

Council to Make Decision About Trees in Ora Bolmeier Park

City considering cutting down large stand of diseased trees on O-A Hill

After years of speculation about the health of a stand of 40 trees within City limits, the City now has a report from a licensed arborist that shows the trees are in decline and could be a danger.



The Vernonia City Council tabled making a decision on what to do about the trees at their February 5, 2018 meeting. The trees under discussion are located between Bridge Street and Louisiana Avenue on the Oregon-American (O-A) Hill section of town. The trees are clustered in the lower section of Ora Bolmeier Park at the intersection of Texas Avenue. The trees that were inspected have been marked with a silver tag. The Council intends to make a decision on the fate of the trees at their next meeting on Tuesday, February 20. (The Council will meet on Tuesday rather than the regular Monday, because of the Presidents' Day holiday.)

While considering how such an important decision will impact the character of the community, as well as

the neighborhood for residents, Council was in agreement that they should give local citizens an opportunity to weigh in on the decision. "The people in the community have a right to be heard," said Mayor Mario Leonetti.

The stand of trees, consisting mostly of Douglas-fir with a few Western Redcedar, was inspected by consulting arborist David D. Hunter of Forest

Grove on December 26, 2017.

In his report, Hunter identified four trees for immediate removal; Council approved this recommendation at their January 16, 2018 meeting. Hunter identified 20 other trees for additional inspection in his report, noting that further inspection may "...determine if change is needed on tree condition rating or the level of hazard level might need to change, which could change the management risk by the city."

Hunter's report found no trees

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Logger Wrestlers Win District, Send Six to State Tournament

Vernonia repeats as District Champions, Barnes named Coach of the Year

The Vernonia Loggers won the 2A/1A District Tournament for the second year in a row in Special District 1 on February 2-3.



The Loggers scored 305 points in a dominant performance; the next closest team to the Loggers in scoring was Monroe with 148 points.

The Loggers will send six wrestlers to the State Tournament at Portland's Memorial Coliseum on February 16-17. The top two finishers in each weight class at the District Tournament qualified for State.

Following the Tournament Logger head coach Chris Barnes was named District Coach of the Year. Barnes acknowledged Dan Rice, his assistant coach this season, in a post on Facebook. "We could not have done

this without coach Dan Rice, the hard work and commitment of the team, and support from our community! Thank you everyone!" said Barnes.

The Loggers had three individual District champions. Wyatt Jones, who had a 22-7 record on the season, took first place at 113 pounds with a 13-3 major decision in the final. Josh

Rice (24-12 on the season) won at 152, winning his semi-final and final matches both by fall. Storm Henson (28-9) took first at 160 with falls in both the semi and final matches.

Additional Loggers to qualify for State were Josh Sholes, who had a strong tournament and won his final three matches all by fall to take second place at 126; Mekhi Williams, whose only defeat came in a tough 10-6 loss to Toledo's Kyle Hayner in the finals at 138; and Forster Hepner at 160, whose only loss in the tournament was to teammate Henson.

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Columbia County Creates New Advisory Committee for CZ Trail

Seeks members from neighboring cities and counties

Columbia County is gearing up to focus on development of the CZ Trail, and is forming a committee to advise county leaders and work on specific projects along the 23-mile route.

"This is the County's newest committee," said County Chair Margaret Magruder, "and unlike our other advisory committees, we're including people from nearby counties and cities to help us. The CZ Trail is a regionally significant part of a larger trail system in northwest Oregon, so we need voices from surrounding communities to make certain we consider a variety of users."

The new committee was formalized by County ordinance in January 2018.

The CZ Trail is an historic route that runs from Vernonia to Scap-

poose. It was created in the late 1800s as a logging trail to move timber from the upper hills of the County to docks on the Multnomah Channel. In the 1950s the trail was purchased by the Crown Zellerbach Corp. and converted to a road. Later Hancock Timber Resources maintained the road for access and fire suppression. Columbia County purchased the land in 2004.

The new advisory committee will assist the Columbia County Commission in further developing the trail. Magruder said a wide range of representatives are needed, including people who live along or own property near the trail; leaders of cycling, hiking and equestrian groups; members of local watershed councils; representatives from local logging companies; and representatives of federal, state and local organizations involved in park, trail or recreation facilities, roads or forest management. Terms run from two to four years.

The County wants to improve the trail for hikers, cyclists and horseback riders. The new committee will work on a variety of projects, including reviewing a Concept Plan developed in the 2000s, possible acquisition or right-of-way of part of the trail in Vernonia connecting to the Banks-Vernonia State Trail, and the use of a former logging camp as an equestrian camp.

The County was also recently approved for a matching grant from the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation. Funds will go towards adding signage, safety, and several visitor amenities.

Those interested in serving on the new CZ Trail Advisory Committee should complete a Volunteer Application Form. The form can be found online or at the County Courthouse, 230 Strand St. in St. Helens. For more information, email Jan Greenhalgh at jan.greenhalgh@co.columbia.or.us or call her at (503) 397-4322.

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