Reserve: 'It's a pretty massive experiment'

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Diverse species

People are used to looking at the reserve from the land, not the most informative view, Gardner said. The information state researchers have been able to gather about the diverse species, from sea cucumbers to rockfish, fascinates her — and she knows she's not alone.

"The (state fish and wildlife) scientists are like, 'Oh, we've got this barnacle species," Gardner said. No big deal. "But for those of us who live on the land, that's big news. We didn't know that was out there."

Most people get a glimpse of the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve while hiking trails in Oswald West State Park or when visiting Short Sand Beach. But on Thursday, the community will get a chance to learn more about the management plan and dive below the surface.

Cristen Don, the marine reserves program leader, will take people on a virtual tour of all the reserves, with a heavy focus on Cape Falcon, as part of the Nature Matters lecture series in Astoria hosted by Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and the North Coast Watershed Association.

"It's a pretty massive experiment in its own way to do this kind of comprehensive long-term research in this nearshore environment where there's so much scientists don't know," said Kelsey Adkisson, communications and engagement project leader at the marine reserves program.

In Oregon's cold waters, things grow slowly and some of the species found in the Cape Falcon reserve do not reproduce quickly. It



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

The Cape Falcon Marine Reserve is the latest addition to the state's protected coastal marine areas.

could be more than a decade before researchers really see what protection has meant for the area.

The state partnered with researchers from Oregon State University last year to look at temperature, salinity, oxygen and chlorophyll levels in the ocean at Cape Falcon. They will track these conditions from year to year and see how they influence the distribution and abundance of marine organisms.

A challenging site to study

But Cape Falcon is a challenging site to study.

Researchers must launch from the Port of Garibaldi, down the coast past Manzanita and Rockaway Beach, and they are at the mercy of the weather. Some days, it is not safe to cross the bar to the ocean. Even on days when they do get out to the reserve, sometimes they are not able to see everything they would like to see.

"Cape Falcon is our youngest marine reserve ... so we are still learning about which conditions make for the best underwater visibility to maximize data collection efforts," said Lindsay Aylesworth, research project leader for the marine reserves program.

Though they have a sense of the many species of fish and invertebrates that live in the reserve, they are still trying to answer seemingly basic questions like: How many fish use the reserve?

"We don't know," Adkisson said. "They're under the water. It's really hard to count them. ... Even at that level there's a lot of unknowns."

Different species vary widely in how they use the rocky reefs.

"In the reserve there will be species that are more transient and some that are more homebodies," Adkisson said. With the fish that are only passing through, "We may not see the changes (due to protecting the area) as quickly, if at all."

But species like China rockfish — a reserve resident researchers are particularly interested in tend to stay on one rocky reef for most of their lives. These species will likely be able to tell researchers the most about what it means to have protected areas like the reserves.

The state hopes to have a draft management plan for Cape Falcon completed this year. An online survey to collect more public input is available through March 21 at oregonmarinereserves. com

Gearhart city official charged with aggravated harassment

By BRENNA VISSER The Daily Astorian

The building official for Gearhart has been charged with aggravated harassment after allegedly spitting at a Seaside police officer.

Mark Brien was arrested earlier this month after officers responded to a report of a person punching walls in his house. When officers confronted Brien, he became confrontational, according to court documents. While putting Brien into a patrol car, a Seaside officer stepped back and made

a statement indicating that Brien had spit onto his face, according to court documents.

Brien was sent to Providence Seaside Hospital for an evaluation by medical staff. He was determined not to be a threat to himself or others and was subsequently released.

The city will continue to monitor the situation before making any decisions about Brien's employment, Sweet said.

"We're sorry that this hap-

pened. We're concerned for Mark and we're very appreciative of what our officers do in this community," Sweet said. "We just hope for the best for everyone in this."



Warrenton has sought lodging taxes from the Shilo Inn.

Warrenton sues over back taxes at Shilo Inn

Hotel owes more than \$130,000

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ The Daily Astorian

Warrenton has filed a lawsuit against the Shilo Inn, alleging the hotel owes more than \$130,000 in unpaid lodging taxes.

The complaint, filed in Circuit Court on Monday, asks for payment of delinquent taxes, accumulated fines and interest of \$134,132.

The hotel has not paid the city what it owes since last July, according to the complaint.

It is not the first time the company has been late on its bills.

"(Shilo Inn) has an extensive history of late payments of transient room taxes," Spencer Parsons, an attorney for Warrenton, stated in the complaint.

The city had not granted Shilo Inn any kind of extension for paying the taxes, and sent multiple written demands, most recently in January and February, to try to collect payment.

The hotel had until the end of the business day Feb. 22 to pay what was owed or the city threatened to file a lawsuit.

Though City Manager Linda Engbretson said she did hear from Shilo Inn before the deadline, the hotel did not offer terms the city was interested in accepting.

City leaders say the hotel has also been late on paying utility bills over the years.

According to the complaint, Shilo Inn owes Warrenton just under \$87,000 in unpaid lodging taxes, but lack of payment over the past seven months means an additional \$47,230 in penalties and interest is due.

The company has gotten into trouble for similar reasons elsewhere. Portland filed suit against Shilo Inn in February seeking \$314,000 in unpaid taxes. In 2016, Seaside filed a lawsuit for more than \$100,000 in lodging taxes owed by a Shilo Inn hotel.

In 2002, the Oregonian reported that Shilo Inn hotels in several cities, including Seaside, were in default on loan agreements.

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Brien is away at rehab, City Administrator Chad Sweet said.

The city will work with Jim Brien, who works with Mark Brien in the same company, for building official services while Mark Brien is away.





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