

Land purchase will protect habitat

The Columbia Land Trust, Bonneville Power Administration and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced, on January 24, the largest purchase of riverside habitat in the Columbia River estuary in nearly 40 years, permanently protecting essential refuge for salmon, steelhead and other wildlife.

The acquisition, which will benefit salmon from Oregon, Idaho and Washington as they migrate to the ocean, is the largest step yet in the estuary to mitigate the impacts of federal dams on the Columbia and Snake river systems.

The Columbia Land Trust on Monday completed the purchase of the 920-acre Columbia Stock Ranch on the south shore of the Columbia River near Goble, with \$5.3 million in BPA funding from electric ratepayers. The purchase sets the stage for the Corps of Engi-

neers to restore hundreds of acres of historic wetlands in the next few years to provide food and shelter for salmon migrating to and from the ocean.

The acquisition protects more estuary habitat for conservation than any other single purchase since the early 1970s.

"The size and ecological importance of this habitat set a new benchmark for habitat protection and is a key piece in an extensive fish refuge system in the lower Columbia River," said Glenn Lamb, executive director of the Columbia Land Trust. "In the last 10 years we have worked with about 60 landowners to conserve 9,100 acres of estuarine and tributary spawning and rearing habitat. BPA has been an important partner in many of these projects. The estuary is a particularly vital nursery for young salmon, and

this project is the best demonstration yet of conserving and restoring the lands that make the estuary so valuable."

An independent panel of biologists identified the parcel as an especially valuable swath of historic tidal wetlands that, if restored, would boost survival of young salmon as they transition to saltwater. Some two-thirds of estuary wetlands have been lost over the last century, but recognition of their biological significance has encouraged restoration.

Management and restoration plans for the property will be developed with public input. Restoration work will also support the local economy and jobs. The restored habitat will benefit coho, chinook and chum salmon; steelhead, and cutthroat trout, as well as terrestrial wildlife such as black bear, elk and river otter.

Library gets \$1K reading grant

Vernonia Public Library has received a \$1,000.00 grant to improve public library services to children. The Ready to Read grant funds will be used for supplies, incentives and paid performances for Summer Reading 2012.

The Ready to Read Grant was established by the Oregon Legislature in 1993 to assist local libraries in helping to achieve the Oregon Benchmarks for childhood learning and development. This annual grant, funded by the General Fund of the State of Oregon, is administered by the State Library. Oregon libraries may use these funds for the statewide summer reading program for children ages 0-14 and early literacy services for children

ages 0-5.

The impact of the Ready to Read Grant program is measured annually by the percentage of libraries adopting "best practices" in their services to children. The State Library has identified three best practices in youth services at public libraries: summer reading programs, training for parents and childcare providers in research-based early literacy curriculums, and outreach to children and teens who face barriers getting to the library. Vernonia's library provides an entertaining, educational reading program each summer for youngsters of the community. This grant helps make this program possible.

VRFPD changes meeting date

The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District regular board meeting is rescheduled for Monday, February 13, at 7:00 p.m. The board's usual meeting day is Tuesday.

Donkey Basketball returns

It is official: Donkey Basketball will be held at the Logger Dome (Vernonia High School gymnasium) on Saturday, March 24, at 7:00 p.m. Teams will be announced soon! Advance tickets are on sale now at Vernonia Florist. Come enjoy the laughs!

Senior Center News

It's time to get out your best bib and tucker and join the fun at our special Valentine's Day lunch on Wednesday, February 15th. There will be prizes for the Best Dressed Man, the Best Dressed Woman, and the Best Valentine's Day Socks. But that's not all, poetry is needed for Valentine's Day, so bring your own romantic poem for the Best Love Poem prize. Yes, the Golden Oldies will be there to add to the festivities.

Everything in the Senior Center Thrift Shop is half price during the first week of each month, so don't miss this opportunity to find good winter clothing at bargain prices, and much more. The thrift shop is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

It's time to renew your membership in the Vernonia Senior Center. If you are 50 or older and live in the Vernonia area, come check us out. The center has many activities and services, and all for a membership fee of just \$15.00 per year.

The Vernonia Senior Center is rarely closed because of winter weather, but it can sometimes happen. If you are not certain whether we're open, you can check by calling 503-429-3912.

Lunch is served Monday through Friday at noon. A \$4.00 donation is suggested for those 60 and older, and \$5.00 for those under 60. If you prefer lunch to go, for only \$5.00 you can call ahead and place your order.

Breakfast is available every Friday at the Senior Center, from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. Breakfast for all ages is just \$3.50 per person. Maple bars are made fresh daily for \$1.00 each. If you want maple bars for a gathering of any kind, call 503-429-3912 a day or two ahead and place your order.

The center's board of directors meets on the second Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Public attendance is welcome.

Vernonia Senior Citizens Center: 446 Bridge Street
Hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Thrift Shop Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Phone: 503-429-3912

Information on Vernonia events will be available at next meeting

A meeting was held January 26 at Vernonia City Hall for initial planning for the 2012 community events. Jamboree and Salmon Festival were discussed. Jamboree will be held August 3-5 and Salmon Festival will be October 6 this year.

Future meetings will be held on the last Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in city hall. The next meeting will be February 23. At the next meeting,

discussion will continue on Jamboree and Salmon Festival along with discussion of Make Vernonia Shine day (April 21), 4th of July, and Christmas events.

Anyone interested in helping, adding activities, or just finding out what's planned, is welcome to attend the Festival Meetings.

Seniors: call for tax help appointment

Qualified tax preparers will be at the Vernonia Senior Center on March 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 45 minute appointments will be scheduled.

The assistance is being provided by two AARP Tax-Aide volunteers and will be free to low and middle income citizens. You do not have to be an AARP member to take advantage of this help. Information on the program is available at www.aarp.org/taxaide.

To schedule one of the 12

appointments available, call 503-429-3912.

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