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Mayor's speech at POCSA event

Last Friday, December 21, the people of Port Orford gathered at the Savoy Theatre to celebrate Port Orford and sustainability. This is the Mayor's opening speech.

As stakeholders in the Port Orford Community Stewardship Area (POCSA), we're meeting tonight to promote sustainability in our community. The goals of this event are to increase participant knowledge, and encourage partnerships within our area in a "triple bottom line" approach to a people-planet-profit philosophy for community sustainability. This event features presentations from myself as Mayor of the City of Port Orford, and newly elected Curry County Commissioners Susan Brown and David Smith. We will cover the subject in a "triple bottom line" approach. I will speak on the Environment (Planet), Susan Brown on Social Equity (People), and David Smith on the Economy (Profit).

Ecosystem-Based-Management (EBM) considers the entire ecosystem, including humans and elements integral to ecosystem function. Informed by both natural and social sciences, EBM is intended to restore our natural and cultural heritage by sustaining diverse, productive, resilient ecosystems and the services they provide.

In 2006, our local non-profit Port Orford Ocean Resource Team (POORT) used Ecosystem-Based-Management (EBM) to guide us in forming our Port Orford Community Stewardship Area (POCSA). The Stewardship Area is our traditional fishing grounds and the upland watersheds that feed into them. In total it covers 1,320 square miles - 385 miles of terrestrial and 935 square miles of ocean habitat.

Our community has been applying this approach toward protection of the terrestrial portion of POCSA for over 30 years. Environmentally conscious forestry interests, working with other conservationists, including sports fishermen and our local Audubon Society, successfully promoted the establishment of the Grassy Knob Wilderness Area in 1974 and the Copper Salmon Wilderness in 2009 to protect the head-waters of the Elk River. They are presently working on establishing additional protective measures for some of the tributaries that feed into the Elk River. The Elk River Land Trust has recently been reconstituted as the Wild Rivers Coast Heritage Land Trust covering the terrestrial portion of our entire Stewardship Area and beyond to the California border.

We led in the formation of one of the first Marine Reserves in the Oregon through the Redfish Rocks Community Team (RRCT). Our Redfish Rocks Marine Reserve and Marine Protected Area were established in a location and size of our own choosing through collaborative work of RRCT and state agencies. Our Community Team continues to work with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to monitor and manage the area.

We recently established a Community Fishing Association (CFA) to secure our long-term participation in commercial fishing. A CFA is a community-based organization that is allowed to buy, hold, lease and sell commercial fishing permits and quota on behalf of a defined fishing community such as ours. This is a tool our community can utilize to offset the negative economic and social impacts of "catch shares" that consolidate fishing permits and quota into large commercially traded efforts that leave out small boats and small fishing communities such as ours.

Ocean Mountain Ranch is working with Archangel Ancient Tree Archive to plant champion redwood and sequoia tree clones in the southeastern portion of POCSA overlooking our Redfish Rocks Marine Reserve/Marine Protected Area.

We will see and hear more about these efforts in the films and discussion that make up the remainder of our program this evening. Thank you for your attention and participation. Good things are happening in Port Orford.