

CHINOOK OBSERVER

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Vaccinations start in Pacific County

OBH front-line workers get 1st doses

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

ILWACO — Hope has come to Pacific County in the battle against covid-19, as Ocean Beach Hospital received and administered the first doses of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine to several of the hospital's employees on Dec. 18.

The hospital received a shipment of 975 doses of the vaccine on Thursday, Dec. 17, the first doses to arrive in Pacific County. OBH administered the first of the received doses the next day to several of its healthcare workers, including a nurse, physician's assistant and physical therapist.

As of this Monday afternoon,

OBH has administered 80 shots of the vaccine, according to Blair Oman, public information officer for the OBH Covid-19 Incident Command System.

For now, doses in Pacific County — and the country — are going to people who comprise Phase 1a; high-risk health workers and some first responders, as well as staff and residents of long-term care facilities. In conjunction with county health officials, OBH

is developing a vaccine distribution plan for how it will administer doses of the vaccine it receives, Oman said.

The doses at OBH are currently being stored in the container they were shipped in, since the hospital does not have an ultra-cold freezer that the vaccine needs to be stored at to remain viable. Pacific County officials purchased a freezer for OBH, but it isn't expected to arrive until mid-January due to a backlog

with the vendor.

The container storing the doses can be recharged with dry ice five times — it has been recharged once at OBH so far — and the doses of the vaccine being stored in the container should be given within 30 days.

On a daily basis, Oman said, only the doses needed that day can be taken from the container and

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TOXIC SPOTS

Science reveals a source of crab, clam problems



LUKE WHITTAKER

Recreational clambers were enjoying abundant harvests on peninsula sands until rising toxin levels slammed the season shut on Oct. 23.

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
EO Media Group

PACIFIC OCEAN — As high levels of domoic acid once again delay the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Washington state and along Oregon's North Coast, researchers say they have zeroed in on a likely cause of our region's marine toxin issues.

They recently identified a new highly toxic hot spot between California's Cape Mendocino, several hundred miles north of San Francisco, and Oregon's Cape Blanco, north of Port Orford, according to a study published this month.

The hot spot — along with another near Newport — are the seed beds for marine microorganisms capable of producing the troublesome domoic acid toxin. These ocean zones seem to be behind spiking levels of the toxin that is plaguing the commercial Dungeness crab fishery and razor clam digs in Washington and northern Oregon this year.

Perfect storm

A perfect storm of factors have favored development and persistence of these toxin sources — in particular a marine heat wave that began in 2013 and continued for several years after. With the progression of many of the same factors under climate change, researchers say hot spots and the issues that accompany them are likely here to stay.

"Can they be washed away? We're not seeing a lot of evidence for that," said Vera Trainer, lead author

MORE INSIDE

Toxin delays commercial crab opener until mid-January • A4

Don't plan on more clam digs any time soon • A4

'WE SAW THE BULLET COMING.'

Dan Ayres

Washington coastal shellfish manager

of the study and an expert in harmful algae with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The 2013 heat wave set off disastrous chain reactions in the marine ecosystem, including a record-setting harmful algal bloom that closed or delayed fisheries in 2015. Fisheries managers and scientists are still watching the effects unspool.

Like a change in forage fish patterns and a delay in crab fishing during the heat wave that brought large migrating whales and fishing gear in direct conflict with each other, the new hot spot is another unforeseen result, another "unknown unknown," Trainer said.

Under certain models, the heat wave as it manifested at its peak in 2015 is now five times more likely to happen due to human influences, Trainer said. Future marine heat waves are 20 times more likely to occur because of climate

change.

"As weather becomes more extreme, these harmful algae blooms are going to become more extreme and more frequent," Trainer said.

She's sorry. It's all kind of bad news.

A confirmation

The researchers' discovery confirmed what others had suspected.

Matthew Hunter, a study author and shellfish and phytoplankton lead for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, said there had been consistent

See Toxic spots, Page A8

Officials allege bear feeder is back at it

In response, six bears killed so far

By JEFF CLEMENS
For the Observer

ILWACO — For the second time this decade, Doris Berryhill-Parks, 76, of Ilwaco's Sahalee neighborhood is accused of intentionally feeding black bears, a misdemeanor under Washington state law punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

It is an illegal hobby that seven years ago resulted in five semi-domesticated Sahalee bears having to be killed and two others relocated. Another was euthanized this summer. There may be more to come.

