

## IN BRIEF

## Cannon Beach to host event for elementary school rejuvenation project

CANNON BEACH — The city will host a meet-and-greet on Saturday to discuss the redevelopment of the former elementary school.

City staff, project architects and representatives of the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes will be available from 10 a.m. to noon for a tour of the building and to listen to feedback.

The former school is located at 268 Beaver St.

— *The Astorian*

## Loyalty Days parade resumes for Long Beach centennial

LONG BEACH, Wash. — In honor of Long Beach's 100th birthday as a formally organized Washington city, there will be a Loyalty Days Centennial Grand Parade from about 1 to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

A tradition since 1950 — that took 2021 off and was organized as a virtual-only event in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic — Loyalty Day weekend will feature kids' activities, food and music, in addition to a parade.

Perhaps the last-surviving event of its kind in the nation, Loyalty Day was initiated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a rich celebration of patriotism and response to Soviet-era May Day observances.

— *Chinook Observer*

## Proposed Port Westward refinery reaches milestones, faces continued opposition

CLATSKANIE — Columbia County officials have signed off on a \$2 billion proposal to build what would be the largest renewable diesel refinery on the West Coast, despite objections from nearby farms and landowners.

NEXT Renewable Fuels wants to build the refinery at Port Westward Industrial Park near the Columbia River in Clatskanie, producing up to 50,000 barrels of renewable diesel per day from recycled organic materials such as used cooking oil.

The county Board of Commissioners voted in February to approve conditional use permits for both the refinery and a railway branch line to the property. Part of the track would cross land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use.

State regulators also approved the project's wetland mitigation plan at a site within the neighboring Beaver Slough Drainage District, where farmers raise livestock and grow high-value crops such as mint and blueberries.

Opponents argue the development threatens local agriculture and the environment, while supporters say it will create hundreds of jobs and displace more than 7 million tons of carbon dioxide every year by supplying cleaner-burning renewable diesel.

— *Capital Press*

## MEMORIAL

## Sunday, May 1

WARD, John — Celebration of life, drop in from 3 to 7 p.m., Driftwood Restaurant & Lounge, 179 N. Hemlock St. in Cannon Beach.

## ON THE RECORD

## DUII

• Timothy Joseph Anderton, 78, of Huntersville, North Carolina, was arrested on April 16 near the intersection of Avenue F and S. Lincoln Street in Seaside for driving under the influence of

intoxicants and reckless driving.

• Brandon Alan Clipping, 34, of Lake Tapps, Washington, was arrested on April 13 on U.S. Highway 101 near Gearhart for DUII and reckless driving.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Clatsop County Planning Commission, Countywide Advisory Committee**, 9 a.m., (electronic meeting).

**Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board**, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

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

**Prairie Cemetery Association of Knappa**, 6:30 p.m., annual meeting, 41484 Hillcrest Loop.

## WEDNESDAY

**Astoria Parks Board**, 6:45 a.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

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

## THURSDAY

**Sunset Empire Transportation District Board**, 9 a.m., 900 Marine Dr., Astoria.

**Port of Astoria Marina Advisory Committee**, noon, El Tapatio restaurant, 229 W. Marine Dr.

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

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## Fishermen urge state commission to revisit gillnetting regulations

## State meeting was held in Astoria

By ABBEY McDONALD  
*The Astorian*

Several local commercial fishermen have asked the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to reconsider Columbia River fishing regulations.

During the public forum section of the commission's meeting in Astoria on Friday, commercial fishermen and those connected with the industry asked the commission to revisit gillnetting regulations and salmon buyback options.

Jim Coleman, a fisherman from St. Helens, asked commissioners to add gillnetting to a future agenda or to work with Washington state to ensure the option of a 6-inch gillnet in the fall.

"The gillnet-caught Copper River King salmon is flown from Alaska to Seattle on a chartered jet with great fanfare, demanding \$70 to \$80 a pound, while commercial fishing on the Columbia River is a political football," Coleman said.

Jim Wells, the president of Salmon for All, said he was disappointed that the



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Fishermen Jim Wells, Jim Coleman and Steve Fick spoke Friday at an Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting held in Astoria.**

commission met in Astoria but did not discuss fishing issues on the river.

Wells asked the commission to align with Washington state regulations, allowing for fall coho fishing with traditional gear and said that pound net fishing is not economically viable for fishermen.

"I don't know any gillnetter that's interested, at this point, in moving forward with that gear type. I haven't talked to anybody that is. It's a loser, and we're not here to lose money," Wells said.

Bruce Buckmaster, the co-chairman of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's water and climate committee and a former fish and wildlife commissioner,

said legislation has failed to balance environmental sustainability and the needs of non-sport fishermen.

He requested that the commission initiate an agenda to consider a Columbia River policy that includes a clear mandate for social justice.

"Two things are clear: One, there are fewer of us. Two, there will continue to be fewer of us unless something changes," Buckmaster said. "We do not want to be lost and then forgotten."

At the meeting, the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted federal ocean salmon fishing regulations, based on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's adopted seasons. The move

meant the updated federal guidelines for fishing in federal waters now apply to state waters within 3 miles of the shore.

The adopted season aimed to meet conservation goals and protect weak salmon stocks, according to the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

North of Cape Falcon, the overall allowable catch is 54,000 Chinook, 4,000 fewer than last year, split between commercial and sport fisheries.

The total quota of marked hatchery coho is 200,000, compared to 75,000 last year. Of that, the ocean sport fishery quota for marked coho is 168,000.

In that region, the tribal ocean fishery quotas are 40,000 Chinook salmon, unchanged from last year, and 52,000 coho, an increase from last year's 26,500. The council adopted seasons as proposed by tribes on the Oregon and Washington coasts.

