



eugene

Outdoors

Fall 2013

Monroe Park

A publication of the City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Division

Inside
Urban Forest

The Hidden Costs of a Vibrant Park System

More than 100 years ago, forward-thinking citizens of Eugene began setting aside park land for the future.

The community invested for decades in major park acquisitions along the riverfront and in neighborhoods throughout the community. This

visionary thinking continued with the recent park bonds in 1998 and 2006, through which Eugene voters supported a significant expansion of the park system, adding 20 new developed parks and nearly doubling the size of the park system over 14 years. In 2013, while we now enjoy 63 developed parks, our maintenance general funding remains stagnant at 1998 levels.



Parks are not unlike the investment you have made to maintain your home or vehicle. Before the roof of your house starts to leak, or your car's engine starts to smoke, you invest in preventative maintenance.



Postponing that work can lead to worse conditions and much more costly repairs. Maintaining our parks is no different. Regular maintenance to keep parks in good condition saves more serious repairs that cost more money down the road. Today's parks and recreational facilities receive much heavier use than in years past. We now see play area components wear out sooner than expected, requiring regular replacement. High rates of vandalism take a toll on things such as benches, tables and trash cans. As a result, they have an increasingly shorter life span.

The current renovation of Washington Jefferson Park provides a glimpse into the consequences of not adequately funding maintenance of our park system. For years, visitors to the 40-year-old park have seen signs of a park in decline: outdated and deteriorated children's play area,

continued on page 2

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continued from page 1

unsafe restroom, inadequate lighting, thin turf, overgrown landscape, peeled paint and cracked and narrow entry paths. What they couldn't see was deterioration of the drainage, irrigation and electrical systems beneath the surface, which had not been upgraded in decades. They were outdated, energy-inefficient and inadequate for today's use. The cost of renovating these essential park support systems at Washington Jefferson Park is enormous, totaling more than \$1.8 million. In order to effectively support the new skatepark at this location, this hidden park infrastructure had to be updated and replaced.

The Parks and Open Space Division is acutely aware of these challenges on a daily basis and has made significant efforts to make the most of all the resources available (see sidebar for a few examples.) As Eugene's park system ages and dollars are stretched thin, the division remains steadfastly focused on keeping our parks safe, clean and green for our community. However, the available resources are not adequate to keep up with demand.

Eugene's long tradition of support for an expanding park system is a testament to the value that our citizens place on having direct access to green spaces and recreation amenities. Hundreds of citizens are now engaged in helping sustain the system in a hands-on way through volunteering and donations. As a community, we must continue to be thoughtful and resourceful in the years ahead and we must seek innovative ways to bridge the maintenance gap for future generations.



What is Being Done?

We have adopted a variety of lower-maintenance strategies throughout our park system. Eugene Park Stewards currently collaborates with more than 40 volunteer groups—and growing. New partnerships are constantly sought to help maintain the funding and functionality of the parks at the highest level possible. Rather than building new parks, capital improvement dollars are being re-prioritized to renovate and replace aging facilities and infrastructure.

Smart Street Trees

Our urban forest is an important part of our well-being. Leafy trees soften the edges of the urban landscape, shade homes and streets, filter the air and add comfort and beauty to neighborhood walks.

The realities of climate change mean that healthy urban trees are more important than ever. Scientists expect the coming decades will bring higher summer temperatures, heavier rainfall and reduced summer air quality – all conditions that trees can help mitigate.

With these changes on the horizon, trees planted today should be suited for current conditions *and* the conditions in 2050. Friends of Trees and the City of Eugene have begun planting trees suited to this challenge, including Oregon white oak, valley oak, Chinese pistache and crepe myrtle.

In spring 2013, more than a dozen of these trees were planted at Sheldon Community Center and a dozen more planted in the West University neighborhood. If you would like to be part of this effort to support Eugene's thriving urban forest, consider planting one of these trees in front of your home this winter. You can find out more at friendsoftrees.org.

Planting an Oregon black oak in the West University neighborhood.

