

County manager apologizes for missing meeting

Moore said he plans to attend in the future

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County Manager Cameron Moore apologized Tuesday for skipping last week's Board of Commissioners meeting and said he would attend in the future.

But the county manager, who last year offered to resign amid conflicts with commissioners, has in recent weeks discussed a potential payout to leave his post, according to sources

familiar with the situation.

In an email to Commissioner Scott Lee — the board's chairman — and County Counsel Heather Reynolds hours before last week's meeting, Moore cited repeated criticism from Commissioners Kathleen Sullivan and Lianne Thompson in his decision not to attend and cautioned he would not show up for meetings for the foreseeable future.

County managers have traditionally been expected to attend commissioner meetings, present reports and answer questions.

Moore said in a statement Tuesday that his decision was a mistake, "and for that I apologize



Cameron Moore

to the citizens of Clatsop County, the Clatsop County commissioners and the county employees that I have the privilege of working with every day. But I also believe it is important that people understand why I took this step."

Moore offered a more detailed explanation of why Sullivan's and Thompson's words and actions led to his decision. "Inappropriate" contacts and "rude, unprofessional treatment" of county staff and others at meetings have violated the county charter and board policy, Moore said.

"These actions have inflicted unfair stress on county staff as well as disrupting county opera-

tions. For well over a year I have been asking, begging, pleading and demanding that these commissioners acquaint themselves with the rules that govern them and consistently comply with them," Moore said. "My only motivation has been to protect county staff and ensure efficient county operations."

"Frankly I reached the point where I felt something drastic needed to happen and thought that missing a (board) meeting might finally get these two commissioners to take their roles and the rules that govern them seriously. We shall see."

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North Fork 53 hopes to plant seed for agritourism



By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Ginger Edwards and her husband, Brigham, have made their North Fork 53 bed-and-breakfast and homestead along the Nehalem River an immersive foodie experience surrounded by organic gardens.

But as they try to become one of Clatsop County's pioneers in agritourism, they face zoning hurdles and a slight uneasiness from some neighbors.

The couple requested a change of use with the county to become resort lodging, hosting workshops, retreats and other events based around growing food. They had wanted to apply for agritourism. But unlike Tillamook County, its neighbor to the south, Clatsop County has no agritourism written into code.

The Edwards' plan to triple the garden areas around a farmhouse, offering walking tours through the 3.6-acre lot. They recently traveled to India to learn about

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Ginger and Brigham Edwards enjoy a cup of tea while discussing the plans for North Fork 53.

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Ginger Edwards

growing the evergreen shrub, *Camellia sinensis*, and hope to become one of the region's first tea farms.

"The whole thing will be an edible walk-through experience, and we're going to lean on tea," Ginger Edwards said. "We'll be one of the first farms in the region to grow tea."

The couple hope to restart a farm stand to sell what they grow, and a mobile food truck tea bar.

North Fork 53's conditional use permit recently came before a county hearings officer. Although the proposal received more than 30 letters of support from growers, chefs and fellow farmers, it also drew resistance from several nearby property owners worried about the noise and traffic associated with a resort.

Restrictions

County staff proposed eliminating events, camping and the food truck, while

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Army Corps lands permits to destroy bird eggs

Cormorants feast on salmon in the river

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Amid calls for an investigation into how a colony of double-crested cormorants on Oregon's East Sand Island is being managed, the U.S. Army Corps successfully secured a permit to destroy cormorant eggs at nesting sites.

The agency has yet to act on the permit. Several thousand cormorants were seen on the island in mid-April, but no nests have been observed yet, according to the most recent weekly monitoring report available on the Army Corps' website.

Breeding season "is in full swing" at the Astoria Bridge, however, according to the report. Over 6,000 cormorants were counted by the end of one survey that occurred at sunset and over 1,000 were counted by the end of an early morning period the next day.

"Nesting materials were being delivered continuously with many birds engaged in breeding displays and copulation," according to the report. Nests were visible on the bridge itself and on a protective wooden barrier on one of the bridge supports.

A depredation permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the Army Corps received earlier in April allows the agency and its contractors to take up to 500 double-crested cormorant eggs and destroy associated nests on East Sand Island. The permit also allows the take of an additional 250 double-crested cormorant eggs from sites on the Columbia River estuary in either Oregon or Washington state, where the Corps deposits material dredged from the navigation channel.

The agency stated in March that it will not shoot any adult birds this year, explaining that this kind of intensive lethal take is no longer warranted. This year, the Corps established a 1.3-acre nesting area on East Sand Island. Outside of that area, cormorants will be hazed and discouraged from establishing nests. Next season, the Corps plans to further modify nesting habitat on the island.

The Audubon Society of Portland asked Fish and Wildlife not to issue the depredation permit or allow any more activity on East Sand Island without an investigation into why cormorants abandoned the island in 2016 and 2017. During both breeding

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Port of Astoria could outsource dredging

Antiquated dredge may be ineffective

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria could outsource dredging along its piers and western marina after learning its dredge might have only been removing about half as much soil out of the waterways as previously thought.

The Port uses a 46-year-old Navy surplus suction dredge, the Felkins, to keep the waterways around its piers

deep enough for log, cruise and other ships to dock. The dredge works only during outgoing tides, with a hose from the dredge running into the main stem of the Columbia River to carry away sediments.

The Port still uses lead lines, an ancient method of measuring depths by lowering a line with a pointed weight at the end into the water. The Port received some unsavory news about its dredging after underwater surveying company TerraSond recently provided the agency with computerized depth reports and dredge volume estimates.

"We were dredging prob-

ably half of what we believe that we were dredging," said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director. "We didn't have the evidence until we could use new bathymetry measurements."

The efficiency of dredging has gone down with the age of equipment and the use of flow-lane disposal, said Matt McGrath, the Port's director of operations.

Knight presented the Port Commission three options: continue operating the Felkins, buy a new dredge for around \$5 million or outsource. He

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The Port of Astoria has discovered issues with its dredging, done by the 46-year-old suction dredge Felkins.