

Gearhart adopts tsunami hazard overlay zone

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

While legislators in Salem reversed course on tsunami hazard planning, the city of Gearhart became the first city in Clatsop County and one of six along the Oregon Coast to adopt a tsunami resiliency plan.

"It will ensure that safety and emergency buildings are not built in a tsunami hazard overlay zone," Planner Carole Connell said after the Wednesday, July 3, Gearhart City Council meeting.

The city's decision comes days after state legislators overturned a 1995 prohibition on constructing new public facilities within the tsunami zone.

The law, known as HB 3309, goes into effect, municipalities will be free

to build schools, hospitals, prisons, other high-occupancy buildings, rehuses, and police stations in areas that will be destroyed when the tsunami strikes.

Using maps developed by the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Gearhart councilors approved an overlay zone with the purpose of differentiating between areas of higher versus lower risk.

The designation will address future zoning decisions and "reflect the community's risk tolerance and its application of mitigation measures," Connell wrote in her staff report.

The tsunami resiliency comprehensive plan lays out general policies, evacuation policy concepts and

policies related to reducing development risk in high tsunami risk areas.

The plan calls for hazard mitigation planning,

which could prohibit hospitals, fire and police stations and other structures from being built in the zone.

Exceptions could come

building height limitations because of its tsunami-resilient design," Department of Land Conservation and Development's Coastal Shores Specialist Meg Reed said in February.

Gearhart received \$14,000 from the state to help the city address tsunami evacuation routes and needs, and to identify evacuation improvement projects.

Along with Gearhart, the state is collaborating with 10 other coastal jurisdictions through two federal grants provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on this project, the closest communities being Rockaway Beach, Tillamook County and New-

port, with participation as far south as North Bend and Port Orford.

These communities expressed interest in addressing their individual tsunami risk, Reed said.

Department of Land Conservation and Development staff provide technical and financial support to the city to prioritize long-term planning related to the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami event.

By identifying projects now and prioritizing them in a plan, communities will be able to take advantage of grant funds when they arise more readily, such as FEMA hazard mitigation assistance funds.

"The state repealed this; it's our own law now," Connell said at the council meeting. "We're in new territory, I admit."

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education and outreach and encourages policies to "consider tsunami risks and evacuation routes and signage when planning."

All land identified as "subject to inundation from the XXL magnitude local source tsunami event" are subject to requirements,

when "there are no reasonable lower-risk alternative sites available for the proposed use," or evacuation measures are provided to minimize risk.

"For example, a new hotel with a vertical evacuation structure built into its roof might get a waiver on

Popular osprey cam in Seaside captures losses at nest

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

A wildlife camera trained on an osprey nest at Seaside's Broadway Park has given people an intimate look at the wild birds since 2013, but nature got a little too real last week.

The male osprey, the main provider for the nest's three growing chicks, disappeared. Some viewers say they last saw him on camera at the end of June with a fishhook embedded in his chest.

Instead of immediately going out to hunt in his place, the female osprey stayed put on the nest. When she finally did go hunting, it was a case of too little, too late. The smallest chick died — likely from starvation — followed soon by a second chick.

Viewers who watched the events unfold over the camera's popular live feed online were upset. Many demanded that the Necanicum Watershed Council, which maintains the camera, or Wildlife Center of the North Coast, intervene.

"It's been rough," said Angie Reseland, of the Necanicum Watershed Council. "It's nature and nature does really cruel things sometimes and it's hard because everybody tunes into this."

The osprey couple — nicknamed "Bob and Betty" by viewers — had had a string of successful years at the nest. Viewers celebrated each new egg, each fledged



An adult osprey, caught on a popular live feed of a nest in Seaside's Broadway Park in June 2018, watches over chicks and eggs.

chick. People were not emotionally prepared for things to not go well this year, Reseland said.

But as they watched the chicks' health begin to go downhill "basically, there wasn't anything we could do unless the federal government gave us permission," she said.

The Wildlife Center of the North Coast is licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to rescue and rehabilitate wild animals, but must follow federal regulations set by the agency or risk losing its license.

When it comes to an active migratory bird nest like the osprey nest at Broadway Park, from the time the first egg is laid until the last chick is fledged and leaves the nest "nothing can be done to that nest," said Josh Saranpaa, executive director of the wildlife center.

