

Ashland Woodlands & Trails Association

P.O. Box 1075
Ashland, OR 97520

*Preserving Ashland's Unique
Beauty for Future Generations*

(printed on 100% recycled paper)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, Nov. 21, 2004
Trail Hike with Emily Zook

Saturday, Jan. 29, 2005
Birdsong Lane Trail
Construction Event

Sunday, Feb. 13, 2005
Trail Hike with Emily Zook

Saturday, Mar. 12, 2004
Trail Construction Event
(TBD)

Saturday, April 23, 2005
Earth Day

For more information on trail events contact John at 482-7562. For information on trail hikes contact Emily at 482-5690.

Ashland Trail Hikes

by Emily Zook

Ashland offers so many wonderful public hiking trails that the residents of our community use on a daily basis. Personally, I love that fact that within as little as five minutes from almost anywhere in town, I can be deep in the forest, surrounded by the unique



beauty of the Siskiyou Mountains. Best of all, Ashland has trails for people of every age and ability. In fact, it is our abundance of trails for hiking and my strong commitment to keeping these trails open to the public that first drew me to the AWTA.

For the past year I have been leading regular trail hikes throughout the Ashland trail system. These hikes are for AWTA members and residents alike – and they are a great way to

learn more about your trail system and make new friends.

For those of you who are looking for an easier hike, may I suggest the trails in Lithia Park or the 22-acre, city-owned Hald-Strawberry open space. Maps of these trails are available on our web site www.ashlandtrails.org or at local bookstores. If you're looking for a more challenging hike, Pilot Rock might be a good choice for you. This is a wonderful journey, which involves some rock scrambling, but it rewards you with some of the most amazing views of the Rogue Valley and Mt. Shasta. On the gentle end of the scale, the trail that my 3-year-old grandson and I like best is Todd-Oredson Woods. It offers meandering trails, a picturesque waterfall, a small bridge to cross over the creek ... and maybe even a friendly troll.

Find out more about these or other trail hikes by visiting our website under "Events," or call me at 482-5690.



A Letter from the President

Our Trail System Needs You



As the new president of the AWTA, I'd personally like to thank you for your support of trails and open space in Ashland. Our trails are integral to life in Ashland – a place to exercise, to meet friends, to find spiritual and physical renewal.

I was recently reminded of the need to protect our trails during a trail run near Ostrich Peak in the Ashland watershed. One of my favorite trails had been obliterated by a bulldozer a few weeks earlier. The sight confirmed for me that our vision of a connected and protected trail system is essential and timely. We must ensure that there are no more closures to the trails we've got. As an active member of the AWTA board, you can count on me to see that the Ashland trail system is protected and improved.

In addition to a recent change in the presidency of the AWTA, there have been some changes on our board. We would like to thank Richard Hendrickson, Jim Moore, David Chapman, Roy Marvin, Kim Marie Murphy and Barbara Massey for their commitment to trails over the past several years. At the same time, we welcome new board members John Price, Rich Vanderwyst, and Torsten Heycke.

As we enter our fall season, there are many trail events and activities for our members to take part in. If you're interested in helping us to protect and add to our trail system, call me at 482-4392 or drop us an email at info@ashlandtrails.org.

*Happy trails,
Rob Cain*

Ashland's Master Trail Plan

Strengthening our community through a connected trail system

by Scott Kurtz



LIVING HERE IN ASHLAND, it's easy to see why our city is often placed on the national lists of "Best Places to Live" in America. In addition to having a rich cultural life, Ashland is a place of unique natural beauty, surrounded as it is by hills of green, nestled within the picturesque Siskiyou Mountains. However, unknown to many of the tourists who venture to our town each year is one of our greatest treasures – our abundance of trails and public open space surrounding our community. However, while our trails are a prized community asset, many of them have recently been closed or are in danger of being closed due to development or property owners' not being informed.

Since 2001, the Ashland Woodlands & Trails Association (AWTA) has been committed to protecting Ashland's open space and trails. As a private, nonprofit organization, we've worked hard to raise funds to purchase easements and create a connected trail system for the people of Ashland. In partnership with the City of Ashland, the Ashland Parks Commission, and the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department, we've been moving steadily towards this goal.

