

# Tornado aftermath: Manzanita rebuilds, honors responders

## Still too early for damage estimates

By R.J. Marx  
Seaside Signal

The Manzanita Visitors Center's Manager Dan Haag came to Seaside to give an update on Manzanita's tornado recovery efforts.

The Oct. 14 event tore through downtown Manzanita before striking U.S. Highway 101.

"It could have been a lot worse," Haag told members of Seaside's Chamber of Commerce at its Friday breakfast. "From what you've seen and heard on the news, obviously some serious damage. Luckily it happened when no one was around and a lot of those houses were unoccupied."

According to Haag, 128 different buildings were damaged and six businesses sustained damages. "The cleanup has progressed really well," Haag said. "Ninety-seven, 98 percent of our merchants are open for business. Lots of trees are down — that's going to take some getting used to. But if you came down and you saw the damage immediately after the tornado, you'll see the difference is amazing."

## Estimating damages

At a special Manzanita City Council meeting Oct. 21, officials estimated they had spent about \$35,000 clearing debris from city rights-of-way.

The decision was made to wait and see how much debris remains after a few weeks before possibly making damage estimates, according to Manzanita Administrative Assistant Kristin Grasseh.

"We're trying to find what insurance is doing and who's doing what," she said Friday.

## Tornado relief

Send donations to Fulcrum Community Resources/Manzanita Tornado Relief, PO Box 44, Manzanita 97130 or visit the Manzanita Tornado Relief Facebook page.

"What we're coming to find is that there's more homes with damage that wasn't visible."

Doors not being able to shut are indications that "something shifted," Grasseh said. "Some people are not even aware there is damage to their homes."

Engineers are being called in to examine homes in the tornado's path.

Grasseh described one property on cinder blocks that shifted 19 inches.

"That house is coming down," she said. "Those are the things we're up against right now."

On Friday, Laneda Avenue was closed throughout the day from Third Street North to Fourth Street North so that a contractor could remove the roof from the damaged building across from the post office.

The Manzanita City Council meeting on Nov. 9 will provide an update and "we'll see where things are at," Grasseh said.

## Shop Manzanita

Haag invited Seaside chamber members to show their gratitude to first responders, utility workers, city employees and local contractors, among others, at a breakfast held Saturday at the Pine Grove Community House in Manzanita.

"We're very fortunate," Haag said. "We have a very well-oiled, well-prepared emergency response team."



SUBMITTED DRAWING

Red markings indicate damage to homes in Manzanita.

Everybody jumped right into action.

The best way to help with the recovery, he added, is to come to Manzanita.

"Come visit your favorite shop, have a meal at your favorite restaurant, say 'Hi' to your local merchants," Haag said. "They'll love you for it."

# Saddle Mountain road reopens after storms

## But the campground remains closed for the winter season

By Erick Bengel  
EO Media Group



JOSHUA BESSE/EO MEDIA GROUP

The Astoria Bridge and Saddle Mountain as seen from Washington state earlier this year.

The campground at Saddle Mountain State Natural Area will remain closed through the winter, but the vehicle road leading up to it reopened Tuesday after a brief closure that caused outcry among hikers.

The state parks department recently closed the gate between the U.S. Highway 26 entrance and the day-use area. Drivers could park outside the gate, but hikers and hunters had to walk an additional couple of miles to reach the Saddle Mountain trail.

Ben Cox, park manager of the Nehalem Bay Management Unit — which oversees Saddle Mountain and other parks and recreation sites — said he closed the road out of concern for visitors' safety after the mid-October storms ripped through the North Coast and knocked down trees at the park.

Craig Hurst, a ranger assistant with Oregon State Parks said that in winter, "we get a lot of trees come down up there, so if a large tree comes down and somebody's

**"We get a lot of trees come down up there, so if a large tree comes down and somebody's on the other side of that tree, they're pretty much going to be stuck."**

Craig Hurst,  
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Cox planned to close the road for the entire season, but he said he did not know the Saddle Mountain trail is a popular destination in the winter, so he changed course.

"I just didn't realize the outcry this would cause," Cox said.

The department decided to revert to standard winter operations: The campground and restrooms are closed, but the road and parking lot will be open.

"This is the best compromise that we could come up with," he said.

Cox said drivers in the winter should be careful on the Saddle Mountain road,

which can become icy. They should also be mindful that, "during storm activity, that road's a great candidate for trees to come down," he said.

Meanwhile, because of the seasonal weather, the short-staffed Nehalem Bay Management Unit will not be working on the trail, which can get washed out and become unstable.

"It's not practical or realistic to try to do a trail repair or maintenance during the winter up there," Cox said.

## Elated hiker

Pete Gimre, owner of Gimre's Shoes in Astoria, has hiked the Saddle Mountain trail every month since April 2003.

On Saturday, he hiked the extra 2 miles to the park, then took the trail to the summit, keeping his streak alive: 163 straight months.

When he learned the road would no longer be blocked, Gimre said, "That is fantastic news."

"There's literally thousands of people I see up there over the course of time that encompasses 12 months of the year," he said.

Gimre saw many hikers this weekend who, as he did, walked the additional length to the trailhead. But he wonders how many chose to turn around instead.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

**Monday, Nov. 14**  
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Tuesday, Nov. 15**  
Sunset Empire Parks and Rec District, 4 p.m., 1225 Ave. A, Seaside.

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Wednesday, Nov. 16**  
Seaside Tourism Advisory Commission, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Thursday, Nov. 17**  
Seaside Tree Board, 4 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Tuesday, Nov. 22**  
Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., at the Seaside Airport.

**Monday, Nov. 28**  
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Tuesday, Dec. 6**  
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Wednesday, Dec. 7**  
Seaside Improvement Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Gearhart City Council**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

**Thursday, Dec. 8**  
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.

**Gearhart Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

**Monday, Dec. 12**  
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Thursday, Dec. 15**  
Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall

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