



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

In 2005, an older tide gate at Vera Slough near the Port of Astoria's Astoria Regional Airport was replaced with a newer model that has created 16 additional acres of wetland — and increased the average water level entering the airport by 2 feet.

'Fish stick' species returns

Warm ocean possible culprit in 2015 hake collapse

EO Media Group

ILWACO, Wash. — Warmer ocean water may be to blame for a troubling harvest decline last fall in one of the North Pacific's most important commercial fisheries, federal scientists report.

Pacific hake, also known as whiting, became scarce in Washington and Oregon waters last fall. This winter, they were "much farther offshore than the fish usually occur in summer and fall," NOAA chief scientist Sandy Parker-Stetter wrote in a February blog.

Hake are an important part of the nation's seafood diet, but aren't well known by consumers. According to NOAA Fisheries, the species is processed into fish sticks, hake filets, surimi (imitation crab), fish meal and fish oil. NOAA notes, "You've probably eaten hake without knowing it!" They also play an important part in the Lower Columbia economy, at times comprising the largest catch by poundage landed at local docks.

See WHITING, Page 12A

High water may dampen airport work

Rising water from wetlands could put airport at risk

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — A decade ago, the Port of Astoria worked with the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce to expand the wetlands in Vera Slough, a tidal inlet, into the northwest corner of the Astoria Regional Airport from Youngs Bay.

The plan, meant to offset the impact of repairs at Pier 1, worked as designed and created an additional 16 acres of wetlands just off the Airport Dike Trail, raising the average level of water entering the airport by 2 feet.

Now the Port, as it prepares to spend \$5 million in state and federal funding on a runway overhaul, has to figure out whether the improved aquatic environment could be endangering the airport.

The Port has dealt with cracks in the cement slabs on the airport's tarmac, uneven settling and depressions where the tarmac connects to vertical drains and buildings. Port commissioners have voiced concern that the water movement in and out of the airport could be ruining the foundation of the tarmac, just as the agency is investing millions in government grants this summer into a runway rehab.

The Port is contracting a hydrologist to determine how water moves in and out of the airport.

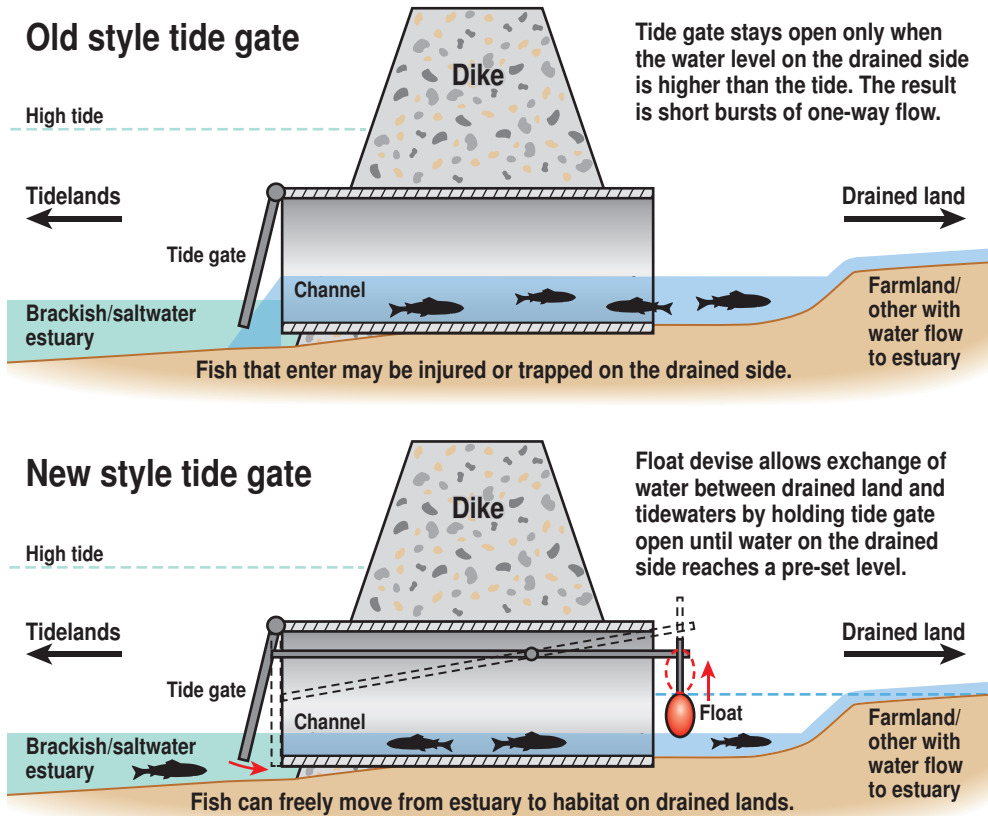
"The big takeaway in my mind is that there's a big change in the drainage characteristics of the airport about 10 years ago," Airport Manager Gary Kobes said.

