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ONE DOLLAR

## Warrenton may seek \$2 million bond

Schools struggle to accommodate growing numbers

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Warrenton-Hammond School Board will vote next month on whether to take

out a \$2 million general obligation bond, as the district tries to accommodate a glut of new students and find a long-term solution.

Superintendent Mark Jeffery led the school board on a tour of the

Tetris-like remodeling that staffers have been playing to fit ever-increasing numbers of students into Warrenton Grade School, where enrollment has increased by a third over the past few years. He recommended the

board approve the bond.

Jeffery warned the board that in about five years, the district would need more than short-term fixes.

### Growing enrollment

In the 2012-13 school year, the K-8 Warrenton Grade School had 640 students. Board Chairwoman Deb-

bie Morrow said the school is at more than 760 students.

While Astoria has seen its enrollment continually drop, Warrenton's enrollment has been growing precipitously, with a glut of elementary-schoolers. Warrenton High School

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## BUILDING 'FISH HOTELS' ON THE WALLACUT



Caitlin Alcott, an ecologist with Inter-Fluve, the firm that is providing the engineering and design for the Wallacut River restoration project, stands near a recently restored tidal channel. Once completely breached, the channel will provide essential rearing habitat for a range of salmonoid species.

## Land trust leads project to restore tidal estuary

By DAVID PLECHL  
EO Media Group

ILWACO, Wash. — For most people, watching the slow trickle of water into a newly breached tidal channel is not exactly cause for celebration. But for Columbia Land Trust Stewardship Director Ian Sinks, it's something pretty close to that.

"A fundamental enjoyment for me is watching water flow into these areas. ... What's it going to do? Where's it going to go? It's just satisfying," said Sinks, who is overseeing the nonprofit conservation group's effort to restore a critical piece of fish habitat at the mouth of the Wallacut River.

The trust purchased 113 acres of forested wetland at the spot where the Wallacut enters Baker Bay, in 2012. This scenic stretch of tidal estuary should be high-quality habitat for several species of juvenile fish, but it's not, because a "push-up levee" has cut the river off from four channels that historically allowed tidal waters to flow in and out.

Now, the group is in the midst of a restoration project that will remove the bulk of the levee. Project leaders say that while the main goal is to create better salmon habitat, improvements to the estuary, channels and surrounding wetlands should also benefit a range of fish species, and other animals. Over time, the restoration work should provide some flood-control and water quality improvements too. The \$170,000 project is paid for with Bonneville Power Administration salmon conservation funds.



Damian Mulinix/For EO Media Group

See WALLACUT, Page 10A The Wallacut River runs toward Ilwaco from the Stringtown area.

## County dissolves Arch Cape committee

Design review falls to county planning staff

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

Arch Cape residents interested in local land use issues will have to find another outlet.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted Wednesday to dissolve the Arch Cape Design Review Committee, a citizen group that made recommendations on development within the unincorporated town south of Cannon Beach.

In February, the commissioners originally discontinued the Arch Cape committee, calling the group unnecessary, time-consuming, expensive and a potential legal liability.

Former interim County Manager Rich Mays accused the committee of harassing a county employee about her disability. Despite her requests, Mays claims, the group voted to move its meetings to a building that is not a federal Americans with Disabilities Act-approved facility.

After supporters challenged the decision to the state Land Use Board of Appeals, the county went through a new public process that led to the board's decision Wednesday.

"This is an issue that I have not taken lightly, and staff has not taken lightly," Scott Lee, the commission's chairman, said. "We are doing what I believe is best for the county."

Commissioner Dirk Rohne said it is a fair outcome for all county residents. No other part of the county has a design review committee. Other residents bring proposals directly to the county planning staff, without having to seek input from a local committee.

Rohne said all county residents, including in Arch Cape, have opportunities for citizen involvement. One proposal for Arch Cape is applicant-neighborhood meetings for projects such as subdivisions or rezoning requests.

"No public process is being shortchanged," Rohne said.

Supporters of the Arch Cape Design Review Committee, also known as the Southwest Coastal Citizens Advisory Committee, could try to appeal the board's decision again. More than 50 people signed a petition in support of retaining the group.

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## Legal clash looms over Eighth Street Dam

Warrenton gives water district until Tuesday

By DERRICK DePLEDGE  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The city on Wednesday warned the Skipanon Water Control District that it could take legal action unless the district surrenders any ownership interest in the Eighth Street Dam.

In a letter to the water district's board, Akin Blitz, a Portland attorney representing the city, demanded that the district immediately give up owner-

ship rights, remove a barricade from a gravel road over the dam, and turn over tide gates and maintenance records.

The city gave the water district until Tuesday to respond in writing or face a potential lawsuit to settle title or the city's seizure of the dam.

"No documentation supports the district having ownership interest in the Eighth Street Dam or the underlying land," Blitz wrote in a letter authorized by the City Commission.

Tessa Scheller, the chair-



Tessa Scheller

woman of the water district's board, could not immediately be reached for comment on the city's demands. She has said, however, that the water district wants to remove the dam as a hazard and to improve fish passage on the Skipanon River.

The water district has described the dam as a liability. But Scheller said earlier this week that the dam should be removed, rather than just transferred so the city assumes the

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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

A legal showdown between the city and the Skipanon Water Control District is pending over the Eighth Street Dam.

