

# Pond spray: Pond was 'incredibly beautiful, now it's just incredibly green'

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invasive weeds, including the parrotfeather that was taking over the pond.

Bloom is upset that she wasn't notified. She thinks the herbicide may have killed some trees and weakened other plants on her lot and nearby city property. She is worried about potential health risks for herself, renters, and wildlife that visit the pond. Bloom said she feels "a crime has been committed," but officials from city of Ilwaco and Washington Department of Agriculture say the city didn't do anything wrong when it applied the herbicide.

Bloom's not satisfied. She is grappling with questions that come up frequently in a community where people love living in close proximity to nature: When a natural feature like a pond stretches across both public and private property, who gets to decide how to manage it? And what, if anything, can residents do when landowners decide to make legal, but controversial decisions about well-loved scenic spots?

These questions have come up several other times in the last year, in regards to a beloved stand of trees in Klipsan that the landowners harvested, aging stands of spruce trees on county-owned properties, debris in a Chinook trailer park that blocks neighbors' view of Baker Bay and oyster-growers' proposal to spray the Willapa Bay.

## Pond memories

In 2005, Bloom and her husband bought the single-wide manufactured home, along with a connected lot that houses a garage. The pond overlaps both plots.

"It was such a cute little place," Bloom recalled in late August.

Workers, retirees and Coast Guard families occupy many of Vandalia's low-slung, modest homes, which are wedged between the town's rural airport and the Wallacut River.

Despite the small size and modest construction, Bloom said the tree-lined pond and mature alders gave the Scarborough Lane home a park-like feel and provided a sense of privacy to the double-lot.

Not long after moving in, Bloom noticed that an invasive weed called parrotfeather was taking over the pond. Native to the Amazon River, parrotfeather most likely started spreading around the Western U.S. after it was introduced to ponds and



David Plechl/EO Media Group

**Barbara Bloom said she used several hand methods to control weeds for five years in the pond. She holds two photos from 2009 that show the pond after her weeding and before her health stopped her from keeping up with the work.**

aquariums several decades ago.

Bloom asked the city and others for advice. They all suggested applying an herbicide, but Bloom resisted. She took it upon herself to weed the pond without the use of what she calls, "poison."

Bloom fashioned a series of rakes and ropes that she attached to her pickup truck. She waded into the tangled weeds and sometimes used a paddleboat to access hard-to-reach spots. She regularly scooped out a green film of duckweed with a fine fish net. The city provided her with a site near the airport to dump the piles of parrotfeather she pulled, but Bloom found that the weed, once out of the water, quickly decomposed. Four-foot mounds of the stuff would reduce to a black compost within a matter of months, she said.

"It was a Herculean job," she said. "I did it for five years."

2009 was the last time she cleaned it. Pictures from the time show a clear and mostly weed-free pond. In one image, Bloom and her friend goof around in a small boat as her husband keeps hold of an attached line, "just in case." Within a year of the photo, Bloom's husband had died, and her own health started to decline.

In 2010, she purchased a home in Long Beach, and decided to rent the Scarborough Lane home. But without Bloom's constant weeding, the parrotfeather grew and grew.

The pond "was just incredibly beautiful, now it's just incredibly green," Bloom said. "This is what it does if you don't keep up after it."

## Poison in the pond

The city of Ilwaco maintains a series of ponds and "greenbelts" within the neighborhood, many of which are often used as common spaces by neighbors.

The ponds play a function in water table management within the low-lying neighborhood.

Most of the pond is on Bloom's two lots, but one long bank, now lined with small dead trees, falls within the city greenbelt.

"All the trees are dead surrounding the pond," Bloom said. A few are on her property. "We've got proof of overapplication here."

Bloom, who is a certified master gardener, claims, "they didn't even kill the weed that they wanted to."

Concerned that the herbicide could be sickening the alders that tower over the house, Bloom called a forester friend, who saw, "stress cones" on the alders.

