

# Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan

July 1995





**Benton County  
Parks System**  
Comprehensive Plan

July 1995

**Adopted by the**  
Benton County Board of Commissioners  
Kent Daniels, Chair  
John Dilworth, Commissioner  
Pamela Folts, Commissioner

September 13, 1995

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date

**Directed by**  
Jerry Davis, Benton County Fair & Parks Director  
and the Benton County Parks Advisory Board

**Benton County Parks Division**  
Avery Services Building  
360 SW Avery Avenue  
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

BEFORE THE BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
STATE OF OREGON

In the Matter of Adopting the Benton ) ORDER  
County Parks System Comprehensive Plan. )

WHEREAS, the bylaws of the Benton County Parks Advisory Board authorize that committee to initiate advice to the Benton County Board of Commissioners based on observations of park operations, public concerns as expressed to the committee, concerns of individual committee members, and Parks Department staff input; and

WHEREAS, consideration of these observations, concerns and input has led the Parks Board to propose the Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDERED:

That the Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan, attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference, shall be, and hereby is, adopted.

Signed this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1995

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1995

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Chair



Commissioner

Approved as to form:



County Counsel



Commissioner

***PREPARED FOR  
BENTON COUNTY FAIR AND PARKS DEPARTMENT***

by  
**Bennett & Bennett Associates**  
Corvallis, Oregon

***FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
RELATING TO THE BENTON COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM***

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## ***Acknowledgments***

The following members of the Benton County Parks Division guided the development of this comprehensive plan:

Jerry Davis	Fair & Parks Director
Al Kitzman	Parks Superintendent
Charles Goodrich	Park/Fair Ranger
George McAdams	Park/Fair Ranger
Mary Simpson	Department Assistant

Special thanks is given to Kathy Straton of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Division for her technical assistance and advice.

## *A Letter from the Director*

Benton County Parks occupy an important position in the future policies and activities of our area including:

- growth and development and land-use,
- open space, scenic and historic area preservation,
- public facilities and services,
- natural resource conservation and management, and
- recreational needs.

Our 776.17 acres attract over 215,000 visits per year. All aspects contribute to our quality of life, community spirit, and respect for nature and the environment. Our investments are of economic and social value.

As in other counties across the United States and in Oregon, Benton County assumes this responsibility as a basic service of local government. The responsibility is outlined in State and County planning goals. It requires ongoing adaptation, improvement, and maintenance of County park facilities, services, and programs. This responsibility continues under the influence of restricted or fluctuating County funds, competitive state and federal funding opportunities, increased regulations, expanding service requests and broadening community initiatives, and fewer County Parks Division staff. Effective, creative programming is a must.

Our *Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan* identifies the opportunities that will best serve Benton County citizens and visitors for the next six to ten years. The plan encourages effective planning, coordination, conservation, development, and financing of the Parks Division's programs and investments.

On behalf of the Benton County Board of Commissioners, the Benton County Parks Advisory Board, and the Benton County Parks Division staff, we hope citizens who review this plan will share their insights and imagination in helping to continuously improve our planning and operations. We invite all Benton County friends and families to explore and actively enjoy the parks system and join us in having a passion for parks!

Respectfully,

Jerry Davis  
Benton County Fair & Parks Director

## ***Missions and Vision***

### ***Benton County Parks Division Mission***

MAKING BENTON COUNTY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE – inviting friends and families for recreation and renewal. Benton County Parks Division serves the interests and pursuits of Benton County residents by providing access to natural, historic, and recreational areas and conserving, restoring, and developing parkland investments.

### ***Benton County Fair and Parks Department Vision***

Benton County parks system and fairgrounds activities promote a society that is rich in heritage, natural beauty, recreation, and fun. We value our past and our future, our rural and our urban. Our indoor and outdoor facilities, events, and accessibility influence the type of community, social expectations, and values we hold. We reflect and enhance our community's lifestyle. Individuals, families, friends, and groups value our offerings for solitude and social interaction. We strive to understand the way people choose to live, the kinds of work they choose to do, and where and when they choose to relax or play.

Our staff maintains a commitment to excellence. We are responsive to community needs and product improvement. Our high maintenance standards are not compromised in order to maintain the integrity of our assets. Teamwork, open communication, and a strong sense of harmony prevail. Volunteers and agency partnerships are an integral part of our accomplishments. Service to the public is top priority.

Benton County Fair and Parks Department will continue to provide useful environments for individual enjoyment and collective activity. Our programs will help people discover how to make the best use of their surroundings to enhance their personal lives and sense of community. *Everyone is invited for recreation and renewal!*

### ***Benton County Mission***

MAKING BENTON COUNTY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE—Benton County government brings to its citizenry the authority, structure, and services to respond to public concerns and opportunities and provides a means for local decision-making.



# *Executive Summary*

## **PURPOSE OF PLAN**

This comprehensive plan will be used as a management tool to:

- describe the philosophy and requirements of the Benton County Parks System;
- evaluate the use and adequacy of its parkland, park facilities, and natural or historic protected lands; and
- outline the opportunities and Implementation Strategies.

The plan profiles the parks system -- its properties, facilities, and administration; the issues or conditions influencing its operation; and a list of recommended Implementation Strategies. Below is a summary of its content.

## **PARKS SYSTEM PROFILE**

### *Existing Parkland*

Within the system, there are 15 Benton County parks, the Benton County Courthouse, and one connecting trail. The table below provides a basic list of the properties -- their geographic locations within the County, their acreage, management zones, and development status. Most parks are part of the active system. Some parks are in a development stage; some parks are undeveloped and inactive.

Three of the most recent acquisitions: Fort Hoskins Historic Site, Jackson-Frazier Wetland preserve, and Open Space Park property, are significant historic and natural sites. The addition of these sites broaden the responsibilities of the system beyond providing land and facilities for public use in leisure and recreation, into new areas that:

- 1) preserve and restore historical subjects and cultural resources, and
- 2) protect, conserve, and preserve scientifically and ecologically valuable lands.

These recent acquisitions plus our traditional recreational sites provide long-term value to the community. The value is best seen in the way Benton County strives:

- to serve the needs and welfare of its people, support activities that address health and safety, and promote the well being of individuals, children, and families; and
- to balance growth, development, and quality of life, maintain the quality of our natural environment, and provide significant natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources.

The parks system should be viewed as both an amenity for and asset of the Benton County community.

PARKLAND	MANAGEMENT ZONE	STANDARD	STATUS
<b>NORTHWEST</b>			
Fort Hoskins	historic	historic site	development stage
<b>NORTHEAST</b>			
North Albany	recreational	community park	active
Adair	recreational	regional park	active
Hyak	recreational	special use park	active
Open Space (temporary name)	recreational/ natural	regional park/ open space	development stage
Jackson-Frazier Wetland	natural	nature preserve	development stage
Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Trail	recreational	trail	active
Benton County Courthouse	historic	historic site	active
<b>SOUTHEAST</b>			
Bundy Bridge	recreational	small parcel	undeveloped/ inactive
Irish Bend	recreational	special use park	undeveloped
Saxton	recreational	small parcel	undeveloped/ inactive
Anderson	recreational	special use park	undeveloped
Bellfountain	recreational	community park	active
<b>SOUTHWEST</b>			
Clemens	recreational	community park	active
Mill Creek/ Robinson Grove	recreational	special use park	active
Campbell Boat Landing	recreational	special use park	active
Salmonberry Boat Landing/ Campground	recreational	special use park	active

## ***Division Profile***

The parks system has been developing in Benton County since 1957. It started as a citizen effort, with dedicated involvement and donated land from a few community leaders and property owners. A more formalized approach was taken in 1973 when a parks department was established by the Benton County Commissioners. The current Parks Division is part of the Benton County Fair & Parks Department. There are 6.2 permanent staff positions. The staff is assisted by:

- an advisory board of citizens (appointed by the Benton County Board of Commissioners),
- two technical committees,
- various community organizations (such as the Greenbelt Land Trust), and
- other natural, historic, and recreational resource-related public agencies.

Funding for the parks system operation is largely drawn from the County's General Fund. Additional monies are collected from a small but dedicated state revenue stream of recreational vehicle registration fees and marine fuel taxes, some Parks Division fees and charges, some successful planning grant proposals, and the Benton County Capital Improvement Fund. The annual operating budget for the Division over the last three years averaged \$388,600. It is a time of financial uncertainty for Benton County, given the influence of Measure 5 – a property tax limitation – and the decline of Oregon and California timber revenues which have traditionally supplemented the County's General Fund and supported the Parks Division operation.

## **FINDINGS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

An analysis of trends helped to capture current needs and project future expectations of park users. Relevant trends indicate the following:

- increased appreciation for and use of parks systems for both recreation as well as resource management of significant natural and historic areas and ecosystems;
- expansion of recreational opportunities to respond to a range of individual and collective needs -- from passive to active, recreational to natural -- all at one site;
- increased level of information about and within each park site to introduce, educate, inspire, and satisfy visitors;
- recognition and response to target markets interested in specific park attributes (such as measured walking trail routes which connect major recreational destinations);

- limited and decreasing opportunities for parkland acquisition as a result of increased population growth and development within communities; and
- the increased number of public-private partnerships to collectively and creatively acquire, plan, preserve, develop, and maintain parkland property.

Descriptions of a range of economic impacts are given to demonstrate the direct and indirect influences which parks systems have on their communities. Below is a sample list of relevant impacts.

- Parks serve to protect natural resources including scenic areas, plants, and animals for the preservation and enjoyment of future generations. If parkland investments are not made and unalterable development or damage occurs, the resources are lost forever.
- Greenways, open space and park availability and design can have a positive economic impact on neighborhood property values, the sale and selling time of property, and new real estate development.
- Recreational activity and time spent outdoors result in measurable benefits to health and wellness.
- In a report prepared by the non-profit organization *Trust for Public Land*, it was reported that crime drops in areas where adequate parks and recreational activities are available.
- Development of historic sites have spurred economic renewal of depressed economies – some have generated as much as seven times the initial public investment in less than ten years.
- Park-related expenditure multipliers for counties average 1.4 - 1.8 for each dollar spent by a visitor. Once a dollar is spent by a visitor, the same dollar may change hands several times in the local economy.
- Natural and scenic areas strengthen the overall image and attractiveness of a community – for the aesthetic enjoyment, sense of community, and personal sense of well being.

