



FRIENDS OF
Hendricks Park

NEWS FROM THE

Park Bench

EUGENE'S FIRST PARK

FALL 2020

What a Year It's Been!


In the third week of March, due to COVID-19 guidelines, Parks and Open Space cancelled all group volunteer events, first through April 8 and then through May 11. Hendricks Park Volunteer Coordinator Christina Bentrup, who doubles as gardener in the Native Plant Garden, was assigned to the City of Eugene's Emergency Operations Center, and spent only minimal time in Hendricks Park. She returned to normal hours the fourth week of April, and spent lots of time weeding.



Rhododendron bloom typically peaks in early May, making the park a favorite destination on Mother's Day. The Rhododendron Garden was very busy with visitors the week leading up to Mother's Day, so lead worker Emily Aune took extra precautions to help with social distancing, such as marking some trails one-way. "To avoid high levels of foot traffic on our narrow trails, we also asked the city's marketing department to do some outreach and request that people NOT visit the garden that day," Emily

said. "The marketing team created a virtual walking tour of the garden so folks could see the blooms from home." Perhaps that's why this Mother's Day was less busy than any other day that week.

Some trusted volunteers worked in the park on their own all through the closure. Group volunteer activities started up again right after Mother's Day, with masks, social distancing and no snacks. Attendance was sparse at first, but picked up as spring moved into summer. By the end of August, attendance was excellent, with several newcomers joining the group's 'old faithfuls.' Then came the smoke, and two more weeks without volunteering, as Hendricks Park was closed.

Since the park reopened, volunteers have returned with enthusiasm—masked of course—to the park's two gardens and, with the help of several new recruits, have been piling on the hours, for a total of 1737, May through October. And in spite of the closures, volunteer activities in the park's forest have not suffered: this past 'forest year' (September 2019 through July 3, 2020), 453 volunteers totaled 1479 hours, actually surpassing the previous year's numbers. 

Our Mission: To provide stewardship for Hendricks Park through education, restoration and community support.

info@friendsofhendrickspark.org • www.friendsofhendrickspark.org • 541-607-4066

Birds and Smoke

Quite a few of us are wondering how the smoke from September's wildfires may have affected birds. Our gardens and woodlands seemed deathly quiet when air quality was at its worst, and there were several observations of birds behaving abnormally—spending more time on the ground or flocking to a water source, for example.


Happily, birdsong has returned to Eugene, but we emailed the question to local bird authority Dan Gleason. "Obviously, some birds were displaced by the fires, and there was significant habitat loss," he said. "Heavy smoke can severely limit visibility and cause disorientation in some birds, but many birds can escape the flames and fly above fire, becoming displaced but not harmed." Studies on domestic poultry that cannot escape heavy smoke show some health impact, but studies on wild birds are mostly lacking.

Some people have speculated that birds might accumulate more damaging toxins and particulates in smoke than mammals because birds have an efficient respiratory system that takes in more air and might therefore capture more particulates. But Dan makes a convincing case that birds might be harmed less than mammals because the avian respiratory system is very different from that of mammals.

In mammals, air enters and exits the body by the same route. Small particulates in smoke can become lodged in the alveoli, the tiny sacs in the lungs where gas exchange takes place. Instead of this in-and-out flow, birds have a


constant one-way flow of air, Dan said. "The lungs are small in comparison, and do not expand and contract as mammalian lungs do. Air travels continuously through the lung, via tiny vessels lying side by side with blood capillaries, allowing for gas exchange." In this system, particulates pass through the lungs with little chance to accumulate.

Dan added: "You may have read about large die-offs of many kinds of birds recently in the Southwest, especially New Mexico. Some people have attributed that to the fires in Oregon and California, but the answer is likely not so simple. At that same time, a massive cold front moved into the middle of the country. Temperatures dropped from the mid-90s into the low 30s overnight. Many insects were killed, and food reserves for birds quickly diminished. Birds did not have time to acclimatize to the cold or the loss of food, and many were forced to fly south before they were ready to do so. They had not built up the necessary fat for such a journey, and many died upon arrival. They experienced total exhaustion and starvation, plus, they were forced to seek food and compete for resources in regions they might not normally be in. The fires here may have also forced some birds to leave early and face the same fate. We simply don't know all of the answers yet for this large problem."

Dan and his wife, Barbara, own *Wild Birds Unlimited* on Willamette Street in Eugene. Dan has posted two articles on birds, fire and smoke to the store's Facebook page. 



Volunteer Sought for Bench Refinishing

The Native Plant Garden has four benches, each constructed with a slab of yew wood resting on stone columns. The yew wood tops need to be refinished once a year. The work can be done at the park. Interested? Contact Christina: CBentrup@eugene-or.gov 

Adopt a Forest Plot and Make a Difference

This spring, Friends of Hendricks Park and Hendricks Park Volunteer Coordinator Christina Bentrup started an effective new Adopt a Plot program to keep the beautiful forested area of the park healthy and ivy-free.

Volunteers are assigned small areas of the park that have recently been cleared of ivy and other invasive species. They commit to traipsing through their area three to four times a year looking for ivy and removing it before it has a chance to spread. The work can be done at any time that is convenient—weekends, early mornings, lunchtimes. It's the perfect way to contribute to the health of the park while maintaining all the safety precautions needed during this time of COVID-19.

Six plots have already been adopted, and more "prime" plots are still waiting. Early adopters Val and Dan Close report, "It's so satisfying to walk by our area and see the healthy ferns and wildflowers flourishing and to know

that we had a tiny role in maintaining this area of the forest."

