

1932: Sea Lion Caves opens to the public

SIUSLAW NEWS: A LOOK BACK AT 130 YEARS

INSIDE — A7

Bringing the valley back to 'a dynamic, chaotic system'

STORY & PHOTOS BY LENA FELT SIUSLAW NEWS

In a basin just 10 miles south of Florence, Ore., lies a watershed restoration site in its final stage of completion. What was previously a valley of wide, open fields of invasive grasses and blackberries is now once again home to a free-flowing creek that slowly winds its way through thick willows and other native plants, providing shade and shelter for important aquatic and terrestrial life.



Fivemile-Bell Creek restoration project enters final stage of completion

Volunteers and USFS crews work together along Fivemile-Bell to capture creek critters such as young Coho, crawdads and Pacific giant salamanders to relocate downstream as they restore the valley.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and its many partners have worked together for over nine years on the Fivemile-Bell Restoration Project, which aims to restore a critical floodplain to pre-settler conditions and improve the habitat for Oregon Coast Coho salmon, a federally threatened species.

Before settlers arrived in the valley, it was a lively wetland, with abundant native plant communities shading the water and slowing it to a meandering stream, creating an ideal rearing habitat for young Coho salmon. In the late 1800s, homesteaders began straightening the streams of Fivemile and Bell creeks, tributaries of Tahkenitch Lake, and pushing them to one

side of the valley to make room for crops and grazing fields for their animals.

This caused the water in the streams to increase in speed and cut into the ground eight to 10 feet in some areas, an impact that was devastating for young Coho.

See PROJECT page 7A

Deadline nears for council candidates for Florence, Dunes City

BY JARED ANDERSON SIUSLAW NEWS

Filing deadlines for mayoral and council positions for the City of Florence and Dunes City are approaching, as residents from both cities begin applying for open positions. There are still two weeks left to submit applications (Aug. 25) for a variety of open positions. Voters will determine the following races in the Nov. 3 General Election.

For the City of Florence, three positions are up for election this November, the first being Mayor. The position is for a two-year term. In addition, council seats currently held by Joshua Greene and Ron Preisler are up for election this year. Each position is for a four-year term.

So far, the City of Florence shows two candidates for the mayoral position and four candidates for the two councilor positions.

To qualify for these positions, candidates must be registered to vote in the City of Florence and have residency of at least one year before the election, or since Nov. 3, 2019.

The role of the Florence City Council is to work as a collective body to pass laws, fees, policies, budget and the supervise the city manager and municipal court judge positions.

"In order to be versed enough to make such decisions, serving on the council requires countless hours of study into the pressing issues of the City of Florence, as well as attendance at regular meetings,

See CANDIDATES page 5A

Siuslaw schools consider reopening metrics

Most grades to remain online at start of school year on Sept. 14

BY JARED ANDERSON SIUSLAW NEWS

While the Siuslaw School District is currently scheduled to open on Sept. 14, new state opening metrics released Tuesday by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown will mean the majority of students will be attending online only until at least October. The only exception to this could be K-3 students, which may possibly be allowed to attend onsite class in a limited hybrid model as early as September.

"For the past few weeks, we've been talking about this being metric driven, but nobody knew what the metrics were," said District Superintendent Andrew Grzeskowiak. "And so, we've been working on a hybrid plan having half the kids onsite every day, and the other half viewing the class virtually at home."

The metric that Siuslaw was going with was specifically local, working hand-in-hand with Lane County Public Health to monitor outbreaks in or around the district.

But on Tuesday night, Brown changed plans by releasing three additional metrics:

- Statewide, the positivity rate for all tests must be at or below 5 percent to allow opening.
• County-wide, the positivity rate must also be below 5 percent.
• Also, county-wide, there must be 10 or fewer cases per 100,000 people over a seven-day period.

For Siuslaw, the biggest issue is the state metric.

"With the metrics coming out Tuesday night, that scrapped our hybrid plan," said Grzeskowiak. "Our current county case rate is trending down. It's under 15, going to 10. The positivity rate is [between 1 and 2]. ... But the Oregon positivity rate is too high for any school to open for general onsite operations."

Right now, the state positivity rate is trending downward, but it's still brushing against the 5 percent threshold.

On Thursday, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reported that the rate was 5.1, though it was as high as 7 the week before. It's also dipped as low at 4.6 percent. But even if the positivity rate declines to 5 percent, it could spike up again, resetting the whole process.

"Where we stand today, we won't get three weeks of data until Aug. 15," Grzeskowiak said.

And that is a few days after the date the district was supposed to turn in its reopening plan to Lane County for approval — which included start dates.

"We want to make sure we're doing good solid chunks of time to continue with one learning mode, regardless of the health metrics, to make sure we're actually getting education done," Grzeskowiak said.

Because of that, the district's plan is to now hold the first day of school, Sept. 14, online only.

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Planning Commission approves code changes on building heights, density

BY MARK BRENNAN SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence Planning Commission met virtually Tuesday evening for a regular session with a short agenda.

Commission Chairperson John Murphey began the meeting, followed by City Recorder Kelli Weese, who again updated the commissioners on the most recent COVID-19 related protocols for allowing public participation in city meetings.

There were no public comments during the session.

The first new item on the commission's agenda was the consideration of Resolution PC 20 06, which had been rescheduled to this meeting. This concerns a request for a conditional use permit for a marijuana retail use in the existing building at 470 Highway 101 in Florence.

Murphey informed the commissioners that the applicant, Rosa Cazares, had requested an additional extension.

Commissioners granted the extension and rescheduled the consideration of the resolution until the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Aug. 25.

The second item commissioners discussed was Resolution PC 20 20 TA 02, a city-initiated code amendment finalizing the building heights allowed in the Commercial, Highway, and Professional Office and Institutional Districts and amending the residential name references in the North Commercial District.

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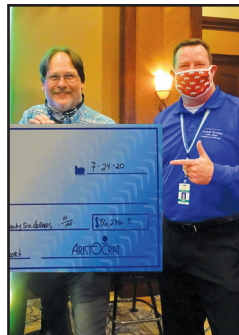
WEATHER



Partly cloudy leading to afternoon sun. High of 64 and a low of 50.

Full forecast on A3

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