

Bioswale dedication celebrates community cooperation

By
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IVN Senior Contributing Writer

A dedication ceremony last week for Evergreen Elementary’s new Bioswale Landscape Garden celebrated the productive collaboration between volunteer community leaders, local businesses, clubs, city and school officials, teachers and students. A commemorative plaque affixed to a monument near the bioswale was unveiled by students involved with the effort.

“We’re very proud of this group in the Illinois Valley,” said Rural Development Initiatives representative Sue Densmore. “They’ve created a remarkable project that will benefit the community for years to come.”

With the support of the Ford Institute Leadership Program, Densmore facilitated leadership training for 75 Illinois Valley residents in a cycle of three “cohorts” since 2010.

The bioswale project emerged from the second cohort in the Ford program, which is comprised of 20 people. Adopting the acronym L.I.V.E., which stands for “Local Illinois Valley Enrichment,” the group sifted through 70 community improvement ideas before settling on the bioswale project along West River street, in front of the school. L.I.V.E. raised over \$6,000, which was matched by the Roseburg, Ore. based Ford Family Foundation.

“The Ford Family Foundation has a unique commitment to Oregon’s small rural towns,” Densmore said. “The leadership training program helps build successful citizens and vital communities.”

“It’s really promising that so many volunteer leaders and teachers are involved to help make Cave Junction a better place,” said Mayor Carl Jacobsen.

The bioswale captures storm runoff and naturally filters water through a network of plants, attractive rocks and gravels, before it enters the sewer system that empties into the Illinois River. The design utilizes native plants donated by Althouse Nursery to create beneficial habitats for bees and butterflies. The bioswale also offers teachers an outdoor science classroom - right outside the front door.

“We’re teaching the kids about the hydrology concepts, how the bioswale helps treat gas and oil residues in water draining from the street and parking lot, and how this

helps restore the creek that runs through the neighborhood here,” said Evergreen teacher Joe Flaherty, who brought students from an after-school program into the bioswale project.

“I hope we can keep building these meaningful projects within the community that provide authentic hands-on learning experiences for kids that solve real problems,” Flaherty added. “This really helps empower these kids.”

“This whole area looks so much nicer now, more inviting,” said student Sam Hess, 10. “We learned about the plants and their names, and, we drew the plans for the bioswale with the Garden Club.”

The Evergreen bioswale project was documented by two IVHS juniors, Nancy Fitzgerald and Nadia McClennon, who created a short video that will be posted soon on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other outlets.

“We’re very proud and pleased with the work these talented young women put into our project video,” said L.I.V.E. participant Christine Perala-Gardiner.

The first cohort of the Ford leadership

program in the Valley started in 2010, and that group accomplished the substantial upgrades to playground equipment at Jubilee Park. Now, a third cohort is planning a disc golf course at Forks State Park, which will be built in 2015.

Donations of time, expertise, money, equipment and services to construct the bioswale came from the Illinois Valley Garden Club, Camp Excavating, Siskiyou Alpaca, Althouse Nursery, Kerbyville Museum, Commune-I-Tea, Eden’s Edge Farm, Vertical Horizons, Fire Mountain Gems, Good Earth Organics, City of Cave Junction, Grants Pass Garden Club, Valley Muffler & Hitch, Diggin’ Livin’ Farm Store, Rusk Ranch Nature Center, Shop Smart Food Warehouse, Evergreen Elementary School, Wheels-a-Turnin Garden Supply, Takilma Community Association, Rural Development Initiative, Lorna Byrne 21st Century Art Extra, IV Soil & Water Conservation District and Evergreen 21st Century Creative Crafts.

Another bioswale project is planned in conjunction with the newly constructed skate-

park at Jubilee Park, and several people at the Evergreen dedication voiced how they hope more bioswales will be constructed throughout Cave Junction.

“Bioswales are a low-tech low-energy but highly efficient way to filter and clean water,” said Valley resident Marcus Freeman. “There’s a spot between Chevron and the Visitor’s Center that could really use a bioswale. This is about the stewardship and the merger between human and natural resources. It’s all about water. And our greatest assets are the kids and our water.”

A newly-formed group, the Friends of the Evergreen Bioswale, will meet monthly and plan to add more plants to that bioswale in the fall. The group is open to anyone who wants to get involved.

