

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nehalem Bay Wastewater Agency Announces Permanent Closure of Treatment Plant Lagoons to Public Access

NEHALEM, OR — Effective immediately, the Nehalem Bay Wastewater Agency (NBWA) is permanently closing its wastewater treatment plant facility and lagoons, located at 14000 Tideland Road, to all public access and recreational bird watching. The dedicated bird watching gate will be locked, and public entry will no longer be permitted on the property at any time.

For decades, NBWA has proudly allowed the public and local birding enthusiasts to utilize the treatment plant's lagoons as a wildlife viewing destination. However, the primary mission of the facility is the safe, compliant, and efficient processing of municipal wastewater.

In recent years, the agency has experienced a significant and unsustainable rise in safety violations. Visitors have increasingly ignored posted biological hazard signs, bypassed safety boundaries, and entered active, high-risk industrial work zones.

"While we have deeply valued our relationship with the birding community over the years, the safety of the public and our operational staff is our absolute priority," said Brad Thayer, Operations Supervisor for NBWA. "Constantly monitoring and redirecting visitors out of hazardous work areas has created a severe safety liability and diverted critical staff resources away from our daily operations. Unfortunately, the public safety risks now far outweigh the educational benefit of keeping the property open."

Important Information for Travelers and Tour Groups:

- **No Public Access:** The closure applies to all individuals, self-guided tours, and organized travel groups.
- **Enforced Boundaries:** All gates will remain locked, and unauthorized entry beyond the facility perimeter will be treated as trespassing.
- **Alternative Adjacent Location:** The Nehalem River Levee: Bird watchers may still view wildlife along the public river levee that borders the gated lagoons and the Nehalem River. This trail offers an excellent vantage point and is a flat, scenic 3/4 to 1-mile walk from nearby street parking. Please note that access beyond the fenced boundary of the treatment plant remains strictly prohibited.
- **Other Regional Spots:** Visitors are also encouraged to explore nearby public recreation areas such as Nehalem Bay State Park, local Nehalem River marshes, and designated coastal wildlife conservation areas.

The Nehalem Bay Wastewater Agency sincerely thanks the regional birding community for their decades of cooperation and passion for local wildlife, and we appreciate the public's understanding and compliance as we prioritize the safety and security of our community's infrastructure.

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