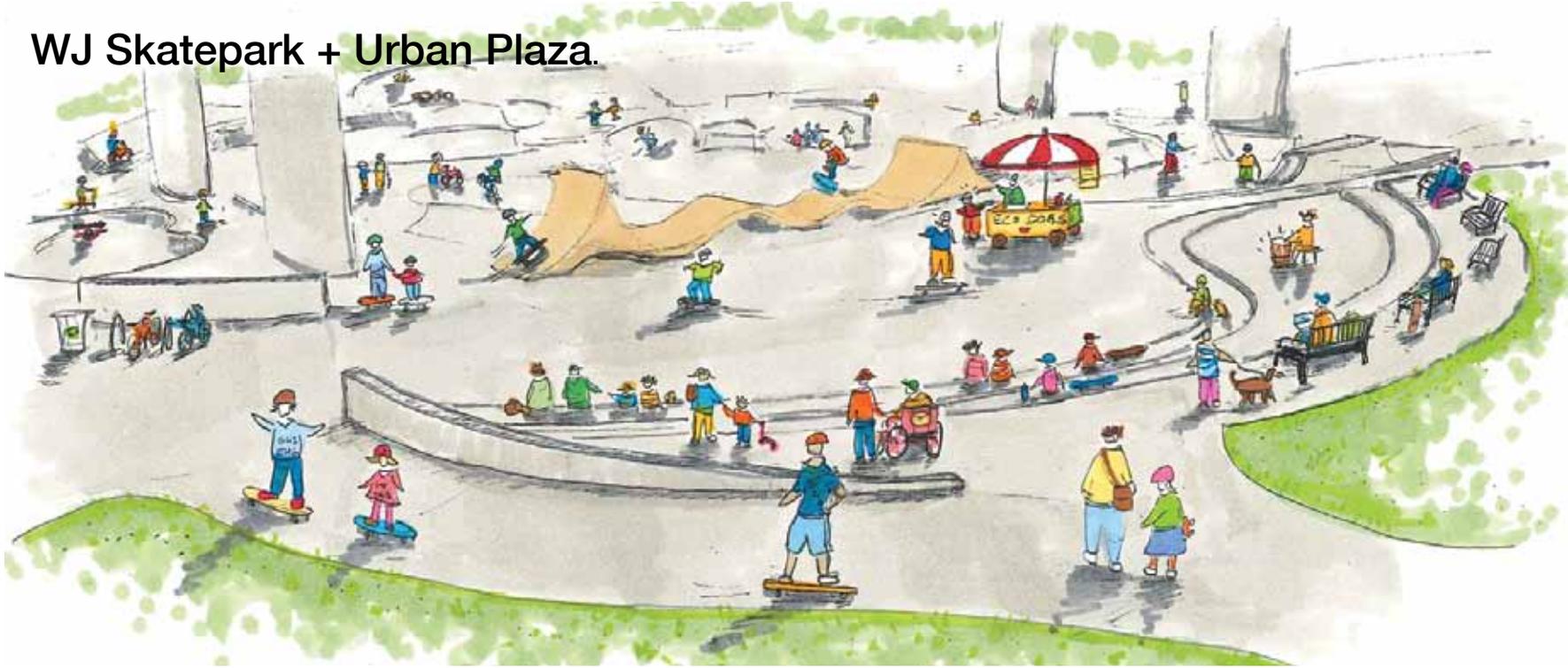


Survey Says?

Coming soon to a mailbox near you!

The City has begun a process of reviewing the Urban Forestry management program with an eye for the long-term health of our vital urban forest. Later this month, a community survey will be mailed to 3,000 randomly selected city residents and will be available online at eugene-or.gov/urbanforest. The survey will be used to help gauge the community's perception of the existing urban forest and will help highlight preferences and priorities for management of the urban forest over the coming decades. For more information, please contact Kevin Finney at 541-682-4800 or pos@ci.eugene.or.us.

WJ Skatepark + Urban Plaza.



Breathing New Life into Washington Jefferson Park

“This project will have such a positive impact on the community and the neighborhood – I can’t wait to experience it!”

Janet Brown,
fundraiser for the
local non-profit
Skaters for Eugene
Skateparks

Construction of a new skatepark and park renovations are underway in the north section of Washington Jefferson Park at West 1st Avenue. Over 20 years in the making, the vision of a world-class skatepark under the cover of the I-105 Bridge is finally coming to fruition. More than just a new landmark skatepark, the project also includes major renovation of infrastructure in this aging park – including construction of a new restroom – comprehensive utility renovations for the electrical, plumbing, irrigation and storm water drainage systems, lighting upgrades and safety improvements.

