

Treasure hunting in Gold Beach: 1,000 glass floats being hidden in April

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The folks at the Gold Beach Visitor Center are spreading the joy of treasure hunting one glass float at a time.

They are hiding 1,000 glass floats on the beach throughout the month of April.

About 250 floats are being hidden every week along a one-mile stretch of beach near the visitor center. The floats come in varying colors, and are 3” in size. They are being hidden at different times of the day, 7 days a week, so there is always a chance of finding one.

Ruth Dixon, the lead at Gold Beach Visitor Center, remembers finding glass floats – “the real thing” – on the beach when she was a child.

Glass floats of varying sizes and shapes were once used by fishermen in many parts of the world to keep their fishing nets, as well as longlines or droplines, afloat.

“My grandparents had a property where a lot of them washed up,” Dixon said.

She remembers the happiness it brought her to discover the treasures. Now, she gets to see the joy on people’s faces when they find a glass float.

“How fun is it to offer something that gets people out on the beach in our area on a treasure hunt?” Dixon asked.

The city of Gold Beach has been offering hunts for glass floats since 2008 during the off-season, with a break during the pandemic.

Inviting visitors to hunt for glass floats during one of the slower times of year brought more business to the community and also showcased the beauty of the Southern Oregon Coast during the spring, according to staff at the visitor center.

In the past, the float hunt was held for multiple months, but due to weather and beach safety considerations, the float hiding is now limited to a one-mile stretch of beach during the month of April.

Floats are hidden a short distance (5 feet or so) on either side of the vegetation line, tucked under beach grass, washed up driftwood and even buried a little bit in the sand. Floats are not hidden down close to the waves or further up into the beach grass.

The folks at the visitor center ask that successful float hunters take only one float so that more people get the opportunity to find a hidden treasure.

In addition to treasure hunting on the beach, the Gold Beach Visitor Center also offers a Glass Float Shopping Treasure Hunt.

In the shopping treasure hunt, shoppers can buy items from participating shops to qualify to get a free glass float when they spend a minimum of \$25. Those who participate in the shopping treasure hunt can bring their shop receipt to the Gold Beach Visitor's Center to receive their gift. Receipts will not be accepted after May 1.

This treasure hunting option is great for those who may not be able to physically get out onto the beach to hunt for treasures. It's also a good rainy day option for visitors, Dixon said.

She says the staff at the Gold Beach Visitor Center look forward to the glass float month every year.

"Seeing the excitement and enthusiasm of everyone who comes in to pick up a float map is contagious. Most visitors tell us it's the joy of the hunt, not the find, which keeps them coming back.," Dixon said.

"With the bonus opportunity of the Glass Float Shopping Treasure Hunt and getting to choose their own float when they bring the receipt into the visitor center, it truly is a special time of year," she said.

For more information about the annual glass float treasure hunt, go to: visitgoldbeach.com or stop by the Gold Beach visitor center for a treasure hunting map at 29592 Ellensburg Avenue in Gold Beach, OR.