

On the North Coast, a nudge toward sustainable tourism

By **ABBEY MCDONALD**
The Astorian

Joshua Heineman, the city's director of tourism marketing, thinks about trash while on beach walks with his family. In the past few years, takeout containers, masks and even human waste have piled up on the North Coast's trails and beaches.

"Ever since the pandemic happened, I don't know if it's a mass psychology thing, I don't know if it's different people visiting that don't usually come out," he said. "It was very, very evident there's people out there that just didn't know how to look out for other people."

Seaside already has monthly trash cleanups, along with a few larger-scale ones throughout the year. Heineman wanted to do more.

"It was just putting together that idea that if everybody just did a little bit to not only pick up after themselves, but pick up after the people that aren't behaving, crowdsourcing that effort could really go a long way," he said.

The idea of having visitors contribute to improving natural sites and community spaces follows the idea of sustainable tourism, a concept that North Coast business, government and tourism management leaders will emphasize in the coming months.

This month, Seaside launched its "Coffee for Clean Beaches" program. Participants pick up bags and gloves at the Seaside Aquarium, then leave them — filled with trash — for pickup on the Promenade. They can then bring a selfie with their handiwork to the visitor's bureau in exchange for \$5 worth of wooden coins to spend at participating coffee shops.

In its first weekend, people picked up around \$25 worth of coins. Seaside has only recently started advertising the program, and intends to market it to Portland with radio ads.

The city is testing out the program for the rest of the year.

Heineman is expecting more businesses to join. He said sustainable tourism projects will likely grow in popularity along the coast.

"I just think it's kind of a beautiful idea, and I think that it's one that — after all this stress everybody's kind of been through — we're all looking for ways to to go back to that carefree life, but at the same time doing things that make it better for us and everyone else," he said.

A pledge

David Reid, the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, presented potential sustainable tourism programs to the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners earlier this month.

The chamber has been



A dumpster filled with trash from a Seaside beach cleanup.

Jon Schmidt

working with state and local organizations, including the North Coast Tourism Management Network, to come up with solutions to issues such as waste removal and traffic.

Reid, too, said the pandemic brought a particularly low point for visitor treatment of parks.

"There sort of became this understanding that we needed to really be very clear in communication before they got here, as to how best to interact with the environment that they're in," he said. "Sustainable tourism is not a new concept, it has certainly become more of a buzzword."

Reid hopes to use the network's existing audience and marketing tools to encourage environmental stewardship and limit some of the nega-

tive impacts of travel, such as traffic.

One method is asking visitors to take a pledge to respect the local community. The Oregon Coast Visitors Association has guidelines with its code of the coast, which details tide pool etiquette, hunting and fishing rules and other topics.

Reid suggested further sharing the pledge through social media and advertising campaigns and attaching it to hotel confirmations.

"Done well, (campaigns) are not just for tourists. They're for locals, too," he said. "We start to see our environment that we're living in differently, as well. We start to appreciate how special it is and we treat it differently, as well. And so we set the tone, we set the expectation and everybody

wins," he said.

He also hopes to address transportation issues associated with tourism, such as cars crowding communities like Cannon Beach. At this point, the groups are focusing on messaging around carpooling and encouraging tourists to use public transportation.

Reid said he is optimistic about the programs and the collaboration between stakeholders and emphasized the economic significance of the tourism industry.

Travelers spent \$115.8 million in the Astoria-Warrenton area in 2019, and \$63.5 million in 2020, a decrease due to COVID-19, according to an economic analysis by Dean Runyan Associates.

County Commissioner Pamela Wev said she sup-

ports opportunities for visitors to have experiences that connect them to the environment.

One example is the region's Trailhead and Beach Ambassadors program, launched in 2020, where volunteers patrol popular sites like tide pools watching for mistreatment and offering their local knowledge.

"We've been taking a look at other places in the county that attract a lot of tourism to the natural environment, to have ambassadors there to say, 'OK, you're getting on a trail, do you have water? Do you have a map?' And being able to supply them with the information that they need, about how far a trail is and how long it is and how difficult because we don't necessarily want to mark all that stuff," she said.

Wev said she's interested in expanding volunteer opportunities for visitors, too.

"We know there are people who would be willing to come out for a weekend and spend a few hours pulling up noxious weeds, and maybe we'll give them something in return," she said, suggesting hotel or restaurant vouchers as options.

"We're working on all

that, and hoping that we can create an environment that people come to, not just to lay in the sun, because we're finding out that a whole lot of people really want to do other things. And if some of that can be in service to the environment, then they're even more interested," she said.

Emily Akdedian, the North Coast stewardship coordinator for Trailkeepers of Oregon, organizes volunteer team cleanups and trail maintenance.

She said people often travel from Portland, Salem, Eugene and southern Washington state specifically to volunteer for the program.

This year has already had a strong showing, but Akdedian hopes sustainable tourism initiatives will get vacationers interested, too.

