

# CANNON BEACH GAZETTE



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## FROM FARM TO PRESERVE

### Conservancy buys Boneyard Ridge, plans to add walking trails



SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Lyra Fontaine  
Cannon Beach Gazette

**N**orth Coast Land Conservancy will permanently conserve Boneyard Ridge, a former commercial tree farm on Tillamook Head, with the goal of helping the property mature into a high-functioning temperate rainforest.

The nonprofit organization finalized the \$1.3 million acquisition of the 340-acre parcel July 27.

The land is adjacent to Elmer Feldeheimer State Natural Area and Ecola State Park and west of the land conservancy's Circle Creek Habitat Reserve in the Necanicum River floodplain west of



Katie Voelke

U.S. Highway 101. "The whole ecosystem gets to flourish when you have that scale and connectivity," North Coast Land Conservancy Executive Director Katie Voelke said. "It's one of those spots in the world where a small purchase makes a huge difference."

By linking 3,500 acres of conserved areas, Boneyard Ridge — which encompasses an entire watershed — creates a habitat corridor, connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities.

"The way we will manage it, the trees will get bigger and older and there will be a greater diversity within the forest understory," Voelke said.

After decades of commercial logging, the property's current forest has trees from 10 to 60 years old, Voelke said. The land conservancy plans to take "stewardship actions that lead to an old, complex rainforest" where native plants and animals can thrive.

Boneyard Ridge is home to 2 miles of salmon-bearing streams, amphibians such as red-legged frogs and Columbia torrent salamanders, and mammals that include black bears and elk. About 90 bird species — including pileated

woodpeckers, olive-sided flycatchers, bald eagles and rufous hummingbirds — live or make a migration stopover at Boneyard Ridge.

Wildlife species at Ecola State Park, including black bears and flying squirrels, could use the Boneyard Ridge habitat as well.

The purchase was funded with a \$524,000 grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, \$500,000 from an anonymous donor, and contributions from more than 120 additional donors.

North Coast Land Conservancy has worked to conserve Boneyard Ridge in partnership with Lewis and Clark Timberlands since 2011.

In March, North Coast Land Conservancy signed a purchase

and sales agreement with Greenwood Resources and had raised \$1.1 million.

Since then, they have raised the last \$200,000 needed to make the purchase.

Voelke emphasized the land's accessibility — one can see it driving on Highway 101.

Within the next few years, the land conservancy will work to create a system of trails.

"We're really excited about being able provide trails and recreation so close to town for residents," Voelke said. "We feel like this can be a new, super special place for people who call it home ... This is something we all get to have now forever."

## Cannon Beach adopts first strategic plan

### Some call for more input

By Lyra Fontaine  
Cannon Beach Gazette

The Cannon Beach City Council has unanimously voted to adopt the city's first strategic plan, though some residents called for the council to wait another month to allow for more community input.

"I am very proud of the council and staff and the amount of dedication and work

they put into this," City Manager Brant Kucera said at the August 2 meeting. "It's the foundation we're going to need to move forward as a community. There is no good reason to delay this."

The plan, a five-year road map for the city that will be revisited every two years, is a way to "align our human resources with our budgetary resources to ensure that these priorities get done," he said.

The city's top focus is affordable housing, with goals that include adding 25 units by

2018. Officials also prioritized infrastructure planning and maintenance, emergency management, relationship with the community and effective government.

City councilors and staff removed the goal of temporarily suspending new transient lottery rentals, a topic debated at Planning Commission meetings last month.

At meetings in May, councilors and city department heads analyzed citizen survey results, discussed city issues, identified priorities and set

"measurable" goals for each priority.

"This is a working document describing our council's direction to staff and ourselves for the foreseeable future," Councilor Mike Benefield said.

Goals include establishing a mass care site at the city-owned South Wind property, deciding whether to purchase the elementary school site by the year's end, creating more downtown parking, adopting financial policies and more.

See Plan, Page 5A

## Draft flood maps shrink city's hazard zones

By Erick Bengel  
EO Media Group

New federal flood plain maps would shrink the flood hazard zones in Cannon Beach, Gearhart and Seaside and lower the estimated flood elevation level at a key levee in Warrenton.

Property owners will have a chance to see the impact of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's draft flood plain maps on Clatsop County communities at an open house next week.

The event — scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center — will focus on FEMA's latest revisions to flood maps in Gearhart, Seaside, Cannon Beach, Clatsop County and Warrenton Levee System No. 1.

The product of a multi-year countywide study, the maps — plotted with Lidar, a maps — plotting technology that uses laser — will help residents and officials determine flood hazards in certain areas. When adopted, the maps will influence development, flood insurance rates and land use decisions on the North Coast for years to come.

"There were generally decreases in the flood hazard zones, even though eleva-

tions were about the same or may have increased in some locations," said David Ratté, regional engineer with FEMA Region X, who will be presenting at the open house along with other experts.

### Reductions

Gearhart will see a roughly 8 percent reduction in the mapped 100-year flood plain, where the flood risk in any given year is 1 in 100, according to statistics from the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. Seaside's decrease is less than 8 percent. Meanwhile, Cannon Beach will see an overall decrease of about 27 percent.

In addition, FEMA has lowered the estimated flood elevation level of Warrenton Levee System No. 1. Recently, the agency provisionally deemed the levees large enough to protect properties behind it, a decision that Colleen Stelzig, a city engineer, called a "huge win for the city of Warrenton."

The county said it has mailed letters and draft maps to people in unincorporated areas who will see some of their land added to the flood hazard area.

See Zones, Page 5A

## Re-examining myths in the Middle Village

### Archaeology provides insight on fur trading era

By Lyra Fontaine  
Cannon Beach Gazette

During the Corps of Discovery's exploration of the west, Lewis and Clark described NeCus Village and campsites on the Columbia River. Written accounts are useful, but do not tell a complete story about Native American contact with European and American fur traders.

"What people say and what people do are sometimes very different things," National Park Service archaeologist Dr. Doug Wilson said at a Cannon Beach History Center and Museum guest lecture in July. "The history that we know about is written by... the conquerors that often had a bias about the way the world was."

See Myths, Page 6A



LYRA FONTAINE/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

National Park Service archaeologist Doug Wilson discusses what artifacts can tell us about a past society at a Cannon Beach History Center and Museum lecture.