

RESTORING CAMPUS WILDLIFE

NEW PLANS IN STORE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

photo by Tom Boggess



Above: Kirill Lgnatyev attended the event in the ELC building on Saturday, April 30. Below: Community members, administrators, CCC staff, faculty and students gather during an open house for the Newell Creek Headwaters restoration.



photo by Shaylyn Struna

BY TOM BOGGESS

Plans for the Newell Creek Headwaters restoration at Clackamas Community College's Environmental Learning Center were viewed during an open house by a large number of community members, administrators, CCC staff, faculty and students.

They all came together in the ELC building located on five acres of wetland at the college to show their interest in the environment.

Shelly Parini, dean of college advancement, said, "The Westside Hall is being utilized for a variety of reasons. They teach one class here but this has been the home for community education for years and years. This is really a multi-use building."

A grant has been provided by Metro to fund this project. The CCC Foundation is committed to raising \$1.7 million to match the grant. The project is estimated to be finished in 2017.

The main focus of the restoration is the Headwaters of Newell Creek and the ponds and waterways feeding them. Another nearby building, mainly used for storage now, will be fixed up during restoration to use it for classes and offices.

The grounds and the pathways have a wonderful transformation thanks to some hard work by mostly volunteers. Because of those volunteers people can walk the grounds and paths to explore what lies there in seclusion.

There are 12,000 feet of pathways running through the grounds. There are two more weekends available for the volunteers to continue cleaning the area. This event will continue on May 14 and groundbreaking will occur on the college's 50 anniversary celebration on May 21.

Bob Cochran, dean of campus

services, explained all of the construction drawings that were on display. He went on to explain how the restoration will change the existing ponds and the landscapes surrounding the waterways.

"The pond's water just kind of sits in one spot, but the pond's new formation in a snaking affect will increase storm water movement and a calculated time that it will be in the area," Cochran said. "Dr. James Nurmi teaches a class here called Water and Environmental Technologies, WET, and he has been collecting water samples along the way and will continue to test the storm water to see how we have improved the quality of the storm water."

Oregon State Rep. Bill Kennemer from Congressional District 39 was in attendance looking at the future plans for the ELC area.

Kennemer said, "I started coming to the ELC building in 1986 and I worked with Jerry Herrmann and I got to know him well. Herrmann was the first student to get involved with the ELC in 1974; it's exciting to see this whole project come together."

Cochran said, "This will be about a two-year project and that is the storm water component of this, but we also will have features like the amphitheater here for education, and a couple of discovery gardens. We'll be having seven new bridges installed and places where the bank will be cut like stairs so kids and students go down to the water to collect larva and insects."

Renee Harber, chair of the horticulture department, was also in attendance. Beginning this summer, Harber will be working with Parini to coordinate what is happening with the educational department here at the ELC.

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