



Wizard Island and the north side of the caldera rim as seen from the Rim Village at Crater Lake National Park.

Surge in visitors threatens Crater Lake’s clear waters

By LEE JUILLERAT
For The Bulletin

Crater Lake, regarded as the cleanest and clearest large body of water in the world, is facing threats of possible contamination because some lake visitors are using illegal items and defecating along its shores.

Crater Lake Superintendent Craig Ackerman is especially concerned that visitors are ignoring signs prohibiting the use of various gear and that could result in aquatic invasive species and non-native organisms being introduced into the lake. Rangers are attempting to turn back people with illegal items, “but we can’t have someone there 24 hours a day,” he said.

The threat to Crater Lake’s water quality tops the list of concerns created by the combination of unexpectedly large numbers of visitors, severe cutbacks in seasonal park staffing because of the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread disregard for social distancing and people climbing into the lake’s caldera.

“It’s pretty clear people are out and about, and the majority are acting like there’s no pandemic at all,” Ackerman said.

During a recent visit to the Cleetwood Cove parking lot, the starting point for the Cleetwood Trail, the only trail to the lake, he said he saw more than a hundred people in the parking lot, but only four wearing masks. Also, no one was following the state-required mandate of 6-feet of social distance separation, he said. Of the 100-plus vehicles in the lot, Ackerman said he counted licenses from 25 different states, including Florida, Texas and Arizona, which are experiencing serious pandemic outbreaks.

Ackerman said park staffing levels are 60% to 70% below normal because of housing shortages stemming from the pandemic. Seasonal

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Craig Ackerman | Crater Lake superintendent

units for National Park Service employees and dormitory-type facilities for Aramark concession employees are restricted to housing far fewer people per unit.

Because of staffing shortages, Ackerman said full-time park personnel are being moved from their usual jobs to help with other concerns, including checking for illegal water-related items at the Cleetwood Cove trailhead and cleaning the park’s few open bathrooms. In some cases, some park staff have volunteered during off-hours to assist.

Ackerman said there have been reports of visitors taking and using water rings, inflatable kayaks, inner tubes, small rafts, snorkeling and scuba gear, various flotation devices and even an eight-person raft in the lake. Many people also take dogs, which are banned because they might unknowingly transmit invasive species that could irrevocably contaminate the lake. People are allowed to swim in the Cleetwood Cove area and, when tour boats are opening, at Wizard Island, “using standard swim suits.”

The Cleetwood Cove bathroom at the parking area-trailhead is open, but the bathroom at the lake is closed because the park lacks staff for the necessary cleaning. Ackerman said some visitors have defecated along the trail and along the lakes and not carried out their solid waste. In addition, the bathroom at the lake was broken into and vandalized. Cigarette butts have been flicked into the lake as well as coffee cups and even underwear.

Ackerman said the situa-

tion is complicated because boat tours normally offered during summer months were canceled because of the pandemic. As a result, staff from Aramark, the park concessionaire, are no longer stationed at the rim parking area or the lake’s boat docks. Likewise, park rangers who normally narrate the boat tours are not at the lake.

“We’re hearing the same story from the state parks, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, anyplace there’s outdoor recreation,” Ackerman said of undisciplined, illegal activities. “We’re really not sure what’s causing that.”

Several incidents of illegal climbing in the caldera have been reported, with rangers and outside crews sometimes dispatched in time-consuming, costly rescues. Seven people were cited Friday after illegally climbing inside the caldera and triggering a large search effort.

At the Mazama Campground, Ackerman said groups of 50 to 75 people have been flouting social guidelines by gathering for potlucks and other activities.

Despite often flagrant disregard for park rules, especially the possible introduction of invasive species into the lake, Ackerman is hopeful. “Education is our greatest hope,” he said.

After being closed from March until June because of the coronavirus, Ackerman said the park’s visitation has exploded, with staff calling the surge “like spring break on steroids.” The park’s March closure resulted in a 20% drop from March 2019. Visitation figures aren’t available for July, but he said

Aramark reports rooms at the Crater Lake Lodge and Mazama Village cabins are booked through the rest of the summer and that Aramark reported its single highest revenue day last week.