To help us reach this collective vision of a connected trail system, the AWTA and its partners created a committee to inventory existing trails, identify trail corridors, and "fill in" the missing pieces of a potential trail structure. The Ashland Master Trail Plan (MTP) Committee was formed in the fall of 2003 to research and create a master plan to be adopted by the Ashland City Council. As an AWTA board member and chairman of the Ashland MTP Committee, I want to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about this committee and its achievements to date.

The MTP Committee consists of seven voting members – two Parks commissioners, one City Council member, two AWTA board members, and two members of the public – in addition to staff support from the Planning and Engineering Departments, and the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department.

Yet, while our trails are a prized community asset, many of these trails have been recently closed or are in danger of being closed due to development and uninformed property owners.

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Ashland's Master Trail Plan
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MTP Committee Members

AWTA: Scott Kurtz (chairman),

Kim Marie Murphy (retired board member)

Ashland Parks Commission:

Jim Lewis, Diane Amarotico

City Council: Chris Hearn

General Public: Bob Altaras,

Jim McGinnis

City Staff: John McLaughlin

(Planning); Don Robertson,

Susan Dyssegard, Jeff McFarland

(Parks & Recreation); and

Rich Hall (Engineering).

Defining the Mission

One of the committee's first tasks was to create a mission statement that would encompass a broad vision for our community. Here is what we came up with:

The mission of the group is to develop a Trail Master Plan for the City of Ashland, which will include both public trails and private easements. The trails will be used by pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, and will provide connectivity between neighborhoods and to

the downtown, as well as to the watershed and the Bear Creek Greenway. In addition, they will be used for recreational purposes and be a part of the City's overall transportation system.

Our next step was to identify tasks and create subcommittees – the Vision, Document, Map, and Public Process Subcommittees – to fulfill our mission over the ensuing twelve months, through January 2005.

The **Vision Subcommittee** was assigned the task of creating a number of essential documents to help in the creation of the trail system, including an overall master trail route encircling Ashland; an inventory of current trails and a list of potential new trails needed to complete a connected trail system; a list of potential funding sources to obtain property and support the creation of new trail access; and a document that defines the various types of trails and paths, along with their uses and standards. Finally, this committee intends to create a document of strategies for implementation to accompany these other documents. It is our hope that staff and citizens can utilize these documents as a “road map” for future trail creation.

AWTA Volunteers

AWTA volunteers, in partnership with Ashland Parks and Recreation Department and the National Park Service (NPS), recently completed another successful trail- and bridge-building event in North Mountain Park. AWTA received a \$16,000 grant from NPS towards construction of the bridge and trail that will eventually connect the Ashland Village neighborhood to the Bear Creek Greenway. Anyone interested in helping to volunteer for future trail events, please call John Price at 482-7562.

Left to right: David Chapman, Robert McLellan, Chris Hearn, Kate Jackson, Alan DeBoer, Joseph Hearn, Moira Cain, Jim Lewis, JoAnne Eggers, Rob Cain, and Diane Amarotico.

The **Document Subcommittee** was charged with establishing the context for the Master Trail Plan by writing – with help from community resources – reports on trail history, flora and fauna, watershed issues, trail maintenance and specifications, trail use policies, and partnerships. This background information will support the location and type of trails to be built, as well as supply an educational document for submission to city staff and residents.

Researching the Trail Corridors

The **Map Subcommittee** has been researching all of the public access easements and “existing use” trails within the city limits to create a potential trail system map. This group has identified three major lateral trail corridors that run through Ashland, roughly from east to west. These are the Bear Creek Greenway, the Bike Path, and the TID irrigation ditch trail. The map committee then took the city's current open space map as a baseline and laid out the trail system research map on top of it, thereby identifying missing links and corridors in Ashland's trail system.

