

Establishing an Exploratory Committee to Investigate a National Marine Sanctuary for the Port Orford Area.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, is in the final stages of fundamentally changing its criteria and process for establishing National Marine Sanctuaries to favor community-based proposals that emphasize economic as well as ecological goals. Fourteen such sanctuaries exist nationwide with four on the West Coast, but none are on the Oregon coast. I believe this presents an historic opportunity for Port Orford to strengthen its economic base in fisheries, tourism, and coastal recreation. Sanctuaries do not restrict fisheries or add new regulations. Instead, they coordinate and streamline a myriad of federal and state agencies to ensure that the use and protection of marine resources inside the sanctuary support community goals. Sanctuaries also increase public awareness of the special ocean areas and attract many new visitors to the host communities.

Because the Port Orford community has long supported ocean stewardship to protect and sustain its economy and culture, I intend to appoint an Exploratory Committee of up to 20 members representing a wide range of community interests. The committee would investigate whether Port Orford and North Curry County might benefit from designation of a nearby National Marine Sanctuary. I will ask the committee to study the NOAA nominating process and criteria, review scientific information about the Port Orford-Cape Blanco marine area, examine the economic and other effects of existing sanctuaries on their nearby communities, and assess potential benefits and drawbacks of a sanctuary for Port Orford and North Curry County. I will ask the committee to report to the City Council by the end of June, 2014, with a recommendation as to whether the City should nominate an ocean area for designation as a National Marine Sanctuary and, if so, what area should be nominated, what goals and objectives the sanctuary should strive to achieve, and what conditions the community should stipulate in such a designation.

I will ask the City Council, to formally approve this process at our October meeting. I will then ask the public for volunteers wishing to be appointed to the Committee and will complete the appointments by the end of November 2013. Because I believe that a sanctuary could benefit communities to the north and south of us, I will ask the mayors of Gold Beach and Bandon for a representative of those communities to sit on the committee and will also ask a Curry County commissioner to participate. I intend the committee to hold its first meeting in January 2014, and meet five or six more times before concluding its work in June. I expect the Exploratory Committee to utilize a transparent public process and use a website to provide information to the public about the process and about what the committee is learning. An experienced facilitator will assist the committee in its work.

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REPORTS

— BAIT AND SWITCH

— STATEMENT OF DAVE DANBOM

THURSDAY OCT 17TH, 3:30 PM

A NEW BUSINESS PROPOSAL FOR CURRY COUNTY

by Jim Auburn

For the Port Orford News

Imagine a national corporation is keenly interested in opening a business location in Port Orford or, let's say, northern Curry County. Let's imagine that no other community on the Oregon coast...or the entire state...has this business. For that matter, the corporation has only four other business locations on the

entire West Coast: one near Los Angeles, one on Monterey Bay, one near San Francisco, and one near the mouth of Puget Sound. These businesses generate millions of dollars for the local economy.

This corporation hasn't opened a new local outlet in more than a decade but is poised to choose one or two new business locations somewhere in the US and is asking coastal communities nation-

wide for proposals. Coastal communities in California and other states have been clamoring for an outlet are ready to put in a proposal. The corporation, though, has its eye on Port Orford and Curry County and would love an invitation to locate here.

So, imagine that this new business will sell a unique local product; in fact, a line of local products made from local

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ents sell themselves to customers from all over the world. In doing this, there will be no need to clear land for giant factories, golf courses, wind farms, or sprawling development. There will be no need for new gas pipelines or electrical substations. The company is virtually pollution-free.

Best yet, the corporation is seeking to open its doors in a community that wants to be a full partner in managing its operations in order to meet the community's needs and goals. The company is not interested in boom and bust development and instead seeks sustainable development for years to come. It will spend its own money and leverage other funds for research and product development in

Curry County. And it will use its know-how to successfully market its new Curry County location and its unique products across the entire world.

Imagine that this business will open its doors with three to five full-time well-paid

professional staff that will bring new residents and their families to become part of the community. Imagine that over time, this staff may grow to ten or more. Based on experience elsewhere, let's say that this new business is highly likely to attract related businesses and, in fact, may very likely spawn a substantial new economic sector in Curry County.

Just what is this miracle corporation?

It is the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Currently, it has fourteen outlets nationwide, with four on the West Coast. None are in Oregon.

And what are its products? Each National Marine Sanctuary offers the public and future generations a host of unique, tailor-made products based on a protected, well-managed marine and coastal environment. A sanctuary in Curry County would sell the dynamic, productive marine environment with its diverse marine wildlife and stunning coastal views. Re-

lated businesses would sell specific experiences selected by customers such as boat and bus tours, boat and kayak rentals, diving and surfing equipment.

In addition, the presence of a National Marine Sanctuary would attract substantial investments in marine research, bringing researcher teams that will generate millions of dollars to the community economy annually. Cape Blanco is a very important physical feature on the West Coast with an enormous influence on the California Current as it flows south toward Mexico. While it has long been known as a kind of ecological dividing line between northern species and southern species, the area has not been well studied due to its remote location. A sanctuary, with related marine science support facilities and laboratories, would unlock the ability to conduct needed research on fisheries, marine productivity, and ecological conditions that support fisheries. These research activities will not only yield new

understandings of the marine environment on the West Coast, but they will buy products, services and labor from businesses throughout the community and will help to create skilled jobs with good wages.

What about ocean fisheries, a mainstay of Port Orford's economy?

National Marine Sanctuaries are multiple use areas where commercial and recreational fisheries flourish.

Study after study shows enormous economic benefit from fisheries to communities where sanctuaries are located. Sanctuaries do not regulate fisheries; state and federal fishery agencies do and will continue to do so. However, the sanctuary management plan that will be prepared based on input from the community could recommend that fishery management in the sanctuary be modified to better meet the community's goals. In addition, Curry County's fishermen will benefit from expanded scientific research and monitoring to make sure

that fisheries are managed sustainably. It is highly likely that investments that fishermen and others have already made in establishing a research program at the Redfish Rocks Marine Reserve will be enhanced by research supported or attracted by the sanctuary.

And, importantly, a strong fisheries component in the sanctuary management plan could have the effect of ensuring that the ports of Port Orford and Gold Beach receive needed funds and services from the federal government.

Why Should Port Orford and Curry County Support a Sanctuary Proposal?

Port Orford, by supporting the designation of an Ocean Stewardship Area, has demonstrated a keen desire to ensure that its marine and coastal resources and the economies that depend on them are sustainable far into the future. Perhaps the only way to reliably bring the vision of the Ocean Stewardship Area to fruition is through designation of a Na-

tional Marine Sanctuary. A sanctuary based on the Port Orford Community Stewardship Area would encompass a coastal and ocean area with Cape

Blanco as its center. It would be the ocean complement to all the efforts in local watersheds to restore freshwater habitats for salmon, to preserve old-growth and other resources in wilderness areas recently designated in the Elk River watershed, and to acknowledge the link between the sea and coastal watersheds.

No other community on the Oregon coast is situated in such a diverse and important ecological area with the strong track record of community-based ocean stewardship to support economic and social goals. Port Orford and Curry County can secure this home-grown commitment through a National Marine Sanctuary. It is just good business.

