

WHO VISITS HAYSTACK ROCK?

New survey delves into where visitors come from and how often

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette



COLIN MURPHEY

Haystack Rock is a perennial draw for visitors to the Oregon Coast.

A recent survey shows visitors at Haystack Rock like to come often and from places outside of Oregon.

The survey, facilitated by the federally and state-funded Oregon Sea Grant, was conducted over six weeks this summer to study the demographics of those who visit the 235-foot sea stack each year.

While Haystack Rock Awareness Program has tracked the number of visitors for years — which has now topped more than 90,000 — this is the first time the group has seen a better look at the demographics.

“We really wanted to learn about why visitors came here,” said Melissa Keyser, program director of the Haystack Rock Awareness Program. “We wanted to ask them who they are and figure out how well we were educating them, so we can learn how to better engage with them.”

Over the course of the summer, Dylan Rozansky, the marine science scholar chosen by the awareness program to conduct the study, interviewed people at the beach and at educational events, and collected data from online surveys. He asked beachgoers questions about where they traveled from, whether they had visited the rock before and whether it is important to protect Haystack Rock for stewardship purposes.

Some of the findings, like the fact that 95 percent of visitors agree it’s important to preserve the rock and 49 percent of visitors were between the ages of 35 and 54, were to be expected, he said. About 75 percent were women, and 56 percent were aware of the program before arriving.

But other findings, like 50 percent of all visitors coming from outside of Oregon and

the fact more than a third have visited the marine reserve more than 10 times, were a surprise.

“And no one surveyed identified as a local, so that was just amazing to me ... that so many people outside Oregon were coming back again and again,” he said.

For awareness program staff, the results were an accurate representation of what they have been seeing on the beach. On a larger scale, the results also mirror the rise the state is seeing in international tourism, which has grown about 11 percent since 2012, according to a report from the research firm Tourism Economics.

“We almost expected to have higher than 50 percent outside of Oregon, so that doesn’t surprise me,” Keyser said. Many of the program’s interpreters are from out of state and started volunteering after multiple visits, she added. “It’s

such a unique place,” she said.

In the past few years, the program has introduced new initiatives to be more inclusive of a more diverse visitor profile, including a beach wheelchair program and bilingual interpreter for Spanish-speaking visitors.

Program staff believe the survey indicates the program’s recent shift to serve more as an educational body rather than as an enforcement group at the rock is working, and will ultimately help to show the program’s relevance in future grant opportunities.

“It validates why we’re here. It shows that there is interest ... that we have the capacity to bring more people from outside the area,” outreach coordinator Pooka Rice said. “From a grant perspective, it’s significant because it shows there’s more potential for the program.”

Time capsule to be unveiled on Dec. 1

Public invited to bring items for new time capsule

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

Curious about what was on the minds of Cannon Beach residents 50 years ago? The city will be unearthing a time capsule allegedly buried near Tolovana Hall on Dec. 1 to find out.

This summer, the city received a call from a citizen who said 50 years ago he was a part of a gentleman’s club that buried a time capsule. After some digging, an article marking the moment on Nov. 7, 1968, was found in the Seaside Signal.

The time capsule was in commemoration of the dedication of the Tolovana Community Hall, and should contain a copy of the Seaside Signal, a page from McCall’s magazine about food and fashion, as well as photos of a Boeing 737, the latest women’s hair-dos and a view of Tolovana State Park. Questions remain, however, about the existence of the time capsule and whether or not it remains without deterioration today.

The dig and unveiling will be held at 1 p.m. at the Cannon Beach Academy. Residents are invited to donate items for a new time capsule that will be reburied the same day as long as they are smaller than the size of a shoe box.



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