

## DeFazio meeting includes a tour of Bandon Marsh



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**BANDON** — On his summer tour of Southern Oregon towns last week, Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Springfield, got a first-hand look at the trenching being done at the Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge to correct the problem that caused the area to be overrun with salt water marsh mosquitoes last summer.

This summer the problem is negligible, with the exception of a few fly-offs that have occurred, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge

project leader Roy Lowe. Lowe led the tour, along with Bandon Marsh wildlife biologist Bill Bridgeland, marsh staff members and DeFazio's entourage.

DeFazio toured an area in front of the Bandon Marsh overlook, named after him because of his help in securing federal funding for the restoration of the Ni-les'tun Unit in 2010. Excavators with custom-made buckets designed specifically to work in the wetland area were in use digging trenches that will allow water to flow freely to and from the river.

The trenches are intended to prevent water from pooling after high tides. Such pools were determined to be a breeding ground for saltwater marsh mosquitoes and the key cause of the problem last year.

Some 46,000 feet of new tidal channels will be trenched in the marsh. The work is part of the USFWS's integrated approach to control mosquitoes at the refuge and is expected to be completed in September, Lowe told DeFazio.

Lowe said he has had a few complaints about mosquitoes this summer but upon further investigation, it appeared in at least a couple of the cases that the mosquitoes were coming from standing water on private property, with only a percentage of them being the *aedes dorsalis*, or saltwater species.

After visiting the marsh, DeFazio toured the new facility of the Coastal Community Health Center (formerly Bandon Community Health Center), a federally qualified health clinic that moved into a roomier and completely remodeled location in the Bandon Professional Center next to the shopping center.

From there, DeFazio held a town hall meeting, one of three that day in Reedsport, Bandon and Gold Beach.

DeFazio updated about 45 people at the Bandon library on current federal issues affecting the South Coast and the nation that he has fought for in Congress, such as veterans' health care, the Affordable Care Act, dredging for small ports, rebuilding crumbling infrastructure and

creating jobs, free trade agreements, making education more affordable, and managing O&C lands.

DeFazio then opened the floor for questions.

Resident Don Chance thanked the congressman for work he's done regarding VA benefits, saying he is now receiving much-needed care. Chance then asked about county road closures enacted by the Bureau of Land Management, in particular at the New River boat ramp.

"We always get the same answer: 'We're the federal government and we can do whatever we want,'" Chance said.

DeFazio said he tries to keep on top of such issues.

Another audience member asked about earthquakes and the Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas project planned for North Bend. DeFazio said he's looked into earthquake early detection technology.

"We don't have it but others do, which is ridiculous," he said.

Jaime Sterling asked about federal funding to move local schools out of the tsunami inundation zone and to make them more earthquake resilient, especially Ocean Crest Elementary, which was built in 1939. DeFazio agreed that it's a serious problem.

"This also ties back to early detection," DeFazio said. "We have some schools built by the CC Corps and there's no comparison to modern schools."

DeFazio added he wanted more information about what was happening locally and suggested Sterling talk with Kathy Erickson, his Coos Bay field representative.

Avery Horton asked about immigration laws and how Congress could justify sending billions of dollars overseas but not take care of the country's infrastructure. DeFazio said he's working on immigration reform that would allow eligibility for citizenship after several years for those who pay taxes, keep a clean record and maintain lawful resident status.

Rick Halliburton asked if DeFazio was aware of issues local cranberry growers are facing regarding having to dump 15 percent of their crop due to a flooded market.

"We'd like to help with developing a local product to use the bonus and create jobs, too," Halliburton said.

DeFazio is making 20 town hall visits this month from Eugene to Roseburg to Brookings.

For more information on the congressman's town halls and current issues, visit [www.defazio.house.gov](http://www.defazio.house.gov).