From a review of the parks system profile and relevant trends and impacts, findings and observations were made that describe the status or conditions of the system's investments and the viability of its operation. Findings are grouped into the following areas: 1) site and facility use, 2) funding, 3) partnership development, and 4) citizen awareness. Management strategies have been outlined to address immediate and long-term needs or opportunities. The strategies represent the best judgments of what can and should be accomplished based on research, assessment, and creative drive.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES DESCRIBED

### *SITE AND FACILITY USE*

<b>OBJECTIVE 1    Develop more river access points for boating, bank fishing, and day use</b>		
Investigate and develop potential sites that enhance current park locations: Digger Mountain on Alsea River, Anderson Park, Half Moon Bend (between Corvallis and Hyak Park), Irish Bend, near Mary's River Estates, along the Luckiamute River; along the Alsea River at South Fork, and near Lobster Creek	Explore undeveloped state parklands along the Willamette River for potential partnership arrangements to develop, manage, and provide additional river access points	Determine feasibility and interest in a joint management arrangement with the City of Corvallis to expand and improve recreational activities and river access at the Willamette Park Campground
<b>OBJECTIVE 2    Acquire and provide more open space and large sites of natural and cultural significance</b>		
Define and establish Benton County's open space philosophy and role in maintaining and improving the quality of our natural environment	Work with such organizations as the Greenbelt Land Trust to investigate significant areas and assess their appropriateness and availability	Determine feasibility and interest in conservation easements, joint property management arrangements, stable funding sources, and establishing an efficient method for site acquisition
<b>OBJECTIVE 3    Develop and maintain trails for hiking, interpretative routes, and biking and continue Inter-agency planning efforts</b>		
Complete County-wide trail plan with general specifications and standards	Explore, develop and maintain potential cooperative trails including Corvallis to the Sea, Willamette River Greenway, Corvallis to McDonald Forest	Build interest in potential trails and develop volunteer pool to support trail development and maintenance
<b>OBJECTIVE 4    Pursue special projects and acquisitions which involve unique opportunities for recreation, education, and leisure</b>		
Further develop existing sites including Jackson-Frazier Wetland and Fort Hoskins Historic Site	Investigate potential special interest sites including watershed management, and demonstration farms or logging operations	Continue to seek site development/preservation assistance from special advisory councils and volunteer task forces
<b>OBJECTIVE 5    Protect existing land, facilities, and equipment by completing a comprehensive management plan and database</b>		
Develop plan scope and requirements	Secure the appropriate levels of staff and volunteer involvement to identify and record findings	Update and evaluate records to address repair and replacement needs

**OBJECTIVE 6 Provide regional/district parks that include a range of recreational activities for all ages in all four quadrants of the County (northwest, southwest, southeast, and northeast)**

<p>Select best sites for further development that provide adequate space, represent the unique natural characteristics of the area, and are accessible to residents and visitors (e.g., Adair Park, Clemens Park, Fort Hoskins Historic Site, and Irish Bend)</p>	<p>Determine appropriate mix of activities (e.g., camping, picnic and all-weather shelters, interpretative trails, boat access, and open field/family fun areas) and design master plans to further develop existing sites</p>	<p>Develop operational policies and practices for expanded sites such as on-site managers, entrance or reservation fees, promotion, and signage</p>
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**OBJECTIVE 7 Develop quality overnight camping near urban areas**

<p>Select best sites to develop fully serviced and maintained campgrounds near urban areas that may include use by youth groups</p>	<p>Pursue planning and capital investments with assistance from State of Oregon Parks Department</p>	<p>Develop operational policies and practices for campground sites such as on-site host, reservation or overnight fees, promotion, and signage</p>
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**FUNDING**

**OBJECTIVE 1 Pursue bond opportunities and levies for a major infusion of capital for facility improvements**

<p>Outline scope, costs, and benefits for targeted park improvements and propose financing options (e.g., public facility bonds or special tax levies)</p>	<p>Draft a list of capital improvement sources in use and other matching grant sources that might be added or attracted (and their specific requirements and legal limits)</p>	<p>Survey taxpayer interest in and support for park improvements and financing options. If favorable, seek approval of County commissioners for proposed financing option and prepare informational materials for voters</p>
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**OBJECTIVE 2 Pursue creative funding ideas and future revenue sources such as a hotel/motel tax that can be dedicated to parks**

<p>Identify general and special purpose revenue sources (e.g., hotel/motel tax, rental or user fees, sales revenues, service charges, craft fairs, historic celebrations, and park concerts) currently used by parks operations or by other visitor-related organizations</p>	<p>Investigate the utility and appropriateness of new sources for the County parks system. Depending on the kind of additional revenue generation proposed, prepare revenue forecasts and sample operating budgets to demonstrate financial impacts</p>	<p>Organize or gain authority for additional revenue sources that involve significant proceeds, charges, or earnings</p>
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**OBJECTIVE 3 Review the criteria and processes for accepting donations of land to the County by private parties to ensure that the processes are effective**

Recognize that donations of land to the County by private parties account for a large part of Parks holdings and inventory any contractual requirements or standards currently being upheld	Review and revise criteria and processes for accepting donations of land to ensure that such agreements are effectively and reasonably carried out over the long term	Build interest in and awareness of County practices for accepting and managing donated lands
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**OBJECTIVE 4 Establish a parks trust fund to be able to efficiently act on acquiring significant parkland property**

Evaluate requirements such as timeliness and capacity for future parkland acquisitions	Determine scope, feasibility, and trustee requirements for establishing a parks trust fund and outline method and manner for attracting and recording resources (e.g., gifts, bequests, and donations)	Present proposal to County commissioners for approval. If approved, establish trust fund operation and seek resources
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**OBJECTIVE 5 Pursue additional state-approved tax and permit revenues similar to the marine fuel tax and recreational vehicle registration fee**

Identify ongoing alternative financial resources that could generate sizable revenues if adequately collected and dedicated to parks	Provide information to the legislature that demonstrates the need for and benefit of parks programming	
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**OBJECTIVE 6 Continue to evaluate pay-for-use opportunities**

Continue annual review of fees and charges	Evaluate where and when significant park developments warrant increased use fees or other reasonable charges such as an entrance fee	Investigate public-private opportunities for appropriate lease management arrangements and/or concessionaires
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***PARTNERSHIPS***

**OBJECTIVE 1 Utilize existing network with governmental agencies for regional planning efforts**

Identify goals and priority recreational needs for future acquisition, preservation, and management	Continue efforts to inform policy-makers of significant threats, barriers, and opportunities that influence service delivery	
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**OBJECTIVE 2 Continue to investigate opportunities for cooperation with community groups and governmental agencies**

<p>Determine and act on opportunities that include such benefits as cost-savings, efficiencies, job sharing, equipment sharing, staff training, and additional revenue sources</p>	<p>Co-sponsor planning efforts that utilize existing staff, shared staff, community volunteers, or contracted consultants</p>	<p>Continue joint interests in regional planning for coordinated river access, trail development, wetland preservation, facility maintenance and improvements, recreational use and capacity, and land acquisition</p>
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**CITIZEN AWARENESS**

**OBJECTIVE 1 Develop and implement a communications plan to inform and educate individuals and groups about opportunities and benefits of our parks system**

<p>Identify the individuals and groups who participate in our recreational programs and/or who are influenced by our activities, policies, and investments and determine their need for parks system information</p>	<p>Identify the kind of information to be told (e.g., population growth and land-use impacts, quality of life and economic characteristics, significant findings in our historic and natural resources, open space planning, and the availability of recreational opportunities)</p>	<p>Select how the information is best delivered (e.g., in-school curriculum, promotional brochures, civic group lectures, a docents program, youth tours, and news articles), who will deliver it, how to encourage and respond to feedback, and how to evaluate efforts</p>
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**OBJECTIVE 2 Utilize internships, practicums, and volunteers to promote the parks system and stimulate use**

<p>Continue to develop internship arrangements with educators from Oregon State University (OSU), OSU Extension Service, Linn-Benton Community College, 4-H clubs, and area high schools</p>	<p>Identify appropriate areas of assistance (e.g., organizing events, preparing news articles, promoting recreational activities, and tabulating user surveys) and provide supervision and training</p>	
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**OBJECTIVE 3 Pursue collective/joint communication opportunities with other interested agencies and businesses to promote services and build awareness**

<p>Improve the level of regional recreation and natural resource information available to community planning efforts</p>		
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Some strategies relate to program areas already underway or ongoing. Other strategies will address issues and opportunities identified through evaluation and public input during the planning process. In many areas, productive efforts are already being focused. The Benton County Parks System is viable and active.

Performance measures can be used to determine the changing impact or influence of a parks system within its community. A list of applicable *Oregon Benchmarks* have been included in this comprehensive plan to begin the process of identifying, classifying, recording, and evaluating relevant benchmarks. It is assumed that the state office and staff of the Oregon Progress Board will assist the Parks Division in providing the necessary data for this evaluation.

Additional information is provided regarding current public-private partnerships and grant opportunities utilized by the Parks Division. The Division has effectively used partnerships and grants as the necessary catalyst or mechanism to accomplish its goals. The Division pursues such arrangements to make the impossible, possible and augment the level of essential general fund monies received for ongoing operations.

It is anticipated that through the use of the Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan, a clearer definition, vision, and direction for parks system management will be demonstrated. The plan represents the rationale for parkland investments and management. Work plans and funding will be needed to adequately implement all of the strategies and recommended actions. Some actions may involve other agencies who have no obligation to follow these plans and there is no assurance that all projects will be funded. Much flexibility must be exercised to create the right combination of projects at the right time.

Creative problem solving and programming has long been the norm for the Benton County Parks Division as it consistently strives to balance its responsibilities with available resources. The Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan projects six to ten years into the future to the years 2001 to 2005. Recommended actions can be pursued within a short-range (1-3 year) time frame or long-range (4-10 year) time frame. The plan is a management tool that forms the basis for prioritization and decision-making, maintenance and development of programs, measurement and evaluation, and continued energies and excitement from staff. It should optimistically yet realistically guide the Division into the future.

