

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

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Young workers clean up Irish Bend

The Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department partners with the Community Services Consortium to create wage-earning jobs for young people to make a lasting contribution to the community.

Work crews in their late teens and early 20s have been doing habitat restoration, trail building and other maintenance work at natural areas and parks throughout Benton County. At Irish Bend, near Monroe, a group performed habitat and forest restoration. Motor vehicle access and abuse at the park helped pave the way for unauthorized roads and destruction of riparian vegetation at the location. About six workers were on the job in December planting willow, cottonwood and other vegetation to restore that area. On the first day of the two-day job, the crew planted 200 starts at the location.

"We were waiting until the weather warmed up a bit," CSC Crew Leader David Pettes said. "It's a nice area and the community around here, they use it a lot."

The group built stairs and a railing at Bezell Memorial Forest and also planted strawberries – a popular nectar plant for

the endangered Tailors checkerspot butterfly – in that area. The county contracts with CSC, which hires the workers and supervises them on the projects.

"We've been doing a lot of restoration in county parks," said 19-year-old Tony Margeson, of Corvallis. "We planted 5,000 wild strawberry plants. That's something to be proud about."

The groups work full days year round, providing employment opportunities for young people who don't have a lot of experience in the work place to get their feet wet despite the struggling economy. The participants also enjoy the work, and most seem to show an affinity for working outdoors.

"It's a great opportunity to be able to go around to different natural areas and do real work that benefits the environment," Dallas Hanthorn, 19, of Corvallis, said.

Each crew works for eight weeks, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Monday through Friday, and those who do a good job and want to continue can keep applying and participating in the program. Hanthorn is saving the money he earns to move to Eugene, where he plans to study architecture at the University of Oregon and Marcus



A Community Services Consortium work crew plants vegetation to repair damage from destructive activity at Irish Bend County Park near Monroe.

Eveler, an 18-year-old Corvallis resident, used his earnings to move into his own apartment. To these individuals, though, it's about more than just collecting a

paycheck.

"Plus you can come back in like 10 or 15 years and see the result of the work you've done," Eveler said.

Benton County set to install new hydrants in Alsea Community

Benton County is working to create greater fire safety in the Alsea community by installing three to four new fire hydrants.

The project is being paid for with \$90,000 in Title III Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) funding, as well as a \$16,000 match from the county Alsea Service District Capital Improvements Fund, and will add to the existing infrastructure that currently includes four hydrants in downtown Alsea, all of them on the south side of state Highway 34.

Currently a fire on the north side of the highway would require that fire hoses be stretched across the roadway, in some instances up to 750 feet, creating greater potential hazard and inconvenience

in an emergency situation. Combined friction loss from the hose and the water traveling uphill would create flows well below National Fire Protection Association standards.

"The real leap is getting fire protection on the north side of the highway," Benton County Public Works Director Roger Irvin said.

Three or four new fire hydrants are set to be located on Alder Street and on the west side of Alsea. The project also will include upgrading the water supply mainlines to those hydrants from 3-inch to 6-inch pipe.

The bidding process for the project is complete and work could begin as early as January 2010. Start time and date

of completion will depend largely on weather, and the project is expected to take 90 days for completion. Monmouth-based R&D Construction Inc. has been contracted to do the work.

Benton County began developing the CWPP in 2008 to promote awareness of wildland fire hazards and create solutions to reduce the risks of wildfire. After several community meetings with valuable input and comments the plan was completed and adopted in 2009. The Alsea Emergency Preparedness Council was invited by Benton County to give input relative to projects that would reduce wildfire risk, and increasing the number of fire hydrants in Alsea was suggested by the council in 2009.



Benton County plans to add new fire hydrants in Alsea to help make the community safer in case of fire.

Riparian and wetlands project floating along



The Mary's River watershed is one of Benton County's water sources.

Benton County community members began asking the county to plan for, protect and improve riparian and wetland areas through rules and incentives when the Benton County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007.

Benton County Community Development is meeting that goal by earning a competitive United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 Program Development Grant totaling \$59,912 for riparian and wetland inventory, outreach and planning.

