

PORT OF SIUSLAW SEEKS A NEW VISION



SIUSLAW NEWS FILE PHOTOS

The Port of Siuslaw will work with members of the public to improve outreach, education and entertainment at its marinas, boardwalk and campground.

BY JARED ANDERSON
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Port of Siuslaw is inviting the public's help in building the future of the Siuslaw region.

On Wednesday, Nov. 29, at 5 p.m., the port is opening its doors to share what it hopes the port will become in the near and far future, and get input from the public on what direction it should go.

The Port of Siuslaw has been the lifeblood of the Siuslaw region since the port began in 1909. It represents the traditions and values that have sustained, and will continue to sustain, the region for decades. But it's an ever-evolving process.

The list of upcoming projects the port has to evolve is daunting, from massive technical projects to classes and artistic endeavors.

The Port of Siuslaw is planning on a two-step process. The first step being broad public input, the second being specific public committees tackling individual projects the port is looking at.

The first part begins with the public meeting on Nov. 29. The meeting is a public free-for-all, an overflow of ideas meant to stimulate the imagination and generate excitement on the possibilities of the port.

Members of the community can give any input they wish. What does

the public want the port to become? What can the port offer? What does it need to improve? What is it doing right? Any question is fair game, and no idea is too far-fetched.

The input derived from these public meetings will lead a more official phase, with a committee (or committees) being formed to address many exciting projects the port is planning.

One project will be looking at ways to get the public involved with what the Port of Siuslaw offers. As of now, the port primarily acts as a marina and campground, but it could be so much more. In fact, the port believes it should be so much more.

There could be a whole host of activities the port offers to the community, from sailing classes to clamming expeditions. Art and historical displays could be built, along with festivals and events.

The port should evolve into a place for exploration, both for the mind and body.

But what should be offered? While many port employees and commissioners have broad dreams of what could be done, they are short on specifics, including who can run these programs.

The community holds a large swath of expertise among its residents, and it has been an untapped resource thus far. Is there an expert clammer out there? How

about an angler who loves to show off their casting skills? And what about the potential for windsurfers?

The hope is that these types of activities will not only improve the lives of those who live in the area, but of those around the country. Schools from the east could bring their students down to learn about what it means to be a part of a coastal community. Travelers from the south can discover the true benefits of the pristine beauty Oregon has to offer. And of course, people from around the world can interact with vital community of the Siuslaw region.

The second project for the port will be the planned estuary trail, an off-street bike and pedestrian connection from the Munsel Creek Multi-Use Path north of Highway 126 to the Siuslaw Bridge in Historic Old Town Florence. A large portion of that trail will run through port property.

The project is massive, and the benefits of a well-planned trail can be enormous. From providing unique interactive and educational experiences, bolstering tourism, and enhancing local businesses, getting the trail right is vital not only for the port, but to the region as a whole.

But building the trail is complicated. From integrating the trail into the planned repairs for erosion damage that occurred last

year, to ensuring the trail does not encumber the privacy of campers in the ports campground, the logistics of this processes are massive. The city, and the entire region, is counting on the Port of Siuslaw to make this portion of the trail one of the cornerstones of the community, and it's the community that needs to help plan and build it.

The third project is improving the Port of Siuslaw Campground facilities. Located at First and Harbor streets in Florence, the campground has become a mecca for seasonal RV travelers and recreational campers from across the country looking to enjoy the beauty of the Oregon coast.

While there are already a whole host of amenities the campground offers, the port is always looking to improve.

One of the most immediate needs of the area is building a second restroom with showers. With hundreds of travelers coming through the campground, and occupancy rising year after year, the current facilities are being stretched to their limits. But questions are still up in the air, including where to put the facility, what the facility should offer and what is the most economical way to build it.

The electricity of areas of the campground needs to be replaced as well, upgrading from the retro 20/30-amp sites to 50 amps, to

ensure that the power always flows to the people.

In addition, the port looks to improve the dry camping sites the port has to full service. A dry camping site is an RV site with no water, sewer or electrical connections. Simply put, it's a parking space. To get tourists to stay longer, and to bring more money into the local economy, the port believes it is vital to have these spaces upgraded to full service sites.

But it's a complicated process. Where do you run the pipes and the electrical lines into the area? How do you make it aesthetically pleasing? And how do you plan it so current services aren't disrupted? The port needs the public's help to figure these logistics out.

The port will also improve its marina facilities. The Port of Siuslaw operates two marinas with a total of 104 boat slips, which host a whole variety of boats with different purposes, including commercial fishers who travel to the deep sea for tuna, seasonal salmon anglers, recreational sailors touring the coast and even a place for people to dock their boats year long and so they may live on the river itself.

The port also is addressing plans to upgrade the marina.

It will need to upgrade the water and add electrical hookups to the F Dock, where seasonal boaters moor. Along with that, new lighting has

to be installed in the west marina to ensure safety at night.

The port also needs to replace the debris booms in the marina, which blocks debris from the river itself, including floating timber, seaweed and silt from clogging up the marina.

