



Bear Creek Greenway

FOUNDATION

May 2018 Newsletter

Bear Creek Greenway – Expansion to North Mountain Park

As reported in the May Newsletter, the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation, City of Ashland, and Jackson County are collaborating on a study to determine a financially feasible and environmentally sensitive extension of the Bear Creek Greenway to North Mountain Park. The study, called “The Bear Creek Greenway Extension Feasibility Study” outlines a number of alternative routes based on a few “key considerations” which include: minimizing private property impacts while establishing the most direct route, minimizing environmental impacts while still creating a scenic experience for users, minimizing high costs items such as bridges and how to utilize on-street facilities while providing an enjoyable experience for trail users that feels connected to the creek. Based on these key considerations, the study has found a number of optional routes and of course, options within the options...

Route “A” would extend from the end of the existing Bear Creek Greenway path at Oak Street, crossing Oak Street, over to the east side Bear Creek with a bridge, along the east side edge Bear Creek through three private properties before it gets to Nevada Street where it would then cross through Kestrel Park and along the creek through two private properties where it would connect with North Mountain Avenue and North Mountain Park.

Route “B” would extend from the bike path’s existing terminus at the Verde Village subdivision on West Nevada Street, then extend along Nevada Street, past the Oak and Nevada Street intersection, then along the west side of Bear Creek, extending through six private properties before it would connect to the recently purchased Mace property, past the Riverwalk Subdivision and eventually to North Mountain Park.

Route “C” would also extend from the bike path’s existing terminus at the Verde Village subdivision on West Nevada Street, then extend along Nevada Street turning south on Oak Street 1/3 of a mile to Sleepy Hollow Street where it would connect with the recently purchased Mace property, past the Riverwalk Subdivision and eventually to North Mountain Park.

A hybrid route, combining portions of the identified routes, will likely occur for a number of reasons relating to time, money and the reality that some properties may not be available or environmentally suitable for the greenway’s extension. The final decision is not likely to occur soon or be decided behind closed doors. There will be public meetings and opportunity for explanation and input. That said, the one outcome that we know is true, there are many options, and options within the options to get this important connection completed.

Mark Knox

Mark Knox, Board Member

Jackson County Parks Update

The root removal construction project is now complete. We completed this work with a contracted construction company and the results are great. Many people have noticed and complimented on the much smoother trail surface and enjoying the trail without all the bad bumps. We were able to get the really bad spots, and some of the smaller ones we will monitor and smooth out when needed. We are still continuing to brush the sides of the trail, which is taking a lot more time and work this time of the year. This will be one of the main focuses over the month and into July. Once things are cut and stop growing so rapidly, we can switch gears to other projects on the Greenway. We are seeing a lot more use this time of the year, so we are trying to keep up with the increase of trash and garbage that is left behind on the trail. Thanks to everyone who is out enjoying the Greenway and helps to make it clean and safe!

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.



**Bear Creek
Greenway**

CHAMPION

A Moveable Creek

On the Greenway Trail just north of the Al Densmore Bridge and adjacent to the Medford Dog Park there is a bike-pedestrian bridge paralleling Barnett Road that crosses Bear Creek and offers a good spot to view the creek.

Bear Creek begins at the confluence of Emigrant and Neil Creek south of Ashland and flows through the heart of the valley until it enters the Rogue River near Lower Table Rock. It has provided a convenient path over the years, first for Native Americans and later for Euro-American explorers, trappers and settlers. The present Bear Creek channel has shifted a considerable distance to the northeast over much of its length. This has occurred naturally, with the disposition of soils from the west-feeding streams during floods. It is also the result of agricultural activities, constructing of homes and commercial structures, and channelization of Bear Creek to protect the highways.

One impact of this movement has been to bury the evidence of historic and prehistoric cultures under layers of sediment. Looking at the creek from this spot, you see the massive sandstone creek bed. Rivers rushing from the early Klamath-Siskiyou range some 37 million years ago deposited this sand and gravel.

With time, the gravel and sand became cemented together to form sedimentary rocks. This vein of sandstone is called the Payne Cliff formation and extends through the Bear Creek Valley. Because local sandstone is soft and therefore erodes faster than the metamorphic Klamath-Siskiyou to the south or the volcanic Cascades to the north and east, the ancestral Bear Creek was able to carve the valley we now see.