Rivers, creeks, streams and other wetlands throughout Benton County are vital to economic and environmental sustainability, and county residents care about protecting and restoring riparian and wetland areas. This vision was captured in creation of the Benton County Comprehensive Plan, which was endorsed by a citizen-led steering committee.

Benton County will use the grant funding and county staff members' time to begin accomplishing these goals through completion of a two-year project designed to improve wetland and riparian resource identification, establish collaborative partnerships, promote

riparian and wetland enhancement, raise awareness about the important functions of wetland and riparian areas and establish protection for these environmentally and economically valuable areas.

The project will be a community effort, with guidance and input provided by diverse stakeholders including technical experts through a Riparian and Wetland Advisory Group (RWAG) that will continue meeting monthly. In addition, public input and landowner involvement is being sought throughout the project.

So far six countywide community meetings were held during November to gather community concerns and ideas for riparian and wetland resources. County staff members leading the project will go back and update community members on work and goals for meeting these objectives throughout the project.

For more information about the grant, or to participate in the project, those interested can contact Project Lead Adam Stebbins by e-mail at adam.stebbins@co.benton.or.us or phone at (541) 766-6085. Information also is available online, at www.co.benton.or.us/cd/riparian.

Water: What's the Problem?

The hydrologic cycle has moved water around the world for eons. Though the total amount of water on earth does not change, each interaction with it potentially changes its direction, chemistry, usefulness or availability. While we know a lot about water, we as users and the scientific community do not have a complete understanding. (1)

In the Upper Willamette Basin, we need to understand that policies, plans and science that determine the condition of surface water and groundwater resources are complicated and incomplete. There is no single body in Oregon that addresses water issues in

a comprehensive way, which can lead to serious problems if the population in the valley increases as predicted.

For those reasons, Benton County, in cooperation with Oregon's Water Resources Department, is in the initial stages of forming cooperative relationships to collect information, study issues and seek grant resources for needed projects.

More information about these activities will be forthcoming as we move toward the Spring.

(1) *Water: A Global Innovation Outlook Report*, IBM 2009

Fair Board names 2010 queen



Karen Hoagland
Rodeo Queen

The Benton County Fair Board has announced that Karen Hoagland is this year's Benton County Fair and Rodeo Queen.

Hoagland, 18, is studying zoology with an option in pre-veterinary medicine at Oregon State University. She is a graduate of Lebanon High School and competes with the OSU equestrian drill team. "Horses have been a critical factor of my life for over 10 years," she said. "Whether show jumping, showing in 4-H, barrel racing on Oregon High School Equestrian Team or just spending quality time with my horse, Rocket, I am always involved with the equestrian lifestyle."

Hoagland is no stranger to the rodeo circuit and currently is serving in the Queen's Court of the Cottage Grove Rodeo. She is excited to represent the Benton County Fair and Rodeo as its 2010 queen.

"I cannot wait to offer the organizational, social and financial skills

built from previous court experience to the Fair and Rodeo Committee ... to promote this event to loyal fair-goers and the general public as well. It is an honor to represent Benton County Fair and Rodeo as the 2010 queen."

The Benton County Fair & Rodeo is scheduled Aug. 4 through 7 at the Benton County Fairgrounds in Corvallis and offers an excellent family entertainment venue for adults and children alike. As the Fair & Rodeo Queen, Hoagland will be promoting and participating in the event.

She also will represent Benton County as a goodwill ambassador in about 15 fairs, rodeos and parades over the next year as the Benton County Fair & Rodeo Queen including the Super Bulls, Broncs & Barrels Rough Stock Rodeo; Spring Stampede Rough Stock Rodeo; Benton County Fair & Rodeo; Thanksgiving Thunder Rodeo and Christmas Parade in Corvallis; the Philomath Frolic Rodeo & Parade; the Monroe Christmas Parade; the Harrisburg Parade; the Veteran's Day Parade in Albany; the Strawberry Festival parade in Lebanon; the Pioneer Days Parade in Brownsville; the Sweet Home Rodeo; the Lincoln County Fair & Rodeo in Newport; and the Eugene Pro Rodeo.