The heart of this effort has been fueled by extensive fundraising and awareness-building by community volunteers committed to seeing this vision through. Volunteers from Skaters for Eugene Skateparks, the Eugene Rotary and the Eugene Parks Foundation spent hundreds of hours organizing and hosting art sales, skateboarding events and restaurant support nights, submitting grant applications and approaching local businesses for cash and in-kind material donations. To date, including a lottery-funded grant from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, fundraisers have provided over \$335,000 to the project, far exceeding the \$250,000 goal.

The 23,000-square-foot skatepark is the hallmark component of the project and is expected to be completed in early spring 2014. In the meantime, City staff is working with our partners on an innovative and multi-pronged strategy to support maintenance of this landmark new facility. Park maintenance staff can continue to provide the level of maintenance the park now receives. However, the new amenities and resulting additional visitors to the park will increase maintenance costs in the long run. Strategies being explored include on-site food vendor fees, park adoption groups, recreation programming fees, facility rentals and regional skateboarding competitions as possible ongoing revenue sources to support programming and maintenance of the new facilities.

Park adoption groups will be an essential component to maintaining the safety and cleanliness of the new park. If you want to join in this effort, just let us know by contacting Lorna Baldwin with Eugene Park Stewards at lorna.j.baldwin@ci.eugene.or.us.



Learn more and view video from our many partners at eugene-or.gov/wjskatepark.



Thanks to a private donation, a new custom bronze tactile map greets visitors of all ages and abilities at RiverPlay Playground. Read more about how you can (literally) get your hands on Eugene’s history at

eugene-or.gov/eugeneoutdoors

Eugene Outdoors is published annually by the City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Division to share information about Eugene’s parks and open space system, and encourage the community to enjoy our recreational facilities, parks and natural areas.

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Carrie Peterson Editor



Creekside Park

A Neighborhood Celebration

On July 25, Cascade Lions, Northeast Neighbors and the City of Eugene hosted a grand opening celebration for Creekside Park. By all accounts, everyone in attendance was delighted to be in the long-awaited and newly developed neighborhood park on a sunny summer evening.

The park was designed and ready for construction in the summer of 2009, but due to limited funding for building and maintenance, construction was postponed. In late 2011, the City Council allocated funding for the project and directed staff to proceed with construction, which occurred during the summer and fall of 2012.

Innovative new play equipment for swinging, climbing, sliding and jumping, as well as a unique sand-and-water play feature, highlight the children's play area. A basketball court, play field, park furniture and paved walks round out half of the site. The remainder of the five-acre site remains a primitive natural area of creek bed, native trees and grass.

A key component to the ongoing success of Creekside Park is the formal adoption of the park by the Eugene Cascade Lions. This group will hold at least four work parties a year to help supplement staff maintenance activities and keep the newly created park a neighborhood gem!

Adoption groups play an important role in Eugene's parks and natural areas. Volunteers carry out a host of tasks, including assisting park staff by monitoring and reporting on park conditions, helping restore natural areas by removing invasive species and re-planting natives, planting trees, clearing litter, removing graffiti from park properties, refurbishing trails and generally helping keep Eugene green.

Each adoption group plays a different role, depending upon group members' skills and interests and the needs of the park site. If you're interested in learning more about local park or trail adoptions or upcoming Eugene Park Stewards events, please contact us at eugeneparkvolunteers@ci.eugene.or.us or call Jackie Hallett at 541-682-4844.



Alton Baker Park

Trail Input Wanted

Do you run, jog, walk, hike or mountain bike on any of the more than 22 miles of unpaved trails in Eugene? If so, we want to hear from you! Our community has a wonderful range of soft surface trails, from Pre's Running Trail in Alton Baker Park to the Ridgeline Trail winding through the south hills, but we lack a comprehensive trail vision to help guide and coordinate decisions about use, development, maintenance and management. This fall, we'll begin developing a Eugene Trails Master Plan and expect it to be completed by the summer of 2014. If you would like to be included in this process and receive notices and updates, please email philip.s.richardson@ci.eugene.or.us.



