

# the Astorian

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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The North Coast Land Conservancy received a \$2.1 million state grant to preserve land east of Arch Cape.

## Land conservancy moves closer to iconic purchase

### A \$2.1 million grant toward a \$10 million goal

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

The campaign to preserve an iconic stretch of forested slopes and basalt cliffs near Arch Cape landed key funding Thursday.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board approved a \$2.1 million grant to the North Coast Land Conservancy for the Rainforest Reserve project. When added to the \$6 million in grants and donations the land conservancy has raised, the state grant brings them within hopping distance of their \$10 million goal.

State staff had recommended approval of the project, saying it represented an “uncommon opportunity.”

The proposed reserve will encom-



The North Coast Land Conservancy will use the new funding for the \$10 million Rainforest Reserve project.

pass 3,500 acres, turning industrial timberland into protected land. When the reserve is added to areas already encompassed by Oswald West State Park and the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, it will help form an uninterrupted conservation corridor that stretches from the summits of 3,000-foot peaks to Short Sand Beach and the sandy seabed and rocky reefs of the nearshore ocean.

The property is populated with a unique mix of animals and plants and also includes the headwater streams that supply drinking water to Cannon Beach and Arch Cape. With the support of the land conservancy, the Arch Cape Water District is working to purchase an additional 1,500 acres to create a community forest and secure full ownership of the Arch Cape watershed.

For Katie Voelke, the executive

director of the North Coast Land Conservancy, Thursday’s grant award is a meaningful statement by the state about the value of the Rainforest Reserve. The land conservancy has received grants from the board before, but \$2.1 million was a particularly big ask.

“It expresses the confidence in the North Coast Land Conservancy, but more importantly speaks to the scale and the uniqueness of what this project means in Oregon,” Voelke said. “Conservation like this just doesn’t happen very often.”

If you stand on the beach at Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach and look up toward the east, you can see the hills and mountains that make up the reserve. It is a familiar backdrop that can be seen from vantage points in southwest Washington state, as well as from Oregon’s Tillamook County.

“The landscape is something that is loved by hundreds of thousands of people and many people who love that landscape don’t even realize that it’s private timberland,” Voelke said.

“A lot of people would assume a lot of those mountains are already within a state park. A place like that we just tend to assume will be there forever.”

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## Consultant shaped message in county commission races

Timber suit, cap and trade

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

Courtney Bangs said she never saw herself as a politician.

But when the Knappa preschool teacher decided to run for the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, she wanted to have a strong campaign that could win. She accepted help from a Salem-based campaign consultant, Intisar Strategis, and hired his company, Intisar Strategies.

In May, Bangs defeated Commissioner Kathleen Sullivan 62% to 38% in District 4, which covers eastern Astoria to Westport.

Kilada also helped John Toyooka, the manager at Lum’s Auto Center, who prevailed over Commissioner Sarah Nebeker

60% to 40% in District 2, which covers Gearhart, Clatsop Plains and parts of Warrenton and Seaside. The consultant is also advising Tillamook Mayor Suzanne Weber, who won the Republican primary for House District 32.

“Without David, I don’t think that I would have had near the amount of experience and organization to have run such a streamlined machine,” Bangs said. “He just had it down. He knew what needed to be done and the time frame that it needed to be done. And I would have been spinning my wheels, I think a lot, without him, and would not have projected such a clear and concise message.”

Early on, Bangs knew she wanted to be an advocate for working families and the natural resource industries that are engines of the economy on the North Coast.



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## County vows to count ballots on election night

Staff delayed the count in May

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

Clatsop County will count most ballots on election night in November after revising the reporting timeline in the May election because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The county reported election results based on ballots turned in, on the afternoon of May 19, but the delayed reporting the next batch of results until the next day. The county used employees to count ballots instead of volunteers, since many who volunteer for elections are elderly and at greater risk from the virus.

The county did not want employees to work late.

County Manager Don Bohn said 95% of the ballots were counted on May 19. “So,

again, that was a decision really based upon COVID and the fact that we were supporting the process differently,” he told county commissioners at a work session Wednesday.

The county also plans to make other adjustments in the hopes of having a flawless election in November.

New ballots were mailed to nearly 440 voters in precinct 22 — North Clatsop — about two weeks before the May election after a mix-up.

The county clerk’s office learned on May 1 that some voters received ballots that did not include the District 2 race for the county Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Sarah Nebeker was running for reelection against John Toyooka, the manager of Lum’s Auto Center, in District 2, which covers Gearhart, Clatsop Plains and portions of Seaside and Warrenton.

Bohn explained that there are 138 different ballot variations for the county and three different ballot variations for precinct 22. As updates were made to the boundaries of the

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