



Bear Creek Greenway

FOUNDATION

February 2018 Newsletter

From the President

2018 greetings on behalf of the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation.

One of our foundation goals for 2018 is to have more frequent contact with our greenway supporters. We hope this newsletter is one way to do so.

The Foundation's mission is to mobilize resources to expand, promote, and improve the Bear Creek Greenway. Today, we offer trail users a 20-mile continuous trail from the Ashland dog park traveling north to the Dean Creek Frontage road north of Central Point.

Our goal is to see the trail expand further south to N. Mountain Park in Ashland, with a long term vision of expanding all the way to Emigrant Lake, and to the north connecting with the Rogue River Greenway.

Current Board efforts include determination of a preferred trail route from the Ashland Dog Park to Emigrant Lake and strengthening community partnerships.

In future newsletters, I will share with you more about the Greenway history, our strategic plan, and a survey completed on Greenway users.

Please except my heartfelt thanks for your past support of the Bear Creek Greenway.

We most welcome your feedback.

David Jordan

David Jordan
Board President
Bear Creek Greenway Foundation

County Update

The Bear Creek Greenway- An example of governments working together for public good

On any given morning you'd be hard pressed not to find at least one user along the Bear Creek Greenway as it meanders its way through urban and rural settings along the Rogue Valley floor, even on a cold, snowy morning in January! The average trail user takes their daily stroll along the path while listening to songbirds, watching the waterfowl, even catching glimpses of salmon spawning in the creek and doesn't even have to think about the maintenance associated with the trail. Cracks in the pavement and leaning trees are generally the last thing users think about. That's our job, and by "our" I mean the trail managers from the five cities and Jackson County that the 20 plus mile trail passes through along its way from Ashland to Central Point.

In 2008 the six governments including Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, Central Point and Jackson County partnered to form the Bear Creek Greenway Joint Powers Committee (JPC) in an effort to pool funding for trail maintenance to more efficiently address needs that arise. Pavement maintenance can be expensive and complicated and it doesn't benefit the user to repair a section as it enters one end of a city and stop as the trail leaves the city on the other end. That approach leaves a patchwork of a variety of maintenance levels that can be frustrating. Instead, through the JPC, cities provide funding to Jackson County that the county Parks Program uses to fund major maintenance projects such as pavement replacement, signage, and other large ticket items to enhance the trail experience regardless of city limits. The funding is provided based off of a Bear Creek Greenway Management Plan that has been approved by all six jurisdictions and results in a more consistent level of service. Since its inception, the partnership has resulted in almost \$2 million worth of investment on the trail, with almost \$1.7 million of that coming from grants that Jackson County has obtained. In other words, by pooling funding and taking a prescribed maintenance approach guided by a management plan, the partnership turned \$270,000 in local funding into almost \$2 million of improvements for trail users. The partnership also provides funding for a trail manager, Andy Austill who is working hard to improve the trail. Andy coordinates maintenance activities, volunteer programs, and special events along the path. If you're looking for ways to volunteer on the trail, Andy would love to chat! In fact, Andy will soon be hiring a Volunteer Coordinator to further grow and expand the volunteer program due to a large amount of folks wanting to donate their time on the path.

The partnership has recently been renewed in 2017 for another five years and the JPC is building upon the success that has been shown from the beginning. Work is planned in the near future to remove root heaved sections of the trail, replace sections with significant cracking, and remove vegetation from the edges of the trail to improve trail safety and visibility, in addition to other projects. The next time you visit the trail, look for the wildlife, search for the songbirds, and leave the maintenance to us.

Steve Lambert, Parks Program Manager, Jackson County Parks

Become a "Bear Creek Greenway Champion!"

The beautiful and scenic Bear Creek Greenway is a work in progress. While we have successfully built many miles of trail, that means there are many miles to maintain and still more to build to achieve the goal of connecting Ashland to Grants Pass and connect into a regional trail network that brings together communities through the Southern Oregon region as well as the Pacific Coast Trail itself through the larger trail network. The vision is grand, and the job is big, so to continue the work and ensure a Greenway that allows people to walk, run and bike from the southern to the northern ends of this amazing region, we need the support of our friends, neighbors and lovers of nature, outdoor recreation and multi-modal transportation.

For an annual tax-deductible donation of only \$50, you can become "Greenway Champion!" As a Greenway Champion, you will receive the monthly Bear Creek Greenway Newsletter in your e-mail, containing messages directly from the Bear Creek Greenway Board regarding plans and updates, messages from Jackson County about current work and future projects planned for the Greenway, notification on all upcoming events being held on the Greenway and a special feature each month highlighting a certain location on the Greenway where one can appreciate the unique features of our natural surroundings.

Becoming a Greenway Champion is simple. Just click on this link: <http://bearcreekgreenway.com/get-involved/donations/> and follow the directions on our webpage. You will receive confirmation as well as a receipt of your donation for tax purposes. You will begin receiving your Bear Creek Greenway Newsletter the following month. Your annual donation will renew automatically, and you will be sent an annual notification and receipt. Of course, if you cannot afford the annual membership fee or would like to contribute more in support of the Bear Creek Greenway, donating is simple. Just go to the same link: <http://bearcreekgreenway.com/get-involved/donations/> and follow the instructions. All donations exceeding \$50 will enroll you as a Greenway Champion and donors of any size will receive a receipt via the email provided.

Thank you for your continued support of this Southern Oregon gem, the beautiful and scenic Bear Creek Greenway!

BALANCED ROCK



On the Ashland section of the Bear Creek Greenway, where Eagle Mill road merges with the trail, look down the bank towards the creek and you will see a large, egg-shaped boulder resting precariously on a rock shelf. This unusual formation is the result of millions of years of water erosion during which the softer sedimentary sandstone has been worn away.

Walk down to the Balanced Rock and examine it more closely. You will see a variety of lichen formations on its surface. Lichens are a unique group of plants composed of two unrelated lifeforms, fungi and algae. They are a perfect example of two organisms living together in a mutually dependent relationship in which both organisms benefit. Lichen communities inhabit soil, tree bark, and in this case, rocks. Notice the different colors of the growth: gray-green, yellow-gold and gray-black.

Lichens have many uses. They are reliable biological measuring devices for atmospheric pollution, and have gained notoriety as accumulators of radioactivity. They were used for dyestuff in ancient Greece. Today they are used in Scotland to dye Harris Tweeds. The myriad of miscellaneous uses, past and present include: scenting soaps and perfumes, packing materials for mummies in Egypt, pipe mixtures for smoking in southern Sahara, facsimile trees and shrubbery for architectural models, and florist arrangements. Eventually the lichen on this boulder will break down the rock and convert it to soil through a process called "chelation." The acids excreted by the lichen and the penetration of the stone by fungal hyphae combine to accomplish this feat.



**Bear Creek
Greenway**

CHAMPION