



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Jay Mitchell, a volunteer with Friends of the Astoria Column, works to clear the access road to the Astoria Column Sunday.

Storm: Column's scaffolding is stable but will be tested, adjusted

Continued from Page 1A

her on-call crew, who proceeded to cut the cover along the seams to relieve the pressure on the scaffolding — and to let the cover, a polyethylene debris netting, take flight if necessary.

"It can't withstand more than 50 mph," Laibinis said Sunday, "and yesterday, that's what we got."

So, when the cover first started flapping in the breeze like a sail, then started blowing away in pieces as the windstorm crescendoed, it meant the restoration team had done the right thing.

"You cut it and let it go," she said. "That's the whole emergency plan."

By the time the storm ended, the cover was gone.

'Weather-dependent'

The scaffolding is stable but will be tested and adjusted over the next several days. "Right now, they're still working on making the service scaffolding secure," said Sheri Mitchell, executive director of the Friends of the Astoria Column.

For safety reasons, Astor Park and the Astoria Column Gift Shop remained closed to vehicles and pedestrians Monday morning and until further notice. The Astoria Parks & Recreation Department closed the park grounds during the weekend so debris and downed trees can be cleared from Coxcomb Drive.

Dedicated in 1926, the 125-foot Astoria Column has been closed since June for the \$1 million restoration project. Even after the storm, the Column is still on track to be finished by late September, weather permitting, Laibinis said. The Column is scheduled to reopen Oct. 24.

Fortunately, the storm didn't undo any of the restoration work, including the repainting of the murals that spiral up the structure, she said. "We were very fortunate in the fact that 90 percent of the mural is finished," she said.

As the restoration project nears completion, the Column won't be covered except at the top for minor



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

On Saturday during a fierce coastal windstorm, Mother Nature offered the public an early peek at the restoration work done on the Astoria Column, which was scheduled to have its cover removed in late September.

repairs and at the bottom to discourage visitors from approaching the base, which is surrounded by a fence.

A similar storm occurred during the Column's 1995 restoration, Laibinis said. In that instance, the plastic cover

er partially tore off and twisted the scaffolding.

"(These are) weather-dependent projects," she said.

Saturday's storm wallops the North Coast

The Daily Astorian

A storm blew over the North Coast last weekend, blowing down trees, wreaking havoc on the Hood to Coast Relay finish, stripping the Astoria Column restoration and closing access to Coxcomb Hill.

After a calm Friday, a hurricane-like swarm of clouds brought winds gusting as high as 85 mph down on the Lower Columbia region. The National Weather Service increased its previous gale warning to a storm, remaining in effect through noon Saturday.

By late Saturday morning, gusts were reported as high as 84.8 mph on Radar Ridge in Pacific (Wash.) County, 78.2 over the Astoria Bridge, 70 mph on Washington's Cape Disappointment and 60 mph above Clatsop Spit. The winds built seas to between 14 and 16 feet, closing the Columbia River Bar to recreational traffic, and with it much of the Buoy 10 salmon fishery. A gale warning

remained in effect through Saturday night.

The winds stripped off tarps on the scaffolding placed around the Astoria Column for its restoration and blew down trees and closed access to Coxcomb Drive through the weekend. Meanwhile, Hood to Coast organizers in Seaside had to cancel the relay's beach after-party and establish gathering space inside the Shilo Inn. (See related stories)

The storm knocked out power to nearly 3,600 residents around Astoria Saturday, along with others on the Long Beach (Wash.) Peninsula and in South County.

The winds stayed above 20 mph at the National Weather Service's monitoring station at the Astoria Regional Airport between 3 a.m. and 7 p.m. Another smaller storm surge kept winds between 10 and 15 mph between 12:40 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday.

The National Weather Service forecasts at least a 50 percent chance of showers through Wednesday, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Coast Guard kept busy by windstorm

The Daily Astorian

During Saturday's storm, the U.S. Coast Guard responded to more than 10 reports of people in the water and more than 20 of vessels dragging anchor or unmanned and adrift throughout Oregon and Washington.

Most of the reports of people in the water came from the Puget Sound in Washington, including Seattle, Tacoma, Bainbridge Island, the Camano Islands, Anacortes, Poulsbo and Lopez Island. Another person in the water was reported near Tillamook. All people were safely recovered by either the Coast Guard, local agencies or Good Samaritans.

The Coast Guard had to escort multiple vessels into harbors and closed the Columbia River Bar to recreational traffic, halting much of the Buoy 10 salmon fishery. It warned boaters to keep their boats secured to docks to avoid drifting vessels and to have their name and contact information on their boats.

"Today was a very busy day, and we are fully mission capable and remaining vigilant as this storm passes through the area," said John Howk, command duty officer for the Coast Guard's 13th District, in a release Saturday. "We ask everyone to know their limits and capabilities and to use their best judgment when it comes to being on or near the water."

Working together

The charter vessel Sea Angel radioed the Coast Guard Saturday morning to report the Playboy Too,

'This was a great collaborative effort ...'

— Lt. Christopher Morris

command duty officer for Sector Columbia River

a fellow charter vessel carrying 13 people, taking on water from a hole on its starboard side near the waterline. The Coast Guard launched a Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Astoria and motor lifeboat crews from Station Grays Harbor in Westport, Wash., and Station Cape Disappointment in Ilwaco, Wash.

Nearby vessels supplied the Playboy Too with pumps to fight the flooding, as did the helicopter when it arrived.

The Coast Guard and several Good Samaritan vessels escorted the Playboy Too into Westport. While under tow, the Playboy Too's captain jumped in the ocean and covered the hole with putty to slow the flooding. The boat and its escort arrived in Westport around 8:30 p.m.

"This was a great collaborative effort between Coast Guard crews and fellow mariners who came to the aid of (one) another," said Lt. Christopher Morris, command duty officer for Sector Columbia River, in a release Saturday. "Without the call for help from the Sea Angel crew this could have had a completely different ending."

The cause of the hole is under investigation.

Smith: The judge tentatively scheduled Smith's evaluation for Oct. 13-14

Continued from Page 1A

"There's nothing wrong with a little courtesy and a little communication," Matyas said.

Falls said he only learned Guastadisegni was improperly credentialed Wednesday morning, and had not had time to contact the DA's office prior to Friday's court appearance.

After a recess, Marquis said he had conferred with the state attorney general's office and had been advised the defense was "misapplying" the new standards.

"The state is flying blind" without the mental health information Guastadisegni would be able to provide, Marquis said.

'There's nothing wrong with a little courtesy and a little communication.'

— Cindee Matyas
judge

Matyas tentatively scheduled Smith's evaluation with Guastadisegni for Oct. 13 and Oct. 14.

Before that date, attorneys will meet in court Oct. 2 for a follow-up hearing.

Falls suggested the state look for a different, certified evaluator in the meantime.



Jessica Smith, outside the Clatsop County Courthouse Friday, is charged with aggravated murder and attempted aggravated murder and the drowning death of her 2-year-old daughter and cutting the throat of her teenage daughter in Cannon Beach in July 2014.

Joshua Bessex
The Daily Astorian