

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

November 20, 2024

Agenda Item: 9b

Action

Public Comment Allowed: **No**

Topic: Request to adopt amendments to 736-030-0020- Adding Brookings to list of cities where camping on ocean shore is prohibited

Presented by: Katie Gauthier, Government Relations and Policy Manager

Background: In June 2024, the department received a petition from the Macklyn Cove Condominium Association in Brookings requesting an amendment to OAR 736-030-0020 to add Brookings to the list of cities where overnight camping on the ocean shore is prohibited within city limits.

Petitions cited concerns over public health, risks to public safety, and impacts on the marine ecosystem along the ocean shore as reasons for proposing the closure of camping on the ocean shore in Brookings.

Currently, overnight camping is prohibited on the ocean shore within the city limits of Seaside, Cannon Beach, Manzanita, Rockaway Beach, Lincoln City, Newport, Bandon, and Gold Beach. Camping is also prohibited on the ocean shore in portions of Clatsop and Tillamook counties, under different rules within division 30.

Public Comment Process

Public comments were opened from September 1 through October 15. 74 written comments and 20 oral comments were received during that time. Comments were posted weekly on the agency rulemaking [website](#).

An in person public hearing was held in Brookings on October 9. Thirty people attended the hearing, with 20 providing public comment. All comments during the hearing were in support of the proposal to prohibit camping along the ocean shore in Brookings. Commenters also presented petitions signed by residents and visitors requesting a closure of the ocean shore to camping. The petitions were added to the written public comments shared on our website. Senator David Brock Smith who represents the area also attended and expressed his support for the prohibition of camping to protect health and safety of residents.

Staff presented information about proposed rule change to the Brookings City Council, as well. After consideration in a council meeting and work session, the city council voted 5-0 in support of prohibiting camping. Their [full letter](#) outlines the city's process for consideration of the issue

that included consulting other cities where camping is currently not allowed and receiving petitions in support from local residents.

Comment Summary

The majority of comments received are in favor of prohibiting camping on the ocean shore in Brookings due to concerns about sanitation, safety, environmental damage, and restricted public access.

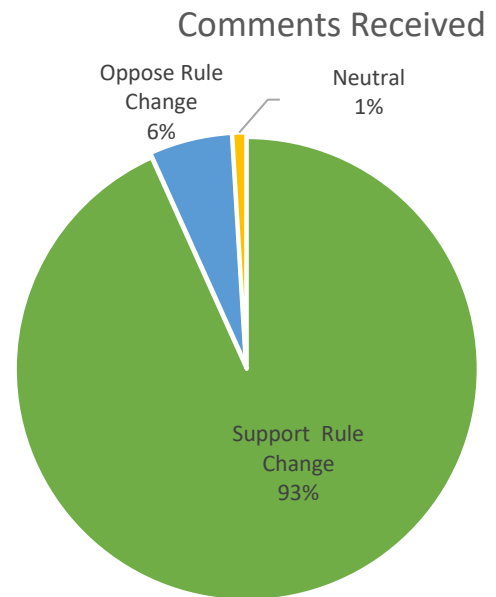
Concerns expressed include:

1. **Public Health and Safety:** Many comments highlighted concerns about camping-related issues like trash, needles, human waste, and unsanitary conditions. These were cited as making the beach hazardous and unpleasant for other users.
2. **Restricted Public Access:** Several comments emphasized how campers on the beach were limiting public access to recreation, such as walking, playing, or simply enjoying the shoreline. Some mentioned that campers were occupying large areas and preventing others from using the beach freely.
3. **Environmental Damage:** Commenters were concerned about the negative environmental impact caused by camping, with mentions of beach fires, litter, and the overall degradation of the coastline. This was often tied to a desire to protect the beach's natural beauty and maintain it for future use.
4. **Impact on Residents:** Many comments mentioned how the camping situation was disturbing residents and impacted potential for individuals to locate to the area. Commenters shared concerns about fires potentially impacting nearby homes and disruptive behavior occurring at all hours, making the area less enjoyable or safe.

A minority of commenters express opposition, citing concerns about public access rights, the impact on homeless individuals, and preferences for alternative solutions like permits or better enforcement of existing laws.

Ideas expressed include:

1. **Address issues through existing rules.** Concerns around littering, out-of-control beach fires, or sanitation issues are all violations of existing rules that could be enforced more strongly.
2. **Allow camping by permit.** To allow limited camping the agency could develop a permit system that would retain potential for camping without opening the entire beach to unlimited use.



Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend adoption of proposed rules to add Brookings to the list of cities where overnight camping is prohibited along the ocean shore within the city limits.

Public comments are overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed rule change. Feedback from community members have highlighted issues related to safety, cleanliness, and the overall experience of beachgoers.

