

Plants: The park is asking people to watch 10 plant species

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monitors, Fernandez showed how the start of spring has been coming earlier across the country than in centuries before.

"All of this is problematic because it's causing mismatches between pollinators, plants, insects," she said.

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park has partnered with San Juan Island National Historical Park to study the impacts of climate change.

At San Juan Island, Fernandez and others are studying the endangered island marble butterfly. Only about 100 of the butterflies are left on the island. Researchers are

finding that when the butterfly larva comes out of its egg, it is expecting to eat a certain flower. However, the flower is blooming earlier than before, making it difficult for the butterflies to eat.

"How many are we losing that could potentially survive?" Fernandez said.

Project Budburst

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park is inviting the public to help monitor and report plant activity at the park and around Clatsop County. Data collected will help the park learn how plants are responding to changes in the environment.

Specifically, the park is asking people to keep watch

on 10 plant species. The species include red alder, Oregon crabapple, Sitka spruce, edible thistle, salal, evergreen huckleberry, salmonberry, wapato, Pacific silverweed and skunk cabbage.

Carla Cole, natural resource program manager at the park, said the 10 plants are culturally and naturally significant to the park. Lewis and Clark described and journaled about the same plants two centuries ago.

Tracking plants at the park is part of a national effort called Project Budburst. The project encourages people to get outside and observe how plants change with the seasons. Observations can be shared online

at www.budburst.org, where the data will become a part of an ecological record.

"Project Budburst is a wonderful way to carry on the tradition of scientific observation and discovery handed down to us by America's first great naturalists, Lewis and Clark," Cole said. "It is exciting that we will be observing the same plants they recorded for the first time here over 200 years ago in their elkskin journals, but we will be using smartphones and the Internet."

Bioblitz 2016

Later this spring, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park plans to, again, call on citizen scientists for Bioblitz

2016, a national event where volunteers at various national parks work together to identify as many species of plants and animals as possible.

Over two days on May 20 and May 21, local volunteers and students will go out around Netul Landing and identify every living thing they come across, with a focus on pollinators such as birds, bats, insects and plants. Lewis and Clark National Historical Park previously hosted a BioBlitz event in 2012 out in the Clatsop Plains.

A Jumbotron will be set up at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., during the two-day BioBlitz to showcase each national park's

findings. What is found in Astoria may be broadcast on the Jumbotron at the nation's capital.

Collecting the data of plants and other species is an initial step in understanding the long-term changes to the environment. It's a piece of the puzzle to know how climate change is occurring, Cole said.

Another goal of the Project Budburst and Bioblitz is simply to get people outside and in their national parks.

"The mission is to get people outdoors," Fernandez said. "We want to connect you to a place. It doesn't matter if it's a national park or if it's a park down the street or in your backyard."



Former commercial fisherman and current Harvard medical student Matthew Tarabochia on vacation in New York City in 2015. He and his brother won a case against the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for an illegal traffic stop in 2007.

Northwest News Network

Lawsuit: Department of Fish and Wildlife denies it targeted the Tarabochia family

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old twins Alex and Bryan. Outside the truck were several officers from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife. They demanded that the Tarabochias get out of the vehicle. The family refused to budge until the county sheriff or undersheriff showed up.

This roadside standoff followed a morning of fishing on the Columbia. The Tarabochias had a load of salmon the department wanted to inspect. The family had led officers on a slow-speed chase before they were finally boxed in.

Legal fish, illegal stop

These officers and the Tarabochias knew each other well. There was a lot of history and bad blood between them. Now, it was coming to a head. The standoff lasted more than 13 minutes. At one point in the video, a Fish and Wildlife captain is seen pulling out a collapsible baton. He said he'd break the window if they didn't get out.

It ended when the undersheriff arrived — someone the Tarabochias trusted. They unlocked the doors to the truck and the officers quickly detained the family.

Driver Matthew Tarabochia and his father, Joe, were jailed for resisting arrest and obstruction. Those charges were later dismissed. The fish the Tarabochias were

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Steve Crown

current chief of The Department of Fish and Wildlife's law enforcement division

transporting that day were all legal.

In 2010, the Tarabochias filed a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the traffic stop. The family argued the Fish and Wildlife officers had no right to pull them over to do a fish check without reason to believe a crime had been committed. They lost in U.S. District Court, but successfully appealed to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

Matthew Tarabochia said the appellate decision on their Fourth Amendment claim was vindicating especially after what the family calls a "campaign of harassment" by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"No one believes you when you say the police did something unfair to you," Tarabochia said. "When you say that, people automatically assume you that did something wrong and you're just trying to cover it up."

'They're going to be inspected'

The Department of Fish

and Wildlife denies it targeted the Tarabochias. Steve Crown, the current chief of the agency's law enforcement division, said regular contact with fish police is part and parcel of being a commercial fisherman.

"It is common knowledge amongst commercial fishermen that they're going to be inspected," Crown said. "There's high dollars, high stakes. When you're engaged in commercial fishing practices you can have huge impacts on a particular species of fish and they know that."

But Crown said as a result of this case, his officers have ended a longstanding practice of pulling vehicles over on the road for fish checks.

"We've told our officers, 'Hey, don't make those kinds of traffic stops unless you have reasonable suspicion to do so,'" Crown said.

Officers can still do those checks on the water and at the landing area. The Tarabochias recently settled their lawsuit against the agency for \$130,000. In addition to

the payment, Fish and Wildlife agreed to acknowledge it violated Matthew and Alex Tarabochia's rights — for technical reasons they were the only family members named in the appeal to the 9th Circuit.

