

## IN BRIEF

## County to distribute free face masks against virus

Free KN95 face masks to help contain the coronavirus will be available at drive-thru events throughout the county on Thursday.

The events will take place between 2 and 4 p.m. at Elsie-Vinemaple Fire Station, Seaside Fire Station, Astoria Aquatic Center, Cannon Beach City Hall, Knappa Fire Station, Warrenton Fire Station, Lewis & Clark Fire Station and Gearhart Fire Station.

People will be instructed to stay in their car, hold up fingers to show the number of masks needed and roll down the window to receive the bag of masks.

## Broadway Middle School is sold

SEASIDE — Broadway Middle School is now owned by the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District. The sale closing, at \$2.15 million, took place Jan. 15.

Park district board member Celeste Bodner said the district's objective is a hub for the community that promotes recreation for all ages.

The district hopes to increase child care, preschool and after-school activities, expand indoor recreation activities for all residents and contribute to the local economy through sports tourism.

"The acquisition of this building will facilitate this goal and benefit our community for decades to come," Bodner said.

— The Astorian

## Gray whale population drops by quarter off West Coast

SEATTLE — Researchers say the population of gray whales off the West Coast has fallen by nearly one-quarter since 2016, resembling a similar die-off two decades ago.

In a paper released last week, NOAA Fisheries reported that surveys counted about 6,000 fewer migrating whales last winter, 21,000 as compared with 27,000 in 2016.

The agency declared an "unusual mortality event" in 2019 as dozens of gray whales washed up on Pacific Ocean beaches.

Scientists aren't sure what has been causing the die-off. But they believe that it is within the range of previous population fluctuations and that the number of whales may have exceeded what the environment can support.

— Associated Press

## DEATHS

Jan. 23, 2021

**MATHRE,** Marvin Richard, 94, of Astoria, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Jan. 22, 2021

**KAWASOE,** Mary Ann, 78, of Gearhart, died at Providence Seaside Hospital. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

## ON THE RECORD

## Assault

• Jeremy Gleason, 37, of Warrenton, was arrested Sunday on N.W. Warrenton Drive in Warrenton for assault in the fourth degree.

• Cody Allen Perez, 31, was arrested Sunday on Seventh Street and Bond Street in Astoria for assault in the fourth degree.

## Reckless endangerment

• Kent Cawfield, 21, of Warrenton, was arrested Saturday on U.S. Highway 101 and East Harbor Drive in Warrenton for two counts of reckless endangerment and reckless driving. Police say Cawfield attempted to pass a vehicle

at a high rate of speed and collided with the driver's side. A third vehicle behind them became involved in the crash.

## Reckless driving

• Thalia Mae Kelley, 51, of Astoria, was arrested Sunday on 14th Street and Marine Drive in Astoria for reckless driving and reckless endangerment.

## DUII

• Chadam Shayne Odell, 27, of Rainier, was arrested Saturday for driving under the influence of intoxicants after crashing into an Oregon State Police trooper vehicle on Lief Erikson Drive near the East Mooring Basin in Astoria.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors,** 5:15 p.m., (electronic meeting).

**Astoria Planning Commission,** 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Seaside Airport Advisory Committee,** 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

**Warrenton City Commission,** 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

## WEDNESDAY

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

## THURSDAY

**Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce Council,** noon, (electronic meeting).

**Clatsop County Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee,** 1 p.m., (electronic meeting).

## the Astorian

Established July 1, 1873  
(USPS 035-000)

Published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday by EO Media Group, 949 Exchange St., PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103 Telephone 503-325-3211, 800-781-3211 or Fax 503-325-6573. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Astorian, PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103-0210

DailyAstorian.com

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEMBER CERTIFIED AUDIT OF CIRCULATIONS, INC.

Circulation phone number:  
800-781-3214

Periodicals postage paid at Astoria, OR

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Printed on recycled paper

Subscription rates  
Effective January 12, 2021

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Joshua Bessex/The Astorian

**Cheryl Johnson, a school librarian turned anti-fossil fuel activist, speaks at a rally in 2015 in Astoria against liquefied natural gas terminals on the Columbia River.**

## A thin green line with global impact

## Activists thwart fossil fuel projects

By **ROBERT McCLURE**  
*InvestigateWest*

SEATTLE — Environmentalists teamed with Native Americans, ranchers and even windsurfers to block nearly every effort over the past decade to export fossil fuels from the West Coast. And they claimed yet another major victory this month when a proposed coal-export terminal in Washington state was called off.

Against the odds, and even their own expectations, activists have fended off more than 20 proposals to use West Coast ports to expand the global fossil fuel trade — the carbon equivalent of five Keystone XL pipelines, according to the Seattle-based Sightline Institute.

Green groups succeeded in fighting fuel-export proposals along the Pacific coast because they enlisted nontraditional allies. They put a lot of calories into figuring out how coal and oil were set to be exported, and they enlisted the communities at risk to supplement the fight.

Government action to slash greenhouse gas emissions has fallen short in Oregon, Washington state and British Columbia, as documented last week in the opening story of InvestigateWest's yearlong series, Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia. But as opposition to climate action thwarted policymakers in Cascadia, its activists repeatedly triumphed.

A few significant energy-export proposals have been revived under the Trump and Trudeau administrations. Still, that wave of earlier victories represents the region's greatest contribution to climate action, according to KC Golden, a longtime policy leader who spent over a decade at Climate Solutions, a regional group headquartered in Seattle, who now sits on the board of the international activist group 350.org.

"You can't measure that on our emissions curve," Golden said. "But it's probably the single biggest thing that we did."

