



North Mountain Park Nature Center

2012 Annual Report



A DIVISION OF ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION



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Photo Courtesy Jeffrey McFarland

Quotes from our quest book...

“Love what you do for the community”

“A delightful respite from plays and restaurants”

“My favorite spot in Ashland”

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OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the 2012 operation of the North Mountain Park Nature Center, a branch of the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department. The Nature Center oversees activities in the areas of environmental education, recreation, stewardship, and sustainability. In the area of environmental education we offer school groups and the community at large programs in local natural and cultural history and demonstrations in eco-friendly practices. Our recreation and stewardship activities utilize hands-on exhibits, demonstration gardens, and interpretive trails. The Nature Center also helps to coordinate projects and education at other sites. Outreach includes work parties at Lithia and Riverwalk Park, educational programs at the Briscoe Geology Park and many other parks & public lands, and oversight of four community gardens.



North Mountain Park Nature Center



The Barn at North Mountain Park
Photo courtesy Jeffrey McFarland

STAFF

The Nature Center staff includes: Education Coordinator Kari Gies; Stewardship Coordinator Linda Chesney; and Receptionist Patty Commons. This year, the Nature Center also relied on two dedicated contractors, Amy Post, who assisted with school programs, and Karin Onkka, who oversaw the design of numerous interpretive materials and exhibits at the park. The Nature Center also relies on a large cadre of volunteers who are assigned to the Nature Center via the Ashland Parks & Recreation Volunteer Coordinator Lori Ainsworth.



Amy Post, School Programs Assistant
helps teach how animals disperse seeds

VOLUNTEERS

Community volunteers are a very important part of The Nature Centers' success. Volunteers, made up of community members and students, logged 3,547 hours of service with the Nature Center during 2012. This cadre of dedicated volunteers assisted in numerous ways both inside and outside the Nature Center, and included work in the following areas:

- demonstration & heirloom gardens
- trail maintenance
- work parties
- wildlife monitoring
- field programs
- service learning programs
- community programs
- community events



Bethany Osborne-Koch
helping teach *Water of the Rogue Valley*



Longtime volunteer and Adopt-a-Gardner Sandra Hendrickson in the Bird Buffet

- exhibits
- interpretive materials
- discovery Kits
- bulletin boards
- collection materials
- resource materials
- photo catalog
- reception



NATURE CENTER

During 2012, the Nature Center was open to the public five days a week, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Inside, the bulletin boards in the reception area invited visitors to learn about new projects at the park, current volunteer needs, and upcoming community programs. A variety of brochures and booklets in the reception area gave visitors a chance to learn more about local wildlife, cultural history, hiking trails, and dog-friendly parks. With the help of local experts, two of the Nature Center background booklets, Native Americans and History, were updated this year. In addition, several new animal interpretive cards were developed and put on display to help visitors identify local amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, and mammals.

Throughout the year, visitors from Ashland and as far away as Europe were also able to enjoy a variety of exhibits inside the Nature Center. To help visitors learn how to navigate the exhibit room, a plan was developed that places each of the exhibits in a color coded ranking system: green for hands-on play, yellow for interactive learning (with adult supervision), and red for eyes-only investigation. As part of the new system, several interactive discovery baskets, some at the green



A young visitor engaging in “hands on play” in the exhibit room



level and others at the yellow level, were developed. Also this year, the Native American exhibit was re-painted, and new displays and shelving were added. In addition, several new activities were developed that related to the sustainability wall, including one on recycling and two on eating locally grown food. Because the exhibit room is also used by a myriad of community programs throughout the year, all of the displays along the walls were re-designed so that they remain visible while the room is in use as a classroom.

Updated and re-designed look of the Native American exhibit

“Nature doesn’t steal time, it amplifies it” — Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

The Demonstration and Heirloom Gardens surrounding the Nature Center were a big draw for park visitors this year and even attracted the attention of garden clubs from other communities, who scheduled docent-led tours. The gardens were featured in the fall “Plants of the Rogue Valley” school field study educational programs, and in numerous community education programs including Growing, Using & Saving Herbs, and Herbal Tincture-Making. The gardens, which provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, continue to be beautifully maintained by two wonderful groups of green-thumbed volunteers. The seeds that gardeners harvested and packaged are a popular item for sale in the Nature Center.

HEIRLOOM GARDEN

The Heirloom Garden prominently sets off the front of the Nature Center and continues to be maintained by members of the Ashland Garden Club. The progress that is made at their monthly workdays is astounding! The group brought in a rose expert in 2012 to consult on maintenance of the garden’s heirloom roses. The group continues to provide updated information for interpretive booklets, which identify all of the plants growing in the gardens.



Heirloom Garden at North Mountain Park Nature Center

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS



The spring orientation and work party jump-started the 2012 volunteer gardening season for new and returning volunteers gardeners. Improvements were planned for the Native Plant Garden to re-establish two species of native grasses and fill some open areas with native shrubs and ground cover. More native wildflowers were sown to add color to the garden. The Habitat Gardens, Herb Gardens, and Bird Buffet attracted many park visitors while serving as a model for home gardeners who wish to create wildlife habitat and employ sustainable gardening practices. The gardens served as a resource for community education classes and school programs as well. All garden areas were again “adopted” by caring volunteers. In July, the dedicated volunteer team enjoyed a visit to *Rogue Valley Roses*, coordinated by the Nature Center staff and hosted by nursery owner Janet Inada. It was a delightful outdoor learning experience for all.

