

Appeal Tribune

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Old Mill Park overlook to be updated

Silverton prepares to seek bids from prospective contractors for project

Christena Brooks Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The City of Silverton will soon be seeking bids from contractors to build and landscape a part of Old Mill Park that's been closed for seven years.

On the top of the east bank of Silver Creek behind the library, this piece of municipal property has historical significance as the location of the former powerhouse of the locally famous Fischer Flouring Mill. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a wooden flume diverted water from Silver Creek to turbines that powered what became a large and successful grain-milling business.

Now it's hard to picture the four-story building that once towered over the creek and was part of a compound that dominated the action on Water Street, turning farmers' grain into flour, cereal and feed at a furious pace until succumbing to the Great Depression

in 1932.

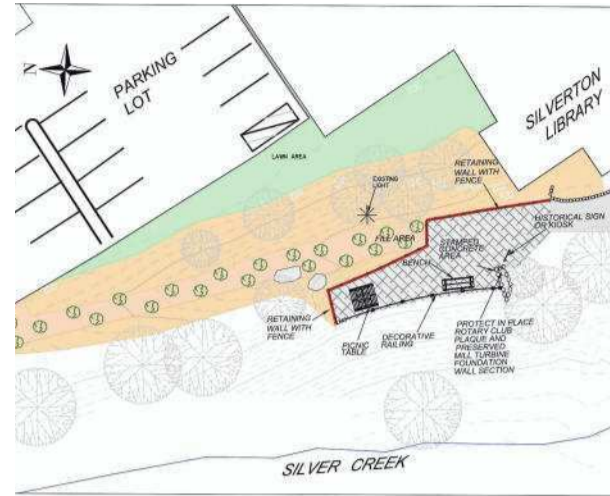
A small 3-by-6-foot section of a river rock and concrete wall behind the library is thought to be the last piece of the powerhouse's foundation. Seven years ago, the wall of concrete there began crumbling into the creek, forcing the city to close the area.

"The wall probably started weakening in the 1996 flood, so by 2012, it was really eroding," said Sue DeVore, Silverton's engineering technician. "The city had to take it down."

"It was a safety issue," added Public Works Director Christian Saxe.

Since then, Silverton Public Works and Silverton Rotary Club, which created Old Mill Park in 1981, have talked on-and-off about how to re-do the overlook. The project was handed over to DeVore in 2015, and she spent the next few years working on it between her

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A blueprint of the Old Mill Park construction plans. PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVERTON PUBLIC WORKS

Stayton lifts its water advisory



Algae blooms in Detroit Lake have resulted in low levels of toxins in the drinking water in Salem. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Few communities along Santiam hurt by algae

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - OREGON

The city of Stayton has lifted its drinking water advisory after the latest tests show it is safe.

The city had a drinking water advisory in place for two days despite negative tests for toxins in its water supply.

The city issued its water advisory after receiving notice of the City of Salem's impending advisory on May 29, but tests of its water drawn May 23 and May 29 — it received the results days later — never showed elevated levels of toxins.

Stayton's intake along the North Santiam River is approximately two miles downstream from where the City of Salem draws its water.

"We have a good system in place," Stayton city manager Keith Campbell said. "The thought process is our data says everything is okay, but what do you do in terms of public safety?"

"With new updated data, we can say we're still good."

Campbell said the city drew water Friday to send off for testing and should receive results in two to three days.

The water intake for Salem is Geren Island — which is in the river at Stayton.

Algae blooms in Detroit Lake have resulted in low levels of toxins in the drinking water in Salem. Salem's advisory was lifted Saturday.

Of the cities in the Santiam Canyon, only Turner also had a no-drink order for tap water for children

under 6 years old, pregnant women, women who are nursing and people with compromised health.

Other cities have different water filtration methods or don't pull their water right out of the river. Here's how the cities in the Santiam Canyon are impacted:

Turner

The city gets its water from the same supply as Salem and issued the no-drink order after being advised by the city of Salem of its problem with the water.

"All of the water that comes into Salem, basically we tap into those lines as they come down the canyon," Turner city administrator David Sawyer said.

Aumsville

The city has not found any toxins in its water.

The water for Aumsville comes from five groundwater wells located in the city.

Gates

The city's latest tests showed no toxins in the water, but the town was waiting on more recent tests to come back from a lab in Michigan.

Greg Benthin, the Public Works Superintendent for the City of Gates, said the city installed a membrane filtration system in 2009 and it has been effective in filtering out harmful particulates.

"We've been sampling for about three years now and it's never made it through the filters yet," Benthin said. "I feel pretty confident there's not going to be an issue. It's a completely different technology than the towns downstream."

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How toxic algae in Detroit Lake tainted water

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

There is nothing particularly surprising about a toxic algae bloom in Detroit Lake this time of year.

The reservoir east of Salem — and Salem's drinking water source — is annually afflicted by algae blooms in May and June, which often produce toxins.

But this year's bloom was different, with a size and potency that sent toxins all the way into the capitol city's drinking water supply.

It's the first time toxins born in Detroit Lake have reached Salem's faucets at levels high enough to cause problems with drinking water, city officials said.

The result was been widespread concern: Officials encouraged parents to avoid giving tap water to children under 6 years old, and people in compromised health to avoid drinking tap water as well. Salem lifted the water advisory Saturday after tests showed toxin levels in the drinking water went down.

And it begs the question: was this a one-time event, or evidence of a larger trend?

"I think it's fair to say that factors associated with global warming — hotter and drier conditions and a rapid snowmelt — could definitely increase conditions that cause algae blooms," said Rebecca Hillwig, natural resource specialist with the Oregon Health Authority. "There's a lot of factors to consider, but it's fair to say that we have the potential for more of these type of issues in the future."

Anatomy of an algae bloom

The first evidence of an algae bloom at Detroit Lake occurred May 8, said Lacey Goeres-Priest, Salem's water quality supervisor.

The city regularly tests for toxins at Detroit and

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Salem's water contamination alert is lifted

Tracy Loew
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Salem's drinking water advisory has been lifted.

Results of drinking water samples collected both May 30 and 31 showed toxin levels are below health advisory levels, the city said in a news release.

The city posted a summary of test results just over an hour after issuing the release.

Salem issued an advisory late May 29 stating the water was unsafe for children under 6 years old and other sensitive people due to contamination with toxins from algae. The advisory also applied to the city of Turner, the Suburban East Salem Water District and the Orchard Heights Water Association.

On May 31, Gov. Kate Brown directed the Oregon Military Department to provide to residents at several locations, following a severe shortage and reports of price gouging.

All customers can now drink tap water, the city said.

City workers are continuing to collect water quality samples to ensure the water remains safe, officials said.

Daily sampling will continue through Thursday. Results and algae conditions at the reservoir will determine further testing frequency.

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