In setting commercial and recreational halibut seasons, the Fish and Wildlife Commission slightly lowered this year's fishery catch limit, keeping with the International Pacific Halibut Commission's recommendations.

## Biden signs order that goes to the heart of Oregon's forest politics

By TED SICKINGER  
*The Oregonian*

President Joe Biden signed an executive order during his visit to Seattle on Friday that aims to safeguard mature and old growth forests on federal land, step up forest maintenance and tree planting projects across the country, and combat global climate change by increasing diplomatic efforts to fight aggressive logging in the Amazon, Africa and Southeast Asia.

Among other things, the order directs the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to define and inventory mature and old growth forests within a year and develop policies to protect them from climate change and wildfire risks.

"We've reached the point where the crisis on the environment has become so obvious, with the notable exception of the former president, that we really have an opportunity to do things we couldn't have done two, five, 10 years ago," Biden said before sitting down to sign the order in Seattle's Seward Park.

The order centers on some of the most fraught politics in Oregon. It is laden with language about reducing wildfire risks — packaging perhaps designed to make it more palatable to rural communities and the timber industry, which have long pushed the federal government to more aggressively manage forests by stepping up logging.

Major appropriations for forest restoration in the federal infrastructure package will almost certainly bring new jobs into those communities and more logs into local mills. But Friday's executive order was clearly focused on protecting trees, increasing carbon storage in forests and delivering on the administration's climate agenda.

Nick Smith, a spokesperson for the logging industry group American Forest Resource Council, said Friday in an email that the federal government should be focused on reducing emissions from large wildfires by managing unhealthy and overstocked federal forests



Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

**President Joe Biden signed an executive order intended to help restore national forests devastated by wildfires, drought and blight, during an event at Seward Park on Earth Day on Friday in Seattle.**

and providing wood products that store carbon.

"We are concerned the president's executive order only adds more bureaucracy to our broken system of federal forest management and will divert more resources away from work that needs to be done on the ground right now," he said.

But the order to inventory and protect mature forests is welcomed by environmental groups, who say the biggest threat to forests and the climate still comes from chainsaws, not wildfire. They are cautiously optimistic the order will establish long-sought policy guardrails on what can and can't be cut, stopping the agencies from gradually whittling away what old growth still exists and establishing protections for maturing trees that are crucial for storing carbon.

"It's not enough to just protect the remnant ancient forests," said Steve Pedery, conservation director at Oregon Wild. "It's the trees that are growing, these 80-plus year-old stands, that are a big deal. We're thrilled to see them include these mature forests in the order."

Together, the Forest Service and BLM manage about 30 million acres of land in Oregon, making them the largest land managers in the state. Most of Oregon's true old growth has already been logged, but its wet forests west of the Cascades are some of the fastest growing and most carbon-dense in the world.

The Earth Day executive order also arrives as the first tranche of the \$8 billion of forest-related money included in the federal infrastructure package is beginning to flow. Some \$5 billion is geared to reduce wildfire risks in forests nationwide by thinning small trees, removing dead vegetation and introducing more prescribed fire into the woods. It will also fund other wildfire mitigation programs around the country, including a \$1 billion grant program for community wildfire defense and \$600 million to increase firefighter pay.

It's still not clear how much of that funding will come to Oregon. But where to spend it is already the subject of deep controversy.

Earlier this month, the Forest Service released an initial list of forest restoration projects that will be funded out of the infrastructure package. It includes \$4.5 million in 2022 to clean up 5,000 acres in the Deschutes National Forest, and an additional \$37 million in the following two years to ultimately treat 50,000 acres northwest of Bend.

Last week, U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley announced another \$11.7 million in funding — partly from the infrastructure package — that will flow to five projects around the state to "thin overgrown forests, support better ecosystems, reduce the threat of wildfires and create more jobs."

The money comes as local residents in Bend are furious with the Forest Service for a timber sale that involved logging older, fire-resistant trees along a popular mountain bike trail outside town in the name of wildfire prevention. That's just one example of the kind of timber sales

around the state where environmentalists say federal agencies offer up older trees to make the sales more economically attractive to timber companies.

"That's Oregon's dirty little secret," said Pedery, pointing to timber sales on BLM land west of the Cascades "where we enthusiastically log old growth. We just don't tell anybody."

Biden's executive order does not ban logging mature or old growth trees, or provide any new protections for them. But the agencies are ordered to produce the inventory in an expedited time frame, put it out for public comment and develop science-based policies that address the threats from wildfire and climate impacts.

The infrastructure package will significantly expand reforestation projects on federal land, and the order directs the agencies to develop a plan to boost cone and seed collection and expand nursery capacity.

It also directs the State Department to detail how to reduce or eliminate U.S. purchases of agricultural products grown on illegally or recently deforested lands, and coordinate with other agencies to use foreign assistance, trade tools and finance mechanisms to combat aggressive logging internationally.

A year after he took office amid a flurry of climate-related promises, Biden's ambitious climate agenda has been marred by setbacks. The president hosted a virtual summit on global warming at the White House last Earth Day. He used the moment to nearly double the United States' goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, vaulting the country to the front lines in the fight against climate change.

A year later, his most sweeping proposals remain stalled on Capitol Hill despite renewed warnings from scientists that the world is hurtling toward a dangerous future marked by extreme heat, drought and weather.

In addition, Russia's war in Ukraine has reshuffled the politics of climate change, leading Biden to release oil from the nation's strategic reserve and encourage more domestic drilling in hopes of lowering sky-high gas prices that are emptying American wallets.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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