

On the Shelves

By Shannon Romtvedt

Summer Reading and Children's Programs

We've missed having programs at the Library and seeing all of our families and small library friends! This summer we are going all out and have a full lineup of performers and fun storytimes and activities for kids. Our Library is open to the public, but we are hosting all programs outdoors this summer. Our featured performers will be at Hawkins Park and our storytimes and our STEM and craft programs will be held in the Library courtyard, right outside the front door. So come to a program and head in to the Library after to check-out books and dvds.

We would love to have some teen volunteers for our summer programming, either to help at the program and/or help prep materials for them. If interested in volunteering, please call the Library (503) 429-1818 or email library@vernonia-or.gov and we will get you a volunteer application.

The first day to sign-up for Summer Reading is Monday, June 14. We do not have an online sign-up form this year, but you are welcome to visit the Library to sign-up your child or give us a call. Children/teens, birth - age 14 are eligible for the reading incentive program. Kids who finish the program receive a free book/activity book, small prizes, and a chance to win larger prizes: Lego set, art supplies, local restaurant gift cards, science kits, and more.

Upcoming Events for Children

Featured Performers (Hawkins Park)

Creature Teachers: Tuesday, June 15, 6 pm
Fostering an appreciation for all wildlife,

including under-loved and misunderstood creatures like snakes and spiders. These events allow kids and adults alike to hear the facts and experience the animals directly.

Mad Science: Tuesday, July 6, 6 pm What Do You Know About H2O? Learn with a Mad Scientist all the amazing attributes of water and the importance of conserving.

Jugglemania!: Tuesday, July 20, 6 pm With "Pixar-like" comedy, Rhys Thomas has performed in 30 different countries. Rhys has performed several times for the Vernonia Library and is a favorite with families.

Penny's Puppets: Tuesday, August 10, 6 pm Animals Got Talent! An original musical puppet play. Penny's animals will sing, dance, and show off their talents, the audience gets to pick their favorite acts!

Summer Outdoor Storytimes (Wednesdays, 10:30, Library Courtyard)

Stories, movement activities, and crafts designed for children up through age 6. Themes vary each week, including: Pirates, Fairies, Circus, Bugs, Ocean, Dinosaurs, and more!

Library Courtyard Activities (Thursdays, 11 am, July 1 - August 12)

For families with young children, preschool and elementary age.

Oobleck!: July 1

Chess and Board Games: July 8

Cake and Ice Cream Science: July 15

Popped Bubble Art: July 22

Did You Know: Library Passport Program and Downloadable Options

We regularly have questions about accessing materials from other libraries as well as downloadable books and audiobooks. You certainly have those option with your Vernonia Library membership! The Vernonia Library is part of the Oregon Passport Program. If you are signed-up with your home Library and have a card, you can sign-up for free with other passport libraries. This includes Washington County Libraries, Multnomah County Libraries, St. Helens Public Library, Scappoose Library, and more. Along with access to print collections, you will have access to digital collections. That means you can go to a participating Passport Library, show your Vernonia Library card, get a membership set up, and then download books and audiobooks for the rest of the year from home. If you are interested in the passport program or want help accessing digital collections, please call the Library (503) 429-1818 and ask to speak with Shannon.

Upcoming Library Closures

Monday, July 5 in observance of Independence Day

Current Hours & Contact Info:

Mon, Wed, Fri: 10 am - 5 pm

Tues, Thur: 12 pm - 7 pm

Sat: 12 pm - 5 pm

Phone: (503) 429-1818

E-mail: library@vernonia-or.gov

Website: www.vernonia-or.gov/departments/library

Online Catalog: <https://vernonia.biblionix.com/catalog/>

Oregon Board of Forestry Appoints Acting State Forester

During a special meeting on May 27, the Oregon Board of Forestry voted unanimously to designate Nancy Hirsch as the acting State Forester while the board conducts a nationwide open, competitive recruitment for Oregon's next State Forester. Hirsch stepped into the interim role, which also serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the Department of Forestry, on June 1.

Hirsch replaces embattled department leader Peter Daugherty, who submitted his resignation on May 7, effective May 28. Daugherty had led the agency since 2016, during which time the department faced multiple financial issues and was characterized as "dysfunctional." Both the Board of Forestry and the State Legislature have been critical of Daugherty's leadership, including State Senator Betsy Johnson. "The problems at the agency are manifold - weak management, inadequate computer systems and internal controls, siloed departments, and bad internal communication," said Johnson in an interview last year with *Vernonia's Voice*.

Daugherty's resignation appears to have been prompted by the release of a critical report, prepared by MGO, an outside accounting consultant, which found a fundamental lack of financial controls and oversight at the Department. The report was reviewed by legislators on the Natural Resources subcommittee of Ways and Means, and,



Nancy Hirsch, interim State Forester

as reported by *The Oregonian*, was met with surprise by the lawmakers, who said they were "aware of the problems in general but found details the firm uncovered eye-opening and troubling."

Hirsch served in a number of executive leadership roles at the Department of Forestry before retiring in 2019, including as chief of both the Protection and State Forests divisions and as the Deputy State Forester. Since her retirement, Hirsch has served as the administrator of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee, which supervises and controls the distribution of funds from the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund.

"Nancy has a wealth of knowledge and experience in forestry and fire

protection in Oregon, and I am grateful for her willingness to return from retirement to serve in this capacity while we search for the next State Forester," said Board Chair Jim Kelly. "I am confident in her ability to seamlessly integrate back into the department's operations and lead the department during this critical period of transition."

"I respect and care deeply about the dedicated employees at ODF and the services they deliver every day throughout Oregon," said Hirsch, who has spent more than 33 years with the department. "ODF is at a critical moment, and I am confident that with the support of the Board of Forestry, Governor's Office, and Legislature, ODF can begin rebuilding trust and confidence in our fiscal responsibility and accountability."

While there appears to be plenty of blame to go around for the troubles at the Department of Forestry, and Daugherty deserves his share, fingers are also being pointed elsewhere. Governor Kate Brown was vocal in her frustration last fall when the State Senate declined to confirm her new appointments to the Board of Forestry; Brown was finally able to bring forward a slate of three candidates that the Senate confirmed this spring. Several members of the legislature have been disappointed by the years of inaction by the Board of Forestry, as the financial woes of the department have accumulated. Some

legislators have called for limiting the power of the Board of Forestry and have introduced legislation to do so.

SB868, with Senator Betsy Johnson as one of three democratic chief sponsors, would take the sole responsibility to appoint the Chief Forester away from the Oregon Board of Forestry, and instead directs the Governor to consult with the Board of Forestry before appointing a State Forester, which would then be subject to Senate confirmation. The proposed bill does have initial bipartisan support from two Republicans, Senators Tim Knopp of Bend and Lynn Findley of Vale.

Aside from the transition in its top leadership position, the department will be navigating other significant challenges in the coming months, including the very high likelihood of a difficult fire season and the continued implementation of recommendations from both the recent assessment of the department's fire finance function and the Governor's Council on Wildfire Response. But those challenges did not deter Hirsch from accepting the board's appointment of her as the acting State Forester.

Vernonia's Voice
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1st and 3rd Thursday.
Look for our next issue
on June 17.