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## CREEK: Park was under four feet of water in 1993

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is the home waters of a third of all wild steelhead in the Umatilla Basin.

In 1989, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife put up fencing along the creek at Hemphill's ranch to keep their cows from overgrazing the banks. ODFW also planted new riparian vegetation, including cottonwood trees, to provide more shade for fish while holding the stream in its bank during high flows.

The Umatilla Basin Watershed Council, in collaboration with partners, is now taking stock of past projects, as well as natural and unnatural functions along Birch Creek to come up with an action plan for future restoration.

Protecting federally listed steelhead is the primary ecological driver of the assessment, said watershed council director Jon Staldine, though solutions could benefit all landowners in the area.

Members of ODFW, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, U.S. Forest Service and Umatilla County Soil & Water Conservation District are all taking part in the assessment. The first community input meeting was Jan. 22 at

the White Eagle Grange.

"There's been a history of change along the watershed," Staldine said. "The river's trying to seek equilibrium, and we have to make it work with our current users."

Birch Creek has been referred to as a "sanctuary" for wild steelhead and the watershed council estimates 70 percent of the basin's salmonids use the creek at some point in their life cycle. Past restoration efforts include habitat rehabilitation, as well as removing abandoned or obsolete irrigation dams that block fish passage.

The assessment will identify where problems remain and help the agencies identify priorities. Research is funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Bonneville Power Administration through its 2008 fish accords with the tribes.

Staldine is optimistic the final action plan will take a holistic approach, addressing both the fish and flooding concerns. He hopes to have the assessment finished by summer and plan signed off by early 2016.

One particularly worrisome flood zone is along the creek's east fork near the southern edge of Pilot Rock, a city of about 1,500 people.

Water flows fast out of the canyon moving north, dropping quickly into a flat alluvial plain where the channel slows and deposits river rock and sediment.

The area is known as the "Miracle Mile," because locals say it will take a miracle to solve the issue. There are about 15 landowners in the area, which makes it difficult to coordinate clearing the blockages.

Flooding comes dangerously close to town, creeping along the Pilot Rock community park and grade school. Public Works Director Steve Draper remembers 1993, when the park was under four or five of water.

Yet despite the danger, Draper said they haven't yet found a solution.

The next public meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 28 in Pilot Rock. Hemphill said landowners are eager to see how they can deal with some of the difficulties that have dogged them for years.

"There's people who have been waiting for an answer to their problems, and who are hoping they'll find an answer through this assessment," he said.

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## LIBRARY: Other frequent thefts are test prep books and books on mushroom identification

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anism, including the Satanic Bible at the Milton-Freewater Public Library, the Pendleton library has no books directly about Satanism.

Pendleton interim library director Mary Finney said the dearth of books like these has been part of a concerted strategy by library staff to slow down the financial loss from stolen books.

Finney said books dealing with these dark subject matters have been disappearing from the shelves since the late 1990s. For a while library staff tried to buy less

expensive books to fill the void, but eventually the library stopped stocking titles on those subjects.

According to Finney, other books that see frequent theft are test preparation books and books about mushroom identification.

The Pendleton library's problems are compounded by a lack of an electronic security system, which would alert staff members if a patron was leaving the library without checking out a book.

Library security upgrades could be part of a Pendleton bond issue in November. But even if successful, Finney

said adding electronic identification to the library's entire catalogue would take a considerable amount of time.

Patrons can still seek out information about the occult or tarot cards through the library's electronic database, but Finney is saddened that those patrons will have a difficult time taking that information home with them.

Finney said she thinks some patrons might be embarrassed of checking out a controversial book, but she didn't condone the books' theft.

"I don't understand theft. Period," she said.

## VACCINES: MMR is 97 percent effective at preventing measles

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Some mothers who have been dropped by their doctors feel "betrayed and upset," said Doty Hagmier, founder of the support group Moms in Charge. She said these parents made up their minds about vaccines after "careful research and diligence to understand the risks versus the benefits for their own children's circumstances."

Dropping patients who refuse vaccines has become a hot topic of discussion on SERMO, an online doctor hangout. Some doctors are adamant about not accepting patients who don't believe in vaccinations, with some saying they don't want to be responsible for someone's death from an illness that was preventable.

Others warn that refusing treatment to such people will just send them into the arms of quacks.

The measles-mumps-ru-

bella vaccine, or MMR, is 97 percent effective at preventing measles, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Measles spreads easily through the air and in enclosed spaces. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough and a rash all over the body. In rare cases, particularly among babies, measles can be deadly. Infection can also cause pregnant women to miscarry or give birth prematurely.

All states require children to get certain vaccinations to enroll in school. California is among 20 states that let parents opt out by obtaining personal belief waivers. Some people worry that vaccines cause developmental problems, despite scientific evidence disproving any link. Others object for religious or philosophical reasons.

Nationally, childhood measles vaccination rates have held steady for years at

above 90 percent. But there seem to be growing pockets of unvaccinated people in scattered communities, said Dr. Gregory Wallace of the CDC.

In recent years, nearly all U.S. measles cases have been linked to travelers who caught the virus abroad and spread it in this country among unvaccinated people.

Northern California's Marin County has a high rate of people claiming personal belief exemptions. In 2012, Dr. Nelson Branco and his partners at a Marin practice started turning away toddlers whose parents refused to make sure they received the measles vaccine.

Branco said 10 to 20 of his practice's 8,000 or so patients left after the change.

Vaccines "can be spooky for parents," Branco said. But "in the end, we have the science. We have the experience that it's the right thing to do."

## SCIENCE: Only 37 percent of public say genetically modified foods are safe, 88 percent of scientists say they are fine to eat

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global warming is caused by man, evolution is real, overpopulation is a danger and mandatory vaccination against childhood diseases is needed.

In eight of 13 science-oriented issues, there was a 20 percentage point or higher gap separating the opinions of the public and members of the American Association of Science, according to survey work by the Pew Research Center. The gaps didn't correlate to any liberal-conservative split; the scientists at times take more traditionally conservative views and at times more liberal.

"These are big and notable gaps," said Lee Rainie, director of Pew's internet, science and technology research. He said they are "pretty powerful indicators of the public and the scientific community seeing the

world differently."

In the most dramatic split, 88 percent of the scientists surveyed said it is safe to eat genetically modified foods, while only 37 percent of the public say it is safe and 57 percent say it is unsafe. And 68 percent of scientists said it is safe to eat foods grown with pesticides, compared with only 28 percent of the general public.

Ninety-eight percent of scientists say humans evolved over time, compared with 65 percent of the public. The gap wasn't quite as large for vaccines, with 86 percent of the scientists favoring mandatory childhood shots while 68 percent of the public did.

Eighty-seven percent of scientists said global warming is mostly due to human activity, while only half of the public did. The figures for scientists are slightly different than past academic studies because of wording

of the question and the fact that AAAS members include many specialties, but they tell the same essential story, said Pew associate director Cary Funk.

What to do about climate change is another issue. Nearly two-thirds of scientists favored building more nuclear power plants, but only 45 percent of the public did. But more of the public favored offshore drilling for oil and fracking than scientists did.

More than four out of five scientists thought the growing world population will be a major problem, but just less than three out of five members of the public did.

Pew polled 2,002 adults in August and did an online survey of 3,748 AAAS members in the fall. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points for the public and 1.7 percentage points for the scientists.



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