Find us on
Facebook

Stay Connected Year-Round

It's easier than ever before to stay in the Parks and Open Space loop. You can like us on Facebook for a behind-the-scenes glimpse of all things we find interesting and think you might too. We share information, inspiration, tips and above all, beautiful photographs. Do you like the kind of information shared in this newsletter? Subscribe to the monthly Eugene Park Stewards e-news for your regular dose of parks. Want even more? Register to receive *News Flash* updates via text or e-mail at eugene-or.gov and be among the first to hear the latest and greatest announcements!



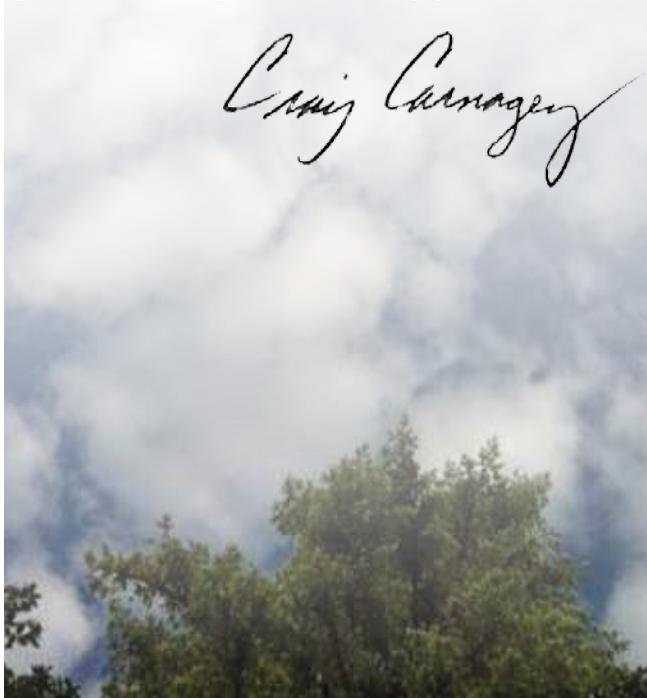
Meet the New Director, Craig Carnagey

I am excited to serve the community as the new Director of Parks and Open Space! I firmly believe a healthy park

system is the heart of what makes Eugene a great place to live, work and play. My family and I love the outdoors – playing soccer, volleyball, basketball, hiking, swimming, paddling and biking – all of which can be enjoyed in our diverse local parks.

I chose a career in public service because I care about improving our communities and our environment. My background in cultural anthropology and landscape architecture established my career's foundation. I've been in this field for ten years now and have appreciated experiencing first-hand the role parks play in improving the health and well-being of communities.

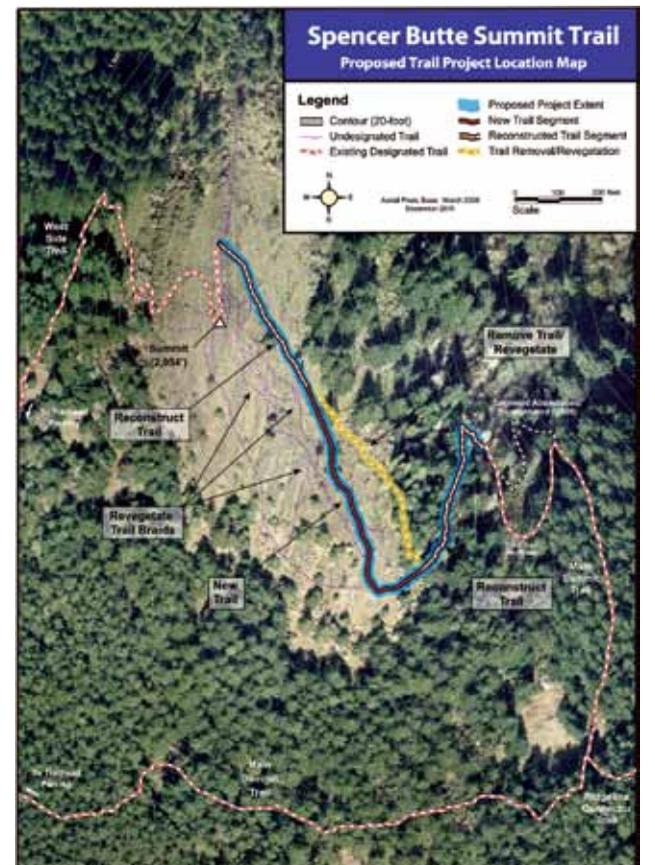
We have so much to be proud of here in Eugene. I am ready to dig in and work towards a sustainable parks and open space system. I envision a future that builds upon our many past successes, and I am optimistic that we will continue to see a thriving park system for future generations to enjoy.



