

**PARKS & COMMONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

441 HWY 101 N., Yachats Commons Room 1

Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 3:00 pm

- I. Call meeting to order
- II. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2019 at 3:00 pm (Attachment)
- III. Reports
 - A. Commissioners
 - B. Facilities Manager
 - C. Trails Committee
 - D. Little Log Church
- IV. Business
 - A. Finance, Revenue/Expenditure Reports - Commons Building, Parks
 - B. Parks & Commons: Powers & Duties; (Attachments: City Code as currently written & Ordinances - OR 177 dated 12/29/95, OR 209 dated 10/9/98 & OR 264 (item #3), dated 12/14/06).
 - C. Yachats Community Park & Wetlands (Attachment - History, undated, compiled by Joanne Kittel) - discussion
 - D. South end estuary dog waste station & waste receptacle.
- V. Other Business
 - A. From Commission
 - B. From Floor: Topics not listed on the agenda: 5-minute limitation per person

Commission meets the third Thursday of each month.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 18, 2019, at 3:00 pm

This meeting is open to the public and all interested persons are invited to attend. This meeting will be audio taped. All items to be considered by the Commission must be submitted to City Hall no later than one week prior to the meeting. Minutes of all public meetings are available for review at City Hall or on the City website at www.yachatsoregon.org



CITY OF YACHATS

PARKS AND COMMONS COMMISSION

May 16, 2019

Draft Minutes

I. Call to Order

Chair John Purcell called to order the May 16, 2019 meeting of the Parks and Commons Commission at 3:00 pm in Room 1 of the Yachats Commons. Members present: Michael Hempen, Linda Johnson, John Purcell, Dean Shrock, Scott Gordon, and Craig Berdie. Absent: none. Also Present: Facilities Manager Heather Hoen, Trails Leads Bob Langley and Joanne Kittel. Audience: ?

II. Public Comment

John Mark Deriberprey (King Street) stated he attended the Yachats Home School program at the Presbyterian Church. He was speaking on behalf of the children at YYFAP. He reported the children cannot play on the ballfield because of dog poop.

He proposed fencing an area for the children to have to use for soccer, kickball and other sports. He proposed that they would fundraise for the materials and the parents could install the fence. He also proposed that they would take care of the maintenance of the grass within the fence. Deriberprey provided a diagram of what they were proposing.

Purcell commended Deriberprey on his presentation.

Commissioner Berdie asked how they would keep dog owners from thinking the fenced area was for the dogs. Deriberprey replied that they would put a lock on the gate and provide a key to the City Council and keep a key for themselves.

Commissioner Shrock asked how tall the fence would be.

Deriberprey stated that information was on the diagram and the fence would be made of metal.

Facilities Manager Hoen stated there was no procedure on how to proceed with this request. She explained the location they

were proposing. Hoen noted Will Williams current mows the ballfield area. Hoen reported Public Works had mentioned they might remove the backstop because it was rusting and falling down presenting hazards.

Shrock suggested to Deriberprey that they could promote the regulation on picking up after your dog. Purcell suggested that a three-foot high fence might work better and cost less. Hoen suggested the higher fence might be to keep balls within the area. John Deriberprey added that the higher fence would keep people from putting their dogs inside the fence. Purcell added that there could be an issue in making this area exclusive.

Purcell offered to have the City partner with the group. Shrock asked if the mole holes would present a problem. Nathan Barnard suggested they could keep a supply of wood chips or other materials nearby to fill in the holes. Commissioner Gordon clarified the 220 feet of fencing was to be added to the area already fenced at the back stop. Hoen noted the City would need to look at the green space master plan to ensure this project could be done.

Purcell indicated the Parks and Commons Commission would figure out what needed to be done and review the project again at the June 2019 meeting.

Commissioner Hempen asked if there was a projected cost.

Deriberprey stated they would create a budget. Hempen asked Deriberprey to also provide a timeline of when they wanted to start and when they expected to finish.

Sylvia Hood (7435 Ten Mile Road) asked that the City clean up the glass and residual trash on the field after the Clean Sweep weekend to protect the safety of people and animals. Purcell indicated he would pass that message to the Clean Sweep planners.

Lillian (317 W 2nd Street) stated the loose rocks on the black top around the Commons creates hazards for scooters, noting her brother fell and hurt his knee. She also noted the hazard also impacts kids playing basketball and kickball. She asked that the area where pipe was laid in front of the Pavilion be repaved to eliminate the gravel hazard. Hoen explained Public Works will pave this area when they do the repaving on Driftwood. Purcell asked Lillian to write a letter to City Council describing the problem.

Ginny Hafner (168 Jennifer drive) stated it was fantastic for the kids to prepare and come to this meeting to speak.

III. Minutes – April 18, 2019

Gordon moved to approve the April 18, 2019 minutes as presented: Aye – 6; No – 0.

