

Land conservancy makes plea to save Boneyard Ridge

Gallery owners Paul and Lana Jane Brent split their time between the North Coast and Panama City, Florida. They opened their home this summer to friends of the North Coast Land Conservancy as an overture to new members and potential supporters of a land purchase that could be the final jigsaw piece uniting a critical parcel between Cannon Beach and Seaside.

The Coastal Edge Initiative focuses on the entire region stretching from Tillamook Head south to Nehalem Bay and extends east to the summits of the peaks fronting the shoreline — “the headland that is visible from everywhere we are,” according to the conservancy’s Executive Director Katie Voelke, a Cannon Beach resident.

Properties supported in the initiative include Onion Peak, Ecola Creek Forest Reserve, Ecola Road Wetlands and Shorewood Wetland. Circle Creek, a 364-acre property in Seaside further lowland, was purchased by the conservancy in 2004 and is classified as part of the Necanicum Wildlife Corridor Initiative — “but classifications are squishy,” Communications Coordinator Bonnie Henderson said. “Some properties fit into more than one initiative.”

In May, the conservancy announced intent to purchase the 360-acre Boneyard Ridge property between Circle Creek and Ecola Forest Reserve.

“If you drive along 101 to south of Seaside and you’re looking across Necanicum to the Circle Creek property, all the land that rises above that, that’s Boneyard Ridge,” Henderson said. “It’s a big part of Seaside’s backdrop.”

CANNON SHOTS

By
R.J.
MARX



The site’s dramatic name came from the discovery of elk bones by hunters on the property, she added.

The purchase would create 3,500 connected acres from the summit of Tillamook Head to the Necanicum River Valley. The conservancy’s goal is to allow the land to mature into a complex rain forest of the kind that once characterized headlands all along the Oregon Coast.

“The big win here would be the entire rain forest,” she said. “All the trees that will be allowed to grow to maturity, and the understory plants. When that happens, and while it’s happening, dozens of species benefit, from microorganisms in the soil to little voles and red-legged frogs on the forest floor and owls above.”

Everything that lives in the coastal forest.”

While the property does not have ocean access, conservancy members intend to open Boneyard Ridge to the public.

“It would be a great community benefit, not to mention an incredible contiguous wildlife habitat,” Henderson said.

Purchase price, and a goal in sight

According to Voelke, the conservancy is negotiating with landowners GreenWood Resources, a global timber management corporation, formerly known as Willamette, Weyerhaeuser and Campbell — “same company, different name.”

The price tag for the property — “well over \$1 million” and possibly as high as \$1.8 million, according to Henderson, is considered within reach, especially with a \$524,000 matching fund grant from Oregon’s Watershed Enhancement Board announced April 29. In addition, Henderson announced this week the conservancy raised an additional \$500,000 from an anonymous donor. Those funds, she said, are not specifically earmarked for Boneyard Ridge but could be used for its purchase.

Efforts throughout the North Coast

“Along with events in Seaside, over the next few years the conservancy will be reaching out even more to the community groups and individuals of Cannon Beach, Arch Cape, Falcon Cove, Arcadia Beach, Manzanita, Nehalem and others that skirt the edge in order to gain more insight and perspective into the conservation goals and community concerns, hopes, and wishes for their surrounding landscape,” North Coast Land Conservancy Executive Director Katie Voelke said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

North Coast Land Conservancy already conserves 387 acres on Onion Peak, east of Arch Cape.

In mid-August the conservancy received a grant of \$58,000 from the Meyer Memorial Trust for the conservancy’s efforts, along with commitments from Cannon Beach Community Grants program and the Marine Reserves partnership.

“These donations are for the conservancy’s conservation planning from the areas of Tillamook Head to Neahkahnie Mountain,” Voelke said Monday. “Support like these grants makes it possible for us to do the on-the-ground work that leads to acquisitions such as Boneyard Ridge.”

While negotiations are far from complete, the conservancy hopes to raise the money by October 2016, before the state grant expires.

Members are confident they can raise what it takes. For one thing, they have a willing seller.

