



The expansion at Circle Creek adds to a long conservation corridor from the Necanicum River to the Pacific Ocean.

EXPANDING CIRCLE CREEK HABITAT RESERVE

Circle Creek Habitat Reserve is one of North Coast Land Conservancy’s most important protected areas for numerous reasons: It supports habitat connectivity for a diverse array of plants and wildlife, contributes to climate change resiliency, and connects the surrounding communities to

place-based conservation efforts.

On Dec. 19, NCLC acquired approximately 24 acres to expand the organization’s existing 364-acre Circle Creek Habitat Reserve and adjacent 340-acre Boneyard Ridge Habitat Reserve. The land—previously owned by the Diment family—is located in the

southern end of Seaside’s city limits, to the north and south of Rippet Road, which serves as the entrance from U.S. Highway 101 to NCLC’s Circle Creek Conservation Center.

The newly conserved 23.85 acres are now part of a larger conservation *(continued on page 4)*

SEASIDE STUDENTS CONNECT TO NATURE THROUGH JOURNALING

It has been an ongoing goal for NCLC: Offering Circle Creek Habitat Reserve as a place for local youth to learn about the ecology of the North Coast and connect with nature in a meaningful way. In the fall of 2025, this dream became even more of a reality, as busloads of fourth graders from Seaside School District’s Pacific Ridge

Elementary School arrived at the reserve to learn about nature journaling.

While they were not the first students to visit Circle Creek—NCLC hosted students from West Exchange School earlier in the year, as well as Fire Mountain School for tree planting—it marked a unique milestone in the organization’s desire to invest more time in

engaging youth, particularly with the local public school district, NCLC Community Programs Director Lynette Villagomez says. “We are cultivating future stewards of the land, connecting kids to nature,” she adds.

Each fourth-grade class got to visit Circle Creek individually. NCLC volunteers KT Blue and Marilyn *(continued on page 3)*



Journaling is an uplifting way to get to know nature.



LAND DONATION ENHANCES BLIND SLOUGH HABITAT RESERVE

Through a donation from a generous landowner in December, NCLC has added nearly 18 acres to its roughly 900-acre Blind Slough Habitat Reserve near Knappa. The new property located along Warren Slough will be merged into the adjacent Blind Slough Habitat Reserve, which The Nature Conservancy (TNC) transferred into NCLC's care in 2019. As part of this legacy gift, the donor also provided long-term stewardship funding that will be used to help care for the prop-

erty in perpetuity.

The Blind Slough area on the lower Columbia River is dominated by Sitka spruce trees—some more than 400 years old—with younger western redcedar and western hemlock also present. It is bordered by Columbia River sloughs and side channels and is adjacent to the Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge, multiplying its conservation value.

Read more at [NCLCtrust.org/news/conserved-warren-slough](https://nclctrust.org/news/conserved-warren-slough).

RESTORATION PLANNING UNDERWAY AT THOMPSON CREEK

Thompson Creek, which flows through the northern part of Seaside, is an important part of the area's ecological makeup. Known for its pristine headwaters, it is one of the most productive streams for Coho salmon in Seaside and, along with the adjacent Stanley Marsh, provides critical habitat for local and migrating wildlife.

As of December 2025, North Coast Land Conservancy (NCLC) is supporting the Necanicum Watershed Council (NCW) on a

long-term planning effort to explore options and opportunities to enhance the habitat along Thompson Creek in an effort to restore natural channel flows, floodplain connections, and wetland functions in the area.

“What we really want to determine is what's best for the fish and the community and make it a positive project,” NCLC Stewardship Director Melissa Reich says.

As part of this planning effort, which is anticipated to take place through the end of 2026, the groups want to connect with neighbors and get their insight and feedback.

**Stay up to date!
Visit necanicumwatershed.org/thompsoncreek**

“The Necanicum Watershed Council is eager to engage Thompson Creek neighbors and stakeholders in this study so that we can gather meaningful input, consider local and historical knowledge, and work



SUSTAINING STEWARD SPRING SOCIAL 2026

Our second annual Sustaining Steward Spring Social will take place Friday, March 13. We can't wait to celebrate and say 'thank you' to this special group of individuals who make automatic monthly donations to coastal conservation.

Want to join us? Sign up to be a Sustaining Steward. For more info, email nclc@NCLCtrust.org or visit NCLCtrust.org/support/donate/sustaining-stewards.



CAPE FALCON MARINE RESERVE TURNS 10



The Marine Program of NCLC does year-round surveys at Cape Falcon to track the health of sea star populations. Photo by Kathleen Callan.

Cape Falcon Marine Reserve is turning 10 years old this year—and we look forward to partaking in the celebration.

Established in 2016, Cape Falcon is one of five sites within Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife's marine reserve system. ODFW Marine Reserves Program staff, scientists, and other partners use various research tools to monitor marine reserves, tailoring them to each site and its unique characteristics.

NCLC adopted the program

from the Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve in 2022. Our goal is to educate on and advocate for the abundant values the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve site has to offer. We do this through a variety of activities, including the Tidepool Ambassador Program (TAP); an annual bioblitz; sea star and marine debris surveys; art workshops, hikes and outings; and other programs.

Learn more at NCLCtrust.org/get-involved/cape-falcon-marine-reserve.

