

Recreational fishing off on river over virus

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Oregon fishery managers closed recreational salmon and steelhead fisheries on the Columbia River on Thursday night to help limit the spread of the coronavirus.

The decision comes on the heels of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's announcement Wednesday that it was temporarily closing recreational fishing and shellfishing statewide.

Washington and Oregon jointly manage fisheries on the Columbia River and have sought to have concurrent regulations, fishery managers said. Other fisheries in Oregon — as well as fishing for species other than salmon and steelhead on the Columbia River — remain unchanged.

The closure is expected to last until at least April 8 and does not carry any implications for other fisheries — commercial or recre-

ational — yet.

State fishery managers are continually evaluating the situation, said Chris Kern, deputy fish division administrator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

It is a new scenario to close down fisheries because of a pandemic, he said. "Closures are usually due to the condition of the fish stocks, whether we've met catch limits or some other metric."

For now, he said the state is planning to conduct upcoming fisheries like the popular Buoy 10 recreational salmon fishery on the lower Columbia River as normal.

Under an executive order issued by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown earlier this week, anglers who do go out fishing must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other people. Everyone has been told to minimize nonessential travel.

Most North Coast cities imposed limitations on hotel stays over the weekend, further restricting visitors coming to the coast.



Hotels: 'Lodging operations will be an important extension of the fight'

Continued from Page A1

The emergency orders have exceptions for essential workers and people on long-term stays. Several hotels, however, have opted to temporarily close because of the decline in business as the government restriction's to prevent the spread of the virus tightened.

While the lodging association has not issued a legal challenge, it has reached out to local governments. Jason Brandt, the association's CEO, said the point is not to promote tourism, but to ensure hotel owners have flexibility to house essential workers if necessary.

"We're a little worried that it's short-sighted, given what the industry is doing to pivot to be there for health care professionals, and (provide) needed shelter for those who are still providing essential work in their local economies," he said.

The lodging association is working with the American Hotel and Lodging Association's Hotels for Hope, an online booking site helping medical workers, people facing quarantine and vulnerable populations needing shelter find vacant rooms. The initiative includes more than 160 lodgings in Oregon, including three in Astoria and four in Seaside.

Businesses with workers not covered by Gov. Kate Brown's order to stay at home could send people into the field, where they would need places to stay, Brandt said.

He reached out to Clatsop County, whose ban mostly covers vacation rentals outside



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Unlike other cities on the North Coast, Seaside has not explicitly banned short-term stays, instead asking hotels to abide by the honor system of only allowing essential employees and people in need of quarantine.

cities that have declared emergencies. The county's order includes exceptions for people staying longer than 30 days, locals who are quarantining and "for travel as directed by an employer."

"The county is not requiring specific documentation," County Manager Don Bohn said of determining essential workers. "The

lodging establishments are addressing (this) on a case-by-case basis. Most often, the lodging is paid directly by the employer."

One outlier is Seaside. The city declared an emergency, restricted access to the beach and other public facilities and ordered vacationers home, but left hotels to decide who can stay.

Jon Rahl, a city spokesman, said it's a difficult balance.

"They're open, providing lodging for essential services," Rahl said of hotels. "Could they be providing lodging to a leisure visitor? They're telling us that they're putting a halt to that."

Online booking sites still allow rooms to be reserved in Seaside for any date with vacancies. But employees contacted at several local hotels said they are only accepting people in town on essential business and canceling all other bookings made online or in person.

Seaside hotelier Masudur Khan, a board member of the lodging association, said he has been shutting down several properties, keeping open the City Center Motel for his employees and construction workers on another hotel he is building. He has also offered up the Coast River Inn for coronavirus patients needing quarantine.

"Hotels should be open for people who call in and show their company information," Khan said.

Brandt said he was reassured by his conversation with the county.

"My takeaway is that we are on the same page in making sure leisure travel at a time like this is mitigated, while making sure essential workers on the front lines have access to accommodations they need," he said. "Lodging operations will be an important extension of the fight against COVID-19 in the weeks to come."

DEL'S O.K. TIRE

point S

TIRE and AUTO SERVICE

Del Thompson, former owner of OK Rubber Welders.

Klyde Thompson, current owner
Mike Barnett, manager

Come See Us to have your Studs Removed by March 31st!

YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR TIRES

CUSTOM WHEELS

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES

Over 71 years of the Thompson family putting you first!

(503) 325-2861

35359 Business 101, Astoria

MON - FRI 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

SAT 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

pointstire.com/astoria

7th Annual

RUN ON THE RIVER

Sponsored by Buoy Beer Company
Along the beautiful Columbia River on the Astoria Riverwalk Trail

HALF MARATHON • 10K

5K • KIDS FUN RUN

PROCEEDS BENEFIT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH ASTORIA PARKS & RECREATION

Join us at www.astoriaparksfoundation.com to SIGN UP become a SPONSOR and to VOLUNTEER

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2020

RECEIVE A T-SHIRT AND GLASS STAMPED FINISHER'S MEDAL

PRIZES FOR TOP MALE AND FEMALE FINISHERS

COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH AND BEVERAGE FROM BUOY BEER CO.

ASTORIA PARKS, RECREATION & COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

#runontheriver Registration and prices at astoriaparksfoundation.com