NATURAL AREA

MANAGEMENT

The natural area of the park (approximately 14 acres) that lies beyond the Nature Center and demonstration gardens and within the Bear Creek floodplain is being managed for habitat values and for compatible educational and recreational use. A primary focus of the restoration and on-going management of the area is to maximize habitat diversity and healthy riparian function. Ashland Parks staff worked with community volunteers and community service workers last year in an effort to control invasive species. Since no herbicide use was permitted in 2012, invasive species management was a bigger-than-ever job. Himalayan blackberries required the most overall effort. This year the Nature Center staff and steering committee have established as a goal the creation of a management and maintenance plan for the Natural Area. After its proposal at the November steering committee meeting, Ashland Parks & Recreation staff met to discuss some first steps in the process.

TRAILS & INTERPRETIVE FEATURES

Wood chip trails provide access to about one half of the Natural Area of the park. These trails, which are maintained by Parks Staff and volunteers, facilitate physical recreation, wildlife observation, and a chance to learn more about the local natural and cultural history of our area.



The Native American Village is used for a variety of programs and events

Three trail areas are used to interpret the area's cultural roots: the "Indian Village," the ethnobotanical plant trail, and the pioneer-era barn. The Indian Village, which interprets pre-historic Shasta life ways, was used throughout the year during school programs, community service programs and events. A new roof made of cedar boughs was added to the shade structure this year, and the inside of the umma was updated with a variety of replica items and a sampling of colorful wall art. The pioneer garden, which is located near the barn, was enhanced with the planting of several heirloom-style herbs.

As a replacement for the former shelter-building log that had been used for several years as part of the Native American field program, a new, larger log was brought in to the park in November. This sugar pine log, which was a standing dead snag that had to be cut down to make way for a construction project, will now be used as the base for a new shelter-building activity site located just across the path from the former area.

The new log will act as a base for the shelter-building activities



"Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health"

— Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

Fire Pit Cover

In response to fire safety concerns, Nature Center staff can now regulate the use of the fire pit located in the amphitheatre area by closing and locking it outside of periods of authorized use. Jacksonville metal artist Cheryl Garcia was hired to design and fabricate a metal cover. Since the fire pit is located in the parks Natural Area and Native American village, the cover design incorporates artistic elements in keeping with those themes.



Fire Pit Cover 2012

WILDLIFE

Wildlife abounds in the Natural Area and gardens, benefitting from habitat restoration efforts and delighting park visitors. This spring large numbers of nesting birds were seen rearing their young and utilizing resources designed for their use. Chinook Salmon were again seen spawning in Bear Creek within the areas of in-stream habitat enhancement.



Young Blacktail Deer
Photo courtesy Jeffrey McFarland



Juvenile Green Heron
Photo courtesy Bettina Arrigoni

Proposed Bear Creek Habitat Enhancements

The Bureau of Reclamation has developed a plan for in-stream habitat improvement, primarily entailing the placement of large wood material in Bear Creek in several reaches upstream of Valley View Rd., including North Mountain Park. Plans were presented to the Ashland Parks Commission this fall and cross sectional stream monitoring began in November. The plan would potentially be implemented within the next eight years.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Community programs for youth and adults were offered at North Mountain Park, Lithia Park, Briscoe Geology Park, Hald-Strawberry Park, Oredson-Todd Woods, the Bear Creek Greenway, Mt. Ashland, the Klamath Siskiyou National Monument, Grizzly Peak, and locations beyond. Community Education programs were taught by Ashland Parks & Recreation staff and both paid and volunteer instructors. Need-based scholarships were still made available, courtesy of the Ashland Parks Foundation.



Pine Needle Basketry—Winter/Spring 2012



Bird Photography Basics—Fall 2012

New community program topics were offered that fit within the Nature Center’s educational mission, especially where interest had been expressed in participant surveys. New partnerships and instructors are always being sought in order to expand the possible program offerings. Some of the more popular new program offerings this year included: Climate Change of the Rogue Valley, Bats, Happy Eggs, Fruit Tree Pruning, Exploring Ashland Parks Trails, Gray water Harvesting, Bird Photography Basics, Family Geocaching, and Birds of the Klamath Basin.

“Without a deep attachment to place, an adult can also feel lost”

— Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS – WINTER/SPRING

2012 PROGRAM	DATE/S	INSTRUCTOR/S	LOCATION
Project FeederWatch	Jan 7 & 21, Feb 4 & 18, Mar 3 & 17	RV Audubon Society Volunteers	North Mountain Park
Preschool Puppet Theatre	Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 9, Apr 13, May 11	North Mountain Park Puppeteers	North Mountain Park
Winter Bird Walk	Jan 14	Vince Zauskey	North Mountain Park
Hand-Woven Basket Workshop	Jan 14	Louisa Lenz-Porter	North Mountain Park
Climate Change and the Rogue Valley	Jan 17	Alan Journet	North Mountain Park
Garden Planning for Vegetables	Jan 28	Louisa Lenz-Porter	North Mountain Park
Going Beyond Xeriscape	Jan 31	Bonnie Bayard	North Mountain Park
Seed Swap	Feb 1	North Mountain Park Staff	North Mountain Park
Ashland's Winter Birds	Lecture Feb 2 Field Trip Feb 4	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park
Happy Eggs	Feb 8	Cynthia Care	North Mountain Park
Plant Propagation Step-by-Step	Feb 18	Jennifer Ewing	North Mountain Park
No Lawn? Then What?	Feb 28	Bonnie Bayard	North Mountain Park
Klamath Basin's Winter Birds	Lecture Mar 1 Field Trip Mar 3	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park Klamath Basin
Pine Needle Basketry	Mar 3	Sue Yamins	North Mountain Park
Fruit Tree Pruning Basics	Mar 10	Casey Roland	Glenwood Park
Making Smoke, Coal & Fire with a Bow Drill	Mar 10	Jesse Biesanz	North Mountain Park
The Self-Sustaining Garden	Mar 14	Cynthia Care	North Mountain Park
Knots & Mechanical Advantage Class	Mar 17	Bob Noyes	North Mountain Park
Spring Garden Work Party	Mar 21	North Mountain Park Staff	North Mountain Park

2012 PROGRAM	DATE/S	INSTRUCTOR/S	LOCATION
Low Maintenance Landscape Ideas	Mar 27	Bonnie Bayard	North Mountain Park
Exploring Ashland Parks' Trails	Apr 3	Jeff McFarland	North Mountain Park
Graywater— Laundry to Landscape	Apr 4	Pam Lott	North Mountain Park
Jumpstart Your Water Harvesting Action Plan	Apr 10	Pam Lott	North Mountain Park
Wildflower Walk in Strawberry-Hald Park	Apr 11	Linda Chesney	Strawberry-Hald Park
Land Navigation	Apr 14	Bob Noyes	North Mountain Park
How to Build an Outdoor Survival Debris Shelter	Apr 14	Jesse Biesanz	North Mountain Park
Recycling: Where Does it Go and Why?	Apr 18	Risa Ruck	North Mountain Park
Upper Table Rock Edible and Medicinal Plant Walk	Apr 21	Jon Carlson	Upper Table Rock
Rogue Valley Earth Day	Apr 21	North Mountain Park Staff	Science Works
Biking the Greenway to Taste Wild Edibles	Apr 24	Linda Chesney	Bear Creek Greenway
Spring Wildflower Walk in Oredson-Todd Woods	Apr 28	Marcia Winteer	Oredson-Todd Woods
Birding Basics	May 2	Klamath Bird Observatory Staff	North Mountain Park
Ashland Spring Birding	Lecture May 3 Field Trip May 5	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park
Restoration Forestry for Beginners	May 5	Ashland Forest Resiliency Staff	Ashland Watershed
Finding Balance: Rock Stacking and Dry-Stone Arch Building	May 5	Jesse Biesanz	Lithia Park
Rogue Valley Geology in Earth History	May 9	Len Eisenberg	Briscoe Geology Park
Rogue Valley Bird Day	May 12	North Mountain Park Staff	North Mountain Park



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS – SUMMER

2012 PROGRAM	DATE/S	INSTRUCTOR/S	LOCATION
Catching Rain	May 8	Lori Tella	North Mountain Park
Preschool Puppet Theatre	Jun 8, Jul 13, Aug 10	North Mountain Park Puppeteers	North Mountain Park
Birding Malheur Wildlife Refuge	May 15	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park
Organic Pest Management for Home Gardeners	May 31	Patrick Marcus	North Mountain Park
Family Geocaching	Jun 2	Meg Fraser	North Mountain Park
Summer Saturday Morning Bird Walks	Jun 9, Jul 14, Aug 11	Volunteer birders	North Mountain Park
Urban Composting	Jun 9, Jul 14, Aug 11, Sep 8	Rhianna Simes	Recycle Center
Herbal Infused Oils and Salves	Jun 9	Jon Carlson	North Mountain Park
Demonstration Garden Tours	Jun 13, Jul 11, Aug 8	Susan Lander	North Mountain Park
Watershed Ecology & History Hike in the Winburn Parcel	Jun 10	City Staff & Forest Land Commission Members	Winburn Parcel
Bees & Beauty: Apitherapy & the Benefits of Honey	Jun 19	Sarah Red-Laird	North Mountain Park
Tree Weaving—Enchanted Structures in the Garden	Jun 23	Sangy'e Tendzin	Ashland Creek Community Garden
Dedication of Native American Signs	Jun 23	Community Members	North Mountain Park
Nature Writing Camp	Jun 25 - 28	Juliet Grable	North Mountain Park
Natural Cleaning Products	Jun 27	Kari Gies	North Mountain Park
Siskiyou Mountain Birds	Lecture Jun 28 Field trip Jun 30	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park MT Ashland/Pilot Rock Rd
Preserving Summer's Bounty	Jul 7	Jackie Greer	North Mountain Park
Decoupage Basics for Kids	Jul 10	Liz Clift	North Mountain Park
Rogue Valley Geology in Earth History	Jul 11	Len Eisenberg	Briscoe Geology Park

