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Memaloose Point waiting on permits to begin dredging

By Blayne Sheaffer
bsheaffer@countrymedia.net

Popular boat launch Memaloose Point in Tillamook has been seeing difficulty from those seeking to boat and fish due to silt filling up the ramp area, and Tillamook County Parks Department Director Delbert Schleichert says permits are what keep the launch from being dredged.

Schleichert says Memaloose Point hasn't been dredged since around 2005 or 2006.

"During low tides, the upstream or eastern ramp is totally unusable, and the downstream or western

ramp, although less filled-in, is still [a] problem," Schleichert said. "The last dredging was in the [2005 to 2006] time period, and involved approximately half as much silt and debris as exists at this time."

The low tides haven't been helping the situation either.

"The existing conditions are impacted heavily by the tides. For the past few weeks, this area has been witnessing the annual or normal, seasonal, very low tide levels, coupled with the heavy silt conditions and the start of the areas

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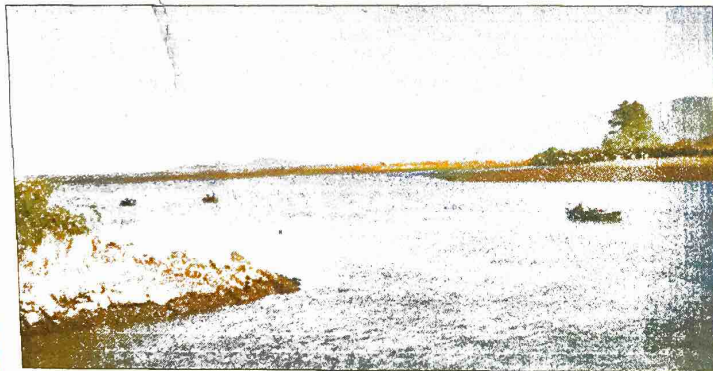


Photo by Blayne Sheaffer

The use of Memaloose Point Boat Launch in Tillamook has been made complicated due to silt filling up the ramp area, making it difficult to launch a boat into the water. The County Parks Department is working with the proper permitting agencies in hopes to dredge in the near future.

Dredging

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fish run," Schleichert said. "When all these conditions and circumstances come together, once one caller told me, 'You have the makings of a perfect storm.'"

To try and fix the problem, the Tillamook County Parks Department has been working with the Oregon State Marine Board for the past several months "regarding the unacceptable silting conditions found at Memaloose Point Boat Launch."

"In the past [two to three] months, their field staff have surveyed the conditions at the site and worked with the Parks Department staff to draft technical and detailed dredging permit applications for the Department of State Lands and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which have been turned in and received by each agency," Schleichert said. "There has been contact initiated from each agency with the Parks Department, concerning certain components of the applications, so there is evidence that the permitting process is moving forward."

Recently, the Parks Department staff went to Salem

to speak with the OSMB staff to discuss the conditions of Memaloose Point.

"Their staff have been very helpful and are intimately familiar with the site and the existing and reoccurring nature of the condition," Schleichert said. "Moreover, discussions centered around grant cycles and potential for a grant application for dredging Memaloose Point Boat Launch."

In addition, the Perks Department has to wait to hear from the proper permitting agencies to find out if permitting is able to be received, or if there's a timeline for permitting approval, before the department can begin working with the granting agencies to get dredging started.

"It is commonly understood that no granting agency wants to commit funding that doesn't have a reasonable possibility of being utilized within the timeframe allowed for accomplishing the work and expending the funds granted," Schleichert said.

So, in order for dredging to occur, Schleichert says everything—from the permitting approval to grant funding—will "come together at the appropriate and same time."