

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Garbage, feces take a toll on national parks

Impacts from the lack of rangers and other staff

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and JOCELYN GECKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Human feces, overflowing garbage, illegal off-roading and other damaging behavior in fragile areas were beginning to overwhelm some of the West’s iconic national parks, as a partial government shutdown left the areas open to visitors but with little staff on duty.

“It’s a free-for-all,” said Dakota Snider, 24, who lives and works in Yosemite Valley, as Yosemite National Park officials announced closings of some minimally supervised campgrounds and public areas within the park that are overwhelmed.

“It’s so heartbreaking. There is more trash and human waste and disregard for the rules than I’ve seen in my four years living here,” Snider said.

The partial federal government shutdown has forced furloughs of hundreds of thousands of federal government employees. This has left many parks without most of the rangers and others who staff campgrounds and otherwise keep parks running.

Unlike shutdowns in some previous administrations, the Trump administration was leaving parks open to visitors despite the staff furloughs, said John Garder, senior budget director of the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association.

“We’re afraid that we’re going to start seeing significant damage to the natural resources in parks and potentially to historic and other cultural artifacts,” Garder said. “We’re concerned there’ll be impacts to visitors’ safety.”

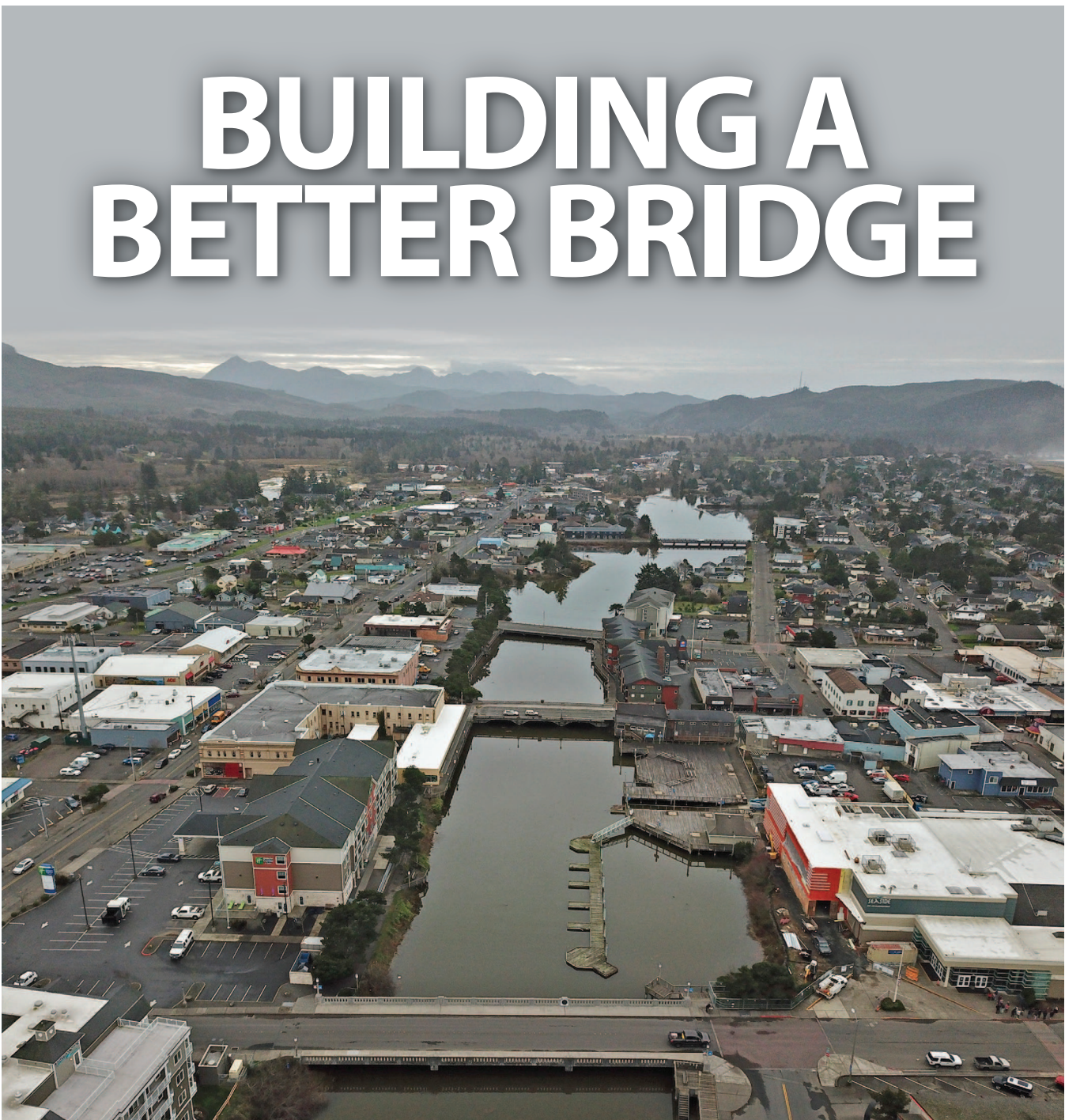
“It’s really a nightmare scenario,” Garder said.