2012 PROGRAM	DATE/S	INSTRUCTOR/S	LOCATION
Poetry Workshop for Young Adults	Jul 11-13	Juliet Grable	North Mountain Park
Edible & Medicinal Plants of Grizzly Peak	Jul 14	Jon Carlson	Grizzly Peak
BUGS!	Jul 14	John Jackson	North Mountain Park
Building a Solar Oven	Jul 17	Linda Chesney	North Mountain Park
Proper Veggie-Harvesting Techniques & Preparing for a Winter Garden	Aug 1	Jennifer Ewing	North Mountain Park
Edible & Medicinal Plants of MT Ashland	Aug 4	Jon Carlson	MT Ashland
Willow Basketry	Aug 4	Ea Murphy	North Mountain Park
Bats	Aug 11	John Jackson	North Mountain Park
Evening Nature Walk	Aug 15	North Mountain Park Staff	North Mountain Park
Celestial Highlights of the Summer Sky	Aug 18	Kevin Ratkovich	North Mountain Park
Blackberry Wine-Making	Aug 21	Carla David	North Mountain Park
Urban Naturalist: Nature Immersion Day Camp	Aug 27-30	Michele Pavilionis	North Mountain Park

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS – FALL

2012 PROGRAM	DATE/S	INSTRUCTOR/S	LOCATION
How to Make Your Own Herbal Tincture	Sep 8	Jon Carlson	North Mountain Park
Rogue Valley Geology in the Earth's History	Sep 10	Len Eisenberg	Briscoe Geology Park
Demonstration Garden Tour	Sep 12	Susan Lander	North Mountain Park
Preschool Puppet Theatre	Sep 14, Nov 9 Dec 14	Pamala & N MT Park Puppeteers	North Mountain Park
Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk	Sep 16	Jon Carlson	North Mountain Park
Catching Rain	Sep 20	Lori Tella	North Mountain Park

2012 PROGRAM	DATE/S	INSTRUCTOR/S	LOCATION
Farm & Garden Tour	Sep 29	Restoration Farm Staff	Restoration Farm
Preschool Nature Days	Oct 1 - Nov 26	Michelle Pavalonis	North Mountain Park
Bear Creek Salmon Festival	Oct 6	N/A	North Mountain Park
Buried History at Hargadine Cemetery	Oct 7	Jan Wright	Hargadine Cemetery
Care & Pruning of Wisteria	Oct 11	Patrick Marcus	North Mountain Park
Green & Solar Tour	Oct 13	N/A	Ashland Homes
Dancing Star Lantern Making Workshop	Oct 13	Anneke Rapael	North Mountain Park
Bird Photography Basics	Oct 27	Dan Elster	North Mountain Park
Plants of the Rogue Valley for Homeschoolers Ages 8-11	Oct 30	Kari Gies & Volunteer Staff	North Mountain Park
Project Feeder Watch	Nov 10 & 24, Dec 8 & 22	RV Audubon Society Volunteers	North Mountain Park
Press Flower Creations	Nov 7	Shelly Jillson	North Mountain Park
Climate Change in the Rogue Valley Session 1 & 2	Nov 13	Alan Journet	North Mountain Park
Winter Birds of Ashland & Jackson County	Nov 15 & 17	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park
Climate Change in the Rogue Valley Session 3	Nov 20	Alan Journet	North Mountain Park
Pruning Japanese Maples	Nov 28	Julie Gates	North Mountain Park
Wreath Making	Nov 29	Ashland Senior Center Staff	Ashland Senior Center
Wreath Making	Nov 29	Linda Chesney	North Mountain Park
Wreath Making	Dec 1	Linda Chesney	North Mountain Park
Winter Birds of the Klamath Basin	Lecture Dec 6 Field Trip Dec 8	Harry Fuller	North Mountain Park



COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Nature Center sponsored three annual free public educational events in 2012 and one additional special event. Rogue Valley Bird Day took place on May 14, and the Bear Creek Salmon Festival on October 1, both at North Mountain Park. Nature Center Staff also participated in Rogue Valley Earth Day (at ScienceWorks Hands-on Museum) on April 21. A special event took place at North Mountain Park on June 23, when Elders, Council representatives and other members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde came to Ashland to share the story of what happened to their people before and after their removal to reservation land west of Salem in the 1850s. A variety of demonstrations, including dancing, weaving, flint knapping, and beading, were presented to an appreciative audience.



These dancers performed as part of the sign dedication

Rogue Valley Bird Day

Celebrated on the second Saturday of May, this annual event is in local recognition of International Migratory Bird Day which highlights many important aspects of bird migration. The 2012 event theme, “Connecting People to Bird Conservation,” helped to draw a receptive morning crowd to North Mountain Park to have fun and to learn about many conservation efforts. Hosted by the Rogue Valley Audubon Society and the Klamath Bird Observatory, along with North Mountain Park staff and volunteers, the event drew all ages and all levels of birdwatchers, from beginners to more experienced birders.



Bear Creek Salmon Festival

In acknowledgement of all the recent improvements to salmon habitat in our region, “Salmon” reappeared in the name of this annual watershed-awareness event which took place showcasing North Mountain Park on the traditional date, the first Saturday in October. Over 500 folks of all ages attended this free event and enjoyed a variety of fun outdoor activities such as: fly and spin-casting, exploring aquatic organisms in Bear Creek, listening to Native American drumming and story-telling, and learning how to become better stewards of local streams. Regional organizations and businesses offered interactive exhibits, while live entertainment and a tasty food concession by Fulcrum Dining rounded out the day. The food cart service was assisted by the Jackson County Master Recyclers in serving on durable eat-ware and thereby reducing the event’s waste stream. “Watershed Awareness Month,” featuring a month-long calendar of activities coordinated by contributing partners, expanded the learning opportunities beyond the day of the event.



