

Drift Creek Camp Embraces Local Ecosystems

By Anna Williams, Drift Creek Nature Center Advisory Board member



Drift Creek Camp in Lincoln City, OR, owned by the Mennonite Camp Association of Oregon, has always had a powerful influence among its constituents. However, we knew we were not realizing the full potential of its amazing location. Situated within the Siuslaw National Forest, the camp's acreage is covered by pristine old growth forest and surrounded by a loop of the meandering Drift Creek.

For years people had dreamed of some kind of environmental learning center at the site, until finally the time was right in November of 2006.

During the annual members' meeting

that year, an ad-hoc group formed to discuss developing and promoting creation care through Drift Creek Camp (DCC) programming. From this meeting, an advisory group to the DCC board of directors was created. The enthusiasm of the group has not waned since its inception, and continues to hold lively meetings every month.

The major goals they have identified are:

- To guide children and adults in exploration of the unique ecosystem that exists within the old growth forest surrounding Drift Creek and the nearby marine environment.
- To foster appreciation for the important ecological contributions of the coastal rain forest, the relationships between the living and nonliving elements and the forest's connection to the marine environment.
- To raise awareness of human impacts on the forest and educate visitors to act as stewards of land and other environments.
- For our facilities to become a model of energy efficiency and sustainability.

We hope that the nature center will touch all of the regular camp users in some way (34 groups and 2,400 individuals last year), and the programming being developed will attract new guests. Much has already been accomplished in the first year, such as crafting the strategic plan, beginning work on the new Nature Information Center, publishing a web site, and being involved in program planning for the 2007 DCC Member's Meeting.

We know 2008 will be a good year, and can't wait for some exciting new program development geared toward children, adults, artists and students. Another goal for this year is to start working on the much needed energy efficiency improvements to the 1960's era lodge at Drift Creek.

Hopefully all of this will lead to the guests of Drift Creek Camp experiencing a renewed reverence for God through learning about the diverse species, native history and ecology in this beautiful setting. We hope this gives way to a deeper appreciation and commitment to care for God's awesome creation.

To learn more about Drift Creek Nature Center, get involved, or join our email list, visit driftcreeknaturecenter.org.