# INTRODUCTION

## *Purpose of Plan*

The Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan is a management tool to:

- describe the management philosophy and requirements of the system;
- evaluate the use and adequacy of parkland, park facilities, and natural or historic protected lands; and
- outline the opportunities and Implementation Strategies.

Comprehensive planning analyzes current and future needs. It requires public involvement to help determine what the community wants and requires in terms of natural resource conservation, available sites and facilities, and recreational activities and events. Planning involves the input of experience and expertise from local, state, and federal recreation agencies and related community groups. Their involvement and coordination ensures an integrated, cooperative approach to service delivery that can reach beyond what a community can accomplish on its own.

The Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan outlines the management goals and policies identified and prioritized by the Benton County Parks Advisory Board, Division staff, public recreation agencies, and community groups. The Plan is part of a statewide effort to identify recreation needs. It supports and collaborates with management objectives of Oregon's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and other recreational planning initiatives involving the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Forest Service. The Plan is consistent with overall policies set forth in the Benton County Comprehensive Plan, the official policy guide for decisions about growth, development, and management of natural resources in Benton County.

## **PLAN STRUCTURE DESCRIBED**

The Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan includes an overview of the communities and people being served, the parks administration, and county-wide park sites. An assessment of trends, policies, issues and opportunities that affect the overall parks system is described, followed by

management objectives and implementation strategies for the next six to ten years. Descriptions and detail vary according to the influence on the overall system. Contained within the plan are:

### ***Section One: Parks System Profile***

- Management zones, descriptions, and inventory of the County parks and its site and facility characteristics.
- Benton County Parks Division profile explaining the administration, planning, and funding of the parks system operation.

### ***Section Two: Findings and Implementation Strategies***

- Parks and recreation trends and economic impacts identified through research, County and State user surveys, and focus groups.
- Findings that describe the status and conditions of Parks Division investments and the viability of its operation.
- Management strategies and recommended future actions to address short-term and long-term development needs.
- Performance outcomes and benchmarks to measure results.
- Public and private partnerships and grant opportunities to assist in project development.
- Expectations and next steps for plan implementation.

### ***Appendices: Supplemental, detailed information***

Work plans and funding will be needed to adequately implement the goals and recommended actions. Some actions may involve other agencies who have no obligation to follow these plans and there is no assurance that all projects will be funded. Yet the plan provides a road map to and for the future. It focuses the Division's energies and resources on the most desirable present and future strategies while it remains flexible to respond to unforeseeable opportunities or difficulties.

The recommendations contained in the Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan represent the "best judgment" of issues and opportunities based on presently available information. The plan outlines objectives to ensure the most desirable outcomes. Considerable project planning, preparation, funding, and program implementation will be required for most recommendations. These recommendations come at a time of financial uncertainty for Benton County, given the influence of Measure 5 – a property

tax limitation – and the decline of Oregon and California timber revenues which have traditionally supplemented the County’s general fund and funded the Parks Division operation. Creative problem solving and programming has long been the norm for the Parks Division as it consistently strives to balance its responsibilities with available resources. As represented in this Plan, the Benton County Parks Division and Advisory Board look forward to the future with a keen sense of purpose and creative determination for accomplishing its goals.

### **TIME FRAME OF THE PLAN**

The Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan projects six to ten years into the future to the years 2001 to 2005. Many policies and goals remain constant with existing efforts. Recommended implementation strategies can be pursued within a short-range (1-3 year) time frame or long-range (4-10 year) time frame. The plan is a management tool that forms the basis for prioritization and decision-making, maintenance and development of programs, measurement and evaluation, intergovernmental coordination, and communication. The plan, however, should be used as a guide that anticipates the future. The Parks Division will regularly review and update its content and continue to be goal driven.

## **SECTION ONE**

# **PARKS SYSTEM PROFILE**

### *Purpose of Parks System*

Parks and recreation programs have a social mandate – to be of service to the needs and welfare of the public. County parks contribute to the life of a community and support important economic and social values including:

- change, restoration, and renewal from everyday demands and work schedules;
- protection and preservation of natural and scientific areas; and
- historic and cultural education; respect for early traditions;
- companionship and gathering of friends and family;
- organized activities for youth;
- exercise, individual skill or challenge, and self-reliance; and
- visitor or tourism development.

Public parks are available to all. Local government traditionally has taken responsibility for providing property where residents can enjoy passive and active areas for relaxation, amusement, education, sport, and solitude. The 1856 land acquisition for New York City's Central Park marked the start of the park movement. Recreational programming and the growth of land-use planning brought park planning to most communities in the 1950s. The 1970s brought expanded programming to serve a range of residents with different recreational interests and increased public investments in natural environments to preserve a community's quality of life. The 1990s brought conservation of natural areas for open space and resource management.

Residents and regional visitors use parks for individual and collective (group) leisure or recreation. *Leisure* refers to the time spent "off-duty", where the experiences are rewarding and restorative in nature. Although once believed to accomplish no productive end, such time is now viewed by society as an essential part of their sense of community and a balance in personal and professional lives. Current trends indicate that local recreation facilities will be used more heavily as individuals, families, and organized groups look closer to home for recreation opportunities.

Today, the professional recreation provider seeks to bring out the unique sociological, aesthetic, environmental, educational, and societal rewards a parks system can provide. Park users experience a degree of enjoyment, challenge, wonderment, and escape from everyday life. Some parkland may be left primarily in its natural state, while other parkland may have a mix of natural areas, community facilities, and recreational activities. Development planners rely on parks for physical and social oases, open space, environmental corridors, and breathing holes within and around communities.

## *Inventory of County Parks*

### **PARK MANAGEMENT ZONES AND STANDARDS**

Parklands can be zoned to represent the best strategies for natural resource management and fulfill land-use and recreational planning objectives. Three primary management zones are recognized in Benton County for how land, water, plants, animals, and historic/cultural artifacts and structures can be managed.

1. **Natural Zone:** Natural features, resources, and processes of land and water remain largely unaltered by human activity. Scientifically significant and ecologically valuable areas are protected, conserved, and preserved. Dispersed recreational and educational facilities such as trails, picnic areas, and interpretive displays are permitted only on a limited basis.
2. **Historical Zone:** Land and structures managed primarily to commemorate historical subjects and/or preserve cultural resources. Areas on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are zoned historical as well as minor historic sites that may not meet the criteria for the National Register but are worthy of protection and interpretation. Physical development and activities are generally limited to sightseeing and the study of cultural and historic features. Appropriate adaptive use of structures for utilitarian purposes is allowed.
3. **Recreational Zone:** Land and facilities which alter the natural environment support public use for leisure and recreation. Areas for parking lots, restrooms, group picnic shelters, children's play areas, hiking trails, organized sport facilities, and boat landings are included in this zone. Seasonal levels of use, facility construction and maintenance, grounds maintenance, site location, signage, and safety effect the quality and quantity of recreational activities.

These policies and descriptions serve as guidelines for the orderly development and management of the Benton County Parks System. The descriptions provide the framework for management classifications and development standards of all Benton County parks.

### ***Natural Zones***

**Open Space** Those areas of scenic and aesthetic quality which have significant value as hills, vistas, rivers, streams, and drainageways. Often an integral part of land-use planning for relief from developed urban areas. Open spaces can enhance entryways into a community, preserve ecologically significant natural areas, and provide existing or potential recreational use. Farm and forest lands are considered productive open spaces. Dedicated open space lands include forested areas which are managed for productive use -- some with revenues restricted for parks system management.

**Greenbelt.** Land within a developed area that is left undeveloped and serves as an amenity to adjoining neighborhoods and communities. Greenbelt areas can be tied to rivers, forested areas and other natural zones preserved as continuous strips or surrounding, encircling open areas. Greenbelts are often used to maintain significant undeveloped natural areas within developed urban areas of a community or region.

**Nature Preserves and Wilderness.** Areas of restricted recreational use, devoted primarily to preserving the natural habitats of plants and animals for their scientific, educational, and aesthetic value. Threatened and endangered species are protected and/or enhanced in preserves.

**Scenic Corridors.** Generally associated with river settings as linear (contiguous) vista areas left primarily in a natural state and unmodified by structures or use, and if modified, retain natural scenic qualities and recreational opportunities.

**Scenic Easements.** A voluntary commitment from a land-owner or an encumbrance on the title to a property to preserve it in a natural or undeveloped state without modification or obstruction.

### ***Historic Zones***

**Historic Sites.** Sites, structures, or objects officially recognized for their historic significance and educational and cultural value. Areas of restricted recreational use, devoted primarily to preserving and/or restoring unique features without substantial alteration.

**Landmarks.** Structures, fixed objects, monuments, or areas of scientific or historic interest.

**Memorials.** Designated areas or structures to commemorate ideas, events, or persons.

### ***Recreational Zones***

**Neighborhood Parks.** Parks of up to 15 acres which primarily serve residents within close proximity of the site.

**Special Use Parks.** Relatively small individual sites oriented to a single use such as boat landings, waysides, or a scenic view and miscellaneous parcels without any recreational facilities.

**Community Parks.** Moderate developments that provide a variety of recreational needs and maintain the natural qualities of the environment. Hiking, picnicking, and limited sport opportunities are offered within 20- to 25-acre sites.

**Regional/District Parks.** Large developments of 100 acres or more that provide for dispersed activities such as picnicking, primitive camping, hiking, organized field sports, and nature study. Some regional parks represent special scenic and natural qualities and serve a major portion of the area's population or several different population centers. Areas are selected and developed for broad public recreational opportunities which are fairly well dispersed in a natural setting.

**Linear or Ribbon Parks.** Areas designed similar to the natural zone's greenbelt concept with the added function of providing recreational activities.

**Parkways.** Elongated or linear parks for non-commercial vehicle travel that connect parks, landmarks, and recreational areas. Access and roadside development can be controlled and appropriate turnouts, picnic areas, and other recreational developments can be provided where space permits.

**Scenic Routes and Roads.** Rural highways within areas of scenic and cultural value that emphasize safe and pleasant recreational driving. Kiosks and information for interpreting the scenic and cultural features of the route and for picnicking and hiking/walking should be provided.

**Trails.** Extended, looped, and usually continuous strips of land dedicated to recreational travel including hiking, bicycling, all-terrain vehicles, or horseback riding and retained for recreational use through ownership or easement.

**Beaches.** Area with frontage on lakes and rivers designed primarily to provide swimming, boating, fishing, and other waterfront activities.

