek to retain moisture for the young trees.

Ordinarily, landowners don't need a fill-removal permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands if they're adding or removing less than 50 cubic yards of material in a waterway or wetland.

But in this case Milk Creek — a tributary of the Molalla River — is designated as "essential salmonid habitat," so any amount of disturbance requires a permit, according to the agency.

Sampson was unaware of the designation, and says his reading of the rules on the state's website made him believe he was in the clear.

A complaint received by the state indicates that Sampson placed hay bales as well as "horse manure and barn cleanout" below the creek's ordinary high water mark.

Though Sampson's intentions were good, he was in violation of the law.

To its credit, when the Department of State Lands finds an unintentional violation it works with the landowner to work things out. If you can restore things as you found them, the fine can be waived. Or, the fine can be reduced to the extent that the effort is successful.

The best policy for a landowner is to assume a permit is needed and seek professional advice.

"Give us call and we can advise them," said Lori Warner-Dickason, field operations manager for the Department of State Lands. "If they proceed without confirmation from us, they do so at their own risk."



SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Coastal needs ripe for research funding

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

If there's a way to demystify coastal resiliency, Oregon State University has found it.

We've seen results in signage, mapping and awareness through state programs like the Great ShakeOut and "Two Weeks Ready," which aims

to inspire citizens to be self-sufficient for two weeks in the aftermath of a major disaster. A new survey is headed to a cross section of Seaside residents to develop a better understanding of perceptions and preparedness toward a Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

Clatsop County Emergency Manager Tiffany Brown, Oregon State University Coastal Natural Hazards Specialist Patrick Corcoran and other local officials — including Cannon Beach's Robin Risley and Seaside Planning Director Kevin Cupples — joined those seeking to prioritize research needs for the North Coast. The session was the first of three workshops — the others held in Newport and Coos Bay.

Coastal priorities

We know that when the Big One hits it could bring a 9.0 earthquake and waves from 30 to 120 feet high. Our bridges could collapse and our cities flood. Mass casualties would almost be a certainty.

If Japan's 2011 tsunami is any example — 20,000 deaths, 2,500 missing — we need to take note. And we're nowhere as well prepared as they are.

"In Japan they don't need to be convinced," Corcoran said.

Corcoran described attendees as "researchers from OSU, students, agency folks and planning commission types — the usual suspects who want to think their way through problems."

They are the "right people" to have in the room when thinking about resiliency, Oregon State Professor Peter Ruggiero said, matching university skills with a target audience.

Ruggiero and others are seeking seed money via an Oregon Sea Grant, which provides grant opportunities related to the marine environment.

Researchers seek to connect "the kind of things we are interested in and the things coastal communities have identified as significant priorities," Ruggiero said.

"We are talking about before and after the event," Patrick Wingard, of the state's Department of Land Conservation, said.

That means preparing for disaster, minimizing risk and response readiness. Recovery follows.

Research projects could address elements of all of these, Wingard said.

Local partners

The goal, Wingard said, is to provide elected officials with the information and resources needed to resolve the coast's complex hazards, even when long-term answers are more costly than the quick fix.

"Let's dig deeper," he said. "We could do more looking forward and thinking about the long range consequences of our short-term decisions." The process involves "a bit of



Photos by R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Oregon State University Professor Peter Ruggiero speaks in Seaside.



Patrick Corcoran contemplates a large-scale Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

One takeaway from the Seaside workshop is the growing sense by people to be strategic and proactive regarding hazards.

matchmaking," Corcoran said.

At the library workshop, some of that matchmaking unfolded as city officials interacted with university academics on issues of interest to both.

Cupples suggested a multihazard approach, taking into account not only preparation for a tsunami and its aftermath, but for wind and rainstorms — "the things we have all the time," he said.

John Dunzer, a Seaside resident, sought ways to develop alternative energy sources that would provide local power after a catastrophic event.

Brown said the county was still "in the first 12 hours" of a catastrophe and needed to look to longer-term recovery.

"What about the 1,000 people on the hill that don't have shelter?" the emergency manager asked. "We have so many unanswered questions about that phase."

Strategic, proactive

"Resiliency" is one of those words newspaper editors and TV news channels hate, neutering truly terrifying concepts in a cloak of slick jargon. Others are phrases like "infra-

structure solutions," "robust facilities" and "natural hazard mitigation."

During the school district's tsunami awareness campaign a few years back, earthquakes and tsunamis were referred to by "T-shirt sizes": M, L, XL and XXL for example. I found that a little more graphic and easier to grasp.

It's not a game and all the big words in the world can't disguise the disastrous potential of a Cascadia event.

One takeaway from the Seaside workshop is the growing sense by people to be strategic and proactive regarding hazards.

"This is about local people who want to work with us," Corcoran said. "As a land-grant university, we want to address local needs. To the extent where our research can align with community needs, this is a home-run for us."

Whether it has the sex appeal of the catastrophic sense of a disaster movie is another story.

Let's hope that's not what it takes to get some action.

R.J. Marx is *The Daily Astorian's* South County reporter and editor of the *Seaside Signal* and *Cannon Beach Gazette*.