“We only work with willing sellers and these people are willing to sell it,” Henderson said. “That’s a core piece of the land trust. We don’t hug trees and chain ourselves to

anything. If you want to sell, that’s great. We don’t try to strong-arm anyone. If we can come up with the money by hook or by crook, great. This is one of those properties.”

With the clock ticking, the conservancy is in what Henderson called “full-bore” fundraising mode from private citizens, public agencies and private foundations. The Circle Creek purchase in 2004 was made possible by the combined efforts of more than 50 individuals and organizations. The North Coast Land Conservancy will have to duplicate those efforts to acquire Boneyard Ridge.

“When you’re on the highway looking up, wondering, ‘Is that public land? Will it be harvested?’ Will it always be there?” We have the chance,” Voelke said at the Brents’ Seaside house party. “If we all keep working on this, it will. I will, hopefully, be here a year from now celebrating that acquisition.”

“Cheers to here!” she added, a toast that seemed most appropriate.

Uncorked Ramblings STEVEN SINKLER

We’re looking forward to next year in wine country

As things in town have begun to slow down, we’ve already begun the process of reviewing the 2015 summer season and preparing both Provisions 124 and The Wine Shack for 2016. I’m a firm believer that if you aren’t working to improve your business, then you’re going to fall behind your competition. In the wine business, competition is fierce and it is everywhere: on the internet, in the supermarket, and in the customer’s hometown wine shop. These are tough competitors. Every week, we have more customers showing us wines, ratings and prices on their smartphones. It’s clear that our customers have more access to wine information than ever before.

We opened the Provisions 124 gourmet market just before the summer season kicked in and we set out

to offer local, artisan and delicious products that you couldn’t find everywhere. For the most part, we’ve accomplished that. Our small but mighty cheese selection draws rave reviews with customers. I knew that people were looking for options other than those from large cheese factories, but we really didn’t have an understanding of how much people love their cheese. We do now. There have been a number of similar surprises and learnings, but I’ll save those for another column.

The Wine Shack has been a fixture in Cannon Beach since 1977. Since we purchased “The Shack” in 2012, we’ve made some smaller changes that may have gone relatively unnoticed, such as a new store layout and changing to Reidel glasses for wine tasting. We’ve also made some more noticeable



STEVEN SINKLER

changes, such as a new store logo, new website, new flooring, changing our wine selection to promote Pacific Northwest wines and of course, opening up the wall and expanding the space with Provisions 124.

We plan to keep improving the interior of The Wine Shack. Planned improvements for 2016 include new energy efficient lighting, new wine racks, new interior signage and the addition of a couple of design

elements to give the store a more updated look and feel. I also expect that we’ll make some adjustments to our wine selections as well. The interest in European wines continues to wane, while the interest in excellent local selections continues to grow. The Wine Shack needs to be the “go to” place on the Oregon Coast for the very finest wines from Oregon and Washington.

The other area we will work on is improving the customer experience and customer loyalty. We want to make sure customers have a good time while they’re in our store and will come back to The Wine Shack the next time they are in Cannon Beach and recommend The Wine Shack to their friends. I’m terrible at remembering customers’ names and it doesn’t help that we may only see a customer once or twice a

year. Customers want to be appreciated and we’ll work on identifying our best customers and welcoming them by name. We’ll do more in-store wine tastings as those seem to be the perfect way to get people to loosen up a bit and have a bit more fun while they’re in the store.

It’s great to have a customer come into The Wine Shack once, but we really want to create a lifelong customer. The cash register system we use, Square Point of Service, will help us to improve customer loyalty. Square has recently added a customer database capability that will allow us to track our customer’s purchase history. This is an enhancement that I’ve been asking Square to add for over a year. Last year, Square began offering gift cards and loyalty discount programs. We’ve had suc-

cess with the loyalty discount program, but we haven’t used their gift card program yet. I expect we’ll be active in both programs in 2016.

We also plan to create a “wine club” so our customers can get their Puffin wine, Oregon pinot noir and Washington red wine throughout the year. We had planned to launch the wine club for 2015, but that got put on hold once we started working on Provisions 124. Customers who join the wine club will receive special perks and discounts, but we see this as our key customer group who will get the very finest services we can provide.

