

IN BRIEF

Place Matters conference to focus on climate change

This year's Place Matters conference will focus on the impacts of climate change in Clatsop County.

The virtual event will take place from April 19 to April 21.

Clatsop Community Health Advocacy Resource Team, or CHART, hosts the conference. The Place Matters Oregon project comes from the Oregon Health Authority.

More information and registration is available online at Clatsop CHART's website, clatsopchart.org.

Astoria man charged after bicycle thefts

Cyrus Galen Grabenhorst, 27, of Astoria, was charged on Thursday for a series of bike thefts from March.

He allegedly stole a bike, worth about \$2,000, off Harrison Avenue in Astoria.

Grabenhorst then allegedly stole four more bikes — totaling about \$13,400 in value — days later from a detached garage off Duane Street.

For the initial case, he was charged with first-degree theft and violation of a release agreement.

For the second case — which involved him fleeing police officers trying to take him into custody — he was charged with second-degree burglary, second-degree theft, third-degree escape and two counts of tampering with evidence.

All the bikes have been recovered, police said.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

April 3, 2022

BOREN, Margaret, 86, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

April 2, 2022

JASPER, Ronald Lesley, 88, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIALS

Wednesday, April 6

REYNOLDS, Liz — Graveside service at 2 p.m., Ocean View Cemetery, 575 S.W. 18th St. in Warrenton. Reynolds, 70, of Seaside, died Thursday in Seaside. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge

of the arrangements.

Saturday, April 9

SWANSON, Theodore Willard "Teddy" and Sally Sue (Manula) — Memorial at noon, Valley Bible Church, 4723 State Route 4 W. in Rosburg, Washington.

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• **Toni Lee Ramvick**, 38, an inmate of the Clatsop County Jail, was arrested on Thursday at the jail for assaulting a public safety officer.

Burglary

• **Kyle Brandon Bean**, 41, of Stevenson, Washington, was indicted on Friday for first-degree burglary and first-degree criminal trespass. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in February 2021.

• **Samuel Alvin Darling**, 47, of Portland, was indicted on Wednesday for second-degree burglary, first-degree theft and second-degree criminal mischief. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in January 2021.

DUI

• **Ashley Anne Wilkins**, 34, of Astoria, was arrested on March 23 on Lewis and Clark Road for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

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

Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., 10 Pier 1, Suite 209.

Seaside Library Board, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway.

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

Clatsop County Fair Board, 5:30 p.m., 92937 Walluski Loop, Astoria.

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

Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E Gower Ave.

WEDNESDAY

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 10 a.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

Warrenton Community Library Board, 6 p.m., special meeting, City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Clatsop Community College Board and Foundation, 6 p.m., Columbia 219, 1651 Lexington Ave, Astoria.

Warrenton-Hammond School District Board, 6 p.m., work session, Warrenton High School Library, 1700 S. Main Ave.

Knappa School District Board, 6:30 p.m., work session, Knappa High School Library, 41535 Old U.S. Highway 30.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

THURSDAY

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

the Astorian

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Freshwater mussels facing decline

Challenges include warming waters

By **COURTNEY FLATT**
Northwest News Network

The Northwest's freshwater mussels are in trouble, rapidly declining in almost every population biologists study.

Take 2005, when biologists counted historic numbers of freshwater mussels in the North Fork of the John Day River. They counted around 500 mussels per meter squared, similar to what Lewis and Clark noted on their westward expedition.

"They said you couldn't step into the river without stepping on 100 mussels," said Alexa Maine, the lead biologist for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's Freshwater Mussel Research and Restoration Project.

By 2007, every mussel in the North Fork of the John Day River was gone, Maine said.

"When mussels start dying en masse like we see now, that, to me, signals there's a greater issue going on that we're not yet recognizing," Maine said.

Biologists aren't sure what's going on. They're working to figure it out quickly.

Freshwater mussels face challenges that include warming waters caused by climate change, an abun-



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A western ridged mussel in the Chehalis River.

dance of nonnative fish species, habitat destruction and pollution.

In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is taking a closer look at one species of freshwater mussels, the western ridged mussel.

The service conducted a 90-day initial assessment that found western ridged mussels might be a good candidate for the Endangered Species List.

Now, the service will take an even closer inspection, known as a species status assessment, of the western ridged mussel throughout the five states in its range, including in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

The assessment will help researchers learn more about the western ridged mussel's life history and current conditions. In addition, the assessment will predict what the future might look like for

the western ridged mussel.

Only a handful of freshwater mussels can be found in the West, compared to the up to 300 species found east of the Continental Divide, Maine said.

"It's pretty difficult these days to find two species in one location together, let alone a population that is what we call self-sustaining," Maine said of mussels in the West.

Freshwater mussels, which live 60 to 100 years, clean the rivers and streams where they're found. One mussel can clean 10 gallons of water in around 30 minutes, said Courtney Newlon, a fish and wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The mussels do a lot of work behind the scenes, such as maintaining water quality, filtering out sediments like pollutants and bacteria,

and they provide food and habitat for other aquatic species," Newlon said.

