

# Come out and enjoy the activities at this year's Salmon Festival



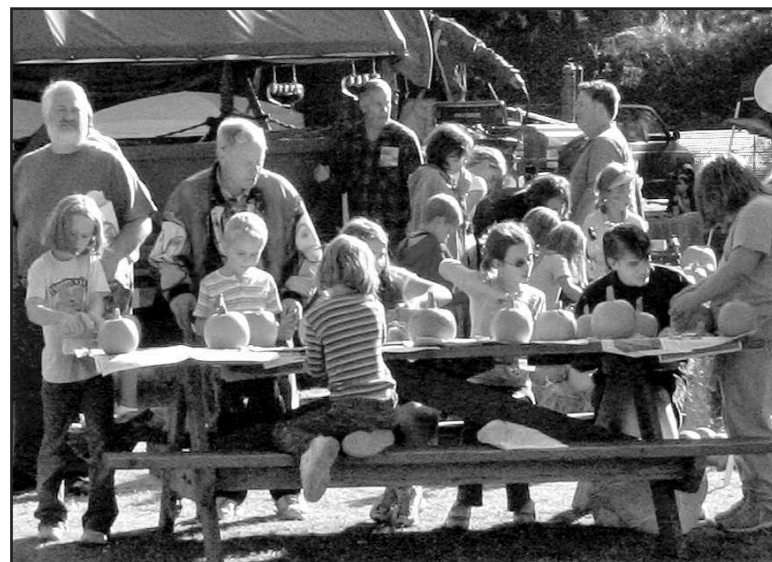
Plan now to enjoy the fifth annual Vernonia Salmon Festival on Saturday, October 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Hawkins Park, Vernonia.

Salmon Festival celebrates the salmon returning from the ocean to spawn. Fantastic viewing sites of the salmon fighting their way upstream are just part of this creative, family event. Please remember it is a crime to bother the salmon during the time they are spawning, so look, but don't touch.

Other activities include Arts & Crafts, Hay Rides, Kids' trout Pond, Knee Deep in Salmon Auction, Live Music in the Park, Native American Dancing, Pumpkin Carving, Salmon Cook Off, Salmon Educational Activities, Scarecrow Building, Wine Tasting, Art and Harvest Exhibition.

New this year is a pumpkin growing contest. Competition will be in a number of categories, not just for largest pumpkin. To participate, bring your pumpkin to the Scout Cabin in Hawkins Park in the

afternoon on Friday, October 5. Judging will be at noon on Saturday, and you can pick them up to take home at 6:00 p.m. Saturday.





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## It's a crime to interfere with the Salmon

Salmon Festival on October 7, in Vernonia, gives people who don't live on a Salmon spawning river or stream a chance to see Chinook Salmon returning to their place of birth to lay eggs for the next generation of Salmon. It's almost universally considered an awe-inspiring thing to see close up.

It's very important to look but not touch when Chinook Salmon are spawning. Each Salmon has traveled over 90 miles from the Pacific Ocean, through low and warm waters, to reach their spawning beds.

The trip, plus the physical toll of making between 5,000 and 8,000 eggs, stresses the resources of the fish. Additional stress from being touched, having rocks thrown at them, being poked with sticks, or in any way being harassed, can lead to what's called "pre-spawn mortality." Pre-spawn mortality is the term for fish that die from being over-stressed before they can spawn.

Assistant District Fish Biologist, Chris Knutsen, with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in Tillamook,

said, "There are usually only enough surviving Salmon returning to replace their parents. It's real important to leave them alone and let them spawn." Knutsen went on to say that Salmon stay in the ocean for two to seven years (the average is four to five) and only a handful manage to survive to return and spawn.

Another reason to leave the Salmon alone is that Wildlife Harassment, ORS 448.006, can be punishable by a fine of \$300. Enjoy the sight, but do not touch.