

CITY OF COOS BAY PARKS COMMISSION

Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
February 19, 2026	3.a

TO: Chair Lyons & Commissioners
FROM: Greg Hamblet, Operations Administrator
THROUGH: Jennifer Wirsing, Public Works Director
ISSUE: Beaver Deceiver Sign Placement

SUMMARY:

Beaver Deceiver Sign Placement

ACTION REQUESTED:

No action requested at this time

BACKGROUND:

Several years ago, the Millicoma Marsh Stewardship Group, as part of the Coos Bay School District's Millicoma Marsh Management Plan, installed a device commonly known as a "Beaver Deceiver" near the east end of the Millicoma Marsh Trail (see attached map).

A Beaver Deceiver is a water-level control structure designed to manage pond elevations while minimizing conflicts with beavers. The system consists of a pipe placed at the bottom of the pond on one side of the berm, which conveys water through the berm to a vertical standpipe on the opposite side. The top of the standpipe is set at the desired water surface elevation. During periods of heavy rainfall, when pond levels rise, excess water flows through the system, helping to stabilize water levels.

Beavers naturally build dams using sticks and soil, often plugging leaks when they detect the sound or movement of flowing water. While this behavior is part of the marsh's ecosystem, it can lead to elevated water levels and seasonal flooding of portions of the trail. The Beaver Deceiver maintains appropriate pond levels while reducing impacts to trail users and preserving habitat.

At times, visitors may notice odors in the vicinity of the standpipe. The device draws water from the bottom of the pond, where low-oxygen (anaerobic) conditions exist. These conditions allow naturally occurring bacteria to produce gases that can emit a sulfur-like or "rotten egg" smell.

Over the past few months, the City has received several concerns about these odors, with some members of the public thinking the odor was related to a sanitary sewer spill. City staff have taken each concern seriously and conducted site reviews. Based on these evaluations, the odors have been determined to originate from the pond discharge associated with the Beaver Deceiver system.

To improve public understanding, the City has worked in coordination with the Millicoma Marsh Trail partners and a local artist to develop educational signage (see attached). The signage will provide clear information about the purpose and function of the Beaver Deceiver, explain the source of occasional odors, and address common questions. This effort is intended to enhance transparency, promote environmental education, and support effective communication with the community.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

The City of Coos Bay's Water Quality Division will Fund the production and placement of the sign.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Pond leveler sign location.pdf
- Big Pool Beaver Leveler Sign Final.pdf