

Deal will add 10,000 acres of habitat to Central Oregon wildlife area

By **HILLARY BORRUD**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is moving ahead with a deal that will more than double the size of a wildlife area where the public can hike, hunt and fish on the Lower Deschutes River.

The agency has worked with the Trust for Public Land over the last two-and-a-half years to acquire the former ranch, which will cost \$3 million. Private groups partnered with the state to raise the money.

Lawmakers gave their support to the plan before they went home in July, and the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted unanimously to acquire the land at its meeting Friday. The proposal will add more than 10,000 acres to an existing 8,500-acre wildlife area on the river.

The parcel is the only private land along the Deschutes River that is “heavily used by bighorn sheep” and two streams on the property are spawning grounds for steelhead, according to the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In July, the Legislature approved the use of \$1.3 million from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help purchase the land, as part of House Bill 5006. Other money for the acquisition comes from more than \$1 million in mitigation fees that utilities paid to the state, \$225,000 from the Trust for Public Land, a \$135,000 Oregon Parks and Recreation Department grant and donations from two wild sheep groups.

The state will not use hunting and fishing license fees on the purchase, according to an Oregon Department of



Courtesy of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is close to a deal to acquire a more than 10,000-acre ranch on the Lower Deschutes River, including Oak Creek Canyon pictured here.

Fish and Wildlife document.

Jeremy Thompson, a district wildlife biologist for the agency in The Dalles, said the property is important “because of the unique habitats in the Deschutes and the ability to tie together a large landscape of public ground in the canyon.”

“Being able to have the entire Oak Creek drainage, and have the ability to try to manage fisheries habitat in that, will be exciting for us,” Thompson said, referring to one of the steelhead spawning grounds.

The existing Lower Deschutes River

wildlife area is a popular location for people to view bighorn sheep, and it’s also a good place for bird watching with habitat for raptors, migratory songbirds and game birds, according to the agency.

Thompson said the Department of Fish and Wildlife will also continue to allow livestock grazing on the property as a management tool.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife already owns or manages 20 wildlife or recreation areas across the state, with a total of more than 200,000 acres.

Likely tsunami debris bagged and barged to Seattle

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — Hundreds of tons of marine debris have been collected from the shores of Alaska and British Columbia as part of an unprecedented cleanup effort that an organizer says barely made a dent in the rubbish that remains on beaches.

A barge heaped with white, heavy-duty bags and loose piles of Styrofoam, bottles, commercial fishing gear, thousands of large buoys and floats and other debris arrived in Seattle on Thursday, three weeks after picking up its first load in Kodiak, Alaska.

Some of the debris collected likely was swept to sea by the 2011 tsunami in Japan, which killed thousands of people. But marine debris in general, including rubbish such as plastics and fishing nets, is an ongoing environmental problem.

In Seattle, volunteers will have to pick through the piles, sorting what can be recycled or returned and what must be taken by train to a disposal site in Oregon. Sorting isn’t expected to begin until next month and could take a couple weeks to complete, said Janna Stewart, tsunami marine debris coordinator with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Still, project organizers were relieved when the barge docked in Seattle after a largely uneventful journey. There were no major weather delays along the way that would have racked up costs, and the bags held up as they were hoisted by helicopter to the barge from often remote, rocky beaches.

“Having it come in was just incredibly gratifying,” Stewart said.

Officials say the project, unprecedented in scale in Alaska, was spurred by the amount of material that has washed ashore; the high cost of shuttling small boatloads of debris from remote sites to port; and a demand by the Anchorage landfill that fishing nets and lines — common debris items — be chopped up, a task that Stewart called impossible.

The mass of debris collected and loaded onto the barge, which is roughly the size of a football field, represents just 1 to 2 percent of the cleanup work that remains in Alaska, said Chris Pallister, president of the cleanup organization Gulf of Alaska Keeper, which coordinated the project.

Alaska has more coastline than all other coastal states combined, and Pallister estimates that crews could fill the barge three more



Alan Berner/The SeattleTimes via AP

This 300-foot-long barge, part of a two-year, multi-national shoreline cleanup project, is docked at Seattle's Waste Management on Friday. The barge will be unloaded of its 3,000 “super sacks” of 400-pound debris, much of it from the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which was carried to Alaskan and Canadian shores. In a few weeks, the debris will be sorted to be identified and, if possible, recycled. Anything remaining will go to the Columbia Ridge landfill. Mount Rainier is in the background.

times from what remains on one island alone, Montague Island in the Gulf of Alaska.

