

# ELC to open river resource museum in Gladstone

by Daphne Hartt  
Staff Writer

Something exciting is happening to the old Gladstone Municipal Water Supply Tower on the banks of the Clackamas River. Thanks to the hard work and effort of Jerry Herrmann, executive director of the John Inskip Environmental Learning Center (ELC), the tower is presently being converted into a river resource museum.

In 1985, the tower, which sits on a half acre of Clackamas County land, was abandoned due to ground-water contamination. Since then, it has been heavily vandalized and exposed to weathering without any sort of caretaking.

This story of events is quite ironic in that the Gladstone City Council approved demolition of the structure back in January. It was supposed to have been into a pile of rubble and then hauled away to some nearby landfill. The tower, which would have been destroyed into about 200 tons of concrete and other debris, is now being restored, instead of adding to landfill problems in Oregon.

The council reconsidered its January decision upon receiving a letter of interest from Herrmann. This letter, which explained the ELC's proposal of the museum, caused the Council to hand over the lease to the center under a specified agreement.

Under this agreement, the ELC will clean up all debris, grade and gravel an access road, renovate the existing station, and construct a "one-of-a-kind natural resource museum on river habitat in the Clackamas River Basin," according to Herrmann.

Although the project requires a lot of work and money, Herrmann is

optimistic in saying, "With the efforts of volunteers and a supply of donated materials, hopefully we can keep costs below \$10,000. So far a great sum of the money has come from grants and aids from the River Cities Environmental Services District and donations from other sources. Also, the Gladstone School District has agreed to provide students to aid in all phases of site clean-up and help in developing educational themes for the museum.

Clean-up just might be the most difficult task of this project. Herrmann said that about ten tons of debris, which in this case is illegal waste, now covers the surrounding grounds of the soon-to-be museum.

"People have been using this area as a dumpsite since about 1984," says Herrmann in a frustrated tone.

Some of the center's plans for the area include the improvement of habitat areas, the enhancement of the area by building park benches and placing interpretive signs, the creation of a pathway system adjoining Clackamette Lake to the east, and the construction of the museum, giving the public a place to learn about the cultural and natural history of the Clackamas and Willamette rivers.

Display exhibits will consist of information, items and photographs concerning Native American life, fishery and wildlife resources, and evidence of techno-

logical growth of these two waterways.

The project will also provide a boat moorage for the "Enviro-trekker," an ELC-owned boat that travels up and down the rivers. Guided by Herrmann, the "Enviro-trekker" tours presently cost \$9.50. However, as soon as the project is accomplished, Herrmann plans to guide tours at no cost. Also, the ELC hopes to run more interpretive tours as soon as the "Envirosailor" is built. Currently, the "Envirosailor" has been started and is still in the making.

Herrmann would also like to obtain some sort of written legal document that could prevent off-road vehicles from driving onto the museum property. Herrmann feels that these vehicles "destroy wild-life habitats."

Opening ceremonies for the Clackamas River Resource Museum are scheduled for June 28, 1992.

If you would like to make a contribution or volunteer your services, please contact the ELC at 657-6958, ext. 2351.

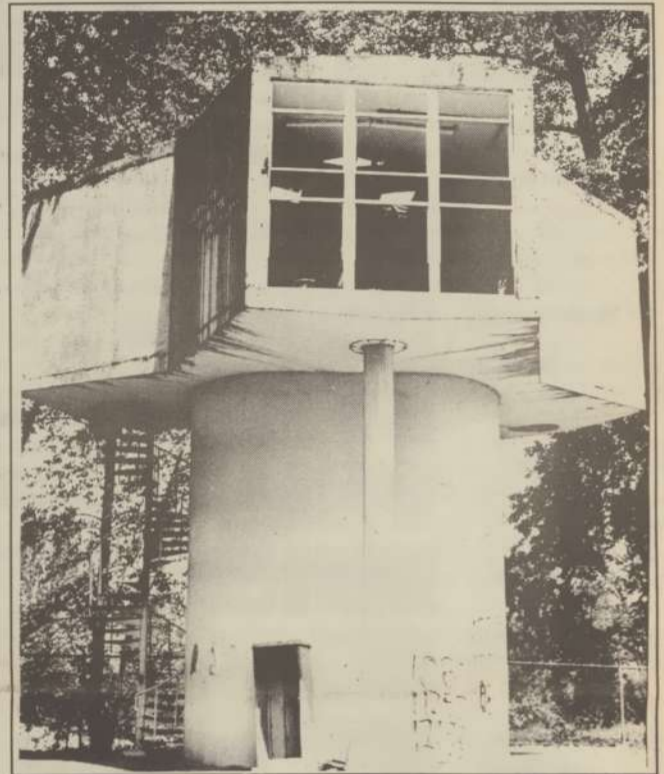
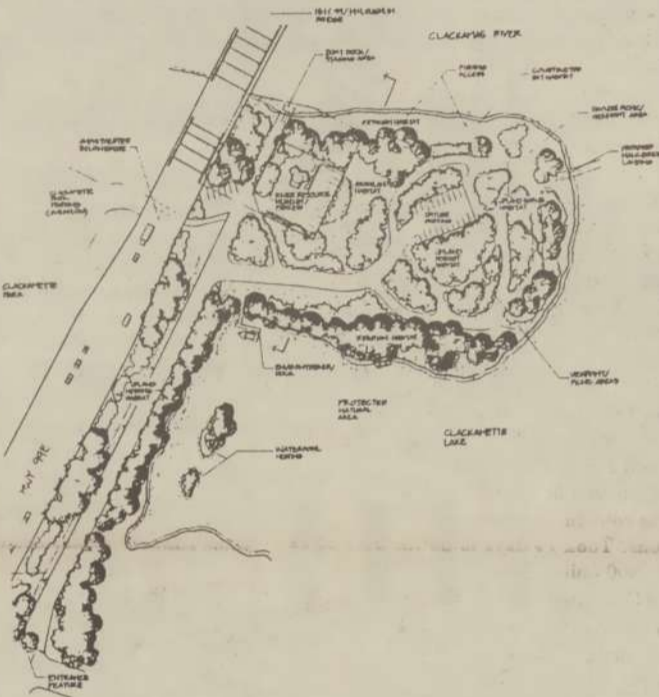


photo by David VanKeuren

The Old Gladstone Municipal Water Supply Tower will become a part of the new river resource museum.

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