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People spend time at the beach near Seaside as the sun sets behind them.

Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Area tourism leaders look at impacts on natural resources

Visitors take a toll on parks

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Staff with the Haystack Rock Awareness Program know one side of Cannon Beach's popular landmark is not like the other.

The tide pools that are open for the public to walk near and poke their fingers into have a wealth of creatures, but even more life abounds in the areas closed off to people, said Alan Quimby, an environmental interpreter for the outreach and educational organization, during a busy April morning at low tide.

That morning, he was splitting his time between pointing out puffins and reminding people to stay out of the protected marine garden around Haystack Rock. They kept coming anyway, seemingly deaf to the instructions Quimby gave prior groups and oblivious to signs that told them to stay out.

In Ecola State Park, visitors intent on getting down to beaches where no established access exists exacerbate erosion on coastal cliffs when they clamber down anyway. Park staff have started to add portable toilets where they've never had them before to curb the issue of human waste on increasingly popular hiking trails.

Tourism is a billion dollar industry in Oregon and millions of those dollars find a home at the coast. But as the number of visitors continues to grow, tourism leaders are rethinking their approach and the environmental impacts of hosting so many people.

Last week, the newly formed



Aurelie and Io Fornier admire the view from a rock outcropping at Hug Point.

Colin Murphey/The Astorian



Wildlife in tide pools is particularly vulnerable to the impact of tourists.

Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

North Coast Tourism Management Network, which includes representatives from Clatsop and Tillamook

counties, looked at three possible projects proposed for grant funding, all tied to environmental stewardship.

The ideas include:

- A transportation pilot program in Cannon Beach to encourage the use of public transportation and a push to provide information about local resources for bike rentals, local transit and walking maps.
- Trailhead and beach ambassadors at heavily trafficked outdoor sites like Ecola State Park, Cape Falcon, Rockaway Beach and Cape Kiwanda.
- And a communications strategy called "Care for Our Coast," intended to provide information about the effect of tourism on natural resources and to educate visitors about ways they may need to adjust their behavior.

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Craft3 gets \$50M in tax credits

Money to help rural areas

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Regional lender Craft3 is deciding where to invest \$50 million in tax credits it recently secured from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The New Markets Tax Credit program incentivizes investment in rural areas. The Treasury Department makes the awards to organizations such as Craft3, a rural- and environmental-focused community development lender. The organizations find investments in underserved communities that will provide community benefit.

The Treasury Department awarded Craft3 \$40 million in tax credits in 2009, \$35 million in 2006 and \$8 million in 2003. Craft3 has invested in such projects as building Columbia Hall and renovating Towler Hall on Clatsop Community College's main campus in Astoria.

"Without Craft3's New Markets Tax Credit investment in Clatsop Community College, we simply couldn't have completed the Columbia Hall construction or Towler Hall renovation," Christopher Breitmeyer, the college president, said in a news release about the tax credits. "These two buildings form the core of our academic spaces at CCC and are used by thousands of students and community members to grow, learn and succeed."

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Merkley addresses national concerns

Senator appeared at town hall in Astoria

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley on Saturday reminded locals to remain involved in national matters.

"A democratic republic does so much better when citizens are engaged and motivated," the Oregon Democrat told the crowd gathered at Clatsop Community College in Astoria.

Merkley, who was elected to the Senate in 2008, has adopted the practice of fellow U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, visiting each county once a year.

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A budding interest in farming

Jewell student likes viticulture

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

When Daniel Kuhnly was a freshman, he thought maybe he'd be an engineer. It was, he said, a kind of random choice, but at the time it worked as a fill-in-the-blank to the question of what he was going to do with his life.

He has a more concrete

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answer now: He wants to go into farming, specifically viticulture. Grapes, wine-making, vineyards.

When the 17-year-old senior at Jewell School graduates in June, his next move is to attend Chemeketa Community College's Northwest Wine Studies Center.

Someday, he hopes to have his own vineyard and organic farm. He is intrigued by the mechanics and aesthetics of vineyards — but, more, he is fascinated by

transformation.

"A raw fruit can transform into wine, and there's that whole process of fermentation," he said. Then there is farming: Dry, gnarled little seeds become plants that can feed and heal people.

"I think it just comes partially from genetics," Kuhnly said of farming, "and I just like nature. I've always liked being outdoors."

His great-grandfather was a farmer. Kuhnly didn't know him well. His grandmother in Svensen has had more of a direct influence, with her greenhouse and her yard full of plants and flowers.

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Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Daniel Kuhnly stands in the greenhouse he built at his family's home in the Jewell area.