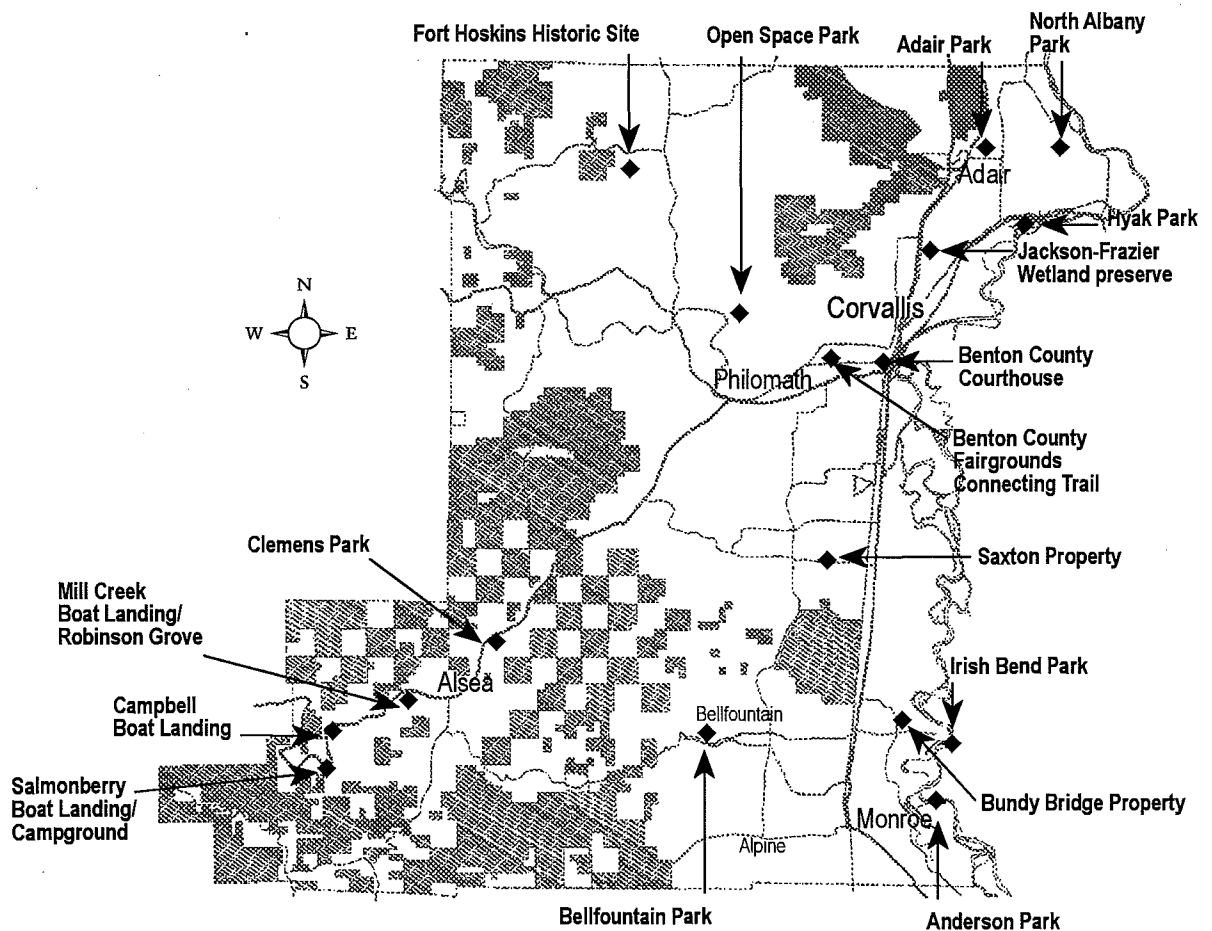


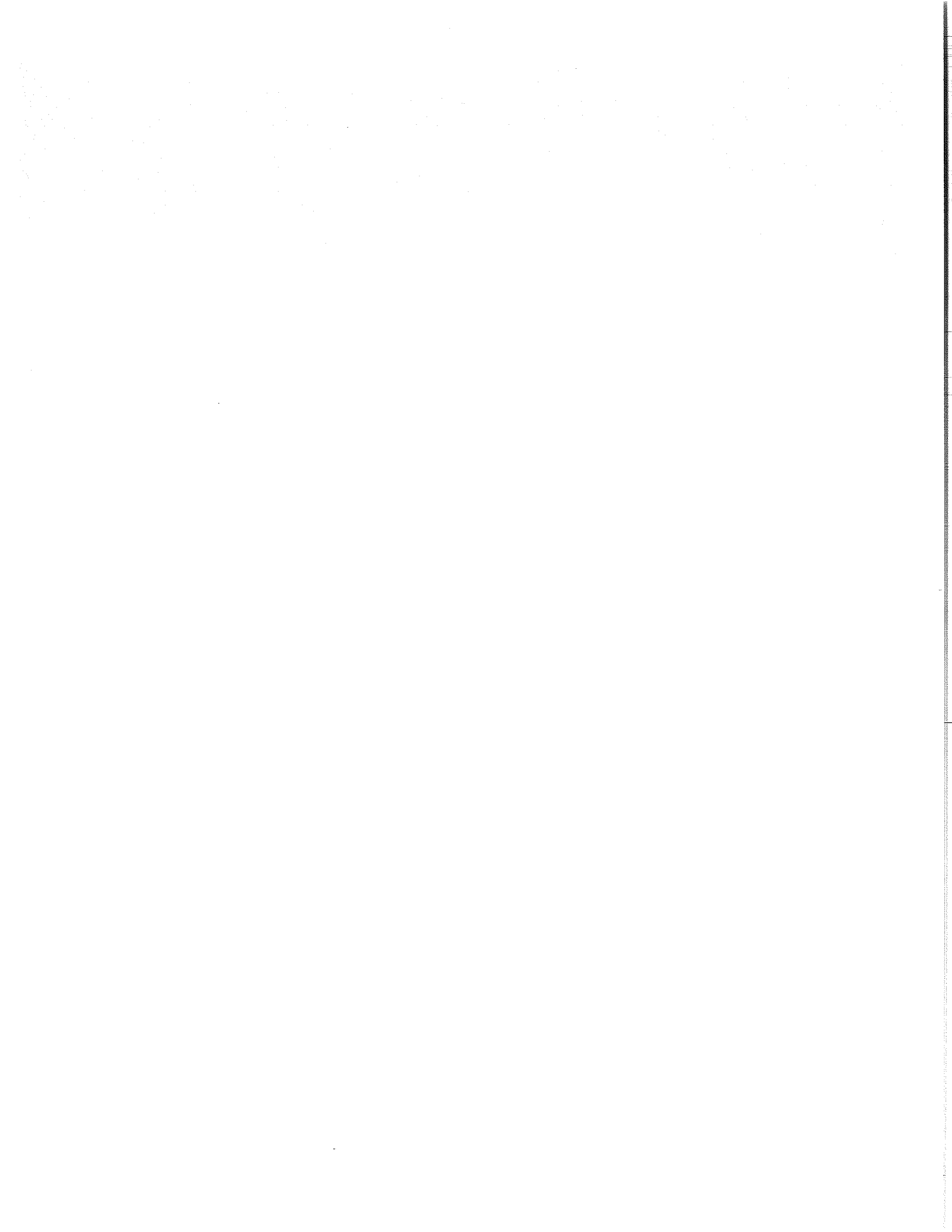
Park management zones and standards for the Benton County Parks System classify and describe recreational opportunities and planned developments. The Benton County standards are consistent with the professional National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) policies. They represent areas of interest and use in providing, protecting, preserving, conserving, and maintaining County parkland.

## EXISTING PARKLAND AND FACILITIES

Benton County Parks Division currently operates and maintains 776.17 acres of developed and undeveloped parkland. Over 215,000 visitors use the sites and facilities per year. Below is a current list of Benton County parks classified according to the parks system's zones and standards. Descriptions of existing recreational uses, site and facility characteristics, and conditions follow.

**Benton County Parks System Property Locations**





## ***Existing Parkland***

<b>PARKLAND</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT ZONE</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>NORTHWEST</b>			
Fort Hoskins	historic	historic site	development stage
<b>NORTHEAST</b>			
North Albany	recreational	community park	active
Adair	recreational	regional park	active
Hyak	recreational	special use park	active
Open Space (temporary name)	recreational/ natural	regional park/ open space	development stage
Jackson-Frazier Wetland	natural	nature preserve	development stage
Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Trail	recreational	trail	active
Benton County Courthouse	historic	historic site	active
<b>SOUTHEAST</b>			
Bundy Bridge	recreational	small parcel	undeveloped/ inactive
Irish Bend	recreational	special use park	undeveloped
Saxton	recreational	small parcel	undeveloped/ inactive
Anderson	recreational	special use park	undeveloped
Bellfountain	recreational	community park	active
<b>SOUTHWEST</b>			
Clemens	recreational	community park	active
Mill Creek/ Robinson Grove	recreational	special use park	active
Campbell Boat Landing	recreational	special use park	active
Salmonberry Boat Landing/ Campground	recreational	special use park	active

Note: The Benton County Scenic Loop is managed by the Benton County Public Works Department. The Highway 99W Scenic Route is managed through a consortium of regional visitors bureaus.

## ***Northwest Benton County Parks***

### ***FORT HOSKINS HISTORIC SITE***

Acquired in 1992, the Fort Hoskins archaeological site and historic house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as one of the most significant archaeological sites in Oregon. Established in 1856 to protect Siletz Indians, Fort Hoskins served as an important outpost for the Indians, Union soldiers and Pacific Northwest settlers during the Civil War. The original purpose of the fort was to encourage better relations among the Indians and settlers. Later, it served as an outpost and infirmary for Union soldiers. The fort was abandoned in 1866.

Surrounding the original 15-acre site on a V-shaped loop of the Luckiamute River, a total of 127 acres are devoted to educational and recreational purposes. The site is only open to the public at prearranged times – usually coinciding with a scheduled archaeological dig. Oregon State University's Anthropology Department and a Fort Hoskins Task Force of volunteers work closely with the Benton County Parks Division in managing this site. University archaeology students and volunteers have uncovered thousands of artifacts associated with the fort.

