

Smoking ban approved in county parks

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Starting next month, smoking and tobacco use will be banned in county parks.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners unanimously agreed Wednesday to add parks to the county's existing no tobacco policy, created in 2011 and enforced outside county department buildings.

The Board of Commissioners opened a public hearing on the issue at its April 22 meeting and kept the hearing open to its meeting Wednesday. No public testimony was given Wednesday.

Steven Blakesley, Clatsop Coun-

ty health promotion specialist, explained to the Board of Commissioners the ban is meant for public health reasons and for the comfort of all park visitors.

Blakesley said the new policy includes bans on marijuana and electronic cigarette use, which have been approved statewide in recent years since the policy was created.

"A lot has changed since then," he said.

The ban also includes chewing tobacco, which creates public health concerns and maintenance issues for county staff, according to the county's parks department.

At at Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee meeting last fall, Blakesley presented infor-

mation about the policy. Supports of the ban, he said, point to environmental concerns and health reasons such as decreasing exposure to secondhand smoke, encouraging more smokers to quit and discouraging children to start smoking.

In addition, supporters cite a safety concern about smoking materials causing sparks that lead to uncontrolled fires.

Parks impacted by the proposed policy include Big Creek, Carnahan, Cullaby Lake, LeeWooden/Fish Hawk Falls, Klootchy Creek, North Fork Nehalem, Sigfridson, John Day and Westport boat ramp.

The Clatsop County Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee recommended the ban

in November. Although the recommendation passed, some on the committee expressed concerns about people's personal rights, how the policy would be enforced and the need for such a policy since parks are outdoors.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Scott Lee believes the county is leading the way across the state by approving the ban. Lee said he can understand concerns with bans on beaches, since beaches are often considered public highways and people can smoke in their vehicles.

Parks are different, he said.

On a personal note, Lee said, he has seen family members struggle with tobacco use. He sees the county's ban as a way

of supporting families and future generations.

"There is not a family not touched by these issues," Lee said.

In other business:
• The Board of Commissioners amended to the county's labor counsel services agreement with firm Bullard, Smith, Jernstedt and Wilson for this fiscal year. The county's agreement with the firm was not to exceed \$30,000 annually. Due to schedule contract negotiations and four unforeseen personal issues, which have been resolved, the county said, an additional \$149,000 was needed to pay for the services in this fiscal year. The largest additional cost was \$113,000 for a labor dispute in the Sheriff's Office.

Seniors labor for community, and a diploma

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Brianna Crews helped build a ramp at the home of a veteran who lost his legs to bomb shrapnel and surgery.

Tucker Johnson organized a campus blood drive. Michael Peden painted props for a traffic safety event for kindergartners.

While the Astoria High School seniors each had their own reasons for choosing the community service projects, they were also meeting a graduation requirement.

Senior projects can help students understand the value of civic engagement and how to manage work and meet deadlines.

Jennifer Newton, a senior transitions and leadership teacher at Astoria High School, said some students spend multiple weeks immersed in the projects, from building houses in Mexico and Tanzania to camping in the North Cascades to learn about the effects of climate change.

"Some that I thought were hard was working with hospice patients," Newton said. "I think that took bravery and courage. There were also kids that volunteering was brand new. I want to honor that, too."

Seniors have to explain their projects in eight- to 10-minute presentations before panels of adult volunteers.

Crews, who said her project was to help local veterans like her brother, Scott, went before a panel stacked with community leaders. Paul Mitchell, the spokesman for Columbia Memorial Hospital, sat next to Loran Matthews, the director of the Astoria Midsummer Scandinavian Festival. Nicole Williams, the CEO of the Clatsop Care Center, sat next to Joanne Nelson, Crews' former sixth-grade teacher.

Crews' project, which included painting two rooms at Clatsop Care Center, was one of about 120 senior projects this year.

Other projects included:

- Cathryn Roe organized a staff vs. student volleyball tournament as part of a Substance and Alcohol Free Environment (SAFE) Night, along with a research paper on alcoholism.
- Josh Cuifici helped



For her senior project, Astoria High School student Cathryn Roe organized a Substance and Alcohol Free Environment (SAFE) Night, including a staff vs. student volleyball tournament.



Jennifer Newton, a senior transitions and leadership teacher at Astoria High School, organized the senior project presentations of upward of 120 students this year.

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build wooden railings and straighten a wooden walkway along a trail at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and worked on metal railings at the Salt Works in Seaside, while writing his research paper on the federal endangered species list.

• Adrianna Long helped coordinate an art show and wrote a research paper about the effects of art.

Seniors often work with parks and other public agencies on community service, Newton said, and some projects continue each year. Newton said she keeps a list of "instant senior projects: just add seniors."

Contact Newton at jnewton@astoria.k12.or.us for more information.

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