

Volunteers tackle Scotch broom

'What lovely yellow blooms'

Katie Frankowicz
EO Media Group

While a crowd in Cannon Beach celebrated the 50-year anniversary of the bill that preserved Oregon's beaches for the public, John Rippey killed plants.

"That took a lot of hard work to stand up to bad interests," he said about Oregon's landmark 1967 Beach Bill as he methodically cut away at invasive Scotch broom plants along Ecola Creek earlier this month. "And I figure, rather than be part of a parade, I should continue the hard work, and you can't do that by having bonfires. You do that by getting rid of invasive species."

Or, at least, the Cannon Beach resident says with some self-deprecation, that's the work he's chosen for this particular day.

A former lifeguard in Cannon Beach, Rippey is well-acquainted with efforts to protect and preserve this stretch of sand — as well as the people who flock here in droves to enjoy it. But this was his first time volunteering with the North Coast Watershed Association, which has organized Scotch broom removal efforts around the creek for several years.

Their work around the creek and in nearby Les Shirley Park has started to pay off. Rippey is tearing up young plants; he doesn't have to tackle the older, established bushes that confronted volunteers in past efforts. Watershed coordinator Brooke Stanley points to wild rose



KATIE FRANKOWICZ/EO MEDIA GROUP

Cannon Beach resident John Rippey volunteers to help pull invasive Scotch broom near Ecola Creek.

that has started to take over areas along a sandy beach approach once dominated by Scotch broom.

"Seeing it change is really amazing," she said.

It has taken a combination of longtime volunteers and new volunteers like Rippey to bring about this change. Nothing against the plants, they say. In fact, the first time most of them saw Scotch broom, they thought, "What lovely yellow blooms!" In May, whole sections of the coast light up — like someone has swiped the hills with a yellow highlighter — as Scotch broom transforms from a drab shock of branches and leaves into an attractive, highly productive flowering shrub.

It is a plant that flourishes

in disturbed soil and quickly displaces native plants and trees, says Nadia Gardner, conservation manager with the North Coast Land Conservancy. Conservationists and watershed groups can track its rapacious growth in tangent with development projects: housing up in the hills of Seaside, on recently logged lands, alongside highways.

Once used to stabilize dunes and as an ornamental along highway corridors, the Oregon Department of Agriculture now calls it "one of western Oregon's most widespread and costliest weeds." The North Coast Land Conservancy declares May "broom-buster month" and organizes extensive efforts to rid their acres of the weed.

For longtime volunteer Bob Lundy, Ecola Creek was right next door. As he entered retirement and began looking for ways to get more involved in the community, he figured tearing out Scotch broom was one small way he could help.

"When I was thinking about what I was going to do after retirement, I said I don't play golf and I don't play cards so I'll probably have to learn to fish." Or surf, he amended. As it turns out, he said, "Cannon Beach will find lots of things for you to do."

Even as he has become more involved on boards and councils and committees, he continues to help with Scotch broom removal. "There are things that need doing. That are worth doing," he said.

Manzanita goes 'Online and at the Beach'

The Manzanita Writers' Series expands offerings to include writing workshops "Online and at the Beach," as part of HoffmanCenter for the Arts program that will offer writing and visual arts workshops.

In its ninth year, the writers' series brings regional authors to the coast for author readings and workshops. To augment that program, "Online and at the Beach" will provide more in-depth instruction online over a five-week period. Students will be able to work on their own schedule as well as interact with the instructor and fellow students. The series culminates in an optional writing retreat weekend June 2-4.

Jennie Shortridge teaches

"Putting Your Prose to Work" for advanced beginners and intermediate writers.

Megan Kruse teaches "Creativity Catalyst," for poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction.

The weekend retreat will allow students to meet their instructor and fellow students, enjoy additional craft writing sessions on building tension even in quiet stories, and on the transformative power of setting and "stuff." After a session on effective open mic readings, participants will have an opportunity to read their work at open mic.

Further information is available at hoffmanblog.org or contact Kathie Hightower, kathiejhightower@gmail.com.

Trail's End Gallery presents new featured artist

Patricia Beck-Fries will be the featured artist at Trail's End Gallery's new show beginning Thursday, June 1. A reception will be held 2 to 5 p.m. that day.

