

THE DALLESSPORT/MURDOCK NEWS

*SERVING THE PENINSULA COMMUNITIES
OF DALLESSPORT AND MURDOCK*

Along the Tracks in Dallesport and Murdock

If you live in Dallesport or Murdock, trains are part of daily life. We hear them at night, see them along the river, and wait at crossings. Those trains are not just background noise. They are part of one of the major transportation corridors in the Pacific Northwest.

On the Washington side, the main rail line is operated by BNSF Railway. Known as the Fallbridge Subdivision, it runs along the Columbia River from Pasco to Vancouver and Portland. Amtrak's Portland section of the Empire Builder also uses this line, with stops in Wishram and Bingen-White Salmon. Across the river, the Oregon side line is operated by Union Pacific, running through The Dalles, Mosier, Hood River, and west toward Portland. Together, the rail lines on both sides of the Columbia River move freight through the Gorge every day and night.

There is no public schedule for freight trains, and traffic changes with the day, season, weather, maintenance, and railroad operations. Public rail references describe the BNSF line as seeing roughly 30 to 40 trains per day in some sections. On the Oregon side, older rail reports have described Union Pacific traffic in the Gorge as several dozen trains per day as well.

A single freight train can also be much longer than it looks. Many trains run 75 to 150 cars, depending on what they are carrying and where they are headed. That means one train passing through our area may represent hundreds of truckloads moving through the Gorge.

So what is in the cars? Usually, a little bit of everything: grain, farm products, lumber, paper products, shipping containers, fertilizers, chemicals, petroleum products, coal, equipment, vehicles, refrigerated goods, and general consumer products. The railcars offer some clues. Covered hoppers often carry grain or other dry bulk materials. Tank cars may carry petroleum products, chemicals, ethanol, food-grade liquids, or other liquids. Centerbeam cars often carry lumber or building materials. Autoracks carry vehicles. Double-stacked containers usually carry mixed freight, retail goods, parts, or refrigerated products.

Still, residents cannot know exactly what is inside every car just by looking. Hazardous material railcars are marked with placards, but full cargo information is handled through railroad and emergency response systems. In an emergency, first responders have access to specialized tools that help identify hazardous materials in specific railcars.

Train speed varies, too. Some trains move slowly through sidings, crossings, curves, or work zones. Others move much faster through open stretches. Even when a train looks slow, it is heavy and cannot stop quickly. Tracks should never be used as walking paths, shortcuts, or photo spots, and no one should cross between stopped railcars.

For Dallesport and Murdock, rail safety is also tied to fire safety. Trains can create sparks or heat from brakes, wheels, exhaust, track work, or equipment. In dry, windy conditions, a small ignition near grass or brush can spread quickly.

For residents, the practical steps are simple: report smoke, fire, damaged equipment, blocked crossings, or unusual activity near the tracks right away. If there is ever a derailment, spill, smoke plume, or strong chemical smell, move away from the area, stay uphill and upwind if possible, and follow instructions from emergency responders. Property owners near rail corridors can also help by keeping dry grass, weeds, brush, and stored materials cleared where appropriate and safe to do so.

WILDFLOWER SEASON IN THE GORGE: A SPRING WORTH SLOWING DOWN FOR

By May, the Columbia River Gorge begins to feel fully alive again. Hillsides that sat quiet through winter turn bright with color, and for a few short weeks, the landscape reminds you just how dynamic this place really is.

Around Dallesport and the eastern Gorge, wildflower season is shaped by sun, wind, and open space. Unlike the dense forests to the west, this side of the Gorge offers wide, rolling hills where blooms stretch across entire slopes. It's less about finding a single flower and more about stepping into a full landscape in motion.

A few key wildflowers define this time of year:

Balsamroot – Bright yellow, sunflower-like blooms that dominate hillsides. Deep-rooted and drought-tolerant, they reflect the resilience of this landscape.

Lupine – Purple spikes that often grow alongside balsamroot, creating the Gorge's signature color contrast.

Indian Paintbrush – Red and orange blooms that add intensity to the palette, often tucked into drier areas.

These plants aren't just seasonal decoration. For Indigenous communities, many native plants in the region hold practical and cultural value—used for food, medicine, and materials. The landscape you're walking through has long been understood, managed, and respected in ways that go far beyond recreation.

Where to Go

If you're looking to experience it firsthand, here are a few of the best nearby hikes:

Columbia Hills State Park*

In our backyard! Wide-open hills, fewer crowds, and a quieter experience.

Lyle Cherry Orchard Trail*

Sweeping views of the river and layered blooms along the hillside. One of the more rewarding hikes if you're up for some elevation.

Catherine Creek*

Both accessible trails and longer jaunts into the hills.

Mosier Plateau Trail

A classic Gorge hike. Rolling terrain, river views, and dense wildflower patches.

*Dogs allowed on leash



A Note on Etiquette

Wildflower season draws people for good reason, but it also asks something in return:

- Stay on established trails, even when it's tempting to step into the blooms
- Avoid picking flowers—they are short-lived and support pollinators and reseeding
- Be mindful of private land boundaries, which are common in this area
- Give space to others and to the landscape itself

The more lightly we move through these places, the longer they'll continue to feel the way they do right now.

