



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Eighteen acres of the Neawanna Point Habitat Preserve was returned to the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederate Tribes by the North Coast Land Conservancy earlier this year.

BUILDING A TRADITIONAL LONGHOUSE ON CLATSOP-NEHALEM LAND

Architect awarded fellowship to support project

BY KATHERINE LACAZE

Architect Todd Lawson visited the North Coast growing up, but it wasn't until college that he started vigorously exploring his roots to the area and his ties to the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes. Now, he's taking part in preserving the history of his people by designing a longhouse to be built on the tribe's land near the Necanicum Estuary in Seaside.

"As an architect, designer and artist, it's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do something really meaningful," Lawson said.

To support his work on the project, Lawson was recently awarded the Architecture Foundation of Oregon's 2020 Van Evera Bailey Fellowship, which is designed to advance the professional development of design and building professionals and encourage greater contributions to their profession.

Lawson, who lives in Seattle, will use the

fellowship to help fund the continuation of a project he's working on as a volunteer.

The first phase of the project involves researching the traditional longhouses of indigenous people on the coast, spanning from Alaska to Northern California. He also plans to research Clatsop-Nehalem traditions, art and history. So far, he has visited eight traditional longhouses and cultural centers, with plans to visit seven more to continue investigating how native people are expressing their identity through these buildings.

Lawson's research will then be channeled toward helping the tribes create a new cultural and environmental center and museum in the form of a traditional longhouse on their land along the estuary, where the Neawanna, Neacoxie and Necanicum rivers converge.

This year, the North Coast Land Conservancy transferred those 18.6 acres of conserved salt marsh and forest—referred to by the organization as Neawanna Point

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