

Unprepared: Projections add up to a catastrophe

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But locals will also see some familiar faces, including Doug Dougherty, the Seaside School District superintendent who sits on the Oregon Earthquake Commission.

Although he has talked tsunami preparedness with CBS, The New Yorker, National Geographic Magazine and other prominent media outlets, Dougherty said a part of him is always a little surprised when he's given the opportunity to speak on the subject.

"Ed (Jahn) has been working on this documentary for at least two years. It was clear that he had done his homework and understood the science behind the story," he said.

In November 2013, Dougherty and the school district board floated a \$128 million bond measure to relocate the district's four schools above the tsunami inundation zone in Seaside. To the board's surprise, the bond measure failed. Jahn interviewed Dougherty more than a year later, and the superin-



NOAA/Submitted Photo

This photo shows the aftermath of a 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck Japan on March 11, 2011.

tendent still appears at a loss for words.

Astoria resident Pat Corcoran, a coastal natural hazards expert with the Clatsop County Oregon State University Extension Office, also has some screen time. Both he

and Dougherty saw "Unprepared" at a Portland screening last week and said the documentary is very well done.

Corcoran said that disaster-related information often triggers people's fight-or-flight response; it can para-

lyze their ability to prepare for the event, let alone to respond when it finally happens. Native Northwesterners, who are relatively new to this information about their corner of the world, are at somewhat of a disadvantage, he said; unlike Japan and Chile, they have no cultural stories and generational knowledge as part of their disaster awareness.

"It's very important that we start developing an earthquake culture that supports the earthquake landscape that we live in," he said. "We live in earthquake country, but we don't have earthquake culture."

'This can be addressed'

A year and a half in the making, "Unprepared" often plays like an unclear bill of Oregon's health — a look at how majestically screwed the state will be if it doesn't get its preparedness act together.

The documentary cites unsettling facts from the 2013 Oregon Resilience Plan: tens of thousands of buildings destroyed and many more severely damaged, including hundreds of schools and hospitals; hundreds of roads and bridges down; three years

without water and sewer service on the coast. Cell phone service? Forget about it.

Tens of thousands of households will be displaced, and possibly hundreds of thousands of disaster refugees may pour into less-damaged central and Eastern Oregon towns.

"It becomes overwhelming after a while," Steve Amen, Oregon Field Guide's executive producer, said.

There's no guarantee that the Astoria or Youngs Bay bridges will be standing when the earth stops shaking, Jahn said. Landslides — which could be a huge problem for Astoria since much of the town is built on fill that slopes toward the Columbia River — could create a panoply of related disasters, Corcoran said: power lines arcing, gas mains breaking, fires spreading, etc.

"At what point do you say, 'We know enough, but what are we actually going to do about it?'" Jahn said. "It's not an easy discussion to have. It makes people uncomfortable."

The projections add up to an unprecedented catastrophe,

not just for Oregon but for the United States, according to the resilience plan, a document that Jahn called a "turning point" in Oregon's awareness of Cascadia.

"Unprepared," though laced with stupefying footage of the Japan disaster, also contains a hopeful message: Cascadia has not happened yet, so there's still time to prepare. One of the lessons from Japan is that Cascadia need not set Oregon back 50 years, Jahn said.

"My hope," Amen said, "is that this (documentary) is a wake-up call."

And, as "Unprepared" illustrates, individuals can prepare where they live by stocking up on survival gear and learning their neighborhood's tsunami evacuation routes. In fact, the documentary's conclusion features footage from Cannon Beach's 2014 Race the Wave 5K fun run, which taught just that.

"This can be addressed, and it's not the end of the world, even if it happened tomorrow," he said, "but we could do so much better."

See more at <http://bit.ly/1QJXQNY>.

Water: Only one health advisory was issued this summer

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The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program tests popular beaches in the summer and issues alerts when enterococcus levels are above the state safety threshold in marine waters. Enterococcus is an indicator of potential fecal matter contamination. July's spill didn't reach marine waters, Public Works Director Dan Grassick said, so no advisory was issued.

City Councilor Mike Benefield added that the city's response may not have been "satisfactory to all," but staff immediately took care of the problem, removing polluted sand and cordoning off the area.

But Manzulli said beach signage could be better. In California, for example, there are signs that clearly state contamination could be hazardous to health. "The Watershed Council would like the city to go above the state requirements and notify the public when the streams and creeks have elevated enterococcus readings," Manzulli said.

Reports to local media would be "a good way to get

the word out," Manzulli said, along with email or text notifications to those who want to be alerted.

Portland officials report spills over 40 gallons to media outlets and local authorities, according to the city's sewer release response plan.

Manzulli said he has seen people of all ages and their pets play in possibly contaminated outfall water, especially at Gower Street and Chisana Creek.

Beach outfalls aren't the "best place to be playing," but Grassick said he too has seen it. He said signs at the outfalls provide ample warnings to the public that untreated drainage water may be contaminated with animal waste. The signs advise beach visitors to stay out of the water and to wash carefully should they do so.

Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel agreed that officials should work on better notifying the public. He didn't learn about July's spill until he encountered Manzulli on a beach walk.

"I always think about it in terms of we have thousands of visitors every day in the sum-

mer," Grassick said. "Making sure they're safe is a high priority for us. We don't take this lightly."

But staff also don't want to unnecessarily worry the public, he added.

High readings

The Watershed Council and Surfrider Foundation are concerned about more than the spill. Surfrider recorded six cases of high bacteria readings over the summer, including two over 3,000 organisms per 100 milliliters in August, way above the 158 organisms safety threshold. The latest high reading was recorded on Sept. 9 at 292 organisms per 100 milliliters.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program has the power to issue public health advisories through a partnership with the state Department of Environmental Quality, and it didn't test in Cannon Beach every week.

Only one health advisory was issued this summer, according to officials.

"Surfrider uses a similar analysis method, but since their sample collectors and

equipment has not been vetted by DEQ, we are unable to issue advisories from these data," Tara Chetock, a coordinator for the beach monitoring program, said.

However, she added that Surfrider's data is "a great resource."

Surfrider uses the same testing methods with data often utilized "to inform management decisions at the statewide level" and target the state's limited testing, Cruse said.

"When situations like this arise, OBMP will often respond after a high reading or ask the city to collect samples and issue the appropriate messaging to the public," Chetock added.

Cannon Beach stopped its own water-quality testing program in July because staff

didn't find any flaws in the wastewater system. Grassick said contaminants were determined to be nonhuman in nature, though a source was never discovered.

Manzulli disagreed. He said the tests staff used to indicate a human presence are inconclusive.

Grassick noted he is curious what causes high readings in the ocean even when outfall water doesn't reach the surf, indicating a source unrelated to humans.

He added he would like to discuss health risks to both animals and pets.

Collaboration

"The most frustrating aspect of all this is that the city has told the Watershed Council and general public for years that the infrastructure is fine

and the problem is the seagulls, the elk and the random dirty diaper. This summer's sewage spill shows the opposite," Manzulli said. "If the city had said, 'Well it's the elk, the seagulls and maybe our infrastructure,' the city would have likely discovered that the spill alarm and pump station run off the same power source and the city could have fixed the problem years ago. The spill would have been avoided or greatly reduced in size."

He added Surfrider and the Watershed Council are eager to assist officials in making improvements.

By the end of the work session, Steidel said the high readings were a topic the Public Works Committee should discuss and the City Council asked for an update in six months.

Biplane: FAA rules guide local patterns

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Grant, who did not attend the meeting, has a clean, 3,700-mile flight record, many of those miles on tours over Seaside, the Necanicum River and up to the Columbia River and Astoria. His Seaside business, Jim's Biplane Rides, continues to operate after 20 years at the airport. This year he flew an average of three flights per day, with most tours taking place on weekends, according to his log. His season ended in mid-September.

Federal rules

FAA rules guide local patterns, Committee Chairman Randall Henderson of Warrenton said.

Arriving airplanes must be at the proper traffic pattern altitude 1,000 feet above the airport elevation before entering the landing pattern. Pilots should begin descent between one-half or 1 mile from the runway and the plane's base turn should take place at 45 degrees from the end of the runway.

Committee member and pilot Teri Carpenter said those standards are important so a pilot knows "where to look to see what people are doing," especially at airports without control towers.

As for wildlife protection, Henderson said FAA altitude restrictions apply at specific areas along the Oregon Coast, but only near federally protected lands. State or local wildlife habitats, such as those within the Seaside airport pattern, are outside restricted areas.



John Dudley/Submitted Photo

Jim Grant's biplane flies over a neighborhood by the Necanicum Estuary in Gearhart.

The last reported bird strike in the vicinity of the Seaside airport was 13 years ago and there was minor damage to the plane.

A change of path?

Grant tried experimenting with alternating patterns in response to complaints before reverting to his original flight plan for safety reasons, Henderson said.

Nonpilots may not understand "the very intricate ways in which we train and learn how to fly and what the safest thing to do is," Henderson said. "It is the traffic pattern. Within that pattern, the safest path may be going over some people's houses."

If a pilot is flying in the legal pattern and is not comfortable with variations, "I would defer to another guy's judgment," he added.

Henderson said he is concerned a flight path complaint about one pilot could lead to

complaints about other pilots or their routes.

Committee member and airport manager Neal Wallace said the committee could send a letter to Grant, expressing the issues presented. That would spark a conversation and produce a written record of the discussion.

A letter would give Grant the opportunity to respond and give his safety concerns over proposed take-off, landing or route changes.

Since Grant's business is licensed by the city, not the airport, if citizens want to speak on the issue they would need to address the Seaside City Council. "Let him tell us why he can, will or won't, and let him give us his reasons," Wallace said.

"I have no inclination to shut his business down," Dudley said, adding Grant's biplane is a worthwhile enterprise. "My desire is for some degree of conciliation."

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