Under the park service’s shutdown plan, authorities have to close any area where garbage or other problems become threats to health and safety or to wildlife, spokesman Jeremy Barnum said in an email.

“At the superintendent’s discretion, parks may close grounds/areas with sensitive natural, cultural, historic, or archaeological resources vulnerable to destruction, looting, or other damage that cannot be adequately protected by the excepted law enforcement staff that remain on duty,” Barnum said.

In the southern Sierra Nevada in central California, some areas of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks were closed Monday evening. In Sequoia, home to immense and ancient giant sequoias, General Highway was closed because overflowing trash bins were spreading litter and posed a threat to wildlife and the icy, jammed roadway was seeing up to three-hour delays, according to the National Park Service.

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Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A new study could help communities like Seaside determine how to improve aging bridges.



Several bridges and roads in Seaside have been deemed potentially problematic in an earthquake and tsunami.



Pedestrians cross a bridge over the Necanicum River in Seaside.

New research provides insight into tsunami risk

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

The way bridges are assessed for tsunami risk needs to be rethought, new research suggests.

In a study published by Oregon State University and the University of Nevada, Reno, researchers found that previous assumptions about how force from a tsunami impacts bridge infrastructure don’t necessarily hold true.

Most studies have only looked at the total force a tsunami puts on a bridge, rather than how force impacts individual components like girders, the horizontal beam that supports the deck, and bearings, the part that provides a resting surface between the columns and the deck.

Standard girder bridges are built with the assumption that all of the stresses from a tsunami are being transmitted and absorbed through the foundation.

The study found that different types of force brought on by a sustained rushing wall of water actually transfers a large amount of pressure onto the supporting parts of the bridge, like the girders, deck chambers, bearings and connections. These parts are not factored in when designing for tsunami resilience.

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The Glam Tram was a fixture over the past several years in Astoria.

For the Glam Tram, the fun is over

Insurance hassles end popular shuttle

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Glam Tram, Jeff Daly’s open-air party shuttle that has whisked passengers around downtown Astoria since 2014, is no more.

Unable to find affordable insurance, Daly has retired the vehicle to storage. It will either be sold or sent to the scrap heap.

The bus was built in the 1960s to take people around the Los Angeles Zoo. An Oregon Coast real estate com-

pany acquired the tram in the 1970s to shuttle prospective buyers. According to Daly, the tram broke down within a few years and languished.

Daly learned of the vehicle several years ago when it was rusting in a junkyard in Jeffers Garden. The bus was about to be scrapped before he acquired it and started fixing it up with the help of mechanic Jason Banghart in Hammond.

The tram is part of Daly’s collection of vintage vehicles, including a 1928 Model A rat rod, a 1969 woodie station wagon and a 1948 Chrysler clown car. Last summer, he debuted the Joy Train, a

restored American Legion Forty & Eight train built on a motor-home chassis.

Getting the Glam Tram back on the road also involved several trips to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get the vehicle registered, eventually, as a 2014 assembled bus.

The tram has built a following over the past several years, taking passengers downtown with its glowing lights, blaring sound system and propane fireplace. It has ended up on television news and was used in a music video by Blind Pilot.

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