Spencer Butte

Detour! New Trail Plans for Spencer Butte

The summit of Spencer Butte has been a popular destination for generations of hikers throughout the Willamette Valley. Heavy use and poorly defined trail routes over the years have led to a “spaghetti network” of confusing informal trails. In 2014, the City of Eugene will construct a new trail at the top of Spencer Butte. The section being constructed will begin just below the tree line and continue all the way to the summit (see map insert). Funded in large part by a Recreation Trails Program grant, this project will improve access and safety and will protect sensitive natural habitat areas. Temporary trail closures will occur to protect trail users during construction. Questions about this project can be directed to Trevor Taylor at 541-682-4888 or trevor.h.taylor@ci.eugene.or.us.



Pavement Repairs Improve Accessibility

Parks and Open Space has worked steadily for the past two years to identify and repair existing park paths throughout Eugene's park system, with the goal of improving safety and ADA accessibility of park travel-ways. New paths of travel were poured where excessive cracking, settling or other damage had occurred. In many cases, new walks provide ease of maintenance on and around existing paths, as well as additional room for tree roots and park furniture. Such preventative maintenance helps to eliminate costly repairs down the road, thus utilizing fewer resources.

As funding allows, these repairs help to keep operations costs down and in turn provide safer parks for all of us to enjoy. If you see an area that needs repair, just visit Park Watch (see page 8) to let us know!



Tugman Park path repairs make for smooth sailing.



Wild Iris Ridge

Native oaks stand majestically over the prairies of Wild Iris Ridge.

Where the Wild Irises Grow

Wild Iris Ridge, an anchor of the Ridgeline Park System, rises dramatically from the Willamette Valley floor. At the top of the ridge, its namesake plant, the Oregon iris, can be seen in bloom each spring. The park's high, open vistas provide panoramic views stretching westward past Fern Ridge Reservoir to the Coast Range and northward over urban Eugene to the valley's agricultural landscape. Plentiful irises, open views, native prairies and oak savannas were not always the case here. Today's Wild Iris Ridge reflects a rich story of planning, partnerships and perseverance to create this remarkable space in our collective backyard.

Wild Iris Ridge's 250 acres were pieced together through a series of six separate acquisitions. Bond measure funds voted for by citizens of Eugene in

For every City dollar spent on maintenance at Wild Iris Ridge, 2.5 dollars have been raised through grant sources.

1998 and 2006 were leveraged with donations from landowners and grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service. Altogether, around 40% of the total acquisition costs were covered through grants and donations.

Prior to City ownership, the land was logged and subsequently neglected. Giant thickets of blackberry and Scotch broom choked the landscape, and decaying slash piles littered the property. Even an old, abandoned car was found! While a community-supported management plan laid out a vision and specific restoration actions, the City did not have the resources to take on this important work on its own.

In came the Long Tom Watershed Council, who in 2004 formed a productive and lasting partnership with the City. The Council highly values restoring native habitat, removing invasive species, stopping erosion, and protecting headwater tributaries. The City shares these goals along with a desire for providing community open space and reducing wildfire risk. Working collaboratively, we have successfully obtained grants totaling more than \$230,000, most of which was awarded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Coupled with the dedicated efforts of Parks and Open Space maintenance staff, grant funds have supported restoration activities across the entire park.

For nearly a decade, the park has undergone restoration to reverse serious degradation, remove hazards and rescue native prairie and oak habitat. It is now covered in patches of native wildflowers, is home to many wildlife species, and Oregon white oak trees are thriving. The evolution of Wild Iris Ridge will soon take the next step with trail system improvements, allowing this spectacular park to be explored and experienced by community members and visitors alike.