As a species that these ecosystems depend on, known as a keystone species, freshwater mussels could be an indicator that not all is well in Northwestern waters, Maine said.

"I think mussels are part of this larger picture of environmental decline and species destruction and all of that that's happening," she said.

Moreover, tribes used mussel shells as a cultural resource in jewelry and ornamentation, Maine said. Historically, tribes considered freshwater mussels a first food — a staple food source — boiling and drying them to eat in the winter, Maine said.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation heads up the only project dedicated to breeding and restoring freshwater mussels in the West.

For that project, Maine snorkels rivers within the tribe's ceded lands, scouring the riverbeds for what might at first appear to be a rock but instead is a freshwater mussel.

After finding many mussels that haven't reproduced, she said she wonders if she's watching elder mussels die out over decades.

"Mussels are now screaming, saying, 'Help us do something, there's something going on,'" Maine said.

Washington approves first statewide missing Indigenous people alert

By **GILLIAN FLACCUS** and **TED S. WARREN**
Associated Press

TULALIP, Wash. — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Thursday signed into law a bill that creates a first-in-the-nation statewide alert system for missing Indigenous people, to help address a silent crisis that has plagued Indian Country in this state and nationwide.

The law sets up a system similar to Amber Alerts and so-called silver alerts, which are used for missing children and vulnerable adults in many states. It was spearheaded by Democratic state Rep. Debra Lekanoff, the only Native American lawmaker serving in the state Legislature, and championed by Indigenous leaders statewide.

"I am proud to say that the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's and People's Alert System came from the voices of our Native American leaders," said Lekanoff, a member of the Tlingit tribe and the bill's chief sponsor. "It's not just an Indian issue. It's not just an Indian responsibility. Our sisters, our aunts, our grandmothers are going missing every day ... and it's been going on for far too long."

Tribal leaders, many of them women, wore traditional hats woven from cedar as they gathered around Inslee for the signing on the Tulalip Reservation, north of Seattle. Afterward they gifted him with a handmade traditional ribbon shirt and several multicolored woven blankets.

The law attempts to address a crisis of missing Indigenous people — particularly women — in Washington and across the United States. While it includes missing men, women and children, a summary of public testimony on the legislation notes that "the crisis began as a women's issue, and it remains primarily a women's issue."

Besides notifying law



Ted S. Warren/AP Photo

Monie Ordonia, second from left, of the Tulalip Indian Tribe, joins others in singing an honor song after Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill that creates a first-in-the-nation statewide alert system for missing Indigenous people, particularly women.

'WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS BRINGING THEM HOME, WHETHER THEY'VE BEEN TRAFFICKED, WHETHER THEY'VE BEEN STOLEN OR MURDERED. IT'S A WOUND THAT STAYS OPEN, AND IT'S SOMETHING THAT WE PRAY WITH (FOR) EACH PERSON, WE CAN BRING THEM HOME.'

Teri Gobin | Tulalip Tribes of Washington chairwoman

enforcement when there's a report of a missing Indigenous person, the new alert system will place messages on highway reader boards and on the radio and social media, and provide information to the news media.

The legislation was paired with another bill Inslee, a Democrat, signed Thursday that requires county coroners or medical examiners to take steps to identify and notify family members of murdered Indigenous people and return their remains. That new law also establishes two grant funds for Indigenous survivors of human

trafficking.

This piece of the crisis is important because in many cases murdered Indigenous women are mistakenly recorded as white or Hispanic by coroners' offices, they're never identified, or their remains never repatriated.

A 2021 report by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office found the true number of missing and murdered Indigenous women in the U.S. is unknown due to reporting problems, distrust of law enforcement and jurisdictional conflicts. But Native American women face murder rates almost three times those of white women overall — and up to 10 times the national average in certain locations, according to a 2021 summary of the existing research by the National Congress of American Indi-

ans. More than 80% have experienced violence.

In Washington, more than four times as many Indigenous women go missing than white women, according to research conducted by the Urban Indian Health Institute in Seattle, but many such cases receive little or no media attention.

The bill signing began with a traditional welcome song passed down by Harriette Shelton Dover, a cherished cultural leader and storyteller. Dover recovered and shared many traditions and songs from tribes along Washington's northern Pacific Coast and worked with linguists before her death in 1991 to preserve her language, Lushootseed, from extinction. Women performed an honor song after the event.

Tulalip Tribes of Washington Chairwoman Teri Gobin said Washington and Montana are the two states with the most missing Indigenous people in the U.S. Nearly four dozen Native people are currently missing in Seattle alone, she said.

"What's the most important thing is bringing them home, whether they've been trafficked, whether they've been stolen or murdered," she said. "It's a wound that stays open, and it's something that we pray with (for) each person, we can bring them home."

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