RAINFOREST RESERVE BECOMES A REALITY

The year 2021 will not soon be forgotten at North Coast Land Conservancy. After a five-year capital campaign—and many more years of dreaming, planning and imagining—the Rainforest Reserve was permanently conserved in October.

Located adjacent to Oswald West State Park and above Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, the Rainforest Reserve is part of an uninterrupted 32-square-mile conservation corridor that stretches from the summits of 3,000-foot peaks within the Oregon Coast Range to Short Sand Beach and the sandy seabed and rocky reefs of the nearshore ocean. This type of protected land-to-sea corridor is unmatched in the state of Oregon.

According to NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke, bringing this land into conservation “allows us to unlock its future.”

The Rainforest Reserve brims with critical habitat for an array of wildlife and plant species, and its conservation will help them adapt to a changing world, while

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NCLC ADOPTS CAPE FALCON MARINE RESERVE PROGRAM

In early February, North Coast Land Conservancy adopted the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve program.

The program—formerly under a “Friends of” group—serves the critical function of educating on and advocating for the abundant values the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve site has to offer the state of Oregon.

The marine reserve is located on the Oregon North Coast, just off Oswald West State Park and NCLC’s adjacent Rainforest Reserve.

The 20-square-mile site encompasses the marine reserve, as well as two marine protected areas. Cape Falcon is the northernmost site within Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife’s marine reserve system. It was established in 2016 for conservation and scientific research. The Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve supported ODFW by doing public outreach, community science and stewardship; NCLC plans to do the same.

“Bringing on Cape Falcon Marine Reserve as a new program is a

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In September 2021, a conservation consortium—including North Coast Land Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust and Sustainable Northwest—partnered with GreenWood Resources to conserve more than 2,500 acres of productive forestland along the northern Oregon Coast, between Seaside and Astoria. The project will protect the working forest from future development or subdivision, ensuring tribal and public access, and preserve water quality through Columbia Land Trust’s purchase of a conservation easement, funded in part by NCLC.

“After years of working toward a forestry conservation project with GreenWood and securing more than $2 million in funding, we were delighted when Columbia Land Trust accepted our invitation to step in to hold and steward this easement,” NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke says. “It’s exciting and hopeful to have conservation and forestry working together in these critical and valuable ways.”

Eamon Happy was already invested in caring for the environment when he read about NCLC’s Rainforest Reserve project. The 13-year-old, who lives in Eugene, can often be found seeking ways to help protect the buttes in the southern Willamette Valley, donating to local conservation efforts, organizing hikes with The Nature Conservancy, and researching the value of showy milkweed for monarch butterfly populations.

“He’s really got a passion for preserving land in general,” says Tom, Eamon’s father.

The Rainforest Reserve struck a chord with Eamon. The family had visited their grandparents’ vacation home in Arch Cape many times over the years and were well-acquainted with the nearby mountains.

“We went up to Angora Peak a few times. We had some really fun experiences up there,” Eamon says. “I was looking at some of the pictures when we hiked up there, and it was just stunning.”

Tom adds their whole family has “an affinity” for the majestic hills along the northern coastline.

Excited about a project designed to conserve this vast area, Eamon decided to donate $100 of his personal savings.

“I thought that would be as much as I could give,” he says. However, his efforts didn’t stop there. The next step was getting his parents and his grandparents, David and Kathy Astle, onboard as well. Eamon convinced both his parents to match his donation, then persuaded his grandparents to pitch in.

Donor Spotlight

Making a Happy Difference for the Rainforest

Eamon Happy, 13, and his parents, Tom and Jane.

A few months later, the Happys heard the good news.

“I’m glad it’s been preserved,” Eamon says, adding he’s reassured knowing the reserve will provide critical habitat for diverse plant and wildlife species. “It’s special to see these ecosystems that are isolated. They’re pretty hard to find.”

Tom says both Eamon and his sister are passionate about nature, cultivating a deep connection “with the plants and the animals in the wild.” Long-term, Eamon has big plans for environmental philanthropy.

