

OSP FISH & WILDLIFE
Summer 2018 Beach Use & Overtime Report
Sauvie Island Wildlife Area

ISSUES OF CONCERN:

In 1993 (re-adopted 2012) the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area (SIWA) Beach Use Plan was adjudicated by the Columbia County Circuit Court and states the following, in part:

The Sauvie Island Wildlife Area Plan Mission and Purpose directs the management of the Wildlife Area to provide suitable habitat for waterfowl, wildlife management, wildlife oriented recreation, and public hunting. The Plans and Goals also direct that recreational opportunities are to be planned and regulated so they are compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife resource and incompatible recreational activities will be discouraged or eliminated.

The Beach Use Plan also describes the management of “Other Uses”:

Objective: Restrict other uses to not more than 200,000 user days per year.

Task 1) Regulate all non-wildlife oriented uses to reduce impacts on wildlife.

Task 2) Explore methods to control and regulate beach use to assure that such use is compatible with maintaining high quality of wildlife resources, complies with all laws, regulations, ordinances, and adopted plans that affect the wildlife area and does not unreasonably deter, distract, or hinder others in the peaceable enjoyment of the area.

The Beach Use Plan recognized over use, parking issues and excessive alcohol consumption as challenges facing the SIWA then (1993) and in the future. With the Portland Metro Area exceeding 2.3 million residents the SIWA beaches are increasingly subject to these negative factors.

The Sauvie Island Wildlife Area Beach Use Plan allots a total of 873 parking spaces to the use of the SIWA beaches; however car counter data (2016 - 2018) has shown that on a hot summer day the SIWA beaches can see the entry of more than 4,000 vehicles. Often vehicles contain 2-3 occupants, leaving overall daily attendance at well over 10,000 people. Suggestions to mitigate this impact can be found in the suggested action section below. Car counter numbers in 2018 were slightly lower than observed in previous years; however they still far exceeded allotment.

The parking situation / overuse and excessive use of alcohol have shown to be the greatest risk to safety for Visitors, ODFW Employees, Law Enforcement, and Sauvie Island Residents. Incidents of excessive alcohol use have been related to DUII arrests, DUII motor vehicle crashes, assaults / group fights, drowning and medical calls, public indecency and littering.

There is only one full time trooper assigned to the SIWA year round. A single law enforcement officer cannot effectively enforce the SIWA rules, or protect public safety given challenges presented by the massive influx of visitors which was often exacerbated by excessive alcohol consumption. These factors not only present a grave officer safety risk, but draw in other law enforcement resources leaving other priorities (Including CEP) unattended.

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ACTION:

Throughout 2016 and 2017 troopers conducted targeted saturations in an attempt to curb criminal activity, mostly related to alcohol use and heavily documented the need for rule changes. Details of those activities can be found in the previous year's beach use and overtime reports.

Partially as a result of a review of statistics from the 2016/2017 summer seasons The ODFW enacted a rule change on the SIWA for 2018. The rule states the following in part;

No person shall possess or use alcoholic beverages or consumable products containing alcohol from May 1 through September 30 on the Wildlife Area except ODFW employees, family members and guests of the employee may possess and use alcohol on agency owned residential property leased by the employee.

An aggressive public relations campaign using social and news media served to educate the public along with the installation of several very large signs on the SIWA detailing the rule change. This rule change allowed troopers to focus enforcement efforts before excessive alcohol use contributed to an additional risk to public/officer safety.

Troopers used coordinated saturations and plain clothes operations to detect persons violating the alcohol ban and to thwart other criminal activity.

Troopers issued the following total citations and warnings during the alcohol ban period:

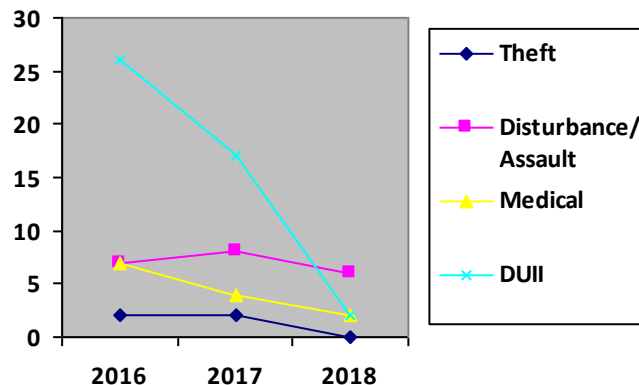
Possession / Use of Alcohol (Violations)

Citations: 298

Warnings: 152

One person was issued a criminal citation for the possession of alcohol.