IV. Reports

A. Commissioners

Johnson reported she got information from Florence on how to manage the transient population. She noted Florence has hot meals five days each week, showers, and other facilities and services for the homeless. She recommended that the City pay Florence to help take care of the transient population.

Johnson reported from the Chairs meeting that the Library was costing \$375,000, the dispensary was in compliance with City codes, Clean Sweep was scheduled for June, and the water billing errors were being addressed. She also reported she went on the tour with the representative from CIS who pointed out all of the signage and issues that needed to be address to ensure safety, noting that the representative was asking for many items to be painted yellow, which Johnson did not favor. Hoen added that many of these issues were being proposed by the insurance provider to prevent negligence and were not coming from OSHA. Hoen also spoke to the City's insurance agent who indicated the City would not be held responsible for not complying with every suggestion as long as they showed a good faith effort. Purcell asked Hoen to pass the list to him when she receives it.

Purcell summarized the highlights of the budget meeting the previous day, noting no major issues arose.

B. Facilities Manager

Johnson asked Hoen about the possible expansion of the Farmers Market. Hoen explained where the group could set up in front of the building and behind the Commons so as to maintain fire lanes and not damage trees and vegetation. Hoen noted they had 37 vendors signed up and 35 show up the previous Sunday, and there were 10 vendors on a waiting list.

Shrock added that Manager George Mazeika appeared to be interacting very positively with the vendors.

C. Trails Committee

Trails Lead Bob Langley highlighted the report contained information on the wetlands as requested. Purcell asked what devices the City had to keep people from putting goldfish in the wetlands. Trails Lead Joanne Kittel indicated the area are established wetlands with the State and the City can prohibit the addition of non-native species of plants and animals as a violation of State regulations. Kittel noted there is a detailed document on the wetlands on the Trails website.

Kittel reported she recently learned that State Parks will cover all the costs in the event that FEMA did not come through with funding. She noted they did not get the Siletz grant for the bridge but the work that View the Future did to raise the \$62,000+ has pleased the funders so that Trails does not need to submit for more grants. Purcell commented that the City was getting a \$375,000 bridge for a contribution of \$5,000. Kittel also reported the county has increased their contribution and the Cape Perpetua Foundation/Discovery Northwest raised their donation \$500 to \$3,500 and is contributing staff time.

Hempen expressed great appreciation for Kittel and the work of the Trails Committee.

D. Little Log Church

Purcell thanked the Little Log Church board for their report. Berdie noted the report was well-written and explained a lot. Mary Crook added that they got two new events:

1. Byrdsong Concert, Saturday, June 8, 2019 at 3:00 pm
2. Buddhist Priest Blessing, July 6, 2019 at 7:00 pm

Hoen noted the group's landscaper was departing and they would need to go through Hoen to contract a new landscaper. Hoen would get more details from Manager Beaucaire on the process.

Johnson clarified that the Little Log Church charges \$75 to use the building. Hoen noted they needed to figure out a new system to do reservations for the Little Log Church in the new reservations software. Crook reported Pat Armstrong is using the computer to deal with reservations.

Berdie clarified that the visitor count was those that actually signed the guest book and asked if there was an estimate of how many do not sign the book. Dave Baldwin estimated 90% of

people sign the book.

Hoen reported the Lions Club and the Ladies Club were very willing and eager to help with fundraising efforts for the Little Log Church. The Ladies Club suggested an open house on Labor Day where they could send people over from the Pie Social. Hempen asked if the Little Log Church was going to do anything to capture the crowds here for July 4th. Crook stated that they have not been open on the 4th for two years as it was too hectic in the past.

Johnson suggested that they expand the Museum if they were going to be rebuilt, perhaps in the style of the interpretive center.

She noted it was the bus stop and it could be the center and main information conduit for Yachats Information. Hoen indicated Johnson's suggestion would require a larger building.

Hoen and Johnson discussed whether volunteers could operate an interpretive center and how that would relate to the Visitors Center. Purcell added that there was more clarification needed in terms of the jurisdiction of the Commission, Committee, and Board.

Carl Miller stated the Board is meeting with an attorney on June 11, 2019 in Eugene to change their nonprofit status to a 501(c)3.

He also has gotten contact names for help with grant writing.

Miller clarified that a comment at the Budget meeting that the Friends of the Little Log Church had the purpose to raise money for the operations of the Little Log Church, which was not true.

Purcell asked the Little Log Church group to inform the City when it pays for items to help maintain and upgrade the facilities.

Hempen asked if the Board had discussed the option of having an interpretive center as part of the facility. The group indicated they could discuss that idea at the next board meeting. Purcell appreciated the Little Log Church's willingness to be open to new ideas.

