



Clatsop Tidings

A monthly review of County business

“Neighbor to neighbor, serving Clatsop County with integrity, honesty and respect”

March 2010

Parks inventory plan will guide protection efforts

Clatsop County’s parks and recreational lands contain a sampling of almost all the rich natural attractions that grace the North Coast – old-growth timber, tidal wetlands, lakes and streams, rare wildlife habitat.

But many of these sites are in jeopardy from overuse, unwanted vegetation and other problems. And with resources tight, the county needs direction on where to best use its money and manpower to maintain and preserve these valuable areas.

The newly completed Natural Resources Inventory and Stewardship Plan aims to provide that guidance with a site-by-site assessment of each county park and natural area and a set of policies to guide management decisions on them.

The document was presented to the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners at a work session Feb. 24. The board is expected to formally adopt the plan this month.

The study was recommended in the 2006 county parks master plan, but not



The plan maps out ‘mixed upland forests’ like this one at Cullaby Lake Park.

until the devastating December 2007 windstorm and its aftermath did the project take on some urgency. The storm’s 100 mph-plus winds caused widespread

damage to timber stands around the North Coast, including on many county parks

Continued next page

Four-county coalition supports fair split for Columbia salmon harvest allocations

The Clatsop County commissioners have joined their counterparts in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties in Washington to urge fisheries regulators in Washington State to give more consideration to lower-river commercial salmon fishers.

The four counties’ commissioners, meeting together Feb. 26 as the Lower Columbia River Joint Fisheries Coalition, voted unanimously to endorse a letter from Pacific County Commissioner Jon Kaino to Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire that took issue with recent

comments from the head of the state’s Fish and Wildlife Commission on the allocation of Columbia salmon harvests.

Kaino’s letter pointed to statements from WSFVC Chairperson Miranda Wecker at a commission meeting in October 2009 explaining the panel’s allocation of only 35 percent of the 2009 non-tribal spring chinook harvest to commercial gillnetters. Wecker cited figures showing 180,000 sport fishery trips per season

Continued next page

Upcoming County Meetings

Planning Commission
Tuesday, March 9, 10 a.m.
Judge Boyington Building

Board of Commissioners
Wednesday, March 10, 9 a.m.
Judge Boyington Building

Board of Commissioners
Wednesday, March 24, 6 p.m.
Judge Boyington Building

Times subject to change

Parks: Invasive weeds, erosion, other threats pinpointed



An example of invasive plant species is this blackberry at John Day Park

Continued from Page 1

and natural areas. Salvage operations removed many of the downed and damaged trees, but the county decided a systematic look was needed to assess the current condition, and possible future threats, to all its park and natural properties.

Led by Trout Mountain Forestry consulting firm with input from county staff, the county's Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee, other public agen-

cies and local conservation groups, the study made detailed inventories of the 11 parks and six recreational/natural sites, which together total more than 800 acres and range from popular destinations like Cullaby Lake County Park to tidal wetlands with no public access.

The study found nine properties are located on major fish-bearing streams or rivers, three feature old-growth trees, and five contain or are immediately adjacent to bald eagle nests. Surveyors even used

Global Positioning System (GPS) locators to pinpoint notable individual features like old-growth trees, wetlands and springs as well as problem like dump sites and potential hazards.

With the collected data, each property was scored according to both its current condition and its vulnerability to threats like erosion, invasive weeds, overuse or safety hazards. Recommended improvements for each site were also listed.

On one end of the scale is David Douglas County Park, a 64-acre tract of largely unspoiled old-growth conifer trees, some more than 500 years old, located on U.S. Highway 26. The study graded its ecological high and risk low.

At the other end is Klootch Creek south of Seaside, home of the one-time Sitka Spruce Heritage Tree. It remains one of the county's most popular parks but is also heavily infested with a half-dozen invasive species and sees extensive erosion along the Necanicum River.

The plan also contains a list of overall policy recommendations: Promote native plants and control and remove invasive species; stabilize and, where feasible, restore vulnerable ecosystems; use parks staff to monitor and maintain properties and partner with other organizations for restoration projects; and provide educational opportunities to the public.

Fisheries: Resolution supports consumers' right to local-caught salmon

Continued from Page 1

versus only 50 active commercial gillnet licenses in Washington as a key reason behind the harvest decision.

Wecker's figures, even if accurate, distort the true impact of both fisheries, Kaino wrote, and don't account for the fact that commercial harvesters are the only source of fish for consumers who don't fish themselves.

"The Commission's decisions on this fishery appear to be based on faulty logic and a predisposition to favor 'upriver' sport anglers," his letter states.

Kaino also notes that the commercial fishery is a strong supporter of fish and habitat enhancement.

The four counties formed the joint fish-

eries coalition last year to present a unified voice to lawmakers and regulators in the complicated and often acrimonious debate over fisheries policies on the Columbia River system. The group meets roughly four times a year.

Last fall the four-county panel adopted a joint resolution supporting:

- An equitable distribution of the lower-river salmon harvest among commercial, sport and tribal fishers.
- Participation of all parties in the formulation of allocation policies.
- Peer- and public-reviewed, science-based fishery policies.
- Consumers' rights to purchase locally caught lower river

salmon.

- Economic investments by commercial and sport fishermen that provide local jobs and support other local businesses.
- Improvement of fish stocks on the lower river.
- Education and interpretation of the cultural importance of salmon to lower river communities from historic Native American tribes to today.
- Improvements to the permitting process by regulatory agencies.
- Protection of private property rights in fish enhancement projects.
- Holding polluters of the river accountable.