

Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation

Annual Newsletter

April 2009

Hello to all the neighbors, friends, and former students of the Soap Creek Schoolhouse.
Happy Springtime!

Mark Your Calendars:

GARAGE SALE

Donation Drop-Off at schoolhouse	Saturday June 13 9-4
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Garage Sale at schoolhouse	Saturday June 20 9-4
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Please no TV's or big appliances.
If you need help transporting any large donations or if you'd like to help with the garage sale, please contact Nancy Hyde.

NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC

Sunday, July 26
2-5 pm

Location: 27630 Writsman Creek Dr.,

The home of Brett Reistad and
Sarah Uebel.

Bring a salad, dessert, or side dish, and
any beer or wine you desire.

ANTIQUe DESKS AVAILABLE FOR RESTORATION

About 5 antique student desks were recently left on the front porch of the schoolhouse as an anonymous donation. The tiny ones are usable by the school, but 3 regular-sized ones are in various states of disrepair.

We don't really have space for additional desks, so if anyone would like to have one or more to restore and keep for himself, please contact Nancy Hyde.

CONTACTS: Nancy Hyde, 745-7470 or nhyde@peak.org,
Bart Spiller, 745-9007,
Joe Crockett (website) 745-5354 or jcrockett@earthlink.net

FINANCES / MAINTENANCE :

THANKS for your great support last year:

\$675 from Dues and Donations,
\$566 from the Garage Sale, and
+ \$455 from the Raffle of 2 Prints
= \$1,696 !

Major Spending Last Year:
\$920 Brick Chimney Replacement,
\$485 Insurance, and
\$55 Minor Roof Repairs.

Projects this year may include:
painting the south side and
the cupola of the schoolhouse.

Check Out Our New WEBSITE !

Joe Crockett developed a beautiful
website for us:
www.SoapCreekSchoolhouse.ORG.

It contains the history of the school-
house, old photos, directions for visi-
tors, and current newsletter informa-
tion.

If you have anything interesting to add
to the site, contact Joe Crockett di-
rectly.

The following is a report on the specialized timber thinning done by Joe Crockett and Janet Ohmann on their property behind the Schoolhouse, included for general interest:

Oak Restoration Project on the Ohmann “Farm”

By Janet Ohmann and Joe Crockett

The “farm” is the 37-acre parcel that is behind the schoolhouse property. It has been undergoing a significant restoration process to restore what was once a significant part of the Willamette Valley’s natural environment, the oak savannah.

When this 37-acre parcel was purchased in 2005, it had been partially logged in the early 1900s and again in the 1950s, and untouched ever since. In the early harvests, the Oregon white oak, madrone, and other hardwoods were left behind due to their low commercial value. Over the years, the Douglas fir gradually returned and were slowly overtaking the oaks. Many of the larger oaks already had lost their spreading branches or had been killed outright from shading by the

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firs. Immediately after purchase, the property was evaluated for how to open up the canopy to help the remaining oaks and madrones. Consultants helped identify and mark which trees to remove, with the emphasis on removing smaller trees and releasing the oaks from competition. Trees were marked to create a mosaic of thinned and unthinned areas, with an eye towards protecting nest trees and travel corridors for the western gray squirrel, and to create some snags for wildlife. Control of non-native, invasive species was another concern. The worst offender, false brome, was sprayed with a grass-specific herbicide before logging to avoid spreading its seed.

The thinning was “cut-to-length”, accomplished with a low-impact harvester/forwarder combination. The highly mechanized harvester is uniquely suited to “extracting” firs growing amidst oak canopies, with minimal damage to the oak. The thinning left a significant amount of tree debris, some of which was “masticated” using equipment that chews up the large limbs and debris into smaller pieces to allow them to break down more quickly. But this treatment was insufficient to restore the site to the desired “maintenance level” for an oak woodland understory.

The landowners procured a small grant for oak habitat restoration, which targeted 15 acres for additional tree removal, spraying of invasive species, and planting of native grasses. Some initial piling and burning of slash was done in areas that would eventually be planted with natives, but there was still much work to be done. The project area still contained many smaller trees left behind from the initial harvest, mostly bigleaf maple and hawthorne. Also, the false brome was alive and well due to failure of the previous year’s spraying. The landowners sprayed this time with glyphosate, using caution to avoid non-target species, and achieving a much better 95% kill.

R-J Consulting was brought in to remove the smaller trees, remove the old overgrown fence, and pile all debris for eventual burning. Most of the remaining undesirable trees were sprouters, primarily bigleaf maple and hawthorne, and the mechanized herbicide treatment of the cut stumps during the shearing process was a huge labor-saver. Furthermore, all stumps were sheared at ground level, leaving a condition well suited to ongoing maintenance with seasonal mowing. Once again a huge amount of tree debris was generated from the thinning, but

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this time, the landowners chose to pile the debris using grappling machinery which made short work of the daunting cleanup challenge. The equipment was well-sized for these kinds of tasks and had minimal impact on the soil. The landowners note that removal of the fence — embedded in “old-growth” poison oak — was also a task given to machinery which wouldn’t have been attempted by hand.

There’s still plenty of work to be done but the bulk of the big machinery is behind them. They are looking forward to this spring as the new growth emerges and the oaks spread their branches to take in the new light.

The Soap Creek Schoolhouse is available for use throughout the year, for small meetings of local interest. Please obtain permission and a key by contacting either Bart Spiller at 745-9007, or Nancy Hyde at 745-7470. A \$20 key deposit is required. Note: the Schoolhouse Foundation does not endorse any political or religious group but does allow its facilities to be used by such groups.

Please provide your email address, to reduce printing and mailing costs. Thanks!



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES and DONATIONS

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

\$10 Annual Membership Dues \$ _____

Any Additional Donations \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Please make checks to “Soap Creek Schoolhouse”, and mail to:
Nancy Hyde, Treasurer, 37845 Soap Creek Road, Corvallis, OR 97330.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!