

# Council Communication

## May 3, 2016, Business Meeting

---

### Approval of Recommendation from the Public Art Commission to accept the Watershed Cairn by Karen Rycheck

---

**FROM:**

Ann Seltzer, management analyst, seltzera@ashland.or.us

**SUMMARY**

The Public Art Commission (PAC) recommends the City Council accept the “Watershed Cairn” by Karen Rycheck to the City’s public art collection. If approved, the sculpture will be installed along the Bandersnatch Trail in upper Lithia Park.

**BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

This project, spearheaded by the Watershed Art Group (WAG) in collaboration with the PAC, is the second piece of public art for installation along the Bandersnatch Trail. WAG, a community collaborative, aims to inspire, educate and engage community members in the stewardship of the watershed through art.

The mosaic totem by artist Karen Rycheck was approved by the PAC at its regular meeting on April 15, 2016. The piece, commissioned by the Watershed Art Group is funded with a grant from the Haines and Friends Foundation.

The WAG received four submissions to an RFP developed in conjunction with the Public Art Commission. This piece was chosen by both the WAG and the PAC as the most appropriate for the specific location for both its scale and form.

The mosaic totem mimics the form of stacked stones and shows several interrelated ecosystems of the Ashland watershed. The piece will be created and installed later this summer.

The group will coordinate with the Public Works Department on the installation of this piece and has had numerous conversations with the City, Forest Service, Parks Commission and AFR on an appropriate location for the sculpture. The site is uphill from the Pacific Fisher piece installed last fall at the beginning of the Bandersnatch Trail.

AMC 2.29 addresses the process for the acquisition and placement of public art. Art that is donated to and accepted by the City becomes part of the City’s public art collection and the City is responsible for the maintenance of the art. The PAC reviewed the proposal and believes it will enhance the visual landscape of the selected site, will be relatively maintenance free, and meets the guidelines for recommendation as stated in AMC 2.29.130.



**COUNCIL GOALS SUPPORTED:**

N/A

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

N/A

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:**

Staff recommends approval.

**SUGGESTED MOTION:**

I move approval of the Public Art Commission's recommendation to accept the mosaic totem by artist Karen Rycheck as part of the City's public art collection.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Concept proposal from artist Karen Rycheck



I propose to create a sculptural mosaic totem mimicking the form of stacked stones, showing several interrelated ecosystems of the Ashland Watershed.

A common practice I've noticed ever since moving to the Rogue Valley twelve years ago, is that people love to create stone cairns, or markers, along the creeks and trails of the Ashland Watershed and it's surrounding area. Rather than simply creating a large-scale version of a stone cairn, I'm proposing to create a sculpture that carries on this "marking" of space, while giving color to the area and calling attention to the nature found within it. The totem would depict some of the flora and fauna of the Watershed that make it unique and so important to our lives.

Beginning with the top piece, I'd mosaic imagery of birds that are native to our area and commonly seen – on one side, the bald eagle against our beautiful skies and on the other, a towhee perched within the branches of a conifer. The second piece would capture the water and fish of Ashland Creek, Bear Creek, and the Watershed using the steelhead and salmon that make them their homes. The third piece would show two species of reptiles found in our area, the rough skinned newt on one side, and the salamander on the other side, hanging out amidst stones, mosses, ferns, and other flora of the creek sides. Finally, the base of the totem would show the conifer forest itself, the mountains around us, and the majesty of the region.

