

A Proposal for a Marine Garden: Coquille Point & Elephant Rock December 9, 2020

Shoreline Education for Awareness

I want to thank you for the effort you have been devoting to Coquille Point (CP) and Elephant Rock for the past 30 years, devoting time and talent to educating visitors to CP and especially to the rocks and tidepools around Elephant Rock, Coquille Rock, and North Coquille Rock. I understand that this area is rich in marine life all year round, and especially rich in the Spring and Summer when the Harbor Seals are giving birth to their pups and the Sea & Shore Birds are laying eggs.

While the area is biologically rich and robust, I realize that it is also fragile. Visitors who are excited to walk in the midst of this beautiful marine habitat can unintentionally harm the residents here and do immense damage to their reproductive effort. I have seen visitors with their unleashed dogs attack & kill the Harbor Seal pups. People will crowd around the seal pups for observation while keeping their mother's from reclaiming them after leaving them for a short while for foraging for food in deeper water where the young pups cannot go yet. The unleashed dogs will also go after the freshly fledged chicks while they are learning to learn how to feed in the intertidal areas. I have seen visitors walking in tidepools and climbing on rocks, crushing hundreds of living organisms. In the excitement of the moment, I've seen people approach bird nest, scaring the adults from the nests and exposing the egg and/or the baby chicks to predation from ferals.

The beach in Bandon is a treasure to humans and marine life. I support you in your intention to have Coquille Point's Elephant Rock area protected and given a special designation by the State of Oregon as a Marine Garden. I would also strongly suggest a required leash law during the Seal Pupping season and the Sea & Shore Bird Nesting season which runs from March thru August every year. The suggested areas that would benefit with a leash law is the wet & dry sand area between the stairways located at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> streets.

I have been a Interpretation Volunteer for the F&WS for the last 7 years at the above mentioned rocky intertidal areas. During those summers I put in 240 hours per summer volunteering on the beach along side these Marine Animals & Birds They need our protection all year long. As more people are moving to live & visit the Oregon coast these very popular sites are getting more trampled by them. These popular sites all need protection from the abusers.

Sincerely,

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