



# Salmon Harbor Miracle Of Coast Development

By CHARLES V. STANTON  
 Fishermen who speak of Salmon Harbor do so with wonderment obvious in their tone of voice. Even those who were enthusiastically eloquent still evidence their awe—awe as if they had witnessed a miracle. And, indeed, Salmon Harbor is a miracle: a modern miracle of recreational development. Salmon Harbor is the name given to the cove at Winchester Bay, near the mouth of the Umpqua River. It is located on the Oregon coast in Douglas County, adjacent to Highway 101, a few miles south of Heppesport.

Ten years ago Winchester Bay was on the verge of becoming a ghost town. River had become seriously depleted from over-fishing and other causes. Offshore fishing boats were becoming larger and drawing more water, could not be berthed in the harbor, for it, too had deteriorated. Siltation had filled in much of the cove until, at low water, acres of mud flats were uncovered.

So, Winchester Bay appeared to be dying. A few ancient fishing boats still were tied to the rickety county dock, floating gracefully at high tide and canting dangerously as their rounded bottoms rested on the sinking mud of the shallow basin during low water.

A few crab boats gingerly worked their way out of the harbor on the black, while, occasionally, a trawler put in to unload a catch at the cannery dock. For in 1929 there had been built a cannery and fish-drying plant.

Less than ten years later the cannery machinery was idle and rusting. The piling on which the building stood was rotting away. The structure was in use only as a fish receiving station.

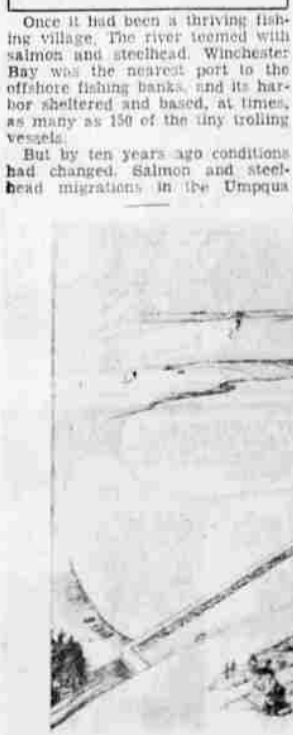
**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
 Charles V. Stanton, editor and manager of The Roseburg News-Review, has had a prominent part in the development of Salmon Harbor. As one of Oregon's best known conservationists, he was active in the legislative effort to close the Umpqua River to commercial fishing. He originated the idea for the Umpqua Basin Council's land acquisition committee, referred to in this article, and served as a member of that committee. He was author of the plan for creation of the Douglas County Parks Department and provided the text from which the county court's order creating that department was officially drawn. He urged upon the county court and parks department the early development of facilities at Salmon Harbor and has been called upon as an adviser in subsequent improvements. Through the newspaper he has sponsored and encouraged the expansion of the Salmon Harbor sports fishery.

But various factors, seemingly unrelated, were bearing on Winchester Bay only 10 years ago. Douglas County sportsmen were fighting to close the Umpqua River to commercial fishing, drawing upon themselves the wrath of the people of Winchester Bay, who saw in the effort elimination of the last vestige of their industrial life.

The Corps of Engineers was working diligently at a laboratory in the South on a replica of the mouth of the Umpqua River, in an effort to devise a system of jetties which would cause the current of the river to keep its shallow bar clear of dangerous shoals.

Douglas County was beginning a boom growth, as a result of its new timber industry. An organization named the Umpqua Basin Conservation Council was created by delegates from each of the organized sports clubs. Sensing that increased population would reduce availability of lands heretofore used for recreational purposes, the Council had as one of its primary objectives the acquisition for the public of picnic spots, parks, and river access. A representative committee was named to direct the program.

These various activities resulted in the birth of Salmon Harbor. First, the effort to close the Umpqua River to commercial fishing culminated in legislation at the 1947 session of the Oregon Legislature. At about the same time, the Corps of Engineers began construction on a training jetty, designed to "train" the river's currents into the desired channel. The Umpqua Basin Conservation Council's land acquisition committee found itself with an unexpectedly big problem on its hands.



for use in loading and unloading skiffs, was built at the water's edge. The effect was immediate and astounding. Completed in time for the 1949 season's fishing, the new facilities were used by 18,107 anglers who caught 58,053 pounds of salmon, according to Oregon Game Commission records.

