

## IN BRIEF

## New Youngs Bay Bridge blocked after Monday morning crash

Traffic was delayed on the New Youngs Bay Bridge on Monday morning due to a crash.

Police say the two-vehicle crash blocked both lanes on the bridge for about one hour.

The bridge reopened just before noon. The traffic light at U.S. Highway 101 and E. Harbor Drive was a four-way stop while the Oregon Department of Transportation worked to fix the issue.

— *The Astorian*

## Gatherings, entertainment limited in Pacific County over virus concerns

LONG BEACH, Wash. — To reverse the spike in coronavirus cases across Washington state, gatherings in Pacific County must have no more than 10 attendees starting Monday.

The new order will apply to all counties in phase three of the state's reopening plan. Gov. Jay Inslee announced the new gathering limit during a news conference Thursday.

Under the previous Safe Start Order, counties in phase three were allowed to have gatherings of up to 50 people.

The new order will also ban live entertainment, regardless of whether it is indoor or outdoor. A worrying trend of new COVID-19 cases caused Inslee to take action to prevent social gatherings across the state.

## Halibut case overturned but Pacific County appeals

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Pacific County prosecutors will fight a Superior Court's decision to reverse the convictions of two brothers who were charged with exceeding daily halibut fishing limits.

In March, a judge found serious flaws in the cases of David C. Gudgell, 59, and Robert W. Gudgell, 58, two charter boat captains who worked for their family's Ilwaco-based business, Pacific Salmon Charters.

The judge found the search warrant used in the cases was overbroad, prosecutors had overcharged the men and important instructions were not given to the jurors before deciding a verdict.

In June, the Washington State Court of Appeals agreed to review the decision overturning the convictions. The decision of county prosecutors to further pursue the case came as a surprise to Mark W. Muenster, an attorney based in Vancouver, Washington, who represented the brothers in their appeals.

"Both David and Robert complied with all of the provisions of the sentence that the judge had put in place," Muenster said. "They did the jail time and suffered a year of lost income."

— *Chinook Observer*

## DEATH

July 17, 2020

MYERS, Virginia Arlee, 99, of Gearhart, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

## MEMORIAL

Friday, July 24

CLARK, Gary Lee — Burial with U.S. Navy honors at 1:30 p.m., Willamette National Cemetery, 11800 S.E. Mount Scott Blvd. in Portland. Clark, 72, of The Dalles, former longtime Astoria resident, died July 15, 2020, in The Dalles. Spencer, Libby & Powell Funeral Home of The Dalles is in charge of the arrangements.

## ON THE RECORD

## Theft

• Stephen A. Smith, 54, of Seattle, Washington, was arrested Sunday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

## Unauthorized entry

• Andrew James Benson Oyler, 24, was arrested Saturday on 17th Street in Astoria for unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Port of Astoria Commission**, 4 p.m., workshop, (electronic meeting).

**Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission**, 5:15 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors**, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A., Seaside.

**Warrenton-Hammond School District Board**, 6 p.m., special session, (electronic meeting).

**Shoreline Sanitary District Board**, 7 p.m., Gearhart Herdig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

## WEDNESDAY

**Astoria Parks Board**, 6:45 a.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

## THURSDAY

**Sunset Empire Transportation District Board**, 9 a.m., (electronic meeting).

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## Two board members resign from Sunset Empire Park and Rec

## Chapman, Mills step down

By R.J. MARX  
*The Astorian*

SEASIDE — Two Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board members announced their resignations Sunday.

Jeremy Mills, the chairman of the board, and John Chapman, a board member, each issued statements announcing their decisions to step down.

Their resignations come after park district staff filed a formal grievance regarding "behaviors unbecoming of a board member" involving Mills and Chapman, including offensive remarks and sexual innuendo.

At a July 7 meeting, information technology director



John Chapman    Jeremy Mills

Darren Gooch and district staff mentioned incidents from last December to late June of alleged inappropriate behavior and sexual innuendo involving Mills and Chapman, both inside district facilities and out.

Gooch and employees called for the immediate resignation of Mills and Chapman.

"These incidents besmirch the district's name in the community and undermine staffs' ability to conduct their work effectively," district management and staff wrote in a letter released

at the meeting.

At the same meeting, Skyler Archibald, the district's executive director, alleged Mills had delivered an inappropriate financial offer to Archibald in December after Mills allegedly sought his services at the insurance agency Mills operates in Seaside.

Mills sent a letter to Archibald and the Seaside Signal on Sunday.

"When I first stepped onto the board for Park and Rec my only goal was to strive to make it the best it could be," Mills wrote. "At this point though I have come to believe that the direction the board is going is no longer a direction I can be a part of. I hope and pray that the new board can still continue to make successful and forward movement while still being responsible to every-

one whose taxes are supporting our incredible programs. This is a heavy burden and I know that each will do so to their best understanding."

Chapman offered a public apology in his announcement that he was stepping down.

"The road to getting here is one I believe I need to put in my own words," Chapman wrote. "I have prayed long and hard and know that I only need to speak with honesty and truth."

In a 2,000-word statement, Chapman said the district's executive director position needs more clarity in its operation and role.

"It's become clear many of the fiscal choices and goals of the executive director's directions are not something I can accept or support, making me ineffective as a board member at this current time," he wrote.

