

Saildrones: 'We have to balance more than cost'

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For years, research on yearly fish populations has been conducted primarily from huge research vessels. For now, the bright orange saildrones will supplement the data collected on the manned ships.

"Before we make any changes that would affect survey results, we really have to be certain those changes would be equivalent or better," Hufnagle said.

Saildrones, produced by Saildrone Inc., are under consideration by NOAA in partnership with the company and Fisheries and Oceans Canada because of what the vehicles can do that research vessels cannot.

Because they are unmanned, the vehicles can be programmed to stay out in the water for as long as a year, without needing to stop for reasons like human illness or breaks.

They can get much closer to the shore than a research vessel, as the vehicles can operate in a depth as shallow as 10 feet.

And they cost less. A research vessel costs \$25,000 dollars a day or more to operate. A saildrone costs around \$2,500 a day. Though cost is a factor in the consideration, NOAA scientists want



Sebastien de Halleux

Saildrones could supplement data collected by traditional research vessels.

to make sure the saildrones are effective data collectors before they start using them extensively.

"We have to balance more than cost because the measurements are important enough to the livelihoods of commercial fishermen," Hufnagle said.

After a few months at sea, the two saildrones launched in Washington state are now off the coast of Grays Harbor. While NOAA scientists will do a more complete analysis of the data when the expedition is complete, the collection has been so far successful, with only one minor component malfunction that was fixed on shore.

"Like anything else, nothing's 100 percent," Hufnagle

said. "We've had loss of time or malfunctions on ships, too, so it's nothing to worry about. Their reliability is extremely high."

When starting the project, NOAA planned for the saildrones to travel transect lines just like research vessels. Transect lines run back and forth from shore for 35 miles, with 10-mile spaces between each line, similar to how someone would push a lawnmower in a backyard.

But saildrones are wind-dependent, not power-operated like research vessels. Hufnagle has realized that NOAA will have to consider sea and wave conditions more extensively when they plan transect lines for saildrones in the future, as the vehicles can get buffeted

off path. Future transect lines for saildrones may look more like zigzags.

"We're learning that what we do as survey planning and survey design may not be optimal for a sailing vehicle," Hufnagle said.

While the technology is still being tested, David Demer, the leader of advanced survey technology at NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center, said that saildrone-only surveys are not a possibility yet. But the testing could lead to saildrones as the primary data source in the future.

"It's presently difficult to say that saildrone surveys could replace the types of fishery surveys that we conduct presently," Demer said. "But it's conceivable that new advances in technology for remotely sensing fish species could evolve, then saildrone-only surveys could then be a possibility."

The saildrones will sail south from 164 feet to 4,900 feet offshore. Hufnagle was unable to provide the saildrones' exact locations, as NOAA doesn't want anyone tampering with them out in the water.

But tourists and locals standing on the shore may be able to see the saildrones pass by the Oregon Coast in the next month if their timing is right.

Tomlinson: Oversees 29 properties along the Columbia River

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After college, Tomlinson became a project manager for a forestry consultant analyzing the health of timber stands. But the job involved constant travel, and soon he was burned out.

Within a couple of years of graduation, Tomlinson was back on the North Coast. He spent five years in temporary positions, augmenting his income by fishing in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

"I was always here, but I was just doing seasonal (work), just trying to scrape by, which isn't bad," he said. "I still got to do the things I love, to travel and stuff, but I was just living paycheck to paycheck."

In 2015, he was hired by the Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District, and two years ago landed a highly competitive job as a land steward with the land trust, competing against some of his friends for the opportunity.

Tomlinson oversees 29 properties along the Columbia River, from the mouth and Washington's Long Beach Peninsula to Rainier. Much of his time is spent in the field mon-

itoring the properties as part of accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance, which includes yearly checkups on species diversity, encroachment of invasives and nearby development that can affect a property in conservation. He also oversees restoration projects such as pulling invasive species.

Tomlinson tries to expose local students to conserved lands and local opportunities in the field, inviting teachers interested in class field trips to contact the land trust.

He recently purchased a house in Gearhart with his partner, a local nurse he's known since middle school who also moved back after spending time in Southern California and New York City.

"A lot of people I went to high school with just couldn't wait to leave," Tomlinson said. "It was a small town. They just wanted to get out. And of course I wanted to do the same thing, too, but I always knew we lived in such an awesome place. I knew I wanted to be here. It had everything that I wanted — the natural environment, the ocean, close to the mountains. It was just like, 'How do you do it?'"

Basin: 'This might even be the end of the sea lions'

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The project could boost the local economy while preserving the rich history, character and core values of Astoria, Sernande wrote.

The company is proposing floating, single-family homes similar to those found in Sausalito, California, in front of Comfort Suites, just west of the East Mooring Basin causeway with connecting docks to the Astoria Riverwalk, Sernande said. The homes would be no more than 20 feet tall from the water level, hopefully allaying any concerns

about blocking river views for nearby residents, he said.

The company is also looking to expand moorage at the East Mooring Basin, which was originally designed for 1,000 slips, and to potentially create a cruise ship terminal along the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers breakwater.

The causeway to the breakwater has fallen into disrepair. The Port has estimated it will cost \$4 million to rehabilitate the roadway, and has looked at potential public-private partnerships to provide funding and spur development.

"That breakwater can eas-

ily accommodate one or two cruise ships," Sernande said. "That could be a really nice facility there as a terminal to accept cruise ships (and) shuttle customers around Astoria."

The development of homes and a cruise ship terminal would also require enhancing the waterfront with more dock connections, lighting and security, Sernande said.

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, said Tuesday's presentation will provide a rollout of what Fishermen's Wharf is planning.

"Floyd is really the motivating person behind this, has

been working on it for the last several years," he said.

The East Mooring Basin is subject to building and height restrictions in the Civic Greenway portion of Astoria's Riverfront Vision Plan. The Port can get exceptions to the restrictions if the agency presents a master plan that is approved by the City Council.

Knight sees the company's proposal as a potential shot in the arm for the Port, which lacks the money to develop the area around the East Mooring Basin.

"This might even be the end of the sea lions," he said.

Housing: Investigations have taken weeks longer than expected

Continued from Page 1A

"The handwriting appeared to be Johnston's and I believe he forged this document to retaliate against me," the complaint alleges. "The investigator showed me a copy of the income verification form. I would never sign anything in respect to verifying Natividad's income for Section 8 purposes."

Johnston could not immediately be reached for comment.

The complaint names the housing authority, Johnston, Lee and LinMarie DiCianni, who resigned from the agency's board in July follow-

ing what she called a harassing email exchange with Sims. The complaint alleges Lee failed to offer the entire scope of the investigations and that DiCianni mischaracterized the email exchange in comments to the news media.

"Why would I have retaliated against her while she was already on leave?" Lee said. "These claims are baseless and mean nothing to me."

The housing authority's investigations, which have taken weeks longer than expected, could be completed soon. "I expect to give a report by the end of next week," Lee said.

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