

Cleaning up the local beaches requires year-round vigilance

Volunteers come together to keep beach clean

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

Summer's over, but garbage on the beach is a year-round concern. The Parks and Community Services Committee wants people to remember the beach is not just a playground for residents and visitors, but a natural habitat. Along with the city of Cannon Beach, Chamber of Commerce and Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, the city is working on a campaign encouraging residents and visitors alike to keep the beach clean.

A complaint was first brought to the committee this summer. "People were tending to stake out spots on the beach for their vacation," Committee Chairwoman Barb Knop said, and some hotels were leaving chairs out overnight. "We decided to tackle the problem through education."

Representatives from the Parks Committee attended chamber board meetings where members agreed to help. The chamber sent out weekly newsletters to hotels and rental homes to remind guests to bring their items back with them, rather than leave them overnight.

But it continued to happen, so the Parks Committee brought in Tracy Sund, with the city's Public Works Department, and Matt Rippee, from Oregon Parks and Recreation, to discuss education and enforcement tactics.

Sund performs beach cleanup on Mondays and Fridays over the summer, retrieving big and small items, like towels. Civilians like Pam Chorlton Chater and Karen Voyt help out, too. Chater and Voyt picked up "at least a shopping bag filled with trash each and every day," Chater said. She also bought magnets to drag through the sand and retrieve as many nails and other sharp items as she could.

During the March cleanup, 200 feet of fishing rope were found in Cannon Beach.

After the Labor Day weekend storm, Sund found 50 broken chair pieces spread out across the beach from Gower Street to Chapman Point.

Knop said the chamber worked with the hotels leaving out chairs this summer to come up with a plan. They have cooperated and made some changes, she added.

Sund cleans up 100 cubic yards of marine debris



COURTESY OF TRACY SUND

Hotel chairs were strewn across the beach after a Labor Day weekend storm.

a year, and it is not unusual to retrieve four bushels of trash a week during the tourist season.

August is the messiest month, he added, as people try to squeeze out the last of summer.

Sund said he has seen tourists leave items on the beach intentionally and unintentionally. He can usually tell the difference, pointing out items left next to a chair. Those, he said, were likely left behind believing a hotel cabana boy would retrieve them.

Sund donates much of what he finds to Goodwill or recycles it.

One of the committee members is working on a brochure with a message for visitors: Leave the beach as you find it. It's a topic the committee will hit hard again in February, before the tourist season begins. The state has the power to enforce penalties when there are Beach Bill violations, but Knop said they're focusing on education.

"The beach is everything," Sund said. "The town owes the beach everything. We're nothing without it."

Which is why he wants Cannon Beach to keep it pristine and "cultivate a sense of place."



SUBMITTED PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Garbage collected by volunteers is a hazard along city beaches.

Summer sewage spill draws \$1,800 fine

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

A July sewage spill in Cannon Beach has led to an \$1,800 fine, levied by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in late September.

"DEQ issued this penalty because raw sewage is a significant pollutant that can harm aquatic life, contaminate drinking water and impair recreational, commercial and agricultural uses of water," according to an Oregon Department of Environmental Quality news release. "Discharging sewage poses a substantial threat to both public health and the environment."

On July 20, the city cordoned off a portion of its beach after an equipment failure resulted in 11,000 gallons of untreated sewage spilling onto the sand in front of Wayfarer Restaurant and Lounge.

Public Works Director Dan Grassick said the internal power supply to the Gower Street pump station's computer stopped working around 5:30 a.m. and alarms routed through the unit never went off. An emergency overflow pipe, permitted by DEQ, sent the sewage onto the sand instead of the middle of town.

One of Cannon Beach's Public Works' employees walked along the beach around 7:30 a.m. and noticed the spill.

The city "immediately responded," Grassick said, manually restarting the pump and removing contaminated sand. The area was marked off, signs were put up and DEQ, along with the Oregon Emergency Response System, were notified.

After the incident, Ecola Creek Watershed Council Chair Mike Manzulli said the city should have "closed the beach until the outfall water tested safe" and informed the public about the spill.

There weren't any notices posted on the city's website, Grassick said, because the spill didn't make it to the surf.

Thomas Lossen with the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program said a public advisory would have been issued discouraging water contact had the contaminated water met the ocean. OBMP tests and issues advisories for marine water only.

The Ecola Creek Watershed Council has since asked the city "to go above the state requirements" and better notify the public when readings are high. Using the E. coli test for freshwater, Public Works reopened the affected spillage area the following weekend in July after bacteria numbers dropped to a safe level. The state safety threshold is 406 organisms per 100 milliliters. The presence of enterococci and E. coli may indicate pathogenic bacteria that can cause short-term health effects, such as diarrhea, cramps and nausea if ingested, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"DEQ appreciates the city's work to correct the violation by immediately placing public warning signs around the discharge, cleaning up contaminated beach sand and improving the pump station equipment to prevent a repeat occurrence," DEQ's news release said. "DEQ considered these efforts when determining the amount of the penalty."

In Grassick's October report to the City Council, he wrote the fine was the minimum "for an overflow and based on failure of the alarm's systems at the station — an issue that was immediately corrected and is not an issue at any other lift station."

The Gower Street pump station's alarm system is now independent of its computer unit to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Trash, by the numbers

SOLVE is a nonprofit organization that restores natural spaces and facilitates events each year in Oregon. In late September, SOLVE held a beach cleanup statewide. More than **5,000** volunteers assisted in removing trash. About **60,000** pounds of trash and marine debris were collected from **120** sites.

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The City of Cannon Beach is pleased to announce that all ten Tsunami Evacuation Pedestrian Route Maps have been updated based on the latest information from the State of Oregon.

These maps can be downloaded from the city webpage www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us/community/evacuationmaps.html
They can also be purchased at **Copies and Fax, 171 Sunset Blvd., Cannon Beach** for a nominal cost.



City Manager Brant Kucera hopes that everyone will view the new Tsunami Evacuation Pedestrian Route Maps and makes copies for their home or business. Brant also asks that we remember "the life you save may be your own, a family member, or neighbor." Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPREP) Chair Karolyn Adamson thanks all the staff and volunteers who worked on this project. Karolyn says she hopes that Cannon Beach will continue to be a leader in emergency preparedness with a focus on "the Big One."

Mayor Sam Steidel reminds everyone to practice their evacuation routes and to have their personal Go Bag handy.

Welcome Dr. Wisbey Martin

Erin Wisbey Martin, MD
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Dr. Wisbey Martin specializes in Women's Health (*Obstetrics and Gynecology*) and Family Medicine. She is accepting new patients and looking forward to building a practice in North Tillamook County. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Wisbey Martin and her husband to the community.

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