



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Waves lash Hug Point on a stormy day. Hikers must keep track of tides when walking through this portion of the Oregon Coast Trail.

## New deal reached on dams, salmon

A three-year pause in protracted litigation

By **TONY SCHICK, CASSANDRA PROFITA and DAVID STEVES**  
*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

A new agreement aims to help more young salmon make their way past dams along the Columbia and Snake rivers.

The agreement, released Tuesday, spells out new strategies for spilling more water over the dams — and sending less water through power-generating turbines — each spring. It signals a reprieve to the yearslong legal skirmishes that have been playing out in federal courts over how best to save salmon and steelhead from extinction.

The fish face a number of challenges because of the hydroelectric dams built on the two rivers throughout the 20th century. Those threats include miles of slack-water behind dams, forcing juvenile fish to swim down rivers where currents previously carried them along. Dams also have created more opportunities for predators like sea lions and cormorants to prey on young salmon. And getting past the dams and their turbine blades presents dangers of its own.

Government and tribal leaders announced the new agreement, describing it as a way to strike a balance between fish survival and continued hydropower generation from eight dams on the lower Columbia and Snake rivers.

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## STATE TO CLOSE GAPS ON OREGON COAST TRAIL

### Hikers struggle to navigate sections

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**D**issuaded by snow and dangerous river crossings, some backpackers ditched the popular Pacific Crest Trail in early 2017 and turned to the shorter, less well-known Oregon Coast Trail.

But though the trail was declared “hikeable” in 1988, hikers looking to walk it from end to end struggled to navigate gaps between segments and faced unclear signs, few legal camping options and, in general, a trail that wasn’t quite ready for them.

Now the state is looking for solutions. This month, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department held several open house presentations across the state to gather feedback from stakeholders about the trail. The outreach followed guidance established in a law passed by state Legislature in 2017 that requires the department to work with other state agencies, local governments, nonprofits and organizations to develop an action plan.

The effort builds on previous connection strategies, like a 2011 plan that identified 31 gaps in the trail that ranged from natural hazards like creek and river crossings to stretches where hikers have to hop onto highway shoulders to reach the next section.

Though the state has worked over the years to address the gaps, Robin Wilcox, a senior state parks and trails planner, estimates over 20 remain today. Some of them are more recent obstacles, like a landslide in Ecola State Park that



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

A 10-man crew from the South Fork Forest Camp chainsawed, mowed and raked its way over Tillamook Head, clearing the trail for the state Parks and Recreation Department in 2016.

sent a portion of the trail into the ocean.

There are other issues, as well, tied to changes in property ownership and questions about how best to maintain the trail’s different sections.

These types of challenges are common with any long trail system, said Chris Havel, the associate director for Oregon State Parks.

“That’s always the case with long trails,” he said. “You get the first 70 percent, 80 percent figured out ... but even portions of the Pacific Crest Trail went unresolved for decades.”

#### 400 miles

The Oregon Coast Trail runs for nearly 400 miles, though the actual distance can vary depending on how a person chooses to hike. The trail is not continuous, interrupted by highways,

towns, property lines and the ocean. In some places, hikers must time their trek with the tides as the trail drops down from forested hills to sandy beaches, around rock outcroppings and back up again.

In fact, most people experience the trail through day hikes at state parks, perhaps not even realizing they are walking a piece of a much larger system.

“You know, honestly, I think one of the main challenges still is that people don’t even know the Oregon Coast Trail is a thing, that it exists and why it could be important for them,” Wilcox said in a presentation to state House lawmakers in May.

“That is an exciting opportunity.”

On the North Coast, the Oregon

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## Reopening causeway would be expensive

Structural problems at East Mooring Basin

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Reopening the East Mooring Basin causeway to pedestrians could cost upward of \$250,000, the Port of Astoria heard Tuesday from a local marine contractor.

Employees with Bergerson Construction recently spent most of a working day underneath the causeway, reviewing the severe deterioration in the substructure that led the state Department of Transportation last month to recommend its immediate closure to all traffic.

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## Port considers selling land to make money

### One option to help with repairs

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
*The Daily Astorian*

The Port of Astoria might sell property to help solve its financial woes.

After hearing about the Port’s need for \$20 million to bring its docks up to proper working order, Commissioner Dirk Rohne said, “I think we should put everything on the table.”

Jim Knight, the Port’s executive director, has said that while the agency can cover operations, it does not

have the resources to repair an aging, ailing infrastructure. The Port has recently left unprofitable leases at North Tongue Point and the Skipanon Peninsula to save money.

“Since I’ve been here, commissioners, it’s been nearly sacrosanct that we would not ever, under any circumstances, sell property,” Knight said. “Perhaps we’re in the circumstances now. We may not have any other choices.”

The Port’s bylaws include a clause barring the agency from selling land except under certain circumstances. Eileen Eakins, the Port’s general counsel, said those

circumstances include when property sales are consistent with the Port’s strategic plan, will create a significant number of family wage jobs, would enhance adjoining Port properties or would help the agency achieve self-sustainability.

While the exceptions would allow a sale of property to raise money, Eakins recommended the Port modify the bylaws to more clearly lay out when the agency can do so.

The idea was met with a cold shoulder from Commissioner Bill Hunsinger,

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Facing financial trouble, the Port of Astoria may sell off property.