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ONE DOLLAR

TAKE A HIKE!



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

A man walks along the Warrenton Waterfront Trail Tuesday. The Warrenton Trails Association recently set its sights on transforming into the Clatsop County Trail Initiative, a regional trail association that would expand the scope of the group countywide.

Warrenton Trails expands mission countywide

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Warrenton Trails Association, a grassroots non-profit formed in 2003, has spent the past dozen years developing a 25-mile loop through Warrenton and cultivating partnerships with state and national parks and other local organizations.

The group recently set its sights on transforming into the Clatsop County Trail Initiative, a regional trail association that would expand the scope of the group countywide.

Having the group become a regional trail association would allow it to collaborate on a larger scale throughout the county, WTA Chairwoman Tessa Scheller said.

"We will focus on our region," Scheller said. "We really see trail routes from Arch Cape all the way to Knappa."

This past summer, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Superintendent Scott Tucker suggested the grassroots organization apply for a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program. The program supports community-led outdoor recreation projects across the country.

"At Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, our business is



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

A portion of the Warrenton Waterfront Trail goes through Carruthers Memorial Park. Members of the Warrenton Trails Association say that transforming into a regional association would help create trails through areas of multiple jurisdictions.

sharing the North Coast's history with local communities, tourists and travelers; therefore, I extend our support to the endeavor and pledge National Parks Service participation in the newly created advisory group," Tucker wrote in a letter of support.

The group sent an application in August and was awarded the RTCA support in October.

Alexandra Stone, an RTCA program coordinator, will work directly with the local group over the year to open communication with community partners and develop

fundraising and grant writing. WTA's past achievements and leadership in Clatsop County helped the group earn the National Park Service's technical assistance, Stone said.

"When we get the request, we are looking for some demonstration of capacity and willingness that is often demonstrated by past success," Stone said.

In its application, WTA had support from Tucker, Clatsop County Public Health, Friends of Astoria Natural Areas, Angora Hiking Club, Clatsop County Board of

Commissioners and the cities of Astoria, Warrenton, Seaside, Cannon Beach and Gearhart.

Scheller, who helped start WTA more than a decade ago, said plans for the regional trail association are still in the early stages, but some goals are already being discussed.

As a countywide group, Scheller said, the regional association would help create trails through areas of multiple jurisdictions such as trails on private, state and federal land.

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Dan Jesse

Dianne Widdop

Jesse asks Gearhart mayor to bow out

City councilor says controversy has 'split the community apart'

By NANCY MCCARTHY
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — In an impassioned speech during a City Council meeting Wednesday night, Gearhart City Councilor Dan Jesse told Mayor Dianne Widdop, "I don't think you're the best choice for the community" and asked her to resign.

The controversy surrounding some of the mayor's recent actions has created an atmosphere that has "split the community apart," Jesse said.

"I don't think it is fair that the rest of us have to endure that," he added.

Widdop, however, repeated her intention of staying in office unless a recall forces her out.

"I have gotten a tremendous amount of support from the community," Widdop replied. "I have not attacked anyone; I have defended myself. If someone attacks you, how would you handle that?"

Following the discussion, the council asked city attorney Peter Watts to request letters from the Oregon Secretary of State's Office and the state Ethics Commission that describe where they are in their investigations.

Although Kevin Willett, an unsuccessful City Council candidate in the November general election, had contacted the agencies, he eventually withdrew the complaints against Widdop. However, Widdop filed her own complaint with the Secretary of State's Office, claiming that allegations contained in a recall petition against her are untruthful.

Wednesday night's conversation repeated several recent City Council discussions about accusations that Widdop unduly used her influence as mayor. She has fielded complaints from a local business owner who said Widdop suggested that Willett's campaign sign be removed from the business and that she accused Willett of having a temper and being unsuitable for the City Council. Former City Councilor Joy Sigler has also accused Widdop of secretly recording a private conversation between

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Rule change will ease sailing on the beach

By KATIE WILSON
EO Media Group

LONG BEACH PENINSULA, Wash. — Kite buggies, blo-karts, kite boards: these wind-powered vehicles, or land sailers, could be coming to state park lands in Pacific and Grays Harbor counties.

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is considering changing a rule that prohibits the use of these vehicles on beaches the agency manages. Now, the commission is looking at allowing them, but likely only under certain conditions, including seasonal and area-by-area based restrictions.

Two public meetings to gather input are scheduled for the end of the month. The first meeting is in Ilwaco from 6

p.m. to 8 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Ilwaco Community Building, 158 First Ave. North. The second is in Ocean Shores 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Jan. 29, at the Ocean Shores Convention Center, 120 W. Chance A la Mer.

The proposal comes after wind vehicle enthusiasts approached the commission and requested a rule change in 2008. A rule-making moratorium postponed any considerations at that time, though. Then, in 2010 and 2013, the agency conducted pilot programs on the beaches near Long Beach and at Grays Harbor County's North and South beaches.

People who wanted to take out their wind-powered vehicles had to get a permit from park offices before hitting the sand, said Cape Disappointment Park

Manager Evan Roberts.

"Based on that monitoring we feel comfortable moving forward," said Randy Kline, park planner with state parks.

Most of the vehicles are designed along the lines of a typical go cart with one very obvious difference: a large sail to catch the wind with and propel the driver down a stretch of road, field or beach. The makers of some models claim their vehicles can harness powerful winds and reach speeds of 55 mph or more.

During the pilot program period, the North Beach seemed to be the most popular location, Roberts said, but if the rule is changed he expects to see land sailers on the peninsula, too.

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Observer file photo

Operators of wind-powered vehicles like this will have clearer legal standing to run them on Washington beaches if a rule change goes through.

