

ODF&W Aware of Cougar Activity

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W) says they are investigating reports that a cougar has been active in the vicinity of the Linear Trail near Vernonia.

"We are currently in information gathering mode at this point," said Rick Swart, ODF&W's Regional Spokesman, during a recent phone conversation. "At this point we have not yet been on the site."

According to Swart, ODF&W has heard that several people have reported seeing a Cougar along the Linear Trail, although Swart says ODF&W has not received any official reports of these sightings themselves. "We've heard but not yet confirmed that there are some trail cam photos of this animal and we're real interested in getting a hold of those, if they do, in fact, actually exist."

Swart said one of the deciding factors that will prompt a site visit by ODF&W is whether local police request them to provide assistance. "They [local law enforcement] would be the lead as far as the public safety aspect of this situation," said Swart. "If they deem that there is an issue then we would provide them with technical support. We could come out but we're not there yet."

Swart said his agency is continuing to gather information and encouraged anyone with actual evidence

that a lion is in the vicinity to report it to the local police and to ODF&W.

Swart said that ODF&W might consider sending their District Biologist from Sauvie Island to investigate if more proof that a lion is in the area is brought forward.

"We have to treat every one of these reports seriously," said Swart.

If you live in cougar country

- Learn your neighborhood. Be aware of any wildlife corridors or places where deer or elk concentrate.
- Walk pets during the day and keep them on a leash.
- Keep pets indoors at dawn and dusk. Shelter them for the night.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Don't leave food and garbage outside.
- Use animal-proof garbage cans if necessary.
- Remove heavy brush from near the house and play areas.
- Install motion-activated light outdoors along walkways and driveways.
- Be more cautious at dawn and dusk when cougars are most active.
- Do not feed any wildlife. By attracting other wildlife, you may attract a cougar.
- Keep areas around bird feeders clean.

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First Day of School!



Vernonia Schools Awarded Green Globes Certification

The Green Building Initiative has awarded the Vernonia Schools building the Green Globes Certification for sustainable building achievements and environmental and energy efficiency.

Vernonia Superintendent Aaron Miller announced the award at the September 11, 2014 School Board meeting. Miller told the Board that the School was awarded three out of a possible four Green Globes.

Green Globes provides independent sustainability assessments for commercial, institutional and some residential facilities. Miller told the Board Green Globes is often used by the timber industry to judge sustainability practices in construction.

Green Globes is an alternative to the LEED building rating system. The Vernonia Schools is still awaiting a final determination on their Platinum rating from LEED.

Friends Group Are Ambassadors for Trail and Park

The Friends of Stub Stewart State Park and the Banks-Vernonia Trail are approaching their twenty-fifth anniversary.

This volunteer group helps preserve and enhance recreational and educational opportunities at the park and on the trail and helps promote the use of their cultural, historical and natural resources. They are a valuable resource for park staff and a vital component

of day-to-day operations.

"The majority of time is spent being ambassadors for the Park and Trail," says group President Marsha Kirk.

Volunteers from the Friends group regularly help with State Parks Day at the beginning of the season. They also run the store portion of the Discovery Depot Interpretive Center, which funds their activities in the park and on the trail. Volunteers do still perform trail maintenance, but they are more likely to be at the interpretive center or out on the park trails or linear trail, informing visitors about the history of the region, the park and the linear trail.

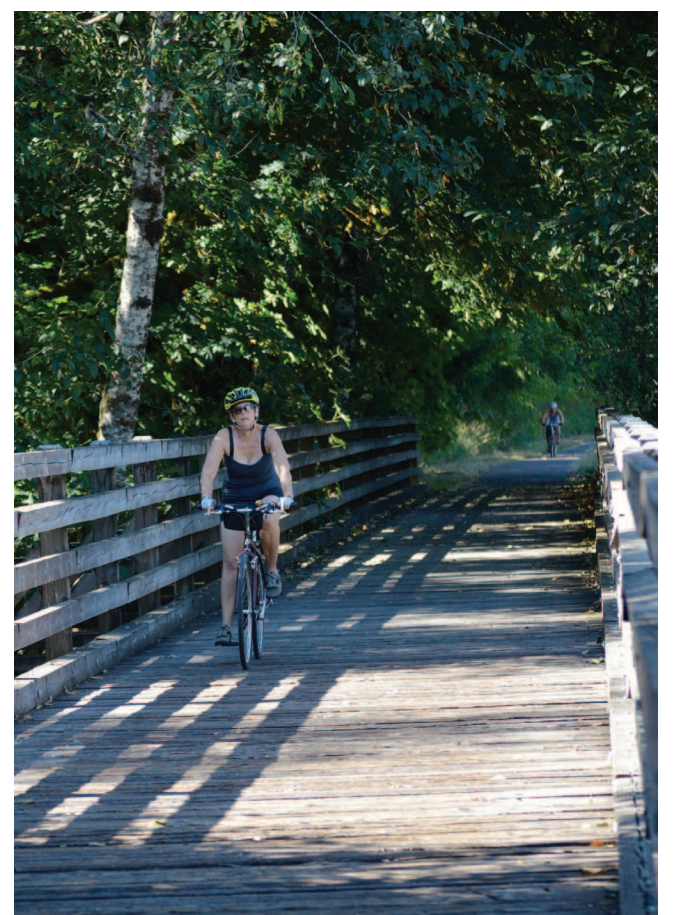
Kirk says the group is always looking for new volunteers to help promote this regional highlight that draws thousands of visitors to the area each year.

Originally the group was the Friends of the Banks-Vernonia Trail and initially began the construction of the trail, which became the first Rails-to-Trails project in the state of Oregon after Southern Pacific abandoned the rail bed. Eventually Oregon State Parks took over construction of the trail, but the Friends remained supporters of the trail once it was completed.

When Stub Stewart State Park opened in 2007 the focus of the group shifted towards promoting the park and trail.

The Discovery Depot is now a major focus of the group. The interpretive center is generally manned by volunteer park hosts through the State Park system. The Friends group runs the store portion of the interpretive center, but also helps with maintaining the visual and hands-on displays and other learning opportunities. The store carries supply items that campers may have forgotten to pack for their trip, as well as crafts created by local artists the group is helping promote.

The group is going through a bit of a transition



period as they move from trail maintenance to administration of park and trail functions.

"We can always find something for volunteers to do," says Kirk. Kirk says the group hopes to apply for some grants in the future to expand their work and impact on the park and trail.

You can contact the Friends of Stub Stewart State Park and Banks Vernonia Trail at Friendsfssspbvt@gmail.com. They are also on Facebook.

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