

Port of Newport Harbor News

Meet Port Commission President Gil Sylvania

In late July, the Port Commission named Gil Sylvania as the body's new president. His selection came nearly four years after he was first appointed to the Port Commission following a vacancy. In May of this year, he ran and was elected to another four-year term.

Sylvia's background and expertise bring a unique perspective to the policy-making body. He has a PhD in marine resource economics and worked in Newport as a faculty member with the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station (COMES) for 32 years before retiring.

"In that job as an applied researcher and station director, I worked on a broad range of projects, including partnering with the Port of Newport," he explained. "I developed a good understanding of the Port's mission, which was consistent with the COMES mission of supporting the best use of marine resources while also achieving balanced conservation."

As President, Sylvia's goals today are the same goals he had when originally taking his seat on the Port Commission in 2019.

"Given my expertise, my interest was in helping the Port support and lead in economic development. Given the financial challenges coastal ports face, including Newport, this remains my major goal."

Sylvia is optimistic about the future of the Port, thanks largely to the



Gil Sylvania

people who make it their life's work to see it succeed.

"The community should be proud of its Port," he commented. "The staff and commissioners are hard-working and dedicated to advancing the Port's mission. The Port faces numerous challenges that are addressed with creativity, financial acumen, and clear-eyed realism."

Sylvia invites Port district residents to stay informed of the organization's work and bring any questions or ideas to the Port Commission or staff.

"The Port makes every effort to seek the input of the community and engages in honest and transparent dialogue," the president said.

Port Commissioners serve four-year terms and each officer serves a

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one-year term but may be re-elected. Joining Sylvia this year are Kelley Retherford as Vice President and Walter Chuck as Secretary/Treasurer. Filling out the five-person board are members-at-large Jeff Lackey and Pat Ruddiman. All members of the commission are unpaid volunteers.

Sign up for email updates about Port activities at portofnewport.com

Port of Newport
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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Port of Newport At-A-Glance



Port Commission

- Gil Sylvania, President
- Kelley Retherford, Vice President
- Walter Chuck, Secretary/Treasurer
- Jeff Lackey, Commissioner
- Pat Ruddiman, Commissioner



Management

- Paula Miranda, Executive Director
- Aaron Bretz, Director of Operations
- Mark Brown, Director of Finance



Port Facilities

- North Commercial Marina
- International Terminal
- RV Parks (South Beach)
- Recreational Marina (South Beach)
- NOAA Facilities
- Properties leased to Rogue, OSU, Aquarium

Surfrider and Port of Newport: Joining forces to keep Yaquina Bay clean

They are champions of Yaquina Bay, rallying groups of volunteers to undertake regular clean-up efforts all along the Oregon coast. Surfrider Foundation and its partners, including the Hatfield Marine Science Center Green Team and SOLVE, have put boots on the ground, sometimes in the mud, to care for our beautiful bay.

“The Newport chapter does a lot of clean-up around Lincoln County,” explained Surfrider Oregon Regional Manager Kaia Hazard. “One area that tends to have a lot of expanded polystyrene is Yaquina Bay. That can come from derelict docks and the aquaculture industry. We do land-based clean-up where debris has been pushed onshore and also kayak clean-ups of the bay.”

One of the most recent clean-up events was Sept. 16, which was International Coastal Clean-Up Day, prompting Surfrider and HMSC’s Green Team to hold events at four locations around the Newport area.

This year, the Port of Newport took steps to increase its support of these clean-up efforts. By ordinance, the Port requires anyone utilizing its property to make application and pay a fee for



Lindsay H. came from Portland to participate in the September clean-up of the bay shoreline. (Photo credit: Cait Goodwin, HMSC Green Team)

use. In August, Port Commissioners approved a memorandum of understanding that shortened the application timeline, waived the user fees, and allowed for a further expedited timeline following storm events.

“Because we are a nonprofit, it is helpful to have the fee waived so

we can access Port property to do these clean-ups,” Hazard said. “It is also important to be able to mobilize volunteers to do rapid response clean-up right after a storm when there can be a ton of debris that can’t wait. It was great that the Port was willing to write that clause into the agreement.”

Port Executive Director Paula Miranda pointed out that the work of these organizations is in keeping with the Port’s mission, making this new agreement a win for everyone.

“Since they are doing something good for our community by cleaning up our bay, it makes sense for the Port to partner up and allow them to enter our property in a more efficient way,” Miranda said. “It benefits the community when everyone is working together.”

Hazard said Surfrider and its partners are also exploring other ways to respond to marine litter, including finding ways to reduce the use of plastics in the aquaculture industry and pursuing water-based clean-up efforts.

Anyone interested in volunteering for a future clean-up should visit the organization’s website at Newport. Surfrider.org.

FOR SALE: Fill Dirt

Need fill for a project? The Port of Newport has dredge spoils that are certified as clean fill and available for purchase at **\$3.56/cubic yard**. Since the materials come from state lands, a portion of the proceeds go to Oregon Department of State Lands and are designated to the State’s Common School Fund.

PLEASE NOTE: buyer is responsible for loading materials and must use their own equipment. Additional fees apply for the operation of heavy trucks on Port property.

INTERESTED?

Contact the Harbormaster at (541) 265-7758.

