

Cassidy Carr

From: Planning Department
Subject: FW: Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan

From: Donna Bonetti <donnambirdlady@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 3:03 PM
To: Planning Department <Planning@co.coos.or.us>
Subject: Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan

This Message originated outside your organization.

Dear Planning Commissioners,

My name is Donna Bonetti and I live in North Bend. I am writing because I am concerned with the condition of the Coos Bay Estuary. This plan has not been updated since 1983 and much has changed during this duration. On one hand scientists know more about what is necessary for a healthy estuary ecosystem. On the other hand it appears there has already been a significant decline in estuary health with declines in eelgrass habitat and subsequent decline in salmon, crabs shellfish and other keystone species. When the original plan was created the local tribes had not yet been recognized by the Federal Government, so as sovereign nations they must be included in any discussions on the management plan. Our local communities have also grown so more citizen representation is also important.

An early settler to the area, said this about the bay and what local natives enjoyed in the early days. "In this small area they could obtain all they needed or desired. If God ever created a paradise here on earth for the Red Man, it certainly was this locality..The streams and bay contained all kinds of fish, as well as clams, mussels and other shell fish." Historian Charlotte Mahaffy observed that the Milluk came every year for salmon smoking and drying and camped among "innumerable clamshell beds."

Earlier this year the Spring season of salmon fishing both commercial and recreational will be closed due to too few salmon. Last year when a local tribe had a memorial gathering to honor Chief Ivy, the speakers were gifted with canned tuna instead of the traditional salmon gift because there were not enough salmon last year. This is a clear sign that the Coos Bay Estuary needs better management to recover a once rich ecosystem.

As you work to put together a Citizen's Advisory Council within state guidelines, I ask that you include representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Suislaw Indians and also the Coquille Indian Tribe on the council. Other representatives should include scientists, commercial and recreational fishermen, shellfish aquaculture representatives, conservation/environmental advocates and the community at large. There is talk about putting someone from the Port Authority on the board but I have reservations on that. It does not appear to me that they are managing Charleston Port well, yet they want to have a mega shipping port built under their control. This idea to have them on the board would be like putting the Fox in charge of a henhouse in my opinion.

The benefits of setting up an excellent estuary plan include opportunities for commercial and recreational fishing and boating, ecotourism opportunities, hiking, bird watching and increased tourism. In addition to this maintaining a healthy ecosystem in the Bay is a good way to lessen the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification and may help lessen the impact of the expected rise in sea levels caused by climate change.

The goal of this committee should be to ensure the ecological viability of the bay, address the needs of the bay through climate change, and regulate the bay's natural, cultural and developmental uses for the health, protection and enjoyment of all.

Sincerely,
Donna Bonetti

1997 Oak St
North Bend, OR 97459
Donnambirdlady@yahoo.com

Sent from my iPad