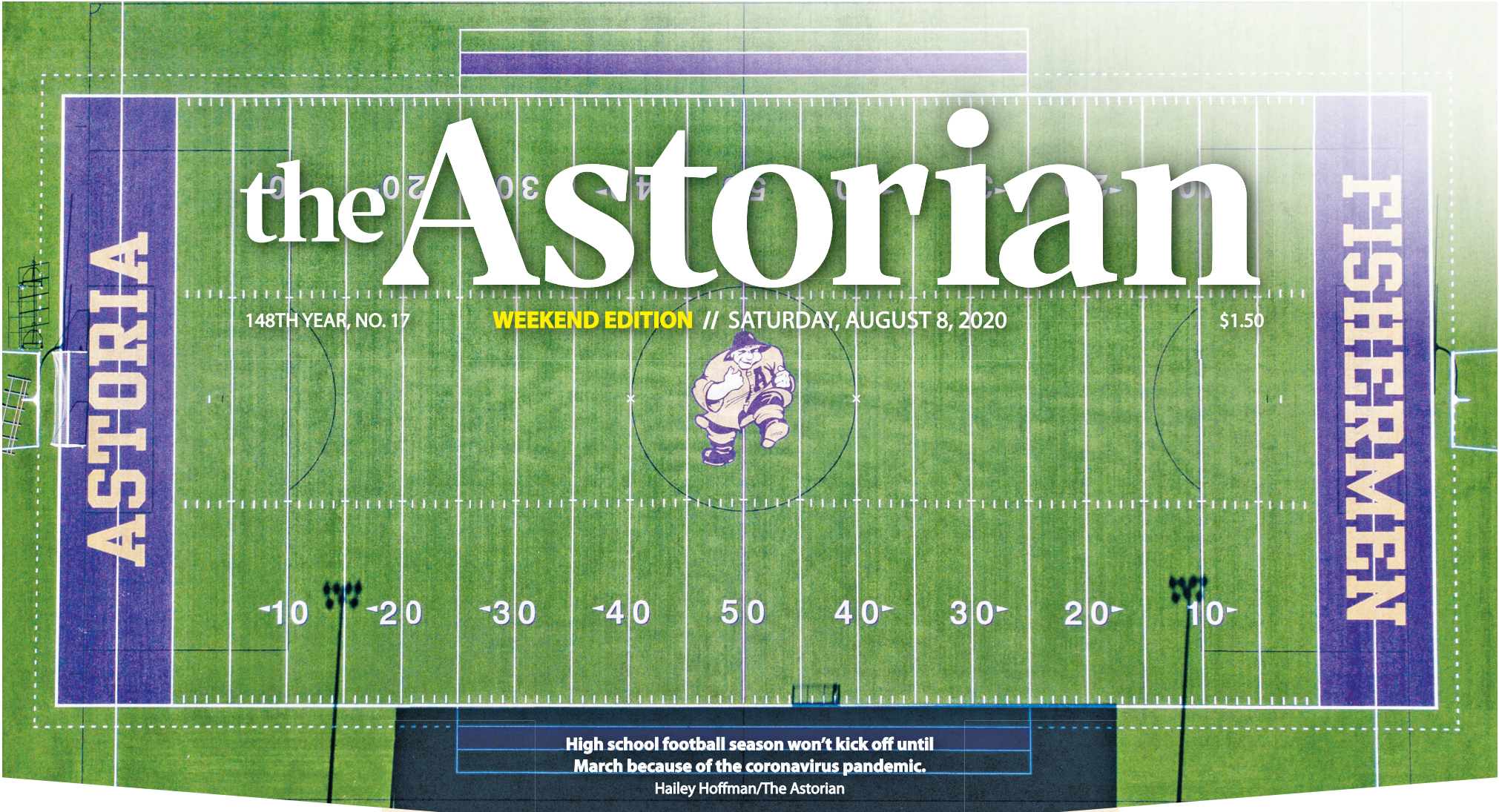




Landmark outdoors law boosts Arch Cape

Efforts to conserve the watershed

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

Local efforts to conserve the Arch Cape watershed received a crucial boost this week from the Great American Outdoors Act.

The landmark measure, signed into law Tuesday by President Donald Trump, gained bipartisan support and will put funds toward deferred maintenance at national parks and other projects in Oregon and across the United States.

The Arch Cape Water District is set to receive \$1 million this year and — with the law fully and permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund — appears to be on solid footing for a request for \$2.5 million next year.

Phil Chick, the district manager, estimates it will cost around \$5.5 million to purchase 1,521 acres of commercial timberland around the source of Arch Cape’s drinking water.

But this week’s news was huge.

“This was the whole project,” Chick said. “I don’t think there’s a whole lot that’s in our way for doing it now. ... It definitely opens up the door for optimism.”

The Great American Outdoors Act is the most significant investment in decades for national parks and public lands, according to Oregon Outdoors, an advocacy coalition representing the outdoor recreation industry, nonprofit recreation groups and conservation organizations.

The Arch Cape Water District is in a due diligence period with property owner Onion Peak LLC to purchase the acreage by 2023, but they do not have a purchase price yet.

The information the water district is collecting now all seems to be pointing to go, Chick said.

Like many coastal communities, Arch Cape does not have full control of its watershed and residents have worried about how to ensure water quality long term while commercial logging is still a possibility on the land. The Arch Cape Water District oversees 290 water connections.

The water district hopes to create a community forest on the acreage, managing the forest for both social and ecological benefits.