Of course, these are merely the planned improvements the port is looking at. There could be a whole host of issues that port staff and commissioners haven't even thought of, and that's why public input is so vital. Are there other issues with the port that need to be addressed? From landscaping to cultural events, the port needs to know what the community wants to help drive the economic and cultural importance of this all important public entity.

As it comes to the end of its current strategic plan, this input will be vital to update the Port of Siuslaw's new plan for the future.

The Port of Siuslaw has been the lifeblood of the community since its inception, and will continue to be so for decades to come. But to make it great, the port needs the community's help. The process is long and complicated, and it can't do it alone. And, it believes, it shouldn't do it alone. The Port of Siuslaw belongs to the community.

The Port of Siuslaw Campground and Marina Administration Office is at 100 Harbor St. For more information, call 541-997-3426 or visit PortofSiuslaw.com.

PORT OF SIUSLAW

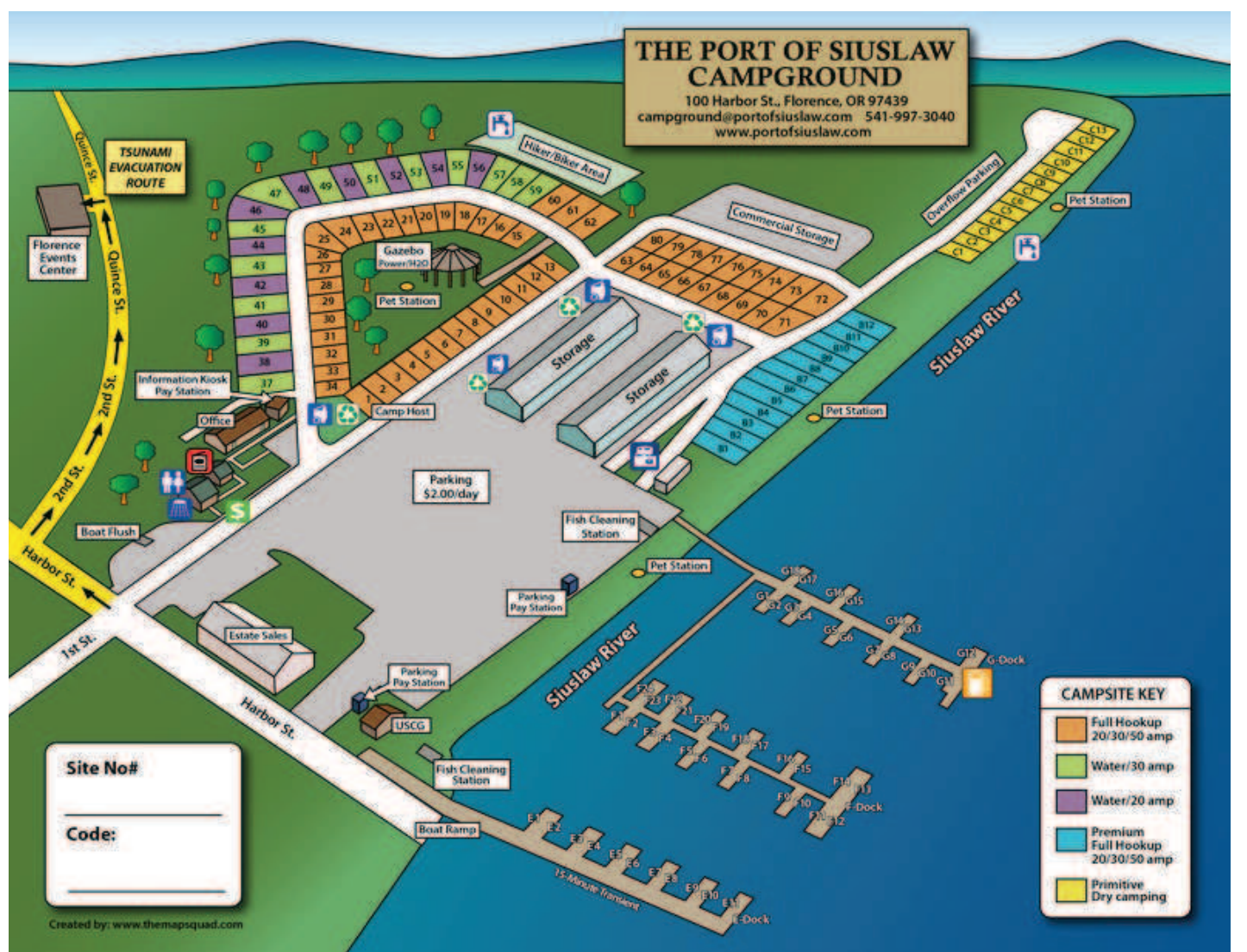
Notice of Public Event



PORT OF SIUSLAW BUILDING THE FUTURE

The Port of Siuslaw is seeking public input in 4 core areas:

- Marina
- Siuslaw Estuary Trail
- Activities
- Campground



You're Invited

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Wednesday, November 29th
Public Meeting @ 5pm

Port of Siuslaw
100 Harbor St. Florence