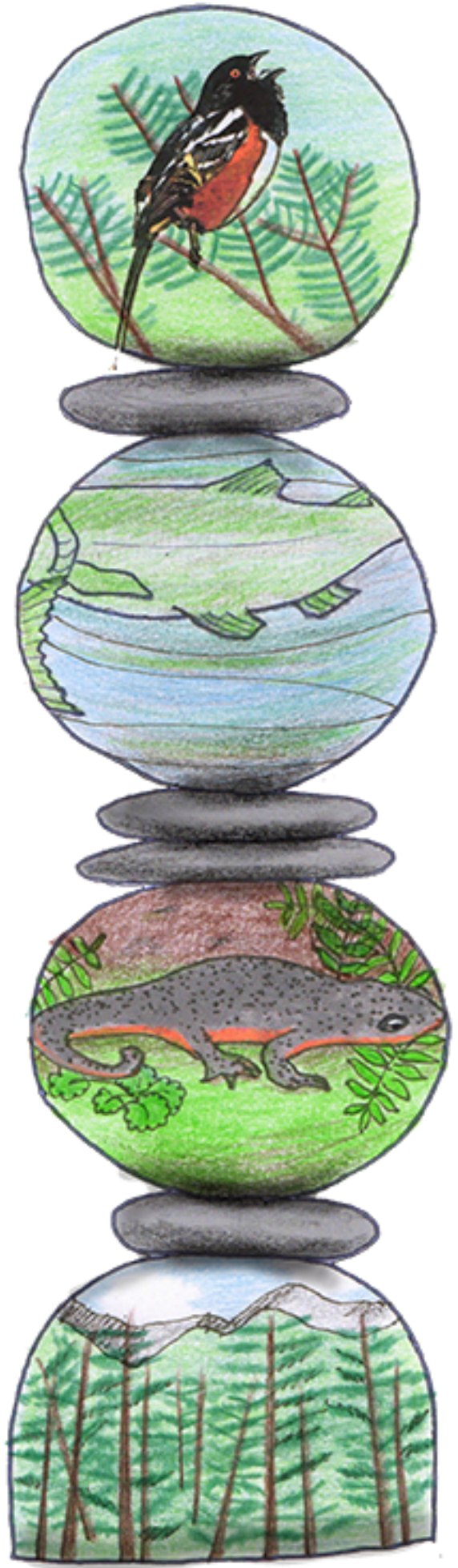
The sculptural elements would be constructed of dense foam, formed to resemble large organic rocks, so each would be slightly different in size and shape. These would then be wrapped in several layers of fiberglass mesh and coated with a concrete mix that renders them able to withstand weather and weight. Next, I'd mosaic the surfaces using a combination of materials including freeze proof exterior ceramic tile, glass tile, pebbles, and other materials rated for long-term exterior use. They would be grouted with a urethane grout, which requires little to no maintenance over time. Each of these sculptural elements would be stacked with smaller real stones between them, adding a more naturalistic feel to the piece.

The totem would stand approximately 8 feet high and, when placed within its ravine setting, would draw the eye upward toward the sky and trees, then back down to the grounds surrounding it, creating a feeling of oneness with the cycle of life we all share.

*Totem front view*

Karen Rycheck

*Totem back view*



Karen Rycheck - Totem in Situ



## Curriculum Vitae

Born 1968, Columbus, Ohio

### Public Art Commissions/Professional experience

- 2015 *The Horses of Equamore*, exterior mosaic handmade ceramic wall installation, Grotto Pizzeria, Talent, Oregon
- 2015 *Lily Pond Mosaic*, exterior ceramic paving, McMinnville Public Library, McMinnville, Oregon
- 2013 Artist assistant, *Sturgeon mosaic*, exterior smalti paving, Garden of Surging Waves, Astoria, Oregon
- 2012 *History Underfoot: Places of Pride*, exterior handmade ceramic mosaic paving installation, Grants Pass, Oregon
- 2010-2011 Lead Artist/designer, facilitation and volunteer coordination for painted mural, *Creating Community: Talent, OR*, Talent, Oregon
- 2009 Exterior mosaic installation, Downtowne Coffeehouse, Talent, Oregon
- 2004-2005 Lead Artist, *Rio Amistad* for Illahe Tileworks, exterior handmade ceramic and glass paving, Ashland, Oregon
- 2004 *Life Cycle of the Salmon*, exterior handmade ceramic mosaic paving, fabrication and installation for Illahe Tileworks, Oregon Zoo, Portland, Oregon
- 2000 Interior ceramic mosaic design, fabrication, installation, and sculptural architectural detailing for Artfull Tile and Design, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1997- 1998 Independent Contractor/Mosaic Artist, interior ceramic mosaic floor installations, City Museum, St. Louis, Missouri

### Selected Private Commissions

- 2013 *Exterior mosaic medallion and handmade tile installation*, Talent, Oregon
- 2013 *Mixed media exterior mosaic panels and interior mosaic mirror*, Tampa, Florida
- 2012 *Exterior mosaic stair risers*, Ashland, Oregon
- 2012 *Exterior handmade tilework and interior stained glass panels*, Ashland, Oregon
- 2010 *Interior stained glass panel*, The Center for Chinese Medicine, Ashland, Oregon
- 2010 *Interior mosaic panel*, Ellicott City, Maryland
- 2009 *Exterior mosaic panel*, Ashland, Oregon
- 2008 *Outdoor kitchen/bbq mosaic installation*, Ashland, Oregon

### Curatorial Experience

- 2010-2013 Curator for 14 separate group shows, Talent City Hall Gallery, Talent, Oregon

### Selected Exhibitions

- 2016 *Rogue Gallery*, Meditations on Daily Splendor: Sarah F Burns, Sarah Fagan, and Karen Rycheck, Medford, Oregon, February-March
- 2016 *Art & Soul Gallery*, Rogue Women: Unique Perspectives in Art, Ashland, Oregon, February
- 2015 *Southern Oregon University's Thorndike Gallery*, Contemporary Mosaic Art Invitational, Ashland, Oregon, September-October
- 2015 *Rogue Gallery*, Rogue Valley Biennial Exhibition, Medford, Oregon, February-April
- 2014 *Illahe Gallery*, Fourth Annual Mosaic Invitational, Ashland, Oregon, October
- 2013 *Illahe Gallery*, Third Annual Mosaic Invitational, Ashland, Oregon, October
- 2011 *Hanson Howard Gallery*, Ashland, Oregon, October-November
- 2011 *Paschal/Tenuta Winery*, Cheryl Colwell and Karen Rycheck, Talent, Oregon, Feb-April
- 2009 *Firehouse Gallery*, 61st Annual Southern Oregon Art Show, Grants Pass, Oregon, July