In 1992, the County purchased the historic property through grant funds from Meyer Memorial Trust (a \$90,000 Challenge Grant award) and loan funds from the Benton County General Fund. The site is in its initial development stage and not open to the public. Planned improvements will be possible as additional outside funding and assistance is received. Improvements include site access, signage, parking, restrooms, and some limited recreation such as picnicking and interpretative trails. Rehabilitation is needed of the historic structure since it is currently unsafe. Displays and educational interpretation of artifacts are also needed.

**127.0 acres / NW location – 12 miles northwest of Philomath, 1.5 miles west of the Kings Valley Highway on Hoskins Road / historic site - development stage - not open to public**

## ***Northeast Benton County Parks***

### ***NORTH ALBANY PARK***

Seating for 150 picnickers, kitchen facilities with special barbecues, open fields, and a unique children's play area makes North Albany Park a popular site for group events. The open fields and some sports facilities including baseball/softball and volleyball provide space for a variety of field games, summer youth programs, and special events. Parking is limited. The park is located in a residential district far removed from the highway; a somewhat

obscure route leads to the park entrance. Collaborative master planning, including possible parkland expansion, will occur with the City of Albany.  
**21.59 acres / NE location off U.S. Highway 20, follow NW Scenic Drive west to NW Valley View Drive, then east on Hillcrest Drive / closed during winter months / high use picnicking, children's play area and open turf areas for field games**

#### ***ADAIR COUNTY PARK***

Adair Park is the largest, most developed park in the system. Two group picnic areas with kitchen shelters and barbecue pits seat approximately 300 picnickers. Extensive sports facilities including baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, sand volleyball courts, open turf areas, walking paths, and a small children's play area receive heavy use. Hiking trails are available but affected by poison oak. Planned improvements to this high use site include expanded covered picnic facilities, children's play area, interpretative trails, and restrooms. Located off Highway 99W Scenic Route, the park has an ideal wooded area for camping as additional funding and assistance is received.

A 6,221 sq. ft. indoor clubhouse with adjacent landscaped patio is available for banquets, receptions, and meetings. On adjoining property, two area hobby clubs maintain an active radio-controlled aircraft aerodrome (model airplane flying field) and a model railroad workstation. The former Adair Officer's Club clubhouse and undeveloped land was obtained from the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1971 when the property was declared surplus, following the closure of Adair Air Force Station. The property served as an active training camp during World War II.

**123.05 acres / NE location off State Highway 99W on Arnold Avenue and Ebony Lane / closed during winter months / active recreational sport facilities, picnicking, indoor clubhouse and model airplane aerodrome**

#### ***HYAK PARK***

Centrally located on the banks of the Willamette River between Corvallis and Albany, Hyak Park is a popular boat launching site and rest area with outstanding views of the river. Formerly called the Adair Water Intake Park of the Adair Air Force Base, ownership of the park was transferred to the County in 1971. Deep water just off the picnic area makes swimming a hazard. Parking and picnicking facilities are limited. A \$147,400 ramp access and dock tie-off improvement project funded by the State Marine Board and Benton County General Fund has been approved by the Board of Commissioners for FY1994-95.

**5.15 acres / NE location 7 miles north of Corvallis directly off U.S. Highway 20 on the Willamette River / high use boating, picnicking and rest area**

### ***OPEN SPACE PARK/PROPERTY***

Open Space property was donated to Benton County to protect and preserve as a resource land with limited recreational improvements. It occupies an important position in a northwest Corvallis greenbelt. Park entrance is along a gravel road; there is no signage, parking, water, or landscaping. Potential recreational use includes a mix of hiking, birdwatching, and great panoramic views. Planned improvements involve parking, signage, erosion control, and expanding the open space site as outside funding and assistance is received. The property is in the initial planning stage.

**85 acres / NE location, 5 miles west of Corvallis and 2 miles north of Philomath, off Cardwell Hill Road and Panorama Drive / low use – development stage**

### ***JACKSON-FRAZIER WETLAND***

Jackson-Frazier Wetland property was formally placed under the Parks Division in 1993. Management objectives include protecting, maintaining or enhancing vegetation, hydrology, and wildlife habitats. A short looped path and footbridge across Stewart Slough provide limited access within the site. There are no restrooms or water available. The wetland property came under Benton County management through tax foreclosure. A Jackson-Frazier Technical Advisory Committee works closely with Benton County Parks Division in the conservation of this natural preserve. Improvements are planned for an elevated walkway, educational kiosk, foot path, interpretive signage and materials as additional outside funding and assistance is received.

**147 acres / NE location off State Highway 99W east on Lancaster Street / nature preserve with some hiking / development stage—limited public access**

### ***BENTON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS TO BALD HILL PARK CONNECTING TRAIL***

A linear connecting trail of 2.0 miles provides recreational hiking and bicycling from the Benton County Fairgrounds west to City of Corvallis' Bald Hill Park. This first phase trail segment is coordinated with the West Corvallis Bikeway Project managed by Benton County Public Works Department. A second phase will extend west from Bald Hill Park to Benton County Open Space Park and Cardwell Hill Road. Design and initial construction began in FY1993-94. Additional construction depends on securing necessary commitments and easements. This connecting trail will eventually become the start of the proposed Corvallis to the Sea Trail as the trail expands across Mary's Peak and on through to the Pacific Coast.

**4.5 miles / NE location starting at the Benton County Fairgrounds / hiking, bicycling, and equestrian trail**

### ***BENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE***

The Benton County Courthouse is the oldest Oregon courthouse still used for its original purpose. Completed in 1888, the four-story building was designed by Portland architect Delos Neer in the Italiannate style of architecture. A tower-like pavilion and single story portico on the east end form the main entrance. A broken pediment is set in the tower cornice, in which stands a Goddess of Justice. Topped by a mansard-like roof and clock tower with bell and carillon, the courthouse is a prominent local landmark.

In 1970, the courthouse was listed on the Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties. In 1976, it was extensively renovated for the purpose of resorting and preserving the historic character of the building as well as providing functional work space for the county offices of the District Attorney, Records & Elections, and the state offices and courtrooms of Circuit and District Court. The building's architectural integrity is intact and its condition is excellent. In 1977, the courthouse was listed on the National register of Historic Places.

The courthouse lawn is well landscaped with rose bushes, flower beds, and ornamental shrubbery. Park benches invite residents and visitors to stop and enjoy this historic block in downtown Corvallis. Guided tours are available by appointment.

**2 acres / NE location - 120 NW 4th Street in downtown Corvallis / historic site**

### ***RIVERVIEW HEIGHTS PARK***

Note: Parkland ownership and responsibility for operating and maintaining Riverview Heights Park was transferred to the City of Albany on April 21, 1993. Riverview Heights, a small 1.79 acre neighborhood park with picnicking and a play court, can best be managed through the City's neighborhood park program rather than the County parks system.

### ***Southeast Benton County Parks***

#### ***BUNDY BRIDGE PROPERTY***

Bundy Bridge is an undeveloped, unmaintained parcel originally acquired in 1960. A privately-owned primitive campground is available on adjacent property. It is not currently part of the active Benton County Parks System.

**2.3 acres / SE location 2 miles east of State Highway 99W at Old River Road / undeveloped—inactive**

### ***IRISH BEND PARK***

Irish Bend Park located 18 miles south of Corvallis provides boat launch access to the Willamette River for non-motorized boats. The site was acquired by the State in 1968 through federal greenway funds and turned over to the County Parks Board for local management. Irish Bend is primarily undeveloped with no parking, signage, restrooms, water, or landscaping. Picnicking and swimming are available. Boat access is hampered by the presence of a sand bar at the launch site.

**7.95 acres / SE location off Dawson Road on the Willamette River / swimming and limited boating - unimproved landing—undeveloped**

### ***SAXTON PROPERTY***

Saxton, located on Muddy Creek, north of Finley Wildlife Refuge, was the first Benton County park site. The County purchased the land for \$10.00 from the Trustees of the Willamette Grange #52 in 1960. The site was heavily damaged by the 1964 flood and is still subject to flooding and has a high water table. No signage, parking, or facilities exist. The property is undeveloped and not part of the active parks system.

**2.02 acres / SE-central location along Muddy Creek on Greenberry Road / undeveloped—inactive**

### ***ANDERSON PARK***

Property on Anderson Road was acquired through tax foreclosure. No signage, parking, or facilities exist. Parks staff and board members view this property as significant in that it is close to state parks property and has potential for quality river access in the future. The property is undeveloped and not part of the active parks system.

**26 acres / SE location on Anderson Road / undeveloped**



### ***BELLFOUNTAIN PARK***

The site of Bellfountain Park has been used as a meeting place since 1860. In 1970, the department purchased the park for \$1.00 from the Bellfountain Park Association. It is a small, high use 10 acre community park including a group picnic pavilion complete with an 85 foot covered picnic table and kitchen shelter, ball field, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, unique children's play area, and freshwater spring. Horseback riding is allowed. Aging restrooms are inadequate and do not meet ADA accessibility requirements. Facility improvements are planned as additional funding and assistance is received.

**10.0 acres / SE location one mile west of the community of Bellfountain on Dawson Road/ closed during winter months / high use picnicking, children's play area, and some group sports**

### ***Southwest Benton County Parks***

#### ***CLEMENS PARK***

Clemens Parks features a .6 mile fishing and swimming frontage along the Alsea River and a 2 mile self-guided interpretative nature trail. Facilities provide riverfront picnic sites, birdwatching, horseback riding, hunting, and an information kiosk. No covered picnic areas are available for winter use. Improved signage is needed to identify recreational use areas and along the trail. Rex and Ethel Clemens donated the land for this park to the citizens of Benton County in 1968.

**37.58 acres / SW-coast range location directly off State Highway 34, 1 mile east of the town of Alsea / active water play, fishing, picnicking and trails**

#### ***MILL CREEK BOAT LANDING/ROBINSON GROVE***

Mill Creek Boat Landing is located three miles west of Alsea and provides drift boat access to the Alsea River. Acquired in 1966 for boat launching only, the site receives heavy use during fishing season from both local fishermen and state and regional visitors. Picnicking, bank fishing and swimming is also available in the Dick Robinson Memorial Grove. A wide naturalized turf trail connects the boat landing with the attractive oak grove picnic area. Bank stabilization measures are needed along the riverbank. Boat ramp conditions are affected by annual river silting.