FIELD TRIPS

(continued from page 1)

Blacketer, longtime practitioners of nature journaling, led the sessions with the students, accompanied by Lynette. Pacific Ridge STEAM teacher Brett Deur was also an integral part of engaging the kids in nature journaling.

After a brief overview about Circle Creek Habitat Reserve and NCLC's work, the students got to walk the trails, meet new plants and insects, and have a quiet time of writing or drawing in their own journals. At the end of the session, the students gathered back together to share their observations.

Looking forward, NCLC is working with Cannon Beach Academy to offer nature journaling lessons and fieldtrips to engage in the activity outdoors. The hope is to take them out somewhere in Cannon Beach, such as Ecola Creek Forest Reserve, whose conservation NCLC helped facilitate, as well as Circle Creek.

“We want students to learn about nature in their community or town,” Lynette says. “We hope this will be an ongoing relationship with two of the local elementary schools and that it can be offered annually.”

Read more at NCLCtrust.org/news/nature-journaling-students.

MARINE PROGRAM VOLUNTEER TURNS LOVE OF OCEAN INTO MEANINGFUL ACTION

The coastline along the New York City borough of Brooklyn is vastly different than that along the northern Oregon Coast, but for Yvana Iovino, both mean one thing: Being close to the alluring majesty of the ocean and its panoply of wildlife.

“Humans have always been drawn to the ocean,” she says. “It's so beautiful—the force of it all. ... It just makes your heart beat faster.”

Now a resident of the West Coast, Yvana attributes her love of the ocean to her childhood and young adulthood in Brooklyn, complete with daytrips to Manhattan Beach and buying fresh fish from local purveyors.

“That sets something in your head—like, ‘that's home’,” she says.

Her connection to the coastline along the Pacific Ocean ramped up with family visits to Oceanside, Oregon, as her children were

growing up. In 2017, she bought a home in Manzanita and then moved to the area fulltime in 2020. She quickly embraced the volunteer spirit, becoming a volunteer with the Haystack Rock Awareness Program (HRAP) in



Yvana rescues a Pacific staghorn sculpin during a TAP shift.

Cannon Beach and the Tidepool Ambassador Program (TAP) at Cape Falcon Marine Reserve. Since then, she also has started helping with NCLC's marine debris and sea star surveys and

participating in the annual Beachy Keen BioBlitz. Yvana is galvanized in her wide array of efforts as a volunteer with NCLC's marine program by the

“feeling of caring for the ocean and being a steward.”

“It's so much a part of the Earth, and it's so much a part of who we are,” she says. Read more at NCLCtrust.org/news/volunteer-yvana-iovino.

“[THE OCEAN IS] SO BEAUTIFUL—THE FORCE OF IT ALL.”



Helping to conserve Oregon's coastal lands and waters, forever.

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CONSERVING CREEKSIDE PROPERTY IN GEARHART

NCLC has partnered with the community of Gearhart to conserve roughly 0.74 acres along Neacoxie Creek in Gearhart for the purpose of environmental stewardship, with long-term benefits for the health and well-being of community members, native plants, and wildlife.

The two parcels, acquired by NCLC on Sept. 15, are located within city limits, between 1st and 2nd streets, and adjacent to Neacoxie Creek. The creek—beloved by many—is nestled among dune ridges to the west of U.S. Highway 101; it is flanked by tall forests and coastal prairies. For birds, elk, otters, butterflies, trout and animals of all kinds, it's a critical wildlife corridor



composed of special and diverse habitats. For local residents, it's a celebrated backdrop to their homes, neighborhoods, and favorite places. Much of the Neacoxie Wildlife Corridor is in parcellated, private ownership, leaving the bounty of natural life that it supports particularly vulnerable to the detrimental effects of habitat fragmentation.

Read more at NCLCtrust.org/news/gearhart-second-street-conservation.

CIRCLE CREEK

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corridor—spanning more than 3,000 acres from the Necanicum River to the Pacific Ocean—that includes Boneyard Ridge, Feldenheimer State Natural Area, Ecola State Park, rocky intertidal habitats, the Marine Garden at Chapman Point, and a designated Marine Conservation Area.

Similar to the existing Circle Creek Habitat Reserve, the expansion property was previously managed as pasture land for livestock and horses, but it maintains high conservation potential, featuring an abundance of forested riparian areas

containing larger Sitka spruce trees, as well as vital wetland zones.

Located in the heart of the Necanicum Wildlife Corridor, it plays a role in ensuring habitat connectivity southward, from Tillamook Head and Circle Creek Habitat Reserve, for elk and other wildlife. The surrounding watershed includes land and tributaries that contribute to the Necanicum River as it flows from its headwaters—2,800 feet above sea level in the Coast Range—to the Pacific Ocean. It provides critical habitat for many coastal plant and animal communities.

Read more at NCLCtrust.org/news/conserved-nclc-expands-circle-creek

**Save the Date for
The Forest Remembers**
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
April 25, 2026
Circle Creek Habitat Reserve
32825 Rippet Road
Seaside, OR

Join us for this special event, where we gather to honor friends and loved ones who are no longer with us. We read aloud the names of all those who have been honored with memorial gifts to NCLC, this year and throughout our history. As the list grows, we are reminded of the human community that surrounds and connects us all.



MORE INFORMATION!
NCLCtrust.org/events/the-forest-remembers-2026

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Find us on the web at **NCLCtrust.org**

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