“I’d like to be able to give money and donate, help with purchasing property,” he says. “I’m trying to do as much as I can now.
NCLC TAKES ON STEWARDSHIP OF RAINFOREST RESERVE

After acquiring the Rainforest Reserve, NCLC is launching into the next step: taking care of this precious land.

This spring and summer, NCLC will be completing an ecological road assessment in partnership with the Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District—which plans to acquire 1,500 acres adjacent to the Rainforest Reserve to create a community forest—and Springboard Forestry, a local consulting firm specializing in conservation forestry and water resources. Currently, there are more than 40 miles of road on the Rainforest Reserve and the proposed Arch Cape Forest.

Two teams, composed of NCLC staff members and volunteer botanists and wildlife biologists, will assess the current condition of the roads and survey for sensitive habitat.

“We already know there are rare, sensitive species occupying the site, but we don’t have spatial data or data about the condition of some of the habitat,” says Stewardship Director Melissa Reich.

The goal is to identify which roads are essential for NCLC and the water district to access and manage the land, and then decommission those that are not needed or that negatively impact habitat or water quality.

The data also will be used to complete the Rainforest Reserve management plan and provide insight for future stewardship projects and opportunities to restore and improve habitat along the roads.

In the meantime, NCLC staff is working to put up signs and spread awareness about ecologically sensitive areas so visitors can enjoy the beauty of the Rainforest Reserve while ensuring protection of its unique wildlife and plants.

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also supporting the surrounding communities.

Onion and Angora peaks are the main fixtures of the Rainforest Reserve, which also includes the headwaters of five watersheds and provides drinking water to Cannon Beach and Arch Cape.

To secure the Rainforest Reserve District to acquire an additional 1,500 acres to create a community forest adjacent to the Rainforest Reserve.

“This is a living museum, a living laboratory, a globally rare and precious place, and it’s our community backdrop,” Voelke says. “Conserving this land gives us all a chance to be in the right relationship with the land and the people it sustains.”
COASTWALK OREGON MAKES RETURN IN 2021

Fall 2021 saw the return of NCLC’s signature CoastWalk Oregon event. About 70 participants came together from Sept. 10 to 12 to explore “The North Coast Less Traveled.”

We detoured off the Oregon Coast Trail to hit up lesser-known hiking routes between the Columbia River and Tillamook Head. Following beaches, boardwalks, footpaths and bike trails, we ventured to the hidden corners of Fort Stevens State Park, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, and our own Circle Creek Conservation Center.

We are now planning for CoastWalk Oregon 2022, scheduled for Sept. 9 to 11. This year, we will return to the Oregon Trail, where we will walk about 30 miles on the northernmost section of the trail between the Columbia River and Ecola State Park. For more information, visit coastwalkoregon.org/.

STAFF TRANSITION

NCLC WELCOMES KASSIA NYE!

In mid-December, Astoria resident Kassia Nye joined the NCLC team as the new development director. Kassia has previously worked as the executive director of United Way of Clatsop County and interim director of the Columbia Memorial Hospital Foundation. Kassia brings a strong passion for fundraising, building relationships, sharing stories and helping to protect natural environments.

She is replacing Lorraine Ortiz, who retired after serving more than seven years on NCLC’s staff. Lorraine was instrumental in organizing and overseeing the Rainforest Reserve capital campaign, enabling NCLC to acquire the land for conservation.

CAPE FALCON

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natural next step for our work in the Coastal Edge and in cultivating a land-to-sea conservation corridor,” NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke says. “There is no fence between the Oregon Coast’s magnificent mountains, forests, rivers and streams, beaches and ocean,” adds Nadia Gardner, volunteer chair of the Friends. “They are all inextricably interconnected.”

Additionally, Kristin Bayans has joined NCLC as the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve program coordinator. Read more at NCLCtrust.org/cape-falcon-marine-reserve-program/.