

Lawmakers push Washington tourism

Money would fund promotion

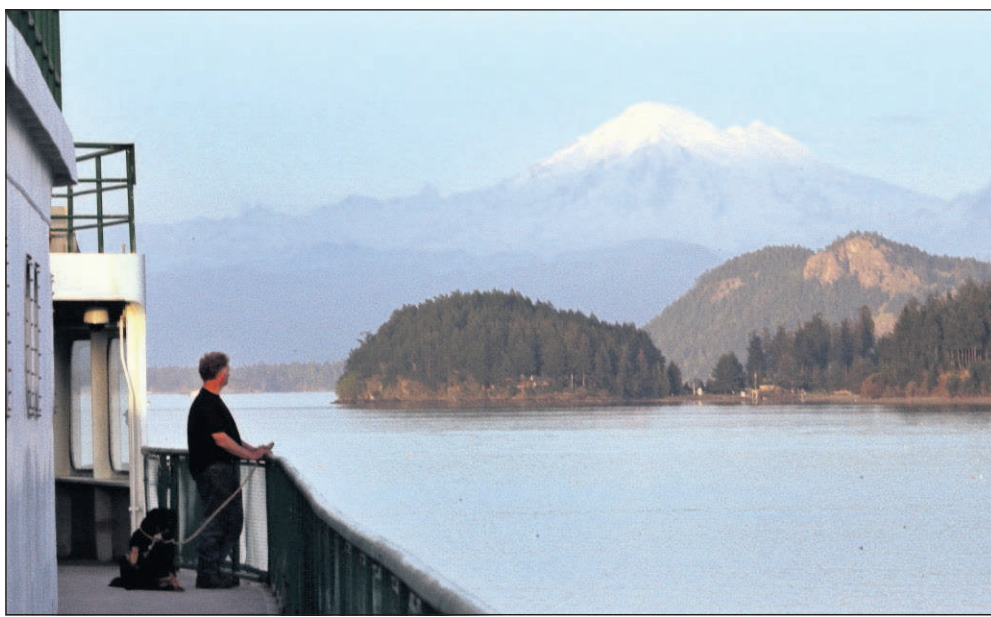
By ALEXIS MYERS
Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Lawmakers are trying to put Washington state back on the map when it comes to tourism.

After eliminating the state tourism office in 2011, the Legislature is considering creating a Washington Tourism Marketing Authority to fund and manage resources throughout the state.

The authority, made up of tourism industry officials and legislators, is expected to deposit \$5 million into its account every two-year state budget cycle by diverting 0.1 percent of retail taxes from lodging, rental cars and restaurants. The plan could offer a maximum of \$15 million per biennium to be spent on tourism across the entire state.

Washington is the only state without a state-funded tourism office, according to the Washington Tourism Alliance, a nonprofit agency that



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

A Washington state ferry passes through a channel in the San Juan Islands and in view of Mount Baker near Friday Harbor, Wash. Lawmakers are trying to put Washington state back on the map when it comes to tourism.

has picked up from where the original program left off.

"We've simply kept the lights on over the past five years," said David Blandford of the marketing authority.

Blandford said the agency has been maintaining the website and taking calls but doesn't

have the funds other states do to advertise and promote tourism across the entire state.

Nearby efforts

Nearby states such as Oregon, Montana and California, are spending \$5 million to upward of \$120 million a year

to attract visitors, Blandford said. He said other states like Idaho are out-spending Washington by several millions of dollars.

State Rep. Cary Condotta, the sponsor of House Bill 1123, says "it's time for the state to keep up."

Walden seeks to amend law used in Hammond case

Convictions prompted standoff near Burns last year

By SCOTT HAMMERS
The Bulletin

BEND — U.S. Rep. Greg Walden is sponsoring a bill that would soften the federal statute used to convict the Harney County ranchers whose imprisonment was central to last year's Malheur National Wildlife Refuge standoff.

The bill would exempt from prosecution people who violate the law under circumstances similar to Dwight and Steven Hammond.

In 2012, the Hammonds were convicted of setting fires on their ranch in 2001 and 2006 that spread to federal land. The Hammonds maintain the earlier fire was set to control invasive plants, while prosecutors maintained it was to cover up illegal hunting.

In 2006, Bureau of Land Management firefighters were battling nearby blazes sparked by lightning, and the Hammonds lit a backburn in an attempt to prevent the already-burning fires from encroaching on the winter feed for their cattle.

The Hammonds were tried under a federal statute that establishes a minimum of five and a maximum of 20 years in prison for any person who uses fire or explosives to damage or destroy or attempt to damage or destroy federal property.

However, U.S. District Judge Michael Robert Hogan declined to impose the minimum sentence on the Hammonds and said at the time doing so would "shock the conscience."

