

# The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen. Phone/Fax: (503) 429-9410.

## Opinion

### Trees are renewable but not very quickly

It appears that trees are being cut down within the City of Vernonia at a much faster rate than they are being planted. Part of that perception may be because of the size of the trees being removed. Generally, they are older, big trees, so their absence is all too noticeable.

Fortunately, the city has planted a fairly large number of trees on Bridge Street, as part of the streetscape program, and around the new municipal buildings. Some of the trees planted are replacements for trees that had to be removed when the water distribution system was rehabbed.

Unfortunately, the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District has no plans, at least at this time, to replace the trees they have removed for a parking lot. The district needs more parking space, that isn't arguable, but large trees absorb more water and pollutants than little trees. They also give off more oxygen than small trees, the same element that is regularly polluted by emissions from the vehicles that will use the parking lot. A plan for planting replacement trees in a location that wouldn't impair parking would be greatly appreciated.

In the overall scheme, however, the city must take the lead, not just for municipal property, but for private property, as well. Other cities have managed to develop workable programs that allow nuisance trees to be removed without doing damage to either the appearance or the health of the community. True, it is still a strange concept to many, but there is value in the natural beauty of trees.

### Vandalism is a cowardly offense needing darkness

Vandalism is an offense committed against an entire community. Destroying, defacing or stealing public property harms everyone in the community by wasting the taxpayers' investment of money and time. When public employees must use their time cleaning up after vandalism, it hurts the people who are paying them to do a different job - the taxpayers.

There is a standing reward offered by the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce and Vernonia Pride for information leading to the conviction of vandals. This reward has worked more than once and every time the money has been spent, the two organizations replace it. That will continue, because vandalism will not be accepted here as harmless mischief.

#### — NOTICE —

The INDEPENDENT is published on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. There are five Wednesdays in May, so there will be three weeks between this issue and the first issue in June.

Deadlines for the June 7 issue will be June 2, for both news items and display advertising, and June 5 for classified ads.



### Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

The morning dawned with the clouds pouring their contents to earth. "Looks kind of wet," I muttered to myself as I picked up the phone to call Troy Horton, my kayaking partner. We soon decided that wet is a relative term when you're talking about the sport of kayaking, and we would go regardless of the weather.

Meeting at 1:30 in the afternoon, we were surprised by bright sunlight that greeted us at our put-in location. Troy said he had found a better place to put-in than at the bridge that crosses the Nehalem River just before the Jewell junction with highway 202. Soon we were sliding our kayaks into Fishhawk Creek just above its junction with Beneke Creek. These are both small creeks at this time of year, but joined together they had enough water to propel us swiftly along. We thoroughly enjoyed the small rapids and wood obstacles as we traveled towards the mouth of the river. I did have one moment while maneuvering my 14+ foot sea kayak around an upturned root wad. Having a longer boat in such a creek can limit your ability to turn, and I thought I was going to plow into the root wad until the boat finally swung its bow around just enough to avoid a head-on collision, though I had to grab the root wad to prevent a hit to my ribs. I easily shoved my boat around the obstacle and was again on my way. A kayaker can get seriously hurt in situations like this and they should be avoided in higher flow situations.

Soon, we burst into the Nehalem river and settled into our paced paddling strokes for long

flat water. Troy and I both savored the excitement of the small creek environment as we felt the more powerful Nehalem under our boats. Having looked at my river map before this trip, I had noted a named rapids, Grand Rapids, and I felt a little concern as to what this unknown rapids had in store for us. On our last trip in the river section above this one, we experienced the power of the river when we both took dunkings while playing on the only good rapids of the trip. We both lost our kayaks into a strainer (low tree hanging over the river that grabs boats or kayakers) which took us considerable time and effort to free them. We remembered the experience and knew this seemingly tame river had a few tricks up its sleeve. The dunking experience was Troy's first and I could see that he was relieved that the experience was in some small ways, almost fun.

The sound of rushing water was soon heard from down river and I thought we had found Grand Rapids. We flew down into the wide rapids and over a small diagonal drop, then swung into a side eddy and beached our kayaks. The sun was shining so warmly that we had to shed some thermal tops. Gliding back into the river, we paddled back up under the diagonal drop and played. Troy decided to see what happened when he got parallel to the falling water: I could see what was coming, but was amazed when he saved his kayak from flipping over when he put his hand down into the water and pushed back upright off the ledge. Troy's eyes were a bit wider when I looked at him! We turned downstream and silently glided over the water as ducks flushed out in front of us from the sides of the river. Salmon

smolts dotted the water's surface like a light shower of rain as we continued through the slack water.

Suddenly the deep water was replaced by an object flying up at us from the depths. It was the river bottom, and it was almost spooky to see the rock formations shoot up at the surface as we descended the river. Once again, as we approached a curve in the river, we could hear rushing water. Troy and I both had started to recognize that most good rapids seem to start at a curve. As we rounded the corner, we realized we had found the Grand Rapids. The river channel was braided with many different routes and we tried to pick the most challenging one. The water was shallow and we bumped off rocks as we ran the rapids, then tucked into eddies behind rocks to scout the next rapids below us. The last descent was all white water, with a boulder in the middle, yet our kayaks easily handled the water as it crashed over our bows and onto our paddle jackets. We spent some moments playing in the tricky currents behind the boulder, then continued down the now faster flowing river. Small riffles and rapids became more constant and we played on a few standing waves as we continued to learn what we could do in these plastic boats.

Eventually we spotted a section in the river that we had scouted from the road when shuttling our pickup rig downstream. The river was divided into three channels by an old lava formation that had formed two islands. We beached our kayaks and stretched our legs while scouting the small rapids next to the highway. When we turned, I noticed Troy's kayak

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