Photos Courtesy Jeffrey McFarland

Another exciting educational addition to the event this year was a Salmon Sightings option for anyone spotting salmon anywhere in Bear Creek. The Bear Creek Watershed Council set up a Naturalist link to their website where observers could note locations, dates and comments as well as photos of salmon sightings.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

K to 5th Grade

In 2012, 19 classes participated in the spring field programs at the park during 2012. The topic for the spring programs, Water of the Rogue Valley, included several activities geared toward showing where our water comes from and why it is so necessary to conserve water. For the younger students, the water program included the use of a circulating stream table, which helped to demonstrate the history of water use in the valley, a pond encounter to take a close-up look at the five life zones around wetlands, and a field-size layout of the water cycle to allow the children to role-play being water droplets going through the cycle. Older students were given the opportunity to construct a water filter that demonstrated the process of wetland filtration, and they participated in a game to show how and when we use the most water. As part of our sustainability mission, students were also shown how the park has incorporated the use of bioswales to help slow down and filter runoff from parking lots, rain barrels to store water, and drought-tolerant plants to conserve water in the landscape.

During the fall, 22 classes participated in field programs geared toward teaching about Plants of the Rogue Valley. Younger students focused on learning how flowers turn into seeds, how seeds are dispersed, and how animals use plants for food and shelter. Older students made the connection between people and plants by learning how indigenous cultures around the globe utilize the native plants of their region in practical and spiritual ways. Older students also learned how we care for native plants in our area as they took on the role of forester and soil scientist. Once again, a committed team of volunteer and student instructors were instrumental in helping teach these programs.



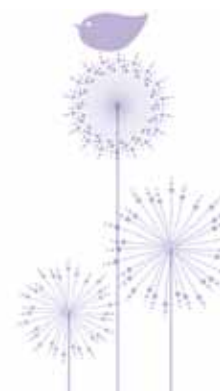
4th grade students are learning how to estimate the height and age of a Ponderosa Pine Tree



A Home-school student with a willow wand she made and decorated

SCHOOL PROGRAMS 2012

SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE LEVEL	PROGRAM/S
BELLVIEW	Renee Gardner	1	Water, Plants
	Joyce Schlecht	K	Water
	Pam Eddington	1	Water, Plants
	Alison Blakeslee	2	Plants
	Julie Anderson	1	Plants
HELMAN	Tia McLean	K	Water
	Mia Driscoll	K	Water
	Valerie McCoy	1	Water
	Mary Snowden	2	Water
	Berit Larson	2	Water
	Kari Smith	1	Plants
	Mark Sherbow	4-5	Plants
	Trish Dorr	5	Plants
JOHN MUIR	Shannon Wolff	1-2	Water, Plants
CHILDREN'S WORLD MONTESSORI	Hale	K	Water
TALENT ELEMENTARY	Diane Bracamontes	4	Plants



SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE LEVEL	PROGRAM/S
WALKER	Kacy Cuddy	K	Water, Plants
	Kathleen Mateas	1	Water, Plants
	Lynn Fain	2	Water, Plants
	Ryan Jackson	1	Water, Plants
	Inge Kendrick	2	Water, Plants
	Chris Stokes	K	Water, Plants
	Debi Blair	3-4	Water, Plants
	Toni Martinez	3-4	Water
	Nancy Keim	3-4	Water
	Tyler Clatcomb	3	Plants
	Dylana Garfas-Know	4	Plants
	Jennifer Parks	4	Plants
	ASHLAND MIDDLE	Hilary Harper	6
Beth Oehler		6	Water, Compass & Survival
Terry Karlin		6	Compass & Survival
Bonnie McCracken		6	Compass & Survival
Karly Pryor		6	Compass & Survival
WILLOW WIND	Lacy Kleespie	2	Plants
	Robin Hawlet	1	Plants
ABRAHAM LINCOLN (MEDFORD)	Teresa McGrath	3-5	Plants

Briscoe Geology Park

The Briscoe Geology Park, with its Walk Through Time exploring Earth’s earliest beginnings, was again the site of several geology field trips. The field trips were led by local geologist Len Eisenberg, who also designed and helped build the park. Len also visited several classrooms to present a series of activities related to the Earth’s ancient history. Len conducted 14 classroom presentations and 6 field trips to the Geology Park classes in grades 5—10. Nature Center staff met with Len and teachers from the Ashland Middle School to discuss ways of expanding the program to incorporate the use of the time wall that was recently built at ScienceWorks.



