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ONE DOLLAR



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach is looking at tiny homes at the RV Resort off of Elk Land Road.

## TINY HOMES, BIG QUESTIONS

Cost, rules are issues in Cannon Beach

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**C**ANNON BEACH — Nearly a year after Cannon Beach agreed to experiment with tiny homes as affordable housing, the city is taking another look.

The original idea was to have four or five 400 square-foot homes in the city-owned RV Resort on Elk Land Road and Haskell Lane by last fall.

But the pilot project was put on hold until the new city manager, Bruce St. Denis, was hired. Since then, the city has raised more questions about the details: How does the city target tenants who work in Cannon Beach without discriminating? What is the cost of management and maintenance? Will those costs be covered by rents that are affordable?

“It makes sense if it can pay for itself at a rate that makes sense for someone who works here,” St. Denis said. “But if the rent is going to be \$1,700 to make it break even? That’s not any help.”

There could also be new costs on the horizon.

A state law that went into effect in January required the development of building codes for tiny homes. One of the changes reclassified tiny homes on



The RV Resort is the site under consideration for a tiny home pilot project.

wheels so they would no longer be considered RV’s, creating additional challenges for how they could be transported into the city.

Keeping tiny homes mobile was never part of the city’s original vision. But acquiring special permits and trailers could influence the overall cost of the project. Questions about whether tiny homes no longer classified as RVs can be placed in the RV Resort will also need to be answered.

“Tiny houses were able to be moved

at one point easily. Now it’s less easy to move,” St. Denis said. “Is that viable? If so, what are the costs associated?”

Regulatory challenges have posed similar obstacles in communities across Oregon looking at tiny homes as a housing option.

Before moving forward, St. Denis is recommending that Cannon Beach have a formal financial analysis done by a housing specialist.

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Bruce St. Denis | new city manager of Cannon Beach

## Gearhart, Warrenton join forces against elk

Mayors meet with state senator, wildlife commissioner

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Gearhart and Warrenton are taking steps together to understand and address elk herds that appear increasingly at home in urban areas.

Gearhart Mayor Matt Brown and Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer met Wednesday afternoon with state Sen. Betsy Johnson, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Bruce Buckmaster and Gearhart City Administrator Chad Sweet to ask questions and provide information.

Both cities plan to hold town hall-style meetings soon with fish and wildlife biologists and officials to review options for sharing a landscape with elk.

Johnson hopes to coordinate with a number of people and organizations who have a stake in the issue to get a better sense of the full impact the herds have on the two communities.

She noted there are costs, both real and social, that come with dealing with the elk — from the impacts on private landowners to the resources it takes for state agencies to gather public input or respond to elk-related accidents on the highways.

“It seems to me that knowing the composite fiscal ramifications informs what all the universe of choices might be,” Johnson, D-Scappoose, told the mayors during the talk at Gearhart City Hall.

Herman Biederbeck, a wildlife biologist for the state’s North Coast Watershed District, will attend a Gearhart City Council meeting in April to answer questions. He and other state fish and wildlife representatives will also present the council with a suite of possible options for addressing Gearhart’s herd of 100 or more animals, from nonlethal possibilities like restrictive fencing to lethal options.

The state does not have a single recommendation, Buckmaster said. Rather, fish and wildlife officials want to know what kinds of actions a majority of Gearhart residents would support. He assumed no one wants to get rid of the elk entirely.

No, the mayors replied. They still want some elk around.

In January, Brown wrote a letter to Biederbeck on behalf of the City Council expressing the city’s increasing concern about the elk population and included documentation of elk encounters reported by residents.

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John Dudley

Elk enjoy a Gearhart backyard.

## Cougar sightings on the rise

Sightings may be tied to the predator’s population growth

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Six cougars have been killed due to threats to public safety so far this year, including a 2-year-old male cougar who wandered into a room in a hotel complex in The Dalles this week and a cougar trapped and killed in Silverton over the weekend.

The sightings may be tied to the predator’s population growth. There are more than 6,000 cougars in Oregon today, a major rebound from a low of 200 animals in the late 1960s.

Prompted by a recent increase in the state’s

coastal cougar population, wildlife biologists in the Alsea management area near Newport are attempting to capture and collar 10 local big cats. They have collars on six cougars so far and hope to gather more information this year about where and how far the animals roam, said Jason Kirchner, the state wildlife biologist leading the effort.

With the cougars in Silverton and The Dalles, though, “one of the bigger questions is how are we going to address this?” said Derek Broman, carnivore-furbearer coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Each situation is different, Broman said, and the tolerance for cougar sightings and the thresholds for safety vary in each community. When wildlife officials are involved in capturing or killing a cougar, the hope is to be



Tamara Swanson

A cougar spotted at The Oregon Garden in Silverton was later killed by wildlife officials.

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