

# What is CERT and why is it needed here?

Each year, some communities are rocked by severe weather, such as floods, winter storms, or by "man made" disasters.

The damage caused by such disasters affect everyone, severely restrict and overwhelm emergency response resources, communications, transportation and utilities, leaving individuals and neighborhoods cut off from outside emergency support.

Because of Vernonia's experience during the devastating flood of 1996, emergency response has continued to be a local consideration. To develop a more comprehensive approach to such a situation the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program was implemented.

So what does CERT do?

The program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area, and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

When emergencies happen, CERT members can give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site. CERT members can also help with non-emergency projects that help improve the safety of the community.

CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

CERT are trained to take care of themselves, then help others in their communities for the first three days following a disaster. This time period is when debris-clogged or damaged roads, disrupted communications, or high volume of

calls may prevent access by emergency response personnel. The purpose of CERT training is to provide citizens with the basic skills required to handle virtually all their own needs, then to be able to respond to their communities' needs in the aftermath of a disaster

Initially, CERT programs were developed to assist communities in taking care of themselves in the aftermath of a major disaster when first responders are overwhelmed or unable to respond because of communication or transportation difficulties. As the CERT concept has taken hold across the country, however, CERTs have become much more than originally envisioned. CERTs have proven themselves to be an active and vital part of their communities' preparedness and response capability. For example, CERTs have been used to:

- Distribute and/or install smoke alarms and batteries to the elderly and disabled.
- Assist with evacuations and traffic control.
- Promote community awareness of potential hazards and preparedness measures.
- Supplement staffing at special events.
- Act as victims in training exercises.

CERTs are an investment of local government's time and resources. To capitalize on this investment, program sponsors can view CERT members as a volunteer resource that can assist with public safety activities. Such an approach will actively involve members in serving their communities beyond disaster response and add value to the CERT program.

Vernonia CERT was created to supplement the assistance given by local emergency response agencies. Vernonia CERT is not a competing

agency, but a support organization with its own identity and independence.

Vernonia CERT is the local chapter of the Citizen Corp's CERT program. For more detail about the organization, see the Emergency Management Institute's website <<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CERT/>>.

Vernonia CERT is seeking people who wish to take CERT training. For more information about CERT training, contact any of the following:

Chief Matt Workman, Vernonia Police Dept., 503-429-7335, <[chief@vernonia-or.gov](mailto:chief@vernonia-or.gov)>; Chief Paul Epler, Vernonia Rural Fire District, 503-429-8252, <[paul\\_epler@hotmail.com](mailto:paul_epler@hotmail.com)>; Mike Orth, Training Coordinator, Vernonia CERT, 503-429-3018, <[VernoniaCert@gmail.com](mailto:VernoniaCert@gmail.com)>.

## Public comment on fish status invited

The results of the first statewide assessment of native fish populations in 10 years are now available for public comment, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced today. The Oregon Native Fish Status Report will be used to help fish and wildlife managers identify priorities for developing conservation plans for at-risk native fish populations throughout the state.

The draft report, which is available for a 60-day public review on ODFW's Web site, identifies and prioritizes areas where added protections may be necessary to conserve fish populations, noted Kevin Goodson, ODFW conservation planning coordinator.

"ODFW staff and other researchers began conducting the assessments in January 2004," said Goodson. "Biologists surveyed 69 different species management units, using the new Native Fish Conservation Policy criteria. This is the first time the new criteria have been used, and this provides an important consistent, science-based approach for evaluating where and how to prioritize resources to help restore and maintain healthy native fish populations throughout Oregon."

The assessment provides a general overview of the recent health of the fish populations studied, noted Goodson, and is not intended to provide detailed



Vernonia Society and "Old Grads" enjoy the annual picnic held each year in August. See page 7 for more information.

information.

"This review is similar to a 50,000-foot fly-over that is intended to catch the urgent problems and provide a snapshot of how the fish are doing," said Goodson. "It sets the stage for the detailed work that will need to follow."

Biologists assessed the status of all of the salmon and steelhead and most of the trout populations in the state, as well as sturgeon, some lamprey, and a few dace and chub species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The assessment methods used in the report will be reviewed by the Independent Multi-disciplinary Science Team, the science advisory committee for the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

Of the 69 groups of fish populations assessed, called Species Management Units (SMUs), nine SMUs were determined to be extinct, 34 were assessed as "at risk," 14 were classified as "potentially at risk," and 12 were assessed as "not at risk." The term "risk" refers to whether the SMU can be sustained until a conservation plan is developed and implemented. The level of risk will determine the priority in which monitoring strategies and conservation plans are developed.

The study was funded through a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). ODFW staff

were assisted in the assessments by S.P. Cramer and Associates, a fisheries consulting firm. The last such assessment was conducted in 1995. The 2005 report can be found online at <<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/ONFSR/index.asp>>.

Public comments on the draft report will be accepted through Oct. 24. Comments should be sent to <[kevin.w.goodson@state.or.us](mailto:kevin.w.goodson@state.or.us)> or mailed to him at 3406 Cherry Avenue NE, Salem, OR 97303-4924. A CD of the report can be requested from Casaria Tuttle at <[casaria.r.tuttle@state.or.us](mailto:casaria.r.tuttle@state.or.us)> or 503-947-6230.

## Air Show will honor all those who serve

The Air Show at Hillsboro Airport will be September 9 -11 this year. The Sunday Airshow will honor heroes; all Military, Police, Fire and EMS active personnel and veterans will only need proper I.D. for their area of service to get free admission into the General Admission area. Sunday will feature a special parade honoring our country's heroes, recognizing our veterans or war and remembering our fallen soldiers and their families.

For complete information, go to <[www.oregonairshow.com](http://www.oregonairshow.com)>.

**Leonetti's**  
Pizza & Grill



**Back to School Special for Parents**  
**Buy 1 Breakfast get 2nd\* 1/2 price**  
\* Equal or lesser value

721 Madison Ave., Vernonia • 503-429-5018