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Chad Durand of Clearway Environmental, LLC, kicks off LNWC's Speaker Series for 2016 with a special presentation on the council's Lower Nehalem Watershed Culvert Assessment project Jan. 14.

Fish passage tops 2016 concerns

'Big projects' in future for the watershed council

By Dave Fisher
For the Cannon Beach Gazette

With its annual meeting and speakers series event two weeks away, the Lower Nehalem Watershed Council finds itself looking ahead to summer to complete a couple of, what council coordinator Alix Lee describes as, "big projects." But, first things first.

At its public meeting Thursday, Jan. 14, at the Pine Grove Community House in Manzanita, Lee, will present to the membership for approval the nominees for the 2016 board of directors, charged with guiding LNWC activities over the next year.

A major step taken by the council to increase its capacity and ability to accomplish its mission took place last August when a resolution was adopted to elect members of the steering committee to the newly created board of directors. LNCT Chair George Hemingway stepped down and board member Samantha Ferber was nominated to fill the position.

"It was a strategic change, which was really a big thing for us," said Lee, who has served as coordinator since September 2014.

In "streamlining" how the LNWC conducts business, by amending its articles of incorporation and by-laws, decisions no longer require a vote of the general membership and are left to the discretion of the board. In addition to electing the 2016 board at the January 14 meeting, candidates for membership will be considered as well.

Founded in 1997, the LNWC is dedicated to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the Nehalem Watershed through leadership, cooperation, and education.

The LNWC's area of focus is the portion of the 855-square mile Nehalem watershed lying south and west of Highway 26, including the North Fork Nehalem, Salmonberry River, Cook Creek, and Nehalem Bay sub-basins. The drainage area of the lower watershed is roughly 300 square miles and includes small pools at the headwaters of

tributary streams, the main channel of the Nehalem River, and tidal marshes and wetlands of the estuary.

As summer 2016 approaches, said Lee, the LNWC looks to complete a couple of ongoing projects in the Lower Nehalem Watershed, one of which is replacement of a failing tide gate on the McDonald Slough near Nehalem. The project is a collaboration between the LNWC and landowner who operates a family-run dairy on the property.

"Once completed it will allow for better fish passage to the slough while still allowing active farming on the property," Lee said, noting that the project was another example of the LNWC working with a local agricultural.

The new tide gate system consists of two concrete box culverts equipped with muted tidal regulator devices. The devices will control the opening and closing of the tide gates and allow much longer periods where the gates will remain open each day, thereby providing many more hours when the slough can function more naturally and increase fish passage and utilization. Water quality and fish passage will be monitored for five years following installation of the new system.

Another large scale fish passage project, slated for summer 2016, is located at Jetty Creek. Here, the LNWC is partnering with the City of Rockaway Beach to address the final fish passage barrier on the creek, located just upstream from the mouth of the Nehalem River. Jetty Creek is also the primary drinking water source for Rockaway Beach.

The stream has 1.8 miles of high quality salmon spawning and rearing habitat; however, fish passage is severely limited by the presence of a low head dam near the stream's confluence with Nehalem Bay. The diversion creates the necessary water surface elevation to support drinking water withdrawal but also limits fish passage. The project will address the issues by creating a natural bypass channel around the diversion and impoundment for fish to utilize.

Rolling out the green carpet

Cannon Beach OKs Haystack Gardens' fake turf lawn

By Andrew Tonry
Cannon Beach Gazette

Despite initial objections, an artificial turf lawn will be rolled out at Martin Hospitality's Haystack Gardens Retreat Center by May.

The Cannon Beach Design Board unanimously approved a plan for significant outdoor renovation to the event space at 148 E. Gower St., across from City Hall on Thursday, Dec. 17.

The approved additions include a new 6-foot wooden fence, stone retaining walls that double as seating, 12 lighting bollards, two covered areas, a swath of additional soft landscaping, and the installation of nearly 6,000 square feet of artificial turf. The inclusion of the artificial lawn was the project's lone point of contention at the meeting.

"I don't think (artificial turf) really belongs in our town," Cannon Beach resident Jan Siebert-Wahrmund said. "It doesn't fit the image of Cannon Beach. We need to seriously look at this."

Dave Norstedt, representing Haystack Gardens, made his case for the artificial surface.

"With our climate here, it's so difficult to maintain that lawn," Norstedt said.



ANDREW TONRY/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

From left, architect Mike Skidmore; design board members Mike Morgan, Marc Bates and Jenee Pearce; applicant Dave Norstedt; board members Sandi Lundy and Todd Rowley and City Planner Mark Barnes discuss the Haystack Gardens proposal.

"Either way, when you have 200 people out there for an event for four or five hours it's hard to do one the next day, or even the next weekend."