This rock wall at ScienceWorks, along with the Briscoe Geology Park, are used to interpret local geologic history

BRISCOE GEOLOGY PARK – SCHOOL PROGRAMS 2012

SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE LEVEL	PROGRAM/S
Eagle Point Middle School	John Janacek	6-7	6 Classroom Geology Programs
Willow Wind	Kim Freeman	3	1 Classroom Geology Program
Willow Wind	Robin Hawley	5	1 Classroom Geology Program
Willow Wind	Robin Hawley	5	Briscoe Geology Park Program
John Muir School	James Bowers	5-6	1 Classroom Geology Program
John Muir School	Candy Gregos	7-8	1 Classroom Geology Program
John Muir School	Camille Siders	3-4	1 Classroom Geology Program
Willow Wind	Kim Freeman	3	Briscoe Geology Park Program
John Muir School	James Bowers	5-6	Briscoe Geology Park Program
John Muir School	Camille Siders	3-4	Briscoe Geology Park Program
John Muir School	Candy Gregos	7-8	Briscoe Geology Park Program
Lone Pine Elementary, Medford	Heidi Gantz	6	1 Classroom Geology Program
John Muir School	Bowers & Gregos	6-8	1 Classroom Oil & Gas Program
Lone Pine Elementary, Medford	Heidi Gantz	6	Briscoe Geology Park Program
Lone Pine Elementary, Medford	Heidi Gantz	6	Scientific Nomenclature, Oil & Gas Program

Workshops

As part of an ongoing effort to increase collaboration among local environmental education providers who network through SOREEL (Southern Oregon Regional Environmental Education Leaders), Nature Center staff helped plan a four day teacher institute in August. The institute, which was the second annual such event, helped to introduce teachers to a variety of field



trip and classroom opportunities related to environmental education. As part of the workshop, a resource fair with 18 local providers helped to introduce the teachers to the wide variety of programs available to them.



Additional Programs

Several other programs were provided by North Mountain Park staff and volunteers including:

- Two Kindergarten classes from Helman school toured the Ashland Creek Park Community Garden
- Two Southern Oregon University Native American Ecology classes toured the Park learning primarily about ethnobotanical plants
- A group of Southern Oregon University students participating in “Beak Week” learned about their mascot, the Red-tailed Hawk, and were lead on a guided bird walk in the park

“Children learn about the rain forest but not about their own region’s forest”

— Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

STUDENT PROJECTS

2012 marked the 17th year that the Nature Center has partnered with SOU on senior, capstone and thesis-level projects. This year, five students, two undergraduate and three graduate level environmental education students, completed projects with the Nature Center. Included in the list was a project focusing on restoration of the wetlands across the road at Riverwalk Park, another project focusing on organizing the pre-school puppet shows, a third project geared toward the development of a series of round-table activities for the exhibit room, and a team effort between two students to research and present to elementary school children the history and use of our local mineral water and hot springs. In addition, several students from SOU came to the park on their own time to volunteer with the field programs and to help teach service learning activities.



SOU student Rikki Miller gets ready to taste the water at Buckhorn Springs as part of her research project related to local mineral water and hot springs

STUDENT PROJECTS 2012

STUDENT	AFFILIATION/SCHOOL	PROJECT
Hannah Kolhni	SOU EE* Masters	Mineral Water Presentation
Jolene Walker	SOU Capstone	Riverwalk Park Restoration
Rikki Miller	SOU Capstone	Use of Local Mineral Water
Libby VanWyhe	SOU EE Masters	Puppet Show Organization
Stacy Perry	SOU EE Masters	Round Table Activities

*Environmental Education



SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Service learning programs were offered throughout 2012 and attracted groups from Ashland and beyond. By engaging in meaningful service activities, while learning environmental stewardship, participants and Ashland Parks & Recreation both benefitted from these programs. During 2012, seventeen classes and service groups (348 individuals), 3rd grade to adult, participated in service learning programs.



Service learning projects resulted in 262 hours of outdoor service conducted at North Mountain Park and other parks in Ashland. In addition, North Mountain Park staff facilitated five Service Learning educational components to Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer camp participants

Participating groups included school classes from 3rd through 12th grade and service organizations such as scouts and church groups and other groups such as Konoway Nika Tillicum, a national summer academy for Native American youth. Still lacking an Ameri-Corps Service Learning Coordinator on staff, service learning programs were again offered on limited days of the week during the high-demand (spring) season. Volunteers assisted North Mountain Park staff in facilitating programs as availability allowed.

SERVICE LEARNING 2012

GROUP	LEADER/ TEACHER	DATE	NO. OF PEOPLE	HOURS <i>(of entire activity)</i>	SERVICE HOURS <i>(total man hrs of service)</i>	WORK COMPLETED/ LOCATION
Riverdale High	Laurie LePore	Mar 21	40	2.5	50	Plants and People— Willow copice and weeding
Central Medford High	Kim Woodbridge	Mar 23	10	1.5	5	Water Quality— Blackberry removal
Rogue River Elementary	Jon Buckley	May 7	30	2	30	Bird Nerds with Trail chipping
Howard Elementary	Jessica Silva	May 14	22	2	11	Bird Nerds with Trail chipping
Howard Elementary	Cheryl Lasley	May 18	22	2	11	Bird Nerds with Trail chipping