Kobes said the information gathered by a hydrologist will be given to a geotechnical specialist to determine what effect, if any, the Vera Slough project has had on the tarmac. The director of CREST, Denise Löffman, will present to the Port Commission on Vera Slough at its meeting Tuesday.

See AIRPORT, Page 12A

Improved tide gate is fish friendly

In 2005, the Port of Astoria replaced an older tide gate with a newer type to ease fish passage, as part of a wetland mitigation project.



Source: NOAA

Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

'The big takeaway in my mind is that there's a big change in the drainage characteristics of the airport about 10 years ago.'

Gary Kobes
Astoria Regional Airport manager

Barnett leaves Seaside Police

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Steve Barnett, a veteran police officer who ran unsuccessfully for county sheriff in 2012, is no longer with the Seaside Police Department.

City Manager Mark Winstanley said Barnett has chosen to retire.

Winstanley said there was no explanation for the sudden move, which was effective Wednesday.

Sean Riddell, a Portland-based attorney for Barnett, declined to comment and said Barnett had signed a "nondisparagement request."

When Seaside Police Chief Dave Ham promoted Barnett to lieutenant last year, he pointed to Barnett's 40 years of law enforcement experience, including the past 32 years

See BARNETT, Page 12A



Steve Barnett

A virtual tour of Fort to Sea? Just Google it

Online treks are possible on trail

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Anyone in the world with access to the Internet can experience the Fort to Sea Trail.

Google Maps, along with the nonprofit Conservation Fund, partnered to create a virtual tour of the 6.5-mile trail that extends from Fort Clatsop to Sunset Beach.

Ann Simonelli, a spokeswoman for the Conservation Fund, said the Arlington, Virginia-based nonprofit partnered with Google Maps last year to capture more than six locations.

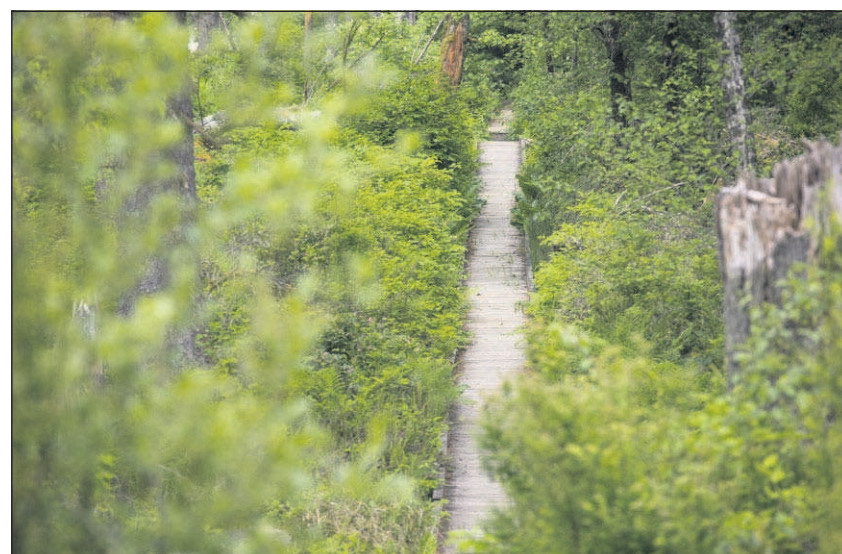
This year, she said, the focus was

TAKE THE TOUR
<http://bit.ly/1UeOr4r>

on historic American sites.

In addition to the Fort to Sea Trail, virtual tours have been created for Gettysburg National Military Park and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Pennsylvania. The many documented places are lands the Conservation Fund helps to protect.

"Making Street View imagery of these iconic and historic places available to people all over the world to explore and enjoy is a true honor," Deanna Yick, Google Maps Street View program manager, said in a news



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

See TRAIL, Page 4A

Virtual tours are now possible on the Fort to Sea Trail.

