



Boo!

## Community Pitches In To Get High School Repairs Underway

By Scott Laird

The Vernonia community turned out on September 13 to assist with repairs to the portion of the Vernonia High School building and gymnasium that will continue to see use in the future. About forty volunteers turned out to help put up sheet rock and salvage bricks from the building's east wing, which was scheduled to be demolished at the end of September.

The school district has decided to repair the gymnasium section of the building give



Community volunteers help clean bricks.



students locker rooms and a place to hold sporting events. The repairs include new sheet rock and paint as well as a new floor. It also included new paint in the locker rooms. The locker rooms were to be inspected and approved for use by the end of September, and it was hoped that the gymnasium would be ready in time for Homecoming Week, October 13-17.

A brick cleaning work day was tentatively scheduled for Friday, October 10th.

Rod Mc Dowell of Milstead and Associates is the project manager. The demolition contractor is Dick Titus. Jaeger and Erwert General Contractors are responsible for the repair work.

## UNWC Builds Huge Stream Restoration Project

By Scott Laird

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (UNWC) is putting the finishing touches on a stream restoration project that has been in the planning stages for about four years. The project, which will stabilize the stream bank to prevent eroding, is on private property owned by Mike Justice in the Sunnyside area just south of Vernonia.

Maggie Peyton, Director of the UNWC, has been working to put this project together: coordinating with numerous agencies, developing engineering plans, receiving necessary permits, and working with landowner Justice. The project finally got underway in August, and the major construction phase was completed in late September. The cost of the project was around \$250,000.

The project has been built on a 600 foot long reach of the river, along a sweeping curve. The project included the removal of hundreds of dump truck loads of dirt to gently slope what had been a steep faced bank that was getting undercut and eroding. A series of large logs with root balls attached have been placed into the bank, stacked cross-wise to form large structures. The structures are filled with large boulders and dirt.



developed the actual plan and is paying for a large part of the construction. Wilson has worked for NRCS for over thirty years. "NRCS started using log structures in stream restoration projects about ten years ago," said Wilson. "This project will provide wildlife habitat and protect the stream bank."

The contractor is Joe Partney Construction that has built around one hundred stream restoration projects. "We are using some unique types of elements in this project," said Partney. "The benefit is going to be real noticeable here."

Both Wilson and Partney said this is one of the larger projects they have worked on. The restoration will be completed with the planting of over 6,000 trees along the bank, further helping to stabilize it, and providing shade for the river. In addition to willows that have been cut from the site that will be transplanted, UNWC crews will be planting maples, dogwoods, Oregon ash, vine maple, red alder, black cottonwood, and mixed conifers. The UNWC will monitor the project over the next four to five years until it is fully stabilized.

Landowner Justice has been very hands-on during the construction, helping with labor and monitoring the work. "The contractor really knows what he's doing," said Justice. Justice has volunteered to have his property used for the restoration, showing good stewardship for the land and watershed by helping provide habitat for area salmon, cleaner water down stream and cooler water temperatures. He of course gets the benefit of not losing more of his property to erosion. "We will be saving some of

my arable land. It's hard to quantify the value," said Justice. Justice was slightly concerned about his privacy and that he would get trespassers interested in viewing the project and not respecting his property. "I don't want to sound like a jerk, but the project is on private property," said Justice.

In addition to almost \$150,000 in funding from NRCS, the UNWC has received financial and technical assistance from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Tillamook Estuary Partnership, the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.



"The stream bank has been eroding away, sometimes losing as much as 12 feet in a bad winter the past few years," said Peyton. "The structures are engineered to stop the erosion, stabilize the bank and push the energy of the water back into the center of the stream."

Bruce Wilson from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been on hand overseeing the construction and design. NRCS provided support for the engineering,

## Drug Coalition Receives Federal Grant

By Scott Laird

The Vernonia Drug-Free Community Coalition has been awarded one of nineteen federal Drug Free Community Grants for \$125,000. The grant is a Phase I grant and is the first of five grants the coalition has qualified for, all of which total \$625,000 collectively over five years. The grant will be run through the City of Vernonia.

This grant will be used to hire a full time coordinator for the coalition who will be responsible for managing the grant, will work as a liaison with the community, will develop community outreach, and work to train community members in programs. The grant will also be used to hire someone to fill a part-time mentoring position who will work directly with youth in the community. The coalition is looking at possibly hiring a contract employee to would allow them to stretch the money further.

The grant can also provide for travel to required workshops for grant administration in Washington, DC, as well as travel expenses for groups to attend local programs which include the development of awareness programs within the community.

Vernonia has been pursuing this type of grant for about six years. "We have shown a history of community programs that have been successful, like our SKID program, which helped our application," said Vernonia Police Sergeant Mike Kay. "They also saw a community with a need when they chose Vernonia."

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