LYLE SCHOOL NEWS



Important Dates

May 1st – No School; Teacher Training Day May 20th – Art in the Park
 May 2nd – Prom May 25th – No School; Memorial Day
 May 13th – School Board; Work Session May 27th – School Board; Regular Meeting

March Students of the Month: March focused on the character trait of Honesty. Congratulations to Zayden Henderson, Laila Adair, Cohen Koch, Kade Moore, Dominick McClung, Bodhi Roots, Adalynn Marshall, Janaila Dobson-Huerta, Brayant Rodriguez, Damian Sustaita, Billie Glueckert, Sam Thorpe, Brittany Granados, Gavin Macleod, and Bryce Macleod.

College & Career Expo: On April 17, 11th and 12th grade students attended the College & Career Expo at Columbia Gorge Community College. Students explored local career paths, financial aid, universities, military opportunities, and sessions on life beyond the classroom. Thank you to CGCC for hosting such a valuable day.

Spring Carnival: The ASB Spring Carnival was a great success. Thank you to ASB, Ms. LaBryer, Kenji, and REACH for helping make the event possible. Special thanks to REACH for arranging performer Angel Ocasio and for providing and serving dinner to families.

First Grade Field Trip: On April 23, first graders visited the Washington State School for the Deaf for the Flying Hands poetry contest. Students experienced Deaf culture, saw American Sign Language in action, and enjoyed time on campus. Thank you to WSD for welcoming our students.

Band Updates: Lyle band students had a busy April, representing the school at the Tri-County Band Festivals and the Cherry Festival Parade. Thank you to Mr. Dempsey and all of our student musicians. These opportunities are made possible through community support and levy funding.

Senior Scholarships: Local scholarship information is posted on the district website under Lyle Secondary School / Graduation and Beyond / Local Scholarships. Seniors should check often.

Co-Ed Volleyball Club: A new volleyball club for secondary students meets Tuesdays and Thursdays after school from 4:30–6:00 PM in the gym. Contact Coach DeRochemont or Coach Carpenter with questions.

Substitute Openings: The district has custodial and kitchen substitute openings. Visit the district website or call 509-365-2191 for more information. Mid-Columbia Transportation Cooperative is also looking for substitute bus drivers for the Lyle Hub, with paid training available. Call 509-493-1590 for details.

PTO Meetings: PTO meetings are typically held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM in the school library.

COUGAR ATHLETICS

High School Track Meets:

5/2 – Redside Invite; Maupin, OR @ 11:00 AM
 5/7 – Irrigon Invite; Irrigon, OR @ 2:00 PM
 5/12 – South Wasco Meet; Maupin, OR @ 4:00 PM
 5/14 – Rocket Invite; Pilot Rock, OR @ 2:00 PM
 5/21-5/22 – District Track; Maupin, OR @ 11:00 AM
 5/28-5/30 – OSAA State Track; Eugene, OR @ TBD

Middle School Track Meets:



5/1 – South Wasco Meet; Maupin, OR @ 12:30 PM
 5/8 – Sherman Invite; Moro, OR @ 12:00 PM
 5/14 – Pirate Invite; Bickleton, WA @ 3:30 PM

School Track Record Broken!

Huge congratulations go out to Lyle Senior **Zeke Marble** for an incredible performance at the Naches Vally Invite on Friday, April 24th! Zeke officially chased down history, breaking a school record that has stood for 39 years. With a time of 41.92, he surpassed the previous 300M Hurdles record of 42.04, set by Mel Walker all the way back in 1987. Zeke, we are incredibly proud to have you representing the Lyle-Wishram Cougars. Congratulations, Zeke!

May

2026

AA Meetings Wednesdays and Sundays 7pm Lyle School Library 625 Keasey 360-870-3321					1 No School Teacher Training	2 Wildflower Half Marathon Hood River Cider Festival 11am-6pm
3	4 Lyle Lions Club Meeting 6:00pm	5 County Commissioners Mtg. 9:30am Lyle School Board Meeting 5:00pm	6 Bookmobile @ Dallesport Community Center 1:30pm-3pm	7 WAGAP Mobile Food Bank @ Dallesport Community Center 12pm-2pm	8	9 Columbia Gorge Wine and Art Festival 12pm-5pm White Salmon Wine Walk 3pm-7pm Goldendale Home & Garden Show →
10  Mother's Day	11	12 County Commissioners Mtg. 9:30am KPUD Commissioner Mtg. 2:00pm County Water Conservancy Board 5:00pm	13	14 Dallesport/Murdock Community Council Meeting 7:00pm	15	16
17	18 Lyle Lions Club Meeting 6:00pm	19 County Commissioners Mtg. 9:30am	20 Bookmobile @ Dallesport Community Center 1:30pm-3pm	21	22 Airport Board Meeting 7:30am	23
24 31	25  Memorial Day No School	26 County Commissioners Mtg. 9:30am KPUD Commissioner Mtg. 2:00pm	27 Dallesport Water District Meeting 2:30pm Lyle School Board Meeting 6:00pm	28 Gorge PitchFest 5:30pm-9pm	29	30

KEY CONTACTS

Dallesport/Murdock Fire Dept - KCFD # 6

630 Central Ave. PO Box 215
509-767-1252

Dallesport Water District

302 Sixth Ave, Dallesport, PO Box 131
541-980-6514
dwdclerk@dallesportwater.org
dallesportwater.org

Dallesport Post Office

Monday-Friday 8:00am-2:00pm
Saturday 7:30 am-11:00 am (package pickup
only) 509-767-1577

Dallesport/Murdock Community Council

PO Box 8
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dallesportcouncil.com