



Bear Creek Greenway

FOUNDATION

March 2018 Newsletter

From the President

This month I wanted to share the Board's strategic intent.

The Foundation's mission is to mobilize resources to expand, promote, and improve the Bear Creek Greenway. We hope to achieve our mission through implementation of four Strategic Drivers: Funding, Partnerships, Board Development, and Trail Expansion/Utilization.

Funding includes such goals around identify community partners, better understanding the cost of trail expansion, and developing fundraisers.

With Partnerships, the Board desires to establish new community partners where synergy, strategic partnerships, and collaboration can be developed.

With board development, we assessed our strengths and opportunities, committed to a higher level of engagement, and brought on new members to expand our outreach.

Finally, the Board desires trail expansion and utilization. Our current efforts in this regard are trail expansion to North Mountain Park in Ashland and movement North to Gold Hill. Also, a Bear Creek connector trail is being developed along Larson Creek in East Medford.

It's exciting to see the trail expansion over the last four decades and the continued opportunities in front of us.

Thank you for your support of the Bear Creek Greenway. The Board looks forward to your feedback and comments.

David Jordan

David Jordan
Board President

New Parks Planner at Medford Parks Department

Haley Cox was hired by the Medford Parks Department in October, following the retirement of long-time Park Planner Pete Young. In addition to building new city parks, Haley is excited to develop the citywide network of shared-use pathways that was approved by Medford's City Council last year. She brings experience in sustainable park design and active transportation, and she is also a member of Jackson County's Bicycle Committee. Haley is looking forward to working with the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation on their efforts to expand the Greenway to the north and south, as well as providing improved access to residents along the way.



Transient Camp Cleanup

Large-scale transient camp cleanup efforts have taken place along the riparian frontages near Bear Creek Park and Railroad Park. Staff disposed of over 70 cubic yards of trash and 100 hypodermic needles. These efforts cleared the way for Oregon Stewardship to continue restoration efforts on over 5 acres of riparian land.

County Update

A lot of great things happened on the Greenway this past month and a lot more are coming this next month! This past month Jackson County Parks continued cleanup efforts with assistance from other jurisdictions, Law Enforcement and Community Justice Crews. We were able to accomplish hauling out 80 cubic yards of garbage during these cleanups. The assistance Parks is getting during the sweeps and cleanups from Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point, along with the Sheriff's office is sure making a difference.

You might notice some new signage that is appearing on the path. The Parks Department has been installing names of places of interest, such as parks and street names/intersections on the Greenway. This will be super useful to users so they know exactly where they are at and able to communicate where there are any issues or problem spots. We will also be installing ¼ mile markers along the entire Greenway. Right now there are only mile markers, so having the Greenway marked every ¼ mile will be something everyone will appreciate and will assist with knowing exactly where users are along the path.

Work will be starting this next month to repair the root bump issues along the entire length of the There are a lot of users that have asked about fixing the sections that have serious root bumps pushing up through the path and affecting their experience while out on the Greenway. So I am happy to say that within a couple of months, these sections will be torn out, smoothed down and repaved.

We are still continuing the brushing work on the sides of the Greenway trail. Most people have noticed a huge difference with the vegetation cut back on each sides of the trail. Users feel safer not having thick blackberries or willows right on the edge of the trail. There is also better line of sight as you come around corners and hit the straight sections to see what is up ahead. I have appreciated hearing from people on the Greenway noticing the difference and for giving thanks for this task.

Thanks to everyone and enjoy the improvements we are working hard on to improve the Bear Creek Greenway.

Andy Austill
Greenway Manager
Jackson County Parks

Don't Forget to Become a "Bear Creek Greenway Champion!"

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.

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



Espey Wildlife Station (Mingus Marsh)



The Espey Wildlife Station is located on the Central Point section of the Bear Creek Greenway about ½ mile south of Pine St. Here you overlook Mingus Marsh. The marshy pond, a treeless tract of water and aquatic plants, contains a tremendous abundance of life. Red-winged blackbirds nest in the cattails, swallows sweep over the surface searching for insects, and mallards dabble in the shallow water feeding on aquatic plants such as pondweeds and bladderwort. Herons stalk their prey. Dragonflies zoom about. You may even see the wedge-shaped head of a muskrat as it swims through the water. In addition to providing vital habitat for many forms of wildlife, this marsh performs the important task of filtering and cleaning runoff before it enters Bear Creek.

The muskrat (*Ondatra Zibethicus*), a stocky, rabbit-sized rodent, is an aquatic mammal with partly-webbed hind feet and a long, vertically flattened tail that is used as a rudder to provide stability as it swims. Muskrats are widely trapped for their fur, dark-brown above and silver-tipped on the belly, with long coarse guard hairs and dense, waterproof, buoyant underfur. Primarily vegetarian, muskrats feed on aquatic plants such as algae, cattails, duckweed, wild rice, sedges and burlrushes. When vegetation is scarce, they will eat small aquatic animals such as shellfish, frogs, insects and slow-moving fish. Muskrats get their name from the scent glands located on each side of the tail, which secrete a strong, yellowish, musky-smelling liquid which is used to mark their territory and to identify one another. Females can produce as many as three litters of one to 10 young per year, though they rarely live more than one year. Some people consider muskrats pests because of the damage they do to pond dams or dikes, though this is counterbalanced by their work in keeping down algae and other plant growth that can choke small ponds. By clearing pond plant life to construct their lodges, they make the pond accessible to waterfowl and shorebirds, which greatly increases a wetlands value.