

BEAVER TALES ART EXHIBITION OPENS IN SEASIDE MAY 6

# From near extinction to a place in art



Rene Eisenbart, "Busy Beaver," watercolor of beaver in natural habitat.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

By Eve Marx  
For Cannon Beach Gazette

**N**amed the "state animal" in 1969, the American beaver builds the dams and wetlands that serve as habitat for Oregon salmon, steelhead, birds, amphibians and insects.

Beavers are nature's hydrologists. "Beaver Tales: A Celebration of Beaver Art" curator Sara Vickerman, a Gearhart resident, said.

Beaver Tales originated as a traveling art show featuring beaver-themed images and art. Presentations and workshops highlighted relevant research from multiple academic disciplines at its February Oregon State University debut, asking the question, "How many ways can you see a beaver?"

The exhibit inspired a month of local beaver-related events in Seaside.

### Defender of wildlife

Vickerman retired after 37 years from Defenders of Wildlife, where her job was the conservation of wild animals in functioning ecosystems. She holds degrees in art, anthropology, biology, geography and education.

Denise Fairweather of Fairweather House and Gallery in Seaside said Vickerman is a gallery patron.

"She visited a lot during our art walk events for several years," Fairweather said. "Little by little she shared with me



Curator Sara Vickerman



Mariana Mace, "Coat of Arms, Tail, Tracks and Teeth," cedar weaving.



Beavers and their contributions to the environment are the topic of lectures and exhibits in coming months.

what her work is. She asked if I had artists who paint beavers and I said yes."

Fairweather artists Paul Brent, Mike Brown, Susan Curington, Agnes Field, Jo Pomeroy Crockett, Neal Maine and Denise Joy McFadden created new original work for this show.

### Back from brink

The beaver is a natural ally in conserving Oregon's wetlands and restoring natural systems, Vickerman said. Beavers play a central role in resuscitating stream habitats and are worthy of a statewide beaver conservation vision. The Oregon beaver was nearly exterminated by trappers by 1900.

Art exhibits, Vickerman said, are a way to raise the profile of the beaver and wetlands and Oregon artists.

"There is limited art depicting beaver and their wetlands and stream habitats," Vickerman said. The artwork exhibited in the traveling show includes photographs, paintings, prints, cards, and quilts. Some of the work is realistic, some abstract, some of it is whimsical, three-dimensional, wood, fiber art, ceramic. The exhibition at Oregon State University, which closed March 1, was viewed by thousands of people. Of the 125 pieces representing about 80 artists, 17 pieces were sold for over \$5,600 total.

Benefits from the sale of the art in support of the Wetlands Conservancy, the Necanicum Watershed Council and the North Coast Land Conservancy. Local conservation groups will host educational workshops throughout May.

Beaver Tales will be on exhibit in Seaside through May,

kicking off with the opening on May 6 from 5 to 7 p.m. as the focus of Seaside Art Walk.

On May 6, from 5 to 7 p.m., the Beaver Tales Art Exhibit becomes the month-long focus of Seaside Art Walk. Author Frances Backhouse will be at Beach Books talking about her beaver-themed book, "Once They Were Hats," from 1 to 2 p.m. Beach Books also hosts

author and illustrator Margo Greeve on May 7 from 1 to 3 p.m. The Seaside Library presents "Beaver Stories and Crafts" on May 3. The North Coast Land Conservancy presents "Stewardship at Beaver Creek" on May 6, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Seaside Brewing Co. offers the film "Leave It to Beavers" on May 11, from 6 to 9 p.m.

and Neil Maine will lecture on "Beaver Ecology" at the Fairweather Gallery on May 25 at 7 p.m.

Fairweather Gallery is located at 612 Broadway in Seaside.

After Seaside, the exhibit heads to other areas of the state including Astoria before finishing up at the Oregon Zoo in September.



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