

IN BRIEF

Saddle Mountain reopens to hikers

Saddle Mountain, closed for more than a year in part because of the coronavirus pandemic, is open to hikers again.

A small campground at the trailhead remains closed to overnight visitors, however, and ongoing maintenance issues mean there is not a functioning water system at the site.

Hikers are encouraged to pack in their own water, said Ben Cox, Nehalem Bay Unit manager for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Chemical toilets are available at the parking lot.

Saddle Mountain, with a summit of 3,290 feet, is the tallest peak in Clatsop County. Rare wildflowers grow on its slopes and there have been efforts in recent years to reintroduce endangered Oregon silver-spot butterflies in the area.

The natural area was heavily damaged in the ice storm that hit the North Coast in February. A team of rangers and an inmate work crew spent considerable time clearing the road to the parking lot and trailhead.

Besides ongoing maintenance issues, the state has looked at problematic spots along the steep trail that leads up the mountain, though it is unlikely there will be a major overhaul of the trail anytime soon.

— *The Astorian*

Northwest agriculture groups say Simpson dam plan poses threat

Representatives of Northwest agriculture believe U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson's plan to tear down four dams on the Snake River is unlikely to go anywhere in Congress, but that it poses a particular threat to their industry.

Simpson has floated a \$33.5 billion plan to boost salmon recovery, remove four dams on the lower Snake River and impose a 35-year moratorium on dam-related environmental litigation. He said he would incorporate feedback from farm groups "where possible."

No legislation has been introduced.

Simpson, an Idaho Republican, has suggested it could be included in President Joe Biden's clean energy stimulus bill.

The plan has drawn opposition from agricultural stakeholders, power companies and environmental groups.

"Idaho Farm Bureau hopes it fades away for good," said Sean Ellis, the farm bureau's spokesman. "We will continue to vigorously oppose this plan, if it moves forward in the current language or different language."

— *Capital Press*

DEATHS

March 30, 2021

RAMSEY, Rosalie, 88, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

March 15, 2021

CLARKE, Charles Michael "Mike," 68, of Yuma, Arizona, formerly of Warrenton, died in Yuma. Smart Cremation of Yuma was in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

• **Chloe Stephanie Hoelzel**, 18, of Seaside, was arrested Saturday on U.S. Highway 101 in Gearhart for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• **Brandon Nicholas Denmark**, 27, was

arrested Friday on U.S. Highway 30 for DUII.

• **Erick Matthew Mansell**, 44, of Beaverton, was arrested Friday off of U.S. Highway 26 for DUII, reckless driving and recklessly endangering another person.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Ave. A.

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, noon, work session, (electronic meeting).

Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Clatsop Care Health District Board, 5 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Astoria Library Board, 5:30 p.m., Library Flag Room, 450 10th St.

Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY

Astoria City Council, 1 p.m., work session, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Gearhart City Council, 6:30 p.m., (electronic meeting).

THURSDAY

Seaside Civic and Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., Seaside Civic and Convention Center, 415 First Ave.

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton Planning Commission, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

the Astorian

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EASTER MOMENTS



ABOVE: Lena Tilton struggles to hold her eggs from her overflowing basket at an Easter egg hunt organized by Spruce Up Warrenton on Saturday.

INSET: An Easter cross is laid outside of Pioneer Presbyterian Church in Warrenton.

LEFT: Elijah Mesak and Jep Puckett go for the same egg.

BELOW LEFT: Maci Stackhouse sprints to find eggs.

BELOW: Summer Burns hunts for eggs.



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



US sued over its inaction to protect threatened species

By **MONICA SAMAYOA**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Decisions by the Trump administration to withhold endangered species protections for the northern spotted owl, monarch butterflies and other imperiled wildlife and plants could be set aside.

That's the goal of a conservation group's lawsuit Thursday, challenging inaction on petitions to extend Endangered Species Act protections for several species that warranted them.

The Center for Biological Diversity claims the Trump administration knowingly kept 10 species that needed immediate Endangered Species Act protections in waiting. All the species listed in the lawsuit were given "warranted but precluded" decisions, meaning the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized the species needed federal listing but did not have the resources to list them.

In addition to the spotted owl and the monarch butterfly, other species covered by the lawsuit are the eastern gopher tortoise, long-fin smelt, magnificent rams-horn, Texas fatmucket, Texas pimple back, Texas fawns-foot mussels, peñasco least

chipmunk and the bracted twistflower.

"Continued delay of protections for 10 species, including the northern spotted owl and the monarch butterfly, is unlawful," said Noah Greenwald, the endangered species director for the Center for Biological Diversity. "This relates to the Trump administration's just abysmal record on protecting species under the Endangered Species Act."

Greenwald said the former administration only listed 25 species as either threatened or endangered over the course of four years. He said it is the lowest number of species that have been listed for federal protections since the law's 1973 passage.

Greenwald said conservationists had reached an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under former President Barack Obama to work through a backlog of 260 species that scientists and officials had determined to warrant protections under the Endangered Species Act but precluded them from the list of protected plants and animals. That backlog had been reduced but persisted into 2017, when former President



Todd Sonflieth/Oregon Public Broadcasting

The northern spotted owl is on a slow but steady course toward extinction.

Donald Trump entered the White House.

"And of course didn't make a whole lot of progress on it," Greenwald said.

The northern spotted owl's status has been threatened since it was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1990. Its numbers in Pacific Northwest and Northern California forests continue to fall. Late last year, the Trump administration denied a petition to increase protections by uplisting its status to endangered. Then, in the final days before Trump left office in January, his administration moved to lift restrictions on logging and road-building on millions of acres of forests by removing critical habitat status that protected those forests in the name of the northern spotted owl's survival.

Democratic lawmakers have called for a delay in stripping critical habitat status for 3.4 million acres and an investigation into what, if any, scientific evidence

exists to warrant the final days decision. Conservation groups have gone to court to reverse the previous administration's actions.

The timber industry has countered with a legal challenge against efforts to delay or overturn federal actions to strip away logging restrictions in place for spotted owl-designated habitat.

The monarch butterfly's range includes Washington state and Oregon, reaching into the intermountain states to the east and south to the U.S. border with Mexico. In December, the Fish and Wildlife Service rejected a petition to invoke the Endangered Species Act for the butterfly, while acknowledging it merited endangered species status.

The monarch was first proposed for protections in 2014. The western monarch butterflies have seen a drastic decline in their species and are on the brink of extinction, with more than 99% of their population having been wiped out.

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