

Astoria to close free RV dump station

Wastewater treatment at risk

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Daily Astorian

Astoria will close a free RV dump station near the New Youngs Bay Bridge by the end of the year due to staff concerns that the unmonitored site could put the city's wastewater treatment system at risk.

The dump station is a vulnerability in a wastewater system experiencing higher annual loads, Public Works Department staff told the City Council Monday. The city does not monitor the station and does not track what gets dumped there.

If the wastewater system were deemed unable to handle these higher loads overall, the state could require a new, technical plant estimated to cost around \$50 million.

Staff, hoping to extend the useful life of the system, are identifying problem spots like the dump station. They have sent flyers out to residential customers, reminding them of what should and should not be flushed down a toilet — “a toilet is not a trash can!” — and working with large industrial users like local breweries.

Fort Stevens State Park also provides RV dump services. After the Astoria dump station closes on Dec. 31, users will be able to go there instead, staff said.

City councilors voted 4-1 to close the dump station. Councilor Tom Brownson was the sole “no” vote. He advocated for delaying a decision to give staff more time to study the issue and investigate a “pay to dump” solution.

A handful of residents also asked the City Council to keep the dump station open. It's not just for tourists passing through, they said.

Dan Sealy, who lives in city limits, uses the dump sta-

tion occasionally and opposed the closure. He pointed out that public restrooms are “open portals, too.”

The dump station is a small entry into the larger system, he said.

“I appreciate their concern about keeping our system in good shape,” he added. “I don't want to see us have to spend \$50 million but I can't imagine this one little RV station is what's going to cause us to have to build the new system.”

William Olson, from Svensen, also wondered what homeless people living out of their RVs will use, arguing that they will dump where it is convenient if the station isn't open. The Fort Stevens dump station is not open all day, he said. The next closest public dump stations are in Rainier and Wheeler, both almost 60 miles away from Astoria.

He argued that the influx of tourists in the summer and their use of restrooms in town probably has more of an overall impact than the RV dump station.

But City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill was not convinced. She said she was speaking up for the people “who would like to be able to affordably flush their toilet in Astoria.”

“It's going to be a terrible inconvenience to some of the people who came here tonight and spoke very well trying to defend the closure of the dump station,” she said. “But for the greater good of Astoria, we need to do what our public works staff is recommending and extend the life of our sewage treatment plant.”

“I don't think that we should continue to have an unchecked, free RV dump station so tourists can come and dump their crap so the ratepayers in Astoria have to pay more money,” she added. “That's ridiculous.”

Oregon gubernatorial campaign fundraising continues torrid pace

Double the previous record

By **JEFF MAPES**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Final disclosure reports filed before today's election show that the two major candidates for Oregon governor are continuing their torrid fundraising.

Democratic incumbent Gov. Kate Brown raised more than \$17 million. Republican challenger Knute Buehler raised \$18.5 million.

So far, the two have doubled the previous record for an Oregon governor's race,



Knute Buehler



Kate Brown

set in 2010. The reports cover money raised and spent up to eight days before the election.

In that period, Buehler received several business-related donations of up to \$10,000. Brown received \$100,000 from the Planned Parenthood PAC of Oregon. Abortion rights advocates have staunchly backed her re-election campaign.

During the campaign, both candidates were heavily supported by the partisan gubernatorial associations that are funded by numerous special interests. The Republican Governors Association gave Buehler nearly \$3.4 million while the Democratic Governors Association sent \$2 million to Brown.

Nike co-founder Phil Knight attracted national attention by giving a total of \$2.5 million to Buehler over the course of his campaign. Knight also gave another \$1 million to the Republican Governors Association. Buehler was also heavily backed by the timber industry and several other busi-

ness interests.

Brown received more than \$2 million from organized labor as well as hefty contributions from a Democratic women's group, environmental organizations and a gun-control group.

The tally for Brown and Buehler together tops \$35 million. The previous Oregon record for gubernatorial election fundraising pales in comparison.

In 2010, Republican Chris Dudley and Democratic incumbent John Kitzhaber together raised more than \$17.7 million for their campaigns. Kitzhaber edged Dudley by a small margin in the election.

Supreme Court justices sound favorable to Alaska hunter with hovercraft

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court sounded skeptical Monday of the National Park Service's authority to prevent an Alaskan moose hunter from using his motorized rubber boat to access remote areas of the state.

The justices heard arguments in a case that tests the limits of the federal government's authority in a state in which more than 60 percent of the land is federally owned.

The state and moose hunter John Sturgeon are arguing that the National Park Service cannot enforce a national ban on amphibious vehicles known as hovercraft on a river in Alaska for which the state claims ownership, even though it runs through a national conservation area.

Sturgeon won an earlier round at the Supreme Court.

The case stems from Sturgeon's 2007 encounter with three park rangers who ordered



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivals

Alaska resident John Sturgeon walks outside the Supreme Court on Monday.

him off the Nation River within the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve in northeast Alaska. The rangers told him it was illegal to operate the noisy craft that can navigate shallow water or even mud. He sued in 2011.

The issue is whether a federal law enacted in 1980 to protect undisturbed land but also allow Alaska residents to maintain their way of life provides an exception to National Park Ser-

vice's regulation of rivers that pass through national parks.

“Well, but, I mean, the waters are very important to Alaskans' way of life in the way they aren't elsewhere,” Chief Justice John Roberts said,

voicing doubt about the Trump administration's reading of the law that gives the federal government sweeping control of the waterways.

Justice Department lawyer Edwin Kneeder told the court that the 1980 law is a compromise because it allows hunting and airplane use in areas that usually are closed to those activities in national parks in other states.

But Congress did not intend to allow hovercraft to be used, Kneeder said, calling them very loud and unsightly.

Roberts didn't sound persuaded by that argument. “While you may think a hovercraft is unsightly, I mean, if you're trying to get from point A to point B, it's pretty beautiful,” he said.

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