"When a tree is distressed, it propagates itself that way," Bloom explained.

Bloom said she used to delight at the dragonflies, frogs, ducks and occasional blue heron that would frequent the little pond. Now when she looks at the pond, she feels a sense of dread and disgust.

She has made numerous calls to the city and other agencies, but none of those calls have been very fruitful, she said. Most recently, she submitted a letter of complaint with the Washington Department of Ecology.

## Dog almost drowns

Unbeknownst to Bloom, her tenant, who has since moved out, had asked the city to do something about the out-of-control parrotfeather in the pond last June.

Dave McKee, of the city's Public Works Department, visited the pond and took some pictures. He forwarded the images to the city and Pacific County Vegetation Management, the city's contractor for all spray jobs. McKee said they con-

cluded it was invasive and "they needed to get rid of it."

The city checked a few other ponds too, but ultimately only sprayed the one. McKee recalled posting notices at the site days before it was sprayed.

"One of (the ponds) was just completely taken over with (weeds). Somebody called because they almost lost their dog. The dog jumped in and almost drowned," McKee said.

Beller, Ilwaco's city clerk, said the tenant had offered to pull the weeds himself. Because the city was already spraying in Black Lake for Elo-dea, city staff thought it made sense to spray the little pond in Vandalia, too.

She said the application of herbicide to parrotfeather in the pond would loosen the roots, so that someone could pull the weeds by hand later. Beller wasn't sure if that ever happened.

Nevertheless, she said the city and the contracted herbicide applicator did everything right, including, notifying the public and contacting the Department of Ecology prior to spraying. Beller said it was unlikely the herbicide damaged any trees.

"It has absolutely zero effect on whatever she thinks is happening to the trees right now," Beller said.

She said the ponds are within the city right-of-way and are there for the purpose of alleviating the high water table.

According to Beller, problems can arise when a private landowner decides to maintain a city right-of-way without the cooperation of the city.

"(Bloom) is a private landowner that, in her mind, has taken over ownership of a city right-of-way, which is illegal and cannot be done, and should not be done," Beller said.

## Spray protocol

A Washington Department of Agriculture investigator, Valerie Davis, determined that city staff posted a notification at the site, the post office and city hall and mailed notices to neighbors. But because of the pond's small size, a special permit and the notification were not required.

"They went above and beyond what they were required to do," Davis said of Ilwaco officials.

Davis concluded Pacific County Vegetation Management complied with the requirements of their aquatic herbicide application permit. She doubts the herbicide damaged any foliage on land, and pointed out that prolonged dry weather followed by heavy winter rains might have caused the problems Bloom observed.

"It doesn't seem likely that a 1-percent solution would kill the trees," Davis said.

Davis said Bloom might not have received notification because she wasn't living there at the time.

## Parrotfeather vs 'Polaris'

According to Washington State Department of Ecology documents, parrotfeather is particularly bad in Wahkiakum, Pacific and Cowlitz counties, where it accumulates in freshwater lakes, ponds, and clogs up drainage ditches.

Kim Patten, a research scientist with Washington State University extension, said governments spend millions of dollars a year controlling aquatic weeds in thousands of miles of irrigation canals and ditches in the Columbia River basin. Sometimes it can be mechanically controlled, other times spraying the weeds is necessary, he said. But no matter what you do, "the weeds always win, and they always return."

Patten said multiple applications are almost always necessary to contain the weed.

"I've seen it thicken enough that you can walk on it," Patten said. "And I have walked on it."

He said the herbicide Polaris, the one used in the Vandalia pond, contains an active ingredient called Imazapyr that is particularly effective at combating parrotfeather and other noxious weeds. It has been one of very few herbicides that has effectively controlled spartina growth in the Willapa Bay, he said.

"It's basically the only reason we have Willapa Bay, is because of the Imazapyr," Patten said.

He said the chemical is quite safe for both plants and animals.

"You could take a goldfish and put it in pure Imazapyr and it would be fine," he said.

