



Rafter on Clackamas River wears life jacket for protection.

photo by Art Nelson

On Clackamas River

Rafting warrants caution

by ART NELSON

One person has been killed and five others were rescued by authorities in recent weeks as a result of rafting accidents on the Clackamas River.

One consequence has been stepped-up enforcement of boat equipment laws on the river during the heavy influx of weekend rafters and canoeists.

"Last weekend, we monitored boats and issued citations," said Sgt. Tim Grolbert, public relations officer for the county sheriff's office.

"We made 40 boat checks and issued 15 citations."

Rafting and canoeing rivers isn't regulated as heavily as boating. "About all we can do is ask people to be reasonable, to take the necessary precautions and use life jackets," said Grolbert.

He noted a major problem dunked rafters encounter is the water temperature.

"It's really cold water," he explained. "It doesn't take long to take all your body heat."

"It's all mountain runoff, melted snow. That's true with all the waters in the county."

The cold water lowers body

temperature and causes hypothermia, a condition which weakens the body.

"When someone gets thrown in, he may be able to swim twice as far in warmer water than in the cold water," Grolbert said.

"Secondly, even if people are wearing life jackets, they can be sucked underwater by currents and such." That's what happened two weeks ago, when a rafter was sucked under the water and thrown into a solid rock wall; he died before he reached a hospital.

Mark Covell, who drives for Alpine Ambulance in Damascus, was on the scene helping in the two recent rescue operations.

Also a volunteer diver for the sheriff's department, Covell was emphatic in his warning about the dangers involved.

"The warning should be, don't be rafting up the Clackamas River above Estacada unless you're an experienced rafter. More and more people go further up the river to raft."

"Around Fish Creek and Carter Bridge (near where the drowning took place) is an extremely hazardous area for other than the experienced rafter."

Both accidents took place in what is sometimes referred to as the "Toilet

Bowl," where a whirlpool can take rafters in and slam them up against a sheer rock face.

Grolbert said another potentially hazardous spot is just below the boat ramp at McIver Park, where there are a number of rough rapids.

Covell also noted persons on shore near these dangerous areas can save "drowned" persons by quick actions.

"People 'drowned' with hypothermia can be submerged 15 to 45 minutes and still be successfully resuscitated."

"If you treat them with good resuscitative efforts and get them to a hospital with hypothermia treatment (Gresham and Willamette Falls are two) there's still a good chance."

"By all clinical definitions, a hypothermic drowned person is dead. But any cold person in water can be considered resuscitable."

"(Persons coming upon a drowned hypothermic person) should always notify the authorities and begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation."

In short, the message is: raft knowledgeably, don't challenge the river beyond your limits, and if you can safely reach a cold, drowned person, begin resuscitation efforts and get additional help.

OREGON CITY — Plans for improving a portion of Highway 212 were approved with little fanfare last week by county commissioners.

The proposed plans, submitted to the commissioners by the Oregon Department of Transportation, were the culmination of engineering efforts which began in 1971. Public hearings were recently held to give citizens a chance to air their opinions about the highway.

The plans for improvement on the section of the highway from Interstate 205 to the Carver junction will next be reviewed by the Oregon Transportation Commission. A final Environmental Impact Statement will then be drawn up and must receive Federal Highway Administration approval for the funds.

Although officials noted there is no guarantee ODOT will receive the funds for the project, they had earlier stated prospects look "very promising" the funds will be allocated.

The county commissioners did accept a report which included the modified alternative for the Carver junction. The junction was the subject of much public testimony.

The modified alternative would include a grade separation so traffic could flow freely through the intersection, requiring only traffic from Damascus to Carver to stop. This should alleviate the citizens' concern about traffic bottleneck, according to Leon Brock, project coordinator for ODOT.

The highway project, including the modified option, would cost about \$6.7 million.

In the plans approved by the commissioners, the truck scales site was maintained at the originally-proposed site between 142nd and 152nd near Carver.

