

## Purchase: Property features a unique mix of animals, plants and streams

Continued from Page A1

The Rainforest Reserve project will be a “significant undertaking,” perhaps the largest project the land conservancy has ever tackled, said Watershed Enhancement Board staff.

“But they do have a reasonable plan for success,” Miriam Forney, the grant acquisition coordinator, told the board Thursday. And the scale of conservation achieved would be massive.

The land conservancy calls the peaks found in the acreage — relics of a far distant volcanic event — Oregon’s “Galapagos Islands.” On their slopes and summits live plant and animal species rarely found elsewhere and some are unique to this spot. Cape’s giant salamander

is only found on a few peaks in Oregon south of the Columbia River, but it makes its home in the proposed reserve. The peaks also contain the only known breeding site for one species of rare dragonfly. Coho salmon swim the streams and there are intact stands of old growth forest.

People have long desired to conserve the property. Seventy years ago, Sam Boardman, Oregon’s first state parks

superintendent, called it “one of the greatest opportunities for creating one of the outstanding natural parks in the nation.”

The North Coast Land Conservancy is in the third year of a five-year effort to acquire the acreage and Voelke is confident they will be able to raise the remaining \$1.9 million. Around half of what the organization had raised prior to the grant award was through individual donations.

“At this point, it feels absolutely achievable,” Voelke said.

The desire to protect large forests — and through them protect other things of value, tangible and intangible — has assumed more urgency in the face of climate change, she added.

“It’s not just electric cars,” Voelke said. “It’s also a shift in the way we manage our lands, to clean our air and clean our water.”

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## Ballots: ‘The goal is to have a flawless election’

Continued from Page A1

Skipanon Water Control District, which is dissolving, there was an omission involving the commission race.

“It really is a complicated system. And part of the complication led to what we experienced in precinct 22,” Bohn said.

The county coordinated with the secretary of state’s office and the original ballots that were already sent in were set aside. If those voters did not send in updated ballots, then their first ballots were counted. Forty voters only turned in original ballots, according to the county.

“The goal is to have a flawless election, and I know that that’s (County Clerk Tracie Krevanko’s) goal also. And so as we move forward, one of the things we’re going to be working on is just those kind of those checks and balances within this complex system to make sure that as we prepare these 138 different ballot variations, that they’re correct.

“Because, as I’ve stated before, elections is kind of the bedrock of our entire system and the public has to have faith and trust in it. And so that’s something that we certainly take seriously.”

Nebeker, who lost to Toyooka by 612 votes, pressed Krevanko about the error.

“I can see that if this were to be in a close race, it could make a big difference. So what’s to prevent this from happening in the future?” she asked.

Bohn and Krevanko said prevention is having the quality assurance processes documented so that any changes can be double and triple-checked.

Bohn said the county clerk’s office responded well to the error, and commended staff for the hard work.

“This is not like any other year that I’ve ever been in, and so I do want to say that,” he said. “But I also want to say that the expectation is, is that we have flawless elections.”

## Consultant: ‘I want my community to express themselves’

Continued from Page A1

When she first introduced herself to voters last year, she highlighted her opposition to cap and trade in Salem and the county commission’s decision to opt out of a \$1 billion lawsuit against the state over timber harvests.

“When I began to get involved, I just started looking around myself and my neighbors and the families that I worked for as a teacher, and I just noticed that we needed a singular voice and we need somebody to hear us,” Bangs said. “I’m not saying that my opponent wasn’t hearing us. It’s just she wasn’t taking a stand for that large contingent of working families.”

Even though Bangs risked being viewed solely

as a #TimberUnity candidate, when she was also talking about the importance of child care and broadband access, Kilada said issues related to timber seemed to really matter to voters.

Sullivan and Nebeker did not take a position on cap-and-trade legislation, but both had voted in 2017 to opt out of the timber suit.

“Looking at that and saying, ‘Here is what these sort of outside agendas are doing in your county’ seems to really work,” the consultant said. “And I would say that the fact that the voters just took out two incumbents who supported cap and trade by not standing up against it — which is an act of support — and by opting out of the timber lawsuit, I think the

voters in the county said they were ready for a more local agenda.”

A breakdown of the vote in District 4 by precinct showed that Sullivan won both precincts in Astoria, but Bangs swept every other precinct, including John Day, Knappa, Olney, Svensen, Walluski, Hillcrest and Westport.

Ultimately, Kilada said, Bangs and Toyooka clearly showed what issues they would have taken different positions on than the incumbents.

“I think I would say that we had an idea that would work because that’s why Courtney got involved in politics in the first place. She was a voter who was upset with the priorities of her county,” he said.

Bangs said she and Kilada connected after a Facebook video of her speaking at a town hall in Seaside last year hosted by state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, D-Astoria.

Kilada, the former political director for Oregon Right to Life, started Intisar Strategies last year. Bangs was his first client, and then he offered his services to Toyooka and Weber. He has also helped several other candidates in Oregon run for seats on city councils, county commissions and the state House.

“He looks at things and he listens to his people. He just listens. And he doesn’t put words in our mouths ... that was my big concern is I didn’t want to turn into someone that I wasn’t,” Bangs said. “He always encouraged

me to use my own words, to be myself.”

While the campaign was built off of her values and goals, she said Kilada helped her stay focused on the issues, sharpen her message and draw a picture for voters. She described him as an anchor and guide in navigating politics as a first-time candidate.

Bangs raised more than \$21,000 for her campaign, including a significant amount from local industries on the North Coast. Sullivan, who was seeking reelection after running unopposed in 2016, raised more than \$15,000.

Bangs said she believes she needed more financial support to get her message out given she had no prior political presence.

“David really knew who to talk to. He knew where to get somebody to create a logo. He knew who was making the sign. He knew people,” she said. “I would have been scrambling and wasting time trying to figure out on my own.”

Along with #TimberUnity, Bangs aligned herself with the Republican Party during the campaign. The county commission is nonpartisan, however, and she said her goal after taking office in January will be to listen and adhere to what the greatest number of her constituents are saying.

“I feel just deep inside that I really want public engagement, because you can’t be a voice for a silent community,” she said. “I want my community to express themselves.”



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