Managing our shoreside facilities

Providing Port users with secure facilities, including well-managed parking and clean bathrooms, has become an increasing priority at the commercial marina this year.

Prompted in part by outside influences, Port officials have devoted time and resources to sorting out a new parking permit system and securing bathrooms.

Funded almost entirely by fees collected for boat moorage and other services at the marina, associated infrastructure like parking lots, storage areas, and bathrooms are meant for use by those customers.

For some of those services, like parking, additional fees are required, and those fees are increasing as of January 1, 2024. The increases are spurred by two factors. The first is the implementation of a parking management system by the City of Newport for street and city-owned lots along Bay Boulevard.

Because of the shift in the city's parking management practices, the Port anticipates a sharp increase in requests for Port parking passes. By keeping pace with the city rates, the Port hopes to avoid an influx of non-marina users.

The second reason for increased rates is to help cover the cost of maintenance and security for the lots, all of which have been on the rise while permit fees were stagnant.

"We have been receiving a little over \$5,000 per year for the parking permits in this area but we spend close to \$20,000 between security, graveling lots, and staff. Providing services at a loss is not a good way to do business," explained Executive Director Paula Miranda.

Beginning in January, users of the commercial marina will pay \$100 annually for a permit. A monthly option is also available at \$25 per month.

An uptick in vandalism to the bathrooms located at the commercial marina has also brought on some changes. After spending resources repairing and cleaning up after repeated abuse, the Port is adopting a more stringent approach to securing the facilities. Keys, which were illicitly duplicated, are being replaced by proximity cards issued to the vessels for use by crew members. There is one restroom open for public use during daytime hours only. Security cameras have been positioned outside of all restrooms.

"We share this information with the community so people can understand how we manage Port facilities," Miranda said. "There is sometimes confusion between what aspects of the Port are open and available for public use and what is limited to fee-paying users. Our goal is to be transparent and keep people informed of what's happening at the Port."

Did you know?

The return of the Sea Lion docks

After a storm-induced absence, the "Sea Lion docks" near Port Dock 1 are back. Judging by the number of California sea lions enjoying the spot and the number of tourists observing them, the site is a favorite for mammals of all sorts!

Did you know that the return of the floating platforms is the work of a local non-profit? While the Port of Newport allows people to access Port Dock 1 to view the sea lions, the surfaces occupied by our local pinnipeds were purchased and placed by the Newport Sea Lions Dock Foundation. The project is made possible by the financial support of hundreds of donors. Focused on improving docks for commercial and recreational vessels, the Port provided no funding for the sea lion hangout.

Anyone who wishes to learn more about the charitable organization can visit their website at newportsealions.com.



Catching up with Foulweather Trawl

Situated at the International Terminal is Foulweather Trawl LLC, a fixture in the commercial fishing community and a Port leaseholder for many years.

The repair and sale of massive, commercial-grade trawling nets has been the domain of this company since 1984, when John and Sara Skamser launched Foulweather Trawl. The company occupied a few locations over the years, including working for a period from what is now Rogue Brewery. Since 1995, the International Terminal has been Foulweather's home, starting first in an old shed that has since been torn down and later in the building they lease now.

"Many of the boats we work with tie up here. This location gives us access to the distant water fleet and it also gives us plenty of space to stretch out the nets," John explained. With nets that are up to three-eighths of a mile long, extra space is a must.

Office manager Denise Schrock says the location is also advantageous to their customers. "The boats we work with come to the docks and have a forklift bring the net right from the boat to our shop. Having us here saves them valuable fishing time and considerable money," she noted.

More than just a repair shop, Foulweather has a reputation for innovation, thanks to John's wife, Sara, who passed away in 2021.

"Sara was a great net designer and a real pioneer with excluder nets," he said proudly.

Skamser is referring to specially-designed features on a net that allow

for the capture of the targeted species but release of unintended catch, or bycatch.

Sara's design expertise reached beyond excluders. One net design was so effective, it was mandated for use inside 250 fathoms by three states. The "pineapple trawl" was used by fisherman targeting species

like petrale sole while trying to avoid rockfish. It reportedly reduced bycatch by more than 90 percent and was a huge success.

Foulweather operates with a crew of five that are known for fast, professional work. "I'm really proud of our crew," Skamser said.



Foulweather Trawl employees Salvatore and Antonio work on a net used by cod fishermen that will exclude halibut bycatch. (Photo credit: Angela Nebel, Summit PR)

IN THE WORKS: A glimpse into the Port's future

Coming Soon:

- ⚙️ Rogue Seawall repairs sometime between November and February 2024
- ⚙️ New Fishing Cleaning Station installed this fall at South Beach Marina
- ⚙️ South Beach Marina security – new gate added to one dock as a trial run

Look for in 2024:

- ⚙️ RORO (Roll On Roll Off) dock repairs at the International Terminal
- ⚙️ Port Dock 7 Reconstruction – planning phase completed in 2024

Looking Forward – 2025 and Beyond:

- ⚙️ RV Park Annex Reconstruction – planning currently in progress
- ⚙️ Dredging Recreational Marina and International Terminal – permit process underway
- ⚙️ Dredging into Commercial Marina – US Army Corps feasibility study currently underway
- ⚙️ Port Dock 7 Reconstruction – construction phase