V. Business

A. Finance/Budget Committee Update

Purcell referred to his report earlier. Berdie noted the maintenance line in the budget was at 42% and had concern about underspending on maintenance. Hoen reported that some of the previous recording of expenses was put in the wrong

categories and this situation was being remedied. She noted it has only been in the last two months that she has had a budget to work with. She stated there would be significant changes in the maintenance activity in the coming year. Purcell added that Hoen was working on an overall maintenance plan. Hoen stated that much of her time in the past year has been addressing unforeseen issues, and she expects to have an ongoing schedule developed soon. Hoen also noted that when she does maintenance work herself, that cost is attributed to her regular pay.

Berdie also asked about the Trails budget being underspent. Langley explained their budget. Purcell stated that the City gets great returns on its investment in Trails. Hoen noted there was some pushback on the Trails budget at the Budget meeting around the Trails not qualifying for Visitors Amenities.

Several Commissioners reported that people have been parking on the 804 Trail along Ocean View Drive. Purcell indicated this issue would fall under Code Enforcement.

B. Trails Letter from Joanne Kittel

Purcell noted the Trails trimmed their budget by \$2,500.

C. Evans/Betz

Purcell reported Evans/Betz was not included in the FY2019-2020 budget. He indicated View the Future decided the cost of the property was too high. Purcell explained the objectives and approaches of the McKenzie River Trust who were interested in investing in a larger package of parcels, especially those that impact the watershed.

D. New Commission Member

Purcell indicated he would plan a course to address this issue.

VI. Other Business

A. From the Commission

Berdie announced the Cape Perpetua Collaborative will be holding their Land-Sea Symposium event at the Commons in November 2019.

Purcell reported the Council will be looking at the role the Commissions and Committees play and they would likely be asked for input.

B. From the floor - none

Purcell adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm.

John Purcell, Chair

Date

Minutes prepared by H.H. Anderson, June 10, 2019

1 of 2

Parks and Commons Commission Draft Minutes May 16,
2019

Yachats Municipal Code							
Up	Previous	Next	Main		Search	Print	No Frames

[Title 2 - Administration and Personnel](#)

[Chapter 2.08 - Public Works and Streets Commission, Parks and Commons Commission and Library Commission](#)

Section 2.08.040 Powers and duties.

A. The commissions shall have the powers and duties hereinafter set forth, and such further and additional powers and duties as conferred upon such commissions by laws of the State of Oregon, City Charter, comprehensive plan, ordinances and resolutions of the City Council. All authority of the commissions shall be derived from the City Council.

1. Public Works and Streets Commission.

a. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for the operation and use of the City's public works; recommend such to City Council for adoption.

b. Plan for future growth, development and improvement of the City's public works.

c. Advise the City Director on improvements and maintenance for the City's public works.

d. Recommend improvements or repairs to the City's streets, culverts, drainage and curbing.

e. Review all rates and fees including, but not limited to, water, sewer, and system development yearly and report to the City Council by March 1st of each year and recommend any changes in rates, fees, charges or policy.

f. Serve as the City's Public and Traffic Safety Committee as follows:

i. Hear suggestions and complaints from citizens concerning issues of public and traffic safety;.

ii. Research and develop remedies for public and traffic safety concerns as needed;

iii. Recommend public and traffic safety priorities for the City;

iv. Review and recommend project application for funding;

v. Serve as liaison between the City and the Oregon Traffic Safety Commission in developing the statewide highway safety program, and in meeting the National Highway Safety Program Standards;

vi. Act in an advisory capacity to the Yachats City Council in the implementation of safety activities;

vii. Foster public knowledge and support of traffic law enforcement and traffic engineering problems and needs;

viii. Monitor the Village Circulation Plan portion of the Comprehensive Plan, including implementation, funding, and signage; and

ix. Serve as liaison between the City and Lincoln County in development of the trail system, shoreline access points, and signage as established in the Village Circulation Plan and approved findings vacating portions of County Road 804 South.

g. Serve as a franchise review committee responsible for initially reviewing, negotiating, and recommending to City Council all franchise agreements.

2. Library Commission:

a. Operate and manage the Yachats Public Library;

b. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for operation of the library;

c. Receive gifts, grants, bequests and devises to carry out the purpose of the library;

d. Prepare and submit to the budget officer an annual budget which will be forwarded to the budget committee.

3. Parks and Commons

a. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for the operation of the City's Parks and Commons building and grounds in a manner which assures security of the City's assets and encourages use by tenants, residents and visitors alike and recommend them to City Council for adoption;

b. Establish rental rates for various uses of the Commons; recommend such to City Council for adoption;

c. Maximize income through promotion or co-promotion of appropriate events;

d. Work with the Commons Director in development and implementation of a marketing program for tenants and special programs;

e. Plan for the regulation, development and improvement of the City's parks;

f. Receive gifts, grants, bequests and devises to carry out the purpose of the Commons and parks;

g. Cooperate with volunteer organizations and City groups in the advancement of the Commons and parks planning and programming process; and

h. Work with the Commons Director in the development of the budget for the Commons. Prepare the annual budget for all City parks and submit to the Budget Officer the budget proposals for the parks and the Commons building for forwarding to the Budget Committee.