Norstedt said maintenance of the artificial turf would be easier than caring for the lawn.

Siebert-Wahrmund said she was concerned approval of an artificial turf plan could set a precedent.

"I don't think it's a good direction for us to go as a community, a community that cares about nature," Siebert-Wahrmund said. "We care very much about how we do things here and I don't think this fits. It's a bad step."

Design Review Board member Mike Morgan agreed. "I don't think (arti-

ficial turf) should be in any way acceptable landscaping for public view," Morgan said.

But since the property is out of public view, the plan would be acceptable, Morgan said.

Board members asked how Haystack Gardens' outdoor renovation proposal would overlap with a previously approved plan to build a multifamily dwelling on the property. The plan for that apartment building — not yet built — overlaps slightly with the proposed outdoor renovations.

With the help of City Planner Mark Barnes, the new proposal was amended to accommodate both the outdoor renovation and apartment building designs.

When and if construction on the apartment building begins, overlapping artificial turf could be rolled back.

Construction on the multifamily unit is intended to offer dormitory-style housing to Martin Hospitality's seasonal employees. A start date for the project has not been determined, Norstedt said.

"The apartment building is on hold," Norstedt said. "The cost of construction is a little bit higher than we anticipated right now, and we're just weighing our options."

The landscape renovations, however, have a target date.

"We want to be ready for the wedding season," Norstedt said. "So we should have it completed by May."

Cape Falcon Marine Reserve site established

After many years of planning and public involvement, the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve site went into effect on Jan. 1. This site is located in the ocean just off the northern coast, between Falcon Cove and Manzanita, Oregon and is an area dedicated to conservation and scientific research.

Just like parks and protected natural areas on land, there are multiple benefits of protected areas in the ocean. They conserve ocean wildlife and biodi-

versity, including various local invertebrate and fish species. Protected areas can also extend benefits to marine birds and mammals that use these areas. These sites also serve as living laboratories, where we can learn about marine reserve protections and Oregon's ocean environment to help us maintain our seas for future generations.

The Cape Falcon site includes a 12.4-mile marine reserve, where all removal of marine life and ocean development is prohibited.

Adjacent to the marine reserve are two marine protected areas. The marine protected areas still prohibit ocean development, but allow some limited fishing activities.

The marine reserve is located just offshore, roughly bordering Oswald West State Park. The north boundary is located at the north end of Falcon Cove Beach. The south boundary is located north of Manzanita, in the Neahkahmie Beach area. The Shoreside MPA is located off of Falcon Cove,

stretching along the shore from the north boundary of the marine reserve to just south of the intersection of Falcon Lane and Tide Ave. This MPA allows recreational angling from shore. The West MPA is located further offshore, west of the marine reserve. Fishing for salmon (by troll) and crabbing are allowed.

Passive recreation is still allowed. People may walk, collect shells, boogie board, and boat (with disallowed fishing gear not deployed) in the marine reserve site.

Surveys ready for mailing to homeowners in new year

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

The city of Cannon Beach will be sending out surveys next month for feedback on its strategic plan.

City Manager Brant Kucera said the council decided to go with the National Research Center's National Citizen Survey, used in cities small and large. Cannon Beach's will be customized, however.

During a Dec. 8 work session Dec. 8, the council worked to eliminate nonapplicable questions and offer suggestions for relevant ones to add.

Kucera said those addition suggestions include topics such as affordable housing, short term rent-

als, parking and marijuana sales. Questions regarding issues like snow removal will be eliminated.

"Because of the size of the community, they (council members) said they'd survey all households," Kucera said.

Councilor George Vetter said one challenge of the survey is post office mail delivery only. Some residents use their business post office box to receive personal mail and the city doesn't plan to send surveys to business addresses, he added.

Kucera said he believes mail deliverers will be able to figure out if a resident is attached to a business address.

Vetter said another challenge they face is that "the experience of living in Cannon Beach during July and August is quite different from most other months."

The strategic plan itself is a two-year process, but will also include plans for the next five and 10 years. It will help guide future city policies and goals.

The shorter termed a plan, Kucera said, the more detailed it is with a narrower time frame to get tasks done.

Request for Proposals for a strategic plan facilitator closed Nov. 30. The city received 14.

"I'm in the process of evaluating RFPs now," Kucera said. He, City Councilor Melissa Cadwallader and Mayor Sam Steidel will do telephone interviews with the top four or five firms.

The surveys to be used in strategic planning will be mailed to residents in late January and due back at the end of February.

Kucera said the city should have an analysis back by March. "The analysis is pretty complex so it takes three weeks," he added. Then the planning process will begin, with adoption of a strategic plan likely in June.

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