**4.0 acres / SW-coast range location directly off State Highway 34, 2 miles west of the town of Alsea / active water play, fishing and picnicking**

### ***CAMPBELL BOAT LANDING***

Campbell Boat Landing (aka Pink House Public Access) provides drift boat access to the Alsea River. It receives heavy use during fishing season from both local fishermen and some regional and state visitors. The asphalt boat ramp is in fair condition. The parkland is owned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and managed by Benton County Parks Division.

**1.0 acre / SW-coast range location directly off State Highway 34, 4 miles west of the town of Alsea / active fishing and picnicking**

### ***SALMONBERRY BOAT LANDING AND CAMPGROUNDS***

Salmonberry Boat Landing provides bank fishing and an easy access concrete boat ramp. A 20-unit campground with flush toilets, water, barbecue grills, and picnic tables was constructed in 1993 and is open on a seasonal basis. Gravel access and parking is in fair condition. A short natural trail along the elevated bank provides very limited hiking.

**10.2 acres / SW location directly off State Highway 34, 5 miles west of the town of Alsea / active bank fishing, boat landing and camping on a seasonal basis**

## **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS**

Benton County Parks Division offers a diversity of parks with traditional provisions like picnicking, hiking, fishing, and some organized sports such as volleyball and baseball. Recreational activities are divided into two categories: 1) resource-based centers on the natural environment and 2) community-based related to passive and active organized (sports-like) activities. The attached pages detail the range of community-based and resource-based recreational activities at each Benton County location. Additional pages include pertinent site and facility characteristics.

RECREATIONAL USE  
Resource Based  
Benton County Parks  
System

Site Name	sight seeing										panoramic views	fresh spring water	
	view wildlife	hiking/walking	birdwatching	fishing	horseback riding	interpretive trails	nature study	powerboats	non-motorized boats	water-skiing			
NORTHWEST													
Fort Hoskins [not yet open to public]	○	○	○	○				○					
NORTHEAST													
Adair Park	●	●	●	●				●					
Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Park Connecting Trail	●	●	●	●				●					
Hyak Park	●	●	●		●			●	●	●	●		
Jackson-Frazier Wetland	●	●	●	●				●					
North Albany Park			●	●				●					
Open Space Park	●	●	●	●				●					
Benton County Courthouse													
SOUTHEAST													
Anderson Park	●	●	●	●	●			●		●			
Bellfountain Park	●							●					
Bundy Bridge Property													
Irish Bend Park	●	●	●	●	●			●		●			
Saxton Property		●	●	●									
SOUTHWEST													
Campbell Boat Landing					●					●			
Clemens Park	●	●	●	●	●			●	●				
Mill Creek Boat Landing/Robinson Grove	●		●		●			●		●			
Salmonberry Boat Landing/Campgrounds	●	●	●	●	●			●		●		●	

RECREATIONAL USE  
Community Based  
Benton County Parks  
System

Site Name	swimming area											
	jogging											
	bicycling tour wayside											
	baseball/softball											
	horseshoes											
	children's play area											
	archeological/historical site											
	fitness area											
	tennis											
	volleyball											
	group activities/reservations											
	picnicking											
	other											
NORTHWEST												
Fort Hoskins [not yet open to public]											○	
NORTHEAST												
Adair Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	aerodrome & aircraft club/ RR club
Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Park Connecting Trail		●	●									
Hyak Park			●				●				●	●
Jackson-Frazier Wetland												
North Albany Park				●	●	●				●	●	●
Open Space Park												
Benton County Courthouse							●					group tours
SOUTHEAST												
Anderson Park												
Bellfountain Park		●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●
Bundy Bridge Property												
Irish Bend Property	●											
Saxton Park												
SOUTHWEST												
Campbell Boat Landing			●									●
Clemens Park	●	●	●				●					●
Mill Creek Boat Landing/Robinson Grove	●		●									●
Salmonberry Boat Landing/Campgrounds			●									●

SITE/FACILITIES CHARACTERISTICS									
Benton County Parks System									
Site Name	# of Acres	NPRA Class	Open seasons	Use Rate	Signage	Park entrance		Parking	

NORTHWEST									
Fort Hoskins [not yet open to public]	127	historic site	development stage		-	-	gravel	-	dirt

NORTHEAST									
Adair Park	123	regional	no winter	high	good	good	paved	good	paved
Adair Park (Benton Co. Clubhouse)	2	-	all	med.	good	good	paved	fair	paved
Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Park Connecting Trail	2	trail	all	med.	good	good	paved	good	paved
Hyak Park	5	special use	all	high	good	good	paved	good	paved
Jackson-Frazier Wetland	131	nature preserve	restricted	low	fair	poor	dirt	fair	paved
North Albany Park	22	community	no winter	high	good	good	paved	poor	paved
Open Space Park	85	regional / open space	development stage		none	poor	gravel	none	

SOUTHEAST									
Anderson Park	26	special use	all	low	none	poor	gravel	none	none
Bellfountain Park	10	community	no winter	high	good	fair	paved	good	gravel
Bundy Bridge Property	2	small parcel (undeveloped)							
Irish Bend Park	8	special use	all	low	none	poor	dirt	none	none
Saxton Property	2	small parcel (undeveloped)	all	low	none	poor	dirt	none	

SOUTHWEST									
Campbell Boat Landing	1	special use	all	low	fair	good	paved	good	paved
Clemens Park	38	community	all	low	fair	fair	paved	fair	paved
Mill Creek Boat Landing/Robinson Grove	4	special use	all	low	fair	good	paved	good	paved
Salmonberry Boat Landing/Campgrounds	10	special use	all	low	fair	fair	gravel	gravel	fair

SITE/FACILITIES CHARACTERISTICS Benton County Parks System	Restrooms	Water	Landscaping	Irrigation	River access
Site Name					
<b>NORTHWEST</b>					
Fort Hoskins [not yet open to public]	none	non potable	poor: specimen trees, turf	none	NA
<b>NORTHEAST</b>					
Adair Park	Serviced/ handicap	potable	fair: natural & specimen trees, turf	none	NA
Adair Park (Benton Co. Clubhouse)	Serviced/ handicap	potable	good: formal, turf	good: Toro	NA
Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Park Connecting Trail				none	NA
Hyak Park	Serviced/ handicap	potable	good: naturalized & semi-formal, turf	good: Toro	good: asphalt boatramp
Jackson-Frazier Wetland	none	none	none	none	NA
North Albany Park	Serviced/ handicap	potable	fair: naturalized, turf	none	NA
Open Space Park	none	none	none	none	NA
<b>SOUTHEAST</b>					
Anderson Park	none	none	none		poor: bank access
Bellfountain Park	handicap	potable	fair: naturalized, turf	none	NA
Bundy Bridge Property					
Irish Bend Park	none	none	none		poor: bank access
Saxton Property	none	none	none	none	NA
<b>SOUTHWEST</b>					
Campbell Boat Landing	vault-type/ handicap	none	fair: naturalized, specimen trees, turf	none	fair: asphalt boatramp
Clemens Park	vault-type/ handicap	none	none: naturalized	none	poor: bank access
Mill Creek Boat Landing/ Robinson Grove	vault-type/ handicap	none	poor: naturalized, semiformal, turf	none	poor: asphalt boatramp
Salmonberry Boat Landing/Campgrounds	serviced/ vault- type/ handicap	potable	fair: naturalized, turf	none	good: concrete boatramp

# *County Parks Division Profile*

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The role and responsibilities of the Benton County Parks Division can be summarized as follows:

- RECREATION            provide sites and facilities in significant areas for outdoor recreational use and education;
- PROTECTION           protect, conserve, and preserve unique natural, historic, and recreation areas of local, regional, and state significance;
- MAINTENANCE           maintain and rehabilitate sites and facilities to secure investments;
- PLANNING              assess natural, historic, and recreation resources of the County to meet present and future recreation or conservation demands and continually improve operation;
- PARTNERING            coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate efforts of agencies and organizations that supply recreation and conservation;
- COMMUNICATION       build awareness for the economic and social values of parkland investments and activities; market sites and facilities; resolve conflicts of recreational users; build teamwork, volunteerism, and a sense of community.

Citizen surveys and town meetings have helped the Benton County Parks Division determine what community members want and need in their parks system. Beyond traditional recreational activities, new initiatives have developed to pursue educational parkland of historic and scientific significance. The need for conservation of open space areas and management of resource lands has gained interest to help balance increasing urbanization. This expanded role reflects public sentiment. It recognizes the need for recreational amenities to support community livability as well as critical property management investments that protect and conserve areas before they are lost forever.

Planning is a top priority for the Benton County parks in the 1990s. Master plans for the Fort Hoskins Historic Site and Jackson-Frazier Wetland preserve are underway. The concept of connecting parks through a linked trail system has been applied to recreational sites west of Corvallis. The initial phase stretching from the Benton County Fairgrounds to a City of Corvallis park has been completed. This new approach offers expanded or value-added use of both sites, partnering public and private ownership along the trail, unique maintenance and safety practices, and ongoing public relations to guarantee the proper level of use.

A proposed Corvallis-to-the-Sea trail has been recorded in local public agency plans since the 1970s. Now through the joint efforts and leadership of the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and Benton County, a planner on contract with Benton County is detailing the alternative routes and necessary property easements. It is hoped that the initial phases of the fairgrounds to Bald Hill connecting trail will prove a successful pilot program for this major trail system to the coast.

Sites acquired by Benton County since 1990 offer special interest and educational activities about ecology, as found at the Jackson-Frazier Wetland preserve, and history, recorded at Fort Hoskins Historic Site. These sites require a different kind of planning and expertise, specialized management and maintenance, and public access plans. Their investment is extremely valuable for the regional uniqueness represented and now preserved.

The new Benton County park investments and initiatives are exciting, creative, and innovative. The Division is continually arranging their ideas and energies to capture unique opportunities, provide valuable sites and facilities for public viewing or use, and improve the quality of what is available.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

Three and a half decades of site acquisition, planning, and development have been invested in the present Benton County Parks System. The system has progressed from a volunteer board with no staff and 89 acres of donated recreational land, to 6.2 staff positions, an advisory board, and 776.17 acres of recreational, natural, and historic lands.