- 2007 *Bilston Craft Gallery, Breakout*, Juried International group exhibition of members of the British Association for Modern Mosaics, Wolverhampton, UK, November
- 2006 *High Risk Gallery, Beneath the Surface*, Juried International Group Exhibition of the Society of American Mosaic Artists, Chicago, Illinois

## Education

### Continuing Professional Development

- 2015 *Mosaic as an Expressive Art Form* with Dugald MacInnes
- 2014 *Fundamento: Shape+Direction=Flow* with Kelley Knickerbocker
- 2013 *Business of Mosaic: Marketing, Pricing and Strategy* with Sonia King
- 2013 *Magic of the Maquette* with Kim Emerson
- 2012 *Mosaic Portraiture* with Carol Shelkin
- 2010 *Abstract Mosaic Intensive Workshop* with Lynne Chinn
- 2006 *Designing and Presenting Mosaics for Commissions* with Lynne Chinn
- 2006 *Mosaic Art and Design: Feedback, Discussion, & Coaching* with Emma Biggs & Sonia King
- 2006 *The Business of Mosaics* with Laurel True
- 2005 *Hard Hat Workshop* with Eric Rattan

### Academic

- 2006 Graphic Design studies, *Rogue Community College*, Medford, Oregon
- 1994-1995 Graphic Design studies, *St. Louis Community College*, Kirkwood, Missouri
- 1991-1994 Bachelors of Fine Arts, Sculpture, *Webster University*, Webster Groves, Missouri
- 1986-1988 Basic Art and Design Studies, *The University of Kansas*, Lawrence, Kansas

## Teaching Positions

- 2016 *Mosaic Open Studio Sessions*, Workshop Instructor, Talent, Oregon, Jan.-current
- 2015 *Mosaic Intensive for Beginners*, Workshop Instructor, Talent, Oregon, July
- 2014 *Mosaic Cutting and Laying Techniques*, Workshop Instructor, Ashland Art Center, Ashland, Oregon, April
- 2014 *Mosaic LOVE*, Workshop Instructor, Ashland Art Center, Ashland, Oregon, February
- 2009 *Mosaic Intensive for Beginners*, Workshop Instructor, Our World Design Studios, Talent, Oregon, September

## Publications

- 2012 *KDRV.com, First Community Mural Unveiled*, August 18
- 2012 *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, "Mosaics add colorful splash of history", May 22
- 2011 *Ashland Daily Tidings*, "'Miss Mosaic' beautifies valley", October 21
- 2006 *Ashland Magazine*, "Mosaic Public Art Flows Through Ashland", Winter
- 2000 *St. Louis Homes and Lifestyles Magazine*, "Home of the Year", March

## Grants

- 2014 *Haines Philanthropic Foundation Grant*, Ashland, OR
- 2006 *William T. Colville Memorial Grant*, Santa Barbara, CA

## Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member **Society of American Mosaic Artists**
- Member **British Association for Modern Mosaics**
- Member **Community Built Association**
- Volunteer **Talent Public Art Committee** Co-Chair



*Eve, 2011*



*Mosaic Town, 2013*



*History Underfoot: Places  
2012*



*The Horses of the  
Equamore Foundation,  
2015*

*Karen Rycheck - past projects*



Karen Rychek – References

Darby Stricker  
110 E. Main St.  
Talent, OR 97540  
541-535-1566  
[mayor@cityoftalent.org](mailto:mayor@cityoftalent.org)

Steve Fenwick  
P.O.Box 338  
Ashland, OR 97520  
541-708-1723  
[steve@stevefenwick.com](mailto:steve@stevefenwick.com)

Lynn Adamo  
2345 Torrey Pines Dr.  
Bend, OR 97703  
503-640-0660  
[lynn@lynnadamo.com](mailto:lynn@lynnadamo.com)

## Karen Rycheck – Budget/Timeline

### **Budget**

Artist design fee: 150

Labor/Fabrication: 2950

Materials: foam board/blocks, cement, fiberglass mesh, steel pole, PVC pipe, foam adhesive, ceramic tile, glass tile, pebbles, stones 400

Transportation/travel: 0

Total: \$3500

### **Proposed Timeline**

May 5 notification of commission

Design/materials gathering May 5-25

Fabrication May 26-Aug 15

Installation anytime after August 16