Officer presence in conjunction with the SIWA rule change appears to have had an overall positive effect on calls for service and observed criminal activity:



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In 2016 and 2017 DUII arrests documented for the summer period showed that more than 30% of all DUII arrests made by troopers in Columbia County were drivers coming from the SIWA beaches. **In 2018 that percentage dropped to about 2%.** 1 additional DUII arrest was made during the ban period, but the driver did not originate from the beach area.

In both the 2016 and 2017 summer season troopers investigated a drowning death at the SIWA beaches. **No drownings were reported in the 2018 summer season at the SIWA.**

Anecdotally, instances of littering and vandalism also appeared to decrease in 2018.

As a result of a 2016 meeting additional overtime hours were authorized by the ODFW in 2017/2018 for existing officers, to preserve time dedicated to other priorities, increase public safety, and mitigate officer safety risks to the lone assigned SIWA trooper. The overtime hours were assigned and accepted on a volunteer basis when beach use was expected to be high, i.e. when weather forecasts indicated high temperatures. Troopers accepting overtime were asked to submit statistics sheets detailing their activities. Troopers from North Plains, Portland, Saint Helens, and Astoria volunteered to work these overtime hours.

Overtime Statistics / Results 2018:

The following activities and contacts were recorded using statistics sheets completed by the trooper on overtime hours.

#Contacts from Traffic Stops:	48
# Welfare/Medical Calls:	1
# Disturbance/Assault Calls:	0
# DUIIs:	0
# MIPs:	3
# Traffic Crashes:	0

- 12.5% of contacts during traffic stops were found to have been using alcohol. This is an approximate 5% decrease from 2017.
- The single medical call listed was alcohol related.
- Troopers on overtime documented their issuance of 63 of the total alcohol possession citations and warnings.

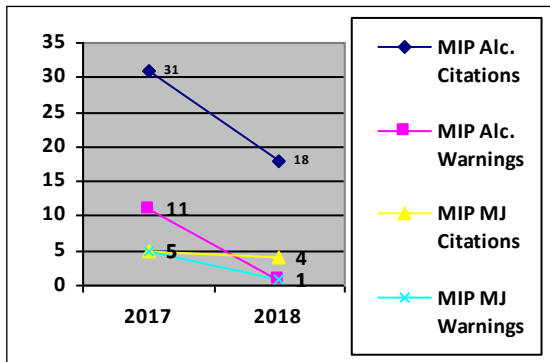
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- Other listed activities also decreased, partially as a result of the mentioned rule changes and partially due to the lack of personnel available to work the OT hours. See Challenges section.

Troopers also came in contact with multiple minors at the SIWA beaches, in possession of, and using prohibited substances. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) provided funding for several new portable breath test units to assist with MIP investigations in both 2017 and 2018. The following statistics were recorded:



Note the drop in overall violations of this type in 2018 despite the increased enforcement on alcohol consumption.

Public indecency also continues to be an issue at the clothing optional beach (Collins Beach) despite increased officer presence and rule changes.

The increased law enforcement presence was warmly accepted by many beach goers and Sauvie Island Residents. Troopers were approached on a near daily basis and thanked for the increased patrols. The local volunteer fire department and other law enforcement agencies also noticed and commented on their decreased calls for service.

Challenges:

- ❖ Effective enforcement of the alcohol ban requires several troopers and the use of plain clothes operations.
- ❖ Subjects were found concealing alcoholic beverages using creative methods and some consent search requests were denied hampering enforcement efforts.
- ❖ As much of the attendance is driven by variable weather conditions the scheduling of troopers was often last minute and inconsistent to effectively distribute the number of overtime hours allotted. At times it was difficult, and even impossible, to schedule a sufficient number of troopers on short notice.
 - Troopers found themselves working long hours, often on high temperature days, leading to fatigue.
 - Overtime hours were allotted for field presence only. Troopers were still taken away from other CEP priorities while completing citation notes, reports, and attending court and meetings in relation to their activities.
 - Given current staffing levels and other summertime priorities many of the troopers chose not to sign up for the additional overtime opportunity.

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- ❖ Overcrowding remains an issue greatly exceeding user and parking capacity as outlined by the SIWA Beach Use Plan
 - At times, even with additional troopers utilizing overtime, troopers were outnumbered 2,000:1 by beach goers. As such, the hours allotted provided an insufficient number of law enforcement resources to markedly increase public safety and decrease the officer safety risk.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

1. Implement Long Term Actions previously suggested in several beach use reports to mitigate issues involving parking and over use of SIWA Beaches.
 - a. This includes managing access through a gate / physical entry control structure.
2. Continue to provide sufficient overtime funding for increased Oregon State Police patrols from May 1 – Oct 1.
 - a. Funding should be determined considering the above referenced challenges.
3. Utilize OSP criminal detectives and outside agency resources (vice teams) to detect and apprehend sex criminals at the clothing optional sections of the SIWA.

