

EARTHQUAKE ALLEY

A cluster of earthquakes is a reminder to be prepared

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

Since mid-July, several earthquakes have rumbled off the Pacific coast, an uncomfortable reminder to get prepared for the Big One.

This month, a cluster of quakes ranging from magnitude 6.5 to 6.8 hit off Vancouver Island in British Columbia, with a 4.5 magnitude temblor striking 171 miles and 6 miles deep off the southern Oregon Coast shortly after. Similar earthquakes near Bandon have registered multiple times throughout the summer, including a 6.2 quake in late August.

While seismic activity along the North Coast has been relatively quiet, some of the shaking — and the fear of whether these earthquakes are indicators that a Cascadia Subduction Zone disaster is coming — has been felt by residents.

Though recent earthquakes have received a lot of attention, their occurrence

should not be cause for any more alarm than usual, local geologist Tom Horning said.

Earthquakes with magnitudes more than 4.0 often come in clusters about once every six to 18 months, Horning said.

“This always comes up,” said Horning, who serves on the Seaside City Council. “You’ll likely be talking to me again in two years.”

The cluster happening near southern Oregon is along the Blanco Fracture Zone, a transform fault known to have frequent seismic activity. Because there are no fault zones directly pointed near the North Coast, there is less constant stress. Consider it “nature’s way of dissipating friction,” Horning said.

“It’s hard to reconcile what’s happening in Vancouver with the center part of the subduction zone where we are,” he said. “It’s only an academic exercise to estimate how much stress could be piling up or not as a result.”

If anything, the fact the Cascadia Subduction Zone fault is so quiet is more notable, said Evelyn Roeloffs, a geophysicist from the U.S. Geological Survey.

“We can’t make any association with earthquakes out in the ocean like (the ones) near southern Oregon and the timing of when earthquakes might hit closer

in the coastline,” she said. “Our subduction zone is unusual because we had large earthquakes in prehistoric times, and we expect to have a big earthquake in the future ... But it’s so quiet now. That’s more the mysterious thing.”

While the types of earthquakes and the frequency are not unusual, the amount of interest taken by the public and the news media has changed in recent years, Roeloffs said. Most calls or inquiries are usually timed when earthquakes hit in clusters. But public education surrounding the 9.0 earthquake expected to rock the Cascadia Subduction Zone appears to have played a role in the increase of calls or reports.

“After one of the earthquakes near Vancouver, 169 people entered a submission to our website to say they felt something,” she said. “It’s good, because I think people are thinking about the reality of earthquake hazards more.”

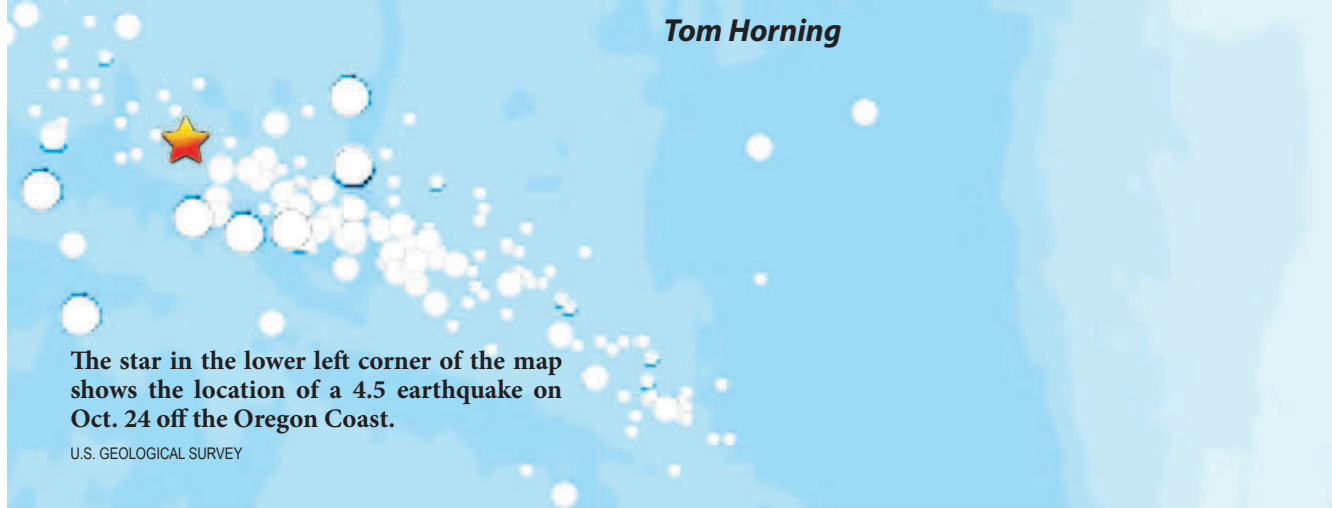
Horning hopes, if anything, the recent quakes have reminded North Coast residents that the Big One could come anytime.