"We can't take the babies or the adult or anything from that nest to rehabilitate them because they're still in the nest," Saranpaa said. "As far as the Fish and Wildlife Service is concerned, it's the natural order to let nature run its course."

If chicks had started questing for food and fallen from the nest — a less than ideal situation — the wildlife center could have swooped in and grabbed them.

But the wildlife center exists primarily to mitigate human-caused issues as much as possible. Though viewers believe the male osprey was injured because of fishing gear, there was no proof that the bird died. Nor is it clear why the female didn't begin hunting to feed her chicks earlier.

The wildlife center did place four extra salmon at

the base of the pole where the nest is located. The mother osprey only took one.

"It can be difficult for folks to witness sad events such as the loss of an adult and the struggles of the chicks," said Leslie Henry, a wildlife biologist and permit specialist for the Fish and Wildlife Service. "Unfortunately letting nature take its course would be the most appropriate action. If the chicks or the adult ended up on the ground and needed assistance then a permitted rehabilitator could provide that care."

Things started to look up over the weekend, however. The remaining chick is being fed and another adult osprey, believed to be male, showed up at the nest with the mother. It is not clear if the new adult is the father or a different bird.

Camera footage Monday morning showed both adult birds in the nest with the remaining chick.

Saranpaa, trying to look on the bright side of the whole situation, believes it could be a good educational moment about potential human impacts on wildlife.

If the adult male osprey did die or stayed away from the nest and couldn't hunt because it was injured by fishing gear, that effect cascaded down to his offspring. In previous years, one osprey chick suffocated in a plastic bag that blew up onto the nest.

Still, as difficult as it is to watch, birds die in nests all the time.

The wildlife center maintains nest boxes for swallows all over its property outside of Astoria. At the end of the nesting season, staff and volunteers clean out the boxes.

"Four out of 10 of them have dead babies from that season," Saranpaa said.

"This sort of thing happens a lot, and in different nests," he added. But in Seaside, "there's an actual camera on it and people are seeing the realities of nature, which are pretty difficult to deal with."

Serious incidents mark otherwise 'quiet' Fourth

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

With complaints from the 2018 holiday, Seaside officials ramped up efforts to deter illegal fireworks with both personnel and educational outreach, including public service announcements and electronic reader boards set up at both entrances to the city.

"The weekend wasn't that busy, we just had more major calls, which is eerie for us," Fire Chief Joey Daniels said.

Firefighters "hit the beach as hard as we could," he said.

While fireworks complaints were down, separate incidents saw five people Life Flighted to Portland.

Incidents included a fireworks hand injury, a burned child, and an unresponsive person on the Prom, Daniels said.

A man with serious knife wounds was found in Dunegrass on the beach in Seaside after midnight on July 6 and received transport, as did another unresponsive person, Daniels said.

The weekend saw seven water rescues, including the grandchildren of a for-



Illegal fireworks confiscated by Seaside Police after the Fourth of July weekend.

mer city manager, Larry Lehman.

According to Police Chief Dave Ham, Seaside Police took 56 calls on July 4, "a hodgepodge of our normal type of calls," he said.

Ham said at least 13 fireworks citations were issued and four arrests on Independence Day. "It's not a lot, but it did keep us busy."

Extra state troopers came in, with 10 in total making traffic stops and fireworks interdictions.

Three plainclothes police in patrolled the beach from 7 to 10 p.m., he added.

"We were pretty quiet from the time the fireworks ended to the time I went home at about midnight," Ham said. "It was overall a good night."

Additional patrol staff continued through the weekend.

"Sunday slowed down," Ham said. "But there were still people in town. Overall, I thought it was a pretty good Fourth of July."

KNIFE INCIDENTS UNDER INVESTIGATION

Shortly after midnight on Saturday morning, July 6 police responded to a disturbance in the area of Ave. K and the Promenade, where they found the adult male with serious injuries.

A short time after a second adult male with a knife wound was reported to be at Providence Seaside Hospital being treated for injuries.

The Clatsop County Major Crime Team was activated and detectives responded to the scene. The investigations are continuing, Police Chief Dave Ham said Monday.

Mayor Jay Barber and councilors thanked responders for their work.

"There were several serious accidents," Barber said. "There was a good response in every case, from what I've heard. Please convey our appreciation to our troops. It's part of who we are as a city to serve our visitors and citizens well."

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