Lines at the park’s two entrance stations, especially the south entrance Station that draws visitors from the Klamath Basin and Rogue Valley, have required waits of an hour or longer to enter the park, especially on weekends. One family said they ate lunch in their car while waiting to enter the park.

“We didn’t anticipate the number of visitors we’re seeing now. It’s just overwhelming, especially at Cleetwood Cove,” Ackerman said.

“We just keep hoping there’s not a confirmed case because we’d have to close the park,” he said, noting that could be necessary if the Park Service or Aramark have employees taking required two-week isolation leaves from work.

“Things are always interesting,” Ackerman said of this summer’s challenges. “This will be another year I’ll be glad to see in the rearview mirror.”

OBITUARIES

Antone ‘Tony’ Ernest Spath

Warrenton

Aug. 25, 1961 — July 28, 2020

Antone “Tony” Ernest Spath died July 28, 2020, in Warrenton, Oregon.

Tony was born on Aug. 25, 1961, in Tacoma, Washington, the son of Dick and Janice (Evers) Spath. The family moved to Washington County and then to Warrenton when Tony was 11.

After graduating from Warrenton High School in 1979, Tony worked at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria for eight years. He earned multiple certifications, and then worked as a welder/machinist for Nygaard Logging/Warrenton Fiber, Lekro and K Manufacturing, where he was employed at the time of his death.

He married Cindy Nelson, and they had a daughter, Tonya. They divorced. He later married Julie Jackson, and they had a son, Andy. They later divorced.

Tonya and Andy describe their dad as his happiest while duck or deer hunting or fishing with his kids, family, friends and dog, locally or in Eastern Oregon. Or, when playing basketball with his kids.

Tonya remembers she was always daddy’s little girl. Her dad was nurturing, kind and patient, got her “high and tight pony” on point and taught her how to skin a deer at age 5.

Andy’s fondest memories are of those hunt-

ing trips with his dad and good friends, and of watching NBA basketball games together.

Tony’s friends, family and colleagues speak of his loving personality, his amazing welding skills and his ability to create the most beautiful traditional bows and arrows from unique and creative materials.

On one bow and arrow he made for a close friend, he cleverly affixed the skin of a sturgeon he and that same friend caught in the Columbia River.

Tony is survived by his daughter, Tonya Spath, of Hillsboro, Oregon, and his son, Andy Spath, of Grand Cooley, Washington. His mother, Janice Spath, lives in Beaverton, Oregon.

Siblings are Debbie (Brad) Stomp, of Beaverton, Richie (Navy) Spath, of Scappoose, Oregon, and Curt (Ratany) Spath, of Beaverton; and nieces and nephews are Nicole Gallien, of Boise, Idaho, Mike Stomp, of Beaverton, Timothy and Stephanie Spath, of Scappoose, and Camden Spath, of Beaverton.

His father, Dick Spath, preceded him in death.

A private memorial will be held in August.

To help defray expenses, donations can be made at U.S. Bank in memory and in honor of the Tony Spath family, under the name Tonya Spath.



Antone Spath

OBITUARY POLICY

The Astorian publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include a small photo and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. The deadline for all obituaries is 9 a.m. the business day prior.

Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style. Death notices and upcoming services will be published at no charge. Notices must be submitted by 9 a.m. the day of publication.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at DailyAstorian.com/forms/obits, by email at ewilson@dailyastorian.com, placed via the funeral home or in person at The Astorian office, 949 Exchange St. in Astoria.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
68 54	67 52	70 53	70 55	74 56	73 56	69 55
Some sun returning	Partial sunshine	Becoming cloudy	Partly sunny and nice	Pleasant with sunshine	Sunny	Clouds and sun

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday

Temperatures

High/low	71/52
Normal high/low	69/54
Record high	86 in 2001
Record low	44 in 1975

Precipitation

Sunday	0.00"
Month to date	0.19"
Normal month to date	0.23"
Year to date	38.65"
Normal year to date	37.42"

Forecasts and graphics provided by
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UNDER THE SKY

Tonight’s Sky: At the head of Cynus we find the double star Alberio, approximately 380 light years away.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:10 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:30 p.m.
Moonrise today	none
Moonset today	2:18 p.m.