Benton County recognized for its drug-free youth

The Benton County Health Department recently received a Certificate of Appreciation for its successful efforts in reducing underage drinking and drug use in 2008.

In late October Oregon Department of Human Services celebrated Red Ribbon Week – the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the country – as a vehicle for communities and individuals to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of Oregon's children

through commitment to drug prevention, drug education and a personal commitment to living drug-free lives.

In the spirit of Red Ribbon Week, DHS took the time to honor Benton County and other county governments for its work reducing drug and alcohol use among children. Benton County met the benchmark that at least 70 percent of eighth graders surveyed in the county were free from substance use in the 30 days prior to

the survey. That includes alcohol, marijuana and other illicit drug use. The benchmark indicator of 70 percent is based on national and state data for average use across all counties.

While this is a strong statement about drug and alcohol awareness and prevention activities geared toward Benton County youth, Benton County Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program Manager Tatiana Dierwechter encouraged community members to

continue working to make sure children in the community are drug and alcohol free.

"Reducing and preventing substance abuse among youth takes the whole community, and these outcomes are the result of many community partners working together to help keep youth drug-free," Dierwechter said. "This isn't just the Health Department or the Commission on Children and Families; we all are working on this as a community."

Living with the beavers



Benton County Park Ranger Shane Galloway, left, and Park Superintendent Al Kitzman install a "Beaver Baffle" to help improve water flow without destroying the beaver dam in December at Jackson Frasier Wetland in Corvallis.

When Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department personnel talk about co-existing with beavers, they usually aren't referring to Oregon State University students.

The department, which manages numerous natural areas and parks throughout Benton County for public enjoyment and ecological protection, favors an approach of living with wildlife, such as beavers, rather than displacing furry neighbors. One case in point is the Jackson Frasier Wetland, where for the past three years beavers steadily have been building dams. Eventually, the

winter water overflow resulting from the dams began approaching flood stages for the boardwalk further upstream.

Removing the beavers doesn't fit with the mission or spirit of Benton County's philosophy when it comes to operating natural areas and parks, so the department worked with Chintimini Wildlife Center to come up with a more effective solution. They concocted two "Beaver Baffles" which each consist of PVC pipe placed 25 feet apart, running through the beaver dam at Jackson Frasier.

On a chilly, wet day in December,

Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department Superintendent Al Kitzman and Park Ranger Shane Galloway, along with Chintimini Wildlife Center Director Jeff Picton and Board President Jerry Paul, installed the "Beaver Baffles," attaching them to trees, running them over the top of the dam and covering them with branches to maintain a more natural look. The pipes help the flow of water, allowing the dams to stay intact without causing flooding upstream.

"The overflow pipes were a good option to maintain certain water levels without damaging the dam," Kitzman said. "We don't want to displace

the beavers because they do a lot of ecological good."

Picton said that Chintimini Wildlife Center works with community members to co-exist with surrounding wildlife. This approach, he said, is more effective than displacing animals.

"The beavers will build their dam as much as they want and it won't affect waterflow; this fits right in with our mission," Picton said. "The common way to deal with this kind of thing is to trap the beavers, but when you remove the animal all you have is a vacuum where other animals move in. This allows a solution that's permanent."



Check with county before creating secondary dwellings

There are many names for secondary dwelling units – such as mother-in-law apartment, studio rental or dual-living opportunity – and they can be hazardous if not properly constructed.

People have understandable desires for separate living spaces to accommodate children and other family members who want to live in close proximity, or to create rental income through an added-on apartment, by altering an outbuilding or a portion of the main house, or by bringing in a recreational vehicle or manufactured dwelling. However, these conversions often are not legal. A dwelling unit is a structure or portion of a structure containing the necessary facilities for living. Only one dwelling unit is allowed per property on most residential lands in unincorporated Benton County (outside city limits) for several reasons:

- The additional use may overload the septic system, creating a health hazard;
- The groundwater (well) may not be adequate;
- Increased traffic on county roads, which were designed based on one dwelling per parcel;
- Increased expense to expand services (including emergency medical, law enforcement, schools, bus routes, libraries, etc.) to cover more households;
- Increased impacts to neighboring property owners, who expect a certain intensity of use based on only one family living on a property; and
- State administrative rules prohibit multiple dwellings on rural residential properties.

