

Johnstone new manager of water resources

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IVN Contributing Writer

Oregon Water Resource Department’s (OWRD) new Southwest Regional Manager Jake Johnstone is no stranger to the Illinois Valley. After graduating from Illinois Valley High School and attending Southern Oregon University, Johnstone has worn the hat of District 14 watermaster covering Josephine County (among other departmental positions) and has also worked in business, bio-tech software, home construction and as a firefighter. “I’m excited

that the Southwest Region Manager position will allow me to bring my expertise that I have developed over the years to continue to contribute to the area where I grew up, recreate in and love,” said Johnstone.

The reach of his new position spans the five counties of Southern Oregon: Douglas, Coos, Curry, Josephine and Jackson, where he will be overseeing the work of watermasters and staff in four districts. The mission of OWRD is to serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management and to fulfill this mission OWRD

manages water rights, responds to landowner disputes over water, addresses unauthorized water diversions, collects data on streams and groundwater and inspects the safety of dams. In addition to overseeing and supporting the work of his staff, Johnstone is also a conduit for working with communities, water users, local government, and the public to address water issues and serve as a liaison for the agency.

And there’s one thing he really wants everyone to know. “It’s been my experience that there is a lot of inaccurate information out

there about Oregon’s water laws and water resources, particularly about what uses are exempt, and what you can legally do with water on your property. I encourage anyone with questions to contact the local watermaster. Our watermasters are very helpful and always happy to help people understand the law and water rights. It’s better to be informed from the start, than to rely on potentially incorrect information that may jeopardize your use of water in the future,” he said.

Illegally using water can result in civil penalties or a class B misdemeanor.

How should a person handle a potential theft or misuse of water? “If someone suspects someone is not using water in compliance with the law, I recommend that they reach out to their local OWRD contact or our regional office in Medford. We would then investigate the complaint, validate any potential illegal use, and address it accordingly. What happens next depends on what the issue is. If the department cannot get the landowner into compliance voluntarily, we would “post” the illegal use, perform compliance checks, and if necessary move to enforcement,”

said Johnstone, adding, “I’m a strong proponent of education to prevent the need for enforcement. If you are interested in meeting with myself or other staff, please don’t hesitate to contact us.”

Currently the District 14 (which oversees the Illinois Valley) watermaster position is vacant and Regional Assistant Watermaster Scott Ceciliani is filling in during the interim to ensure that the department can still provide services. He can be reached at 541-261-2213, and holds office hours Mondays, Wednesdays and until noon Friday.

Porn ...

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Fight The New Drug addresses: 1) What we love (pornography shapes how we believe love should be); 2) How much we love (just like any drug, pornography affects the addictive

behavior, making the person need more and stronger pornography); and 3) how we think about those we love (pornography encourages us to objectify the people we love).

Bottom line, if we can educate young people about the effects of pornography, we can help them deal with decisions in the future. The presentations at I.V. High School and Lorna Byrne

Middle School were well-received. The students were engaged by the facilitator, Hymus, who presented much of the same information that was shared with the adults, but done in a way that children could identify with, in both the upper and lower classes. In both levels, he emphasized the importance of talking to a parent or counselor with questions.

According to Hymus, it is important for parents and educators to be prepared, educated and pay attention (70 percent of exposure to pornography happens in the child’s own home and the majority of children are first exposed to porn between the ages of 8 to 11 years old). Become familiar with technology to be able to restrict access to sites. But

also remember to not spread a message of shame as that makes it more complicated. Take the time to talk about it, find the right place and make it one-on-one. Don’t be judgmental, make it natural and stay calm (how an adult responds is paramount). Further information to help adults get educated can be found at www.fightthenewdrug.org.

VOLUNTEER ...

Continued from A-1

Vautier told how she started the nonprofit CEEN in 2009 which “evolved from the Acorn Festival.” Together they do river surveys searching for noxious weeds such as alyssum and do helicopter surveys each June. Vautier also works with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to look for invasive insects in the Illinois Valley and she hosts hikes for the I.V. High School botany class to show them the native *Darlingtoniacalifornica* (cobra lily) plant.

CEEN also sponsors the annual Acorn Festival where Native American traditions of acorn cracking and making mush are learned. “Less than a hundred years ago, 40 percent of the Native American diet consisted of acorns.” Another program CEEN sponsors is basket weaving classes, and the next classes are scheduled for Dec. 15 and 16

and are already sold out.

And it doesn’t stop there. Leyba and Vautier also volunteer for KXCJ, 105.7 FM by hosting the radio program called Mother Earth Connections from 3 -5 p.m. every Sunday which will now be live streamed all over the world.

Vautier said she spends about 4-6 hours writing material for the show that is “eclectic talk and music connection.”

“The show focuses on Native music, modern and old, geared toward the environment and our relationship with the earth.” Vautier said she reads wild edible recipes and often will talk about what birds and flowers are doing. “We also like to report on Native news, like just recently the first two Native women were elected into Congress.”

Leyba explained how he is the one that runs the sound board and “ad-libs” on the show and that they “like to have fun and banter with each other on the air.”

“My favorite music right now is from ‘Red’ which is techno hip-hop with

traditional Native drums,” said Leyba.

One of Vautier’s favorites right now is music from “Squaw’kin,” a women’s Native drum group that expresses taking care of the earth.

Both Vautier and Leyba agreed that if you want to feel the vibe of their show then you should look up “Mother of the

Round Dance” which talks about the earth.

The call sign of Mother Earth Connections is a wolf howling and they both laughed when they described going places like the grocery store and hearing their radio fans start howling to let them know they listen to their show.



Suzanne Vautier (left) and Tim Leyba in the Doug Hoskins Food Bank Monday, Nov. 12. (Photo by Laura Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*.)

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