

EUGENE'S FIRST CITY PARK



F.M. WILKINS SHELTER

In 1906, Eugene's first City park was established when Thomas and Martha Hendricks donated 47 acres, and the City purchased additional acreage, to form 78 acres of Hendricks Park. The Hendricks' noted that "...such a park should be procured at the present time when the same is available in its natural state, to be reserved for future generations of the city of Eugene as a public park, open to all of the inhabitants thereof and of the surrounding country."

Thomas Hendricks was a prominent banker who helped establish the first public library and the University of Oregon. He and the mayor at that time,

Francis M. Wilkins, shared a mutual civic commitment. They were friends and neighbors, and went on family picnics together. It has been said that it was on one of those family picnics to the ridgeline where Hendricks Park now stands, that the idea to create such a park was first discussed.

The landscape has changed over time. Prior to European settlement, the southern Willamette Valley, including Hendricks Park, had a more open



Hendricks family, 1906

oak woodland and savannah habit. This was due in large part to the native Kalapuya tribe's practice of regularly burning the prairies and savannahs. With the cessation of burning, the park land developed into a Douglas-fir forest with a few small stands of Oregon white oak remaining from earlier times. The fir forest continues to transition into an old growth forest and the remaining oaks are being protected and enhanced.

Today the park is an island of open space surrounded by neighborhoods, and bisected by city streets. As Hendricks Park evolves, the needs for restoration and the management of an urban forest become more acute. With the continued commitment of volunteers, visionaries, and dedicated staff, Hendricks Park will be preserved for generations to come.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VERN ROGERS

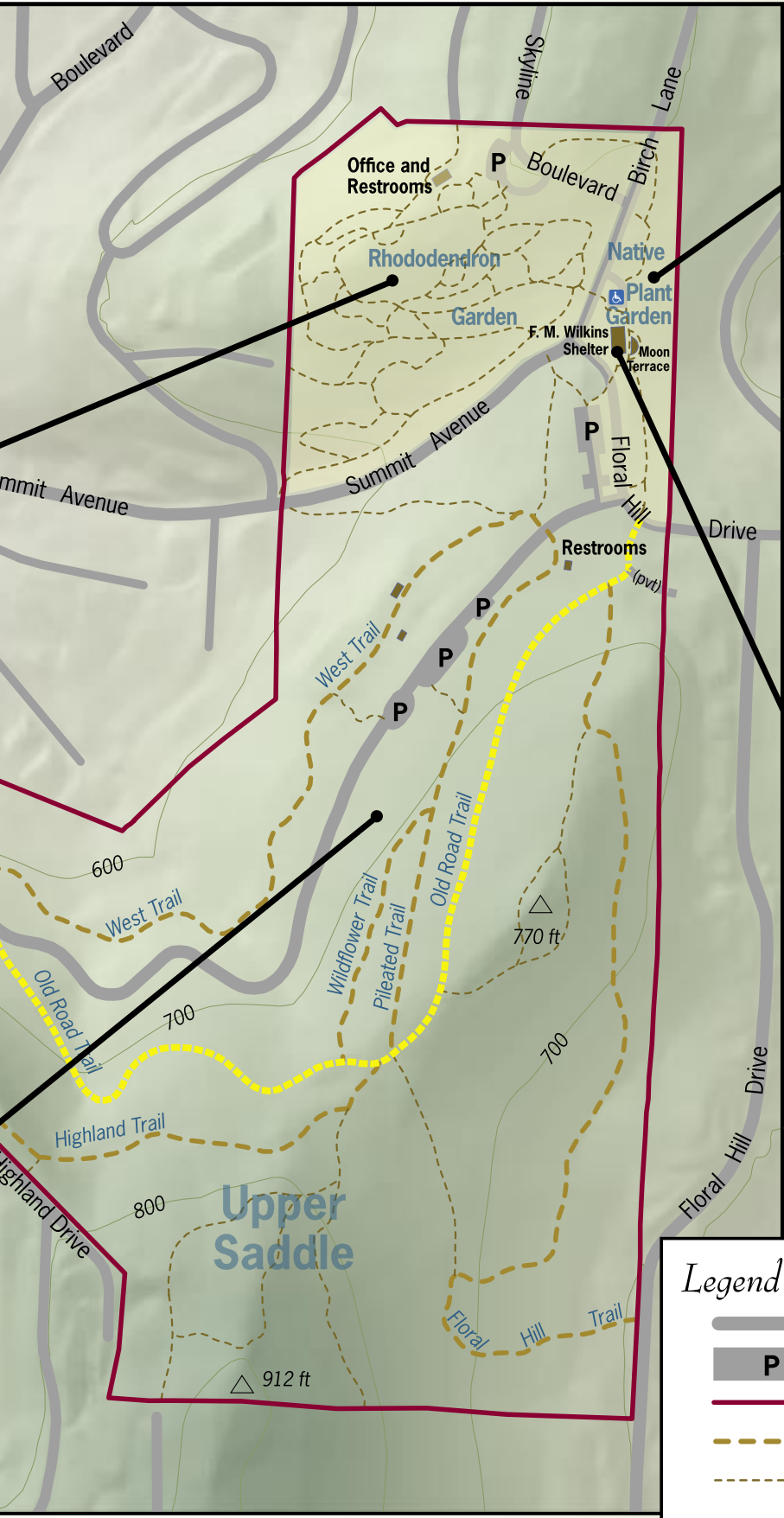
HENDRICKS PARK
ESTABLISHED 1906



THEN
A VIEW OF EUGENE FROM HENDRICKS PARK



NOW
PHOTO COURTESY OF VERN ROGERS



NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

The Native Plant Garden was established in 2002 to feature the native plants of the southern Willamette Valley and demonstrate their use in various garden settings. This garden, as well as the Moon Terrace adjoining the F.M. Wilkins Shelter, was made possible by the family of Mary Rear Blakely, noted landscape architect Jin Chen, and many hours of volunteer labor. This garden serves as a living bridge between the Forest and the Rhododendron Garden.



RHODODENDRON GARDEN
PHOTO COURTESY OF VERN ROGERS

The F.M. Wilkins Shelter, a Works Progress Administration Project, was constructed in 1938 and dedicated to the city and Mr. Wilkins on his 90th birthday. The local newspaper referred to it as "the new picnic lodge." In March of 1999, a fierce windstorm toppled two Douglas-firs, crushing the shelter and destroying everything except the stone fireplace. The shelter was re-built the following year, in the original style. In 2003, the 'Moon Terrace' deck was built adjoining the shelter to serve the growing need for outdoor gatherings.



MOON TERRACE

The Rhododendron Garden was established in 1951 by the founding members of the Rhododendron Society on an oak knoll where deer pens had existed for many years. Over time, unusual rhododendron species and hybrids, as well as many other interesting trees and shrubs, have been planted. The garden is a major attraction for local residents as well as visitors from all over the world. The Rhododendron Garden serves as a gateway to the rest of the park.

The Urban Forest covers approximately 60 acres of the park and has remained largely undeveloped save for a few walking trails. This forested portion of the park serves as important wildlife habitat.



FOREST

Legend

- Roads
- Parking
- Park boundary
- Named trails
- Other footpaths

Contour Interval is 10 feet

Friends of Hendricks Park, UO InfoGraphics Lab, 2005

