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# Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

## WEARING AWAY

Port closes part of campground due to worsening erosion



COURTESY PHOTO

Port of Siuslaw recently closed the east end of its campground due to riverbank erosion. A FEMA grant is being sought to help with repairs.

BY JACK DAVIS  
Siuslaw News

**P**ort of Siuslaw has closed a portion of the campground located at the east end of the property along the Siuslaw River to the public due to ongoing riverbank erosion creating safety concerns.

Bank erosion along this section of the park has been an ongoing concern of the port for years, but the high tides and storms from last December has exacerbated the problem, prompting the closure.

“There is significant erosion to the shore bank,” Port of Siuslaw General Manager Steven Leskin said. “This will require extensive repairs

and renovation to prevent further loss of land. In the interim, we need to close the area. This is a necessary step to protect public safety in this area. The port will have the beaches open as soon as possible. At this point, it is unknown when that will be.”

Satellite images show the extent of the erosion, going back more than a decade. In some places the riverbank has eroded more than 50 feet. The port had been considering how to address the problem, and the December storms that accelerated it may also have created a solution.

“We weren’t alone,”

Leskin said. “There was a lot of other water damage done during those storms. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has offered grant money specifically to help repair storm damage from December 2015. The FEMA grant is not 100 percent. I believe it is a 75/25 percent grant with 25 percent coming from the port.”

According to the port, FEMA has inspected the eroding shore bank twice since February. Now,

the port must submit a grant request.

The port announced it has retained a maritime engineer to assist with repairs to the shore-bank. The current plan is to bioengineer a solution. Bioengineering consists of using natural material, such as vegetation, grasses and logs, to repair shore bank instability. It is not harmful to aquatic life, is easier to have permitted by the state and is considered a permanent solution.

**“This will require extensive repairs and renovations to prevent further loss of land.”**

—STEVEN LESKIN, PORT MANAGER

The other option, according to Leskin, would be to place large rocks called rip-rap along the shore and down into the river, but rip-rap is not favored by state regulators.

“We had the river surveyed last week and we expect to have a presentation by the April 20 board meeting,” Leskin said.

See **PORT 9A**

## Sea lions prepare for ‘splash off’

Florence Events Center’s  
20th anniversary festivity  
starts Saturday

BY CHANTELE MEYER  
Siuslaw News

After months of hard work for project managers, staff, suppliers, artists and volunteers, Dancing with Sea Lions will finally be revealed at its Splash Off! event on Saturday, April 9.

Dancing with Sea Lions celebrates 20 years of the Florence Events Center’s (FEC) commitment to the arts and the Florence community. Twenty full-sized sea lions will grace the Oregon coast from Reedsport to Newport with a long dance leading to Florence.

“I think people will be very surprised and impressed by how well the artists did,” said FEC marketing specialist and project coordinator Jennifer Connor. “Each sea lion is different and unique, just like the artists who painted them.”

Besides small snippets of the sea lions shown on social media, the appearance of the sea lions is a secret until Saturday, when all 20 will gather at the FEC for the free Splash Off! event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“We wanted families to get a chance to see the sea lions right here in town,” Connor said. “It was especially important to our sponsors, such as Siuslaw Outreach Services, that the Splash Off! be presented at no charge. It’s our gift to the community for all the support it has given the events center.”

The public is invited to drink coffee, eat a cookie or two and see the sea lions together for the first and only time. The next time the sea lions will be together will be when 16 of them are auctioned off in the fall. Four sea lions will be permanently placed.

See **SPLASH 9A**

## Teen Center now serving hot meals

BY JACK DAVIS  
Siuslaw News

Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County Teen Center is now serving free hot U.S. Department of Agriculture approved meals to members as part of its after-school program.

The club received a \$6,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Education in February to install a new kitchen, including stovetops, two refrigerators, a dishwasher, cabinets and stainless steel sinks, and began serving hot meals in March.

“We are now providing healthy, nutritious meals that will help curb childhood obesity, which is an enormous problem today,” said Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Chuck Trent.

The Teen Center has passed the Child and Adult Center Food Program health inspection. The staff has been trained and all have current food handler’s cards.

See **CLUB 9A**

## Visitors: ‘Spend another day in Florence’

Travel Lane County presents semi-annual  
report on marketing the Florence area

BY CHANTELE MEYER  
Siuslaw News

Florence City Council listened to a report by Travel Lane County at the council meeting Monday night. Kari Westlund, president and CEO of Travel Lane County, and Meg Trendler, tourism sales manager, presented marketing information on

Florence and how they plan to draw more visitors to the coast.

Travel Lane County is a private corporation that invests funds generated through the 9 percent Lane County and Florence Transient Room Tax (TRT) as well as funds from Travel Oregon, which receives the 1 percent statewide TRT.

“Our mission is to increase the

number of overnight visitors to Lane County,” Westlund said.

Travel Lane County does this by marketing four regions, the Willamette Valley, the Cascades, Eugene and the coast. Each region gets its own campaign.

“Our basic brand premise is that we have a variety of enriching, approachable, authentic adventures for all ages and abilities. We’re focused on what is common for the entire 4,722 square miles of the county, and we’re representing quite a good number of our

communities,” Westlund said.

The marketing group prints 130,000 copies annually of its visitor’s guide. Florence and the surrounding sand dunes of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area are on the cover for the guide promoting the coast.

“It is my great pleasure to go out into the world and promote Lane County, and in particular, promote Florence,” said Trendler.

See **TRAVEL 9A**

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