Nevertheless, especially when combined with a surfactant that helps the herbicide stick to foliage, it can cause damage to nontarget plants. He said it can linger in soil and can readily be taken up by the roots of plants. Species like alders can be sensitive, he said.

## Whose pond is it?

Bloom said she feels she has every right to manage the weed how she sees fit, at least in the part of the pond that overlaps her two lots. She has sought advice on managing the weed and containing the damage she perceives the spraying has caused trees around the pond from several agencies. Recently, she contacted the Senior Assistance Center and asked to talk to a lawyer. Her name was placed on a waiting list, she said.

After learning Ilwaco officials consider it a city pond, for the enjoyment of all residents, and the ownership of none. Bloom said, "If that's a city pond, then I wonder why I'm paying taxes on it."

Bloom is worried potential renters will have problems with the pond. She recently spoke with a woman that wanted to rent the place, but Bloom worried the woman's 4-year-old might wade into the pond and get tangled in the parrotfeather.

For now, Bloom said she'll continue to weed her part of the pond one way or another, but she said she needs help to maintain the entire pond. She said other neighbors are unhappy that they often do more to maintain the city right-of-way than the city itself.

Bloom said if it was just the city's property that was affected, she wouldn't have had such a problem with what happened. "But it's my property too — and not a word!"

"A community pond is what I want," Bloom said. "Put out a lawn chair, feed the ducks, enjoy the wildlife. That's what I want."

Now that the pond is green and overrun with parrotfeather and duckweed again, Beller said she may have a city crew pull the parrotfeather from the pond by hand. In the future, she promised to notify Bloom personally with any plans to weed or treat the pond.

"I completely understand where she's coming from," Beller said. "I just don't know how else we could have alerted her and taken care of these concerns."

