

Waves: Bystanders should never enter the ocean to save somebody

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“These waves become dangerous when beachgoers are in or near the waterline, and expect that the gentle spilling waves they have been experiencing will continue,” Hansen explained. “The sneaker wave will quickly travel further up the beach than expected, and may sweep people off their feet and pull them back into the surf.”

Researchers aren’t sure why or how sneaker waves form, but it’s generally thought that they develop as many waves travelling at the same speed come together, overlapping and combining to create a wave that crests taller and travels much farther ashore than normal.

The waves can sweep up people close to the water’s edge in an instant, and can carry large debris — like the massive logs that line the coast — over top of beachgoers. A viral video shot in Charleston this past January shows the terror and suddenness with which a sneaker wave can arrive.

Hansen said the best way to stay safe is to be aware if you go near the water, and to stay within

arm’s length of small children if they’re playing in the surf. If you do get swept up, don’t try to fight the current — conserve energy and focus on keeping your head above water until rescuers arrive.

Bystanders should never enter the ocean to save somebody, she added, but should instead call 911 and keep visual contact with any victims.

Warning signs are posted at Oregon beaches, but victims’ families have complained that they’re not enough. After a wave killed two Eugene teenagers in February 2011, the community erected a memorial statue at Smelt Sands State Park that offered a personal story and a blunt message: “The Ocean is a treacherous wonder.”

“Nobody predicts the ocean,” Chris Havel, Oregon State Parks spokesman, said after the deaths in 2011. “The only thing you can predict is 362 miles of ocean shore that is a wild area. You struggle with the idea that you want to keep the ocean shore the kind of place people want to visit, not over fenced, not over signed. Then something tragic happens and you question everything you’ve done before that.”



AP Photo/Don Ryan
A lone person walks on the beach in Seaside. Since 1990, all major sneaker wave incidents have occurred between October and April, peaking in November and March. In that time, at least 21 people have been killed by sneaker waves on the Oregon Coast, and several others have been severely injured.

Brown: Governor is expected to release her balanced budget Thursday

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Wheeler’s effort, referred to as the Investment Modernization Act, stalled out several times after meeting opposition from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle who voiced trepidation about

the proposal.

Read, in an interview Tuesday, said that he would support the Governor’s Office in its efforts and emphasized communication with the public and the Oregon Legislature about the state’s investing.

“... I expect we will be

supportive and helpful to the extent that we are asked, but I’m also cognizant of the fact that Treasurer Wheeler and the Treasury have made specific efforts a number of times,” Read said.

Reducing investment costs might be one small

way to address the \$22 billion unfunded liability facing the state’s public employee retirement system.

PERS is managed independently and has its own board, but the Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund is managed by the trea-

surer, under the direction of the Oregon Investment Council, according to the treasury. The investment council is required by state law to get the highest possible return on its investments.

In 2015, the Oregon Supreme Court struck down

most of the legislature’s recent PERS reform efforts. A bipartisan legislative work group is now looking at other ways to address the PERS issue.

The governor is expected to release her balanced budget Thursday.

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