

CORONAVIRUS

Mushrooms grow at Fort Stevens State Park.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Parks work to understand mushroom legalization during foraging season

Surge of visitors at Fort Stevens

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

With mushroom hunting season in full swing on the North Coast, Oregon parks officials are still working to understand how two state ballot measures will apply to sites where so-called “magic” mushrooms grow.

Measure 109, passed by voters in November, legalized access to psilocybin — using hallucinogenic mushrooms in a supervised therapeutic setting. Measure 110 decriminalized possession of small amounts of drugs, including psilocybin.

There is a possibility that people may misunderstand the first measure and what it does and does not allow.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has reached out to the Oregon Health Authority and others “to try to get our heads around it,” said Chris Havel, the associate director for the parks department.

“Once we understand how the ballot measure will be implemented and how it addresses harvest, we will update our messages so mushroom hunters can continue to safely and legally enjoy their hobby,” he said.



Oregon State Parks

Dane Osis, a park ranger, leads a wild mushroom hike and teaches foraging basics at Fort Stevens State Park. All wild mushroom hikes are canceled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Increase in foraging

Mushroom picking has grown in popularity over the years. Local foragers have noted an increase in activity in the woods. At some favorite, easy-to-access spots in Fort Stevens State Park, edible mushrooms, like the prized king bolete, seem to vanish the minute they emerge from the ground.

Fort Stevens is home to many kinds of mushrooms and has long been a pop-

ular spot for mushroom pickers, most of them looking for varieties to add to their dinner menu. Others simply enjoy walking and looking at the array of fungi on display.

But rangers do see visitors who come to hunt for hallucinogenic mushrooms. In the past, there was a pronounced police presence at the park during the

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College considers options amid lower enrollment

Larger projects are on hold

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

The creation of a new maritime sciences building, as well as several other larger projects in the works at Clatsop Community College, are on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The college had launched a multimillion dollar capital campaign for the maritime sciences building project, hoping to expand on existing facilities and programs. But now is not the time to ask certain donors for money, said Chris Breitmeyer, the college president.

The good news, he said, is that the design work is complete. Though the college's board will need to discuss soon whether to proceed with the building in the near term, “whenever we're ready to proceed with that project, it's shovel ready.”

There are other things for the college to consider as the pandemic continues.

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Seaside police chief takes job in Enterprise

Ham served in city for 25 years

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Police Chief Dave Ham has accepted the position of police chief in Enterprise.

“It's an exciting, mixed emotion type of thing,” Ham said. “It's not that we were necessarily wanting to leave Seaside, as much as this was an opportunity we decided to take a look at.”

“The city of Seaside, the community, has always treated me very well. It is strictly a personal decision my wife and I have thought about, contemplated and researched for the past several years. If this works out, it's a good time to make that move.”



Dave Ham

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A story dedicated to young Native Americans

Taylor writes about his experiences

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

When Cliff Taylor is not working at Natural Grocers in Warrenton, he is writing and sharing a memoir, short stories, poetry and essays on his website and Instagram.

Taylor, a member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, was raised in Columbus, Nebraska, and lived in the state until his mid-30s, when he moved to Seattle and then New Orleans before settling in Astoria with his



partner.

Taylor self-published his new book, “The Memory of Souls,” in October, which he describes as part memoir and part letter to young Native Americans.

He said the story was born from a pair of dreams over two nights about the “little people,” which are common in folklore and are more popularly depicted as elves, gnomes or leprechauns.

To many Native Americans, Taylor said, little people live in the woods or mountains in villages hid-

den in nature. They are keepers of medicine and often have a hand in helping in ceremonies, training medicine people or bringing healing and spiritual help.

He said the story is about how the little people came to him, helped him and educated him about his culture and heritage.

“I never thought I would write a book about these little people, but, then again, I never would have thought little people would have been such radical, beautiful healing influences in my life,” Taylor said. “But, like the ancestors themselves, they are.”

“Inadvertently in telling the story about the little people, I found myself telling all these stories about our culture, our spirituality and essentially



Nicole Bales/The Astorian

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Cliff Taylor is a writer who works at Natural Grocers in Warrenton.