B. Each commission shall perform such other responsibilities and duties as the City Council, from time to time, may delegate by ordinance, resolution or motion. (Ord. 177 § 4, 1995) (Ord. 264, Amended, 12/18/2006; 209, Amended, 10/09/1998)

View the [mobile version](#).

C) Parks and Commons.

1. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for the operation of the City's Museum, Parks and Commons building and grounds in a manner which assures security of the City's assets and encourages use by tenants, residents and visitors alike; recommend such to City Council for adoption.
 2. Establish rental rates for various uses of the Commons; recommend such to City Council for adoption. The Commission should maximize income through promotion or co-promotion of appropriate events.
 3. Develop and implement a marketing program for tenants and special programs.
 4. The Chair, or Chair's designee, is authorized to prepare and sign Permit Agreements with users.
 5. Plan for the regulations, development and improvement of the City's museum and parks.
 6. Receive gifts, grants, bequest and devises to carry out the purpose of the commons, museum and parks.
 7. Advise and work with the City Superintendent on maintenance, repairs and improvements of the physical plant and grounds.
 8. Cooperate with volunteer organizations and City groups in the advancement of the commons, museum and parks planning and programming process.
 9. Prepare and submit to the Budget Officer a budget proposal to forward to the Budget Committee.
- 2) Each Commission shall perform such other responsibilities and duties as the City Council, from time to time, may delegate by ordinance, resolution or motion.

Section 5. Organization of the Commissions.

- 1) The Commission shall, at the first meeting of each calendar year, elect a chair and Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair and serve in the absence of the Chair.
- 2) Each Commission may select a Secretary from among its members, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Commission or the City Council shall designate a City staff person to act as

Secretary. The Secretary shall keep accurate records of all proceedings of the Commission and shall perform such duties as are requested of the Secretary by the Commission, this Ordinance or by law.

- 3) Four members of a Commission (Library, three members) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- 4) Regular meetings of each Commission shall be monthly (except the Library Commission which shall meet at least quarterly) at the City Council chambers. The Chair shall have the power to convene special meetings or cancel regular meetings.
- 5) The City office shall be the office for transaction of Commission business and the keeping of its records.

Section 6. Report to the Council. Each Commission shall make and file with the Council a report of all meetings and transactions of the Commission for the preceding month. Copies of the minutes recorded by the Secretary at the regular and special meeting of the Commission may serve as reports, and shall be filed with the Council as expediently as possible, and in no case more than 30 days after the meeting of the Commission. Each Commission shall, in addition, make other reports as may be requested by the Council.

Section 7. Repeal. Ordinance No. 160, enacted March 11, 1993, is repealed.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council on the 27th day of December, 1995 by the following vote:

<u>5</u> Ayes	<u>0</u> Abstentions
<u>0</u> Nays	<u>0</u> Absent

APPROVED by the Mayor on the 29th day of December, 1995.

Martha Dillen
Martha Dillen, Mayor

Attest:

Andrea Phelps
Andrea Phelps, City Recorder

Ordinance No. 177
Continuing Commissions

**CITY OF YACHATS
ORDINANCE NO. 209**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING §2.08.040 (A) (1) AND (3) OF THE
YACHATS MUNICIPAL CODE, PRESCRIBING THE DUTIES OF
THE PUBLIC WORKS AND STREETS COMMISSION AND THE
PARKS AND COMMONS COMMISSION.**

WHEREAS, the Little Log Church and Museum is managed by a volunteer board, separate from, and no longer under the jurisdiction of, the Parks and Commons Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Commons Director has been assigned duties for which the Commission was once responsible; and

WHEREAS, City Council has determined a need for a Public and Traffic Safety Committee, and the Public Works and Streets Commission has expressed interest in serving in that capacity; and

NOW THEREFORE, the City of Yachats ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. § 2.08.040 (A)(1) of the Yachats Municipal Code shall be amended to read as follows:

1) Public Works and Streets Commission.

- a. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for the operation and use of the City's public works; recommend such to City Council for adoption.
- b. Plan for future growth, development and improvement of the City's public works.
- c. Advise the City Superintendent on improvements and maintenance for the City's public works.
- d. Recommend improvements or repairs to the City's streets, culverts, drainage and curbing.
- e. Review all rates and fees including, but not limited to, water, sewer, and system development yearly and report to the City Council by March 1st of each year and recommend any changes in rates, fees, charges or policy.
- f. **Serve as the City's Public and Traffic Safety Committee as follows:**
 1. Hear suggestions and complaints from citizens concerning issues of public and traffic safety;
 2. Research and develop remedies for public and traffic safety concerns as needed;
 3. Recommend public and traffic safety priorities for the City;
 4. Review and recommend project application for funding;
 5. Serve as liaison between the City and the Oregon Traffic Safety Commission in developing the statewide highway safety program, and in meeting the National Highway Safety Program Standards;
 6. Act in an advisory capacity to the Yachats City Council in the implementation of safety activities;

7. Foster public knowledge and support of traffic law enforcement and traffic engineering problems and needs;
8. Monitor the Village Circulation Plan portion of the Comprehensive Plan, including implementation, funding, and signage; and
9. Serve as liaison between the City and Lincoln County in development of the trail system, shoreline access points, and signage as established in the Village Circulation Plan and approved findings vacating portions of County Road 804 South.