Note that different rules apply within city limits, and on Benton County's non-resi-

dentially zoned land. Also, duplexes can be allowed with special approval on land that is outside city limits but within an urban growth boundary.

Because of the limitations on secondary dwelling units, some people construct them without obtaining building permits. This is a serious concern, because without inspections there is no assurance that the work meets code. Health and safety hazards can result if work is not completed properly, including improper wiring can cause a fire; improper plumbing can present a health hazard; and improper furnace installation can create risk of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning. Structures built or modified without required permits also typically will not be covered by insurance in the case of a loss.

The Benton County Community Devel-

opment Department can help by providing the following information:

- Before purchasing a rural property with two dwelling units, prospective buyers can contact Benton County to determine if both were constructed legally;
- Owners with properties containing secondary dwelling units, for the safety of them and their families, are encouraged to contact Community Development about determining if the structures are constructed to code; and
- There are exceptions to the limit of one dwelling per property, but they require special approval from Benton County.

For more information, those interested can contact the Benton County Community Development Department at (541) 766-6819, or by e-mail at comdevinfo@co.benton.or.us.

Board of Commissioners names officers for 2010

The Benton County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously at its regularly scheduled work session on Jan. 5 to name Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo as the Board Chair and Commissioner Linda Modrell as Vice Chair.

Jaramillo – who has served on the BOC since 2001 – and Modrell – who has served since 1999 – took their posts effective



Annabelle Jaramillo
Board Chair

immediately for 2010. Commissioner Jay Dixon – who has served on the Board of Commissioners since 2001 – served as Board Chair for the 2009 calendar year.

Benton County continues to face challenges, but the county is well positioned to make the most of opportunities that may present themselves this year.

“We look to 2010 as a year for new opportunities,” Jaramillo said. “While we certainly will face challenges Benton County is in a good position to continue offering outstanding services to Benton County residents.”

Better to be safe than sorry during flu season

While this flu season so far has been less severe than some expected, according to the Centers of Disease Control data from the past 26 years, the peak of flu season has most often occurred during February. So it is important to continue following best practices to keep from getting sick or spreading illness to others and recognizing warning signs of serious illness.

H1N1 and seasonal influenza – as well as the common cold – are very likely to continue to show up in Benton County throughout the flu season, which typically runs through March. During this flu season it also is vitally important to continue following best practices to avoid becoming sick or spreading the disease to others. These steps include the following measures:

- Get vaccinated. It's not too late to get an H1N1 vaccination and now supplies are plentiful;

- Cover the nose and mouth with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw tissue in the trash immediately after use;
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after a cough or sneeze (alcohol-based sanitizers also are effective);
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people;
- Always stay home from work or school when becoming ill and limit contact with others to keep them from getting sick; and
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth.

More information is available from the Benton County flu hotline at (541) 766-6246, the state of Oregon at (800) 978-3040, and <http://www.co.benton.or.us/health/flu.php> and <http://www.flu.oregon.gov>.

Lunch with Santa

The Benton County Juvenile Department and community partners joined forces to share a little holiday cheer for families in need at the sixth-annual Lunch with Santa event held at the Boys & Girls Club in Corvallis.

Participants were selected by the Juvenile Department and Boys & Girls Club based on need. Each family submitted a list of wishes and needs, and the organizing committee shopped for each child. Gifts were wrapped at the Juvenile Department and delivered by Santa during lunch, and each child was allowed to select a bicycle that had been refurbished by the Juvenile Department work crew. The number of participants was based on the amount of donations received.