Several area residents had earlier testified about the site, with some concerned the site was too close to residences and others feeling the site should be completely removed from the area.

Winston Kurth, assistant director of the county Department of Environmental Services, earlier noted the site had been located near residences for years. Five others had been studied for the scale site, but there had been flaws in all of them, ODOT officials said.



The site also has a higher violation rate than the state average, ODOT officials said.

Proposed plans include four travel agents with a "nearly continuous" turn lane to the Carver junction, according to Brock. As an interim project, the highway is currently being widened near the Evelyn Street intersection in Clackamas for the installation of a traffic light.

A traffic light will also be installed at the Carver junction. The interim projects should be completed by fall.

The proposed highway project also includes realignment of Evelyn Street with 102nd Avenue. Separated bikeways and sidewalks will be constructed from 82nd Avenue to Evelyn Street.

The highway will also be realigned just west of Carver to move the road away from the bend of the Clackamas River.

Six single family dwellings and four commercial structures will be displaced because of highway construction.

Following federal approval of the project and the allocation of an expected \$7.1 million, right-of-way acquisition will probably begin in November, ODOT officials said. Construction would then begin in June 1981 with completion by 1983.

The Highway 212 improvements project has a long and "tumultuous" history, according to the environmental impact statement.

ODOT did some preliminary engineering for the improvements with federal aid

secondary funds in 1971. That funding was lost, however, when the Federal Highway Act of 1973 instituted a new system of classifications for routes in "urban" areas.

A location survey was completed in 1975 after the Columbia Region Association of Governments approved a request for funding under the federal urban aid program.

In 1976, however, ODOT once again reclassified the highway and it no longer qualified for the urban funds. Clackamas County became the primary sponsor of improvements in 1977 and CRAG then appropriated \$119,200 from the Mt. Hood Freeway transfer funds.

That money went only for preliminary engineering and preparing the impact statement for the now scaled-down project.

Hoodland firemen monitor burning

Fire season has already started in the Clackamas-Marion District of the Oregon State Forestry Department.

Hoodland Fire Chief Don Armintrout said his

department has answered calls for five brush fires in the past few weeks.

"It's drier than you think," he said, and added that his department is starting to monitor weather conditions

and the way people are burning.

Forest areas will still be open for public and industrial use during the official fire season. A spokesman for the Oregon State Forestry Department said industrial

operations in the forests must meet fire prevention requirements.

These include having fire tools, water supply and watchman service at logging and sawmill sites within the district.

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Hoodland Happenings

Wednesday, June 27

The Hoodland Women's Club will hold a craft workshop from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Women's Club. Bonnie Lookabill will teach participants the art of weed basket weaving.

Welches Community School "Tiny-Tots" group will meet from 10 a.m. to noon. Call Kathryn Bliss at

622-3032 for information and meeting location.

At 8 p.m., the Mt. Hood Lions Club will hold its general meeting at the club building in Wemme.

Thursday, June 28

There will be a Well-Baby Clinic held at Welches Grade School on Salmon River Road starting at 9:30 a.m. Call Pauline Beckoff, 622-

3252, to make an appointment for immunizations or check-ups for children from newborn to age 5.

The Hoodland Women's Club will hold a craft workshop from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Women's Club. Edna Cooke will teach participants how to make coasters and napkin rings from jute.

The Hoodland Women's Club Rummage Sale is set

for July 7-8. Florence Simmons, co-chairman of the rummage sale, said club members will accept donations for the sale from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Women's Club. Call 622-3288 for further information or pick-up.

To place an event in "Hoodland Happenings," contact Dawn Morrison at 622-3538.

Liebertz named to honor roll

An Eagle Creek resident is listed as one of 35 Blue Mountain Community College students to receive a 4.0 grade point average for spring term.

Thomas Liebertz earned a place on the college honor

roll. Students have to earn a 3.5 or better grade point average to be placed on the honor roll.

Blue Mountain Community College is located in Pendleton.

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