

Fire season: Usually begins in late June or early July in county

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The management plan is now in front of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for review. The board provided critical funding that allowed the city to purchase the property in the first place. City leaders expect some degree of road improvement for wildfire access is in the reserve's future.

For now, temporary "no smoking" signs have gone up outside the reserve at the request of City Councilor Robin Risley. City Manager Bruce St. Denis readily agreed to the new signs, especially, he said, "with the current drought."

Most of Clatsop County is considered in moderate drought, while large chunks of the state are in severe to extreme drought, according to recent information provided through the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Despite recent rains, the North Coast experienced a dry — sometimes hot — spring, and there is little rain in sight in weather forecasts.

Already, fuel moisture levels are going back down on the coast. In other words, it's dry out there, and getting drier. Bond estimates the North Coast is "three to four weeks ahead of schedule" in terms of just how dry things are.

Fire season

The Oregon Department of Forestry announced fire season in Clatsop County will begin Tuesday. A countywide burn ban will also go into effect Tuesday.

The state declaration affects all lands — public and private. Most other regions in Oregon are already considered in fire season. Meanwhile, state lawmakers are calling for the need for more federal resources to help families and businesses weather drought and wildfire conditions exacerbated by climate change.

Under the fire season declaration in Clatsop County, industrial forest operations, campfires and small, residential burns will be subject to various restrictions tied to state fire precaution levels. Clatsop County will begin at the lowest level — level 1 — on Tuesday.

Under the fire season declaration, open debris burning will not be allowed starting June 22. People who want to use burn barrels will need a permit.

The state makes fire season declarations each year when fire hazard conditions exist. Depending on the weather, this declaration usually begins in Clatsop County in late June or early July.

State forestry staff in Astoria prepare every year for fire season, gearing up to respond to issues on the North Coast, as well as to deploy resources to other regions.

But this year, Bond said, "I'd say we're at a little bit higher concern than average."

Firefighters and timberland managers want better fire access roads at Ecola Creek Forest Reserve.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



Scoters: 'I can see those things in the river'

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Under Bird's model, riders download an app and are required to watch brief training videos before taking their first ride. The scooters can reach speeds of up to 15 mph and are intended for use on public roads. While helmets are required in Oregon, Bird does not supply riders with helmets and has not required helmets in order to use the scooters.

Herman worried that the short training videos were not sufficient and the use of scooters could further strain city resources.

City Councilor Tom Hilton became the deciding voice about whether city staff would continue to talk with Bird about developing a pilot program to bring back to the City Council for consideration. At first, he echoed Herman and Rocka, saying safety was the biggest issue for him, followed closely by potential nuisance issues related to the scooters.

"I can see those things in the river, at the boat dock, in the river," he said.

But Hilton concluded that despite his own opinions, he wanted to hear from people in his east side district. When he is satisfied that he has heard enough, he can bring the matter up again at a City Council meeting. The council would need to formally vote on any pilot program agreement with Bird.

Others who attended the meeting shared the city councilors' concerns but were more in favor of trying out the pilot program.

Kathy Kleczek, a transportation options specialist for the Sunset Empire Transportation District, and David Reid, the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Com-



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

A group of Bird electric scooters sits parked in Hermiston in March.

merce, see the scooters as a way to encourage car-free exploration and help ease summer congestion.

In Astoria, electric scooters — and any motorized vehicles — are not allowed on the Astoria Riverwalk. If Bird were to bring scooters to the city, the company would work with the city to designate no-ride zones. A scooter would automatically,

slowly come to halt if riders tried to enter those areas. Scooters are not allowed on sidewalks.

Some cities have decided not to proceed with Bird's scooters after the pilot program. Hermiston is still evaluating the program, with 75 scooters on its streets for now. Bird has proposed bringing the same number to Astoria.

Knappa: Anyone can read through state materials online

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years, there are at least a few students whose parents opt them out of taking the course.

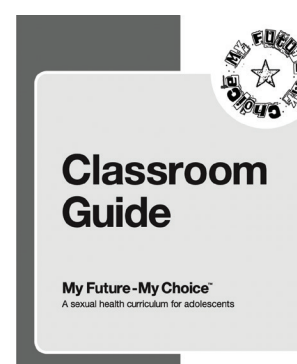
The curriculum committee felt the opt-out option was a good "check and balance" if parents felt uncomfortable," Fritz said.

The state curriculum also includes optional supplementary worksheets and information that teachers can use to deepen students' understanding of a topic or make it more relevant to their own lives.

The committee determined that teachers should not be prohibited from using these additional materials if they believe it would help their students. However, if a teacher does plan to use the extra materials, this needs to be communicated ahead of time to parents, so families know what students will encounter in the course, Fritz said.

Anyone can read through the state materials online.

Though the curricu-



Oregon Department of Education **Knappa School District briefly suspended the use of a state middle school sexual health course after parents demanded a review.**

lum will remain in use, the school district is looking at ways to improve how the opt-out information is communicated to parents. The committee suggested that one way would be to bring it up at parent-teacher conferences in the fall. Previously, the district sent home a form with students, but some parents said this year that they never received the paperwork. They were later shocked to find out their

children were taking the course.

A newly-formed parent group, the Knappa Parents Organization, had asked for a review of the curriculum. They were concerned about how the opt-out option was communicated to parents and the content of the course.

In a statement to The Astorian, and repeated on their Facebook page, they argued that issues related to gender identity, sexual preference and sexual orientation are outside the bounds of a public school curriculum and "are better left to families to handle."

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