

Rainforest Reserve campaign nearing its \$10 million goal

A Clatsop County nonprofit wildland preservation group won a large grant to preserve a local stretch of rainforest and now is appealing to the public to raise the rest of the funds it needs for the project.

North Coast Land Conservancy received a \$400,000 grant from M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust for its Rainforest Reserve landmark conservation project.

The proposed Rainforest Reserve is a 3,500-acre tract of forested coastline south of Arch Cape, adjacent to Oswald West State Park and above Cape Falcon Marine Reserve. When completed, the reserve will create an uninterrupted 32-square-mile conservation corridor stretching from the summits of 3,000-foot peaks — the horizon visible south of Cannon Beach — to Short Sand Beach and the sandy seabed and rocky reefs of the ocean.

“Once again, the Rainforest Reserve rises to the top because of the incredible place it is,” said Katie Voelke, executive director of the conservancy. “The Murdock Trust is the last big funder we have reached out to and, after a rigorous screening process, they chose to support us generously. This grant is a win for all who love the Oregon Coast.”

Creeks high in the reserve provide drinking water to local communities. Allowing this stretch of temperate rainforest to grow to maturity will help mitigate the effects of climate change by drawing down carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in the trees.

“We believe the strongest and most sustainable solutions come from a spirit of collaboration,” said Steve Moore, executive director of the Murdock Trust. “Orga-



Tom Horning/North Coast Land Conservancy
A view of Onion Peak in the proposed reserve south of Cannon Beach.

nizations like the North Coast Land Conservancy help our communities thrive by working to build solutions that serve the common good through an inclusive approach. We are grateful for their efforts to help preserve and protect the natural beauty of our region while also modeling a collaborative method to find solutions.”

With support from the community, NCLC hopes to complete fundraising and take



Voelke

ownership of all property within the reserve by the end of 2021. Gifts from individual donors, public agencies, and private foundations have now contributed \$9.3 million toward the campaign goal of \$10 million, leaving \$700,000 yet to be raised.

“This grant award launches us into the last stretch of this marathon campaign,” Voelke added. “It’s all hands in now. Every donation counts.”

More information about

the Rainforest Reserve and a donation link can be found at NCLCtrust.org/creating-a-rainforest-reserve.

NCLC launched its Rainforest Reserve campaign in 2016 when it signed a purchase and sales agreement with Ecotrust Forest Management, a forestland investment company that had just purchased the property.

But NCLC had been negotiating with EFM and previous landowners for nearly a decade, attempting to find a

way to conserve the property, which contains rare plant and animal species. The effort to put the land into conservation began in the first half of the last century with Samuel Boardman, Oregon’s first state parks superintendent, who envisioned creating “one of the great natural parks in the nation.” Unfortunately, he wasn’t able to achieve that vision before his retirement.

The conservancy protects habitat reserves and conservation easements totaling nearly 5,000 acres between the Columbia River and Siletz Bay.



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