



Danny Miller/The Astorian
Guy Capoeiman speaks during a welcome pole dedication in 2016 at Ne Cus' Park in Cannon Beach.

Pole: Students to develop welcome pole, enhance mural

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Student Blake Baugher said the new campus pole will face the elementary school. Lighting will likely be from dawn to midnight. Benches, native plants, a path and signage could be added.

The donation of a cedar log has already been pledged by Weyerhaeuser, which in 2016 donated the land for the new high school and middle school campus.

The welcome pole comes with another Native American heritage project, providing digital links to the mural on Broadway near North Holladay.

During a class field trip, students noticed there wasn't a lot of information accompanying the Native-American mural along the south side of Broadway near North Holladay Drive. The images on the mural, painted in 2008, represent the essence of Northwest tribal culture, fishing, canoe-making and family life.

Students, with assistance from the Clatsop-Nehalem tribe and local businesses,

will add a QR code to link visitors to the tribe's website.

After Basch publicized the students' plans in a tribal newsletter, an anonymous donation came in to fund the project. Student Chloe Cox is working on sign design and Madden Wunderlich has begun work on a web page.

The heritage project and class are part of the school's capstone program.

The tribal history class won't return until fall 2022, but students intend to keep the projects alive with an ongoing club. Students will meet throughout the school year to identify funding sources and applying for grants.

"All the kids are pretty excited to figure out where we're at and what's needed to be done," Westerholm said. "Our goal is to have both these projects completed and done when we teach this class in 2022. We're looking forward also to working with the Clatsop-Nehalem. I hope they're excited to be working with us as well, to pass along past knowledge, history and new projects."

Front row, Alex Ramirez-Cruz, Blake Baugher, Madden Wunderlich, Kiana Reyes, Emily Sills, Diego Munoz; back row, Madison Fleming (head down), Syria Watson, Chayse Mason, Chloe Cox.

Bill Westerholm



R.J. Marx

The Gearhart firehouse off Pacific Way.

Firehouse: Highlands Lane land swap will go on

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Mayor Paulina Cockrum said the court will hear arguments that the preliminary geotechnical report does not contain enough information to go to the voters.

"Typically preliminary geotech and architect reports are the council's due diligence on this issue, and would be enough to get accurate costs for the project," she said. "These costs have been published on the city website and were discussed in detail at the Aug. 13 meeting."

Zimmerman said his preference was to improve

the ballot language and hold the vote this year.

"But it is what it is," he said. "All the city needed to do was agree to amend bond language in line with our complaint. ... It would be over and on to November."

City Attorney Peter Watts said the land swap to bring the Highlands Lane property into the urban growth boundary will proceed, as the transaction is not conditioned on passage of the bond levy.

"The idea was to lock up land for a future fire station, whether that happens in the near term or long term," Watts said.

Fireworks: Local first responders oppose ban

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friends injured, Bowman said. "Nor do they want their neighborhood catching on fire," he said. "The fireworks are generally set off in the street with little chance that anything will catch on fire. And since the discarded fireworks are in front of their residence, they generally clean it up."

Interim Fire Chief Josh Como said firefighters and police cannot seize or write fines for fireworks unless witnessing them being set off.

"Creating this ordinance will only hurt the core of the city of Gearhart, the people that are recreating safely, where legal fireworks have not been a threat or harm to the public or had fire department issues with legal fireworks," Como said.

This year, out of 25 calls on the Fourth of July, none were directly to illegal fireworks, he said.

"Placing a fireworks ban into effect will create a greater strain in which we will not be able to handle the extra threat dune grass fires, as well as structure fires, present," Como said.



Jeff TerHar

July Fourth fireworks on the beach in Gearhart.

Mayor Paulina Cockrum and City Councilor Dan Jesse, Councilor Kerry Smith and Councilor Brent Warren voted to consider a proposed draft of the ordinance at a work session tentatively scheduled for November. City Councilor Reita Fackerell voted against considering the draft.

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Elk: 'This feels like the end, but it is really the beginning of very hard work'

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recommendations and actions, but the goal is to continue to work together. Certain initiatives will require a high degree of continued cooperation, community engagement and some outside funding, stakeholders said.

Culling — always a controversial proposal — remains on the table, but will take some time to implement and requires more data and community outreach. Warrenton plans to pursue hunting as an option to control urban herds, however.

Balensifer anticipates some trepidation about wildlife management in city limits, but exactly how the city will proceed with such management involves questions that have not been answered yet, he said.

Any culling activities will occur outside city limits first.

"I do think as we learn from that, that will inform practices closer and inside," Balensifer said.

He expects the City Commission will tackle other issues first, though, such as reexamining Warrenton's wildlife feeding ordinance and how it is being enforced.

Gearhart City Administrator Chad Sweet expects some of the recommendations city leaders agreed to will begin to appear on meeting agendas in the near future.

There are some items the city can begin to tackle sooner rather than later, he said. Things like reviewing sections of the city code that deal with fences, providing information about types of landscapes that deter elk from an area rather than entice them, or installing more educational signs.

Data

Then there are other proposals that will require

more research and a more nuanced understanding of herd movements. In many cases, this data is still being collected and analyzed. In some areas, it has not been collected at all.

This winter, staff at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in Warrenton plan to analyze various data tied to elk movement in and around the park.

For around a dozen years, park rangers and volunteers have tracked herd movements through elk pellet monitoring and driving surveys. Beginning in 2020, rangers worked with state wildlife experts to fit six elk across three different herds with radio collars.

While they have managed to get collars on elk in two different herds that range around Camp Rilea and the Astoria Regional Airport, they were not able to collar elk in a herd that travels into the park from the south. These elk have proven more elusive, said Carla Cole, chief of resources at the park.

The final two collars instead went to elk that wander the coast between Sunset Beach and Gearhart.

After the combined pellet, driving survey and radio collar data is analyzed, Cole hopes to have more concrete information about elk movement by early 2022.

Members of the elk collaborative do not expect to find a one-size-fits-all solution to the issues connected to the elk herds. The key is to remain flexible and in close touch with one another, they said.

Vanessa Blackstone, a wildlife ecologist and member of the elk collaborative who previously worked for the state, cautioned the group. "As we find solutions that fail, remain open-minded to find the ones that will succeed."

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