“This activity should not encourage people to be less alarmed or more alarmed,” Horning said. “You should always be a certain amount of alarmed living here ... and you should always be prepared.”



‘YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ALARMED LIVING HERE ... AND YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE PREPARED.’

Tom Horning



The star in the lower left corner of the map shows the location of a 4.5 earthquake on Oct. 24 off the Oregon Coast.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



The future of the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve goes before the public at a series of meetings.

ODFW seeks input on Cape Falcon

Cannon Beach Gazette

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife seeks input and ideas from North Coast residents on how the department can best share information and engage communities input as part of management of the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve. The department will host upcoming workshops in Seaside and Cannon Beach.

The state has designated five marine reserve sites off the Oregon coast. These sites have been reserved to protect marine habitats and biodiversity and to serve as long-term monitoring sites to track and understand changes in Oregon’s near-shore ocean.

The Cape Falcon Marine

Reserve is located just off of Oswald West State Park near Manzanita. This is Oregon’s northernmost site and includes a marine reserve plus two marine protected areas.

The Seaside event takes place from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6, at the Best Western Plus Ocean View Resort Sandpiper Room, 414 N. Prom in Seaside from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The Cannon Beach event takes place at the Haystack Rock Awareness Program Speaker Series 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 14, at the Cannon Beach Library, with a focus on the site management plan being developed for the reserve. The event also features a virtual tour of the marine reserves.

Land trust acquires forestland near Oswald West State Park

Owners donate 111 acres at southern edge

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

In its largest land acquisition ever, the Lower Nehalem Community Trust now owns 111 acres of forestland on the south slope of Neahkahnie Mountain for conservation.

The property, known as “The Headwaters,” is connected to the southern edge of Oswald West State Park and runs nearly a mile south. The area holds ecological significance both for its large, mixed-age timber and for the tributaries that feed into the Neahkahnie Creek watershed below, the land trust said.

“We’re pretty excited. The fact the community gets to have community forestland like this is a big deal for us,”

Doug Firstbrook, a board member for the land trust, said.

The acquisition began last summer when Firstbrook heard about 181 acres near Neahkahnie Mountain was going to be logged. He got ahold of plans published by the Oregon Department of Forestry and contacted the local point person who represented the landowners, which were two California-based development companies: Seventeen Enterprises LLC and Pacific Land Conservation LLC.

Firstbrook told the representative he was concerned about how a logging operation would affect properties the land trust had worked to restore downstream, including a marsh restoration project above Neahkahnie Lake and Alder Creek Farm, a community garden and ethnobotanical trail.

The companies took a tour with Firstbrook to look at areas of concern, but ultimately

logged about 30 acres of the property later that summer. About a year later, Firstbrook heard again from the development companies, but this time they asked if the trust would be interested in acquiring the land for conservation.

“They needed a mechanism for a tax write-off and were looking for a conservation group,” Firstbrook said. “My name came up because of the tour we took before.”

In September, the development companies donated 111 acres — along with about \$22,000 for replanting and maintenance costs — to the land trust. The companies still own the other 70 acres, which are zoned residential, for future development, Firstbrook said.

“We’re pleased it happened so quickly. Often these kinds of projects can take an inordinate amount of time,” he said.

In addition to its conservation value, the land is also

significant due to its proximity to one of Oregon’s largest state parks. The land trust is in conversations with Connie Soper, a trail advocate working with Manzanita to extend the existing Neahkahnie Hiking Trail. Doing so would help connect a gap in the Oregon Coast Trail, which now routes hikers out onto U.S. Highway 101 before reconnecting at Manzanita Beach.

Firstbrook said the land trust has to consider whether it has enough resources to take on the responsibilities of ongoing trail maintenance, as well as look into whether the trail would have any negative impacts.

Trail or not, the land trust considers the donation as a conservation win.



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