The federal government appealed and won, negat-

ing the reduced sentences imposed by Hogan. The Hammonds were resentenced to five years each with credit for time served and returned to prison in January 2016.

The perceived mistreatment of the Hammonds was at the root of the demonstrations in and around Burns that led to the takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge at the same time the Hammonds were headed back to prison.

Demonstrators held the refuge headquarters for more than three weeks, at which point demonstration leader Robert "Lavoy" Finicum was shot and killed by Oregon State Police during a traffic stop between Burns and John Day. Most of the remaining occupiers fled, and the final holdouts surrendered to law enforcement last February.

Walden's bill defines the circumstances under which the law would not apply, carving out exemptions that would likely have spared the Hammonds had they been in place at the time. Provided a fire was set on an individual's private land for the purpose of protecting that property or as part of farming-, ranching- or timber-related vegetation management — and does not pose a serious threat of injury or damage to any individual or federal property — that individual would not be prosecuted.

Andrew Malcolm, a spokesman for the Republican congressman, said because a law cannot be adopted retroactively, the passage of Walden's bill would have no effect on the Hammonds' conviction or imprisonment.

Walden proposed an identical measure last year, according to Malcolm. Malcolm said the measure attracted five co-sponsors from Western states, but Congress ran out of time before the proposal could be considered.

Beached loggerhead turtle dies after rescue

Turtles suffer in colder water

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

The best efforts of Seaside Aquarium and the Oregon Coast Aquarium staff were not enough to revive a cold-stunned loggerhead turtle rescued late Saturday in Cannon Beach.

The loggerhead was reported dead by the Oregon Coast Aquarium a day after arrival for treatment.

Seaside's Tiffany Boothe responded to a report of turtles washed ashore at Crescent Beach in Ecola State Park on Saturday. After walking a mile and a half along the beach, she discovered the tur-



Oregon Coast Aquarium/
For The Daily Astorian

Front view of the loggerhead rescued in Cannon Beach Saturday. The turtle failed to survive after specialized treatment.

tle near Chapman Point.

Boothe and Seaside Aquarium staff member Molly Schmidt recovered the animal and assisted in transferring it to Newport Sunday morning.

A threatened species, loggerhead sea turtles are con-

sidered a "rarer species" to strand on Oregon beaches, according to Jim Burke, the Oregon Coast Aquarium's director of animal husbandry.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium and Seattle Aquarium are the only rehabilitation facilities in the northwest United States authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide the specialized care sea turtles require.

Most stranded turtles in recent years have been olive ridley and green sea turtles, Burke said.

Two olive ridleys, named Thunder and Lightning, were transported from the North Coast to SeaWorld in San Diego last winter. Thunder died, but Lightning continues rehabilitation, SeaWorld officials said in January.

Loggerheads are known

for their large heads and heavy, strong jaws and can weigh up to 375 pounds. They are listed as a threatened species due to coastal development.

The last loggerhead to arrive alive at the aquarium was on Christmas Eve 2007, and it also survived only one day, Burke said.

During the winter, cold-shocked sea turtles can become stranded on beaches, Boothe said Sunday. Water temperatures in Newport are at least 20 degrees lower than those needed for survival.

Reports of stranded turtles can begin as early as mid-October and can continue through January, Boothe said. This was the third turtle to wash ashore this year, but the only one to be recovered alive.

Four seek vacant Seaside council seat

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Four candidates stepped forward to fill a City Council vacancy. Norman Brown, John Chapman, George Stacey and Steve Wright each provided a minimum of 10 signatures from Ward 1 residents and filed forms with the city indicating interest in filling the remaining two years of Jay Barber's four-year term.

The opening comes after Barber was appointed mayor to finish the remainder of former Mayor Don Larson's four-year term. Larson died in December after serving 14 years as mayor.

"We have a very difficult task before us," Barber said. "We have four applicants, all of whom are very highly qualified."

Brown, a three-year Sea-

side resident, is retired after a career as a human resources manager and director. He is a member of the city's parks advisory committee.



Jay Barber

Chapman, a 23-year resident, is a business owner and property manager of Seaside Factory Outlets. He has served on city advertising and budget committees.

Stacey, a former high school teacher and broker with John L. Scott Real Estate, is a member of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation Depart-

ment. He is a 50-year Seaside resident.

Wright, a Seaside homeowner for nearly five years, is a current member of the Budget Committee and Planning Commission. He is the former chief financial officer of Columbia Grain Inc.

"The process that will now happen, the council will interview each of these applicants and in an open meeting we will vote to appoint," Barber said.

City Council members will interview the candidates Monday from noon to 4 p.m. Each interview is expected to take about an hour, Barber said.

The council aims to decide at the last meeting in February.

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