Berryhill-Parks was arraigned on the most recent charge on Dec. 16 in front of Pacific County South District Court Judge Nancy McAllister. She entered a plea of not guilty. She did not have an attorney but told the judge she will be hiring a private one. Parks' next court appearance is set for Jan. 27, 2021, with a tentative trial date of March 11.

2013-14 issues

Berryhill-Parks previously stood trial on Oct. 15, 2014, for the same charge. After five hours of testimony and strenuous cross examination, her attorney, Aberdeen-based Orlando Tadique, struck a deal in court resulting in a stipulated order of continuance. Berryhill-Parks was ordered to pay a \$500 fine and to refrain from feeding any wild animals for two years. The formal charge was shelved, providing she lived up to the deal.

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Pacific County home prices shoot up 52%

Peninsula 'Zoom towns' see 75% increase

Chinook Observer

PACIFIC COUNTY — Median home prices shot up an astounding 52% countywide and more than 75% on the peninsula in November compared to a year earlier, reflecting strong demand, short supply and historically low mortgage rates.

The countywide median — meaning half sold for more and half for less — hit \$238,000 last month, up from \$156,500 a year earlier, according to the Northwest Multiple Listing Service, which represents brokers in 23 of Washington's 39 counties. The countywide average price was \$258,373 in November. (The average is nudged higher than the median by sales of higher-end properties.)

On the peninsula, where around three-quarters of county sales occur, the median price of the 38 single-family homes sold in November was \$281,775,

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Group pays tribute to Bill and Gloria Buck

Couple has aided Peninsula in a big way

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

PENINSULA — Bill and Gloria Buck have dedicated their retirement years to helping others.

As they step back from volunteering, they are earning applause for their kindness and zeal.

"They are 24-carat gold," said Cecelia Haack, coordinator of the

Peninsula Poverty Response team. She commended Bill Buck's service on the group's board and his hands-on leadership. "They have been marvelous. He has had a vision for doing good in his community.

"He has a great sense of humor," Haack added. "Gloria is sweet and gentle and kind. They have always been very generous with their time."

Like many "power couples," when groups recruit one they get two sets of helpful hands. As the Bucks remember it, Gloria was first



'THE PEOPLE WE ARE HELPING ARE SO GRATEFUL.'

Bill Buck
Retiring volunteer

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bill Buck, Nichole Lopez and Mitzi Pothier are pictured in their distinctive yellow volunteers T-shirts at a Project Homeless Connect event. Bill and Gloria Buck are retiring from involvement in Peninsula Poverty Response, earning significant applause for their dedication and zeal. Lopez is the Peninsula Poverty Response group's historian. Pothier is volunteer coordinator.

Couple

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to become involved when Pastor Adrienne Strehlow, who has since moved away, spearheaded efforts to serve the homeless through Ocean Park Lutheran Church; Bill soon pitched in, too.

But now they say it is time to "retire."

Coalition. The group coordinates the annual Connect project, plus year-round efforts to help others. Nancy McAllister, its board president, was full of praise for Bill and Gloria's significant contributions. "They have given their total hearts for the community and responded to its needs," she said. "You just cannot say enough about them."

'THEY HAVE GIVEN THEIR TOTAL HEARTS FOR THE COMMUNITY AND RESPONDED TO ITS NEEDS.'

Nancy McAllister

President, Peninsula Poverty Response, speaking of Bill and Gloria Buck

"We are both stepping back from our volunteer work because of health issues," said Bill, who is 74. "We have loved every minute of it. It's been fantastic to work with all these other people."

Providing essential services

Years ago, Bill, a journeyman cabinetmaker, was an alcoholic. When he embraced sobriety, he embarked on a campaign to help others. "When I got out of recovery, I was very grateful because I had hit bottom," he said. He facilitated Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Tacoma and assisted others through 12-Step programs.

When they moved to the beach 10 years ago, they joined Peninsula Baptist Church and began volunteering with the Pack-2School program, which fills backpacks for 400 Peninsula school children each year. After about four years, they passed the leadership to others.

Next they helped create Project Homeless Connect which aids more than 100 people each year; Bill Buck has served as its lead coordinator. It was later renamed Project Community Connect because most agencies' definitions of "homeless" cover people with poor or inadequate housing and "couch surfers" — not just those living rough outdoors.

