

Possible shipwreck debris uncovered in Cannon Beach

State will examine wood object

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

What at first glance looks like one of the many logs that line Cannon Beach may be an uncovered keel of a boat from a possible shipwreck.

The wood object, which measures about 18 feet long and several hundred pounds, was found Wednesday, June 14, on the beach close to the Taft Street access by Jeffrey Smith of Portland. Looking for a place to rest after walking with his wife, he noticed rusty square nails, notches and square cut-outs in the log and decided to call the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum.

"Maybe this isn't a big deal, but when you look at the square nails and the cutouts, it looks like this is from a very old ship," Smith said.

After Elaine Trucke, the museum's director, came out to take a look, she called the Columbia River Maritime Museum and Christopher Dewey from the Maritime Archaeological Society to help identify the object.

"Looking at the parts makes me think it could be from the mid-1800s, but I'm not an expert," Trucke said. "In general shipwrecks are pretty common on the coast, but if it were actu-



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Christopher Dewey with the Maritime Archaeological Society examines a wood object recently uncovered near Cannon Beach that may be historically significant.

ally that old it would be a rare situation."

The wood is some variety of old growth timber, Dewey said, which would make the object historically significant.

But defining the age and exact nature of the wood will require an evaluation from the state archaeologist's office in Salem, Dewey said. Without a thorough examination, the object could be anything from a structural part of a ship to debris still washing ashore from the tsunami in Japan in 2011.

Dewey, an anthropology and archaeology adjunct instructor at Clatsop Community College

who specializes in investigating shipwrecks, said there are many ways to determine age. Some methods include looking at different types of fastening, machinery cuts and analyzing wood samples to see if the species is local or from somewhere around the world. "The fact that it's washed up onto the beach, it means it could be from anywhere on the coast," Dewey said. "Trying to find a record of a ship that matches this piece of wood from a wreck would be difficult."

Shipwrecks are not uncommon along the Oregon Coast. Three men using metal detec-

tors in the dunes uncovered a large piece of wood in 2014 that turned out to be a 1950s trawler, and a 21-foot keel turned up in the dunes at Seaside in 2015.

Ultimately, the state will determine what to do with the object and whether or not it is valuable enough to move and conserve. With the closest conservation lab in Texas, Dewey said, transportation and conservation costs would climb for an object so large and heavy.

"This is significant," he said. "This could be many things, but it's still really cool for anyone interested in underwater archaeology."

Arch Cape native tapped for Parks and Rec post

Deur from Page 1A

stepping up as the new coast representative on the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Commission seemed like a natural fit.

Road to commission

Deur has replaced Cannon Beach resident Robin Risley on the commission after she reached her eight-year term limit. The commission establishes policies, sets fees, acquires property and promotes the state's outdoor recreation policy, among other tasks.

Commissioners serve four-year terms and are appointed by the governor, then confirmed by the state Senate. There are two other new commissioners starting their terms with Deur: Steve Grasty, representing Burns, and Victoria Berger, representing Salem.

When Risley came near the end of her term in May, members of the North Coast community started encouraging him to apply for her spot, Deur said.

"It's about my personal connection to Oregon parks. I feel like all Oregon citizens have an obligation to take care of parks so future generations can see these same places I enjoyed and my grandparents enjoyed," he said. "It was an

offer I could not refuse."

Deur has been studying North Coast history for years, which included publishing "Empires of the Turning Tide."

The book, published and funded by the National Park Service, details the creation of the parks and tells the stories of the relationship between these places and indigenous people.

He's also a founding member of the fundraising group Friends of Haystack Rock Awareness Program, the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve initiative, as well as other environmental groups and movements in Cannon Beach.

Changing Oregon

Parks and Recreation Department Associate Director Chris Havel said that, while all of the commissioners share a deep love of Oregon and the desire to improve the parks system within, Deur is notable for his background as a historian and anthropologist.