SECTION 2. § 2.08.040 (A)(3) of the Yachats Municipal Code shall be amended to read as follows:

3) Parks and Commons

- a. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for the operation of the City's Parks and Commons building and grounds in a manner which assures security of the City's assets and encourages use by tenants, residents and visitors alike and recommend them to City Council for adoption;
- b. Establish rental rates for various uses of the Commons; recommend such to City Council for adoption;
- c. Maximize income through promotion or co-promotion of appropriate events;
- d. Work with the ~~Commons Director~~ in development and implementation of a marketing program for tenants and special programs;
- e. Plan for the regulation, development and improvement of the City's parks;
- f. Receive gifts, grants, bequests and devises to carry out the purpose of the Commons and parks;
- g. Cooperate with volunteer organizations and City groups in the advancement of the Commons and parks planning and programming process; and
- h. Work with the Commons Director in the development of the budget for the Commons. Prepare the annual budget for all City parks and submit to the Budget Officer the budget proposals for the parks and the Commons building for forwarding to the Budget Committee.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Yachats on this 8th day of October, 1998.

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 1

APPROVED by the Mayor this 9th day of October, 1998.

Attest:


Arthur Roberts, Mayor


Nancy Otterson, City Recorder

Ordinance No. 209

**CITY OF YACHATS
ORDINANCE NO. 264**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE YACHATS MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 2.08.040
POWERS AND DUTIES TO INCLUDE AS A DUTY OF THE PUBLIC WORKS AND
STREETS COMMISSION THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FRANCHISE AGREEMENT
REVIEW COMMITTEE**

NOW THEREFORE, the City of Yachats ordains as follows:

Section 1. Section 2.08.040 is hereby amended to read as follows

2.08.040 Powers and duties.

A. The commissions shall have the powers and duties hereinafter set forth, and such further and additional powers and duties as conferred upon such commissions by laws of the state of Oregon, City Charter, comprehensive plan, ordinances and resolutions of the city council. All authority of the commissions shall be derived from the city council.

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- d. Recommend improvements or repairs to the City's streets, culverts, drainage and curbing.
- e. Review all rates and fees including, but not limited to, water, sewer, and system development yearly and report to the City Council by March 1st of each year and recommend any changes in rates, fees, charges or policy.
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 - i. Hear suggestions and complaints from citizens concerning issues of public and traffic safety;
 - ii. Research and develop remedies for public and traffic safety concerns as needed;
 - iii. Recommend public and traffic safety priorities for the City;
 - iv. Review and recommend project application for funding;
 - v. Serve as liaison between the City and the Oregon Traffic Safety Commission in developing the statewide highway safety program, and in meeting the National Highway Safety Program Standards;
 - vi. Act in an advisory capacity to the Yachats City Council in the implementation of safety activities;
 - vii. Foster public knowledge and support of traffic law enforcement and traffic engineering problems and needs;
 - viii. Monitor the Village Circulation Plan portion of the Comprehensive Plan, including implementation, funding, and signage; and
 - ix. Serve as liaison between the City and Lincoln County in development of the trail system, shoreline access points, and signage as established in the Village Circulation Plan and approved findings vacating portions of County Road 804 South.

g. Serve as a franchise review committee responsible for initially reviewing, negotiating, and recommending to City Council all franchise agreements.

2. Library Commission:

- a. Operate and manage the Yachats Public Library;

Public Works & Streets Commission Duties

- b. Formulate rules, regulations and standards for operation of the library;
- c. Receive gifts, grants, bequests and devises to carry out the purpose of the library;
- d. Prepare and submit to the budget officer an annual budget which will be forwarded to the budget committee.

3. Parks and Commons

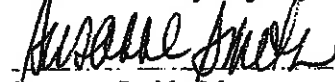
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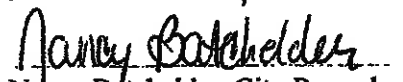
B. Each commission shall perform such other responsibilities and duties as the city council, from time to time, may delegate by ordinance, resolution or motion. (Ord. 177 § 4, 1995)

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Yachats on this 14th day of December, 2006

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 1

APPROVED by the Mayor this 14 day of December, 2006.


