

Oregon LNG withdraws Warrenton project

Opponents react with shock, relief

By ERICK BENGEL and DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — After a decade of fighting Oregon LNG's push to build a \$6 billion terminal and pipeline project on the Skipanon Penin-

sula, Cheryl Johnson had no idea if an end was in sight.

"I hoped that I would see it in my lifetime, but I didn't know," said Johnson, the 65-year-old co-chairwoman of Columbia Pacific Common Sense.

The fight came to an abrupt end Friday, when Oregon LNG informed city and state officials that the company will withdraw the proposed liquefied natural gas development.

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A timeline tracking Oregon LNG is on **Page 5A**

The move ended a dozen years of acrimony over a controversial project that galvanized residents to protect the Columbia River and caused political upheaval in Clatsop County. Warrenton Mayor Mark Kujala

said he was told by a company representative that Leucadia National Corp., the New York-based holding company behind the project, was no longer willing to bankroll the effort.

Skip Urling, the city's community development director, said he was told Oregon LNG would not proceed with an appeal of a city hearings officer's decision to deny the terminal. The hearings officer had approved the pipeline portion of the project.

A hearing on Oregon LNG's appeal was scheduled before the City Commission for early May. But Urling said he was informed that "they're done. They're not going to fight the hearings officer's position."

Richard Glick, a Portland attorney representing the company, advised the state Department of Environmental Quality in an email Friday afternoon

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Records abound at Daily A meet

Astoria rewrites the books with six top wins

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Star-studded, record-setting, perfect weather ... what more could you ask for in a track meet?

The 2016 Daily Astorian Invitational was all of the above and a little bit more Saturday at Seaside High School, where the Gulls played the perfect host for this year's annual event, now in its 28th year.

You want stars?

Athletes from the state track champion Astoria girls and the state cross country champion Seaside boys made the meet a virtual "Who's Who" of Oregon track and field at the 4A level.

Meet records?

Once again, the Astoria girls stole the show. Actually, the Lady Fish are the show.

Astoria athletes set SIX new meet records (and narrowly missed a seventh), as the Lady Fishermen continue to rewrite the books on their way to a special season.

The local schools all had a chance to strut their best stuff. Ilwaco sprinters, Warrenton hurdlers, Seaside boys distance runners, the Astoria girls in everything ...

All in all, a fun day of track and field on the North Coast.

The records, meanwhile, were coming fast and furious.

On the track, Astoria sophomore Kaylee Mitchell ran the meet's first sub-5 minute 1,500 meters, running 4:58.91 to break the mark of 5:03.37, held by Astoria's Katie Choate.

Astoria's 400-meter relay quartet of Gracie Cummings, Victoria Kee, Mitchell and Natalie Cummings had the best time of 50.96, just missing the 50.91 meet record.

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Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

TOP: Astoria's Darian Hageman reacts after breaking the Astoria school record during the high jump event at the Daily Astorian Invitational Track Meet at Seaside High School on Saturday. ABOVE: Astoria's Kaylee Mitchell wins the girls 1500-meter race during the Daily Astorian Invitational Track Meet at Seaside High School on Saturday. More photos at DailyAstorian.com

Scientists worry as sardines collapse

Possible ripple in ecosystem for predator species

By KELLY HOUSE
The Oregonian

Nearly a year into a West Coast sardine fishing ban enacted to protect the collapsing population, the fish formerly worth more than \$8 million to Oregon's economy have shown no signs of a comeback.

New federal research indicates numbers of the small, silvery, schooling fish have plummeted further than before the fishing moratorium, dashing any hope of lifting it in 2016.

With the current sardine population hovering at 7 percent of its 2007 peak, fishermen now say they expect to wait a decade or more to revive the fishery.

"I don't want to take a pessimistic view, but I would think we'll be shut down until 2030," said Ryan Kapp, a Bellingham, Washington, fisherman who advises the Pacific Fishery Management Council on sardines and other fish.

Sardines aren't struggling in isolation. Other fish near the bottom of the marine food web, such as anchovies and herring, are also down. The shortage of sustenance is rippling upward to create crises for predator species from seals to seabirds.

Researchers can't tell exactly what's driving the die-off, nor how long it will last. Some say the crash can be attributed to cyclical boom-and-bust population dynamics sardines have always exhibited.

Others argue overfishing played a role, driving sardine populations down too far and too fast to blame it on a natural population flux. Then there's the unavoidable presence of the "warm blob," a lingering mass of overheated water that for more than two years has wreaked havoc on sea life off the Pacific coast.

"Those ocean life patterns are just not working the way they have in the past," said Michael Milstein, a spokesman for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the federal agency that tracks sardine numbers. "There's a feeling that a lot of this is environmentally driven."

Ripples in the food chain

The Pacific fishery council's rules call for a fishery shutdown if the total weight of adult sardines falls below 150,000 metric tons. When the population fell below that threshold last spring, council members scrambled to enact a midseason shutdown.

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Astoria's well-traveled second baseman

Samboy Tuimato isn't the first baseball player to travel a different road to play for the Astoria Fishermen.

Players past and present have come from Ilwaco, Knappa, Naselle, etc. — but it's safe to say that Tuimato did (officially) take the longest road to get here.

And since arriving two years ago from Tillamook, by way of Hawaii and Portland, he's lovin' life as a Fisherman.

"I like it," Tuimato said. "It's definitely a lot different from Tillamook. When it comes to expectations and what we are supposed to be producing, it's way higher here. Especially with coach (Dave) Gasser. He doesn't settle for anything but your best."

EVERYDAY people

A junior at Astoria, Tuimato is in his second year at the high school, after transferring from Tillamook following his freshman year.

He was born in Portland, but spent the first few years of his life in Hawaii before returning to the mainland. He has family from Samoa and Hawaii, to California and Utah.

"My dad is from American Samoa, a small village called Alao, and my mom grew up in Oahu," Tuimato said.

And from Day 1, sports have always been a big part of his life.

Tuimato is currently Astoria's starting second baseman in baseball, batting sixth on your scorecard.

While he has seven hits in 24 at bats so far (.292), Tuimato has an on-base/plus slugging percentage of .875, one of the highest on the team. But his one special trait or area of expertise seems to be getting hit by pitches.

"Mr. HBP," a.k.a. "Booskee" and "Lil Sammie" on his Facebook page — Tuimato has been hit by pitch a team-high four times so far this season (seems like more), after he was plunked 11 times last year to lead the team.

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Daily Astorian/File Photo

Samboy Tuimato was a volunteer coach in last summer's Jordan Poyer Football Camp.