Analyzing the two maps, the members of the Map Subcommittee concluded that the creek corridors in Ashland, which travel from north to south, offer unique connections to the three main lateral trails. These creek corridors are Wright's Creek, Ashland Creek, Roca Creek, Hamilton and Clay Creeks, and Tolman Creek. By combining the main lateral trails with the creek corridor trails, the group was able to design a potential connected trail system around and through Ashland.

The trail system research map created by the MTP Committee is now posted for community feedback in four public locations throughout the city: the library, the YMCA, the Community Development Building, and the Parks & Recreation office.

Seeking Public Input

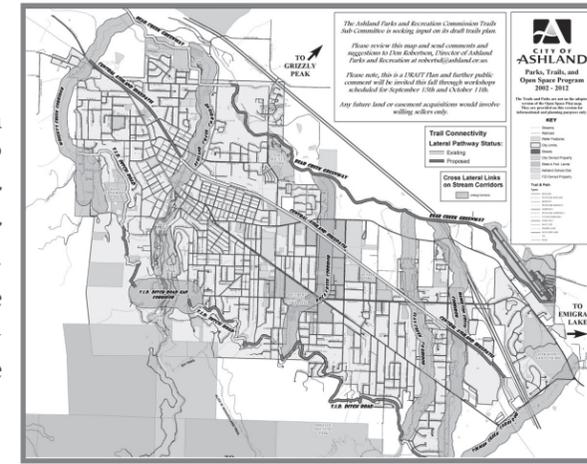
The **Public Process Subcommittee** has focused on organizing public meetings to open the MTP Committee process to the community. The MTP Committee held its first public meeting on June 7, 2004 to unveil the trail system research map and request feedback from the community. A second public meeting was held on September 13, 2004 at a private residence on Strawberry Lane and focused on the potential Wrights Creek corridor. A third public meeting was held on October 11, 2004 and focused on Tolman Creek, Hamilton Creek, and Clay Creek corridors. At each of these meetings, public turnout was excellent and the feedback was extremely useful.

Creating the Final Plan

Once we have completed our series of public meetings, the MTP Committee will create a final proposed trail system map and turn it over to the

Ashland Parks Commission and the Ashland City Council to be reviewed and adopted into the City Comprehensive Plan.

Everyone involved in this process has come to realize that establishing a master trail plan calls for a long-term vision and the open and honest participation of the community and city organizations. We believe that with a strong public/private partnership and



Ashland Master Trail Research Map

On display for public input at the Library, YMCA, Community Development Building, and the Parks & Recreation Office.

lots of patience, we can make this dream a reality.

To become involved in the process of helping to create the Ashland trail system plan, contact me at 482-0796, or the Ashland Parks & Recreation office at 488-5340, for more information. Monthly MTP Committee meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 1:00 PM in the Parks & Recreation office in Lithia Park. The public is invited.

Rob Cain: *President*
Michael Donovan: *Vice President*
Chris Hearn: *Secretary*
Rob Cain: *Acting Treasurer*

Board:

Torsten Heycke Scott Kurtz
Robert McLellan Emily Zook
John Price Rich Vanderwyst

GUEST COLUMN

Don Robertson

Director, Ashland Parks and Recreation Department

Why are Trails in Ashland Important?

We have all heard the cliché “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” This phrase can be applied to many different situations – and our trail system can certainly be included in this list. For some people, trails are little more than a means of transportation, perhaps a quicker route to the store or their place of work.

Others like to use the trails to achieve better physical health. From my office, which is located along a path in Lithia Park – one of the prettiest and most interesting sections of our trail system – I see a continuous stream of joggers and walkers, both old and young, using the trails for their personal goals.

For still others, as I have observed, the search for a different kind of fitness brings them to our trails. I like to call this “fitness of the mind.” As these trail users pause to enjoy the flora or share a conspiratorial whisper with a walking partner, social connections are made and peace of mind is achieved.

These, for me, are just a few of the reasons why trails and a connected trail system are important assets to our beautiful town. For whatever reasons people choose to use our trails, Ashland offers many wonderful choices.

Don can be reached at
robertsd@ashland.or.us.

AWTA Contact Info:
Ashland Woodlands & Trails Association

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