

## VHS Forestry Program Moves Forward

### Class is providing free firewood for senior citizens

The Vernonia High School Forestry Program, in its first year, is starting to take shape and is planning some interesting projects.

According to instructor Byron Brown the Forestry class was the recipient of some donated firewood from Ron Meyer, which was delivered by Mike Pihl to the school. "We want to make this available at no cost to senior citizens in our community who are in need as a way to say thank you and pay them back for passing the school bond, which no doubt raised their taxes," says Brown. Seniors interested in receiving some free firewood can call Tonia Clark, who is helping coordinate this project at 503-429-0524 to arrange pick-up or delivery—Tonia will also want to know

the desired length of the firewood. "We will do our best to get some wood out to them as quickly as we can," says Brown.

The class is also planning some local tree planting and riparian zone improvement projects. They will be looking into some projects at Stub Stewart State Park and are also working with the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council. There are also plans to start a student Christmas tree farm out by the Vernonia Airport.

According to Brown the class has been practicing plant identification and inventories, forest measurements, and pacing and compass bearings in the Bear Creek Watershed above town in the first semester this school year. In

the second semester, students will be studying watershed science, riparian zones, wetlands plants and animals, timber cruising, forest management, the role of fire in a forest ecosystem and wildfire suppression. "I am also planning field trips to a lumber mill, a seedling nursery and a fish hatchery," said Brown.

Brown was also pleased to announce that the class had received a grant of almost \$1500 from the Columbia County Small Woodlands Owners to help purchase needed equipment. He also noted that the class has been fortunate to have the assistance of professional forester Mark Dreyer for their fieldwork projects.

## VHS Winter Sports Update

**Wrestling**—The Loggers brought home another first place trophy from the Colton Tournament on December 10 finishing with 156.5 points and ahead of 3A Riverside, Clatskanie and Harrisburg. Individually several Loggers placed well at Colton, including winners Jake Barnes 170 and Dawson Shay at 195, second place finishers Joe Benes at 160 and Bridger Steward at 152 and third place finishers Damien Young at 132, Jake Stevens at 182, and Quinn Johansen at 145.



Damien Young took third place at the Colton Tournament at 132.

On December 16, the Loggers wrestled against Warrenton and Knappa in head-to-head matches at home. Against Warrenton, Shylo Dooley won a very close match in the final seconds at 138 and Quin Johansen at 145, Joe Benes at 160 and Brett Benes at 195 all won with pins. Against Knappa, Vernonia won every match except for 220 and 285



Joe Benes finished first at the Nestucca Tournament at 160.

which they forfeited because they had no wrestler in those weight classes.

On December 17 the Loggers traveled to the Nestucca Tournament where they faced some very tough competition, bringing home fourth place after finishing behind Tillamook, Banks and Gladstone, all 4A schools. Joe Benes at 160, and Jake Stevens at 182 both took first place; Damien Young at 132, Jake Barnes at 170, Dawson Shay at 182 and Brett Benes at 195 all finished

second.

Logger head coach Chris Wolf is pleased with his their results so far this season. "We're competing well as a team," says Wolf. He mentioned two freshmen who have impressed this year. Jeff Goodman, wrestling for the first time, looks like he has earned the varsity spot at 120 and is working hard to improve. Damien Young has continued to improve as the season has progressed. "His



confidence is growing with each match," says Wolf, "and it's showing in the tournament results." Wolf

was also happy to have senior Brett Benes return after recovering from a football injury. "He's a nice addition to



Dawson Shay (in black) took first place at the Colton Tournament at 195. All photos by Yaraslava Denysenko.

our lineup," says Wolf.

In the Rockwell Rankings, Vernonia is ranked third in the state in 2A/1A behind perennial powers Culver and Gold Beach. Individually several Loggers are ranked in the early season state wide polls including Shylo Dooley, ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and Damien Young ranked 5<sup>th</sup> at 132, Joe Benes ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> at 160, Jake Barnes ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> at 170, Jake Stevens ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> at 182 and Dawson Shay ranked 5<sup>th</sup> at 195.

"This will be a very tough team as the season moves on and our kids start dropping down to their natural weight classes," says Wolf.

The Loggers were headed to the Clatskanie Tournament on December 28, followed by the Bob Bishop Invitational on January 7 and then the Oregon Classic in Redmond on January 13-14. They will wrestle at home against Clatskanie on January 17.

**Boys Basketball**—The Loggers are continuing their winning ways. After a tough 50-44 loss at home against Gaston to open league play on December 13, the boys bounced back with a 39-34 win over Knappa on December 16. At home on December 20 they defeated Gervais in a non-league game, 54-46.

The Loggers head into the Christmas break with a solid 7-2 record overall.

Despite their good record, according to Logger head coach David

Weller, neither he nor his players are particularly pleased with the way they are playing so far this season. "We are making a lot of turnovers, especially in our last three games," says Weller. "and we're are not playing as physically as we should be." Weller noted that

as one of the taller teams, the Logger are often being out-rebounded by smaller teams. "That should not be happening," says Weller.

Weller noted that the Loggers continue to have a pretty balanced scoring attack, with most of the offense coming from Craig Weller, Paul Jiranek and Austin Cutright. Jiranek scored 19 points against Gervais, but coach Weller says any number of players are capable of contributing points in any game. He was particularly pleased with the

play of Kendrick Leverton off the bench in the fourth quarter of the Gervais game.

The Logger will not play during the holiday break, which according to Weller, will give them a chance to practice hard, work on some of the mistakes they are making, and give a couple players a chance to heal from some injuries.

The Loggers return to league play on January 6 at Delphian before returning to the Logger Dome on January 10 against Portland Christian and January 12 against Riverdale. A look ahead will see a stretch of what should include some key league match-ups at Faith Bible on January 17, at home against Nestucca on January 20 and a rematch against Gaston, away on January 23.

**Girls Basketball**—The Lady Loggers continue to struggle this season. Winless through seven games, the girls dropped league games to Gaston 63-33 and Knappa 61-26, before losing to non-league opponent Gervais 33-18.

The Lady Loggers will head to the Riverdale Tournament during the holidays, where they will play three games December 27 through December 29, opening against Damascus Christian. They will look to win their first league game at Delphian on January 6, before facing tough match-ups at home against Portland Christian on January 10 and Riverdale on January 12.

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