

# Conservancy volunteers help restore habitat

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**  
For Cannon Beach Gazette

Throughout the fall the North Coast Land Conservancy's Weed Warrior Wednesdays turned into Seed Warrior Wednesdays as volunteers gathered at the Circle Creek Conservation Center to roll clay, soil and seeds into "seed bombs" to be used for restoring coastal prairie habitat.

"Trying to get native plants reestablished is a worthwhile endeavor," said land steward Eric Owen, who oversees many stewardship activities with volunteers.

The seed bombs will be planted at Reed Ranch, one of the conservancy's Clatsop Plains properties located between Gearhart and Warrenton, west of U.S. Highway 101, that has been overrun with invasive plants, like pasture grass, scotch broom and creeping buttercups. The organization has tried sowing seeds by hand at Reed Ranch, but the sandy

soil and strong coastal winds mean the seeds tend to get blown away before they can germinate.

"Putting them in these seed bombs will help them get a better foothold in that habitat," Owen said.

The conservancy regularly holds what have been dubbed Weed Warrior Wednesdays, which typically include pulling weeds and invasive plants as they appear. Tasks also vary by season, though, and can include planting and harvesting, as well. With planting season approaching, Owen said they planned to get the seed bombs into the ground as soon as possible.

At the beginning of the year, the conservancy puts together a work plan with goals they hope to accomplish during the coming months. Often goals are determined by grant funding the conservancy has received, but if other more immediate issues arise — such as damage done by illegal dumping or trespassing



Katherine Lacaze/For Seaside Signal  
**North Coast Land Conservancy Land Steward Eric Owen (left), works with his father and volunteer Tom Owen, of Astoria, and volunteer Krickett Wertz, of Astoria, to put together seed bombs during a stewardship activity held Nov. 21 at the Circle Creek Conservation Center. Volunteers rolled thousands of seed bombs using about 6 pounds of native plant seeds, soil and clay.**

— the staff can respond as needed, Owen said.

For several years, the conservancy has received grant funding from the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife to help restore the

Oregon silverspot butterfly, a federally threatened species that has diminished because of habitat loss and degradation. The Oregon silverspot butterfly inhabits its coastal grasslands and

relies on the early blue violet, the only plant species they develop and feed on in the larval stage. Reed Ranch is potentially a reintroduction spot for the butterfly, Owen said, which is why

they have planted early blue violets there in the past. The seed bombs also include violet seeds, along with dune tansy, yarrow, dune sedge, California oatgrass, sea blush, Canada golden-rod, and red fescue.

Beyond encouraging repopulation of the Oregon silverspot butterfly, restoring habitat has other positive impacts.

"We need healthy, working habitats for our ecosystem," Owen said, adding that both indirectly and directly benefits humans and countless other species, as well.

The conservancy has a regular core of volunteers who frequently attend stewardship events, although they are joined at times by new folks, area visitors, interns, or groups representing different agencies, such as AmeriCorps. They value the opportunity to get involved and learn about the environment in a hands-on way, according to Penny Abegglen, a volunteer from Clatskanie.

## Former fire district board member Al Aya dies at 94

Cannon Beach Gazette

Al Aya, a longtime Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District board member known for spearheading the design and installation of Cannon Beach's "mooring" tsunami warning sirens, died Friday, Dec. 21, at 94 years old.

Aya, who was Dec. 11, 1924 in Portland, was a descendant of the pioneer Honeyman Hardware family.

After high school, Aya joined the Army and fought in World War II. In 1953, he moved to San Francisco, where he continued to serve in the Army Reserve and began his career as a researcher and statistician for the Pacific Bell Telephone Co. He retired from the Army in 1968 at the rank of major. After retiring from Pacific Bell in 1984 he moved to Cannon Beach.

Aya had just moved to Cannon Beach, when an old high school friend convinced him to apply for an opening on the fire district board. He was elected to the board of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protec-



Alfred Aya

tion District, for many years serving as chairman.

He spearheaded the design and installation of warning system for tsunami threats, the first of its kind in the United States and a model

for other coastal warning systems.

As a joke, he recalled in 2017, because the acronym for our system was COWS — an acronym for "Community Warning System" — "that maybe we could broadcast a mooring sound," Aya said.

While part of the value is definitely for comedic

effect, Aya said, having an unusual sound also serves as a built-in education tool.

A funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 5, at St. Peter the Fisherman, 79441 U.S. Highway 101, Arch Cape. A reception honoring Aya will follow the Mass. Private interment is at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Portland.

### OBITUARIES

#### Sarasue Berger Walla Walla, Washington Dec. 21, 1940 — April 6, 2018

On April 6, 2018, our beloved mother and grandmother "Nattie" died peacefully at home. She was born in Colorado, and later settled with her family in Hillsboro, Oregon.

She is a graduate of Hillsboro High School, and served as worthy adviser for Rainbow Girls, while her future husband, Gary, served as master counselor of DeMolay. They met on a blind date, and he knew the moment he set eyes on her she would be his wife. They were married for 53 years at the time of his death.

She was a devoted homemaker and business partner with her husband, own-

ing the Cannon Beach Bakery and Geri's Seafood and Chicken. She loved gardening, square dancing, painting, rodeos and playing pinocchl with her friends at the Walla Walla Senior Center. In memoriam, donations in her name may be sent to Walla Walla Community Hospice.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Jerry Davis, of Hillsboro, Oregon, and her husband, Gary, in 2013. She is survived by her daughters, Trina Berger, of Walla Walla, Washington, and Edie Paden, of Walla Walla, Washington; grandson, Austin Paden, of Boise, Idaho; and granddaughter, Jordan Schilling, of Milton Freewater, Oregon.

### CANNON BEACH POLICE LOG

#### Dec. 7

9:22 p.m., S. Hemlock: Man comes into Pelican Brewery looking for food. Staff fed him.

#### Dec. 8

4:35 p.m., N. Entrance: Elk on roadway.

#### Dec. 9

6:12 p.m. Highway 101: Police are asked to check on a man walking on the highway.

#### Dec. 10

7 p.m., Dutch Brothers: Police assist Seaside police with canine trained in narcotics.

9:22 p.m., Roosevelt: Police and narcotics canine assist Seaside police.

#### Dec. 11

10:43 p.m., Highway 101: Elk vs. vehicle.

#### Dec. 12

5:10 p.m., Hemlock and Susit-

na: Police assist someone looking for their dog.

#### Dec. 13

9:03 a.m., Logan Lane: Tools taken from a construction site are reported.

#### Dec. 14

10:52 p.m., Elk Creek Apartments: Officer seized illegal display of license plates and leave information for vehicle owner.

#### Dec. 15

4:28 a.m. 700 block 15th Street: Police assist Seaside police with a suicidal male.

#### Dec. 16

8:53 a.m., Highway 101: Police assist Cannon Beach fire department and Oregon State Police with an overturned vehicle.

#### Dec. 17

4:40 p.m., N. Hemlock: Clerk said subject attempted to as-

sault them with a candy dish. Subject cited with Disorderly Conduct in the Second Degree and Harassment.

#### Dec. 18

1:20 p.m., Sunset Boulevard: A volunteer who was terminated grew agitated and refused to leave. Subject left prior to police arrival.

#### Dec. 19

1:07 a.m., Hemlock and Harri-

son: A person is charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants.

6:38 p.m., Elk Creek: Domestic dispute over custody arrangements; female sped off with child prior to police arrival.

#### Dec. 20

12:41 a.m., 10th Street: Police assist Seaside police with a burglary. Suspect unable to be located.

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