

Zoo has volunteer opportunities

Do you enjoy interacting with people and animals? The Oregon Zoo has opportunities for youth and adult volunteers to work at least one 3-hour shift per week from mid-May to Labor Day in the Winged Wonders butterfly exhibit as ZooAmbassadors.

ZooAmbassadors provide general animal and exhibit information to visitors, while spending time with colorful butterflies in the butterfly garden. Ambassadors 15 and older can volunteer on their own, while people between the ages of 10 and 14 can volunteer with a parent.

The zoo is encouraging entire families to volunteer. "Last year several family members volunteered together," commented Tony Vecchio, Oregon Zoo director. "It's rare for children to be included in these opportunities. It's a unique way to create lasting family memories."

The program is designed to extend knowledge about the importance of wildlife conservation, while simultaneously bringing families together. Duties include talking to zoo visitors, insuring the safety of the butterflies, and monitoring the exhibit doors to prevent butterflies from flying away.

"I have seen huge changes in the demeanor and communication skills of kids who volunteer," commented Paula McCall, volunteer coordinator. "It's a fun learning experience for everyone involved."

There are many benefits to volunteering. ZooAmbassadors meet people who share similar interests and values; receive free zoo admission and a com-

plimentary train ride; have the opportunity to volunteer at zoo concerts; learn about how to attract local wildlife; and participate in training opportunities only available at the zoo.

Potential ZooAmbassadors are required to attend one orientation session. After attending the orientation overview, those choosing to continue will receive 10 hours of training. The orientation will be offered on the following days:

- Saturday, March 31, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 3, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, April 13, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Saturday, May 5, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

To R.S.V.P. for the session of your choice, please call 503-226-1561, ext. 5397, or e-mail zooambassadors@metro.dst.or.us. The deadline to sign up for the first orientation session is March 20.

The Oregon Zoo has one of the largest zoo volunteer programs in the country. More than 2,000 individuals volunteer more than 156,000 hours per year.

The zoo opens at 9 a.m. daily and is located just off Highway 26. General admission is \$9.75 (12-64), seniors \$8.25 (65+), children \$6.75 (3-11), and infants 2 and under are free; 25 cents of the admission price helps fund regional conservation projects through the zoo's Future for Wildlife program. A parking fee of \$1 per car is also required. Additional information is available at www.oregonzoo.org or by calling 503-226-1561.

Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer,
General Manager,
West Oregon Electric Cooperative



A Moment of Clarification

I was approached by a couple of members who wanted to know if two of my articles about renewables were in conflict with each other. I would like to

take this opportunity to clarify my position. When it comes to renewable energy, there are very clear and distinct points to be made as they relate to West Oregon Electric Cooperative. I will try to make them easier to understand.

- Renewable energy is good, clean, and environmentally safe.

- Renewable energy, other than hydro, is also more expensive.

- Hydro power from existing dams is renewable energy, despite the Governor trying to exclude it in his Renewable Portfolio Standard.

- Developing additional renewable sources of energy is a good thing and should be pursued by utilities to augment our current power supply, not to replace it.

- Wind, solar, and wave energy, while certainly clean renewable sources of energy, do not produce firm (continuous) power and therefore must be combined with another constant source to provide sustainable and reliable power.

- Wind, solar, wave, methane gas, and geothermal are from 25 percent to 100 percent higher in cost than our current hydro power and, therefore, would have a significant impact on our power costs if we are forced to replace our current hydro with them.

- We are adamantly opposed to the Governor imposing mandates on our member owned electric cooperative. We are owned, operated, and governed by our member owners and they alone should decide what is best for their utility, not losing local control to state or federal government standards.

- As responsible citizens we should always

look for and develop alternative sources of energy that make economic and reasonable sense.

While West Oregon fully supports the development of renewable energy sources, and has been and continues to be involved in projects, we do so only if and when it makes reasonable and economical sense to our members. We are well aware that the amount of energy produced by BPA from Bonneville Dam is nearing capacity.

Future load growth may require us to turn to alternate sources to obtain our power supply, so we are proceeding cautiously and with due diligence to identify the sources that are best for our members. We are looking at all possible sources, which includes renewable energy. As I pointed out above, while wind, solar, and wave are very clean and environmentally friendly, they do not provide a reliable, firm source of power and therefore must be combined with another constant source. The only currently available alternatives that produce constant sources of power other than hydro, are fossil fuel based, such as coal and gas. Nuclear power is making a return, but is far on the horizon.

Coffin Butte, the methane gas project we are part owners of, comes the closest in cost to our current hydro power. In our Green Power program, we pass along the additional cost to only those members who want to participate in this program, not the entire membership. It is a way for us to participate in a supportive way of developing and offering an alternative renewable source of power at a reasonable cost.

We are opposed to the Governor's Renewable Portfolio Standards not because we oppose renewable energy, but due to the following reasons: The fact that it refuses to acknowledge our current hydro as renewable, wants to take away local control (one of the reasons cooperatives were created in the first place), and mandates standards that would demand we replace existing low cost, clean, renewable energy with inconsistent, higher cost energy.

I hope this sufficiently clarifies the issue for everyone. I am always available to discuss it further with any of our members. I appreciate hearing from you.

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