Susanne Smith, Mayor


Nancy Batchelder, City Recorder

YACHATS COMMUNITY PARK AND WETLANDS

For years, a hidden treasure lay behind the Yachats Commons—a natural wetlands once fed both by streams and by rainwater running down the hills from the east side of Highway 101. Then a manmade ditch drained it and left it to become a tangle of blackberry, salal, and willows. It became a garbage dump for many and was frequented by transients. Over the past ten years, a dedicated corps of volunteers has reclaimed this environmental jewel and brought it back to a healthy, functioning wetlands. This is the story of how the Yachats wetlands was restored.

*

In 1997, when Jerry Kraft retired from his position as an entomology professor at Western Washington University, he and his wife Cheryl moved to Yachats. Both of them became active volunteers in the Yachats community. Jerry joined the Yachats Watershed Council and the Mid-Coast Watersheds Council of Lincoln County. He received a grant to monitor water quality in four watersheds in the county, including the Yachats River, and he trained volunteers to do the monitoring. Jerry joined the Yachats Parks & Commons Commission and was elected to City Council where he began developing plans to restore the wetlands behind the Commons. This wetlands area, approximately 4.3 acres in size, was city property. The restoration project had been considered ever since the old elementary school, now called the Yachats Commons, was bought in 1989 to serve as the location for city government and as a center for community activities. After City Council accepted a master plan for the Yachats Parks & Commons Commission, Jerry developed a three-year plan for the project.

Sadly, Jerry died of cancer in 2003. In his memory, a task force was formed by Cheryl and then-mayor, Lee Corbin. The task force included the following people: Don Niskanen, president of the Friends of the Yachats Commons; Cy Kauffman, chair of the Parks & Commons Commission; Leslie Carter, Parks & Commons Commission; David Schlesinger, fish biologist; Paul Engelmeyer, National Audubon Society; Keith Kraft, Jerry's brother and also an entomologist; Chad Link, developer; Betty Bahn, Master Gardener; Jim Gerdemann, botanist; Jim Adler,

water quality monitor; Ray Meehan, city council member; Mark Doyle, excavator; and Larry Lewis, Yachats city planner. Evelyn Everett joined the task force later.

In 2003, the wetlands appeared as an impenetrable barrier of Himalayan blackberry, ivy, and other invasive species. On the west side of the wetlands was a spruce grove, shaped by years of high winds and salt-laden air. The area had been used as an illegal dump and was inhabited by transients and illicit drug users.

In the 1970s, the Yachats fire chief, Frankie Petrick, home-schooled children in the firehouse. When she took her students into the wetlands for a botany lesson, she pointed to a gnarled spruce tree, Big Spruce, in the middle of the wetlands and told them to meet there if they got separated—it was the only visible landmark above the blackberries. It was hard to know at the time that wetlands existed in the area, but people like Jerry and other members of the task force had the expertise to identify the treasure buried under the snarl of brush and garbage.

Historical evidence supported the biological analysis. Sam Case, Farm Agent for the Alsea Sub-agency that managed the forced relocation of Indians during the years 1860-1875, noted in his annual report for 1869 that crops planted in a boggy area, even root vegetables, failed to thrive. That boggy area may well have been the wetlands west of the Commons. Betty Bahn's mother reported her own mother's accounts of seeing migratory fowl, including swans, landing in the wetlands.

When enough of the blackberries had been removed, members of the task force discovered a deep ditch exiting at W. 6th Street that had been excavated to drain the wetlands. Bert Harley, who moved to Yachats in 1946, and Al Green who attended the Yachats School, also in 1946, remember a stream that they think may have been manmade. Al and his friends played with frogs and pulled skunk cabbage out of the waterway. He remembers it being muddy and he didn't venture too far into the water. Back in 1948, Judy (Carson) Kauffman and Sherri Hall were not supposed to play that far to the west of the elementary school. Sherri said her parents, Doris and Lester Hall, would have been upset if she had come home with muddy shoes, although Judy remembers that the native plants provided a great place for hide-and-seek. The boys, more willing to venture into

the tangle, discovered the ditch. Elaine Harley attended the Yachats School for 6th through 8th grade (1945-1948). Like Judy and Sherri, she doesn't recall going far into the area to play. The spruces on the west side of the wetlands were tiny, Elaine remembers, and you could see the ocean from the school, something that is no longer possible. Another classmate, Doris Gardenhire, remembers how wet the area was, from the back of the school all the way to the Adobe Resort, a memory corroborated by Al Green. By the early seventies, when Frankie and her students cleared a trail for their botanizing expeditions, the area was already a blackberry jungle, although she does also recall the ditch and the swampy conditions.

No one knows for sure why the ditch was excavated. Betty Bahn, a retired nurse, speculates that it was the polio scare of the 1930s and the locals' fears that the wetlands could be a breeding ground for insects that carried the virus. Elaine Harley, also a nurse, supports Betty's speculation. It's also possible that parents thought their children faced more danger from the wetlands than from the possibility of falling into the ditch. One thing is certain: the mud was like glue and difficult to wash off, something the task force members and other wetlands volunteers can personally attest to.

