

OCEAN SHORES CITIZENS FOR BALANCED GROWTH *NEWSLETTER*

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Weatherwax Report

As stated in our last newsletter, the current plan to preserve Weatherwax is to designate it as a wetland mitigation bank. If you want to understand more about wetland banking, there is a **MEETING ON MONDAY JULY 27th at 3PM** at the Convention Center. There will be representatives of the Department of Ecology and the Army Corps of Engineers to describe wetland banking in detail.

Some people have expressed concern that a Weatherwax wetland bank will mean all other wetlands in the City will be destroyed. This is not accurate. Any development on land with a wetland and buffer must be designed to (1) avoid it if possible; (2) minimize impact if possible; and (3) only then will mitigation be considered. The other positive note on mitigation is that most of our wetlands are small, scattered, and Category III or IV on a scale with IV being lowest value. By mitigating them with the highest value Category I wetlands in Weatherwax, we are preserving a large contiguous ecosystem of high quality wetlands, thus improving the overall quality of wetlands in Ocean Shores.

The process of creating a wetland bank involves a lot of paperwork. The City has submitted a first draft of the "prospectus" which is a document describing the property and why it has value as a wetland bank. The Mitigation Banking Review Team (MBRT) commented on the first draft and returned it. The MBRT consists of representatives from Ecology and the Corps. The City is now working on version 2 in response to those comments.

Fourth of July

This Fourth of July was considered a terrific success in many ways, but what we want to talk about is litter. Lillian Broadbent, our acting president, took on the task of a money drive to put a full page ad in the North Coast News about litter pickup. OSCBG as a whole got credit for that. The City bought litter bags for volunteers to hand out at beach approach roads. Some of the volunteers were from OSCBG. Countless bags were collected and collection sites were overflowing on the morning of the 5th. Of course some beach cleanup was still required and again we had some OSCBG volunteers. All in all, this Fourth of July was a great step towards future clean beaches. Thank you to all who got involved and helped!

One Voice

Last fall, a single citizen made a lot of noise about wetlands being cleared and filled on an 8 acre tract of land on the southwest side of town. The vegetation at the front of the tract was

left standing until the end of the job, so the extent of destruction was unfortunately unseen until after the damage was done. Many problems led up to this situation: inadequate wetland flagging, inadequate information on the clearing permit, oral rather than written agreements of what was being cleared, initial lack of response to the citizen, etc. But this one citizen did not give up and finally got a meeting with the Mayor and Ken Lanfear. Mistakes were made all around, but the Department of Ecology and Army Corps of Engineers were finally called in for site visits. This triggered an investigation that is ongoing, but to date has resulted in the owner being told to clear all of the fill and restore/recreate the wetlands that were destroyed. Out of 8 acres of land, 6.4 were found to be wetlands and will be restored, leaving the owner with much less development space and much more landscaping cost than he anticipated. In other words, he didn't get away with it, and he may have more mitigation costs still to come.

So why did we tell you this story? Because one voice, yours, can make a difference. Government entities did respond and the owner is paying for it. This destruction was caught after the fact, but if a lot of citizens are watching, some destruction can be prevented. Many citizens are concerned about the "clear everything to the sand" work that regularly occurs in Ocean Shores. The City of Ocean Shores Planning and Building departments cannot monitor every clearing permit, and some clearing is happening without permits. They can only give the contractors the rules and trust they will follow them. If you see clearing that you think is wrong, report it: CALL 289-2754 (Permit Center) or the Police. Ask them to get back to you after they investigate. Stay on top of it with more calls if you don't get a response. Here are some things you can look for:

- Wetlands and their buffers must be flagged and avoided. (To determine if there are wetlands, see the City map or the property file folder at the Permit Center.)
- Ten percent of evergreen trees more than 8" in diameter must be left standing, or if unavoidable, three trees must be planted for every one (of the ten percent) removed. Leaving some natural areas with 100% trees is preferable.
- Lots cannot be cleared then put up for sale. Building plot plans must be filed with the clearing permit.
- Unfortunately clearing permits do not have to be posted, but contractors should have a copy with them.
- Clearing a lot without private access (driveway) to the lot is not allowed.
- Waterfront lots can only be cleared to the property line, which must be posted, not to the shoreline. If it happens that the property line is in the water, at least two feet of vegetation must remain in from the shoreline.
- For docks, an area up to 8 feet wide can be cleared to the shoreline.
- This one applies to building: on waterfront lots, buildings must be 25 feet back from the shoreline

An important reason for reporting what you think is a problem: word will spread among the contractors that Ocean Shores is now enforcing its codes, and destruction will decrease. If you want more detailed information on a property, go to the Permit Center and ask to see its file folder. This is public information. Have the legal description (preferred) or lot address with you.

Another example of one citizen making a difference is described in this week's (July 24, 2009) North Coast News Guest Editorial. Just one persistent voice is all it takes.

Membership

Our general dues are \$10 per year and additional donations are always welcome! If you do not want to join but want to donate, provide that information with your check. Our address is OSCBG; PO Box 443; Ocean Shores, WA 98569. You can also make a donation using Paypal on our website, <http://www.weatherwax.info/>. At this time dues and donations are going towards brochure printing and keeping a stable amount in our treasury for any unexpected issues concerning Weatherwax.

Meeting Times

OSCBG meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 3 PM in the Library conference room. Please join us!

*Thank you for your continued support and desire to
preserve the Weatherwax ecosystem.*