Stones Tell the Story

Nestled within the Whilamut Natural Area – which encompasses 237 acres in the eastern portion of Alton Baker Park – are 15 boulders quarried from a basalt deposit in traditional Kalapuya territory. These stones are inscribed with a few of the remaining known words of the Kalapuyan language and their English translations. Recently, the final four stones were funded and installed as a part of the Willamette River I-5 Bridge project. The bridge was designated the Whilamut Passage Bridge. Whilamut is the Kalapuyan word for *where the river ripples and runs fast*, which is also inscribed on one of the stones.

Ga-Ach-Li (peaceful in daylight) stone among the season's fall leaves. Photo courtesy of Vern Rogers.



The Talking Stones Project was undertaken in close consultation with Kalapuyan Elder Esther Stutzman and the Kommema Cultural Protection Association. At the opening ceremony, the Stutzman family welcomed each of the new stones with a story and song. The City is collaborating with Elder Stutzman to record these stories and make them available to the public on

our website. Stay tuned for updates in late winter of 2013. For more information, please visit eugene-or.gov/whilamut.

Go out. Get dirty. Give back.

We here at the City of Eugene would like to extend a heartfelt **“Thank You!”** to all of our Eugene Park Stewards volunteers, individuals and groups. You contribute to your local parks, take pride in your community and have a positive impact in helping keep Eugene green! Our volunteers are truly the heart and soul of the park system in Eugene.

A big shout-out to the dedicated Eugene Park Stewards groups who've donated time to Eugene's vibrant park system in 2013:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Beta Alpha Psi | Goodpasture Island Neighbors |
| Cascade Family Flyfishers | Jefferson Westside Neighbors |
| Cascade Lions | Lane Schools |
| Disciples of Dirt | Life Technologies |
| Eugene Delta Rotary | Marist High School Ecology Class |
| Eugene Downtown Lions | McKenzie Commercial |
| Eugene Downtown Rotary | Mountain Rose Herb |
| Eugene Metro Rotary | Nearby Nature |
| Eugene Parks Foundation | Nobel Peace Laureate |
| First United Methodist Youth | Obsidians |
| Fred Meyer Santa Clara | Oregon Track Club |
| Friendly Area Neighbors | Petanque Club |
| Friends of Awbrey Park | Rachel Carson Program |
| Friends of Blanton Ridge | Ridgeline Montessori |
| Friends of Ferndale Park | Rotaract |
| Friends of Hazelnut/Cottonwood Grove | SeQuential Biofuels |
| Friends of Hendricks Park | South Eugene High School Outdoor Program |
| Friends of Heron Pond | Trader Joe's |
| Friends of Lafferty Park | Trainsong Neighbors |
| Friends of Razor Park | Trout Unlimited |
| Friends of Rosetta Park | U of O Environmental Leadership Program |
| Friends of the Ridgeline | Walama Restoration |
| Friends of Trees – Eugene | |
| Friends of Washington Park | |



Delta Ponds

Looks Can Be Deceiving

The rampant spread of *Ludwigia endangers*
Delta Ponds

Just as invasive blackberry tempts us with delicious fruit in the summer, there is a highly invasive aquatic plant at Delta Ponds that tempts us with its beauty. The plant is Uruguayan primrose willow or *Ludwigia hexapetala*. Originally from South America, *Ludwigia* is lush, green and has large, bright yellow flowers. But don't let its looks fool you. This aquatic weed is highly invasive and is capable of doubling its size in a matter of weeks. It forms dense mats both above and below water and chokes out habitat for native plants and wildlife. In addition to spreading by seed, plant fragments that break off are capable of sprouting roots and infesting new areas. Due to the invasive nature of this plant and its potential to spread downstream into the Willamette River, the City of Eugene has launched an aggressive plan to eradicate *Ludwigia* from Delta Ponds. For more information visit eugene-or.gov/ludwigia.



If you or your group are interested in getting involved, give us a call at 541-682-4844 or contact us at eugeneparkvolunteers@ci.eugene.or.us.



Our Kind of Math!

So far in 2013, Eugene Park Stewards have:

Held 246 events

Utilized 2,462 volunteers

Logged 5,920 hours of volunteer time

Hauled 155 bags of litter

Removed 220 yards of invasive plants

= ONE safer, cleaner and greener park system!



