

Long Tom Watershed presents successes to Veneta City Council

By Joan Mariner

Fern Ridge Review

The June 13 session of the City Council had five separate opportunities for the public to comment on pending decisions, but no Veneta citizens were present to voice opinions or concerns. The distribution of revenue from the state was discussed, the annual budget was presented, and new fees for water, sewer and storm water drainage were presented. All information regarding council meetings is available on the city website for those unable to attend the meetings in person.

After two public hearings on uses of state shared revenue and the annual budget, the council heard a presentation from the Long Tom Watershed Council (LTWC). Clinton Begley, Development and Communication Director, and Rob Hoshaw, Operations Director, took turns giving a brief history of the council and its operating philosophy.

Unlike many government mandated measures to improve water quality, LTWC relies on relation-

ships, shared goals and voluntary action to improve the quality of water in the Long Tom River and its tributaries. Since 1988, the City of Veneta has been an active partner in this process and has contributed funding to the organization annually.

Begley expressed appreciation for the free use of Veneta's Community Center for LTWC open houses, and said they were by far the best attended of the community events they hold. Working with private property owners to protect riparian zones, limit contamination and remove barriers to fish movement through the waterways has had its challenges, but the success of these projects are a matter of shared values with a very diverse group of people.

No one opposes clean water, and the return of fish to areas where they were unable to survive without improvements to the ecosystem and removal of barriers is a matter of great satisfaction. The most common barrier to fish moving upstream has been culverts

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Benefits by the Glass meets Mid Lane's goal

Mid Lane Cares raised approximately \$20,000 at the seventh annual Benefits by the Glass event June 12, hosted by Charlie and Karol Niemeyer of Deep Woods Events in Elmira.

Event coordinator DeAnna Townsend said that funds raised from live and silent auctions support the Fern Ridge Service Center which houses all senior programs in the Fern Ridge area and the Love Project food pantry, as well as Mid Lane Cares' community programs.

Established in the 1970s to provide programs that meet community needs, Mid Lane's current services include emergency assistance with utilities; the Jim Petty scholarship program, enabling students to participate in sports and other youth activities; Silver Tree, providing Christmas gifts for homebound seniors; ROAM Clinic, a free clinic held monthly at the Methodist Church in Veneta; SANTA, insuring that all area children have gifts under the tree; Gleaners, distributing food to needy families twice monthly; and the expanded community garden at Veneta City Park.

Townsend expressed Mid Lane's gratitude to the many



The popular dessert auction helped Mid Lane meet its fundraising goal at Benefits by the Glass. Mid Lane executive director/auctioneer Pat Coy is assisted by bookkeeper Tammy Finwall and volunteer Devinne Langan, 2016 EHS grad.

community-minded contributors to the event, including the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Deep Woods Events, ROAM, Sherwood Pines and Swanson Bothers Lumber, all platinum sponsors, and to gold sponsors Veneta Dairy Queen, Mary Jo Wade and Jack Gray.

Mid Lane's service area covers the Fern Ridge and Crow-Aplegate-Lorane School Districts, an area of 475 square miles, operating with a part-time staff of five and hundreds of dedicated volunteers. For information, go to Mid Lane's website www.mid-lanecares.org.

- Sandra Larson

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that are too small to permit their moving through. Often, the culverts are undermined during high water events, and they spill into the downstream side too high for fish to negotiate.

In the Veneta area there have been 29 projects resulting in 340 acres and eight miles of improved habitat. Cutthroat trout are returning to areas where the water was too warm because vegetation shading it had been removed or culverts blocking them are gone. Hoshaw showed the council a bridge that was built to replace a culvert that blocked fish movement. He expressed great satisfaction about how well the LTWC model works and was so impressed with it that he moved to Oregon from Montana to join their efforts.

The LTWC has expanded its efforts into the Amazon Creek drainage, and they have been identifying sources of contaminants and where they enter the stream. Residential, industrial and agricultural activities may all produce

source. Hoshaw showed slides of bio swales and settling ponds that allow pollutants to be filtered out of the water before it goes into the creek. People who initially may feel defensive about their contribution to pollution often are willing to work on solutions once they see the opportunity. Council asked about educational opportunities for school children and was told that other groups do programs related to that so LTWC has not developed one. Charles Ruff has replaced Ric Ingham as chair of the LTWC.

Mayor Sandra Larson reported on the success of Mid-Lane Cares fundraiser, Benefits by the Glass, and the enthusiastic response that the Graduate Walk through the middle and elementary schools received from the younger students.

Lane Branch, City Engineer, gave a report for a possible Local Improvement District (LID) to provide sewer service to seven properties on Eighth St and McCutcheon. Kyle Schauer and Branch

the report during the meeting on July 25. City staff wants the opportunity to discuss the possibility of an LID with all of the impacted property owners and give them a chance to see the anticipated costs. Once the council accepts the engineering report, the legal process of forming an LID is set in motion, and in their usual concern for residents, the council wanted input from all property owners first.

The council then established the fees for the Transportation Utility Fee as three dollars for a residential account and six dollars for a business account. They voted to approve transferring funds to meet costs for the 2015/16 fiscal year, and set new fees for water, sewer, and storm drainage. They approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Lane County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement in the city, and moved that staff develop the necessary materials to refer a three percent tax on recreational marijuana sold within the city to be placed on the No-