## Forest service considers rule change for logging of old growth forests

By COURTNEY FLATT  
*Northwest News Network*

The U.S. Forest Service is considering changing a rule that prevents logging of large trees on national forestland in parts of Washington state and Oregon.

Federal officials say it's an important update that could help tame large-scale wildfires. Conservation groups worry the amendment process has been rushed and could damage important forest habitat.

The land management plans, known as the "Eastside Screens," came about in 1995 to protect old growth trees east of the Cascades. The rules were meant to be temporary. The Forest Service wants to amend a section of the policy called the "21-inch rule," which prohibits harvesting trees that are greater than 21-inches in diameter.

Conservation groups say the provisions, though largely unknown, are "the most meaningful protections for large trees and old growth" in Oregon.

"By keeping old growth logging off the table for 25 years on public lands, these protections for wildlife habitat, clean water, and other values have kept the peace and created conditions for some level of agreement over forest management in the region," Rob Klavins with Oregon Wild said.

While Klavins says his group isn't opposed to removing individual trees at times, he says hastily removing the 21-inch rule would drastically weaken the Eastside Screens provisions, and thereby hurt old growth forests.

The amendment would apply to the Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, Malheur, Ochoco, Umatilla, and Wal-



Oregon Department of Forestry

The U.S. Forest Service is considering a change to its 'Eastside Screens' rule that prevented logging of some trees over 21-inches in Eastern Oregon and Washington state.

Iowa-Whitman national forests, which are primarily in Oregon with some sections in southeastern Washington. It wouldn't apply to the portion of Washington's Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest that falls under the Eastside Screens management plan. The Colville National Forest, in northeastern Washington, recently removed the Eastside Screens provisions — including the 21-inch rule — from its forest plan.

Forestry groups say the blanket rules don't help make wise land management decisions. Amending the 21-inch rule would lead to better management of individual stands, says Andy Geissler with the American Forest Resource Council.

"It should be done on a stand-by-stand basis. Using just one number for every stand out there, without actually looking at the stands, is just flawed. It's using this absolute approach, and it

just doesn't work," Geissler said.

Geissler says removing the 21-inch rule won't drastically increase the amount of logging done on national forests, calling it an "incremental change." But conservation groups aren't convinced that's the case.

The Forest Service says it's trying to encourage a mix of different types of trees of all different sizes. That would help forests better withstand wildfires and drought, spokesperson Stephen Baker said.

"The ability to remove some 21-inch trees would help us manage for more resilient forests with species that are less likely to die in wildfires and other disturbances. It could also allow us to manage homogenous, high-density stands in a way that lowers the potential for large-scale forest die-offs from individual disturbances like a wildfire or an insect outbreak," Baker wrote in an email.

Baker says the 21-inch rule has allowed fast-growing, shade tolerant species to thrive, such as grand firs. That means there are bigger trees in forests, but not necessarily older trees. He says those younger trees can out-compete more fire-adapted species, such as ponderosa pines.

A recent white paper from the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station said "tree diameter alone" was an "insufficient guide for restoration." In its recent bioregional assessment, the Forest Service said the Eastside Screens have helped stabilize old growth forests on federal lands, but that these forests are now at risk of increasing wildfires.

The Forest Service is developing a draft environmental assessment that would provide four alternatives for tree removal — likely due out at the end of July. A final decision is expected by next spring.

## Fishing: Fishermen pay for cost of having an observer on board

Continued from Page A1

"An observer doesn't work for you," she said. "You don't have that same level of control over whatever they're doing ... It just seems like a really unnecessary risk."

Observer coverage was one of several measures required in the West Coast groundfish trawl catch share program after certain rockfish species were declared overfished. A number of these species have since rebounded.

Fishermen pay for the cost of having an observer on board, but the observers are employed by outside companies. On the West Coast, observer companies told the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration they would be taking public health precautions because of the pandemic.

Mann does not think every

fisherman is interested in a waiver. She thinks less than 15 boats in Oregon, Washington state and California would take advantage of an extended blanket waiver.

"Some people don't even think the virus is a real deal so they'll take the observer. They don't care," she said. "But there are people who do care and are concerned about that."

The industry is also seeking temporary relief for fishermen from the payment of mandatory cost recovery fees, a percentage of the value of the fish harvested that goes to cover the costs of managing, enforcing and data collection in the West Coast trawl program.

The coronavirus pandemic, which has already upended major industries and economies globally, has not spared fishing.

Outbreaks have shut down plants and kept vessels at docks. Markets have shifted or, in some cases, disappeared. Coastal communities have seen spikes in cases at seafood processing plants.

This month, Seafood Harvesters of America, representing industry groups and fishermen, also sent a letter, this one addressed to National Marine Fisheries Services administrators and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

They asked the agencies to add a third criteria to the emergency action under which the fisheries service can waive observer coverage that considers "the health and safety of captains, crew, coastal communities and observers."

They argue that the agency has taken a scattered approach to observer coverage across national fisher-

ies, waiving it in some areas and enforcing it in others. The agency has said a flexible approach is necessary given the differences in fisheries and fishing communities' circumstances.

But in their letter, industry leaders note that the agency canceled scientific surveys because of the logistics during an outbreak and the possible risk to staff. They argue that the same caution should be possible for the fishing industry, too.

"We understand the need for science and data — they are the underpinnings of all of our fisheries management," the letter stated. "Our businesses, as well as sound fisheries management, depend on science and data. However, we cannot safely gather this data through the deployment of human observers at this time."