This effort brings together 70 volunteers and 25 service providers to the Long Beach Elks Lodge No. 1937 for a one-day gathering for people to receive flu shots, dental care, eye exams, haircuts, access to veterans' services, identity cards, Social Security, and items like tents, backpacks and hygiene products. In January 2021, because of the covid-19 restrictions on in-person gatherings, these services will be made available in different formats. Details will be announced.

Peninsula Poverty Response was formed in 2012 in collaboration with the Wellspring Community

Bill Buck's leadership has been significant, she added. "We are losing a very vital member of the board."

Grateful for the opportunity

Bill said the program was gratifying. "You see the rewards when you see the looks on the people's faces — the people you have been helping," he said. "The people we are helping are so grateful. It is rewarding that people who we have seen as our 'guests,' the next year they come back as volunteers."

Gloria noted that one memorable element has been the optician testing — which prompts emotional reactions. "Sometimes they burst into tears when they can see."

Fellow volunteers will miss their energy.

Judy Graham leads the Laundry Love program, which offers free clothes washing services to needy people. She knows the Bucks from Peninsula Baptist Church. "They are a very giving couple to the church and community," she said. "They always have big smiles on their faces for everyone. They both go out of their way to help everyone in need."

Mitzi Pothier agreed. As volunteer coordinator for Peninsula Community Connect, she and her husband Greg met the Bucks from the program began in 2014. "I have enjoyed knowing the Bucks for all of these years as they volunteer up and down the Peninsula," she said. "They are both dear friends and I will miss them very much."

The Bucks say they are delighted to have played a part. "This is a fantastic community," said Bill. "But 'everything has a season,'" he said, quoting Ecclesiastes. "There is always a time to step back."

Gloria commended others who have given their time freely. "This Peninsula has a heart like no other place in this world, for having people see a need and wanting to help," she said. "It's tremendous."

Bears

Continued from Page A1

This outcome was interpreted at the time to be an admission by Parks to the facts of the case, but a recognition by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife that their evidence perhaps didn't rise to the required legal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt."

According to neighbors, Berryhill-Parks for at least two years appeared to refrain from feeding the large flock of crows and dozens of raccoons that previously haunted her property. But about five years after her trial, bears again began converging on her house. WDFW officers also continued surveillance of Parks' residence through the years following her original charge.

"On one of these checks, I contacted Parks, and she advised she was feeding squirrels, birds, and chipmunks on her back porch," WDFW Officer Paul Jacobsen wrote in a report included in the court documents. "She denied intentionally feeding any bears but said they still come by. She stated she believed the squirrel and bird food was dropping down to the lower deck, and it may attract some bears."

Allegedly back at it

WDFW was notified by a concerned Ilwaco citizen around Sept. 1, 2019, that Berryhill-Parks was again feeding bears.

"I was contacted by a resident on Sahalee Hill in Ilwaco," Jacobsen wrote. "He stated the bear lady was feeding bears ... he identified the house where the lady lives, and I recognized it as the location of where [Berryhill-Parks] lives. He stated he was worried about the safety of children and others who walk in the area."

Additionally, a member of the Ilwaco city government, Stephanie Davis, also voiced concerns about the issue. On Sept. 14, 2019, Jacobsen began surveillance on Berryhill-Parks' residence on one of four separate occasions that also included Sept. 23-24, 2019, and once more on Oct. 7, 2019. On his first visit, he observed four bears walk into and away from her yard — a large male, a large female and two cubs.

"On each [subsequent] occasion, I observed up to five bears enter and leave the back deck area," Jacobsen wrote in the same report. "I observed three adult bears and two yearling cubs. The bears were extremely fat and not what a normal bear would look like."

Another resident contacted the WDFW and stated, "this morning there were four bears present [on the 2100 block of Hiaqua Place] in Ilwaco. Last evening we observed a yearling cub and later a large [male]. I know this has been a problem in the past... I have many pictures from our security cameras from this spring. During the last week, it has been an every morning and evening event."

