

Local Election Results: Voters Renew Columbia 9-1-1 Operating Fund

Columbia County voters approved the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District renewal of operating funds for five more years by a 73.83% to 26.17% margin in the May 21, 2019 election.

In other local election results, Greg Kintz and Steve Whiteman were both elected to the Vernonia School District Board of Directors. Position 6 - a two year unexpired term which had no candidate filed, received 234 write-in votes. Position 7, which also had no candidate filed, received 90 write-in votes. According to Vernonia School District Executive Assistant Barb Carr, the County Elections Supervisor will convene a board to count the write-ins for the two positions. Around June 10 they will send the District

the final Election Abstract. The School Board will need to accept the Abstract at their June 13 meeting. Once the Board accepts the abstract the County will send out Acceptance of Office forms to the persons identified as top vote getters.

Joel Glass, Jesse Harbour, and Tim Buchanan were all re-elected to the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors after running unopposed.

For the Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District, Dave Crawford defeated D. Scott Carpenter by 60 to 44 votes. Joan Jones was re-elected after running unopposed.

Dave Crawford was re-elected as Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District Director for Zone 4 after running unopposed.

Help Make Fireworks a Success

The Vernonia Fireworks Show for this year is running a few dollars short of the \$5,000 goal. So far the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District (VRFPD) has collected just over \$4,000, including \$1,000 from the Vernonia Volunteer Ambulance Association, \$1,000 from the Vernonia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, \$1,989.15 donated directly by various Vernonia community members, as well as through collection jars at R&S Market last year. Jars from the market this year have added another \$150.28 in the last few months.

"We are close, but need some help to push us to our goal for this year and start the fund for next year," says VRFPD Lt. Loren Loomis, who organizes the fireworks display each year. "The collection jars will be back out until July 4th, so please donate what you can to continue this show."

If you would like to donate directly, please send your donation to the Vernonia RFPD, 555 E. Bridge Street, in care of "2019 Fireworks Show."

"A big thanks goes out to those who have donated and to those that will help us reach our goal," added Loomis.

BEST OF LUCK VHS CLASS OF 2019



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Beavers are Eager to Help Us Restore Our Watersheds

There's a growing movement across Oregon to encourage beavers to return to our streams and rivers

By Scott Laird

The state of Oregon has a unique relationship with a local rodent. Beavers were here when the first white men moved across the wild and untamed territory in the early 1800s. They're Oregon's state animal, the mascot of our largest university, and hold a prominent place in the center of our state flag. We even call ourselves the Beaver State!

After almost being completely eliminated from North American rivers and streams during the 1800s, today

wildlife biologists are recognizing the numerous benefits beavers provide in the areas they colonize. Oregonians have also begun to appreciate their beavers more in the last several years, especially the way beavers can help the Northwest's struggling salmon populations.

But it's a love/hate relationship, especially in some parts of the state, because beavers, while known for their industrious nature, have a tendency to cause trouble when they get to work. As we all know, beavers build dams, and dams control and constrain water. Done in the right location, beaver dams can produce great benefits



— improving water quality, expanding fish habitat, providing water storage for agriculture, and saturating and recharging natural water tables. But, construct a dam in the wrong place, and a beaver can be more than just a nuisance — they chew down valuable trees to build their dams, create wetlands where they didn't exist before, often cause flooding that damage farmland and residential property, and block culverts causing damage to roads.

So, how do we as Oregonians, living in the Beaver State, find ways to coexist with these neighbors, and encourage their proliferation so we can reap the many benefits they can provide? That's a question many Oregonians, including those working in the Nehalem River watershed, are trying to answer.

Creating Beaver Dams

The rest area on the Sunset Highway, west of Timber Junction, was a convenient meeting spot. It was

the middle of April, 2019, so the weather was cold, damp, and overcast, with an ever-present threat of rain showers, and most of us wore several layers of warm clothing.

Our trip was organized by Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (UNWC) Executive Director Maggie Peyton and included staff members from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), several other directors of regional watershed councils, and a few interested citizens.

The April weather didn't seem to bother Steve Trask, our leader for the day, who wore just a down vest over a t-shirt, jeans, and rubber boots (he later gave in and added a flannel jacket). Trask would guide us into the Tillamook State Forest to inspect Beaver Dam Analogue (BDA) structures he installed the previous summer on several small streams located on Oregon Department of Forestry controlled lands.

Trask, who lives in Alsea, Oregon, operates Trask Consulting, Inc, a company that works with local partners to develop and install stream restoration projects in the Coast Range and the Willamette Valley. He is lean and rugged looking, and well spoken. You can tell he's smart and capable, and he sports unusually tanned arms and face for April in Oregon — you can tell this guy spends a lot of time in the outdoors.

BDAs are man-made dams designed and constructed to replicate naturally built beaver dams, with the intention of encouraging beavers to repopulate a specific area. This new restoration technique is starting to be used across the country, often with very successful results.

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A Beaver Dam Analogue (BDA) constructed in the Tillamook State Forest, part of a pilot project being managed by Upper Nehalem Watershed Council.