



SWIMMING THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

WEEKEND BREAK • PAGE 1C

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ONE DOLLAR

Burn-o-meter: Threat checked for fire season

Protection Unit Forester Neal Bond points out locations of concern for firefighters. Bond and all other personnel at the district headquarters in Astoria are busy preparing for what they say could be an above-average fire season.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Forestry preps as fire season gets underway

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

The state Department of Forestry continues to add fuel to its prevention efforts after officially declaring

fire season last week.

The district typically prepares its 11 seasonal firefighters by June at the latest. As warmer, drier conditions begin to negate the effects of an unusually wet winter, the district has placed restrictions — including a few additions this week — on open fires.

“This year’s threat is growing,” Astoria District Forester Dan Goody said. “We haven’t had real rain in a month.”

Goody pointed to an incident Wednesday on the side of Lewis and Clark Road, roughly 10 miles south of Warrenton, in which a vehicle crashed into the hillside, causing a small fire that spread through the nearby brush.

“When you have fires starting by the roadside, you’re getting into fire season proper,” he said.

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A LIFESAVING TRADITION



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach lifeguard Jesse Willyard keeps a close eye on the surf and the sand from his perch atop a lifeguard stand last week near Haystack Rock. He is one of eight lifeguards protecting thousands of visitors to the beach.

Cannon Beach lifeguards share moments of reward, exhilaration

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — When Jesse Willyard was growing up in Cannon Beach, he didn’t have much interest in becoming a lifeguard.

But his career as one started before he was even officially hired to join the Cannon

Beach lifeguard team 11 years ago during his 15th birthday party.

“I was skimboarding north of Haystack Rock when a kid ran up and said his brother had been swept up in the ocean,” Willyard said. He said he saw the child’s head bobbing up and down in the waves and decided

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‘I’VE NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF THE OCEAN. I SUPPOSE THAT’S A GOOD QUALITY TO HAVE IN THIS LINE OF WORK.’

Jesse Willyard
Cannon Beach lifeguard

Sunday Market ponies up for parks

Downtown event gives \$5,000 to ailing agency

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The first donation to Astoria’s Parks and Recreation Department is in.

The Astoria Sunday Market, celebrating one of its biggest financial years so far, donated \$5,000 to the department Thursday. The donation comes on the heels of a City Council meeting where councilors voted to increase the lodging tax and accept donations to raise money for parks and avoid drastic cost-cutting measures, such as closing the Astoria Aquatic Center.

“We’re just really happy to have the funds to do this, this year,” said Market Director Cyndi Mudge, adding, “We would love to see our donation dwarfed.”

“Well, three cheers for the market,” said Mayor Arline LaMear. She and Councilors Bruce Jones and Cindy Price met with Mudge, parks board members and staff and market board members to present the \$5,000 check at the Garden of Surging Waves across from City Hall.

“The core of our mission is to revitalize downtown,” said Jack Ficken, the market’s board president. “The Astoria parks and its many assets that improve the quality of life for the community are vital to our success.”

Echoing Mudge, he said, “We are proud to be in a position this year to make this donation. The need is clear and we hope our donation encourages others to step forward.”

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Warning signs posted after shark sightings

Dorsal fins spotted off Cannon Beach

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Officials are not sure what to make of recent possible shark sightings off Cannon Beach, but they have adopted a cautious approach.

On Tuesday, both a surfer near Haystack Rock, as well as a person on the shore in Cannon Beach, reported seeing dorsal fins. Since then, the state Parks and Recreation Department has posted

upward of 10 signs along beaches and are hoping to acquire more. It is not known exactly what type of shark may have been spotted.

“It’s always hard to be 100 percent sure of what someone saw,” Parks and Recreation Department Associate Director Chris Havel said. “There are lots of things that can look like a dorsal fin.”

The caution signs will be taken down after several weeks unless another sighting is reported. Small and easily removable, the signs may need to be continually replaced over the summer.

“We know it’s tempting to take a shark sign because

they look cool,” Havel said, “but we encourage people to keep other peoples’ safety in mind.”

The Oregon Coast has had eight shark attacks since 2000, but no one has died as a result. Most recently, a 29-year-old man was bitten twice in the leg while surfing off the coast of Ecola State Park in October.

Havel said possible shark sightings have come in waves recently and that it would take years to determine whether or not shark attacks and sightings off the coast are becoming a trend.



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

See SHARKS, Page 7A Signs in Seaside warn beachgoers of the potential danger.



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