But disaster lay ahead — disaster that was to prove a blessing in disguise. The Corps of Engineers had completed its training jetty. In 1951 there came a severe storm from the southwest. Heavy waves beat into the river from the ocean. The new jetty confined them to the river channel. They raced upstream until they hit the bank opposite Winchester Bay, then turned, with great force, across the stream and into the cove.

The county's limby dock was ripped out. The parking area was damaged. Debris was tossed into the moorage basin. Many areas of the beach were washed away. A row of trees was uprooted. Houses were undermined, while residents and Coast Guardsmen worked frantically to save the village.

A plea for emergency aid went to the Corps of Engineers. But the Engineers had no money. The County Court and the Port of Umpqua began studying the problem. An engineering firm, Cornell, Howland, Hayes and Merrifield, Corvallis, was employed to find answers. Their resultant study proposed steps to prevent a recurrence of storm damage, coupled with step-by-step development of recreational facilities.

**SALMON HARBOR TODAY** looks like this: The top picture shows the county-port district built breakwater separating the harbor from the main channel of the Umpqua River. Moorage basin at left is newest unit in development. The older basin is shown at far right. Proof that the fishing is good is furnished by Governor Paul Patterson, shown here with a big one he hooked shortly after the dedication ceremonies on July 9. Shown with the governor are, at left, Col. J. U. Moorehead, corps of engineers, and Howard Hinsdale, owner of the yacht "Judy." At the right is shown the floating dock and some of the private and commercial vessels in the new moorage basin. In addition to privately owned pleasure craft, charter boats make regular trips carrying passengers over the bar for trolling or mooching in the ocean outside river's mouth. The bottom drawing shows the ultimate development of the Winchester Bay area as it will look upon completion. — Photos by Paul Jenkins

In 1954-55 the County Court and Port of Umpqua again pooled resources and spent an additional \$77,000 to build the second unit specified on the master plan. This unit consists of approximately 10 acres of additional moorage space, with floating dock, and about 13 acres of parking area.

The county and port now have invested \$250,000 at Salmon Harbor, while private investments have been made in excess of \$75,000. Today, with deeper water available, Salmon Harbor's commercial fishing fleets number about 50 boats, with from 75 to 100 in the harbor at times. More than 25 charter boats operate during the season to take anglers over the bar. About 400 sport craft utilize the facilities throughout the season from June through October.

Accepted and iced for market. Bottom fish are purchased and processed for mink feed. Motels, restaurants, tackle shops and numerous other businesses have developed. Last year, the Game Commission reports, Salmon Harbor was visited by 21,860 anglers. They caught 20,175 salmon — 6,262 chinooks and 13,913 silversides. Total weight was 212,685 pounds. No record was made of the striped bass, ling cod, black bass, halibut, flounder, sole and other fish taken by anglers. Salmon Harbor truly is a modern miracle producing wonderment and awe for those who observe its growth.

## Study Slated For Pollution

Possible crop and livestock damage from industrial fumes is scheduled soon for nationwide study with funds provided by federal legislation, reports F. E. Price, dean and director of agriculture at Oregon State College.

Public Law 159 authorizes a yearly appropriation not to exceed \$5 million the next five years to conduct research on eliminating or reducing air pollution.

## College To Study Milk Protein Rate

Growing consumer preference for high protein foods is prompting a study of all major dairy breeds in Oregon for possible inheritance of herds to produce high protein milk.

Because of the effects of air pollution upon human health, the basic authority for carrying out this legislation is vested in the department of health, education and welfare. The department will work with other federal, state, local and private agencies.

Amounts of protein, sugar, minerals and other components of milk delivered to Oregon's key consuming markets will be studied this year by Oregon State College dairy scientists under \$5,000 grant from the Oregon dairy products commission.

OSU and Oregon air pollution control officials will confer soon on possible research problems that might be undertaken in Oregon with funds from the federal grant. Price stated. The OSG agricultural experiment station, he added, has well-qualified staff members to engage in such research. Agricultural chemists and horticulturists at the college have conducted extensive research into related problems in recent years.

Dr. G. A. Richardson, who will head the project, says samples of milk — mainly Grade A — will be taken from bulk tanks that deliver to dairy plants in an attempt to trace milk composition to dairy herds.

As passed by Congress, the bill recognizes the control of air pollution as a primary responsibility of state and local governments. The role of the federal government will be limited to conducting research and providing technical services and financial aid to agencies and individuals concerned with air pollution research and control.

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