He went on to say, "These folks are no better than poachers and deserve to be treated in the same manner... I can identify at least five different bears



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This large black bear was trapped in Ilwaco on Aug. 26 about 200 feet from the home where, it is alleged, a resident deliberately fed it. Sadly in keeping with the wildlife-management adage that "a fed bear is a dead bear," this one had to be killed by wildlife officers who concluded it could not be rehabilitated to avoid humans.

that are showing up and they may all end up needing to be destroyed. What a shame."

Ringling a similar bell, another resident contacted WDFW and voiced concern, as noted in court documents. "I phoned [the witness] and spoke with her. She stated there are bears all around her residence. She stated that she is afraid for her elderly parents, who also use the home. She stated her father comes and goes late, and she is terrified he will encounter the large male bear that frequents their driveway, yard and deck."

Stench and flies

On June 20, 2020, Jacobsen contacted Berryhill-Parks at her residence and observed several raccoons coming and going from under her house. When he approached the home, he smelled an unpleasant odor and observed flies coming from the front door. Fearing for Berryhill-Parks' safety, he reached out to another agency to request a safety check.

"I contacted Adult Protective Services, and on June 29, 2020, we went to Parks' residence and met with her in the driveway," Jacobsen wrote. "Parks was with her cousin, who stated he lived with [her]. [He] stated Parks was still feeding bears, and that she refuses to stop, but that she refuses and she is her own person and does what she wants."

Jacobsen continued, "[He] appeared to be nervous about cooperating. I also spoke with Parks, who stated she knew her feeding activities were attracting bears... Parks stated she felt the bears were not a threat and her neighbors were mean people for trying to get the activity to stop."

Habituated bears are dangerous

According to Jacobsen and wildlife expert WDFW Wildlife Biologist Scott Harris, "bears that are accustomed to being fed by people lose their natural fear and are very dangerous."

Black bear attacks on humans are rare but arouse the public's concern and raise issues of legal lia-

bility for the state. The last reported fatality from a bear in Washington was in 1974. In September 2010, Bellevue City Councilor John Chelminiak was severely mauled by a female black bear in the driveway of his Lake Wenatchee vacation house. He lost an eye in the attack.

"Feeding squirrels and raccoons alone would not attract and hold the number of bear observed," Harris stated. "Given that this is occurring during a time of year when bears are in hyperphagia is [a] further indication of a substantial food source. During hyperphagia, bears are driven to eat consistently to gain weight for hibernation. This will normally require a bear to travel continually in search of food."

Harris continued, "given the area and history of the homeowner feeding bears, I am confident she is supplying an unnatural food source that is attracting and holding these bears. This food source will [habituate] bear to food provided by humans and can delay or alter natural hibernation patterns of bears. This activity presents a public safety concern and property damage [concern] and a concern for the bears involved. Bears that become habituated to human-provided food and food-conditioned to humans can pose a significant risk to the public and once identified will often require euthanization."

Bear trapped in August

WDFW trapped a bear near Berryhill-Parks' home on Aug. 26, WDFW Capt. Dan Chadwick said. The adult bear was euthanized because it was habituated to human contact. A neighbor said that he walked up to the trapped bear, and it acted more like a pet hoping for a treat rather than displaying wild behavior. Resumed trapping is planned when

and if other bears begin roaming the neighborhood.

"What we have done with any of these bears previously when we have trapped multiple bears, we have taken a look at them [with our biologist] and decided whether or not we take a chance," Chadwick said. "If they are young enough, our biologist will take a look at them, assess them, and decide whether or not we want to give [releasing it in a wilder location] a try. [But] after two years old and in a situation like this where have known that they have been habituated and have been coming to a human food source like this, [we have to] euthanize the animal."

He continued, "We are not going to change their behavior by taking them out in the woods. They are going to try and come back. We have seen it time and time again where bears get themselves right back into trouble again. The public safety aspect of it is too great to relocate a known habituated bear."

'It's frustrating'

Chadwick said he and other WDFW officers and officials are personally upset that they are back in this scenario. He said they each take pride in protecting the wildlife of Washington state. It is disappointing when someone interferes with natural order and animals have to be euthanized as a result, he said.

"It's frustrating that we are back here again with this same individual," Chadwick said. "Hopefully, the second time through the court system is the charm. We hope that we aren't back a third time. It is serious business, and these are large wild carnivores that you cannot trust. There is plenty of food for them to eat out in the woods. So [no one] needs to be feeding them and creating this public safety risk."

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