

School menus now online

The Daily Astorian

The Astoria School District now offers Nutrislice, a website and free smartphone app providing information on school meals.

A calendar shows the main entree each day, alternate entrees and a la carte options. Each option includes photos, descriptions and detailed nutritional information, including calories, fats, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, fiber, sugar and protein. The site also provides allergy information and nutritional education messages.

"This fresh technology allows us to more vividly and accurately communicate our menus, and makes them convenient and accessible to parents and students anytime, anywhere," the district said in a release.

For more information, visit astoria.nutrislice.com

Service fair features city departments

The Daily Astorian

The city is hosting a Service Fair from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Columbia River Maritime Museum's Barbey Center.

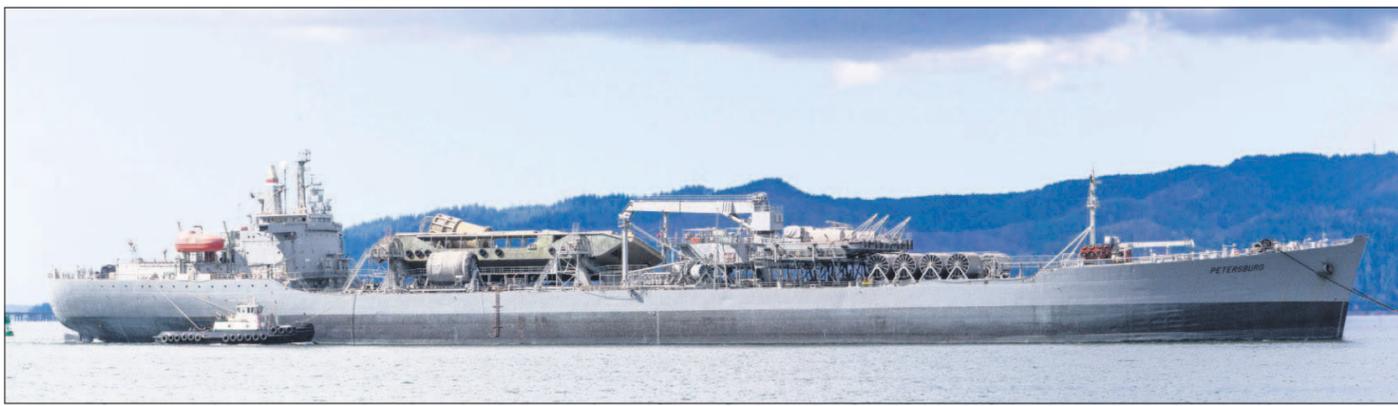
The fair includes equipment displays and booths featuring the various departments within the city, and gives citizens an opportunity to learn about the departments and what they do, and to see the various vehicles and equipment up close.

The event also provides an opportunity to meet elected officials and city employees. Citizens will be able to express comments, concerns or ask questions about different aspects of city operations.

There will also be games and prizes, and food will be provided free of charge. Families are welcome to come and enjoy a fun-filled evening.

For information about the event, contact Julie Yuill at 503-325-5824 or jyuill@astoria.or.us, or Rosemary Johnson at 503-338-5183 or rjohnson@astoria.or.us

Tankers away



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The SS Petersburg, one of Military Sea Lift Command's tankers, passed by Astoria Friday. The command provides transportation for the Department of Defense.

Legal action threatened over spotted frog habitat

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

When Mike Britton answers the phone at his North Unit Irrigation District office in central Oregon these days, the conversations take a quick turn.

"The first three words are, 'I heard a rumor...'" Britton, the North Unit manager, said.

And so it goes. Environmental groups have warned they intend to file suit over Oregon spotted frog habitat, and patrons of multiple Deschutes River Basin irrigation districts worry the outcome will leave their land with less water and more restrictions.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in August 2014 listed the Oregon spotted frog as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. The listing wasn't a surprise; the frog has disappeared from an estimated 78 percent of its historic range, from southwest British Columbia to Northern California.

Loss of its favored marsh habitat and introduction of predators such as bullfrogs are the primary reason for the frog's decline. Fish and Wildlife proposed 22,600 acres in the Deschutes River Basin as critical habitat.

The Upper Deschutes in central Oregon is one of the few places where the frogs can still be found, particularly in Crane Prairie and Wickiup Reservoirs and in the wetlands downstream from them and from Crescent Lake.

Irrigation districts, recognizing the potential impact of an Endangered Species Act listing, worked with Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies and groups to develop a habitat conservation plan for spotted frogs. Britton heads a group, the Deschutes Basin Board of Control, which represents eight irrigation districts in the process.



Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Central Oregon irrigation districts worry they'll be restricted by lawsuits over the Oregon spotted frog, which is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Legal challenges coming

But this summer, the Center for Biological Diversity and WaterWatch of Oregon separately gave 60 days notice they would file suit against the Bureau of Reclamation, which built the Crane Prairie, Wickiup and Crescent Lake reservoirs,

and against the North Unit, central Oregon and Tumalo irrigation districts, which operate and manage the dams and reservoirs.

The lawsuits allege the bureau and districts have harmed spotted frogs. In a news release, WaterWatch said "managing the Deschutes more like an irrigation ditch than a river has

caused significant damage to river health."

WaterWatch said it is primarily concerned about the stretch of river from Wickiup downstream to Bend. The Center for Biological Diversity questions the operations of Wickiup and Crane Prairie, saying the frog

lives upstream and downstream of both and is harmed when river levels rise and fall rapidly in response to irrigation needs.

In a prepared statement, the center's endangered species director, Noah Greenwald, said the problems "can likely be fixed with minimal impact to irrigation districts."

He said the Oregon spotted frog is "one of the most imperiled amphibians in the world" and the Bureau of Reclamation needs to "step up" its oversight of the dams.

Puzzling move

Britton, the North Unit manager, said he doesn't want to speculate on what the lawsuits will specifically allege once they are filed. "I wish we knew, good or bad," he said.

Britton said the Center for Biological Diversity's involvement is puzzling, because it hasn't been involved in development of the habitat conservation plan. Britton said WaterWatch's threat of legal action is disappointing, because it was among the agencies, districts, tribal leaders and others involved in the planning.

"I thought we were working for a collaborative solution," he said.

One of the projects that emerged from the spotted frog work is called Ryan Ranch Meadow, a 65-acre site. Fish and Wildlife, the Forest Service and the districts see it as possible spotted frog habitat that could mitigate habitat loss elsewhere, Britton said. District volunteers installed pipes and fish screens and plan to flood the meadow to determine if it can retain enough water to be used by the frogs.



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4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
at the
Columbia River Maritime Museum's Barbey Center,
20th and Marine Drive

- Meet City officials, employees, and volunteers
- Find out what's happening in City departments through displays and demonstrations
- See big construction equipment, police cars, and fire trucks up close
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ANNUAL
Customer Appreciation
PICNIC

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