A Gearhart resident for the last 15 years and a Cannon Beach resident before that, Beck-Fries believes she may have been "born an artist, or at least with a keen observation of color and design," she said, adding that she almost always uses vivid color in her work.

Beck-Fries has studied under many local artists. Most of her work is watercolor "with some additions here and there." A gardening

enthusiast, Beck-Fries paints landscape, still life and portraits, she said.

In addition to Beck-Fries's work, patrons at the gallery (656 A St.) will enjoy the work of other gallery artists, including Mary Ann Gantenbein, Susan Bish, Richard Newman, Michael Muldoon and Lynda Campbell.

The gallery, which opened in 1950 in the "Little Red Schoolhouse" is the oldest on the North Coast.

For information about Trail's End Art Association classes, workshops, membership and other offerings, visit trailsendart.org or call 503-717-9459.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Work by artist David Jonathan Marshall of Modern Villa Gallery.

Plein Air festival coming

Artists from around the world arrive to capture Cannon Beach "en plein air" or "in the open air." To celebrate this challenging artistic style, the Cannon Beach Gallery Group is presenting their Ninth Annual Plein Air and More Arts Festival. Scheduled for June 23-25, the event will feature more than 30 artists represented by Cannon Beach's art galleries.

The artists can be found near their representing gal-

eries or in one of five locations: Whale Park, the courtyard between Spruce and Hemlock Streets, the Coaster Theatre Courtyard, Washington St. at Ocean and Harrison Street at Ocean. They will also all come together for an "artists' swarm" from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 24, in the Coaster Theatre Courtyard. For more information about the artists, contact the individual galleries, listed on the website, cbgallerygroup.com

Cannon returns to Cannon Beach

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this project. It's the icon of this town," Trucke said. "Now we don't need to keep worrying if they are going to last 10, 20 or 100 years."

The iron cannon, technically called a carronade, and the capstan used to lift the ship's anchor are from the decking of the USS Shark, a U.S. naval schooner that went down in the Columbia River in 1846. The cannon was found, lost, then discovered again in 1898, when it came ashore in Arch Cape.

For years the cannon sat exposed to weather and children playing on it alike in Arch Cape, until it was vandalized in the 1980s, Trucke said. The Clatsop County Historical Society moved the cannon to the Clatsop County Heritage Museum, until it found a home at the Cannon Beach history museum in 2005.

So when Trucke started with the museum in 2010, historical preservation of these artifacts became No. 1 on the agenda.

"This cannon has been my entire career here," Trucke said.



BRENNIA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

The new exhibit for the Cannon Beach cannon and capstan opened May 20.

When it returned in 2014 from restoration, the museum did not have the proper space or environment for the preserved artifacts, so the museum worked with engineers, contractors, architects and others to plan the exhibit, Trucke said. Other challenges, such as figuring out how to transport a 2,000 pound cannon and building something strong enough to support it, also slowed the project down.

From start to finish, Trucke said the project to keep the cannon in perpetuity totaled about \$90,000 and countless

volunteer hours from museum supporters since 2011. With all of the structural and restoration changes that were required, Trucke said it is unusual for a museum of this size to take on this kind of project.

"Throughout this I received a lot of doubt from people about our ability to do this. There was a rural bias," Trucke said. "Yeah, we might be small, but we do a lot of good stuff."

Vice president of the museum board and curator at Clatsop County Historical

Society Amber Glen echoed this sentiment, and said in her experience it's unusual for a town this size to tackle this kind of feat.

"It's unusual for a small, rural place to have such large artifacts, and the fact that most of it was fundraised is unusual," Glen said. "We don't have a budget like Columbia River Maritime Museum."

Liz Johnson, the outreach coordinator for the museum, started supporting Trucke on this project in 2012 and said this moment was one of relief as much as celebration.

"At times it just seemed daunting, like it would never finish," Johnson said. "It's an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. It's been our baby for so long."

Trucke said while there still a few little details to wrap up, overall she is happy that what she feels is the identity of Cannon Beach is back.

"In a way it's like the Liberty Bell," Trucke said. "It's not nearly as old or of national importance, but it's our identity, and until now it felt stolen from our community."

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