

Portion of Nehalem River may become 'scenic'

Decision could come by November

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

SALEM — Oregon parks officials believe a portion of the Nehalem River qualifies as "scenic," but potential restrictions have met with consternation from agriculture and local government representatives. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has completed a study concluding that 17.5 miles of the river meets the criteria for scenic designation, such as free-flowing water, outstanding views and recreational opportunities. The report was submitted

in June to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission, which oversees the agency and plans to vote on a "scenic" recommendation as early as November. Restrictions meant to protect the natural features of scenic waterways can be problematic for landowners, particularly the requirement they notify state parks at least one year before making certain changes to their property within a quarter-mile of the river. During that time, the landowner can negotiate with the agency over possible alternative plans or a sale of the property. In the forested areas surrounding the Nehalem River, the primary concern would be delayed timber harvesting, which is already regulated un-

der the Oregon Forest Practices Act, said Mary Anne Cooper, public policy counsel for the Oregon Farm Bureau. "It's a complicated structure that's on top of anything else," she said. Changes to roads or farm buildings may also be hindered by the requirement, Cooper said. Though the rules for scenic rivers do make allowances for agriculture, the construction or modification of a structure — such as a pumphouse — must be compatible with the surrounding aesthetics, she said. Whether a design is visually obtrusive is a highly subjective question that could prove problematic for landowners, she said. The scenic designation is also meant to protect river



COLIN MURPHEY/THE DAILY ASTORIAN

The Nehalem River passes near the Nehalem Falls Campground southeast of Manzanita.

flows, potentially interfering with the development or transfer of new water rights, Cooper said. The protections may have implications for water quality, which is already reg-

ulated under other laws for agriculture and forestry. The Farm Bureau is also skeptical whether the 17.5 mile stretch actually meets the criteria for a scenic designa-

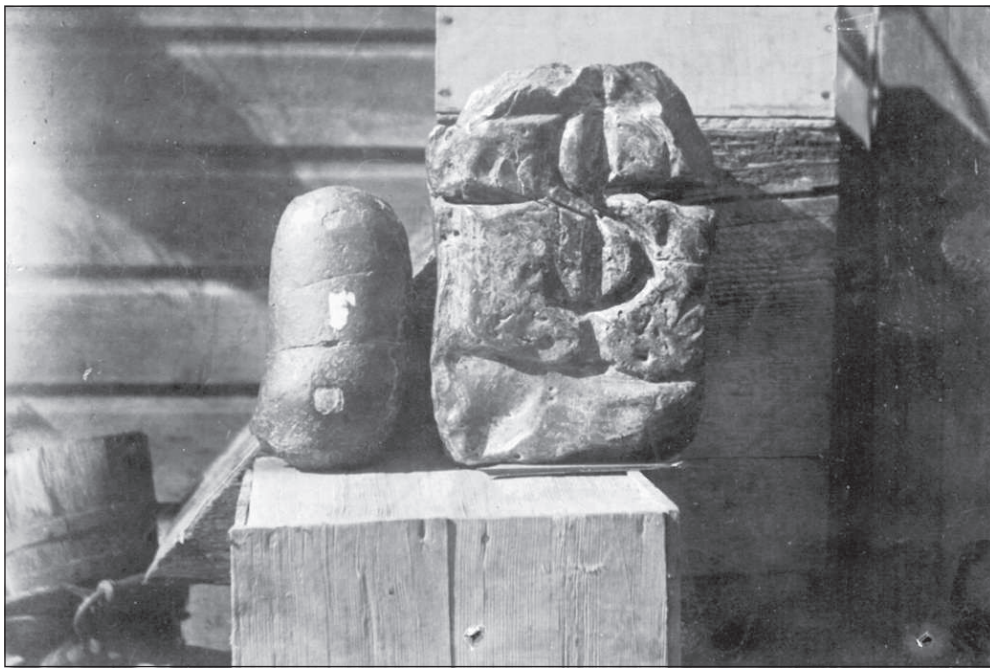
tion, since the landscape has long been managed, she said. "There are homes and roads throughout the area, so it's not really undisturbed," she said. Tillamook County's Board of Commissioners has also come out against the scenic designation, arguing that restrictions on logging will violate the state government's duty to generate revenues from property donated by the county. "Although we support public uses on the Nehalem River ... we cannot support the proposed designation as it fails to take into account the primacy of timber production on properties which the county deeded to the state decades ago," according to a letter sent by the board.

Journal explores a nautical tale from the 17th century

A local mystery lives on

By Edward Stratton
The Daily Astorian

The Beeswax shipwreck, a local mystery born from blocks of beeswax and shards of Chinese porcelain found along the shores of the Nehalem Spit, is the subject of the Oregon Historical Society's newest quarterly journal, "Oregon's Manila Galleon." The first article, by author Cameron La Follette and a team of archivists, takes a deep dive into the Santo Cristo de Burgos. The Spanish galleon left Manila in 1693 loaded with Asian trade goods headed for Acapulco, Mexico. Researchers have long theorized the ship, which disappeared, is the wreck near Nehalem Spit. La Follette had been searching the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum's website for something else in 2015 when she came across a talk about the Beeswax wreck and looked it up. She later connected with the Beeswax Wreck Project, an archaeological study of more than 10 years looking for the shipwreck. Fascinated by the Spanish galleon trade and the people who risked their lives to



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Researchers have linked the markings from blocks of beeswax found near Manzanita to ship-pers in the Philippines that were part of the Spanish galleon trade across the Pacific Ocean.

bring goods across the Pacific Ocean, she started an archival study of records in Spain, Mexico and the Philippines related to the Santo Cristo de Burgos. "Archives often have the most surprising things," she said. "Documents get deposited there, and then all knowledge gets lost over time." Her team's research uncovered information about the captain, Don Bernardo Iniguez del Bayo, from the

Basque region of Spain. The General Archive of the Indies in Seville, Spain, had a complete manifest of the estimated 235 passengers and crew aboard the ship. Researchers also found a partial cargo manifest, including 2.5 tons of mercury that may help with identification of the wreck, and were able to link the markings on some of the beeswax blocks found in Oregon to shippers in the Philippines part of the galleon

trade. "I hope that our archival research will help the archaeological team in locating the wreck," La Follette said. "I would also like other people

to do genealogical research of the people on the passenger and crew list." Other articles in the quarterly recap the Santo Cristo de Burgos' crew and cargo, along with the Spanish galleon trade across the Pacific Ocean and the tradition of treasure hunting around Neahkahnie Mountain and the Nehalem Spit. One recaps the research by the Beeswax Wreck Project, started in 2006 to ascertain the nationality, port of origin, destination, name and final resting place of the ship. The Beeswax Wreck Project has since been folded into the Maritime Archaeological Society, a nonprofit based in Astoria and focused on documenting shipwrecks in the Pacific Northwest. The group last searched for the shipwreck last summer, deploying side-scan sonar and an underwater robot to explore rocky outcroppings along Oswald West State Park. Scott Williams, lead researcher with the Beeswax project, said the archaeolog-

ical society is hampered by a lack of money for the expensive underwater archaeology equipment. The group will dive near the Beeswax search area this summer in search of an unrelated anchor chain, but needs a new magnetometer to help find metal deposits from artifacts such as the cannons the Santo Cristo de Burgos would have been carrying, he said. But Williams is excited about the potential interest La Follette's work could generate. "I think it kind of kicks it up to another level of scholarship," he said. "Having this out will really raise awareness." La Follette, who is active with the Oregon Coast Alliance, will present her team's findings July 8 at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. Copies of the Oregon Historical Quarterly are available at the historical society's museum store, and starting next week at the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

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