

UNWC Recaps Productive Year

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council completes numerous restoration projects in 2018

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (UNWC) has been an instrumental piece in the regional efforts to protect the health of the Nehalem River watershed.



The Nehalem watershed, from its headwaters on the east side of the Oregon Coast Range, through Vernonia, and all the way to the Pacific Ocean, has been seen as a high priority river basin for restoring habitat as part of the effort to protect and re-establish coho salmon in their native streams in the Pacific Northwest. The UNWC has been instrumental in developing and managing projects as part of those recovery efforts, including the replacement of culverts that act as barriers to migrating fish, working with private landowners to plant trees and restore natural settings along stream banks, and placing large trees, with rootwads attached, in streams to create natural habitat for coho and other native species.

Vernonia's Voice recently sat down with UNWC Executive Director Maggie Peyton to review the work of the UNWC, now in its 22nd year of

operation. Peyton discussed projects that have been completed during the last year, talked about current issues and ongoing concerns about the health and water quality in the region, and looked ahead to this upcoming summer season and the Council's plans.

"The habitat in the Nehalem watershed has not been totally degraded

and is seen as having a lot of potential," says Peyton. "We're getting to the point where we're starting to connect some of the dots. We've been doing projects all around the region for twenty plus years, but now we're able to do some sub-basin treatments that address multiple factors in an area with road crossings and enhanced habitat."

According to Peyton, 2018 was *continued on page 10*

Vernonia SK8 Awarded \$25K Tony Hawk Grant

Vernonia SK8, a 501(c)(3) grassroots organization which has been working hard to get a professional style skate park built in Vernonia, announced they have been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Tony Hawk Foundation, and are one big step closer to making their dream a reality.



Vernonia SK8 started this project back in July 2017, spearheaded by Wendy Sears, J.D. Vorheis, and Jeremy Simmons. The goal was to raise \$60,000 as a match towards the Tony Hawk grant.

"The Tony Hawk Foundation were the first people we contacted back in 2017," said Simmons in making the grant announcement. "I was first introduced to Alec Beck, project manager of the Hawk Foundation and he's helped us since the beginning of this project. They've given us the knowledge of what we needed to do for this project."

Over the course of about a year and a half Vernonia SK8 has raised \$42,000 in cash, including a big cash donation of \$10,000 from Holce Log-

ging, Inc. of Vernonia, and many other sizable donations from local Vernonians. Vernonia SK8 has held six different fundraising events, and continues to receive donations from businesses throughout the community, along with donations from big businesses like Intel and Auto Warehousing Company. Local Vernon-

nian Javoss McGuire has committed to donating his time and heavy equipment for excavation on the project.

The group is now in the process of applying for a Local Government Grant from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with the City of Vernonia. The group continues to work with two skate park designers, Evergreen Skate Designs and Aaron Spohn of Spohn Ranch Designs.

The group says they will continue to fundraise so they can build the best skate park possible for the Vernonia community.

If you'd like to donate contact them at Vernoniask8.com or vernoniask8@gmail.com.

VHS Spring Sports Preview

By Scott Laird

Track and Field – The Vernonia boys team are the defending district champions and have many returning athletes from that team. Head coach John Roady thinks the boys, with 19 competitors on the squad, will be in contention again this year for the district title, along with Portland Christian, Columbia Christian, and Neah-Kah-Nie. Several newcomers look like they will be important contributors to the squad.

The girls squad looks like they have a diverse and talented team that Roady says has the ability to compete for the District title. Roady's 16 girls look especially strong in the field events and in distance running events.

Early in the season coach Roady, along with assistant coach George Spaulding, have been working on conditioning and helping their athletes find their best events. Roady says Vernonia's new facility, completed last fall on the school campus, is a great improvement for his teams, providing locker rooms nearby, a real track surface to practice running events, and regulation field event facilities for practice. For the first time in decades Vernonia will host their own meet at their own facility on Thursday, May 2.

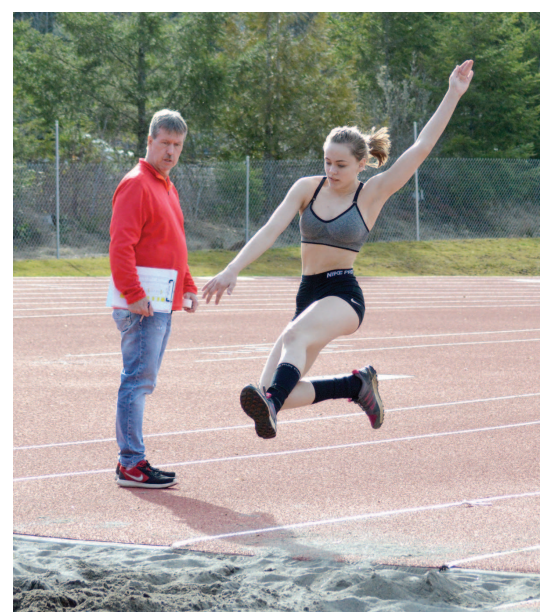
The boys will have senior Jake Handegard leading the way in the distance events after finishing 4th in the 800 meters in the district last year. Handegard will run either the 800, 1,500, or even the 3,000. Also running distance events will be sophomore Wyatt Jones and possibly exchange student Abraham Kpirikai.

In the sprints, junior Josh Rice is the top returning sprinter in a group that includes sophomore Pete Crystal and junior Elijah Thompson in the 100 and 200. In the 400 senior Abram Martin, a first time track athlete, has looked very strong early, along with Kpirikai, and Jacob Pasko.

The boys should have a competitive 4x400 relay this year that looks to include Handegard, junior Kale Sullivan, Martin, Pasko, and Kpirikai.

Crystal, a very versatile athlete, is the defending district champion in the pole vault after just picking it up at the end of last season. Crystal will also be part of a strong group of high jumpers, that includes Handegard and Martin.

Sullivan will lead the long jump group, along with exchange stu-



Isabelle Coleman practicing the long jump with track coach John Roady.

dent Radek Zikmund, who has shown some great natural ability in several events. Martin is trying out the triple jump, along with Nick Costley.

In the throwing events, Sullivan is tops in the javelin but is being pushed by Zikmund. Newcomer Dustin Carreon, who Roady says is a big and strong athlete who really loves the weight room, has looked raw but shows a lot of potential in the shot put and the discus.

Roady says the boys team is *continued on page 12*

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