In all, eleven families with 35 children participated in the event, which was geared toward assisting those in need by making their holiday season a little brighter. More than 250 coats, clothing, shoes, hats and gloves, bath and jewelry items, toys, books, movie and bowling passes, bedding items, sleeping bags, pajamas and other items were given away as gifts to open during the holiday season. Children and families enjoyed lunch with Santa



Santa Photo: Two children enjoy a visit with Santa Claus at the recent Lunch with Santa event.

Claus as well.

Private business, local groups and several individuals made a variety of donations, including Kohl's Department Store, Philomath Community Foundation, Consumer's Power, Inc., Corvallis Lion's Club, Squirrel's Tavern, Emmon's Meat Company, First Alternative Coop in South Corvallis, Starbuck's and Great Harvest.

Commissioner Modrell appointed to MPO task force

Governor Ted Kulongoski has appointed Benton County Commissioner Linda Modrell to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Greenhouse Gas Emissions Task Force.



Linda Modrell
Benton County Commissioner

MPO is a federal designation that is triggered by an area reaching the 50,000 population mark. The purpose of an MPO is regional transportation planning. In Benton County, it is the Corvallis Area MPO.

The Task Force includes appointments from each of the six MPOs in Oregon, the chairs of the Oregon Transportation and Land Conservation and Development

Commissions, stakeholders from the American Automobile Association, Oregon Homebuilders, Oregon Environmental Council and 1,000 Friends of Oregon, as well as two state Legislators.

The 2009 Legislature passed legislation (HB 2186) directing the appointment of the Task Force to:

- Study and evaluate alternative land use and transportation scenarios that accommodate planned population and employment growth in areas served by MPOs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG);
- Evaluate potential fiscal impacts to implement land use and transportation scenarios;
- Evaluate impediments to implementing land use and transportation scenarios; and
- Recommend legislation to establish a process for adopting and implementing plans for reducing GHG by 2035 to meet the goals set by the State of Oregon.

Mountain Rescue members recognized for heroics

Two Benton County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue members were honored Dec. 9 at the Oregon State Sheriff's Association Annual Awards Banquet. Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit (CMRU) members Nate Meehan and Aaron Hartz earned the OSSA Meritorious Achievement Award at the event, which honored personnel from around the state for service above and beyond the call of duty.

On Jan. 17, 2009, Meehan and Hartz were descending Mt. Hood while on a recreational climb. At the Hogsback location on the mountain, they noticed that a climbing party appeared out of order. Meehan inquired if they were okay and the response was “No, that guy just fell 200 feet!” After identifying themselves as members of the CMRU, the party gratefully accepted their assistance. The group of climbers, which also included other rescuers, requested Meehan and Hartz set up the evacuation system. Meehan traversed over the patient (a Portland Mountain Rescue Unit member on a climb with friends), and set up a lowering system using ropes and devices designed for personal mountaineering. The patient had suffered lower extremity injuries in the accident and was unable to move out of the area of a significant icefall. He was stabilized with clothing, equipment and straps.

“Upon arriving at the patient, it was immediately apparent that if the rescuers and patient didn't get out of the debris chute (an

open area on the mountain slope prone to rock fall and falling ice from above), someone else was going to get injured or killed,” Meehan reported. “Within two minutes of my arrival, this point was punctuated by a rather large icefall event that literally sent me running across the hill and out of the chute. The two rescuers and patient were getting pummeled (by the ice debris).”

The first lowering rescue system was actually designed as a pendulum to get the patient and rescuers out of the chute. Rescuers then were able to break down their anchors and retreat. From there, they lowered the patient about 200 feet four times in order to reach the “Devils Kitchen” area. During the last lowering of the patient, the “reach and treat” from American Medical Response arrived. Then more and more support from Portland Mountain Rescue arrived. Finally a Blackhawk helicopter arrived to assist. The helicopter transported the patient to Oregon Health Sciences University.

Although they had little to no traditional rescue gear, Meehan and Swartz were able to improvise a rescue using what they had, along with their training and knowledge of safety factors and rescue systems. Their quick and decisive action not only saved the patient from imminent rock fall injuries, but also provided for the safety of the rescuers from the ice chute hazards.