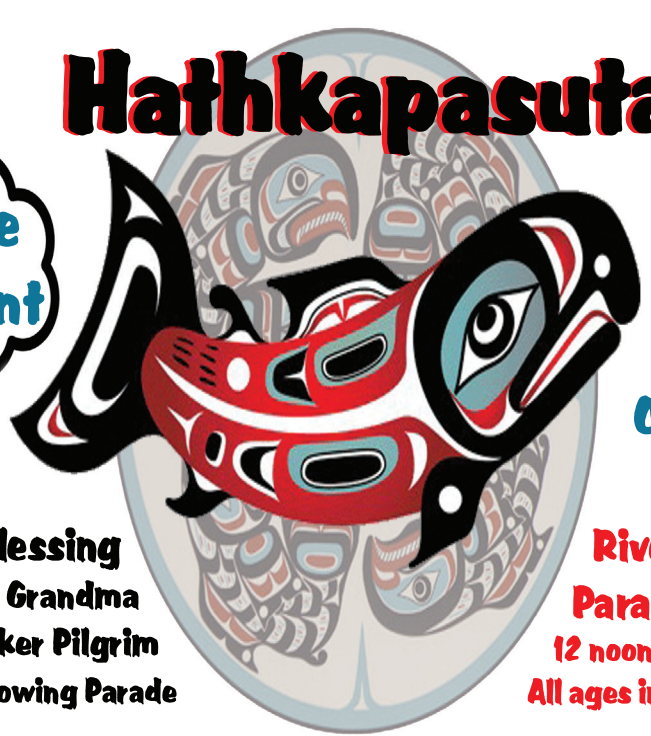
“We really forged a lot of great community partnerships through the entire process,” said Perala-Gardiner. “It’ll be exciting to see where these new connections take us.”



Evergreen Principal David Regal along with students inspect the new Bioswale project June 4.

The Historic Hathkapasuta

Free
Event



1/4 Mile
south of
Cave Junction

River Blessing
by Grandma
Agness Baker Pilgrim
following Parade

River Celebration
Parade
12 noon
All ages invited to join in!!

Illinois River Celebration

Sat June 14th 10am-6pm

Illinois River Forks State Park

Playful arts and nature experiences for the whole family
Join our community celebration with the people, the park, and the river
Ribbon Cutting Dedication Ceremony for the park's new partnership

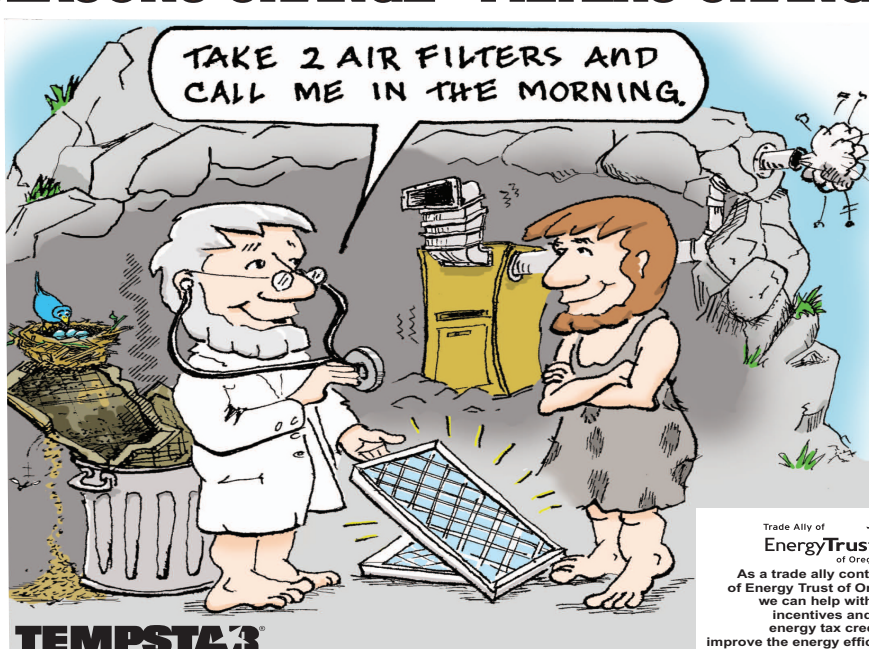
Entertainment Schedule:

- 10:00am **Grant Nelson** (Singer Songwriter)
- 11:00am **Lonesome Road** (Bluegrass-Folk Rock-Americana)
- 12:00noon **River Celebration Parade** All ages invited to join in!
- 12:30pm **River Blessing Ceremony** Grandma Agnes Baker Pilgrim
- 1:00pm **Ribbon Cutting Dedication of Forks State Park**
- 1:30pm **Only Natural** (Conscious-Positive Hip-Hop)
- 2:30pm **Lotus Blossom Tribal Troupe** (Belly Dancing)
- 3:00pm **Daybreak** (Eclectic Rock)
- 4:30pm **Aleyon Massive** "Dream the World Awake" (Hip-Hop meets Reggae)



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