

# Tolovana, Ecola Court ramp improvements proposed

## City and state talk possible ownership transfer of Tolovana

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

A draft of major design changes and improvements to Tolovana Beach State Recreation Site and Ecola Court ramp have been presented to the people of Cannon Beach.

The sites were proposed at an open house Thursday, April 13, as a part of the parks master plan to be proposed to the city council.

The open house, lead by Otak architects Maggie Daly and David Haynes, outlined long term improvements for the well-used park and ramp after collecting public input for more than a year.

Costs and project timelines were not a part of the presentation, though each were labeled as high priority projects if they were to be chosen. The proposals are drafts of a master plan that serves as a recommendation for the city council if they were to adopt it, Haynes said.

“These places were identified as high-profile sites, and these plans help answer the question ‘what could this area be if we could raise the funds?’” Haynes said.

## Transferring Tolovana

Casual conversations about transferring Tolovana to the City of Cannon Beach have started, according to Cannon Beach Public Works Director Dan Grassick, though no formal plans or agreements have been made.

These conversations stem from the community’s desire to have more liberty to pursue upkeep projects, such as increasing the amount of green space in the park which is mostly composed of an asphalt parking lot. Other improve-



BRENNIA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

## Ecola Court ramp.

ments include cementing the boat ramp, moving the accessible ramp in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, moving the bathroom farther away from the beach and adding a promenade, foot washing stations, more picnic areas and an event space.

“We think it would be a nicer park [if Cannon Beach took responsibility],” Parks Department Lead Utility Kirk Anderson said. “A city’s identity is often portrayed by its parks.”

The idea is that city would be able to do maintenance more consistently than the state can provide, Anderson said. The city already does maintenance on parts of the park it owns — the playground and boat ramp — as well as continually clearing driftwood that blocks the ADA ramp.

Some members at the public house voiced concern about the financial commitment that would mean for the city.

“There is already unbudgeted money spent on maintaining Tolovana already,” Anderson said, referring to when crews have to clean up after immediate issues, like downed trees or built up driftwood.

Mayor Sam Steidel, who was in attendance, said that the city has the ability to consider these type of projects.

“We’re not desperate for funds,” Steidel said. “We have the ability to do projects. Where this one in particular falls in the line of priorities we don’t know.”

Oregon State Parks Associate Director of Communications Chris Havel said he has heard of Cannon Beach’s desire to manage Tolovana and is interested in pursuing the conversation.

“We’re always interested in hearing from local partners to improve public service and government efficiency. We hope to learn more from Cannon Beach in the next couple of months when they send us more information about this idea,” Havel said.

Because the conversations are so early in the process, there is no clear timeline of when a transfer would happen at this stage.

## Turning a ramp into art

The other high priority recommendation would be installing infrastructure along

the retaining walls at the Ecola Court ramp that would display art celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Oregon Beach Bill.

The design would be conceptualized by the public arts committee, which has about \$15,000 in budget to carry out the vision.

What that vision is remains to be seen, committee member Hank Johnson said, but the general goal is clear.

“The idea is to dedicate this art to public beaches and past governors who supported them,” Johnson said.

Haynes said his goal is to have the concept for how the art would be placed solidified by the 50th anniversary celebration on May 13.

Other improvements suggested by the public in this plan were to install bollards—waist-high poles—to discourage cars from driving down the ramp, as well as installing a wheelchair storage unit.

While most of these plans are still up in the air, Steidel said the process has been solid.

“I’m impressed with the community involvement in this process,” he said. “There have been new faces at every open house.”



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The road to Ecola State Park was closed due to heavy spring rains.

# Ecola State Park road reopens

## Access was blocked due to heavy rains

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

The road leading into Ecola State Park closed April 12 after heavy winter and spring rains caused sections of the road to start slipping downhill, Park Manager Ben Cox said.

“The road was built over active, slow-moving landslides and we’ve long had trouble spots,” said Cox. “This year’s rainy season and subsequent ground movement have made the road nearly impassable and unsafe for visitors.”

This ground movement has created severe dips in the road that Bob McEwan Construction began to fill

with compacted gravel surface on April 17. The repair will cost under \$10,000.

Pending any weather-related delays, the road should reopen this week, Cox said.

Repairs of this nature have stretched back many years, Cox said. He said state parks are exploring long-term solutions for the road. In December, heavy rains damaged temporary repairs made to the trail between Ecola Point and Indian Beach trail after a series of storms. The rains caused sinking and sliding on Ecola Park Road and erosion around the Canyon Creek culvert.

“There will periods of unexpected closures, especially if it keeps raining,” Cox said. “We are aware of iconic status of park, and we’re making sure people will have access to the park as soon as we can.”

## Proposed rain forest reserve gets \$45,000 grant

A \$45,000 grant from the Conservation Alliance to the North Coast Land Conservancy will help protect a proposed natural area adjacent to Oswald West State Park. The proposed Rainforest Reserve is part of a 3,500-acre summit-to-sea corridor originally envisioned by Oregon’s first state parks superintendent, Samuel Boardman, nearly a century ago.

North Coast Land Conservancy is one of 20 organizations from throughout the country to share \$850,000 in support this spring from the Conservation Alliance, a Bend-based group.

The conservancy was nominated by Manzanita-based photographer and alliance member Justin Bailie.

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