If you are interested in this unique and valuable way to maintain the health of the native forest of Hendricks Park, contact Christina Bentrup at 541-510-4636 or CBentrup@eugene-or.gov




A Forest Charmer

The Douglas squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*), also known as chickaree or pine squirrel, is one of the most vocal and flamboyant residents of Hendricks Park. Drumming its rust-red tail on a branch or from behind a tree trunk, the Douglas squirrel scolds birds, chipmunks, turkeys, deer, dogs and humans with equal enthusiasm. This squirrel has a special affinity with the Douglas-fir tree. Douglas squirrels often reside in Douglas-fir trees, and both squirrel and tree are named after the botanist and explorer David Douglas.

Squirrels may appear to be frolicking, but their acrobatic movements and soaring leaps are actually about eating and storing food. Seeds, fruit and nuts comprise the bulk of their diet. Using their four sturdy front teeth as tools, they peel back Douglas-fir cones and extract the seeds. They stash reserves in root hollows, tree boles and abandoned animal lairs.

Although squirrels are active day and night, they take time to rest. They craft twigs, boughs, moss and bark into bowl-shaped nests 30 or 40 feet off the ground. Kits are birthed in late February, three or four per litter, and each spring a new generation of orange-chested Douglas squirrels inhabits Hendricks Park.

Next time a cheeky Douglas squirrel scolds you for encroaching on its territory, try answering "pillilooeet!"—the Native American imitation of a squirrel's alarm call. 

—Suevo Brooks



PHOTO CREDIT: Photographer Gary Tepfer grew up next to Hendricks Park.

A Little Bit of History

We know that Hendricks Park was established in 1906, when Thomas G. Hendricks and his wife, Martha gave the city of Eugene 47 of the park's 78 acres in the Fairmount Hills.



The city then purchased an additional 31 acres. Some of us have wondered who owned that land before it became Eugene's first city park and how much money the land was worth at that time.

The answer appears in an article in the Eugene Weekly Guard of November 8, 1906:

"The park tract consists of 37 acres of the Sweet donation land claim purchased by Mr. Hendricks from J. G. Bristow for \$2500 [and] 10 acres further south owned by H. F. Kilborn and purchased by Mr. Hendricks for \$1000. . . The other 31 acres have been purchased [by the City of Eugene for \$3100] from Colonel Smith, who owned the greater part of the land where Fairmount now lies when that suburb was laid off into city lots." If anyone has information about these property owners and, especially, what their land had previously been used for, please contact us.



— Christine Goldberg

Volunteers Needed to Help Create History of Hendricks Park

If you are interested in helping the Friends of Hendricks Park with the production of a history of Hendricks Park (such as editing, writing, organizing or researching material, etc.) please contact Sandra Austin at: info@friendsofhendrickspark.org or 541-343-3452.



If Hendricks Park has provided a place of peace or beauty for you during this time of social distancing, please consider a donation to the Friends of Hendricks Park.



Volunteer Spotlight

Jon Heritage has been a regular Tuesday morning volunteer since the fall of 2007! That possibly makes him the longest-serving volunteer who is still going strong. Jon says he enjoys the camaraderie, and doesn't mind hard work. "I can't do everything I used to," he says. But he was recently seen digging out some big old stumps—no mean task.

Jon came to Oregon from New Jersey in the early 1970s. "I was hitch-hiking around the country, and ran out of money in Medford," he says. While working orchards there, he made a quick trip to Eugene and discovered Hendricks Park. "I've had a relationship with the park ever since."



New and Renewing Friends of Hendricks Park

On behalf of the FoHP Board, thank you to the many people who contribute financially to our organization.
Your donation allows us to fulfill our mission with Hendricks Park.

Donors from 4/9/20
through 10/27/20

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Thanks to all our contributors — we regret any omissions or errors.



COVID-19 protocol briefly suspended to commemorate the 93rd birthday of Phyllis Hamel (third from right).

Special Thanks for the Oregon Community Foundation Grant from "The Hendricks Park Native Plant Garden Fund" (Blakely)

Yes! I want to become a member of Friends of Hendricks Park

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/student/limited income | \$20 |
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☐ Native Plant Garden
☐ Rhododendron Garden
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- ☐ Rhododendron Garden
☐ Native Plant Garden
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TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make checks payable to Friends of Hendricks Park

Yes! I want to volunteer

- ☐ Work parties ☐ Education

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Friends of Hendricks Park

P.O. Box 3784, Eugene OR 97403-0784

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Tax ID #93-1330075



**FRIENDS OF
Hendricks Park**

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Volunteer Opportunities

Until further notice, staff and volunteers wear masks, social distancing is required and shared snacks and water are not provided. Please RSVP to all events and attend only if you feel well. We encourage volunteers to bring their own gloves, hand tools, water and snacks. We do have extra gloves and tools to share if needed. To RSVP or for more information about our COVID-19 enhanced safety protocols, contact volunteer coordinator Christina Bentrup at 541-510-4636 or cbentrup@eugene-or.gov.



Free the Forest

- 9 a.m. to noon. Meet in the picnic area. RSVP required.
- Oct 31, 2020. Forest restoration through blackberry removal.
- Nov. 14, 2020. Oak Knoll planting and invasive species removal.
- Dec. 5, 2020. Forest restoration through ivy removal.
- Jan. 16, 2021. Forest restoration through ivy removal

Rhododendron Garden Work Parties

Every Tuesday, 9 a.m. to noon. Meet at the main lawn, off Skyline Blvd. A sign will direct you to the day's work area.

Native Plant Garden Work Parties

Every Thursday, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Meet at the F.M. Wilkins Picnic Shelter.