**Ode to the Tides**

**Project Summary**

The Wetlands Conservancy and partners are sponsoring a 2019 traveling art exhibit and sale to highlight the beauty, ecological, and economic value of near-shore coastal habitats. The exhibit will focus on the plants, animals, fish, land formations and the magic of estuaries and tide pools, the rich mixing zones where freshwater from the land meets salt water from the sea.

This blend – also known as brackish water – creates a unique environment with abundant and diverse life. Estuaries gather nutrients from both land and sea, forming an ecosystem that contains more life per square inch than the richest Midwest farmland.

Oregon’s 22 major estuaries are ecologically essential for many fish and wildlife species, including salmon, herring, flounder, crab, oysters, clams, wading birds, ducks, and otters, providing habitat for reproduction, rearing, resting and foraging.

The intertidal areas, including tide pools, are home to unique organisms that adapt to wide fluctuations in temperature and tidal action. Sea stars, urchins, and crabs are examples of mesmerizing creatures that provide textures, shapes and shadows to explore.

The *Ode to The Tides* art exhibit will contain original art in a variety of media, created by Northwest artists, and will be displayed at several venues on the Northern Oregon coast and Willamette Valley. The goals of the exhibition are to celebrate the aesthetic and ecological significance of Oregon’s estuaries, tide pools and intertidal habitats, and build a diverse community of Oregonians and coastal visitors to promote protection and conservation for generations to come. The Wetlands Conservancy learned from the *Beaver Tales* exhibit that art is a great entry point for introducing people to the importance of natural resources, the threats and opportunities to get involved to conserve them. A portion of the sale of each piece of art will support The Wetlands Conservancy’s program to acquire and conserve Oregon’s Coastal estuaries.

In addition to the exhibition and sales of art to support coastal conservation, each venue will offer scientific programs and outdoor experiences for visitors.

**About The Wetlands Conservancy**

Founded in 1981, The Wetlands Conservancy is the only organization in Oregon dedicated to working in partnership with communities statewide to permanently protect, conserve and restore Oregon’s greatest wetlands.

**Venues – Schedule**

**Art must be completed by mid-April, and delivered either to Oregon State University or to a specified location in the Portland area no later than April 26.**

The exhibit will open at the LaSells Stewart Center at Oregon State University on May 2 and close on May 29, 2019. This facility hosts conferences and events that draw thousands of visitors each month. The art will be displayed on walls throughout the center, and on pedestals for 3 dimensional pieces. Depending on the size and format of the art, the space can easily accommodate about 150 pieces. There will be an opening reception on the evening of May 2.

The second venue is Fairweather Gallery in Seaside for the month of June. If available, there may be pop-up space nearby to accommodate a larger collection. June is a great time for visitors on the Oregon coast, and the opening will be celebrated on the first Saturday Art Walk, June 1. The exhibit will continue through June, and depending on whether the exhibit travels elsewhere for July, some of the pieces may remain at the gallery.

The third confirmed location is the Columbia Center for the Arts in Hood River in September.The lobby will be available for display of a portion of the exhibit, while the main gallery will be used for a “black and white” show. The lobby offers wall space and pedestals for 3-d pieces. This venue will accept cards, prints, and other items for sale in the gift shop, where they will be retained until sold. Art to be delivered August 31, and removed September 28.The opening reception will be September 6. The Center includes a quality theater space for a program about estuaries and tide pool habitats.

Discussions are underway for additional venues for July and August, and perhaps later in the year. Stay tuned.

Proceeds from art sales will be split between the artist, the gallery, and The Wetlands Conservancy. Percentages may vary between different venues.

**Themes – Content**

As described above in the summary, the theme focuses on coastal estuaries and tide pools. These habitats are fascinating, ecologically important, and contain literally thousands of different organisms that offer unlimited artistic potential. Ideally, the exhibit will have a variety of unique pieces that include representation of estuarine and rocky tidal areas and the organisms that inhabit them. Landscapes and/or close-up images of plants and animals are fine. They can be abstract or realistic, but please avoid whimsical, cartoon-type images. Also avoid generic beach scenes, waves, etc. as these are quite common in coastal galleries and don’t exactly fit the theme of *Ode to the Tides.*  A partial list of species is attached. If you have knowledge of other species that occur in these habitats in Oregon, you need not feel constrained by the partial list provided.

The project will accept almost any media including paintings, drawings, ceramic, glass, fiber, wood, metal, mixed media and other materials. Photographs will be accepted. Printing them on museum wrap facilitates safe transport, but framing is acceptable. Only a limited number of large framed photos will be selected due to space limitations.

**Specifications – How to Apply – Selection Process**

Wall art may be either framed or un-framed, as long as it looks finished. Use simple frames, nothing ornate, and consider using acrylic instead of glass if needed within the frame. Acrylic is lighter and less likely to break during transit. If you do use glass, take special care in packing it to avoid damage. Finished pieces should be no larger than 40 inches in either direction, including frame, unless special permission is granted in advance to submit larger pieces. It is fine to submit several pieces for consideration, with the understanding that the number of pieces must fit the space available. Some can be held in reserve to replace art that sells during the shows. Smaller pieces work well in sets of 2,3, or 4, and have the added advantage of being more portable than large pieces. Wall art must be ready to hang with wire attached to the back. Do not use toothed metal hangers.

To apply, send an e-mail to Sara Vickerman, volunteer curator for art and conservation projects for The Wetlands Conservancy (svickerman@comcast.net) and **register** as soon as possible – preferably by the end of the year. Describe what you intend to submit for the exhibit along with complete contact information. This information will help facilitate advanced planning and promotion. Include:

Name, mailing address, phone number(s), e-mail address, web site (if any).

If you already have pieces that are consistent with the theme, or complete them quickly, please provide them so they can be used to promote the show. When new work is completed, send another message to Sara, and attach digital images for each piece, along with complete Information about each one: Include title, media, exact finished size, and price.

Be sure to notify Sara at any point in the process if you decide NOT to participate, and your name will be removed from the list. We will send periodic updates and additional information about related events that should increase interest in the topic.

The submissions will be reviewed by a small committee of people who are knowledgeable about art and exhibits. Judging will be based on the quality of the art, consistency with the theme, and the overall design of the exhibit as a whole.

**Packaging and Transport**

Since the exhibit will travel to several locations, it is essential that the pieces be properly packaged for travel. Art should be wrapped inside with bubble wrap or other material that will protect it from scratches and scrapes, and then placed in a secure cardboard carton that can be easily opened and closed multiple times. 3-d pieces, especially if they are fragile, must be properly padded within a secure carton. Please use the most compact box you can that will still protect your art. The install and take-down must often be done quickly, and the sponsors don’t have time to mess around with shoddy packing materials. Sturdy cartons can be purchased from U-Haul or other places that sell moving supplies.

Each package should be clearly labeled with artist’s name, and title of the piece(s).

The art will be re-packed and transported from OSU to Seaside, then stored if necessary - unless you want to handle it yourself. Unsold selected art will then be transported to the next venue, then back to the Portland area or other location as convenient as possible for artists to pick up.

**Promotion**

Every effort will be made to promote the exhibit to ensure strong attendance and good sales. Printed cards and posters will be available, along with extensive promotion via social media and local news outlets. Artists will be asked to share information about the exhibit and associated programs with your contacts.

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