While littering and sanitation issues identified in the public comment are addressed through enforcement of existing rules, expanding the areas closed to camping can improve recreational access to the ocean shore, create a safer and more enjoyable environment for visitors and protect coastal resources.

Additionally, the support of the city council and state lawmakers highlight additional opportunities to continue to partner in enforcement of this rule and other existing rules. Each OPRD beach ranger patrols over thirty miles of the ocean shore and rely on partnerships with local law enforcement to provide additional coverage and support.

It is important to note that while comments specifically reference Mill Beach, this prohibition would apply to the entire ocean shore within the Brookings city limits.

If proposed rules are adopted, staff would work with Brookings and Curry County to monitor implementation of this rule change and review the impact to determine if changes are needed.

Prior Action by Commission: Approved opening rulemaking in July 2024.

Action Requested: Adopt amendments to OAR 736-030-0020 adding Brookings to the list of cities where camping is prohibited on the ocean shore within city limits.

Attachments:

Attachment A- Marked Copy

Attachment B- Map of ocean shore near Brookings

Attachment C- Map of ocean shore closed to camping

Prepared by: Katie Gauthier

Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission, Nov. 20, 2024, 9b Attachment A- Marked Copy

736-030-0020

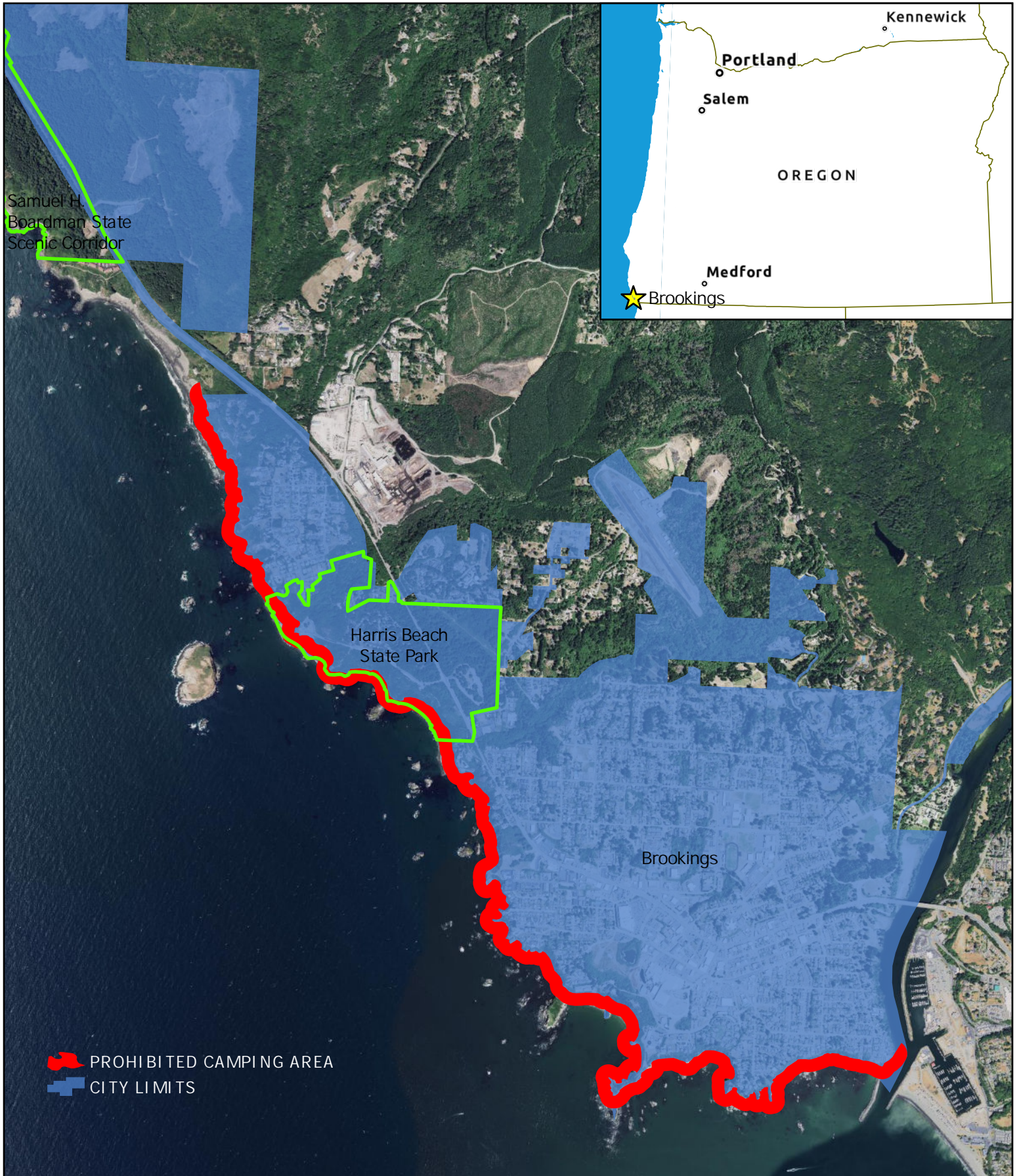
Prohibition of Camping

Overnight camping, including overnight sleeping in tents, driftwood shelters, sleeping bags, recreational vehicles, trailers or automobiles, on the ocean shore within the city limits of Cannon Beach, Lincoln City, Seaside, Newport, Bandon, Gold Beach, **Brookings**, Rockaway Beach, and Manzanita is prohibited.