Members of the task force divided into committees to tackle several jobs. The biggest were grant-writing and fundraising. Planner Larry Lewis searched for grant money. Leslie Carter and Cheryl Kraft led the quest for private donations.

Phase 1 was a challenging learning curve for the task force. Permits and approvals had to be obtained from a variety of agencies, even after the Yachats City Council approved the project. Planning, hiring consultants, and complying with State and Federal regulations for wetland restoration work were ongoing tasks. Public hearings were held to get input from local citizens and groups about what they wanted in the wetlands area. Students in the Yachats Youth and Family Activities Program (YYFAP) had some strong desires, including a skate park and a swimming pool. Despite some strong lobbying on behalf of the skate park, neither idea became part of the wetlands restoration project, but other valuable additions did come out of the students' input. One of their wishes was for a Peace Garden, and

at the initiation of Leslie Carter, it was constructed in 2004. The kids continue to tend the garden, producing vegetables and beautiful flowers in raised boxes shaped like a peace symbol. An arbor and trellis were designed and built by Syri Hamilton, bordering the parking lot behind the Commons and creating a separation between the cars and the children's playground to the west.

Larry Lewis, with the assistance of Don Niskanen, wrote a grant application to the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department for \$75,000. The task force met the 40% match requirement, for a total budget of \$125,000.

The task force hired retired OSU professor and landscape architect John Stewart to create a conceptual master plan. John's fee was \$4,000; however, he never sent in a bill for his work, in essence donating his fee to the wetlands project.

In December 2003, a boardwalk was constructed between Big Spruce in the middle of the property to West Sixth Street, connecting to the Yachats Library on Seventh Street. The boardwalk was built by Lake Price, a contractor from Reedsport. The treated wood was environmentally safe, but careful attention was paid to make sure that no treated wood would touch the ground or the wetlands themselves. Concrete pilings supported the framing and decking. One part of the boardwalk is removable, and it was removed temporarily when the west pond was graded in 2006.

Before any further wetlands restoration work could begin, a permit was needed from the DSL. One of the permit requirements was a wetland delineation report. Loverna Wilson, an environmental consultant, prepared a report which documented four separate wetlands areas. Both John Stewart and Loverna visited the site several times in order to complete their reports. Paul Adamus, a wetland scientist, and Nancy Holzhauser, a wetlands consultant, prepared the final report on which the DSL application was based, with a detailed plan for restoration of a fresh-water wetlands.

While DSL is vigilant about approving restoration plans, they may have been "kinder" to the Yachats task force, since it was obvious that the task force was proceeding with persistence and incredible attention to detail to reverse the

damage to this fragile landscape. It took some time, but DSL finally approved the project.

Approval was also needed from the Army Corps of Engineers. However, since the project was small, DSL and the Army Corps of Engineers agreed that no additional permit was needed. The task force also contacted the State Water Board to make sure no additional permits or other requirements would be imposed. They were assured that none were.

While approval of the DSL permit was pending, David Schlesinger, on behalf of the City of Yachats, prepared a grant application to the state Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) for a supplemental grant for wetland restoration. The guidelines for the grant included improvement of access to coastal resources. Of course, that is not what the project intended. The access was there; money was needed to improve the wetlands (coastal resources). Despite not fitting the guidelines, a grant of \$27,000 was awarded with no match requirements. The task force speculated that the reviewers were impressed with the project goals, the objectives already met, and the honesty of the task force.

In 2006, Phase 2 began. Bill Bodewig, a local tree cutter and invasive species remover, and Calder Bell, arborist, were hired to clear out the invasive plants so that others could access the property and start restoration work. The first project was to remove the blackberries and other invasive species covering the four wetland areas, grade those areas, and fill in the drainage ditch that had been there for decades. Steve Trask, a fisheries biologist from Alsea, was hired as the project manager. Terry Duman from Florence, who had done similar work for the Forest Service, was hired to do the grading.

It was determined that additional boardwalks were needed. Application was made to LCDC to re-direct funds still remaining in the grant to finish the boardwalk project. They readily approved, since the boardwalk additions clearly met the application guidelines for enhancing access. Doug Thompson from Roseburg was hired to construct the boardwalk from Big Spruce to Fourth Street. An additional extension was built from the main boardwalk into the spruce forest.

Later, an additional path was built along the east side of the wetlands, again with volunteer labor.

The ballfield was re-oriented from the northwest to the northeast section of the open area adjacent to the wetlands. Fencing was installed on the north border of the field and around home plate to prevent balls from hitting cars, people, and nearby buildings. Nine benches were constructed by Steve Kolstad of Yachats and placed around the wetlands area. All were donated by people to commemorate different individuals. The first plaque was in honor of Jerry Kraft.