The area on Montague that needs to be cleaned is 74 miles long, Pallister said. Over the past three summers, cleanup crews have covered 10 miles of that stretch and filled at least 1,300 heavy-duty “super-sacks,” he said.

Many of sites that have been cleaned are remote — not the kind of beaches that attract tourists. But it’s important to clean the areas since disintegrating foam can seep into salmon streams or be ingested by birds, Stewart said. There is also concern with the impact

of broken-down plastic on marine life.

Pallister worries about securing funding to continue the cleanup work. The barge project was funded in part with \$900,000 from the state’s share of a \$5 million gift from the Japanese government for states affected by tsunami debris. Pallister’s group committed \$100,000. The total cost of the project was still being tallied.

The barge arrived in Kodiak on July 15, where it loaded debris collected in that region in 2013 and 2014. Most of the collection sites were in Alaska, with

the last stop in Alaska near Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. There also was a pickup site in British Columbia.

It can be hard to distinguish tsunami debris from run-of-the-mill debris without identifiable markers.

Before the tsunami, a lot of old fishing gear would land on beaches. But afterward, there was an inundation of Styrofoam and urethane foam used for things like building insulation that has continued to be found, Pallister said. Property stakes and crates used by fishermen in Japan also have shown up.

BRIEFLY

Portland Art Museum to return sacred Crow artifacts to tribe

PORTLAND (AP) — The Portland Art Museum will be returning 18 ceremonial packages to Montana’s Crow Indian Reservation decades after the sacred artifacts were taken from the tribe.

The *Oregonian* reports the museum announced Wednesday that the tribe will get back their medicine bundles, which are typically wrapped in a piece of animal hide and contain everything from beads, seeds, arrowheads and shells.

The museum’s director of collections and exhibitions, Donald Urquhart, says Native antiquities and arts dealers sold the 18 Crow medicine bundles to a Eugene collector sometime between 1970 and 1990. The woman then donated them to the museum beginning in the 1980s up until her death in 2004.

Urquhart says the tribe will work with Little Big Horn College in Montana to identify possible owners of the artifacts.



Health care company sues Eugene newspaper over records release

EUGENE (AP) — Shareholders of a Eugene company that manages services to about 95,000 Lane County Oregon Health Plan patients are suing the publisher of *The Register-Guard* to try to stop the state from releasing some records.

The *Register-Guard* reports that shareholders of Agate Resources Inc., the parent company of Trillium Community Health Plan filed a lawsuit against Guard Publishing Co., saying that disclosing the names and ownership interest of Agate shareholders would invade their personal privacy and threaten their professional reputations without serving any public interest.

Agate submitted the names and ownership stakes of shareholders to the Oregon Department of Consumer Services in connection to the company’s proposed sale.

Earlier this year, the state agency denied the newspaper’s records request, but an appeal to the Oregon Department of Justice later forced the agency to disclose the records.

Little League vice president charged in theft of baseball gloves

OREGON CITY (AP) — Oregon City police say the vice president of the Clackamas Little League has been arrested on a theft charge.

Sgt. Matthew Paschall says 33-year-old Kerry Edward Davis turned himself in Thursday, a day after a sporting goods store called to report the theft of three high-end baseball gloves. The gloves’ total value was more than \$1,000.

Police say the theft was captured on video surveillance, and the store was able to identify the suspect from a credit card he used after taking the gloves.

Davis was booked into the Clackamas County Jail. Bail was set at \$15,000.

Comments sought on navigation channel environmental review

PORTLAND (AP) — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking public comments on a draft environmental review for continued maintenance of the Columbia River Federal Navigation Channel.

The proposed maintenance includes placement of dredged material on the shoreline of Rice Island, just upstream from Astoria. The goal is to rebuild and protect the existing placement site and allow development of a forage area for streaked horned larks, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Maintenance also includes re-handling of dredged material at an in-water site near Howard Island, located where the Cowlitz River meets the Columbia. It’s needed because sediment deposition is forming too far away from the island for a dredge to directly pump that material to the existing placement site.

The public comment period ends Sept. 7, 2015.



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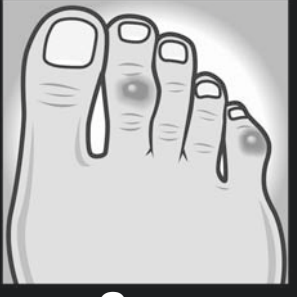
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