

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Looking to the future, not stuck on last year's losses

It has been one year since the devastating flood of December 2007. If we chose to participate in the traditional anniversary hype of natural or man-made disasters, we would reprint the most spectacular flood photos and emphasize the misery it caused.

We're not doing that because we all know what happened and we're still living through it. We are living for the future, though, not the past.

Although the wait is frustrating, the hope remains that federal funds may soon be available to buy out or elevate many homes. Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR) says they've been crunching numbers, pulling them together so the required cost/benefit analysis can be completed on properties that may qualify for federal assistance.

There is a potential for \$3 million or so and, even though the economy stinks, let's hope for the best. Whatever the outcome, some people will be helped.

If the feds get really serious about flood mitigation, Rock Creek will be mapped up to its headwaters. Then, with that information, sensible flood control could be developed using strategies such as bypass channels and overflow reservoirs. It won't happen today, but we can work for tomorrow.

It is the people who make our communities strong, and that strength comes from working together, caring about and for each other, and refusing to let life's setbacks define us. So, with one year behind us, let's focus on the future. We can't change the past, but we can surely prepare for the future.

Real time river gauge information

When heavy rain is forecast, flood nerves are natural. But how much water can the Nehalem River and its tributaries handle? If you want quick information about potential flooding, there are two websites that will take you directly to the information from the water gauge on the Nehalem, about 8 miles upriver, near Clear Creek.

So instead of fretting, bookmark this site: http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?site_no=14299800&agency_cd=USGS

The other is a link from: vernoniaflood.org Click on Be Prepared, then on National Weather Service River Gauge Info.

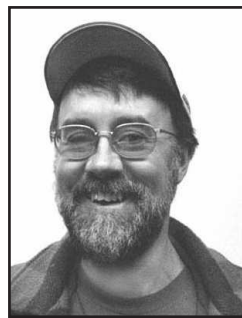


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Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



Hunting seasons are winding down in our area, only a few cow elk hunts and late archery for deer will be going on this month. This has been an interesting year for big game hunters, many who went east reported low success, while others reported good success. It always seems to end up with location and a good amount of luck thrown in. It will be interesting to see the statistics when they come out next year; will the downward trend in harvest of eastern Oregon deer and elk continue or will it finally flatten out? I would bet it is still sliding. The stats next year should be more informative since the new mandatory reporting system has been activated. Not only should the sample size of hunters reporting be well over the minimum for statistical confidence levels, but units with small hunter numbers should also at least have data and it should be accurate. Information on the small hunts has been painfully lacking in recent years; antler information should also be available. This data used to be included in the reports years ago, so it should be interesting to see where the big bucks and bulls are coming from now. You did remember to report? If not, it is not too late, there is no penalty this year, so either go to ODF&W's reporting web site

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/reporting/index.asp> or call 1-866-947-6339 for the automated phone recording system. All you guys with bear and cougar tags also need to remember to report your harvests, or lack of, at the end of the year.

Deer season locally seemed to produce a few more bucks this year, but it is really hard to tell. We will have to wait for the stats to come out next year to see if we beat the all-time low of 270 bucks taken last year in the Saddle Mt. unit during the general season. Of the bucks that were taken, once again many were very nice sized animals, which frankly is abnormal. Where are all the small bucks? Deer numbers remain pitifully low; during seven days of elk scouting/hunting this year I saw only three deer, two Does and a fawn. This was during the peak of the rut, folks, truly sad to see. There were a few deer tracks, and I think the elk almost had them outnumbered. The Scappoose unit continues to outperform the Saddle Mt. unit, even though it is smaller in area. Statewide, the deer hunting seems to be better the more east and south you travel on the Westside. Southern Oregon is really kicking out some trophy-sized Blacktails and higher success rates.

This was a good year for bow hunters in the Saddle Mt. unit, much like in 2007 when they had an 18 percent success rate on bulls and cows. The success rate on bulls, only, was 12 percent, which was equal to the two rifle seasons when averaged. I predict that this year's stats will be

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