

# Sewage spill in Cannon Beach draws \$1,800 fine

By DANI PALMER  
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — A July sewage spill in Cannon Beach has led to an \$1,800 fine levied by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

“DEQ issued this penalty because raw sewage is a significant pollutant that can harm aquatic life, contaminate drinking water and impair recreational, commercial and agricultural uses of water,” according to a department news release. “Discharging sewage poses a substantial threat to both public health and the environment.”

The city cordoned off a portion of its beach on July 20 after an equipment failure resulted in 11,000 gallons of untreated sewage spilling onto the sand in front of Wayfarer Restaurant and Lounge.

Public Works Director Dan Grassick said the internal power supply to the Gower Street pump station’s computer stopped working around 5:30 a.m. and alarms routed through the unit nev-



Dani Palmer/EO Media Group

The Cannon Beach Public Works Department posted signs to notify beachgoers of a sewage spill in July. The city was fined \$1,800 as a result.

er went off. An emergency overflow pipe, permitted by the state, sent the sewage onto the sand instead of the middle of town.

One of Cannon Beach’s Public Works’ employees walked along the beach around

7:30 a.m. and noticed the spill

The city “immediately responded,” Grassick said, manually restarting the pump and removing contaminated sand. The area was marked off, signs were put up and the Department of Environmental

Quality, along with the Oregon Emergency Response System, were notified.

After the incident, Ecola Creek Watershed Council Chair Mike Manzulli said the city should have “closed the beach until the outfall water

tested safe” and informed the public about the spill.

There weren’t any notices posted on the city’s website, Grassick said, because the spill didn’t make it to the surf.

Thomas Lossen with the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program said a public advisory would have been issued discouraging water contact had the contaminated water met the ocean. The monitoring program tests and issues advisories for marine water only.

The Ecola Creek Watershed Council has since asked the city “to go above the state requirements” and better notify the public when readings are high.

Using the E. coli test for freshwater, Public Works reopened the affected spillage area the following weekend in July after bacteria numbers dropped to a safe level. The state safety threshold is 406 organisms per 100 milliliters.

The presence of enterococci and E. coli may indicate pathogenic bacteria that can cause short-term health effects, such as diarrhea, cramps and nausea if ingested, accord-

ing to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“DEQ appreciates the city’s work to correct the violation by immediately placing public warning signs around the discharge, cleaning up contaminated beach sand and improving the pump station equipment to prevent a repeat occurrence,” DEQ’s news release said. “DEQ considered these efforts when determining the amount of the penalty.”

In Grassick’s October report to the City Council, he wrote that the September fine was the minimum “for an overflow and based on failure of the alarm’s systems at the station — an issue that was immediately corrected and is not an issue at any other lift station.”

The Gower Street pump station’s alarm system is now independent of its computer unit to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Cannon Beach was given until Thursday to pay or appeal the penalty. Grassick said the fine was paid through wastewater operating revenues.

## Quake, tsunami threat put bridges at risk

Weak bridges could pose serious problems

By DANI PALMER  
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — If an earthquake were to shake the Oregon Coast, the bridge over Ecola Creek likely wouldn’t survive, making it even harder for people in downtown Cannon Beach to survive a following tsunami.

Because of the likelihood of a bridge collapse, the city’s evacuation map guides residents and visitors south, toward midtown. It’s a longer route that could eat up valuable time, Emergency Preparedness Committee Vice Chairman Les Wierson said during a meeting in late September.

The risk has prompted the committee to take a closer look at options, such as a replacement bridge, pedestrian bridge or a bridge relocation.

OBEC Consulting Engineers conducted a bridge study in 2011, warning the bridge at Ecola Creek is “vulnerable to failure” even in a “relatively small earthquake” because of its age and construction.

“The shortest evacuation route for the north downtown area is across Ecola Creek and up Fir Street to reach elevations above predicted maximum tsunami wave heights,” the report states. “Currently, evacuation by this route can be completed in approximately five minutes by using the North Elm



Cannon Beach History Center/Submitted Photo

The bridge that crossed Elk Creek on the north side of Cannon Beach collapsed during the 1964 tsunami. The school’s gym is visible on the south side of the creek, as well as students from Cannon Beach Elementary School lined up to look at what remained of the bridge’s footings.

Avenue/First Street Bridge. However, it is unlikely that this bridge will withstand a large earthquake or tsunami.”

Karolyn Adamson, the committee chairwoman, said a bridge replacement is the best option. “That is my preference because it serves multiple purposes,” she said.

“There’s not a jam of 500 people trying to get across the pedestrian bridge.”

According to the 2011 study, replacement of the existing bridge would cost \$4.8 million while a 6-foot-wide pedestrian bridge could cost up to \$1.6 million.

A proposed pedestrian bridge over Ecola Creek could either be a way for people to quickly evacuate to higher ground as a tsunami approaches or it could be a “fatal funnel” leading to a crossing “over the jaws of death,” ac-

ording to a consultant in 2012, the time of the report’s release.

In its report, OBEC reviewed several bridge options for the creek on the north side of Cannon Beach, which would quickly lead to higher ground and away from a tsunami. Among those options was a fixed timber bridge with a 6-foot-wide deck and steel pile foundations. The estimated cost was \$1.05 million.

