

BRAND NEW YEAR: SAME COLD STORY

By GRETCHEN AMMERMAN
For the TODAY

Diving into cold water in the middle of winter might seem like a strange way to kick off a new year to some, but the fact that the number of organized events where people plunge together keeps growing, means it could actually be pretty fun.

Though most events on the Central Coast take advantage of the proximity to the ocean, Lincoln City Parks and Recreation is taking a different approach with its plunge, taking place in the relatively sheltered confines of Devils Lake.

“A polar plunge is the best way to break in the new year,” said Recreation Supervisor Boone Marker. “The brisk splash of cold water helps revitalize the mind while also allowing all participants to be thankful for the many great things we may take for granted, like a hot shower, heated car seats and hot coffee.”

Free hot coffee and light refreshments will be provided for pre- or post-plunge comfort; and plungers can decide their comfort level during the immersion.

“You can dip a toe, wade or jump into the chilly waters of Devils Lake,” Marker said. “If you do plan to take the plunge, though, be sure to bring a towel.”

The free event starts at 10 am on New Year’s Day, Wednesday, Jan 1, at Lincoln City’s Regatta Grounds, just off NE West Devils Lake Road.

For more information, call 541-994-2131 or go to www.lincolncity.org.

Resolution Run and Polar Bear Plunge

Though not on New Year’s Day, the Newport Resolution Run and Polar Bear Plunge on Saturday, Jan 4, is a favorite for many as a way to start a year of commitment to fitness resolutions.

The 5K, 10K and half marathon event gives people a way to warm up so that the ocean, just a few yards from the finish line, seems much more appealing.

“Though the plunge is optional about 75 percent of the people that race end up doing it,” said organizer Ed Cortes of Ardor Adventures. “Our photos of the plunge are fantastic. We have people running into the ocean holding hands,



The Devils Lake Dunk

running in with their dogs and even doing flips into the waves.”

Beginning at the southeast end of the Newport Jetty, the 5 and 10 Ks explore the paved walkways in the area, while the half marathon includes sections run on trails. All distances end by running over a dune then down to the finish line on the beach, where those that choose to keep going, do.

The half marathon starts at 9 am, the other races at 10 am. For more information or to register, go to ardoradventures.com.

If ocean immersion sounds fun but running doesn’t, take advantage of these free New Year’s Day events:

Manzanita Polar Plunge

After warming up at a bonfire then gathering for a group photo, participants at this event run into the ocean then back up the beach, usually straight back to the bonfire.

“If you don’t have a smile from ear to ear, you didn’t do the plunge,” said Janice Gaines of Spa Manzanita. “I’ve never seen



Manzanita Polar Plunge stalwart Janice Gaines starts the proceedings by sounding a horn made of bull kelp • Photo by Scot Gilbert

anyone not smiling at the event. Not in all the years I’ve been doing it.”

The signature of this more-than-a-decade-old event is that many participants come in costume.

“Some years it’s so sunny and warm people strip down to t-shirts and shorts,” Gaines said. “But a lot of people really like the fun of dressing up.”

The plunge location is Neahkahnie Beach, one mile north of downtown Manzanita. Parking is available in the neighborhoods on both sides of the beach access.

Though the official start time is 11 am, Gaines recommends arriving by 10:30 am.

“People can go into the water any time,” she said, “but if they want to be part of the group and be in the photo they should get there early so they aren’t scrambling at the

last minute.”

Cape Lookout Polar Plunge

The scenic beach at Cape Lookout State Park is conveniently located next to miles of popular trails that can be crowded the rest of the year.

Partnerships make this a safe and cozy event, as state parks staff provide warming fires and Netarts Fire and Rescue also have staff present.

Donations of hot cocoa help sweeten the thought of doing the plunge and participants can follow up with a hike down the beach or on trails that twist through giant coastal trees.

The event begins at 11 am at Cape Lookout State Park day use area; fees are being waived for the day. For more information, go to tostateparks.org.