'My family's name is kind of tarnished'

Many years have passed since that roadside standoff in Wahkiakum County. The Fish and Wildlife captain in the video is now a deputy chief. The Tarabochia family is no longer in the fishing business. The boys moved away. Alex Tarabochia doesn't think he'll come back.

"I'm not sure I would go home," he said. "I feel to some extent like my name and my family's name is kind of tarnished and sort of like there's a stigma around it to where I'm not sure that I would ever have kind of an even playing field."

Even though he would be coming home as a doctor. Alex Tarabochia is attending medical school at Dartmouth in New Hampshire as a rural health scholar. Matthew Tarabochia also is in med school — at Harvard.

Alex Tarabochia said he always knew he would go into medicine. But Matthew Tarabochia said what happened between his family and the authorities on the Columbia River influenced his decision to leave the fishing business behind.

Fergus: 'It's just kind of fun to be someone I'm not'

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regular in the North Coast theater scene, most recently appearing in "Once Upon a Mattress" at the Coaster Theatre in Cannon Beach, in which her son was in the ensemble.

Fergus, 13, has appeared at the Coaster and with the Missoula Children's Theatre, making his debut as Little Jake in "Annie Get Your Gun," then playing Tiny Tim in "Scrooge, The Musical" and Chip in "Disney's Beauty and the Beast," which his mother directed.

"I've never pushed him to be in a show," said Lisa Fergus. "He chooses whether to be involved and prepares on his own for auditions."

"And I try to instill in him the classic, 'no small parts, only small actors,' and that the way he acts with his cast and crew is just as important as the performance he gives on stage."

Fergus recalls his debut with fondness.

"When they did 'Annie Get Your Gun,' my mom asked me if I wanted to be in it. I said OK," he said. "I just kind of checked in and figured out a passion. I love acting. It's just kind of fun to be someone I'm not."

He's eloquent about why he does it, too. "Applause — that's reward enough," he said. "If I got paid, it would be a dream job."

His ability to memorize lines continues to surprise his mother. "He does not have to study them — lines come naturally, very early on in the rehearsal process," she said. "He doesn't usually write anything down, but simply commits everything to memory."

Fergus shrugs off his ability. "It just comes to me. I don't know how," he said. "I just remember the line."

"Waiting for Godot," which spawned the "theater of the absurd" movement, was famously described by a newspaper critic as a play in which "nothing happens — twice." It was written by Irish playwright Samuel Beckett and first staged in Paris in 1953 as mainland Europe rebuilt after World War II.

The director, Karen Bain, studied the script at the Directors Lab West, an invitational workshop in Los Angeles last spring. For the Astoria production, which opens Friday, she cast familiar North Coast actors William Ham and Slab Slabinski as the tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, with Bill Honl as a strange visitor, Pozzo.



Submitted Photo

Parker Fergus

IF YOU GO

Partners for the PAC will stage a new Astoria production of Samuel Beckett's tragi-comedy "Waiting for Godot" at the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center at 16th Street and Franklin Avenue in Astoria 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, and 7 p.m. Feb. 5 and 6. Tickets are \$15, available at the door.

"I was looking for a young boy to play the two boys in the play, who are traditionally played by one actor," she said.

"Parker was recommended to me by several people," Bain added, noting the youngster's experience acting at the Coaster Theatre.

"From the beginning, Parker was treated as an equal member of the ensemble, with the same expectations and respect. His ideas during the exploration of the script were excellent."

When older, Fergus would like to sing the role of Javert, the villain, in "Les Miserables." For Christmas, his parents gave him "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare."

"I am working my way through it," he said, with a grin, noting that "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" are his favorites ... with his eye on the male lead roles.

Bain, the director, is impressed with his talent. "Parker is a young man I would be happy to work with again," she said.

"Waiting for Godot" is funded, in part, by a grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust, distributed through the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition.

— Patrick Webb

Managing Editor's note: The writer will appear in the mute role of "Lucky" in the Astoria production of "Waiting for Godot."

Balzer: He is asking for more than \$525,000 in damages and his reinstatement

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Balzer, who alleges breach of contract, wrongful discharge and defamation, is asking for more than \$525,000 in damages and his reinstatement as fire chief.

An attorney representing the fire district's board could not be reached for comment

about the lawsuit, which was filed in Clatsop County Circuit Court in December.

Balzer's firing has caused an uproar in Cannon Beach.

Residents have defended the former chief and complained about the way Balzer was treated by fire district directors, who locked him out

of his office the morning after his dismissal.

Garry Smith, a board director, described the firing as "strictly business, not personal," and other directors questioned Balzer's administrative skills.

Susan Neuwirth, a Cannon Beach resident, has filed a recall petition to remove three of

the board's five directors: President Sharon Clyde, Smith and Linda Beck-Sweeney.

Jim Stearns, of Hermiston, is serving as interim fire chief. The fire district board hopes to hire a new chief by June.

According to Balzer's lawsuit, board directors conducted a performance evaluation in the first quarter of last year

that was very critical of Balzer's work.

Balzer claimed directors, in particular, chastised him for allowing his wife to criticize board directors on social media and other comments.

Balzer said the board set goals for him to accomplish by November that were "impossible to obtain" within that time

frame and then "intentionally created a hostile work environment" before his firing.

Balzer said he "suffered irreparable injury to his business and personal reputation, and will have serious difficulty finding substitute employment, particularly in the small coastal community in which he resides."