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CORONAVIRUS

Birds, waste cloud fish meal plant

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

WARRENTON — The Scoular Co. hopes to open a new fish meal plant next summer at the Port of Astoria's Airport Industrial Park, employing about 10 people and taking in scraps from seafood processors to turn out as protein for aquaculture and pet food.

But the agribusiness giant must first satisfy community concerns over the danger of attracting birds to the nearby Astoria Regional Airport and how the plant will impact the city's wastewater treatment.

The Warrenton Planning Commission received two letters of concern shortly before a meeting Thursday from Life Flight Network and the U.S. Coast Guard about whether the Scoular plant will attract birds hundreds of yards from their bases.

Capt. Gretchen Bailey, the deputy commander of Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, said the military incurs millions of dollars in damage annually because of bird strikes on aircraft.

"There is no backup in either our rotor-wing or fixed-wing aircraft should a bird crash through the windshield and incapacitate the pilot," wrote Ben Clayton, the CEO of Life Flight. "The aircraft will crash, resulting in the likely deaths or serious injury of the (three to five) persons on board."

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State discloses outbreak at school site

School superintendent said cases happened weeks ago

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A coronavirus outbreak at the Astoria Middle School construction site has been tied to six virus cases.

The Oregon Health Authority disclosed the outbreak at Skanska USA Construction Inc., the Astoria School District's contractor, on Wednesday in a weekly coronavirus report.

Superintendent Craig Hoppes said the virus cases include workers and contacts, and that no staffers at the school came into contact with the workers who tested positive.

He said workers affected were outside in the open air and did not come into the building at any time. Once Skanska found out about the cases, Hoppes said, they removed the workers from the construction site and they were quarantined.

Hoppes said Skanska has also implemented additional health and safety measures, including training on Skanska, state and federal guidance for infectious disease precautions, implementation of an infectious disease program, providing additional hand sanitizer and wash stations, requiring and enforcing social distancing and face coverings and enforcing a zero tolerance for working sick policy.

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The North Coast Rocky Habitat Coalition is trying to designate new protections for Ecola Point, Tillamook Head and Chapman Point.

New protections sought for rocky shores habitat



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Kari Henningsgaard, the communications coordinator for the Haystack Rock Awareness Program, examines tide pools near Ecola Point during a site visit in September to discuss possible protections for rocky shore areas near Cannon Beach.

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — When considering possible new state protections for popular rocky outcroppings near Cannon Beach, Tabea Goossen can think of three priorities.

"No. 1: Leashing dogs. No. 2: Leashing dogs."

And No. 3? Take a guess.

Goossen has patrolled the beach from Chapman Point north of downtown to Indian Beach in Ecola State Park as a local citizen scientist for nearly four years, observing the activities of a distinctive shorebird: the black oystercatcher.

These shorebirds sport a brilliant orange beak and are an important indicator of the health of intertidal ecosystems — the tide pools where they and their chicks forage for food and the rocky areas that become fully exposed at low tide where they roost and build their nests.

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Port pivots back to old waterfront plan

Agency wants to attract urban renewal money

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

In 2007, Portland design firm Crandall Arambula was creating a master plan for the Port of Astoria's central waterfront, envisioning a mix of public parklands, tourist shopping centers and

a boatyard cluster around Pier 3.

The plan was done in concert with the city, which controls the urban renewal dollars the Port hoped would help move it forward.

But the master plan was never adopted as a new Port Commission pivoted toward a more industrial focus centered around the return of log exports.

Now the Port is going back to the 2007 plan as the agency tries to get city and state support.

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Port of Astoria is pivoting back toward a 2007 waterfront master plan that envisioned a mix of tourist, commercial and industrial uses.

State House hopefuls debate cap and trade, gun rights

Boothe-Schmidt, Weber appeared in Seaside

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For The Astorian

SEASIDE — State House candidates Debbie Boothe-Schmidt and Suzanne Weber discussed issues such as cap and trade, a Second Amendment sanctuary and negative advertising at an election forum in Seaside on Thursday night.

After sidestepping the topic during a forum in Astoria on Tuesday, the candidates were asked directly about cap and trade, an issue that has caused division in Salem and on the North Coast and prompted two Republican walkouts.

Boothe-Schmidt expressed support for protecting living-wage jobs and the state's natural resources, adding, "We also have to work together to take care of our climate, or those natural resources will be

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