An osprey platform was installed. This took some ingenuity. Ordinarily, utility poles are used. New poles, made of specially-raised Douglas fir from Canada, cost \$6,000. Some "retired" poles were located in the Central Lincoln PUD utility yard. The platforms themselves are usually built with a pallet or similar material. However, Betty Bahn and the task force decided they needed something sturdier and found a suitable pallet plan online. PUD paid for the pallet and the task force used their funds to have all the nuts and bolts changed to stainless steel. Ray Meehan built the platform. PUD brought the pole to the chosen site and augured a hole thirteen feet deep. While the PUD staff went to breakfast, task force volunteers attached the nesting platform to the top of the pole. When the pole was finally in place, it stood 60+ feet off the ground. To date, no ospreys have made a home there, but hope remains.

It was agreed that there would be no further alterations beyond the grading and removing invasive species and planting native species. If the wetlands were to fill with water, nature needed to run its course. The task force agreed to wait and see—and as is obvious today, the wetlands did fill with water.

The next phase—planting—was crucial. The deep wetland soils are clay and highly acidic, which is why it takes a lot of scrubbing to remove it from clothes and skin. However, certain plants thrive in this environment. Many wetland plants returned by themselves; a testament to the dormant seeds in the soil bank awaiting suitable conditions to grow. Much to the delight of the task force members, native plants started to appear almost immediately. Green false hellebore

(*Veratrum viride*), Coast Boykinia (*Boykinia elata*), and cattails (*Typha latifolia*) soon appeared.

Two major planting days were scheduled, one in the fall and one in the following spring. Volunteers placed over 4,000 plants in the ground during those two planting days. Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*) was planted around the osprey pole, extending thirteen feet out to discourage people from trying to climb it.

Experimentation is ongoing to determine what will grow and thrive in the four wetland areas. Kathleen Sand, previous co-owner of the Gerdemann Botanical Preserve, David Schlesinger, and Betty Bahn planted Western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), a rare and endangered plant, originally collected by Jim Gerdemann. This proved quite successful. An illustrated list of plants can be found on the yachatstrails.org website under the Commons Wetland tab.

Many wildlife species now make their home in the wetlands. Red-legged frogs, an endangered species, are present, as are a variety of ducks, including mallards, scaups, and red phalarope. Green herons, great blue herons, and egrets frequent the wetlands. There are rough-skinned newts and numerous songbirds, including red-winged blackbirds and marsh wrens whose calls ring out from their nests in the willows and cattails. In summer 2012, a muskrat was seen in the main pond harvesting the cattails.

Another YYFAP wish was to have a treehouse adjacent to the playground. The kids brainstormed the design features. Over the next several years, funds were raised and then increased by additional contributions from the Friends of the Commons and the Commons budget. However, when sufficient funds were available, the project stalled because a county permit was needed, including an engineering design. Several local engineers were approached and all declined—for liability reasons and probably lack of experience in designing treehouses. A year or so later, Charlie Greenwood at Treehouse Engineering, agreed to provide the plans at 10% of his standard fees. Bids were obtained from a local licensed builder, but the engineered design and the higher-than-expected labor costs, left the project short of the necessary funds. Ultimately, Chris Graamans, a local wood artist who

had served as chair of YYFAP for many years, offered to build the tree house for free. YYFAP scraped together more money for materials. Construction began in October 2010 and was completed in December.

The covered picnic shelter behind the Commons was completed several years earlier, sponsored by the Lions and the Parks & Commons Commission. However, the cold north winds that blow in the summer diminished its usability. In 2011, glass enclosures were installed under the direction of Dave Rieseck, a city council member at the time.

Maintenance of the wetlands is an ongoing project. It was originally undertaken by Betty Bahn, David Schlesinger (now deceased), and Don Niskanen. Dylan McDowell, a high school student, monitored the area for a year, reporting on plant and wildlife in the wetlands to the Parks & Commons Commission.

YIPS volunteers – a subcommittee of the Yachats Trails Committee – are now doing much of the wetlands maintenance. They have spent many hours in the wetlands park removing blackberry and ivy and mulching the cleared areas with bark. Once the invasive plants are under control, there are plans to add more native plants.

While oral reports from people who lived in Yachats in the mid-forties make it clear that the ditch that drained the wetlands went in before that time, their testimony also attests to the persistence of the wet, boggy area, begging to come back as a functioning wetlands.

This was achieved, as is so much, in Yachats, by the competence, collaboration, tenacity, and vision of the local all-volunteer wetlands task force, and all the many others who donated labor and expertise to achieve that vision. Yachats is a community that is proud of its achievements. As long as we continue in this tradition of volunteers and cooperation, our village will thrive and continue to meet its mission.

The history of the Commons Park and restoration of the wetlands was compiled by Joanne Kittel in consultation with Betty Bahn, Frankie Petrick, David Schlesinger,

Don Niskanen, Cheryl Kraft Wade, Al Green, Sherri Hall, Elaine Harley, Bert Harley, Doris Gardenhire, Larry Lewis, and Andrea Scharf.