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

# TV LISTINGS

Evening listings THURSDAY

THURSDAY EVENING												SEPTEMBER 1	
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
2	KATU	(2) KATU News at 6		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	BattleBots (N)		BattleBots (N)		Match Game		KATU News at 11	(35) Jimmy Kimmel
3	KOMO	(4) KOMO 4 News		Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	BattleBots (N)		BattleBots (N)		Match Game		KOMO 4 News	(35) Jimmy Kimmel
4	KING	(5) NBC Nightly News	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	Running Wild "Julianne Hough"		American Ninja Warrior "National Finals Week 1"				KING 5 News	(35) Tonight Show
6	KOIN	(7) KOIN 6 News at 6	CBS Evening News	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Big Bang Theory   Life in Pieces		Big Brother (N)		Code Black "Diagnosis of Exclusion"		KOIN 6 News @ 11	(35) S. Colbert
7	KIRO	(7) KIRO 7 News	CBS Evening News	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Big Bang Theory   Life in Pieces		Big Brother (N)		Code Black "Diagnosis of Exclusion"		KIRO News	(35) S. Colbert
8	KGW	(3) KGW News at 6:00 p.m.		Live at Seven	Inside Edition	Running Wild "Julianne Hough"		American Ninja Warrior "National Finals Week 1"				KGW News at 11	(35) Tonight Show
9	KRCW	(3) Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Modern Family	Modern Family	DC's Legends of Tomorrow "Destiny"		Beauty and the Beast "The Getaway"		KGW News at 10	(35) Two 1/2 Men	(05) Two 1/2 Men	(35) King of Hill
10	KOPB	(10) In the Americas	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour		Carole King and James Taylor Live at the Troubadour		Oregon Revealed 2 "An Oregon Field Guide Special 2"					Great Performances
12	KPTV	(12) 6 O'Clock News	Pre-game	NFL Football Pre-season Seattle Seahawks at Oakland Raiders Site: Oakland Alameda Coliseum -- Oakland, Calif. (L)				Post-game		10 O'Clock News		11 O'Clock News	(35) Rosewood
13	KPDx	(13) Mike & Molly	Seahawks	NFL Football Pre-season Seattle Seahawks at Oakland Raiders Site: Oakland Alameda Coliseum -- Oakland, Calif. (L)				Post-game		The Mentalist "Red Gold"		The Mentalist "Red Queen"	
14	KCPQ	(13) Gameday	Seahawks	NFL Football Pre-season Seattle Seahawks at Oakland Raiders Site: Oakland Alameda Coliseum -- Oakland, Calif. (L)				Post-game		Gameday		Q13 News	Rosewood
20	TBS	(20) Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	2 Broke Girls	2 Broke Girls	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends	Friends
22	KZJL	(22) Two and a Half	Two and a Half	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends	Friends
29	ESPN	(29) (5:00) NCAA Football South Carolina at Vanderbilt (L)				SportsCenter		SportsCenter		SportsCenter		SportsCenter	
30	ESPN2	(30) (4:00) ITF Tennis U.S. Open (L)				NFL Live		Baseball Tonight (L)		Jalen & Jacoby (N)	30 for 30 "Trojan War"		
31	NICK	(31) ALVINNN!!!	Henry Danger	Henry Danger	The Thundermans	*** Rio ("11, Animated) Voices of Anne Hathaway, George Lopez, Jesse Eisenberg		Full House		Full House		Friends	Friends
32	DISN	(32) Liv and Maddie	K.C. Undercover	Girl Meets World	Stuck in Middle	Zapped (2014, Fantasy) Chanelle Peloso, Zendaya.	(45) K.C. Underc.	(10) Liv Maddie	(35) Liv Maddie	Cheer "Romance and Retribution"		Bunk'd	Stuck in Middle
34	FAM	(34) (15) *** Dirty Dancing (1987, Dance)	Jennifer Grey, Jerry Orbach, Patrick Swayze.					Pretty Little Liars "The Darkest Knight"		Cheer "Romance and Retribution"		The 700 Club	
35	FAM	(35) (5:00) Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hu...	(10) ** Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter ("12) Rufus Sewell, Benjamin Walker.					(15) FXM Presents *** 47 Ronin (2013 Action) Hiroyuki Sanada, Tadanobu Asano. Keanu Reeves.	(50) FXM Presents				
36	LIFE	(36) Grey's Anatomy "Elevator Love Letter"	Grey's Anatomy "Sweet Surrender"	Grey's Anatomy				Grey's "What a Difference a Day Makes"		Grey's Anatomy		Grey's Anatomy	
38	ROOT	(38) NCAA Football South Dakota at New Mexico Site: University Stadium -- Albuquerque, N.M. (L)						Boeing NW9		Boeing NW9	NCAA Football UNC - Charlotte at Louisville		
39	F51	(39) Boxing Premier Champions				Fox Sports Live	TMZ Sports (N)	Speak for Yourself		Fox Sports Live	Best I Heard (N)	Fox Sports Live	TMZ Sports
