

6th Annual Heceta Head Coastal Conference

In Partnership with

OREGON SEA GRANT

Theme: "Oregon's Ocean: Working Waterfronts"

Florence Events Center ~ October 28-29, 2010

SUMMARY of CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Master of Ceremonies: Craig McMicken, Chairman, Heceta Head Coastal Conference, Inc.

Panel: "Partnerships for Oregon's Waterfronts"
"Saving Our Assets...S.O.S...A Waterfront Revitalized"

Gina Dearth, Executive Officer, Port of Bandon

All the signs were clearly there in the late 1980's; declining timber for the areas local mills and a seriously shrinking and dismal forecast for the commercial fishing fleet, the two generational mainstays and economic backbones of this small, rural and remote community of Bandon situated on the southern Oregon coast. It was time to plan for change in a way that would help buoy the sinking economy and bring a fresh and attractive look to our waterfront. S.O.S., sink or swim.

Ten years in the making and through changing port commissioners and staff the vision never swayed. Today when visiting Bandon's waterfront you will be struck by the outcome of this vision and immediately realize what it has done for the local economy. The Port of Bandon improvements play heavily on the natural beauty of the area. In doing so it encourages visitors to reintroduce themselves to Oregon's natural resources, the Coquille River and estuary and the opportunity to access the Pacific's bounty.

The port, along with many wonderful granting partners, has completed a 25,000 square foot Boardwalk, a glass enclosed picnic shelter, a 100 seat outdoor amphitheater, creative and artistic sidewalks along the marina and port owned historic Coast Guard building that houses our offices.

In August of this year, through litigation and mediation the port was able to regain control of a port owned property (1.34 acres) stuck in a 100 year lease directly on the waterfront and adjacent to these new additions. This exciting news along with the same committed vision, public input, dedicated port commissioners and staff will allow us to continue to find sustainable ways to create jobs and continue to enhance Bandon's quality of life, while protecting her heritage and unique natural resources.

"The Riverfront Visioning Process in Astoria"

Rosemary Johnson, Planner and Historic Preservation Officer for the City of Astoria

Astoria was established as a fishing and trade community as early as 1811. The River has always been the focal point of transportation, industry, and the aesthetic beauty of the community. In the 1920's, more than 50 over-the-water fishing related buildings filled the waterfront. With the decline and changes to the fishing industry as well as the increased cost to maintain these buildings, they slowly yielded to the disintegration of time.

The 1980's found Astoria as an economically depressed area with little new development and a continuing deterioration of existing buildings. However, Astoria began to see the potential in downtown improvements that would include public spaces along the waterfront. In 1990 the City adopted the

Waterfront Planning Study that proposed to bring the public down to the “working waterfront” with small river parks and dock improvements. With the acquisition of the abandoned railroad line along the Columbia River, the City was at a turning point for the Astoria Riverfront.

During the 1990’s, Astoria began to construct the River Trail, trolley line, and small pocket parks, block-by-block, with public/private partnerships. With the success of the waterfront improvements and the increase in the economic activity, developers pursued projects that would take advantage of the beautiful riverfront locales. Citizens began raising concerns; development strained peoples comfort level. Community members urged the City to adopt codes that would protect the open spaces and views enjoyed by so many. The City, with the assistance of a consultant team, held numerous public input meetings/events, and eventually developed a Riverfront Vision Plan that addresses the conflicting interests of developers, property owners, citizens, and the environment.

“Transportation Infrastructure to Promote Economic Development”

Elise Hamner, Communications & Community Affairs Manager, International Port of Coos Bay

In the days of Paul Revere, travelers to port towns had two options. “One, if by land; two, if by sea.” Here on the Oregon Coast, many travelers historically arrived by river and sea. Over time, came roads and rail and eventually airports. These days, it’s crucial for ports big and small to have access to transportation – all kinds of transportation. Yes, if by land, sea or air, you can get to Coos Bay, or Portland, or Astoria, or Bandon.

Some things haven’t changed in 235 years. Working waterfronts still fill many niches in a community – all relating to commerce in some form. Traditionally, coastal ports have offered safe moorage and access to seafood processors and markets for commercial fishing fleets. Some, such as the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, are centers for short-sea and international shipping and industrial operations. To succeed, Oregon’s ports advocate continuously for dredging and harbor maintenance funds at the state and federal levels. Some ports are home to shipyards for commercial and recreational vessel repair, which require substantial investment to meet federal and state environmental regulations. Many ports develop and manage public docks for recreational boaters and public use. Other ports run airports and railroads.

These agencies can’t do it alone. Sustaining transportation infrastructure requires partnerships – from the grassroots level all the way to the halls of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Vigorous transportation networks beget dynamic working waterfronts, whether for industrial, tourism or general port business needs, and these waterfronts are essential to healthy, sustainable communities.

“Stormwater Opportunity—A Green Approach for Urban Settings”

Mike Miller, Director of Public Works, City of Florence

Flooding in the late 90’s brought to light the City’s often inadequate storm drainage system. In order to reduce the cumulative impacts to existing private and public property the City needed to address how stormwater can be managed with Florence’s unique hydrology, wetlands, and habitat.

In 2006 the City of Florence implemented a stormwater utility and added stormwater treatment requirements to the city code largely based on the effective requirements of other communities in Oregon. Most new development follows the guidelines as set forth in the city of Portland Stormwater Management Manual. Although effective, it has become apparent that many of the standard Best Management Practices (BMP’s) described in the Portland manual are inappropriate or are in need of modification(s) to be effective in Florence’s sand soils and coastal environment. With the creation of our own BMP manual, we will be ensured that as areas develop or redevelop that appropriate technology and science will be applied to protect the city’s federally protected sole source drinking water aquifer, inland water resources, and salmon bearing coastal streams. The stormwater design manual is our attempt to simplify and take the best from the best for our stormwater BMP’s.

One of our newest approaches to stormwater management will be incorporated in the Siuslaw River Bridge Interpretive Wayside project. Located on the north bank of the Siuslaw River in the historic Bay Street area of old town, tourists, travelers and residents will be introduced to the history of the bridge and surrounding area as well as the ecological value of the estuary. Interpretive signage will introduce the visitor

to stormwater in our built environments and demonstrate how efforts to improve stormwater quality through green approaches can be both functional and attractive.