

'Critter Gitter' relocates wayward animals

By Doug Vaughan
Of The Print

"As far as I know it is the only one nationwide. When I went to put my ad in the yellow pages they questioned it. The guy had worked there twenty-five years and never came across anything like it," Clackamas Community College student Larry McClintock said.

What exactly is he talking about? His two-month old business, of course. Better known as "The Critter Gitter," McClintock is making a living out of animal rescue and relocation.

"It was just an idea. I was involved in trapping quite a bit before this," McClintock said. "Certain wild animals can cause problems and there is not one who specializes in this area."

The system is easy. McClintock has a 24-hour answering service which receives complaints about wild animals that are a nuisance. If the complaining is an emergency he will respond immediately. If not, McClintock will get in touch with the person at a later time.

McClintock discusses the problem with the customer and informs them of his fees. The original fee comes with the installation of his equipment (traps), and an additional fee is charged with the removal of the animal. Costs depend on the size and type of animal.

Following the removal there is a 30-day grace period in which if any of the problems re-occur, he will install his equipment without another installation fee.

College site for regional project

Jerry Herrmann, ELC director, announced that the John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center at Clackamas Community College has been designated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as the Regional Demonstration Project for the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP).

As part of the recognition, the ODFW will provide the Center with the technical assistance, 25,000 winter steelhead eggs and interpretive signage.

In anticipation of the formal dedication of the Fish Rearing Facility fish and wildlife biologist Dave Heckerth will explain the STEP program and how other individuals can become involved at a "Home Fisheries and Aquaculture" seminar to be presented at the ELC Pavilion from 7-10 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29.

In other STEP related activities, the ELC has successfully negotiated with the State Highway Department to provide fish passage culverts

For a business that got its official start in September, McClintock has already relocated over 100 animals.

"I just started doing it to begin with, but I began to find a need for this type of work," McClintock said. "Right now there is not a lot of money to be made at this, but there is a possibility down the line that I might be able to make a living doing it. The spring will tell whether there is a demand for this."

In order to get a start at his new business, McClintock needed approval from the Oregon and Wildlife Commission so he could work with the wild animals.

The tedious part of the business comes with the paperwork. McClintock is required to have a business license for each city he serves. With each animal he relocates, he must fill out a report to the Game Commission. On top of that he needs a license to capture, transport and release wild animals.

McClintock, a Milwaukie resident, works with a Portland telephone number so that people can call from all suburban areas without being charged long-distance rates.

The majority of the animals he works with he refers to as "little furry ones." Included in this group are raccoons, muskrats, beavers, weasles and skunks, even though he feels his business is capable of handling bears and cougars if needed.

The type of traps the "Crittter Gitter" uses are cage-like life traps, into which the animal is lured by bait and trapped alive. Once the animal is trapped, McClintock then

relocates it into its normal habitat.

"I work with the game commission on that (relocating)," McClintock said. "We monitor the areas pretty good. We have to put them in a habitat that will satisfy their needs."

McClintock is in his fourth term of welding at the College and is also studying hydraulics. Even though the areas of study may not seem to intertwine with the business, they are becoming profitable for him.

"I have developed a new life trap that will be capable of taking anything alive," McClintock said. "It will work off compressed air, where the animal will actually trick a light beam."

The invention is pending

"denial" type fish ladder in at least one location near the old Maple Lane intersection. This is the same kind of installation that has been used successfully on small tributaries.

for both down-stream migrants (juvenile salmon) and upstream spawning runs of salmon and steelhead.

Negotiations with the State are underway to construct a simple and inexpensive

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CRITTER CATCHER—College student Larry McClintock poses with his unique "Crittter Gitter" vehicle. Raccoons, muskrats and skunks are some of the various animals transported in McClintock's truck during relocation maneuvers.
Photo by Joel Miller

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controlled circumstances so they can find out the faults of the trap and perfect it. One amazing aspect of the trap is that it can accommodate more than one animal at a time.

Once McClintock has thoroughly tested the trap, a final model will be made out of aluminum and will be anodized for salt water use. He does not know exactly how effective or expensive the project will be.

So far, McClintock's farthest call has been from Eastern Oregon, but in due time the word may spread to other regions.

"I just like working with animals and I am an outdoors-type person," McClintock said. "If you can take a raccoon out of downtown Oregon City and put it in a habitat where it can survive just as good without rumaging through trash cans, it is worth it."

Once McClintock modifies his prototype, the Game Commission has agreed to help him test it under con-

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