

Tourism: Workshops will be held through fall

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The strategy folds into the destination marketing organization's overall focus to increase tourism outside of the summer months, as well as to invest more heavily in promoting international tourism — a market that has potential to grow and attract visitors who will take longer trips, Davidson said.

Accomplishing the strategy, however, is complicated. Since April 2017, 110 leisure and hospitality jobs have been added in Northwestern Oregon, but in that same time, the vacancy rate for those jobs jumped 232 percent due to the lack of affordable housing to keep employees year-round, according to the state Employment Department.

Longer stays will not alleviate congestion at car-dependent destinations like Fort Stevens and Ecola State Park at the height of summer. Many environmental nonprofits would like to follow the Haystack Rock Awareness Program, which educates visitors about the proper etiquette around a marine garden, but



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
A tour bus arrives at the Astoria Column.

say they lack the funding. A lot of the sustainability goals center around doing more to encourage people to visit outside of the summer — a cultural task easier said than done.

"It's a hard slog to change generations of thinking that says 'Let's come to the beach in the summer,'" Nan Devlin, of Visit Tillamook Coast, said.

Connecting the region — through institutions and geog-

raphy — is a good way to start, said Kristin Dahl, the vice president of destination development at Travel Oregon. Having a unified destination marketing organization to coordinate regionwide tourism goals has been one way areas like Hood River and the southern Oregon Coast have approached solving these problems through their studios.

Other countries, like New

Zealand, have decided to link popular trailheads and attractions together on a tourist-focused shuttle system. The system allows visitors to travel around the country for days without ever needing a car.

"I point that out because Oregon doesn't have an extensive amount of multiday experiences in outdoor recreation," Dahl said.

Action items

Workshops to discuss solutions to visitor transportation, outdoor recreation and cultural heritage preservation will be held throughout the fall. By January, action teams designed to carry out specific projects will be formed and funded by a \$25,000 matching Travel Oregon grant.

At this point, the projects remain a work in progress. But the region is now united by a common goal.

"One of the goals is to protect our natural and cultural resources, because man, if we neglect them, we're sunk," Devlin said. "It's what makes us unique. We don't want to become a place where people just stop to get gas."

Clams: 'Right now, it is difficult to find any razor clams larger than 4 inches'

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the exception of the seasonal closure on the Clatsop beaches. Areas also close if marine biotoxin levels spike to unsafe levels.

Washington state operates on a case-by-case basis from October through May, opening digs here and there on select beaches. But the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has had similar concerns recently about razor clam populations and their small size. The department has delayed traditional October razor clam digs on the Long Beach Peninsula until late December.

Both states are trying to avoid situations where smaller clams are wasted when diggers either purposefully or inadvertently discard them in pursuit of larger clams.

Ideally, razor clam populations on a beach should be a mix, with a large amount of younger, smaller clams but

also larger 1 and 2-year-old clams and then a scattering of much older, much larger clams.

"In 2004, we also saw large numbers of small razor clams along Clatsop beaches, but they were more variable in size with a few medium and large clams," Hunter said. "Right now, it is difficult to find any razor clams larger than 4 inches."

Of the 50 clams Hunter and staff dug this summer, only three were of a commercial legal size.

The beaches in Clatsop County are productive clam beds and a popular destination for clammers. Razor clams at the beaches account for 95 percent of the clams harvested in Oregon.

Other beaches in Oregon are open for razor clamming. The south coast, from the south jetty of the Umpqua River to the California border, remains closed because of high levels of marine biotoxins.

Oregon lawmakers prepare to take another run at cap and trade

Legislation set for next year

By AUBREY WIEBER
Capital Bureau

SALEM — In what was a contentious hearing by Oregon standards, state lawmakers grilled a right-wing think tank statistician who testified that the climate changed the day the earth was "born" and media and government are generating hysterics over the matter.

Kevin Dayaratna is a mathematician for the Heritage Foundation, but said his presentation reflects his personal beliefs. He was among the witnesses Tuesday before the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction, co-chaired by state Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek.

The hearing centered on potential cap-and-trade legislation meant to lessen the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the state.

Cap and trade has become a perennial topic since 2015, but advocates hope the committee will draft legislation that will get through the Legislature next year and pass into law. After taking October off, the committee will convene in November and December.

Cap and trade would limit carbon emissions for the state's biggest polluters — those emitting at least 25,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases. A 2017 report showed polluters overall were emitting about 60 million metric tons per year.

As proposed, the cap

would decrease over time. To make sure they aren't penalized, large polluters would buy credits to cash in if they surpass pollution regulations. Those under the cap could sell their credits to companies that are over the cap.

It's a system working in California and several Canadian provinces. Most jurisdictions are on the same marketplace, managed by Western Climate Initiative. Oregon would likely join the marketplace.

On Tuesday, officials from Western Climate Initiative and Quebec followed Dayaratna to explain how the policy has worked in recent years. The hearing was among the most popular at the Capitol this week, with viewers spilling into two overflow rooms. Many audibly scoffed as Dayaratna posited that the committee should instead be focused on getting Oregonians the cheapest energy possible.

Cap-and-trade policy, he said, would "kill thousands of jobs, make families poor and have a negligible impact on climate."

When asked about increased extreme weather, Dayaratna said the narrative purporting an increase in frequency and severity of droughts and hurricanes are "myths propagated by the mainstream media."

Dayaratna was invited by state Sen. Fred Girod, R-Stayton. Girod acknowledged the controversy of bringing him to the Capitol, and asked Dayaratna to explain he wasn't representing the oil industry.

Dayaratna said that the Heritage Foundation gets minimal financial support from corporations. However, a significant amount of funding for the organization has often come from the Koch brothers, who own Koch Industries. Koch Industries manufactures and refines petroleum, among

other things.

Girod twice thanked Dayaratna for traveling from the East Coast for the hearing, saying the committee was "blessed" to have him provide his perspective.

The Quebec officials painted a different picture. The province implemented cap and trade in 2013, and the following year partnered with California to trade credits. Cap and trade regulates Quebec companies responsible for 85 percent of the province's greenhouse gas emissions, officials said.

But the regulations haven't put a chokehold on industry. Officials testified that the regulation increased competition,

giving the province its strongest economy ever and a 5.6 percent unemployment rate, third lowest in Canada.

Past Oregon legislation, including a 2017 bill that died despite 33 co-sponsors, indicates the policy would also include an investment element. In a 2018 bill, credits were projected to have a floor of \$16 per metric ton, and then increase each year due to inflation. That money would go into a fund to be invested in

projects combating emissions or preparing the state for climate change.

The projects could range from a citizen applying for funds to put solar panels on their home to a city looking to build a light-rail train. The state could also use some of the money for things such as wildfire mitigation.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group, Pamplin Media Group and Salem Reporter.

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