A Vision That Spans from Rivers to Ridges

Ten years ago, the elected officials of City of Eugene, City of Springfield, and Willamalane Park and Recreation District endorsed a regional parks and open space vision called *Rivers to Ridges*. The overarching goal of Rivers to Ridges was to create a comprehensive vision for the parks and open space system in the greater Eugene-Springfield area that could be implemented through collaboration among regional partners. Rivers to Ridges describes a future where parks and natural areas are seamlessly connected throughout the Eugene-Springfield area, providing an abundance of recreational opportunities for people (such as hiking, biking and wildlife viewing) coupled with protection of outstanding wildlife habitat.

Read the full story, including some impressive regional accomplishments, at eugene-or.gov/eugeneoutdoors.



*Kayaking the Willamette River.
Photo courtesy of Colin Klein.*



Help Keep Our Parks Safe, Clean and Green

Park Watch is a powerful new online tool aimed at increasing safety and reducing crime in Eugene's parks, recreation facilities and surrounding neighborhoods. You can immediately report non-emergency issues as you encounter them. With a few easy clicks, you can report bike path hazards, graffiti, harassment, theft, trash, vandalism, disorderly behavior and more. Go to eugene-or.gov/parkwatch from your computer or mobile device and walk through the easy-to-navigate reporting system. Bookmark the page, or use the QR code on Park Watch signs with your smartphone.

Please note: Park Watch does not replace 911. Please report emergencies and crimes in progress by dialing 911 directly.

Listen to your intuition. If something doesn't look or feel right, report it!



events

Contributors to this edition of Eugene Outdoors:

Bob Blanchard
Neil Bjorklund
Craig Carnagey
Kevin Finney
Jackie Hallett
Lauri Holts
Clara Matsler
Matt McRae
Carrie Peterson
Chris Phillips
Emily Proudfoot
Philip Richardson
Emily Steel
Trevor Taylor
Eric Wold

Go Out! Get Dirty! Give Back!

For a full listing of upcoming park volunteer opportunities through Eugene Park Stewards, please visit us for regular updates at eugene-or.gov/eps and check out our calendar of events. There's always something new being added.

September

28, *Saturday, 9 a.m. – noon, National Public Lands Day* in West Eugene Wetlands, Eugene Park Stewards, BLM, WREN, lorna.j.baldwin@ci.eugene.or.us

28, *Saturday, 9 a.m. – noon, volunteer at Hendricks Park Forest*, Eugene Park Stewards, carrie.l.karl@ci.eugene.or.us

29, *Sunday, The TEN* (5k and 10m), Alton Baker Park, www.the10miler.com

October

5, *Saturday, 9 a.m. – noon, Great Willamette River Cleanup*, Eugene Park Stewards, katie.a.blair@ci.eugene.or.us

6, *Sunday, Komen Race for the Cure*, Alton Baker Park, <http://race.komenoregon.org>

12, *Saturday, Out of the Darkness Walk*, Alton Baker Park, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, angelamafsporchapter@gmail.com

12, *Saturday, Great Rotary Duck Race*, Alton Baker Park, Rotary, www.rotaryduckrace.com

13, *Sunday, Walk to End Alzheimer's*, Alton Baker Park, Alzheimer's Association, kara.busick@alz.org

18, *Friday, Haunted Hike*, Alton Baker Park, Nearby Nature, www.nearbynature.org

27, *Sunday, Monster Dash* (5k), Alton Baker Park, Slocum & KidSports, www.kidsports.org

November

9, *Saturday, Trees for Tilor 5K Run*, Alton Baker Park, www.eclecticedgeracing.com



The annual Great Willamette River Cleanup returns on October 5.

24, *Sunday, EWEB Run to Stay Warm*, Ruth Bascom Riverbank Path System, www.eweb.org/runtostaywarm

December

21, *Saturday, Eugene Half Marathon & Hustle*, Fern Ridge Bike Path, eugeneholidayhalf.com

Ready to explore a new park but not sure where it is? Visit the Parks and Natural Areas page at eugene-or.gov/parks for descriptions and locations, or call 541-682-4800 and we'll mail you a paper map.