

Part I: Introduction

Parks

*Parks are full of trees, swings
And other fun things.
Like tennis, football, and slides.
You can even watch a seeker seek while the others hide.
Merry go rounds go around and around
Until you get dizzy and fall to the ground.
Or you can walk, jog, or even run
Parks are full of a lot of fun.
When you hear laughing children you feel free
Especially when you visit your favorite tree.
That's why Cottage Grove's parks are the best
They're better than all the rest.*

*-by Garrett Rhodes
Delight Valley Elementary School, 5th Grade*

Water to Woods: 2003 Cottage Grove Parks Plan

A. INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a guiding philosophy as well as a practical guide for creating a parks, open space and recreation system capable of meeting the current needs of Cottage Grove residents, leading the way towards a better quality of life for future generations and attracting tourism to Cottage Grove. The Plan assesses the physical attributes of the City and the needs and desires of the residents, and establishes goals, policies and specific actions for developing a cohesive and interconnected system of beautification areas, neighborhood and community parks, greenways and natural areas in which the community can take pride.

The City's commitment to park system development began in 1909, when the Cottage Grove Women's Club petitioned the City to create a public park. This resulted in the creation of Coiner Park, which has remained the community's favorite park for almost a century. In the 1960s and 1970s, the City of Cottage Grove led the movement to protect and provide access to the Willamette River Greenway through the acquisition and development of a series of nodal parks along the Coast Fork of the Willamette River through the center of town. The City's last big addition to parks and recreational opportunities was the development of the Row River Trail. Together with the Bureau of Land Management, the City developed a trail that extends 18 miles up Row River past Dorena Reservoir into the forested hills surrounding Cottage Grove.

Cottage Grove's population is growing along with the rest of the southern Willamette Valley. As a testament to its small town roots, the City has a larger population of youth, senior citizens, and low-income families than the surrounding region. As such, the demand for local and accessible parks is high. Though rich in history and forward-thinking in its commitment to greenways and floodplain natural areas, the City's parks system has not continued to grow to meet the recreational and community meeting place needs of the City's expanding residential neighborhoods.

B. PURPOSE

This planning document has several purposes, including to:

1. Identify and prioritize parks, recreation and open space needs, enabling the City to focus fundraising efforts.
2. Evaluate the state of parks and recreation services in Cottage Grove, thereby identifying parks and services that are fulfilling their purpose, parks and services that need improvements and parks and services that should be removed in order to allow the City to focus energy and funds elsewhere.

3. Coordinate provision of parks and recreation resources with non-City entities, such as the State of Oregon, Lane County, South Lane School District, local non-profits and private recreation providers.
4. Meet Statewide Planning Goals.
5. Provide a means for citizens and interest groups to participate in parks, recreation, and open space planning.
6. Educate the public and citizen boards on the importance of parks and recreation, and why these services should continue to be funded or funded at a higher rate.
7. Identify areas of the City parks system where citizens can help through volunteer work.
8. Provide a philosophy of park development and maintenance for citizens, City Councilors and other commissions and staff.
9. Identify methods to ensure adequate, long-range funding for parks acquisition, development and labor needs.

C. PROCESS

Plan development was a team effort on behalf of the City Council, Planning Commission, two citizen advisory boards and City staff. The Parks, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee (POSRAC) was given the charge from the City Council of reviewing and making recommendations for the revision of the 1974 Parks and Recreation Master Plan on August 25, 1997. The committee was disbanded on March 1, 1999.

On July 9, 2001, the Cottage Grove City Council established the Comprehensive Parks Advisory Committee (CPAC) and charged the Committee with reviewing and revising the City's 1974 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan, subject to citizen review and Planning Commission and City Council review and approval. The Committee was to be disbanded at the end of the work period.

The Comprehensive Parks Advisory Committee (CPAC) picked up where POSRAC left off. City staff, primarily from the Community Development and Public Works Departments, conducted research, scheduled meetings and wrote draft portions of the plan.

D. SCOPE

1. Update of Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Upon adoption, this plan updates the 1974 Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Master Plan and amends the 1980 Cottage Grove Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This plan provides goals and policies that will guide park and recreation decisions for the next 15-20 years.

This plan contains: a community overview which includes a review of Cottage Grove's population needs as well as the existing local and regional park system; an evaluation of needs and issues facing Cottage Grove's park system; definitions and standards for use in evaluating and developing Cottage Grove's future park system; and goals, policies and specific recommendations that can be used to guide decision making. An extensive appendix is attached to lend support to these recommendations, including documentation of existing parks and facilities, environmental factors that were used in developing park definition and standards and terminology.

2. Relationship to Other Plans

This plan supports the Statewide Planning Goals (specifically Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas and Open Spaces, Goal 8: Recreational Needs, and Goal 15: Willamette River Greenway) and the 2003-2007 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

This plan addresses parks, recreation, and open space planning within the Cottage Grove Urban Growth Boundary. Other Cottage Grove plans or ordinances address street trees, bike and pedestrian transportation, storm water, neighborhood beautification, cultural services and other related topics. Any references to these other planning areas are made solely in terms of how they relate to parks, recreation and open space planning. This plan is intended be used in coordination with other Cottage Grove plans.

Water to Woods is intended as a planning document. It does not include a schedule of work or a funding proposal.