

Effort to save local rainforest reserve wins large grant

A portion of North Coast characterized by scientists as the “Galapagos Islands of Oregon” moved a big step closer to permanent conservation last month.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board announced a \$2.13 million grant to North Coast Land Conservancy. With the grant, the nonprofit land trust has raised a total of \$8.1 million and is launching a campaign to raise the final \$1.9 million needed to complete its landmark marine reserve project.

“Many people have worked for so many years to conserve this spectacular coastal gem,” said Katie Voelke, NCLC executive director. “Thank you to everyone who has come together to get the project this far.”

The conservancy is in the third year of a five-year effort to acquire what it calls the Rainforest Reserve: 3,500 acres of forested coastline south of Arch Cape, adjacent to Oswald West State Park and above Cape Falcon Marine Reserve.

When complete, the reserve will create an uninterrupted 32-square-mile conservation corridor stretching from the coastal range to the sandy



Above: The mountainous horizon line south of Cannon Beach includes the peaks of the proposed Rainforest Reserve (photo by Justin Bailie).

Right: Chambers painbrush is found only within the proposed reserve and on one nearby peak (courtesy NCLC).



seabed and rocky reefs of the shore.

“Times of crisis and upheaval such as what we are experiencing nationwide remind us of our need for nature and its healing power,” Voelke said. “Wide open spaces are food for our souls.”

The Galapagos comparison stems from the area’s geological history and biological

diversity. An unusual mix of plants and animals are found in the area.

The property includes the headwaters of streams providing drinking water to Cannon Beach and Arch Cape. So conservation of the Rainforest Reserve will help ensure clean drinking water for residents and visitors and will help lower water treatment costs.

Protection of the proposed Rainforest Reserve has been a goal of coastal conservationists for decades. Seventy years ago, Oregon’s first state parks superintendent, Sam Boardman, characterized the property as “one of the greatest opportunities for creating one of the outstanding natural parks in the nation.”

In 2016, North Coast Land Conservancy entered talks with Ecotrust Forest Management, a forestland investment management company that promotes sustainable forestry. That led Onion Peak Holdings, a subsidiary of Ecotrust, to purchase 5,000 acres of forest from Stimson Lumber Company.

NCLC immediately signed a purchase and sales agreement with the owner, giving the conservancy five years to raise the money needed to buy the property. Arch Cape Water

District is meanwhile working to acquire an additional 1,500 acres to create a community forest with support from the conservancy.

The grant awarded to NCLC is unusually large.

“Our land acquisition grant program is very competitive and seeks to protect places with a high ecological value,” said Katie Duzik, a director with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. “The Rainforest Reserve property was selected ... (because) the opportunity to acquire a large intact forest on the immediate coast for conservation is uncommon.”

North Coast Land Conservancy has its headquarters in Seaside and is protecting 52 habitat reserves and conservation easements totaling nearly 5,000 acres between the Columbia River and Siletz Bay.

Children still can get free meals

Two summer meal programs for children continue to operate in Warrenton.

Warrenton-Hammond School District continues its meal offerings along several bus routes. The meals also can be picked up at Warrenton Grade School from 10 to

10:45 a.m. and from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays through summer.

Meals next week include muffins, toaster tarts, blueberry waffles, cereal, and sausage-pancake sticks for breakfast. Burgers, chicken nuggets, chicken tacos, turkey hot dogs, and deep-dish pizza for lunch. Each bag also contains two servings of fruit, carrot and celery sticks and an extra snack such as crackers.

For information, call 861-2281.

A program during Camp Rosenbaum, offered at Camp Rilea, provides free breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is from 7 to 8 a.m. and lunch is from noon to 1 p.m. July 19-24 at 33168 Patriot Way. For information on the Rilea program, call 503-504-2169.

The meals are free and open to all children.

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