

Razor clamming reopens on North Coast

Toxin levels fall below limit

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Razor clamming is open again on the North Coast.

Unsafe levels of the marine toxin domoic acid in razor clam meat closed Clatsop County beaches to harvest in early March. Now recent shellfish samples indicate the toxin levels have fallen below the closure limit, according to information released by the Oregon Department of Agriculture on Friday.

Recreational razor clamming is now open in Oregon from the Columbia River to Cape Blanco, north of Port Orford.

Stormy weather kept most people inside Saturday, but around a dozen people could be seen braving the surf and occasional rainfall near the South Jetty on Sunday afternoon during low tide.

“Today is pretty stormy, but we live here and we know: Don’t turn your back on the ocean,” said Jeri Johnson of Svensen, who was out on the beach with her family, coat zipped to her throat and hood up against the rain. “We’re just glad it’s open again.”

Her husband was a distant figure, wading in knee-deep water. Johnson and others who had come without their waders hung back and watched the waves. They darted out when the outgoing tide exposed more of the sandbar and then raced the waves back to keep from getting soaked.

There was, in the words of one clammer who had only managed to dig a few small clams in between wave pulses, “just too much ocean today.”

State fishery managers struggled to secure the samples that made the opening possible. Bad weather made it difficult, even at low tide, to access the sandbars in

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Camp Rilea purchases former school

Property will host science academy

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A decade after running low on students and closing the doors, the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists sold the former Pleasant View Adventist School as part of a sound barrier around Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center.

The state Military Department is retrofitting the former schoolhouse into the third statewide campus of Starbase, a U.S. Department of Defense-funded youth science and technology academy.

“We’d been seeking that property for a while as a buffer for Camp Rilea, for at least 10 to 15 years,” said retired Col. Todd Farmer, a training site manager at Camp Rilea.

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Bridgette Blakesley

Volunteers turn soil to prepare mountain bike trails.

From mountain bikes to the sea in Seaside

Better trails for cyclists

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Bridget Hildreth and Jason England prepare to hit the trails.



Bridgette Blakesley

Progress made by trail volunteers.

SEASIDE — From the mountains to the sea on a bicycle — that’s the goal of volunteers who came together for the “Big Dig” work party at Klootch Creek Park on Saturday.

A steady downpour failed to dampen support from volunteers of the North Coast Trail Alliance, which aims to develop mountain bike trails from the top of Twin Peaks down to the park entrance on U.S. Highway 26.

Nell Stamper, of Astoria, checked volunteers in at base camp.

Stamper has been involved with the project since plans were first conceived 18 months ago.

“It’s raining today and cold and damp and drizzly, and we have a great turnout of people coming from all over the place: Portland, local, and all the way down the coast,” Stamper said.

After its inception in 2015, the North Coast Trail Alliance quickly saw success with Seaside’s approval of the Cartwright Park pump track, all with the labor and support of volunteers.

Since then, they affiliated as a sub-chapter with the Northwest Trail Alliance and the International Mountain Biking Association.

In late September, the North Coast Trail Alliance began clearing out future riding areas on Lewis & Clark Timberlands north of Klootch Creek County Park, 6 miles of downhill, single-track trail to start, with a goal of expanding to 40 connected miles over the next few years.

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For Astoria’s new fire chief, firefighting is personal



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Dan Crutchfield is the new Astoria fire chief.

Crutchfield served in Coos Bay

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

Dan Crutchfield isn’t entirely sure what inspired him to become a firefighter at such a young age.

As early as 4 years old, he remembers being fascinated by the big, red firetrucks he would see drive through his hometown of Coos Bay, always questioning where they were going and what they were doing.

Maybe he was inspired



by the day he saw his neighbor’s house catch fire across the street. Whatever it was, it’s a desire that has never wavered.

“I think a lot of little kids have that sense,” he said. “But then they grow out of it ... I didn’t grow out of it.”

In March, Crutchfield started as Astoria’s new fire chief after a 26-year career at the Coos Bay Fire Depart-

ment. Richard Curtis led the department as interim chief following the retirement of former Fire Chief Ted Ames in September.

“I’m humbled and honored to be here,” Crutchfield said.

Crutchfield started his firefighting career as a volunteer at 18 in Coos Bay before eventually being hired as a career firefighter in 1996.

“Everything about it seemed like it would be fun,” he said. “You don’t know fully until you get there ...

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