"In Doug's case, his strong credentials as a historian fits in well with the department mission, with his experience with national registry, local museums, and with his role in the state through recreation and history," Havel said. "I think people who are natu-

rally drawn to that will find the commission a welcoming place.

State parks have many challenges before them. While on the commission, Deur hopes to address how to bolster infrastructure better to accommodate the influx of traffic at heavily used parks, such as Oswald West and Ecola State Park, as well as look for ways to improve beach access points with small land acquisitions.

But most notably, he wants to use his background to tell the stories of all Oregonians and their relationship to the parks system.

"We need to tell these stories so we don't forget that these parks still mean something to Native Americans. Different communities have different stories associated with the parks that relate to their histories," he said.

One of the most encompassing challenges is to figure out how to keep parks

relevant for a culturally and demographically changing Oregon, Havel said.

Most of the growth and development of state parks happened between the 1950s and 1970s, Havel said. Since then, the demographic and cultural landscape of Oregon has changed, leading to usage changes such as an increase in day trips rather than overnight camping.

"In the last five years, we've had increasing visitation every year. We've found it's many of the same people visiting more often, maybe not as diversified as it could be," Havel said. "We won't know if we are serving every Oregon city until we ask better questions."

Deur hopes his background in cultural studies can help bridge this gap to encourage more park access for more people, he said.

"Oregon is changing. We want parks to be relevant to everybody," Deur said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cannon Beach celebrates the 50th anniversary of the state's beach bill.

Celebrating a legacy

Environmental groups sponsor more Oregon Beach Bill celebrations

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

Cannon Beach will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Oregon Beach Bill yet again with another day of festivities planned for July 6.

On May 13, the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce held an event celebrating the anniversary of when former Gov. Tom McCall flew his helicopter to Cannon Beach as a statement of his commitment to the bill that would keep all 363 miles of Oregon shoreline public.

The Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition and Haystack Rock Awareness Program, however, decided to celebrate the anniversary of the day the bill was actually with a special beachwalk, speeches from local environmental activists and a dinner party.

Oregon Shores Executive Director Phillip Johnson said the goal of the event is to not only celebrate the past 50 years of conservation and preservation efforts, but to inspire action to sustain these actions for the next 50 years.

"We don't always think the beach as an ecosystem — and it's a fascinating one," Johnson said. "We hope to educate people about the natural history of this area as well as the history of the bill."

Johnson said Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition's inspiration to hold this event comes out of the fact the group formed in part because of the passage of the Oregon Beach Bill.

The group evolved from the ad hoc group, Citizens to Save Oregon Beaches, which campaigned for the passage of Oregon's famed Beach Bill. The coalition works to protect coastal ecosystems from development and to deliver those lands back into public hands if possible, Johnson said.

"We are now in our 46th year of existence," Johnson said. "Now that this public legacy has been established, now you have a need watchdog group to watch over those beaches."

The nature walk will show exactly the type of land the coalition fights to protect, starting south of Ecola Creek, south to Haystack Rock and back to the community center, Johnson said. It will be led by coastal ecologist Stewart Schultz, who will discuss shoreline natural history, Bonnie Henderson from the North Coast Land Conservancy and local geologist Tom Horning.

The route intentionally passes the Surfsand Resort, where the campaign for the Beach Bill in 1967 began when the former owner staked out part of the beach for the exclusive use of his guests.

"[The Haystack Rock Awareness Program] wanted to get involved with this event because Cannon Beach was and is the center of the action," Executive Director of HRAP Melissa Keyser said. "There are still so many community activists who still have a voice here."

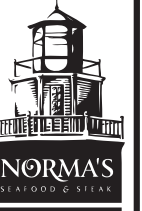
The celebration will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Cannon Beach Community Hall with refreshments and a remarks from Johnson, Cannon Beach resident and conservationist Ed Johnson, environmental activist, author and filmmaker Stephen Grace, and others, before starting the beach walk at 2:15 p.m.

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