

CITY OF COOS BAY WORK SESSION - PARKS COMMISSION

Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
May 7, 2026	3.a

TO: Chair Lyons & Commissioners

FROM: Christina Teixeira, Grant Coordinator

THROUGH: Jennifer Wirsing, Public Works Director

ISSUE: 2026 Standout Heritage Volunteer Award

SUMMARY:

Recognition of Colleen “CoCo” Sutton as a 2026 Oregon Heritage Standout Heritage Volunteer, presented on behalf of the Oregon Heritage Program, administered by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

ACTION REQUESTED:

No action requested at this time.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Heritage program, administered through the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, recognizes individuals across the state who demonstrate exceptional commitment to preserving and promoting Oregon’s historic and cultural resources.

Colleen “CoCo” Sutton exemplifies the spirit of the Oregon Heritage Standout Heritage Volunteer recognition, which honors individuals whose dedication, leadership, and service significantly advance local heritage efforts. This non-competitive category recognizes action above and beyond the ordinary call of duty, with special consideration for new ideas, approaches, and innovations.

In 2026, Colleen “CoCo” Sutton was selected for this recognition based on her outstanding volunteer contributions to historic preservation efforts in the City of Coos Bay.

CoCo Sutton has been a driving force in the preservation, activation, and long-term stewardship of Coos Bay’s historic and community resources. Her work reflects a deep commitment not only to protecting the past, but to ensuring these assets remain active, relevant, and supported by the community.

Most notably, CoCo led the effort to gather required documentation and complete the application for the Mingus Park Community Building (“Scout Cabin”) to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This effort required extensive research, coordination, and persistence, including compiling historical records, documenting architectural significance, and navigating the federal nomination process.

As a result of her leadership, the building—constructed in 1939–1940 through the Works Progress Administration (WPA)—was officially listed on the National Register in 2025. The structure is recognized as a rare and well-preserved example of WPA-era Rustic architecture and holds significance in the areas of recreation, community development, and architecture.

In addition to her work on historic designation, CoCo has demonstrated exceptional initiative in expanding community engagement and support for parks and heritage resources. She spearheaded development of an “Adopt-a-Park” pilot program, designed to foster volunteer stewardship, strengthen

community partnerships, and create a sustainable model for ongoing park care and activation.

CoCo has also successfully led fundraising efforts and created lasting annual community events, generating both financial support and increased public awareness for local heritage assets. These events not only provide critical resources for preservation efforts but also create meaningful opportunities for community members to connect with Coos Bay's history.

Her contributions include:

- Leading the National Register nomination for the Mingus Park Community Building
- Spearheading the Adopt-a-Park pilot program initiative
- Fundraising to support preservation and community projects
- Creating sustainable, annual events that promote heritage engagement
- Building partnerships and mobilizing volunteers across the community

CoCo's work has directly supported the City's commitment to heritage preservation and community vitality, aligning with broader efforts to recognize and protect historic resources while fostering civic pride and engagement.

Her impact extends beyond individual projects—she has built systems, partnerships, and traditions that will benefit the community for years to come. May her legacy endure through the lasting programs and preservation efforts she helped bring to life.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

None.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Oregon Heritage Commission Award Letter.pdf
- 2026 Standout Heritage Award Colleen CoCo Sutton Certificate.pdf