

CREST's projects include work in Ilwaco and John Day

The Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce approved its largest budget ever recently, with six projects expected to facilitate fish passage and restore habitat.

CREST's 2020-21 fiscal year budget is \$10.2 million.

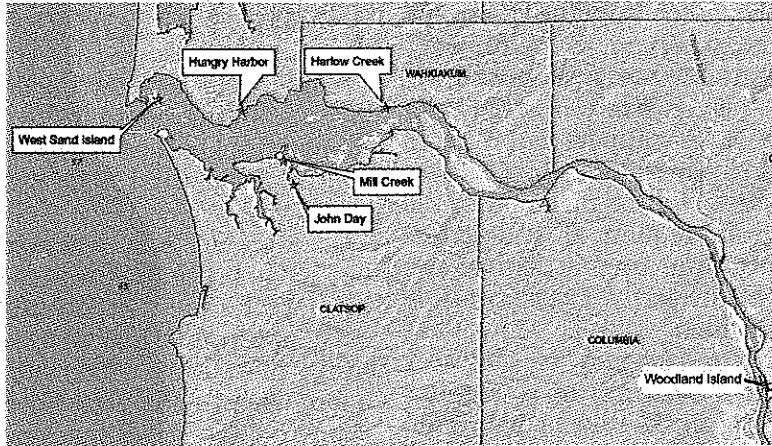
CREST, located in Astoria, is a nonprofit group dedicated to environmental planning and habitat restoration for fish and wildlife.

Staff members worked remotely to finalize plans, obtain grants and develop a budget for the year.

The largest project is the Hungry Harbor Habitat Restoration on Highway 401 in Washington state.

The overall project budget is \$1.34 million and includes replacement of a small 5-foot culvert that's blocking fish access to more than a mile of spawning habitat north of the highway. The culvert will be replaced with a much larger 18- by 12-foot concrete box culvert.

More than 80 percent of migrating juvenile salmon use the Columbia River's north shore while migrating out to the estuary and ocean,



CREST leaders said studies have shown.

Those helping to fund or work on the project include Greenwood Resources, Washington Department of Transportation, Washington Recreation and Conservation Office, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, Washington Coast Restoration and Resilience Initiative, Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bonneville Power Administration.

The West Sand Island project, which is in Baker Bay south of Ilwaco, will re-establish tidal flow connections

to wetlands in the island's interior. Twenty-three newly excavated channels will allow juvenile salmon to access the new habitat.

The \$712,200 project includes controlling invasive

plants on more than 60 acres. Work is expected to continue through winter and is being completed with partner agencies Bonneville Power Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Other habitat restoration projects are in John Day, Mill Creek, Harlow's Creek and Woodland Island.

Agency council members, who approved the budget, include Warrenton Commissioner Rick Newton, Port of Astoria Commissioner Frank Spence, Astoria Councilman Roger Rocka, Clatsop County Commissioner Sarah Nebeker and representatives from Wahkiakum County, Cannon Beach and Ilwaco, Wash.

Astoria teen named Regatta queen

Astoria High School senior Annalyse Steele was named queen of this year's Astoria Regatta following a low-key ceremony in the Loft at the Red Building.

Princesses from the county's four high schools gave speeches during a limited attendance live-streamed event, usually held in the Liberty Theatre.

Annalyse takes over the crown from last year's queen, Mara Dowaliby of Warrenton. This year's princesses are Mia McFadden of Warrenton, Zoey Alexander of Seaside and Gabrielle Morrill of Knappa.



Mitch Eckhardt
Annalyse Steele was crowned Astoria Regatta queen.

Astoria Regatta also dedicated a sculpture by Jeremy Furnish on a dock at the Columbia River Maritime Museum. It was commissioned for the group's 125th anniversary.





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