Impact of Proposed Camping Ban in Brookings

9b Attachment B

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 PROHIBITED CAMPING AREA
 CITY LIMITS

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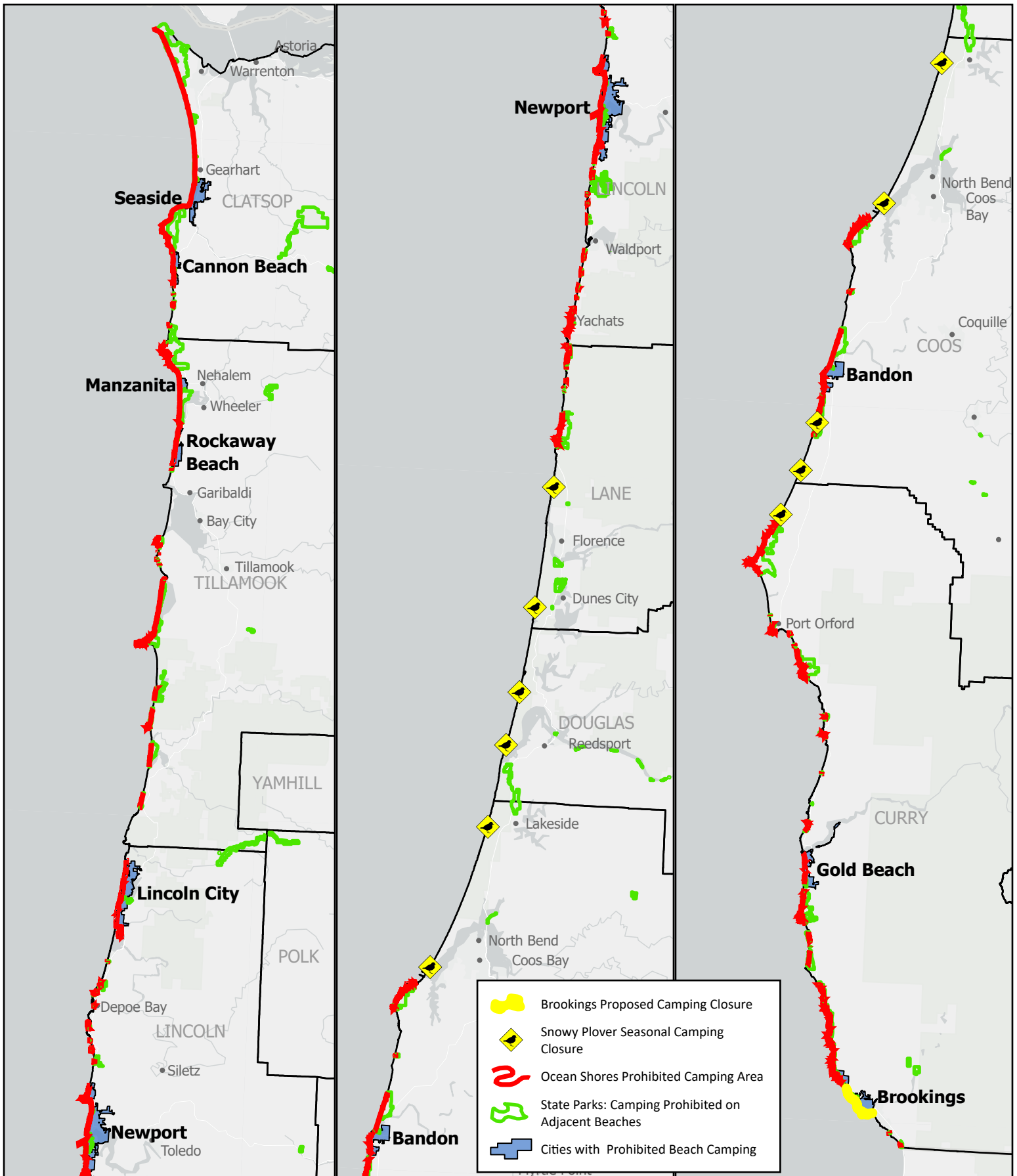
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David.Quillin 7/10/2024

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Areas of Prohibited Beach Camping



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