

Volunteers working toward Nehalem River watershed recovery

A group has formed to help protect and improve the Nehalem River watershed and the survival of our native Coho, Chinook and Steelhead. Members of the Nehalem Watershed Recovery Team are citizens of Clatsop and Columbia Counties who believe that the quality of our watershed is critical to the health of our communities and environment. They are a diverse mix of landowners, former loggers and foresters, environmentalists, teachers and business owners.

Most members have been involved with local watershed groups and are aware of current practices that degrade the watershed as well as new ways of doing things that can help the watershed recover. They are also aware that a healthy watershed will lead to improved and sustainable water supplies, improved habitats for wildlife, healthier fishing and timber industries, increased recreational opportunities and a better quality of life.

According to team member Troy Horton, of Fishhawk Lake, the goal of the group is to provide information about proactive ways that communities and businesses can efficiently improve the watershed. Also highlighted will be current is-

sues and practices that are degrading and harmful to the watershed and efforts to eliminate or change those practices.

One example the watershed recovery team cites of a current activity that they feel needs major revision, is the practice of Hardwood Conversions. The Forest Practices Act allows riparian area buffers which are currently dominated by hardwoods, to be cut to within ten feet (and sometimes closer) of native salmon-bearing streams. The theory that converting hardwoods to conifers will improve the health of the stream in the long run may or may not prove to be valid, Horton pointed out, but it clearly causes other problems that are harmful to the survival of native Salmon and Steelhead..

The Oregon Department of Forestry's own study on the Effectiveness of Hardwood Conversions by Liz Dent, March, 1997, shows that minimum and average water temperatures increase throughout the harvest units. The watershed team says the Oregon Department of Forestry needs to either stop the hardwood conversion experiment or make changes to the implementation of the practice.

One local example of Hard-



Oregon Forest Practices Act allows conifers to be removed sometimes within ten feet of salmon-bearing streams.

wood Conversion was done on McCoon Creek, a tributary of Fishhawk Creek. It demonstrates:

1. How imprecise definition of high water leads to cutting of trees, even with the ten foot buffer areas.
2. How letting the operator determine "danger" trees can lead to cutting conifers that should have been left.
3. How improved replanting practices are needed to reduce the harm done.

The Nehalem Watershed Recovery Team welcomes people who are interested in finding ways to work together to improve our lives and the lives of our children. Different perspectives are valued.

"Our intent is to bring light to poorly designed and executed practices," Horton said, "and



Close-up of Coon Creek shows sparse hardwood growth left after allowed cut, which will cause water temperature to rise with potential harm to native salmon and steelhead.

provide effective ways to help Horton at 503-755-0213, or create a healthy watershed." Dale Webb of Vernonia, 503-429-4062.

Leonetti's

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Community Calendar

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Mondays	6:30 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
Alcoholics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	627 Adams Ave./ 503-429-4000
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library
Boosters	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., Leonetti's Grill
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	Noon, Lew's Place
Doll Club	4th Tuesday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center
Girl Scouts	Thursdays	6:30-8 p.m., Christian Church
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Lew's Place
Narcotics Anonymous	Fridays	6:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
Nehalem Valley Car Club		For Info Call 503-429-4074
Preschool Story Hour	Mondays	10:30 a.m., City Library
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	4th Thursday	For location call 429-2401
Vernonia Airport Committee	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Cares Directors		For location call 503-429-1414
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Comm. Dev. Corp.	2nd Tuesday	Noon, City Hall
Vernonia Grange	2nd Friday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Pride		For Info Call, 503-429-5201
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	8:00 p.m., District Office
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	1st Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board	2nd & 4th Tuesday	7:30 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Assoc.	1st & 2nd Thurs.	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Firefighters Assoc.	1st & 2nd Wed.	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Rescue	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Wednesday	10:00 am, 755-2346 for info.
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Sundays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	8:00 p.m., Methodist Church
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Brown Derby
Citizen Participation Org.	3rd Monday, odd months	7:15 p.m., City Hall
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Methodist Church
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.
Tri-City RFPD Board	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13

COLUMBIA COUNTY

(All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
COLCO Transportation	2nd Friday	10:30 a.m., Courthouse
County Council of Seniors	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Courthouse
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Monday	6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St.
Emergency Comm. Dist. (9-1-1)	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Courthouse
Historical Society	4th Wednesday	Noon, location call 429-3713

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.