



"Kid, kayak and heron on Beaver Creek Marsh," on display at the Ode to the Tides exhibit presented by the Wetlands Conservancy.

Brian Booth

ODE TO THE TIDES

By CARA MICO
For Seaside Signal

At first glance the "Ode to the Tides" exhibition seems like an ordinary fine art exhibit, but at second glance the exhibit is much more than that.

The exhibit is curated and supported by volunteers for the Wetlands Conservancy, an Oregon nonprofit which has worked to protect the state's wetlands since 1981 through education, conservation and stewardship.

The conservancy does more than protect Oregon's Wetlands, the nonprofit educates residents and visitors alike about the beauty and ecological significance of one of the states most precious resources; the estuary and tide pools that grace the coastline.

To show people just how spectacular Oregon's waterways are the conservancy is touring an exhibit of Oregon's best artists featuring imagery of the area where the land meets the sea. The exhibit, which opened this month at both Fairweather House Gallery and Broadway Books Art-in-Loft Gallery showcases over 100 works by regional Pacific Northwest artists including paintings, sculpture and photography.

The idea for a touring exhibit got off the ground a few years back when a long-time supporter of the organization and artist saw a need to inform people of the important work beaver do within the state. That first touring exhibit included works from over 50 artists with the proceeds of the art sales supporting the conservancy's programs. Esther Lev, director of the conservancy,



Dave Pitkin

The Wetlands Conservancy's Lower Yaquina Preserve on display at the Ode to the Tides exhibit.

PROMOTING INTERTIDAL HABITATS

The goals of the exhibition are to celebrate the aesthetic and ecological significance of Oregon's estuaries, tide pools and intertidal habitats, and build a diverse community of Oregonians and coastal visitors to promote protection and conservation for generations to come. The exhibit will focus on the plants, animals, fish, land formations and the magic of estuaries and tide pools, the rich mixing zones where freshwater from the land meets salt water from the sea. This blend – also known as brackish water – creates a unique environment with abundant and diverse life. Estuaries gather nutrients from both land and sea, forming an ecosystem that contains more life per square inch than the richest Midwest farmland. Oregon's 22 major estuaries are ecologically essential for many fish and wildlife species, including salmon, herring, flounder, crab, oysters, clams, wading birds, ducks, and otters, providing habitat for reproduction, rearing, resting and foraging.

A portion of the sale of each piece of art will support The Wetlands Conservancy's program to acquire and conserve Oregon's Coastal estuaries.

helped to get that tour going.

"Although beavers are the state animal, it's really a love hate relationship with people. Beaver do good things but peo-

ple see them as black or white, good or bad," said Lev.

The first exhibit didn't end up having that many pieces featuring beaver but the work high-

lighted the way people feel when they see signs of the elusive mammal including chew marks and dams. More than 50 artists were featured in that first show.

By comparison, the current touring exhibit had over 300 submissions with fewer than 200 being accepted.

Ode to the Tides is intended to draw attention to the importance of the sensitive marine intertidal and estuarine habitat where the land meets the sea. The purpose of the exhibit is to support and educate people about the diversity of species including marine plants, shellfish, fish and birds.

The reception, which opened on the first Seaside artwalk in June, drew visitors from across the region.

"There was an incredible energy," said Lev.

The funds generated from this exhibit will support Wetlands Conservancy's programs. A big part of what the Conservancy does is protection of sensitive habitats through ownership with most of their land being located between Newport and Reedsport with a small parcel in Manzanita. The nonprofit works to restore native species on their lands and their partner lands. The Conservancy also supports coastal communities and healthy ecosystems preferring to work with willing communities. Lev said that their informal motto, "is there any way we can help" is a guiding principle.

The Ode to the Tides exhibit tour started at Oregon State University in May before coming to Seaside. It will be on display at the Fairweather House and Gallery, 612 Broadway Street and the Art-in-Loft Gallery at Beach Books, 616 Broadway Street, until the end of June before heading out to Newport, Hood River, and finally Beaverton where it will culminate in a celebration at the city hall and library.

Tourism leaders look at impacts on natural resources

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Staff with the Haystack Rock Awareness Program know one side of Cannon Beach's popular landmark is not like the other.

The tide pools that are open for the public to walk near and poke their fingers into have a wealth of creatures, but even more life abounds in the areas closed off to people, said Alan Quimby, an environmental interpreter for the outreach and educational organization, during a busy April morning at low tide.

That morning, he was splitting his time between pointing out puffins and reminding people to stay out of the protected marine garden around Haystack Rock. They kept coming anyway, seemingly deaf to the instructions Quimby gave



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

People spend time at the beach near Seaside as the sun sets behind them.

prior groups and oblivious to signs that told them to stay out.

In Ecola State Park, visitors on getting down to beaches where no established access exists exacerbate erosion on coastal cliffs when they clamber down anyway. Park staff have started to add portable toilets where they've never had

them before to curb the issue of human waste on increasingly popular hiking trails.

Tourism is a billion dollar industry of those dollars find a home at the coast. But as the number of visitors continues to grow, tourism leaders are rethinking their approach and the environmental impacts of hosting so many people.

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