

ODFW to Host Family Fishing Event at Row River Nature Park in Cottage Grove



COURTESY PHOTO

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Springfield Field Office is hosting a Family Fishing Event Saturday, April 6, in Cottage Grove. Anglers aged 12 and older must have a fishing license but children who are 11 years old and younger can fish for free without a license.

This free event will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Row River Nature Park. ODFW will stock the park pond with 2,000 rainbow trout.

The purpose of these events is to encourage fishing and fun for young people and their families. Anglers of all ages are welcome. ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to provide rods, reels, bait and advice on casting; as well as fish identification and assistance cleaning fish. Those who have fishing gear are more than welcome to bring their own if they prefer it.

Registration is not required. For anglers 12-17 years of age, a \$10 juvenile combination

fishing and hunting license is required. Licenses are not available at the event but can be purchased online or at one of ODFW's license outlets. All fishing regulations continue to apply for this event.

Row River Nature Park is located off Row River Road east of Cottage Grove. From I-5, take the Cottage Grove exit (Exit 174). Head east on Row River Road about 1.5 miles. Turn north into the Row River Nature Park parking area near the weigh sta-

tion.

To purchase a license online, visit ODFW's website at www.myodfw.com/articles/ways-buy-license

For a list of other family fishing events, visit ODFW's Outdoor Skills page at www.myodfw.com/fishing/workshops-events

For more information, contact the Springfield Field Office at 541-726-3515.

-Submitted Report

Visitors to coast reminded to give springtime seal pups their space

It's that time of year again: Seal pups are appearing on beaches along the Oregon coast. Beachgoers are asked to stifle their desire to assist these animals in some way,

and instead give them space. Every spring, harbor seals give birth on secluded beaches or reefs along the Pacific coast. The pups are born ready to swim but cannot tread wa-

ter for long; they need ample time on shore to rest and stay warm. They can remain there for days while their mothers forage at sea.

Concerned observers often report "abandoned" seal pups on the beach, not realizing that the mother might be foraging nearby, or swimming just offshore to maintain distance from curious humans and their dogs.

Humans approaching or otherwise trying to "help" these unattended pups may inadvertently cause them harm, as the presence of people may deter mother seals from coming ashore to nurse.

Harbor seals are wild animals that face many challenges to reaching maturity, and pup mortality is a natural check on robust seal populations in our region. In general, the Oregon Coast Aquarium is committed to the rescue and rehabilitation of indigenous wildlife when

they are deemed injured by human interference. But in the case of harbor seal pups, humans should not be approaching these animals in the first place, and the aquarium advises the public to obey marine mammal protection laws and let nature take its course.

"Concerned observers can call the Oregon Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 541-270-6830 if a pup is spotted," said Jim Burke, Director of Animal Husbandry at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. "Their staff can post signs near the seal to inform other beachgoers of the situation."

Stern warnings aside, finding a harbor seal pup on the beach can be an enchanting and poignant experience. To keep these creatures safe, watch with binoculars or take pictures from afar — let the seals take care of themselves.

-Submitted Report



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

By Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Cozy Cat Companions



MARY ELLEN "ANGEL SCRIBE"

Volunteer cat companion, Nicki, comforts a nervous shelter cat while it awaits a new family.

I am jealous of my friend Nicki's purr-fect hobby! "A family member is allergic to cats, so I solved the dilemma of not being able to have one by volunteering at the animal shelter as a cat companion," said Nicki.

Every Sunday, she leaves her busy work week behind and heads to the shelter to pet and cat-chat with kitties looking for homes. Many shelter cats arrive with no purr-evious history. Are the felines: Loving? Cuddly? Shy? Bold? Do they like being held, petted, played with or have a hidden injury? Nicki helps the cats settle and, often, teaches them how to trust again. Learning what the kitties like when and how to pet and play, who wants to be brushed and for how long, helps paw-tential pet parents meet calmer cats and speeds up placing the homeless animals in their paw-fect homes.

If we love cats and dogs as children, we will at any age. The following is one of Nicki's observations:

"Last week, an eight-year-old child arrived at the shelter carrying a \$10 bill and a bunch of change. She had saved the money to donate to the animals' care," said Nicki. "She had also learned how to make a cat toy out of a roll of toilet paper on the internet. She cut and curled the ends of the roll, added a piece of yarn that extended two feet out and tied this to a wooden skewer — all for the cats' entertainment. Her wish to make a difference in the lives of others and volunteering shows that one is never too young to start. The shelter staff gave her a pair of wire cat ears, and then I introduced her to some cats wanting to play. This wasn't her first donation, and I'm sure it won't be her last. I bet she won't forget her trip to cheer up the kittens for a long time. Neither will I."

Shelters are always in need of volunteers' time, help and compassion. Some of their needs: dog walking, fund raising, organizing events, feeding, animal socialization, cleaning, laundry, children to read to dogs, office help/answering phones, the pet food bank, writers and photographers to post incoming pet bios on the website, adoption counseling, making cat posts/animal beds. Whatever your skills, they will find a "job" for you. Check out a shelter's volunteer website page and see if you or your family can help in the bunny/hamster room, cat cattery or dog kennels.

"A few loyal volunteers wake up early to drive our dogs to radio and TV stations for the 'Pet of the Week' segment," said Megan Brezovar at Greenhill Shelter.

"Sixteen years ago, I began volunteering in the shelter's cat quarters," said Nan. "The day I arrived, they had 25 cats and loads of kittens. I cleaned, washed and refilled litter trays. It was not a glamorous job, but a much needed one. I also washed and dried cat towels for their kennels and lookout posts. The jobs were more fun than they sound like. The entire time I had a room full of cats to talk to and pet. It was lovely meeting and chatting with the public searching for a new furry family member. One thing we volunteers always needed were donations of good mops, brooms, etc. to clean the place. It was a lot of work keeping the cats' rooms and cages clean, but the cats were wonderful and I loved every minute."

TIPS:

"I loved the 'Saving Jimmy' article on the senior dog," said Dick. "Years ago, I rescued an elderly Airedale. He was one of the most devoted and loyal pets I ever had. I am currently looking to rescue another dog. The time and love that we devote to our furry friends comes back many times over and we are richer for it."

"The best way people can help with animals is to neuter and spay their own pets or the strays in their area. If this was done, then we'd be gratefully out of a job!" said Janetta Overholser, president of the Humane Society of Cottage Grove.

Share your fur-avorite pet memory or adventure at angelscribe@msn.com. Visit Pet Tips 'n' Tales on Facebook at/ www.facebook.com/PetTipsandTales Humane Society for Neuter/Spay Assistance Program. 541-942-2789

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