Last	New	First	Full
Aug 11	Aug 18	Aug 25	Sep 1

TODAY’S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
7:24 a.m.	5.0	1:22 a.m.	1.5	
7:09 p.m.	6.8	12:51 p.m.	2.2	
Cape Disappointment				
6:46 a.m.	5.0	12:42 a.m.	1.7	
7:00 p.m.	6.6	12:18 p.m.	2.5	
Hammond				
7:05 a.m.	5.2	12:59 a.m.	1.5	
7:05 p.m.	7.0	12:32 p.m.	2.4	
Warrenton				
7:19 a.m.	5.4	1:06 a.m.	1.6	
7:04 p.m.	7.2	12:35 p.m.	2.3	
Knappa				
8:01 a.m.	5.3	2:23 a.m.	1.3	
7:46 p.m.	7.1	1:52 p.m.	1.9	
Depoe Bay				
6:13 a.m.	5.3	12:14 a.m.	2.0	
6:14 p.m.	7.1	11:40 a.m.	2.8	

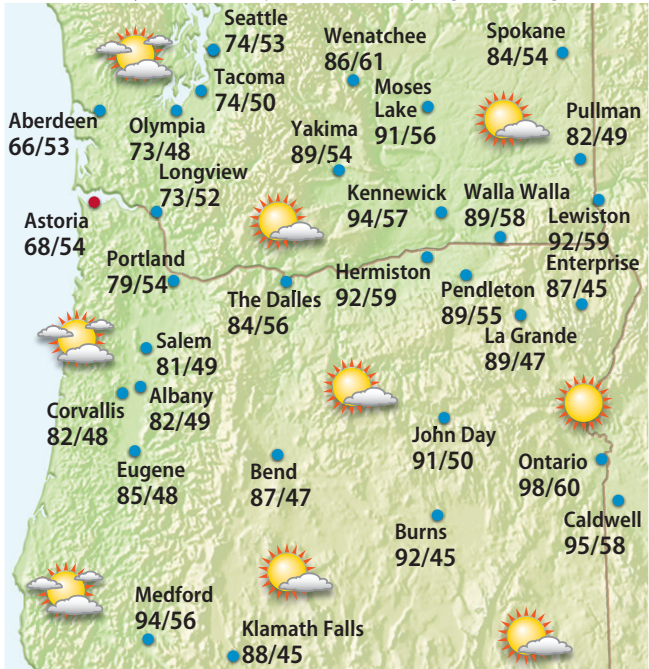
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	90/73/t	92/73/pc
Boston	92/72/s	88/72/pc
Chicago	85/66/pc	85/68/pc
Dallas	98/77/s	98/80/s
Denver	95/63/pc	95/64/pc
Honolulu	88/76/pc	88/75/pc
Houston	95/78/s	96/77/pc
Los Angeles	83/60/s	88/63/s
Miami	92/80/t	92/79/t
New York City	90/73/s	88/74/pc
Phoenix	109/90/s	112/91/s
San Francisco	73/59/pc	74/56/pc
Wash., DC	92/76/pc	90/76/s
Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.		

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today’s weather. Temperatures are today’s highs and tonight’s lows.



City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	92/43/s	81/45/pc	North Bend	67/51/pc	66/52/pc
Brookings	69/51/pc	67/56/pc	Roseburg	87/53/s	84/53/pc
Ilwaco	66/56/pc	66/53/pc	Seaside	68/54/pc	68/51/pc
Newberg	80/50/pc	76/50/pc	Springfield	85/49/s	81/47/pc
Newport	61/48/pc	60/44/pc	Vancouver	78/53/s	74/52/pc