An Oregon State University engineering professor, who made computer models of potential evacuation routes in the city in 2011, estimated at least 1,080 people would head toward the bridge on a typical summer day after an earthquake.

At the September meeting, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Stacy Burr suggested the committee go for a predi-



Dani Palmer/EO Media Group

Cars cross the bridge over Ecola Creek coming from the north.

saster mitigation grant, sharing costs with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA would pay 75 percent of the bridge cost and the city would bear the rest. The grant is competitive among cities nationwide, Burr said, adding national politicians do not always approve project money each year.

Before applying for such a grant, the city needs to decide on which route it wants to take.

Burr advised the committee work together to offer options to City and Emergency Manager Brant Kucera, who would decide what to present to the City Council. She added that Cannon Beach would need to do another bridge study on the best option, costing up to \$30,000.

Wierson suggested taking a closer look at Washington state’s bridge standards as those are designed to withstand earthquakes. He also recommended flashing beach signs to further improve the city’s disaster preparedness. Cannon Beach is waiting to hear back now on a grant for beach kiosks.

Burr said the kiosks would offer emergency information and be designed by local artists. Preparedness talks continue this month.

## Housekeeper arrested after stealing from Astoria couple

The Daily Astorian

A woman who responded to an ad for a housekeeper on a local Facebook page has been arrested for allegedly stealing from her employers.

Astoria Police detectives arrested 25-year-old Kourtney Marie Scott of Astoria on Thursday following an investigation into multiple thefts from an Astoria couple who had hired her as a housekeeper from the Facebook page “Astoria Oregon Virtual Yard Sales.” She was arrested for first-degree theft, but could face a laundry list of other possible charges including burglary, unlawful entry into a motor vehicle and second-degree theft.

According to police, the Astoria couple who hired Scott say they had noticed cash, jewelry, clothing and electronic items missing from their home and cars. They helped detectives conduct surveillance at their home on Thursday. During that time, Detective Thomas Litwin watched as Scott broke into the victims’ car to take money. Scott was then arrested.

Detectives have been able to recover some of the other stolen items including some of the jewelry which had been sold to a local jewelry shop. However, other jewelry, sold to a different local shop, had reportedly already been melted down.

“If anyone else has employed Scott in this capac-



Kourtney Marie Scott

ity and they believe things are missing from their residence, we would encourage them to contact our detectives,” Astoria Deputy Police Chief Eric Halverson said in a statement.

Police warned about hiring people from sites like the Facebook page.

One Facebook user posted a news story about Scott’s arrest to warn others on the “Astoria Oregon Virtual Yard Sales” page. Others believe Scott has been turning around and selling some of the stolen items on the same page.

The page, and others like it including “GoonieVille Buy & Sell,” allow locals to offer goods and services for sale, though most pages have an informal policy that the pages should only be used to sell or try to find items. However, people routinely use the pages to post jobs and services, advertise their businesses and also to share information about missing pets, which has, in some cases, helped owners quickly recover their animals.

## Longtime county Circuit Court judge to retire

Nelson will not seek re-election next year

The Daily Astorian

Judge Philip Nelson, the presiding judge of Clatsop County Circuit Court and the county’s longest-serving elected official, will retire when his term expires next year.

Nelson’s decision not to seek re-election will create an open seat on the bench that will likely attract interest from prosecutors and private attorneys.

“Given our current makeup here in Clatsop County, I would think that there is a distinct pos-



Judge Philip Nelson

sibility that there will be at least somebody in the DA’s (District Attorney’s) office who would be interested as well as private attorneys,” said Lawrence Popkin, a Seaside attorney and president of the Clatsop County Bar Association.

Nelson, who has a bachelor’s degree from Willamette University and a law degree from the University of Oregon, was a private attorney for 16 years before he was first elected

to the district court in 1992. He ran unopposed for re-election to his latest six-year term in 2010.

Nelson suffered a heart attack in July and returned to the bench in late September.

The judge, through the Trial Court Administrator’s office, declined to comment Monday about his retirement.

Judge Paula Brownhill and Judge Cindee Matyas are the other two judges on the Clatsop County Circuit Court.

**Finnish Brotherhood Auxiliary**  
All-You-Can-Eat  
**Laksloda Luncheon**  
\$15.00/person  
(Scalloped Potatoes with Salt Salmon)  
Saturday, Oct. 17 • NOON  
SUOMI HALL • 244 W. MARINE DR. • ASTORIA  
Public cordially invited

**WANTED**  
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber  
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA  
Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500

**CONCEAL CARRY PERMIT CLASS**  
Oregon - Utah  
Valid 35 States  
October 23<sup>rd</sup>  
1PM or 6PM  
Best Western: 555 Hamburg Ave, Astoria  
OR/Utah—valid in WA \$80 or Oregon only \$45  
www.FirearmTrainingNW.com | FirearmTrainingNW@gmail.com  
360-921-2071

Visit us online at  
[www.DailyAstorian.com](http://www.DailyAstorian.com)

Now thru October 31st  
Schedule a  
**Manicure & Pedicure**  
Get **\$20 OFF!**  
\$85 value priced at \$65

Schedule a **Pedicure**  
Get **\$10 OFF!**  
\$50 value priced at \$40

**PSH**  
SALON & SPA  
1370 Commercial Street, Astoria  
Call Jeanne at 503-791-8373 or 503-325-7671