

To: Residents of Neskowin  
From: Neskowin Coastal Hazards Committee  
Date: December 14, 2009

We write this letter to you on behalf of your state, county and some of your community citizens to bring attention to a potentially serious situation in the Neskowin area. It is important that you are all aware of the threat from coastal erosion, flooding, and inundation hazards. These forces could impact the beach, ocean-front properties, and the village behind it.

Neskowin has experienced significant erosion of its beaches in recent years. Ongoing research by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries suggests that Neskowin could experience even more negative impacts in the future. Jonathan Allan with the Department, presented research recently that indicates:

1. Ocean winter wave heights have increased significantly during the past decade, and are the highest they have been in the past three decades.
2. Significantly stronger wave events are happening earlier in the Fall/Winter and not subsiding until later in the Winter/Spring, effectively lengthening the period of winter erosion.
3. The Neskowin beach/dune continues to erode and is currently not replenishing itself.
4. Because the volume of sand contained in the beaches and dune is much lower than was present in the mid 1990s (for example the dune face north of Proposal Rock has eroded landward ~150 ft since 1997). Should Neskowin experience storms today with intensities comparable to those of the late 1990s, combined with high tides, there is a strong probability that the community could experience significant damage to its shorefront.

There have been several community meetings in Neskowin to discuss available facts on what has been happening and to consider both short and long term solutions. County Commissioner Mark Labhart is now chairing a committee of local citizens and county and state government representatives to address this issue.

The mission of the Neskowin Coastal Hazards Committee is to: Recommend to state and county agencies and officials ways to maintain the beach and protect the village through short term and long term strategies; and explore ways to plan for and adapt to the potential future changes in the Neskowin coastal area.

#### **Neskowin Coastal Hazards Committee**

The objectives of the Committee are to:

1. Become more knowledgeable about past and current dimensions of the situation and study expert projections for the future.
2. Provide information to alert Neskowin beach users to potential dangers of coastal hazards.
3. Investigate options (short and long term) for maintaining the beach and preserving the village.
4. Publish Committee findings and advocate actions likely to be most effective in fulfilling our mission.

5. Help garner support and resources necessary to implement agreed upon actions. The Committee will keep the community informed as we learn more information and make plans to move forward on recommendations. Any actions to protect and preserve Neskowin will need community support and will not happen without it.

In the meantime, the Committee encourages residents to stay informed about potentially threatening events by monitoring official sources of weather forecasts and warnings. The National Weather Service (NWS) provides forecasts and warnings for extreme weather and high surf. This information is found at the NWS website (<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/>) and is broadcast on NOAA weather radios. Private companies, such as The Weather Channel, also provide phone based on NWS warnings for extreme weather.

The Committee welcomes feedback and ideas as we develop options for consideration by the community. If there are residents or property owners interested in, or have questions for, the Committee please contact Commissioner Mark Labhart or a local Committee member.

Sincerely yours,

**Neskowin Coastal Hazards Committee**

*Community members: Leslie Gordon, Gale Ousele, Pete Owston, Alex Sifford, Guy Sievert, Charlie Walker, Jeff Walton*

*Tillamook County members: Mark Labhart (Commissioner), Gerald Parker (Planning Director)*

*State agency members: Jonathan Allan (DOGAMI), Laren Wooley (DLCD) Tony Stein (Oregon State Parks), Patrick Corcoran (Oregon Sea Grant)*