## How did they do it?

The coalitions joined climate policy and environmental organizations with community groups. Crucially, they looked beyond policy measures designed to cut emissions, such as carbon trading and carbon taxes, and instead followed the fossil fuel shipments that impact communities — often mar-

ginalized communities — en route to warming the global climate. They went after the underground pipelines proposed to tunnel beneath farms and fields, and the trains rumbling through downtowns.

Regional factors also helped. Indian tribes and First Nations bands reasserted sovereign powers. And the political and economic makeup of Oregon, Washington state and British Columbia eased the lift politically. Fossil fuel production makes up a small part of the region's job base. Many politicians score with voters by opposing the likes of Big Oil.

The most important factor, though, was the sheer number of people that activists mobilized by reaching beyond their traditional alliances. In massive numbers, community members attended public hearings. Marched in protests. Spent nights and weekends at kitchen tables drafting pleas to government agencies.

"Clearly part of what is different about this campaign is the fairly extraordinary level of grassroots involvement," said Becky Kelley, former president of the Washington Environmental Council.

daily basis in towns between Washington and Wyoming. And in a derailment or collision, the trains could cause devastation on a fearsome scale.

By the middle of last decade, a fossil fuel tsunami seemed to be pointed at Cascadia and its ports. But by then, environmentalists had also built a coalition far stronger than their partnerships with each other — a regional infrastructure of activism whose importance to the greens' success is hard to overstate.

"That's a real lesson learned: To be successful on major campaigns you have got to work outside traditional alliances," said Ross Macfarlane, then a key architect of the effort at Climate Solutions.

It began as a campaign called Power Past Coal, based on the projected dozens of coal trains per day. At first the activists thought industry's momentum would be too much to counter. Macfarlane recalls the early days of the campaign as dark. Allies in the business world warned "that we were going to get creamed," McFarlane said.

## 'WE ESTABLISHED THAT FOSSIL FUELS DO NOT HAVE A SAFE HARBOR IN THE NORTHWEST.'

The Sightline Institute's Eric de Place

This story of uncharacteristic environmental victories has its roots in the mid-2000s, when growing use of so-called natural gas spawned proposals to import liquefied natural gas through ports in Oregon and pipelines to move the fossil gas eastward — pipelines that take a lot of land, and much of it in solidly conservative expanses of the state.

Fracking turned that picture upside down. Cheaper domestic gas and oil, as well as surplus coal, spurred three new waves of export proposals: Facilities to take coal transported by rail; oil transported by rail and pipeline; and then — once again — gas from pipelines. This time the latter would carry gas westward for export.

Climate policy experts at Sightline, a key player in the greens' movement, calculated that if all the proposals for coal exports went through, it would mean 50 to 60 trains per day traveling through the region.

Oil trains more than a mile long would block emergency vehicles and other traffic on a

"And I wasn't sure they were wrong," he said. "In fact, I was pretty sure they were right."

What turned it around was forging a broader coalition, said Beth Doglio, the Power Past Coal campaign's co-director, who was elected to a Washington House of Representatives seat in 2016. "It was the combination of people wanting to turn the tide against climate change coupled with communities' very visceral reactions to 60 trains a day coming through."

Environmentalists looked at who might be affected by each project or proposal and reached out, often discovering natural allies who already had mobilized. Scouting far up the rail lines, they also found previously unlikely supporters, from politicians in decidedly conservative towns along the rail routes to a concerned researcher for the Montana Wheat & Barley Committee. Lots of folks worried about the effects of mile-long, traffic jam-inducing trains. Especially when they carried volatile oil.

They were far stronger together. Dedicated people at the grassroots level poured in their time and worked their community connections. Professionals at environmental nonprofits bolstered their case, providing expertise to, for example, challenge a

company's calculation about how much of a neighborhood would be decimated if an oil-bearing train exploded.

"It's all about grassroots resistance to the fossil-fuel infrastructure," said Doglio. "Legislators really can't ignore the massive outcry in our communities around trying to stop these fossil fuel projects."

## Native peoples critical to success

First Nations and Native Americans have often been in the forefront and in a few cases provided the pivotal legal firepower that won the day.

Take, for example, the proposal to build the Gateway Pacific Terminal, about 10 miles from the Canada-U.S. border, to ship coal to China — a project that saw Montana ranchers and their Native American neighbors travel to Seattle to protest together in 2012.

So many people wanted to attend that hearing that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved the event from a community college to the convention center. More than 2,300 people showed up on that Dec. 14 along with the Northern Cheyenne, the Montana cowboys and their allies; more than 6,000 more attended other hearings for the project around the state.

In Seattle, opponents sang to the tune of "Deck the Halls":

"We have lots of greener choices

Fa la la la la, la la la la

Stop the coal and

Raise our voices..."

The fatal blow for the Gateway Pacific coal terminal landed a few years later, when the Lummi Nation — an Indian tribe living just south of the U.S.-Canada border — won a legal fight to convince the Army Corps to reject the proposed 3,000-foot wharf and rail trestle. The Lummi cited the 1855 treaty under which they gave most of their traditional territory to the United States and were guaranteed the right to forever fish at their "usual and accustomed grounds and stations."

Taking aim at the coal-export terminal, the Lummi submitted fish catch reports dating back to the 1970s showing that Lummi fishermen had long been landing crab, salmon, halibut, herring and cod in the waters around where the marine terminal was to be sited. As a sovereign native nation, the Lummi could expect the federal government to give their position serious consideration.

And they won. In 2016, the Army Corps declined the permit application.

In her decision, Michelle Walker, chief of the Army Corps' regional regulatory branch, recognized not only the Lummi's sovereign rights

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