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Alpinees/Hood River Civil Air Patrol Continue Legacy

The Alpinees are pleased to announce the launch of the Alpinees/Hood River Civil Air Patrol Fund and the Jack Baldwin Memorial Outdoor Education Fund.

In 1947, four local men--Dick Mansfield, Myron Weigant, Don Kresse and Bob Duckwall--returned to Hood River from the Italian Alps, where they served with the 10th Mountain Division. Anxious to use their experience in modern mountain rescue techniques, they joined with Jack Baldwin, a local businessman and climber, to form a Mountain Search and Rescue group that they named the Alpinees. According to long-time Alpinee Carroll Davis, this was a serious minded group that focused on training and the use of modern equipment, such as radios. Recognizing the importance of an airplane, they teamed up with the Hood River Civil Air Patrol, pulling together air and ground rescue operations.

For 13 years, they met weekly in Baldwin's basement until it was time for a proper headquarters building. In 1960, men from the two groups built a timber framed mountain chalet that they dubbed the Alpinee Hut. True to their roots, local stone was gathered for the immense fireplace and a pilot with the Civil Air Patrol, the late Sterling Hanel, provided lumber from his mill.

Over the years, the focus of the Alpinees changed gradually from search and rescue to outdoor activities that could be enjoyed by the larger community: waterfall hikes, mountain bike clinics, trail maintenance projects and orienteering. The original headquarters building was put to use by local artists and musicians for studio space and practice areas.

But times continue to change and by 2008 when there were only three dues paying members left, it was clear that it was time to dissolve the organization. Members Carroll Davis, Ken Earle and Mark Flaming wanted the original intent of the Alpinees to continue. "We were inspired by the efforts of local school teachers to incorporate outdoor activities and education into the curriculum," said Flaming. "We agreed that the best legacy for the Alpinees was to create a

permanent vehicle for promoting outdoor education for residents of the Columbia River Gorge.”

Working with the Gorge Community Foundation, they created two funds: the Alpeenes/Hood River Civil Air Patrol Fund and the Jack Baldwin Memorial Outdoor Education Fund. Both funds will be used for outdoor education. Money to seed the funds will come from the sale of the historic Alpeene Hut, which was donated to the Foundation and is now listed for sale.

Both Davis and Flaming agree that flexibility was their primary reason for partnering with the Gorge Community Foundation. Davis points out that not every organization can accept real estate as a charitable gift. Flaming adds, “We wanted the flexibility to grant funds to any project consistent with our mission, rather than be limited to a specific school or non-profit organization. And community members can participate in the effort by contributing to the fund.”

Gorge Community Foundation President Gil Sharp acknowledges that One Size Does Not Fit All in the world of charitable giving. “We pursued several different proposals before we came up with a final plan that would work for everyone,” said Sharp. “As a local community foundation, we strive to accommodate donor’s individual requirements if it is possible under our bylaws.”

Grants from both funds will be distributed on a yearly basis to be used for outdoor education in the community. A special Advisory Committee, which includes Alpeene members, will review the grant applications and make recommendations for approval.