So, although the quiet season is approaching, we have a lot on our “to do list.” We’ll get crackin’ on the list and see you the next time you visit Cannon Beach.

LETTERS

Should you limb up evergreen trees?

Should you limb up evergreen trees? The answer to this question is usually no. To remove full limbs from an evergreen tree is a very permanent decision that should be made carefully. For many evergreens, especially young pines and spruces of all ages, the limb structure is part of what makes the tree strong. The lower limbs of the tree support the upper limbs in times of sever weather or heavy snow, and their removal can have a permanent effect on the tree.

For aesthetic reasons, these branches are also best left untouched. There is no

question that an evergreen tree looks best when grown in a natural state, with branches growing naturally from the ground up. A pine tree will shed some lower branches as it ages all by itself, where a spruce will normally stick close to the ground forever if left uncut. Trees that are limbed up can look anything from odd to plain silly.

If you are considering this pruning technique because a tree was planted in the wrong spot such as right next to a sidewalk or driveway, a better solution may be removal and replanting the area with a proper tree.

Diane Amos
Elizabeth Lorish



REX AMOS/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

An example of “toilet brush” pruning in Cannon Beach.

Dedicated to saving region’s seabirds

Wildlife Center of the North Coast honors late founder Sharnelle Fee

EO Media Group

Sharnelle Fee, a former paralegal who founded the Wildlife Center of the North Coast and dedicated much of her life to helping animals, especially seabirds, died Sept. 14. She was 68.

The wildlife center announced that Josh Saranpaa, Fee’s understudy for nearly eight years and assistant director for the last year and a half, would take over as director.

“I spent the last eight years learning from her,” Saranpaa, 23, said of Fee, adding he thought of her like family.

For the last five years, Saranpaa said, he’s been the only other licensed animal rehabilitator. Fee trained him as if he was taking over, he said, but the expectation was he’d leave and go to college. But life took a different turn, Saranpaa said, and he’s happy to be doing what he loves at the wildlife center.

The center will soon announce a celebration of life for Fee, who is survived by a brother in Dayton.

A change of life

After spending a quarter century as a paralegal at Davis Wright Tremaine in

Portland, Fee took a sabbatical in 1991. She started volunteering with the owl rehabilitation program at the Oregon Zoo, which Fee said sparked her interest in wildlife.

For the next eight years, Fee balanced her career and volunteer work with the Audubon Society of Portland, a turtle rehabilitation program in Beaverton and even weekends at the Avian Medical Center in Lake Oswego, where she learned surgical skills.

Fee eventually became licensed by the state and federal governments to rehabilitate animals out of her home, and applied for non-profit status to start a wildlife center. After a divorce, the death of her father and hip replacement, Fee sold her house in Portland, left her job and made her way to Olney, where she had purchased 105 acres.

Coming to the coast

In a 2008 interview, Fee said she moved to the North Coast to help seabirds.



SHARNELLE FEE



FILE PHOTO/EO MEDIA GROUP

Sharnelle Fee, the director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, shows off a sand-dollar-sized wound on the back of a white pelican chick last year. The wound is the result of an encounter with a bald eagle.

“They’re challenging because most of them live way out in the ocean,” she said. “If they’re in on land, they’re not only out of their element, but they’re in bad shape and so it’s difficult to get them back into condition, treating their wounds.”

Her pet project at the wildlife center has grown to handle between 2,000 and 3,000 animals a year, mostly birds. Saranpaa said the center has more than 100 murrelets, a penguin-like bird of the cooler northern oceans found all along the West Coast, that have been

washing up on beaches. The wildlife center’s speculation is that the murrelets are having a harder time finding food in warm ocean temperatures.

The center has more room for birds, he said, but they are asking people to bring the birds to the center, which is short on staff and volunteers.

The center receives no direct government funding, other than a small grant it applies for from Cannon Beach. It depends largely on donations and volunteers, with only Saranpaa and another part-time staffer.