

‘Slam’n Salmon Derby’ on tap again

August 24, 2019



After a two-year hiatus, Crissy Cooper, owner and director of West Coast Adventures, is reviving an ocean salmon fishing derby that began in 2003.

The event will be held over Labor Day weekend, Aug. 29 through Sept. 1, at the Port of Brookings Harbor.

The first Brookings-based ocean salmon fishing derby, in 2003, was the brainchild of Leroy Blodgett, former Brookings city manager, and Jim Relaford, former Port of Brookings Harbor commissioner.

Originally called the “Wild Rivers Coast Salmon Derby,” the event drew 113 fishermen, with 200 salmon barbecue dinners prepared.

The event continued through 2016 with great success. In 2017, the derby fell to the wayside when the “bubble season” for salmon fishing over Labor Day was cancelled.

After 2017 - and the lack of a salmon season - Cooper started crunching the numbers. “The revitalization of the derby would be advantageous for marketing the area as a travel destination,” she determined.

Her vision was to “do one big community event in a great big collaboration between businesses, community members, entertainment groups and lots of nonprofit organizations, and bring it all to the boardwalk on that weekend.”

This year’s revived derby offers the chance to win up to \$5,000 for those who enter. The grand prize, awarded on Sunday, will be for the largest Chinook salmon caught during the entire derby.

Daily prizes for largest fish of the day will be awarded on Friday and Saturday. A consolation prize will be awarded for the smallest salmon caught in the derby.

In addition to the fishing derby, youngsters can participate in the Smolt School and Scavenger Hunt.

South Coast Tours will be offering guided kayak tours all three days of the event, with a special “Kids and Kayaks” event set for Saturday at 4 p.m. Derby organizers said kids ages 9 to 18 are invited to try kayaking and learn all about the water sport, and how to paddle responsibly.

The Curry County Emergency team will be hosting a variety of adventure and disaster-preparation workshops. Joining them will be the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary team for boating safety.

The Smith River Mountain Men (and women) will let people try their hand at axe and hatchet throwing, archery, basket weaving and fishing pole construction.

Fishing Veterans of America will also be on hand. You’ll be able to ask about their upcoming surfing, kayaking and other “extreme sporting events,” and even sign up to take a military veteran fishing.

“To keep the momentum going, the (derby) event will feature live music, vendors and a store that sells Slam’n Salmon logo items,” Cooper said.

“On Sunday, the event wraps up with a ‘shore dinner’ prepared by our community.”

As the former subcontracted event coordinator for the Port of Brookings Harbor, Cooper is using her experience to ensure a smooth-running derby and family-friendly event.

Transportation passes may be purchased for the local trolley (pet-friendly) to give options other than parking at the port, because there will be a boat show by Y Marina boats in progress. The trolley will stop at several places throughout the Brookings and Harbor area.

Parking areas for passenger vehicles and boats, boat-launching areas, volunteers to help manage the area, vendor applications and locations, and event area maps are organized and displayed on the event's website. A detailed schedule, derby rules and applicable fishing regulations also are available.

"One of the missions of the event is to bring nonprofits together to create a community event," Cooper said.

"Another mission is to educate our youth about how to adventure safely and learn about our local habitat.

"Funds raised will be used to help restock fish to create sustainability.

"Finally, we will be highlighting our tourist economy."

For more information, visit <https://wcadventure.com/slamn-salmon>, or call West Coast Adventure at 541-294-1252.