See Arch Cape, Page A3



Last year’s Astoria Regatta queen, Mara Dowaliby, passed her crown on Wednesday to this year’s queen, Annalyse Steele.

CORONAVIRUS OFF SEASON

Fall sports postponed by pandemic

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Astorian

Athletes, coaches and fans of high school sports have been waiting for this news the past two months: No games this fall because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Oregon School Activities Association will try to fit the fall, winter and spring sports seasons into a six-month span starting in January.

The move was announced Wednesday by the OSAA after most schools decided to start the year with distance learning because of the virus.

Winter sports like basketball, swimming and wrestling are scheduled to begin competition in January.

Sports usually played in the fall like football, volleyball, soccer and cross-country will start in March.

The spring sports season of track and field, baseball, softball and golf will take place the first week of May through late June.

Athletes can practice or work out with their teams beginning in late August.

“Today’s decisions by the executive board provide a framework to maximize the potential opportunity for students in Oregon to participate in three seasons during the 2020-21 school year,” Peter Weber, the executive director of OSAA, said in a statement. “The board recognized that a ‘one-size-fits all’ approach isn’t what’s best for students across the state. By waiving policy to allow regional participation this fall, local school districts will have the discretion for participation in those areas that are able to do so safely, per state directives.”

Each season will feature a sev-

MORE INSIDE

County reports new virus case • A3

‘WE ARE SO LUCKY TO EVEN BE GETTING SHORTENED SPORTS SEASONS. I THINK IT IS A LIGHT AT THE END OF A DARK TUNNEL.’

Avyree Miethe | Warrenton junior who plays volleyball, basketball and softball

en-week regular season followed by an OSAA playoffs “culminating week.”

Specific plans for the playoffs will be developed with member schools in the coming months to align with large group gathering guidelines issued by the state.

OSAA also said that “shifting the season calendar later in the school year provides additional time for more schools to return to a hybrid or on-site learning format, while providing flexibility for local school districts to make decisions this fall that are best for their school communities.”

‘A really good plan’

“Overall, it’s a really good plan,” Howard Rub, Astoria’s athletic director and football coach, said. “It gives a lot of flexibility for kids to play their sports. And for the (returning) athletes who missed out last spring, at least this gives us some hope.”

“I’m excited,” Rub added. “I’m just glad that they were able to come up with a plan that keeps kids healthy and allows them to play.” Trying to fit 10 to 12 sports into a six-month span also creates some serious overlapping seasons.

Winter sports run through the first week of March with practices set to begin in late February for sports normally played in the fall.

The quick turnaround could create problems for coaches trying to prepare their teams with many of the same athletes coming off the physical wear and tear of a basketball or wrestling season to play football or soccer a week later.

And football teams could be playing through early May, after the season has already started for baseball.

See Sports, Page A6

Astoria declines to extend hotel permits

Project planned for riverfront

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

The Astoria City Council on Thursday denied an appeal by developer Mark Hollander for more time to build a controversial four-story Fairfield Inn and Suites along the Columbia River.

The developer’s request for a one-year extension of building permits, which expire in December, had been denied by city staff before he appealed to the City Council.

The council’s decision forces Hollander to either appeal the denial to the state, finish a substantial portion of construction by late December, or conform the project to new, more restrictive building standards that would shrink the hotel by two stories to protect surrounding views.

Hollander and his representatives could not immediately be reached for comment about how they intend to proceed.

After being denied several times by city commissions, Hollander appealed to and ultimately won approval from the City Council in 2018 to build a Marriott-brand hotel at The Ship Inn and Stephanie’s Cabin, two former restaurants on waterfront lots off Second Street.

But since the approval, the site has sat largely untouched, the restaurants vacant, the parking lots overgrown with weeds and surrounded by fences. Hollander would need to show substantial construction progress by late December for his project to be vested.

The approval of the hotel was vehemently opposed by many residents worried about development crowding out views. The project inspired the city to revisit development rules in the Riverfront Vision Plan.

Changes to the Bridge Vista Overlay, a section of the plan between Portway and Second streets, reduced allowed building heights from 45 to 28 feet, essentially lowering development from four to two stories. The changes also limited building mass and required north-south orientations to provide view corridors to the river.

See Hotel, Page A6

Steele crowned Astoria Regatta queen

A tradition modified by the pandemic

By **MORGAN GRINDY**
The Astorian

In another tradition disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, Annalyse Steele, a senior at Astoria High School, was crowned Astoria Regatta queen on Wednesday evening at a small coronation at the Loft at the Red Building.

The event, which usually takes place at the Liberty Theatre, was limited to the Regatta Court, judges and a photographer due to virus precautions. Families of the princesses watched remotely via Zoom.

“It was definitely very different. We were all very far apart from each other,” Steele said.



Mitch Eckhardt
Astoria High School’s Annalyse Steele was crowned as this year’s Astoria Regatta queen.

The pandemic was the fourth time the Regatta festival has been modified in its 126-year history, after World War I, the Astoria fire in 1922 and World War II.

“I felt truly grateful for this opportunity and I honestly did not

expect it to be me,” Steele said. “I think all of the girls did amazing with their speeches and their on-stage questions.”

Steele, along with princesses Zoey Alexander, of Seaside; Mia McFadden, of Warrenton and Gabrielle Morrill, of Knappa; delivered speeches that focused on life in the 1920s in Astoria, Clatsop County, Oregon and the West.

Steele said the Regatta Court was given a few speaking opportunities and attended a reverse parade in Tillamook earlier this year despite virus restrictions.

See Queen, Page A3