A brief outline of historical highlights follows. A more detailed description appears in the Appendix.



## ***Benton County Parks Historical Highlights***

- 1957 Benton County Parks Board established
- 1960 Acquired property for Saxton Park, followed by acquisitions of Oakland Wayside, Mill Creek, Campbell Boat Landing, and Salmonberry / Bundy Bridge site donated / Benton County Public Works Department provides maintenance after volunteers and Parks Board members construct facilities
- 1967 *Benton County Urban Area Park Plan* prepared for Benton County Planning Commission focusing on urban growth in Corvallis, North Albany, and Philomath
- 1968 Acquired Clemens and Irish Bend properties
- 1972 Acquired North Albany, Bellfountain, Hyak, and Adair sites increasing total holdings from 89 acres (16 acres developed) to 216 acres
- 1973 Benton County Parks Department created / Parks Board assumed advisory role
- 1974 System-wide parks plan outlined / Benton County Comprehensive Plan for growth and development prepared / staff hired / annual department budget totals \$124,000 with \$77,000 for capital improvements
- 1976 Citizens for Benton County Parks Committee formed to campaign for major park improvement financing / Capital Improvements Serial Levy passes / five-year development plan prepared
- 1977 Benton County Courthouse listed on National Register of Historic Places
- 1982 Update of 1974 Benton County Comprehensive Plan released
- 1983 \$780,000 of improvements made throughout parks system over last seven years / parks and recreation serial levy monies end
- 1984 Visitor count estimates reach 150,000 persons per year / Corrections Work Crew established to assist in park maintenance & construction
- 1986 Benton County Fairgrounds merges with Parks to form one department, initial staff commitment placed on improvements to fairgrounds

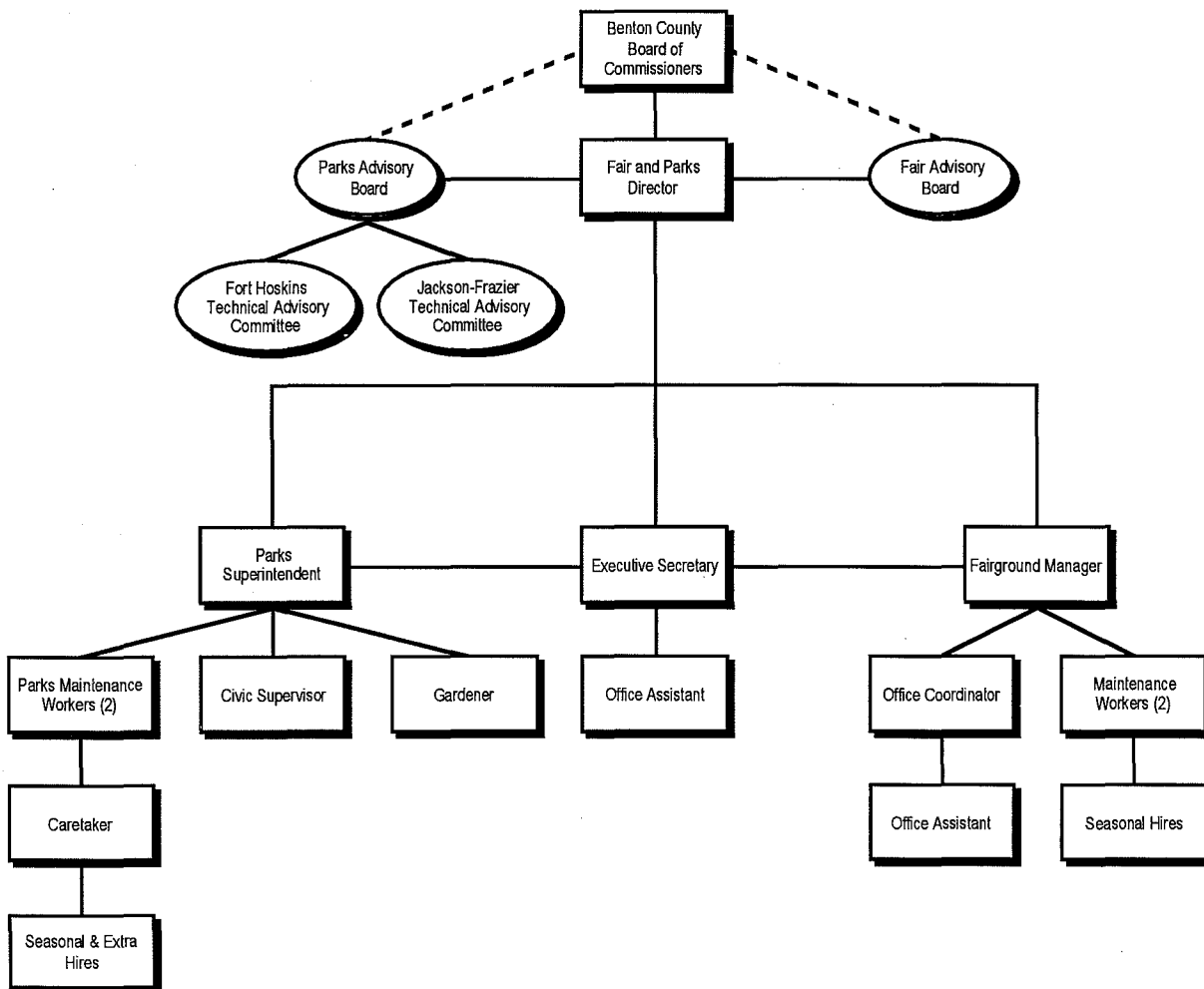
- 1988 Acquisition discussions begin for Fort Hoskins / Concentration and staff commitment to fairgrounds improvements decreases / Centennial of Benton County Courthouse
- 1989 Public surveys and town meetings begin to explore community interests and needs / Preliminary site plan designed for 15-site campground adjacent to Salmonberry Boat Landing
- 1990 Benton County assumes ownership of 147 acre Jackson-Frazier Wetland property / Fort Hoskins Task Force formed by Benton County Historical Society / Open Space Report prepared by Greenbelt Land Trust
- 1991 Acquired 8.80 acres located north of Salmonberry Boat Landing along Alsea River for proposed campground / option agreement signed for Fort Hoskins property / Oakland Wayside deeded back to original owners / open space conservation criteria drafted
- 1992 Benton County dedicates \$20,000 toward the purchase of Fort Hoskins property followed by a \$ 76,000 loan from the general fund / Meyer Memorial Trust awards \$90,000 Challenge Grant toward the purchase of Fort Hoskins property / Jackson-Frazier Wetland Management Plan Task Force appointed / Wetland Management Plan approved by the Board of Commissioners
- 1993 Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division awards \$62,480 toward site preparation and construction of Salmonberry Campground / design and construction begins on a Fairgrounds to Bald Hill Park multi-use connecting trail / Benton County transfers the property title of Riverview Heights Park to the City of Albany / Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan started / \$6,000 grant received for trail planning and development with the City of Corvallis / Benton County Trail System Plan started / Donation of Open Space Park Property
- 1994 Benton County Commissioners commit \$10,000 and the Oregon State Marine Board awards \$30,000 plus in-house design and engineering toward an improvements at Hyak Park / Fort Hoskins master plan started with receipt of \$10,000 planning grant / Corvallis to the Sea planning is approved by all partners to move beyond feasibility study and into actual trail development planning / Jackson-Frazier public access plan started with the construction of a visitor boardwalk / Donation process developed for parkland and resource management property

## ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

In 1986, two divisions, Parks Division and Fair Division, merged into one department to maintain, operate, and market the Benton County parks system and fairgrounds facilities/events. Initially management and staff members concentrated on deferred maintenance and facility improvements greatly needed at the Fairgrounds. Time away from parks planning and maintenance had a severe impact on the system and its properties. In 1988, the transition was complete and a more balanced approach taken.

Today, the two divisions work cooperatively under the direction of a Fair and Parks Director and various advisory boards and committees appointed by the Benton County Board of Commissioners. A current organizational chart appears below.

**Benton County Fair & Parks Department Organizational Chart**



The nine-member Parks Advisory Board is responsible for:

- initiating advice and recommendations based on observations of park operations, public concerns, and matters submitted by the Commissioners;
- providing leadership and promoting cooperation between public and private organizations in the provision of adequate recreational opportunities; and
- safeguarding and representing the public interest in park issues and encouraging citizen participation in and support of parks programs.

Additional advisory committees and task forces are appointed for specific management projects. This report deals with the overall responsibilities and operation of the Parks Division.

### ***Financial performance objectives***

Financial performance objectives for the Parks Division include parks administration, maintenance, grounds maintenance, the Benton County Clubhouse operations, Community Service Work Program, and a Capital Improvement Program.

**Parks administration** involves planning and acquisition of parkland and open space properties, resource land management, budget preparation and control, cost accounting for maintenance and development projects, parks system and special event marketing, comprehensive planning, and organizational support.

**Parks maintenance** serves over 215,000 visitors per year, providing expertise, tools, equipment, and labor to maintain over 776.17 acres of parkland and new and aging facilities.

**Grounds maintenance** accentuates the historic Benton County Courthouse with quality landscaping and maintenance as well as maintains attractive public grounds at three Benton County government facilities: the Law Enforcement Building, Public Service Building, and Avery Services Unit.

**Benton County Clubhouse operations** serves approximately 15,000 visitors per year, maintains and markets the Clubhouse for group rental, and supports a resident caretaker.

**Community Service Work Program** provides a constructive alternative to incarceration and other detention methods for minor and non-violent offenders through a coordinated work program involving special projects and maintenance of County parks, County facilities, and other public projects.

**Capital Improvement Program** projects, plans, and allocates funds for capital improvement projects including land purchase, and the design, construction, and rehabilitation of park sites and facilities. The program also attracts federal, state, private, and charitable sources to assist in improvement funding.

**FUNDING AND FEES**

Development, management, and maintenance of parks systems are generally funded through the following methods:

tax revenues	fees and charges
property & special taxes	bonds
assistance grants	leases and rentals
funds, & endowments	concessions
gifts, bequests, trust	sale of surplus property

The Parks Division operation is supported by unrestricted funds and taxes from the Benton County general fund, recreational and equipment fees, and dedicated program funds secured through grants and state collected recreational vehicle registration fees and marine fuel taxes. Division operations are largely supported through tax dollars from the Benton County general fund (i.e., FY1993-94 at 83.9% and FY1992-93 at 84.3%). The following table outlines the department's/division's budget history since its creation in 1973.