43	SPIKE	(43) *** Wedding Crashers (2005, Comedy) Vince Vaughn, Rachel McAdams, Owen Wilson.						Lip Sync Battle	Lip Sync Battle	Lip Sync Battle	Tracks	Tracks	Wedding Crashers
44	COM	(44) (20) Futurama (35) Futurama "A Farewell to Arms" (25) Futurama				Daniel Tosh: Happy Thoughts		The Roast Battle "Day One"		The Roast Battle "Day Two"		The Roast Battle "Day Three"	
45	HIST	(45) Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	Mountain Men "Nemesis"		Mountain Men		(05) Ice Road Truckers (N)		(05) Mountain Men "Rock Bottom"	
46	A&E	(46) The First 48 "Fatal Call"		The First 48 "In a Lonely Place"		60 Days In	(45) 60 Days In	60 Days In "All Pain, No Gain" (N)		Behind Bars: Rookie Year "Fear" (N)		(05) The First 48 "Cold Betrayal"	
47	TLC	(47) Say Yes-Dress	Say Yes-Dress	My 600-lb Life "Lupe's Story" At 600 pounds, Lupe spent the last 10 years in bed.		Extreme Weight Loss "Love Can't Weight: Tiffany and Cain" (N)		Extreme Weight Loss		Extreme Weight Loss		Extreme Weight Loss	
48	DISC	(48) Diesel Brothers "Tows Before Bros ..."		Fast N' Loud "One Cool Impala"		Fast N' Loud		Fast N' Loud		Fast N' Loud "Parked in the Keys"		Vegas Rat Rods "Desert Rat"	
49	NGEO	(49) America's Parks "Grand Canyon"		Inside: Cocaine Submarines		Narco Bling		Facing "Escobar"		Miami Drug Cartel		Facing "Escobar"	
50	TNT	(50) Castle "Law and Murder"		Castle "Slice of Death"		*** Olympus Has Fallen ("13) Morgan Freeman, Aaron Eckhart, Gerard Butler.		(15) ** Red 2 (2013, Action) Helen Mirren, John Malkovich, Bruce Willis.		(15) ** Red 2 (2013, Action) Helen Mirren, John Malkovich, Bruce Willis.			
51	AMC	(51) (4:00) Erin Brockovich Julia Roberts.		** The Conjuring (2013, Horror) Vera Farmiga, Ron Livingston, Patrick Wilson.				*** Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End ("07) Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley, Johnny Depp.		Queen of the South (N)		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit	
52	FAM	(52) Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		*** Fast Five (2011, Action) Paul Walker, Dwayne Johnson, Vin Diesel.				Chopped "Teen Redeem"		Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play
53	FOOD	(53) Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Chopped "Teen Tournament: Battle 2"		Chopped "Teen Redeem"		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Desert Flippers (N) Flip or Flop	
54	HGTV	(54) Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop (N)	Flip or Flop	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Desert Flippers (N) Flip or Flop	
56	FX	(56) (4:00) The Wolverine Hugh Jackman.		*** Iron Man 3 (2013, Action) Gwyneth Paltrow, Guy Pearce, Robert Downey Jr..				Sex&Drugs (SF) (N)	Sex&Drugs&Rock	Sex&Drugs&Rock	Sex&Drugs&Rock	Movie	
57	CNN	(57) Holy Hell (2016, Documentary)				Holy Hell (2016, Documentary)		The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly		Anderson Cooper 360		CNN Newsroom	
58	FNC	(58) The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly		Hannity		The O'Reilly Factor		The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly		Hannity		On the Record	
61	CNBC	(61) Shark Tank		Ground Zero Rising (N)		American Greed: Scam '9/11 Fraud"		American Greed: Scam		Amer. Greed "Psychic Fiend's Network"		Paid Program	Paid Program
63	BRVA	(63) Housewives/NewJersey "Spa-cation"		The Real Housewives		Real Housewives "Woo Hoo Weekend"		Flipping Out (N)		Housewives/NewJersey "Spa-cation"		WatchWhat	Flipping Out
64	TCM	(64) (5:00) The Lady Eve (45) *** Sullivan's Travels (41) Veronica Lake, Robert Warwick, Joel McCrea. *** The Palm Beach Story (42) Claudette Colbert.						(15) *** Hail the Conquering Hero		(15) *** Hail the Conquering Hero		(44) Ella Raines, Eddie Bracken.	
65	SYFY	(65) (5:00) Lake Placid 3 ("10) Yancy Butler.		Lake Placid vs. Anaconda ("15, Hor) Yancy Butler, Corin Nemec, Robert Englund.		*** Anaconda (1997, Action) Jennifer Lopez, Ice Cube, Jon Voight.						Lake Placid (1999, Action) Bill Pullman.	
162	RFD	(162) SF Machinery	Small Town	Rural "Trans-Pacific Partnership"		Steve Lantvit	Rural Eve. News	Market Journal	GA Farm Monitor	SF Machinery	Small Town	Time Life Library	

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