

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### Vernonia is coming together

On March 29, at a Vernonia celebration of FEMA giving Vernonia schools an \$11.2 million grant (see complete story on page 1), FEMA Region X Administrator Kenneth Murphy presented Mayor Josette Mitchell with a Whole Community Commendation. The letter with the commendation states, "Before the flood waters receded, the people of Vernonia organized themselves and undertook the daunting work of rebuilding the community." It goes on, "The whole community participated...and demonstrated that the "pioneer spirit" of Oregon is alive and well." FEMA Region X includes Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, and there are 10 U.S. regions total.

When we think of all the people who have helped since the 2007 Flood, it's a pretty amazing list. First there were all the many people who immediately donated food, water, building materials, furniture, appliances, clothing, pet food, etc. Then those who showed up from outside to help clean-up, even helping pull wet carpet and insulation (two very nasty jobs). These people's efforts made it possible for residents to work on community recovery. But, let's not forget the people who could not stay and wait for recovery to reach them, due to the economy, the flood, or a combination of both.

We supported the \$13 million bond measure, while having reservations, because we knew it would take a lot more money than that to build new schools. But, since the bond passed, that bond has repeatedly been pointed to as the reason others have been willing to help financially. So, thanks to the Bond Committee for their hard work. The total cost for the new school is now estimated at \$38 million. Of that amount, fundraising has raised \$17.4 million for a total of \$30.4 million. Just over \$7 million to go. Not bad!

Others who have done tremendous work for Vernonia, and continue to do so, include Alissa Keny-Guyer from the Oregon Solutions team and co-conveners; Portland businessman Tom Kelly and County Commissioner (and Vernonian) Tony Hyde. Everyone on the team has worked tirelessly to find resources for this town. Also, thanks to John Donovan and the Metropolitan Group. Yes, the school district hired them to help find funds, but Donovan (and his team) have been upbeat, and have organized meeting after meeting after meeting where they have "pitched" Vernonia – successfully.

This is just a tip of the iceberg of all of the people who should be thanked. But, to all, congratulations on the Whole Community Commendation from FEMA.



### Ike Says . . .

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



There is new information about Hair Loss Syndrome that has come from a thesis paper written by Shannon L. Murphie while attending Humboldt State University. The studies providing the basis and data for the thesis appear to be well grounded and thoroughly explored. This appears to be the first study of HLS in Blacktailed deer fawns, the documentation of mortality rates and the difference in mortality rates between HLS fawns and non-HLS fawns. Murphie worked in conjunction with the Makah Indian tribes in Northwest Washington from 2006-2009. The Makah tribes have been investigating the effects of HLS and the general health of the Blacktailed deer herds in their region.

Here are some of the over-lying findings from Murphie's studies. First, the overall mortality rate of Blacktailed deer fawns in her study area was 63%, so only 37% survived to become yearling deer. The captured (close to new born) fawns were fitted with radio collars, and 14% of them were observed to have lice. Of the 14%, 74% died before reaching one-year-old. While 43% of the observed fawns had HLS during the December to March time frame, fawns that did not exhibit HLS had an average survival rate of 79% and those with HLS had a 57% survival rate.

A big eye-opener in the study was that mortality in fawns was higher in the December-March time frame than in the first nine weeks after birth, 36% versus 29% respectively. A second major finding was that mortality of all fawns was due primarily to predation, and that HLS fawns suffered a higher rate of predation than their non-HLS counterparts. Predation in this study was attributed to cougars 40%, bobcats 11.4%, bears 3.4% and coyotes only 1.1%. Other mortalities were unknown, unknown predation 23.9% (when a predator could not be identified precisely), natural causes 12.5%, and human caused 3.4%.

Murphie also examined many carcasses of the killed fawns and noted a marked difference in body conditioning between the non-HLS fawns and the HLS fawns. While this is not surprising, it confirms that HLS fawns are, indeed, suffering nutritionally and to a greater degree than their non-infected counterparts. This is thought to be due to the time the HLS fawns spent scratching and grooming themselves, instead of foraging, and from the extra demands on their bodies to stay warm while losing up to 75% of their hair.

So, what does all this mean to sportsmen? Murphie concluded, "Similar research should be conducted in other areas of western Washington to determine the role that predators play in survival of black-tailed deer fawns, especially in areas affected by HLS. Where possible, all factors responsible for limiting populations should be evaluated and addressed. Locally, the deer population is limited by recruitment, and managers

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