

Historic cannons found, removed from Oregon beach

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

ARCH CAPE, Ore. -- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department staff removed a pair of historic cannons from the beach near Arch Cape on February 19. The cannons were discovered by beach visitors over the weekend, and had been revealed by extreme low tides and the natural loss of beach sand due to winter storms.

Historic cannons found on Oregon beach Park staff, under the supervision of state archaeologist Dennis Griffin, transported each of the 800-1,000 pound cannons by truck to a nearby park office. On February 20, with guidance from historic cannon restoration experts from Texas A&M University, staff submerged the artifacts in tanks of fresh water and covered them with layers of wet burlap. The fresh water bath, refreshed weekly, will draw salt from the objects and protect them from further corrosion. The cannons are fragile, having survived in a protective, oxygen-free environment for many decades. Because the cannons are kept covered, public viewing is not yet possible, but staff plan to announce a regular schedule for viewing as early as the week of February 25. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Department of State Lands will work together with local, regional and national historians over the coming days on a plan to place the cannons in the hands of qualified experts for study, and eventually transfer ownership to a suitable local museum so the public can enjoy these important parts of Oregon's history. It is possible the cannons are remnants from the USS Shark (a survey ship wrecked in 1846 off the Columbia River Bar), but the cannons' origins have not been determined; a thorough review by qualified historians may take weeks or months.

Winter storms, low tides, and the continual movement of sand from one beach to another have revealed a bounty of Oregon's secrets this season. Visitors to the beach, whether around Arch Cape or elsewhere, who find items they think may be of historical value should: 1) Document the location by marking on a map and taking photos or video; 2) Leave the items where found; and 3) Contact the nearest state park office or a local historical society. As always, beach visitors should also be mindful of their safety, and keep careful track of tides, beach logs and other debris, unstable cliffs, and unusually powerful waves.

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