"I know people are really interested in regenerative travel ideas. And our coastal trails, I think especially during the pandemic, were hit so hard by visitation," she said. "I think that also kind of jump-started these conversations about, 'OK, well, then how do we get more folks involved in actually taking care of the trails, because they need it so badly.'"

COMING IN APRIL

our coast

MAGAZINE

From Manzanita to Willapa Bay, the beautiful scenery, engaging stories and fascinating history that tells why visiting Our Coast is special. This year's edition celebrates eleven years of feature-packed magazines with a special keepsake pull-out poster of Our Coast covers.

DiscoverOurCoast.com

Secure your advertising space today
email sales@dailystorian.com, or call 971-704-1555

DINING on the NORTH COAST

Great Restaurants in:
GEARHART • SEASIDE
CANNON BEACH

WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE LOCALS GO?

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Junior Menu
- Lighter appetite menu

BEST BREAKFAST IN TOWN! Fish 'n Chips • Burgers • Seafood & Steak
Friday & Saturday - Prime Rib
Lounge Open Daily 9-Midnight
All Oregon Lottery products available

1104 S Holladay • 503-738-9701 • Open Daily at 8am

CHOCOLATE CAFE

Cannon Beach
Chocolate Cafe

WE STILL HAVE VALENTINE'S DAY TREATS!
MILKSHAKE HAPPY HOUR
3PM-5PM, \$1 OFF ALL MILKSHAKES

232 N. Spruce • Cannon Beach, Oregon
503.436.4331
Starting in October: 9am-5pm daily, closed on Tuesday and Wednesday

Call Sarah Silver
503.325.3211
ext 1222

YOUR RESTAURANT AD HERE.

Find Your Next Regular Customers!

SEASIDE Signal **MARKETPLACE**

To place a classified ad call 800-781-3214 or go to SeasideSignal.com
DEADLINE IS MONDAY AT NOON

181 Lost & Found
Found cell phone on McCormick Garden Road in Gearhart. Call 503-738-6194 to identify. Leave a message.

201 Antique & Classic Vehicles
Vendors Wanted
Astoria Automotive Swap Meet
Clatsop Fairgrounds
Saturday March 12th, 2022.
8am-2pm
Contact Fred 503-440-9481
Dorothy 503-468-0006

Sell your children's outgrown clothes and toys with a classified ad in the Seaside Signal.
Call 503-325-3211 to place your ad today!

Classified ads work hard so you don't have to. Call 503-325-3211 to place your ad today!

604 Apartments

Now Accepting Applications
Creekside Village Apartments
1953 Spruce Drive
Seaside, OR 97138

1, 2 & 3 bedroom apartments and also apartments with special design features for individuals with a disability. Inquire as to the availability of subsidy.

Call (503)738-6880 Mon-Fri
8:00am-5:00pm.
TDD#1-800-735-2900.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACCESS.

www.SeasideSignal.com

651 Help Wanted

TILLAMOOK BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Full Time Director of Business Services

\$51,348 - \$56,110 DOE
Excellent Benefits
Full Employer Paid PERS

Contact Briar Smith (503) 842-8222, ext.1022
briarsmith@tillamookbaycc.edu

Details and application packet available at:
Human Resources - Tillamook Bay Community College (tillamookbaycc.edu)

TBCC is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

651 Help Wanted

Part-Time Employment
Hiring Special Ed Paras to serve Ocean Beach and Naselle School Districts. Positions vary 20 - 35 hrs/wk, and work a school year schedule. Health Benefits and Retirement. \$16.71/hr.
www.esd112.org/takeroot

Now Hiring

Part-Time Employment
Hiring a Family Resources Coordinator to serve Pacific County, WA. 17.5 hrs/wk, 230 days/yr. \$20.68/hr.
Details and apply online:
www.esd112.org/takeroot
ilwaco, wa. (360)750-7503
hr.dept@esd12.org

If you live in Seaside or Cannon Beach, call 503-325-3211 to place a Seaside Signal classified ad.

651 Help Wanted

Part-Time Employment
NORTH COAST LAND CONSERVANCY seeks a cheerful Office Manager who values organization and timeliness.
APPLICATION DEADLINE March 1. TO APPLY VISIT:
NCLCtrust.org/career-opportunities

SHOP LOCAL!
Check the Business Directory daily to utilize the local professionals advertising in The Seaside Signal.
To place an ad in our Business Directory, call 503-325-3211.

651 Help Wanted

CLATSOP COUNTY

Road Maintenance Worker Trainees
\$23.40-\$28.43/hour

Public Works seeking two full-time trainees for maintenance, repair, construction of roads, bridges. Requires knowledge construction, repair methods, CDL learner's permit. Details and to apply by March 14, 2022, visit www.co.clatsop.or.us/hr_Career_Opportunities.

AA/EOE.

Have you seen our **FEATURED ADS?**
Only viewable on our website, www.seasidesignal.com.
Call 503-325-3211 for more information!

Classified Ads work hard for you!