

# Warrenton property owners call for wider bridge after dam removal

## Narrow span could limit growth

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Norm and Judy Kujala, whose family runs Skipanon Brand Seafood, told the Warrenton Planning Commission Thursday night that plans for a single-lane bridge over the Skipanon River after the Eighth Street Dam is removed are short-sighted and could undermine future growth.

The Kujalas, whose son, Mark, is the mayor, are among several property owners on the east side of the river who want a wider bridge that might enable development.

The width of the bridge has become a sticking point in the \$1.2 million project to demolish the aging dam and improve salmon habitat. The city, the Columbia River Estuary Study Task Force and the Skipanon Water Control District, which owns the dam, have agreed to a single-lane, 54-foot span that is 16 feet wide.

While property owners consider the 16-foot width an improvement over the original plan, which was 14 feet, several want the bridge built to city code of 20 feet or wider.

The city had sought a bridge as part

of the project to preserve emergency access that is now provided by a gravel road over the dam. The gravel road is controlled by the Skipanon Water Control District. The bridge, if built, would be the city's property.

According to CREST, the Bonneville Power Administration, which is financing the dam removal to restore salmon habitat, has only agreed to replace the existing emergency access with a single-lane bridge.

Judy Kujala told the Planning Commission that the Skipanon Water Control District and CREST are "definitely anti-development."

Norm Kujala said the bridge should be 24-feet wide to allow for two-way traffic. He said it would be "pretty short-sighted of the city of Warrenton" to put in a single-lane bridge.

Mayor Mark Kujala who leads Skipanon Brand Seafood, has recused himself from the debate over a project that has also prompted objections from Warrenton Fiber, a leading employer.

Stephen Fulton, who works on land development and wetland mitigation for Warrenton Fiber, asked the Planning Commission to continue the hearing on the land use aspects of the project so

more study can be done on whether removing the dam would impact water levels for upstream property owners.

Matt Van Ess, a habitat restoration coordinator for CREST, said the project "does not in any way change water elevations on the upstream side of the dam. And that's the finding from our engineers. That would be a deal-breaker for the project."

But Fulton has questioned why the city would rely on private engineers working with CREST.

"This is a dam protecting the upriver landowners," Fulton said. "When it's taken out, it's going to have an impact on the hydrology."

An attorney for Warrenton Fiber also raised questions this week about whether property owners received adequate notice about the project.

The City Commission, which on Wednesday approved an agreement with CREST and the Skipanon Water Control District, did not send out notice to property owners. The city attorney has said that notice was not required because the commission was not making a land use decision.

The Planning Commission, however, did send out notices to property owners near the dam. The Planning Commission will continue its hearing on the project in May.

# Kids on the Art Walk

The Astoria Head Start Parent Group, in collaboration with Northwest Regional Educational Service District, will take part in Second Saturday Art Walk from 4 to 7 p.m. Saturday with "Art Through the Eyes of a Child," an exhibit of mixed media by children 3 to 5 years olds and a fundraiser for early childhood education.

The exhibit is part of celebrations for the Week of the Young Child, sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and running from Sunday through to April 18.

Winnifred Byrne Luminary Arts, 1133 Commercial St., will display the work of about 47 children from Astoria Head Start and NWRES's Early Childhood Class. Curious Caterpillar, 1184 Commercial St., will display the work of 35 children from Warrenton Head Start and the NWRES.

The Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. This one night only art exhibit will help to raise awareness and funds to support the importance of art in the early childhood education. Head Start is a no-cost education and social service program.

"This event also strives to give the students a voice, by sharing how they see the world giving

students an opportunity to express themselves and develop feelings of accomplishment," wrote Tiffany Hall, an early intervention specialist with NWRES.

The exhibits will include art available to the public by the Astoria Head Start Parent Group. A silent auction and raffle will also be held that evening, with items donated by local community businesses. All proceeds from the art exhibit, auction and raffle will go toward increasing the parent group funds for special activities for Astoria Head Start children.

"We are very excited to have a collaboration with Head Start and Northwest Regional Educational School District," Hall wrote. "We work together every day and we are really excited to expand our art show to NWRES to celebrate Week of the Young Child. Both organizations goals are to support young children and families with building a nurturing, safe and supportive environment, which is so critical to the development of a young child. Clatsop County needs more exposure to the importance of early childhood programs, because it is critically underserved."

Refreshments will be donated by Serendipity Café, Home Bakery and Kick Ass Coffee, and live music provided by Live Blues with Maggie and the Cats.

For more information, contact Hall at thall@nwresd.k12.or.us

# 'Color the Coast' run to raise autism awareness

By The Daily Astorian

The second annual "Color the Coast for Autism" color run and walkathon will be held Saturday at the Astoria/Warrenton/Seaside KOA.

The color run and walk, an event where runners are showered with colored powder along the run, will begin at 11:30 a.m. Other activities will begin at 10 a.m.

Registration is \$14 for adults and \$11 for children.

Funds raised at the event benefit the Autism Society of Oregon. Last year, the inaugural run raised nearly \$10,000 from about 250 participants.

Brandi Lindstrom, a local chapter representative for the Autism Society of Oregon, said the event this year already has 364 people signed up, which has surpassed the funds raised last year.

The KOA donates the color and offers free camping to participants in the run/walk event.

The Autism Society of Oregon's mission is to empower individuals with autism, their families and their service providers to improve the quality of their lives through support and information.

"Color the Coast for Autism," is scheduled this month partly because April is Autism Awareness Month.



Submitted photo  
"Color the Coast for Autism" walkers are covered in colored powder at last year's event held at the Warrenton KOA. This year's event is Saturday.



Submitted photo  
"Color the Coast for Autism" last year drew about 250 participants. This year, more than 300 people have signed up for the walk/run.

Oregon has one of the highest rates of autism in the United States, according to the Autism Society.

A report from March 2014 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states 1 in 68 children nationwide are identified with autism by age 8.

There are more than 9,000 children in Oregon receiving special education services for autism spectrum disorder.

The Autism Society of Oregon is a nonprofit group. The Clatsop County chapter hosts a support group from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the North Coast Family Fellow-

ship Church, 2245 N. Wahanna Road in Seaside. Dinner and child care are provided at no cost to the family.

For more information, contact Lindstrom at 503-791-1678 or by email at bables82@yahoo.com

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