



Visitors to Arcadia Beach make their way down damaged stairs.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

CLIMATE CHANGE coastal parks face a new norm

Severe weather and rising sea level

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Trees lining the path to Arcadia Beach slant back against the hillside as if permanently enduring invisible gale-force winds.

The path down to the beach buckles and drops. A winter storm first washed away access to Arcadia Beach in 2015 and landslides and erosion continue to warp the path. Caution tape blocks off a spot near a set of stairs where the ground has crumbled away.

The state expects to begin rerouting and repairing the path this year. In the past, the storm damage would have been written off as the type of problem you just have to deal with on the coast sometimes.

After all, the popular parks in the Nehalem Bay Management Unit — including Arcadia Beach, not far from Cannon Beach — are dynamic landscapes. Park staff are used to seeing unusually high waves or storm surges wash out stairs or erode embankments during rough winters.

But now, park manager Ben Cox said, “we’re seeing that happen more and more with less power and force behind a storm because the water level is just higher to begin with.”

The days of simply making a repair at a place like Arcadia Beach and hoping it lasts may be over. The byproducts of climate change, such as more severe weather and rising sea levels as oceans warm and expand and glaciers melt, are already becoming apparent.

“I think the biggest shift for everyone is understanding that the events we’re responding to — the landslides and erosion



Connie and Joe Ratti climb their way up the damaged trail leading to the parking lot at Arcadia Beach.

— are, by and large now, not (the result of) meteorological outliers but the new norm,” Cox said.

Climate change has begun to influence a host of decisions at coastal state parks, from what land is acquired to how trails and facilities are repaired, replaced or even relocated.

Recent property acquisitions like Sitka Sedge near Pacific City “are either protected from some of the most dramatic effects, or are capable of adapting to it, or serve as a place to observe and understand these changes as they occur,” said Chris Havel, a spokesman for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

Meanwhile, planners see how some coastal properties not exposed to the ocean may serve “as a savings account of sorts

that could provide recreational opportunities if other properties become less usable,” he added.

Response plan

A climate change response plan prepared by the department in 2010 predicted a range of impacts to state parks.

These included saltwater intrusion into estuaries; changes in where wildlife species are able to survive and thrive; localized extinctions; increased risk of forest fires; flooding at some park facilities; and erosion that could threaten park infrastructure or historical sites, and even, in some cases, lead to the loss of entire facilities and beaches.

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Downtown project gets state backing

Former J.C. Penney would become taproom, food court

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The effort to turn the former J.C. Penney Co. into a taproom and food court has received nearly \$150,000 from state preservationists.

The Astoria Downtown Historic District Association secured \$148,880 from the Oregon Main Street Revitalization program, coupled with a \$103,640 local match, to restore the Duane Street facade of the old department store.

J.C. Penney closed in 2017 and was bought by local apartment complex owner Sean Fitzpatrick.

Fitzpatrick has partnered with Baked Alaska chef and co-owner Christopher Holen to create the Astoria Oregon Marketplace, a taproom on the building’s main showroom floor anchoring a food court.

“This grant is focused on economic development, and with the food court element, we knew it would be a strong contender,” said Sarah Lu Heath, executive director of the downtown association, who applied for the state grant.

The Duane Street frontage is largely a blank wall, its rectangular windows filled in with cinder blocks a decade ago. The grant will help with disabled access and pay for opening up the facade to its historic look, with large display windows topped by transoms, similar to other downtown storefronts.

The belief is that opening the view through the building will create more movement between the city’s main downtown retail corridor on Commercial Street and the growing business community, including several drinking establishments and food carts, on Duane.

The downtown association has focused on Duane Street as a way to expand the downtown corridor, Heath said. It recently awarded a contract for a mural in the 13th Street Alley between Commercial and Duane streets to improve pedestrian movement.

The grant is a shot in the arm for the J.C. Penney project. The developers have faced delays with permitting and contractors, making little progress so far beyond

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At Daily Astorian, an end of an era

Carriers deliver their last papers today

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Joan Betterton doesn’t own a telephone — landline or mobile. Or a computer. She doesn’t know how people use new technology to get the news.

But she understands the financial pressures that are changing the newspaper industry.

Betterton is one of more than 20 carriers who will deliver their last papers today as The Daily Astorian switches to tri-weekly print publication and delivery by the U.S. Postal Service next week.

Originally from Nebraska, Betterton moved to Knappa at age 7. She and her husband returned in 1992 to take care of her aging mother. It was then that she was asked by her nephew’s wife about subbing as a carrier for the newspaper.

“The first time she took me out there I was like, ‘Oh, I’m never going to learn it.



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian
Joan Betterton has delivered newspapers for The Daily Astorian since 1992.

I’m going to get lost,’” she said.

But she quickly learned the job, eventually took over deliveries to Arch Cape and later switched to the Warrenton-Hammond

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For a newspaper carrier, 100 miles a day through Knappa and Svensen

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

After driving the same 100 miles through Knappa and Svensen nearly every weekday for 22 years, Laurie Nicholas became very good at learning to pass the time.

Some days that meant singing along to the songs on the radio. Other trips were narrated by an audio book.

But oftentimes, she made a game of trying to memorize the names of the 200 people on her newspaper delivery route.

“Sometimes it’s a little boring ... You have a lot of time to think,” Nicholas said. “But every road or two you know someone.”

Nicholas, 57, was one of the The Daily Astorian’s longest-serving carriers. With EO Media Group’s decision to deliver the newspaper three days a week through the U.S. Postal Service, instead of five days with carriers, her run ends today.

“I’m really bummed out about it,” she said. “I made a lot of friends on the route.”

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