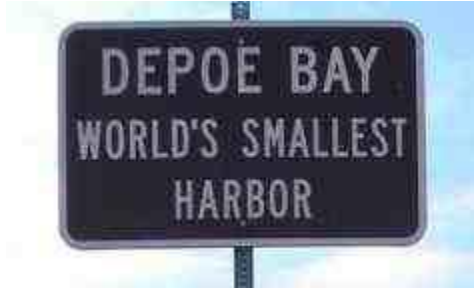


The World's Smallest Harbor



Depoe Bay is the world's smallest natural navigable harbor, currently covering approximately six acres, with a 50-foot wide, 100-foot long rockbound, dog-legged channel connecting to the Pacific Ocean. There are two freshwater creeks that flow into the harbor; North Depoe Creek enters at the northeasterly corner, and South Depoe Creek enters at the southeasterly corner.

These creeks are very different in character. North Depoe Creek is rocky-bottomed and fairly fast-flowing, while South Depoe Creek is sandy-bottomed and slow-moving. Originally, the inner bay was shallow with a beach area on the east side surrounded by a cedar forest. Boats would simply anchor in the bay, afloat during high tide and resting on the bottom during low tide.

In 1937, Congress authorized development construction of the inner bay. When the construction was completed in 1939, the harbor was 375 feet long by 125 feet wide by five feet deep.

In 1950, the harbor was closed for improvements which were completed by 1952. A cofferdam was constructed across the mouth of the channel to keep ocean waters out of the bay, and flumes rerouted water from North Depoe Bay Creek and South Depoe Bay Creek to the ocean. The water in the bay was pumped out and the harbor was enlarged to 750 feet long by 390 feet wide by eight feet deep, and the retaining seawall along the east side was constructed. Just before the project was completed, rough waters at high tide tore out the south side of the cotterdam, flooding the bay. However, all construction equipment had been removed from the bay floor, and there was little consequence to this potentially devastating event.

In 1963, the 150-foot long channel was widened from 30 feet to 40 feet and deepened to eight feet at average low tide, by the Army Corps of Engineers.

In 1966, the existing breakwater was lengthened, and an additional breakwater was installed on the north side of the channel. In September of that year, Depoe Bay's harbor was visited (at high tide) by the Omar, the largest vessel ever to enter the harbor. It weighed 33 tons and was 70 feet long with an 18-foot beam and a nine-foot draft.

In 1995, a new boat ramp and docks were installed in the harbor.

While the harbor was included in the Port of Newport District for a number of years, in 1975 the Port of Newport relinquished the harbor to the City. Since the harbor has always been and remains the heart of our community, this was an important change for Depoe Bay.