



St. Patrick's Day parade March 17th

St. Patrick's Day will be soon be here and, in Vernonia, that means Parade Time.

Because St. Patrick's Day, March 17, is on a Saturday this year, parade sponsor Pat Knight has set a 2:00 p.m. starting time.

There are no entry fees and no written regulations. The parade route is short and straight

and the parade rarely takes more than 30 minutes from beginning to end. You don't need an invitation and you don't need to register.

Vernonia's St. Patrick's Day Parade is for fun. Just bring your entry and be ready at the corner of State Avenue and Bridge Street by 2:00 p.m. on March 17.



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Growing up...



Bynum Way, Project Planner for the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, with a Douglas fir tree, one of many planted in January by the Vernonia Youth Corps along the Nehalem River adjacent to Vernonia Lake.

Tree planting helps restore river health

"Think Globally and Act Locally" is a phrase that often raises the question, "What can we do to make a difference?"

The Upper Nehalem River Watershed Council has an answer: We can plant trees along streams!

For the past nine years, volunteers have been working in cooperation with private landowners planting trees on the banks of the Nehalem River. The purpose is to restore conifers and other native species to the riparian areas. Historically, large evergreen trees existed along a majority of our stream reaches. They provided shade to the river system and habitat for both terrestrial and aquatic life.

This is no longer the case. These trees have been removed over time for various reasons, by humans and by other natural processes. Past and present land use practices and policies and the encroachment of noxious weeds has suppressed the regrowth of our riparian forests. Human power is required to reforest these areas. By reestablishing healthy riparian areas, streamside and aquatic conditions will be improved, both in the short and long term. Once these trees mature, they will provide thermal cover to the river system, modify stream temperatures year around, filter upland runoff, reduce mass erosion and provide large woody debris to the stream system which, in turn, will increase salmon habitat opportunities and production.

The Nehalem River, as beautiful as it is, has stream temperature readings in the summer months that exceed, for extended periods of time, lethal limits for the juvenile salmon present in the system.

It has also been documented that sediment loading during the rainy season exceeds lethal limits for migrating salmon and settles into spawning beds, smothering salmon eggs. Dissolved oxygen levels are also dangerously low in the late summer and fall months, to the detriment of aquatic life.

Many reaches of the Nehalem system also are classified as deficient in the habitat complexity that is created by large trees laying within the stream channel. Short term efforts are being made by local timber companies, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Forestry to place large trees back in the system to supplement habitat building processes until young trees mature and fall into the stream naturally.

The volunteer tree planting project was initiated by the Nehalem Valley Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, in an effort to keep the river healthy and viable. Continuing efforts have been under the direction of Maggie Peyton, coordinator of the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, who developed a riparian restoration program funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the DEQ 319 program. This program builds cooperative partnerships with landowners and supplies planting/fencing crews and materials needed to implement large scale projects.

The annual volunteer tree planting activity starts in February and ends in April, weather permitting. These efforts are making a difference. A look along the banks of the Nehalem River shows young fir trees growing.

In the past, volunteers from
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Council accepts bid for Anderson Park

The Vernonia City Council awarded the contract for new restrooms and a picnic shelter at Anderson Park to MJD Development.

At \$221,075, MJD's bid was the lowest of five received. The highest bid was \$338,255. The city is paying for the work with a grant of nearly \$250,000 from the state Department of Parks and Recreation.

Kevin France, consulting engineer for Vernonia, recommended MJD after thoroughly checking the company's references because the bid was so much lower than others.

Transportation meeting in Seaside

The Northwest Area Commission on Transportation and the Oregon Department of Transportation will hold an open house March 14, 3-6:00 p.m., at the Seaside Convention Center.

Topics will include a public review of the draft Statewide

Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2002-2005, plus information about many transportation projects.

For directions to the meeting site or for more information, call 503-986-2651, or check the ODOT website <www.odot.state.or.us/stip>

Vernonia clean-up day is April 21

Mark your calendar and start making plans to participate in this year's Vernonia clean up day on Saturday, April 21. Planning is already underway under the direction of Vernonia Pride and SOLV.

To be a part of this community-wide activity, contact Ver-

nonia Pride at 503-429-5201. If you would like to suggest sites that need special attention or that just need cleaning up, please let Vernonia Pride know.

More information will be forthcoming, so continue to watch *The INDEPENDENT*.