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ONE DOLLAR



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A juvenile male bald eagle sits atop a perch at an enclosure at the Wildlife Center of the North Coast.

County might take action on vacation rentals

Disagreements persist on parking, inspections

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County commissioners have reluctantly agreed to hold a hearing that could determine whether to impose vacation rental regulations.

Commissioners will vote Jan. 24 on an ordinance that would require property owners to apply for five-year, renewable permits based on safety inspections for an unlimited number of short-term rental properties. Discussions on Wednesday night revealed parking limits and the five-year timeline as the two remaining hangups.

The permits would require property owners to comply with quiet hours, provide covered garbage containers, possess at least one fire extinguisher and offer at least one off-street parking spot. Only three people per sleeping area plus two more in the entire dwelling would be allowed to occupy a residence.

The hearing later this month may culminate a roughly 1 1/2 year effort by county staff, who have documented multiple complaints from residents. They estimate the ordinance would impact at least 173 property owners in unincorporated areas who rent out homes for up to 30 days, nearly double the 2010 estimate for vacation rentals.

Commissioners were first handed a draft of an ordinance in June and have held three work sessions on the topic. They opted to indefinitely postpone a final vote at a similar hearing in September.

The delay was due in part to Gearhart regulations that were put to a vote in November, Scott Lee, the board's chairman, said in September. Voters rejected the ballot measure 77 percent to 23 percent, keeping the regulations in place.

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Gearhart voters upheld vacation rental rules in November.

RETURNING TO THE WILD

An eagle finds his wings again at wildlife center

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The bald eagle fixes one fierce eye on the meddlesome people below him.

He squawks at them, a plaintive and undignified sound. Then they move, and so does he, taking off in a smooth swoop across the flight enclosure. It is his fifth or sixth run back and forth and he almost knocks his tail feathers against the branches of a tree in the middle of the enclosure.

"He's getting tired," said Josh Saranpaa, executive director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast.

But this is the eagle's CrossFit. When he showed up at the center to recover from surgery on a broken wing, flying the length of the enclosure was a major workout. He would come to rest on the ground, winded. Now his increased stamina means he's that much closer to returning to the wild.

When he is released later this month, back to posing on piers or chomping down on dead whales while still looking noble, he'll rejoin a robust population — one that seems to be reshaping bird colonies up and down the coast.

Rebound

Poisoning by the pesticide DDT, loss of habitat and shooting contributed to a significant decline in bald eagle populations across the country. By 1963, the birds were in danger of extinction. Following decades of recovery efforts, they were finally removed from the federal endangered and threatened species list



Josh Saranpaa checks the chart for an injured bald eagle that was brought to the Wildlife Center of the North Coast.

in 2007. Oregon's population grew from a mere 65 nesting pairs in 1978 to more than 500 by 2012.

"The eagle population is doing very well in Oregon," said Shawn Stephensen, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex. "We're finding new eagle nests all the time in new areas."

But that recovery has come with complex consequences.

In Oregon, there was a distinct shift of common murre colonies from the northern to the central and southern coast, according to a federal research

paper published in 2017. The authors — Susan Thomas with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex, and James Lyons of the U.S. Geological Survey and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center — noted that a surge in bald eagle populations in the Puget Sound region could set off a chain of events that may restructure that food web.

Murres, a seabird common to the region, are often the prey of bald eagles, though eagles are scavengers and will eat just about anything.

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Old trestle timbers survive in house flooring

Reclaimed wood a popular trend

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

SVENSEN — In the late 1800s, crews building the South Jetty at the mouth of the Columbia River used a wooden trestle bridge to move large boulders to the end of Clatsop Spit.

Some of those same timbers have found new life in the popular trend of using reclaimed wood in construction, including the flooring of

an elaborate new barn house in Svensen.

Tobey Parsons, owner of McGee Salvage, acquires reclaimed wood flooring from old gyms, houses and other structures. He was recently connected with Greg Morrill, general manager of marine contractor Bergerson Construction.

Bergerson in 2016 was awarded a contract to remove about 900 feet worth of jetty stones to improve fish passage into Trestle Bay near the tip of Clatsop Spit.

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Tobey Parsons of McGee Salvage checks in on work to a home in Svensen that utilized reclaimed timber from the trestle bridge at Clatsop Spit.