GROUP	LEADER/ TEACHER	DATE	NO. OF PEOPLE	HOURS <i>(of entire activity)</i>	SERVICE HOURS <i>(total man hrs of service)</i>	WORK COMPLETED/ LOCATION
Howard Elementary	Jennifer Horton	May 21	22	2	11	Bird Nerds with Trail chipping
Cub Scout Pack 12	Stacy Shaver	May 22	7	2	3	Bird Nerds with Trail chipping
Orchard Hill Elementary	Bonnie Swanberg	Jun 1	29	2	29	What's in the Creek—Blackberry removal
Orchard Hill Elementary	Lara Liden	Jun 1	31	2	31	What's in the Creek—Blackberry removal
St Mary's Prep Track	Monique Abbett	Jun 5	16	2	12	Bird Nerds with Blackberry removal on Bear Creek
Cub Scout Pack 12	Stacy Shaver	Oct 10	7	2	7	Bird Nerds with blackberry removal on Bear Creek
SOU Make-a-Difference	Britany	Oct 27	4	2.5	10	Bird Buffet take-down and blackberry removal
John Muir School	Jim Bowers	Oct 25	27	2.5	27	Plants and People—Willow copice and weeding
John Muir School	Jim Bowers	Sep 17	28	2	28	Water Quality—Blackberry removal on Bear Creek
Camp Gesher	Andrea Shupack	Aug 7	16	1.5	6	Plant Activity & Environmental Art
SOU Konaway Nika Tillicum	Carol Jensen	Jul 11	38	2	38	Aquatic Insects—Blackberry removal near Bear Creek
Girl Scouts	Jennifer Akins	Jun 29	8	2	8	Plants and People—Weed and water ethno trail
YCC	Lori Ainsworth	Jul 16	10			Water Quality—Led learning componet only
YCC	Lori Ainsworth	Jul 17	10			Invasive species
YCC	Lori Ainsworth	Jul 18	10			Environmental Art
YCC	Lori Ainsworth	Jul 24	11			Invasive species
YCC	Lori Ainsworth	Jul 25	11			Environmental Art
TOTALS			348		262	

STEWARDSHIP

OUTDOOR SERVICE

North Mountain Park staff offers outdoor service and stewardship opportunities to students and community members. Ashland Parks & Recreation Volunteer Coordinator Lori Ainsworth now facilitates the majority of Ashland Parks & Recreation volunteer outdoor service projects. In 2012 North Mountain Park staff led outdoor service programs for four full days at Ashland Ponds, engaging Helman School students in 188 service hours. A group of SOU students was led by North Mountain Park staff in clearing blackberries and preparing the Bird Buffet habitat garden for winter. All participants were provided with equipment, gloves and snacks, along with a brief, informal educational overview relevant to the service projects.

Individual volunteers logged 448 hours of outdoor service in 2012. Ashland Police assigned community service workers engaged in 106 hours of outdoor service work in 2012, coordinated by North Mountain Park staff. Their involvement is often a positive experience for them as well as providing the obvious benefit to Ashland Parks & Recreation and the Nature Center.

MONITORING

Students, natural resource professionals, and Ashland Parks & Recreation staff participate in monitoring efforts at North Mountain Park. The North Mountain Park monitoring efforts contribute valuable scientific data to regional and global monitoring programs, help to teach about monitoring methods and strategies, and engage volunteers in exciting, authentic environmental stewardship. The data collected also helps to guide the on-going management of the park's natural area.

Weather Station

A computer monitor inside the Nature Center displays current weather data received from the weather station located on the roof, and educational information about the weather station's instruments along with sustainable living suggestions. Gardeners are encouraged to check current conditions by accessing the weather station on-line, and utilize that information to conserve water by adjusting irrigation schedules.



View of the weather station from the top of the Nature Center



Bird Monitoring

Volunteers, the public, and staff are involved in on-going bird monitoring programs at the Nature Center. Project FeederWatch, now in its eighth year, takes place from November to March. Monthly area search surveys are conducted by expert volunteers throughout the year. Nest box monitoring utilizes volunteers to maintain and monitor the use of numbered nest boxes during the spring and summer breeding season at North Mountain Park. A group of OSU students on spring break will be installing rat-proof boxes in 2013 to thwart rat infestation that has been a problem in recent years. Park visitors continued to record their wildlife sightings on a dry-erase board outside the Nature Center. This information is compiled on a monthly basis and reviewed by staff for updates to the North Mountain Park database. A volunteer also records Project FeederWatch and sightings board data in “eBird,” a Cornell Lab of Ornithology database.

Turtle Monitoring

An SOU student in Dr. Michael Parker’s fall term used baited floating live traps to monitor Western Pond Turtles in the ponds located in the park’s natural area. Although the results of her study have not yet been received, one large male was estimated to be over 50 years old. A small female was aged at three years old, indicating that some reproduction has taken place since the restoration and re-grading of the ponds occurred in 1999.



Dr. Michael Parker with a Western Pond Turtle

Salmon Monitoring

Chinook Salmon were again observed spawning at the park this fall and were documented in a spawning survey report by Eugene Weir of the FreshWater Trust. Eugene’s recommendation; “resurvey this reach for fall Chinook on an annual or bi-annual basis so that we can continue to document the presence of this species and continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the boulder weirs and future habitat improvement projects.”

SUSTAINABILITY

Green Business Program

The City of Ashland promotes resource conservation, waste and pollution reduction, and education for employees and the public through the Green Business Program. North Mountain Park received certification through the program in 2009, and the entire department is working toward certification as well. Rachel Dials, Brenda Hammers and Linda Chesney are the current Green Team members for Ashland Parks & Recreation.

