

Water: ‘The moratorium is without basis’

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“That’s very good news. I mean, what that says is that we do not think we will need another extension to this moratorium, that we will be able to end the moratorium within the next six months,” Dice said. “It’s not a promise or a commitment, but, you know, I’m certainly confident in what information I have seen.”

The moratorium has been a point of contention between property owners over the past year. Some believe the moratorium has been a way to block new development, since property owners need a documented water source before they can obtain a building permit from the county.

“If you tell me when the drought is going to end, I’ll tell you when the moratorium is going to end,” Dice had said at the November board meeting in response to questions from property owners.

Guido Paparoni, a geologist, and his wife, Margaret Rozendaal, a climate scientist, own a lot in Cove Beach. They have spent months analyzing the data and have come to the conclusion that there is no drought or water shortage in the late summer months. David Livermore, a hydro-geologist and longtime homeowner in Cove Beach, came to the same conclusions.

“There was no emergency in 2018. The moratorium is without basis,” Paparoni said during public comment on Saturday.

He said 2018 was a normal precipitation year in Cove Beach, adding that the 30 gallons per minute data points the water district used to declare the moratorium coincide



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Some property owners have challenged a moratorium issued by the Falcon Cove Beach Water District.

with periods of heavy rainstorms and are measurement errors.

“The district chose to use instantaneous minimum water production rates to call the moratorium,” Paparoni said. “Our findings are that the summer baseline was 150 gallons per minute the year the moratorium was enacted.”

Paparoni added that the actual consumption rates are one-fifth of the rates the water district reported to declare the moratorium.

“The bottom line is we all want ample, clean water,” Livermore said. “Our system is not under some threat where the year-rounders won’t have water if we spend some weekends. That is not true and managing a water system that has two tiers of consumers is not right or feasible.”

Livermore also advocated for tapping the brakes on the development of a second well.

Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson, who represents South County, said her skills, expertise and information — like some other neighbors — have been shut out by the board.

“We are all accountable as public servants to voters, to ratepayers and just to our neighbors. So I would ask for more humility and openness and welcoming everyone,” Thompson said.

Following the public hearing and the board’s vote to extend the moratorium, Dice addressed Paparoni’s report.

“We disagreed with the conclusions of the report,” Dice said. “We did send it in to our engineering partner, Curran-McLeod, who also agreed it was not appropriate for our particular case.”

However, Dice said there were interesting aspects of the report.

Butterfly: Reintroducing the butterfly to Saddle Mountain ‘provides a hedge against extinction’

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Anne Walker, a wildlife biologist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Newport field office, said the goal is to increase the size and number of populations. The service tells the zoo and other partners where and when to release the butterflies.

The lab at the Oregon Zoo has been working on silverspot recovery since 1999. It normally brings in females from the wild that already have fertile eggs and provides a safe environment for the resulting caterpillars and pupae before releasing them.

“To date, no one had bred this species of butterflies in captivity,” Walker said.

But this time, Koons decided to give it a try.

“I asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for permission to hold back some of those pupae in the lab and try to see if we could find some methods for captive breeding,” he said. “It’s been tried in the past but not successfully done.”

The lab held back 22 pupae from being released, and set up the right conditions for the butterflies to breed.

“When you have a whole bunch of chrysalis, the early ones are almost always males and the caterpillars that pupate later in the season are usually females,” Koons said. “There needs to be multiple males so there’s competition, because that’s how butterflies work.”

The male butterflies will already be out, they’ll pick up on the pheromone cues of a still-enclosed female, and they’ll be waiting for her to emerge from her chrysalis.

This method worked for one pair of butterflies, and the 269 caterpillars were born.

Walker said that having the ability to breed the butterflies in the lab provides an additional tool that might be used again in the future.

“The success of breeding in laboratory conditions may help to reduce the number of wild females we collect each year, typically 20 to 25 per year, for egg production,” Walker said.

The 269 butterflies will be released in any of the six locations in Oregon that need an extra boost of butterflies next year.

Some of the sites where Oregon silverspots remain are Saddle Mountain, Cascade Head and Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

There had not been any silverspots seen at Saddle Mountain since the 1970s, until the zoo and its partners reestablished the population in 2018.

“Saddle Mountain once supported an Oregon silverspot butterfly population in the past and the habitat is in excellent condition, so reintroducing the butterfly to this site provides a hedge against extinction,” Walker said.

Koons added that the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department helps with the recovery process at Saddle Mountain, removing invasive plants like English ivy and Scotch broom, while planting native plants like early blue violet. The early blue violet is key to silverspot survival, as the caterpillars eat it, they attach to it as pupae, and they lay eggs on it as butterflies.

“We are extremely encouraged that the Oregon Zoo butterfly lab has reached this milestone in raising the butterfly,” Walker said. “The Oregon Zoo, as well as our other partners, have made significant contributions to our recovery efforts for the Oregon silverspot.”

One of those partners is Seattle’s Woodland Park Zoo, which has also been helping reintroduce the silverspots to their historic locations. The Siuslaw National Forest and the Nature Conservancy have also been working to conserve silverspots on their lands and the North Coast Land Conservancy has been preparing future sites for reintroduction.

Crash: Driver charged with vehicular homicide

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Their father, Steve Richman, 63, sustained serious injuries.

Rebecca Richman’s boyfriend had minor injuries.

According to police, after striking the family, the driver hit a fire hydrant and a streetlight pole before getting out of the car and fleeing the scene.

The driver, Radalyn King, 23, has been charged with two counts

of vehicular homicide, one count of vehicular assault, felony hit and run and reckless driving.

Steve Richman lives in Los Angeles and owns a home in Astoria.

During the summer of 2017, Rebecca Richman worked as a law clerk for Clatsop County Circuit Court under the supervision of Judge Paula Brownhill. She was a law student at Lewis & Clark College and graduated and passed the bar earlier this year.

“Rebecca was smart and personable and inquisitive,” Brownhill said. “She had lots of energy and worked hard, working more hours than the program required. She was an excellent law clerk, and she would have been a good lawyer.”

“Her death is a tragic loss, and the circumstances are incomprehensible. My heart aches for her father Steve Richman, her boyfriend Andrew, and everyone who cared for Rebecca and her brother Michael.”

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