

Reliving his childhood walks along the Yaquina turns into a muddy and dangerous mess –

Daily News



A walk on a mud flat turns dangerous on Yaquina Bay Road.



Newport Firefighter walks out on alternating back boards to reach "Walter."



Firefighter and Walter struggle to free him but can't.

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Doug White photos

A visitor and his wife from Salem stopped along the banks of the Yaquina River this afternoon near Oregon Oyster. The man got out and remarked that in his childhood he used to walk along the river and out to the water. And for old times sake that's what he did. He walked out onto the mud. But suddenly a sweet memory turned into a sour and potentially lethal muddy mess.

As the man walked walked out onto the mud it was real mushy. But instead of turning back he reasoned that the closer you get to the ocean, the firmer the sand, so he figured the same was true for a river bank.

Wrong!

The man continue to slog toward the water and soon the mud was up to his knees. He tried to pull himself out but after a while he fell on his side in exhaustion. A passing motorist saw what was happening and stopped to render aid. He said his wife was on the bank powerless to do anything. So he went out on the mud to try to rescue her husband. But he too began sinking. Fortunately he turned around in time and called 9-1-1.

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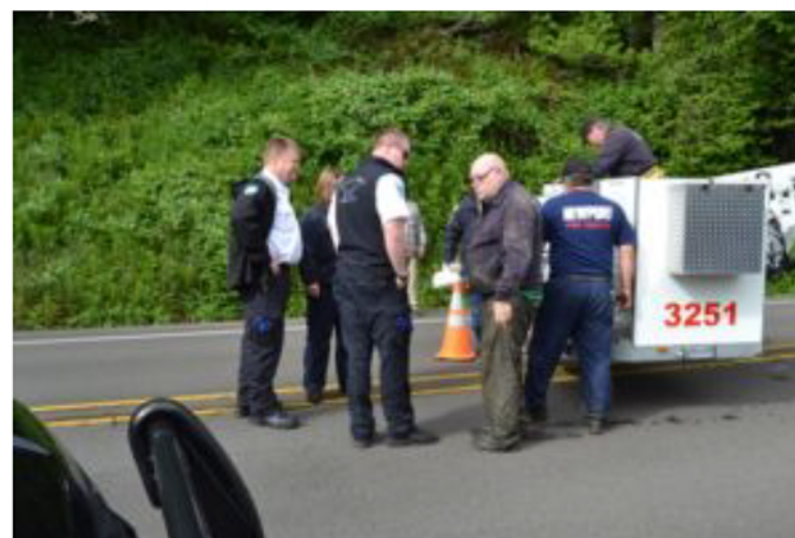
Hook and Ladder Truck reaches out and lowers down.



Now they have something to hold on to. Walter is freed from the mud's grip.



Walter rides back to shore in the bucket.



On the road Walter thanks his rescuers – declines a ride in an ambulance to be checked out – says he's okay. Walter is hosed off and returns to Salem.

Newport and Toledo Fire Departments were on scene within minutes. Newport brought their ladder truck so they ran the ladder up, swung it around, and put the bucket down right next to where a fire fighter had reached the victim by walking out on litter backboards. With something to hold on to, firefighters freed the man from the mud and lifted him back to the road.

Tired and muddy the man thanked his rescuers who replied in kind with a stream of water to wash off all the mud that was caked on his pants and feet. A sheriff's deputy gave him a blanket to put down so he could more comfortably drive home to Salem.

Full service Fire and Sheriff's Departments. Lesson hopefully learned.