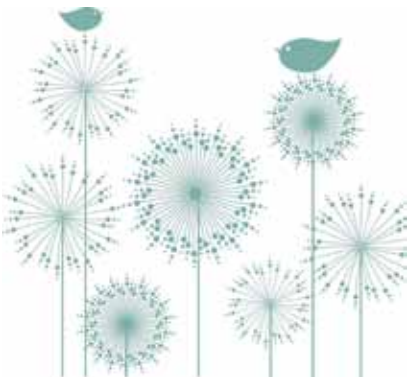
Solid Waste: Ashland Parks & Recreation participated in the hazardous waste event in May and the plastic round-up in October. The Nature Center recycled plastics at the annual plastic round-up. The Bear Creek Salmon Festival on October 6 was again run as a Zero Waste event. The planning committee chose to use both rented and borrowed (from Darex) durable dishware, and the Jackson County Master Recyclers ran the scraping and rinsing station. The concessionaire cooperated by minimizing the use of dishware.

Energy: Light switch timers are being installed at each shop location to prevent energy waste from lights being left on. Timers have now been installed in the restrooms in the Lithia Parks office building, with others to be installed soon. Reminders have been sent recently to a city electrician.

Facilities Review: Since the Green team toured the Ashland Parks office and shared recycling ideas, custodial staff has begun collecting commingle from the Parks Office break room. Lithia office staff and North Mountain Park staff now periodically check in for current information on recycling and green product sources. Compostable cups and plates are used at Ashland Parks & Recreation safety meetings and volunteer events.

Green Living Project

This project, designed to highlight and promote green living practices modeled at North Mountain Park is now complete. The “Green Living Home”, a diorama featuring green building design and materials, was wrapped up this year, including hands-on activities for kids and an insert/addendum to the brochure.



Green Living Home exhibit
in the Nature Center



Green Educational Programs

The Nature Center continues to try to meet the demand for programs on sustainability topics. In addition to popular programs that are repeated periodically, new topics this year included Climate Change, Building a Solar Oven Workshop, and Preserving Summer's Bounty. Sustainability practices are also incorporated into school field trips and service learning programs in a variety of ways such as the green lunch buckets and conservation and stewardship themes and activities.



Solar Oven Building Workshop

New Recycling Area



Slab being poured for the recycling area

With the help of Risa Buck of Ashland Recology, Nature Center staff completed a plan for moving the park's trash and recycling receptacles to a location that is more accessible to ball field concession users and to the pavilion for picnickers and program participants. The bins have been partially changed out and relabeled to bring them up to date with current recycling streams for collection of trash, glass and refundable plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Mosaic artist Susan Springer has designed an exterior sidewalk base with mosaic to increase

access and visibility for recycling containers. The proposed changes will make the area more attractive and informational and make the recycling bins more convenient and user friendly. Ashland Recology is paying for Susan's artwork, and Ashland Parks & Recreation Department poured the slab and provided relabeling and installation of the bins. The mosaic installation has begun and will be completed as soon as weather permits.

Environmental Impact Award

During the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association (ORPA) Statewide conference in October, Nature Center co-directors Kari Gies and Linda Chesney received the ORPA Environmental Impact Award, which acknowledges park and recreation professionals who have achieved excellence in leading their agency and community to a more environmentally sustainable future. Conference attendees from all over the state were given a tour of North Mountain Park and the Nature Center and also toured Siskiyou Mountain Park with other park staff.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Ashland Parks & Recreation Department offered recreational community garden spaces for non-commercial organic gardening in four community gardens with coordination by Nature Center staff. Volunteer garden managers assisted with management of each of the community gardens, with all garden members being required to volunteer a minimum of four hours to help maintain common areas and contribute to other garden endeavors. There were no changes in the fee structure for garden leases. The 2012 growing season ended with no-wait list for Clay St Garden and plots available for everyone on the Ashland Creek Garden wait list. Currently there are waiting lists for Scenic Park and Garden Way for next season. The Ashland Community Gardens are located at:



Garden Way Park Community Garden

- Ashland Creek Property at 27 E Hersey St
- Scenic Park at 603 Scenic Dr
- Clay Street Park at 491 Clay St
- Garden Way Park at 1620 Clark St



Linda Chesney, Stewardship Coordinator, inspecting Garden Way Park Community Garden



2012 AT A GLANCE

Community Programs & Events

Number of programs: 113

Number of events: 2

School Programs

Number of K-5 field programs: 41

Number of 6-8 programs: 11

Number of Briscoe Geology Park programs: 20

Total number of programs: 72

Total number of students served: 1,800

Service & Service Learning Programs

Number of service programs: 9

Number of service learning programs: 11

Total number served: 500

Student Projects

Number of student projects: 5

Volunteers

Total number of volunteers: 103

Number of new volunteers: 19

Number of individual volunteer hours logged: 3,347

Number of mandatory service hours logged: 106

Number of group service hours logged: 200

Completed Projects

Artistic fire pit cover

Shelter building log

Updated the outdoor recycling containers

Updated the garden orientation sign

Expanded the pioneer garden

Completed 45 animal interpretive cards

Updated the Native American background booklet

Updated the History background booklet



Welcome to North Mountain Park

620 N Mountain Ave
Ashland, OR 97520

541.488.6606
www.northmountainpark.org



★ YOU ARE HERE

• Bioswales

• Restrooms & Drinking Fountains

• Children's Play Areas

• Restricted Wildlife Areas

North Mountain Park is open daily,
sunrise to sunset

ASHLAND
PARKS
& RECREATION

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