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THE INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

January 16, 2003

Nature's frosting...



January temperatures in the low 20s invited Jack Frost to wield his paint brush in the creation of some delicately frosted leaves and grasses.

Surprise! State will cut in city watershed

Vernonia officials were dismayed to find out that the Oregon Department of Forestry has approved a logging plan that includes clear cutting at the headwaters of Selders Creek, a tributary of Rock Creek, which supplies water for the city, and that a "proposed" property swap with Longview Fibre Co., which includes the 301.5 acre parcel is, for all practical purposes, approved.

The major reason for the dismay is the absence of notification. According to District Forester Tom Savage, from the ODF Astoria office, the timber on the Selders Creek parcel was sold at auction in August, 2002. Additionally, ODF has been working with Longview Fibre on the 40,000 acre land trade for three years. A public hearing on the exchange was

held December 16 in Astoria, but the City of Vernonia was not contacted until January, 2003.

Savage met with local officials at Vernonia City Hall last Monday, January 13, when there were just three days left in the public comment period. Concerns expressed by Director of Public Works Robyn Bassett, City Administrator Mike Sykes and Councilor Glen Purvee dealt primarily with how logging, especially clear cutting, affects water quality for both human consumption and fish habitat, how flood and drought are both affected by the presence and/or absence of older trees, and why ODF didn't inform the city earlier in the process. Maggie Peyton, director of the Upper and Lower Nehalem Watershed Coun-

cils, also attended the meeting.

Savage couldn't say what impact the operation may have on the quality or quantity of water in Rock Creek, except to say the job will be done in compliance with the state Forest Practices Act (FPA), and that the city should form a Watershed Protection District for Rock Creek. He didn't know whether the state or Longview Fibre would be in charge of the harvest.

The "Written Plan" (ODF uses quotation marks around Written Plan) for Harvest of Selders Creek describes the creek as a medium Type F (fish bearing) stream with a small Type F tributary. The plan says that approximately 1,200 feet of the stream requires protection. The FPA describes the width of

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Park utility fee will be on city water bill

An ordinance approving a \$1.00 per month utility fee for park use and maintenance was adopted by the Vernonia City Council at their January 6 meeting. The fee will be included as a separate item on the monthly water and sewer bill and will go to all residential units and businesses in Vernonia. In situations where a single address is used to bill utilities to multiple residential units, such as a mobile home park or an apartment house, the fee will still be \$1.00 per month per residential unit.

Because many local businesses are owned by local residents, the draft ordinance proposed waiving the monthly fee on one of the bills, but three people who would have qualified for that waiver, testified during a public hearing prior to the council meeting that such a waiver did not seem right, es-

pecially since well-maintained parks were good for business.

The ordinance takes effect immediately and will show on the utility bill for January. The first bill will be accompanied by a letter explaining the change, a sticker for a resident vehicle and two cards that can be used by residents when they go to the parks without a vehicle.

Nonresidents will be charged varying fees for park use, ranging from \$16 per night for full RV hookups to \$2.00 for day use. An annual family pass for nonresidents will be \$20 and seniors may get a \$12 annual pass. Children under age 18 are exempt.

Varying fees have also been established for group reservations and uses such as picnic areas, group camping and athletic fields. A complete fee schedule may be obtained from City Hall.

O-A Lumber Company office on national list of Historic buildings

The former office of the Oregon-American Lumber Company in Vernonia, long used as a museum, is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The listing was an exciting event for the group of volunteers who have been working to make improvements at the museum, at 511 East Bridge Street.

"There were many matters to consider to get us on a firm and true footing to make us worthy of having the Oregon-American Lumber Company Mill Office placed on the National Register of Historic places," said Enid Parrow. "It's been long in coming and many thanks go out to Ann Fulton for her untiring work in making it happen."

Fulton, author of *Vernonia: A*

Pocket in the Woods, is Adjunct Professor of History at Portland State University.

All costs associated with the listing procedure were donated by Art and Enid Parrow.

Nominated at the recommendation of the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, the building was listed by the National Park Service on December 5, 2002. The National Park Service maintains the National Register under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Register is the official list of the nation's cultural resources and includes districts, sites, archaeological sites, buildings, structures and objects of national, state and local significance.