***Benton County Parks Budget History***

During the five-year serial levy from FY1977-78 to FY1981-82, \$780,000 in major park facility investments were made. The department successfully matched outdoor recreation funds from state and federal sources including the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the State Marine Board. A State of Oregon Grant-in-Aid program provided revenue sharing funds from FY1982-83 to 1986-87, but this source no longer exists. Grants and loans such as the \$90,000 Challenge Grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust toward the purchase and preservation of Fort Hoskins property is held in a separate trust fund. A second trust fund holds private donations and a foundation grant for conservation of the Jackson-Frazier Wetland preserve.

BUDGET HISTORY — BENTON COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT

Operations Beginning Budget Appropriation				Capital Projects Actual Revenue by Source				
Year	Total Budget	Unrestricted Share	Unrestricted % share	General Fund	Serial Levy	Revenue Sharing	Other / Grants	Total
94-95 *	415,583	328,783	79.1%	20,000			137,400	157,400
93-94	369,795	310,135	83.9%	12,500				12,500
92-93	380,424	320,864	83.9%	12,500			118,815	131,315
91-92 #	367,302	320,302	84.3%	18,385			9,625	28,010
90-91	390,259	366,259	87.2%				0	0
89-90	347,676	325,776	93.9%	35,000			0	35,000
88-89	326,324	304,824	93.7%	22,250			0	22,250
87-88 +	301,239	280,489	93.4%	22,924			0	22,924
86-87	264,411	241,871	93.1%			14,782	0	14,782
85-86 ++	259,014	230,604	91.5%	15,000		31,018	810	46,828
84-85	236,713	208,322	89.0%			20,000	1,089	21,089
83-84	226,919	212,689	88.0%			42,909	3,060	45,969
82-83	226,216	209,265	93.7%	18,352	0	19,532	18,840	56,724
81-82 ^	294,371	236,935	92.5%		96,552		116,870	213,422
80-81	227,312	202,599	80.55		102,065		59,575	161,640
79-80	191,904	170,813	89.1%		95,364		78,048	173,412
78-79	188,350	157,447	89.0%		95,187		9,918	105,105
77-78	147,578	133,058	83.6%		89,980		9,129	99,109
76-77	78,090	74,690	90.2%					0
75-76 **	141,302	139,802	95.6%					0
74-75 ***	123,660	123,160	98.9%					0
73-74 ##	54,600	54,600	99.6%					0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,559,042</b>	<b>4,953,287</b>	<b>89.1%</b>	<b>18,352</b>	<b>479,148</b>	<b>128,241</b>		<b>1,347,479</b>

Footnotes:

- \* Approved Budget (CWC leader reduced .40 FTE)
- # Management FTE reallocated to Fair Fund
- + Corrections Work Crew leader .50 to 1.00 FTE
- ^ Peak of serial levy supported park construction & development
- \*\* \$96,143 in capital outlays
- \*\*\* \$77,110 in capital outlays
- ## \$43,800 in capital outlays
- ++ Corrections Work Crew Program added

Changes in management responsibilities have occurred with the addition of the Corrections Work Crew Program in FY1985-86 and the reallocation of management staff to the Fair Fund in FY1991-92. Parks has never had a large staff. The FY1994-95 staff consists of only 6.2 regular full- and part-time staff positions. During the peak of the serial levy in 1981, there were two to three additional park rangers/maintenance personnel and a park planner beyond the current 6.2 positions.

The State of Oregon collects fees and taxes for county park maintenance, operations, and improvements from recreational vehicle registration fees and marine fuel taxes. The 1993 legislature approved a local lodging tax to allow counties to assess a tax on overnight campers in publicly-owned campgrounds. Lodging tax rates added by Oregon counties range from 3 to 9 percent, adding about \$1 per night at most campgrounds. There are five campgrounds in Benton County at Salmonberry, Benton County Fairgrounds, Alsea Falls (managed by Bureau of Land Management), Mary's Peak (managed by Siuslaw National Forest), and Willamette (managed by City of Corvallis). Benton County has not assessed this tax.

General fees and charges used by parks systems include:

Entrance fees:	entrance into large outdoor areas
Admission fees:	admittance to buildings or structures
Rental or user fees:	exclusive use of property and equipment
Sales revenue:	purchase of merchandise, food, or drink
License and permit fees:	legal consent for regulated or controlled actions such as fishing, hunting, or model plane flying
Special service charge:	unusual services for a particular purpose such as group membership or seasonal equipment storage.

County rental fees are assessed and collected by the Parks Division for group picnicking reservations at Adair Park, Bellfountain Park, and North Albany Park, camping fees at Salmonberry Campground, and one-time or multiple use of the Benton County Clubhouse. An average annual total of \$7,500 is collected from reservation and permit fees and \$23,000 from Clubhouse rental fees. The Parks Advisory Board annually reviews park fees and wrestles with the balance between providing services for community use and the trend for "pay-as-you-go" outdoor recreation. Public park and recreation programmers have generally found that the minimal charge for use of parkland and facilities has had little or no negative effect on the amount of visitation as long as the charge is reasonable. Programmers have also found that public education is required to help citizens become aware that general tax funds cannot cover the increasing costs for park recreation.

Revenue sources principally used by the Oregon State Parks include park user fees, recreational vehicle registration fees, general tax funds, miscellaneous revenues, and some federal aid. Miscellaneous revenue can come from land rents, payment for services rendered to the state Highway Division by State Parks Division, timber sales, land sales, interest, damage claims, property rental, charge for services, and fines. For the Oregon State Parks, more and more revenue is expected from user fees and recreational vehicle registration fees rather than the general fund or federal aid.

With the recent increase in usage and the necessity for more sites and facilities, the United States Forest Service not only charges fees for facility use that had once been free, but now private concessionaires are allowed to operate on the grounds to provide services to park users. Concessionaires provide food, equipment, supplies, and lodging. Some concessionaire arrangements are successful, almost risk-free and profitable, while other arrangements can negatively impact the park environment, facility maintenance, and recreational programming.

For Benton County Parks Division, user fees and state-collected revenues cannot support the overall parks system operation. Most resources from federal and state grant funds and private foundations are highly competitive and restricted to specific eligible projects. To help support its general operation, the Benton County Parks Division will continue to 1) regularly seek out additional revenues, resources, donations, and matching funds, 2) as appropriate, pursue major capital improvement financing through bond issues and/or grant opportunities, 3) continue to arrange planning partnerships and equipment trades, and 4) attract volunteer assistance.

### ***Benton County Capital Improvement Program***

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Benton County estimates costs for planned projects that exceed \$ 10,000.00. Projects for roads, bridges, bikeways, fairgrounds, parks, and county government facilities are described with a total estimated cost for all project construction phases over a five-year period. A financial summary of CIP FY1995-99 park projects appear in the Appendix.

## **MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

Capital improvements, maintenance, and repair is an ongoing exhaustive requirement of any outdoor development. The design, construction, and maintenance should withstand heavy use, dry rot, vandalism, weed control, and erosion. Making the right initial investment the first time saves time, energy, and expense in the long run. Unfortunately even the best facility design or construction materials do not hold up forever.



During FY1994-95 the Parks Division will begin using a computer database program designed specifically for parks system maintenance. This program will help the Division track individual park needs, seasonal trends, and system-wide collective repairs and requirements—information beyond what is listed in these tables. Staff time and training to fully utilize this database maintenance package is required. Tools, equipment, materials, and supplies are adequate and, in some cases, on loan. The Division often arranges trades or rentals with other public agencies to keep the costs down. Park maintenance is labor intensive. The assistance and man-hours provided by the Corrections Work Crew is not only helpful but essential for maintaining these investments.

## **MARKETING**

Marketing performed by the Benton County Parks Division has been limited. There are currently no funds available to update a recreation guide which outlines the features and locations of county-wide parks. Some County parks are not included in the brochure since they were acquired after its printing.

Parks Division staff recently formed a “Passion for Parks” team to review potential communications and advertising that would require little or no costs. Three priority areas were recommended:

- 1 – improve park signage to include County identification and recreational symbols along the highway or access road and within the parks to stimulate park use and recognition;
- 2 – develop and distribute park-related stories (e.g., stories of historic significance, seasonal highlights, and family fun) to the media, schools, and community groups; and
- 3 – create a distinctive visible identity for the Benton County Parks Division through unique park features such as signage and landscaping or identifying marks such as a slogan or logo on all correspondence and park vehicle doors.

The recommendations of the “Passion for Parks” team build on two citizen surveys which sampled the perceptions and use of Benton County parks: 1) a needs assessment survey and public meetings conducted by the Benton County Parks Division in 1991, and 2) an image study to probe the impressions and awareness of Benton County government conducted by Market Decisions Corporation, Portland in 1989.

### ***1991 Survey Results***

Parks Division results indicated that residents value the recreational opportunities offered by the Benton County Parks System. Specific park use and recommended improvements were reported as follows:

- By visitor ratio, the high use parks include: Adair, Clemens, Hyak, North Albany, and Bellfountain.
- The most frequented recreational activities include: hiking/walking, picnicking, playgrounds, fishing, organized group activities, and wildlife viewing. The rate of frequency for hiking/walking is once a week; once a month or more for playgrounds and wildlife viewing; and four times a year or more for picnicking, fishing, and organized group activities.
- Requested park development improvements include: land acquisition for parks and open space and improvements to existing facilities.
- Requested recreational activity improvements include: interpretive and hiking trails, organized recreational programming, water access for swimming, boating and fishing, and playgrounds/children's play areas.
- Requested administrative improvements include: more publicity and a three-year serial levy for funding development and improvements.

### ***1989 Survey Results***

Market Decisions Corporation reported that residents were most likely to have knowledge of, usage of, and satisfaction with parks as a county service than any other primary or secondary service.

- 92% of respondents reported having used parks.
- On a five point scale, parks recorded an average rating of 4.37 for satisfaction with service—the highest of all services presented.
- County residents are most likely to agree that area parks are well maintained.
- Given a choice between city and county government, most residents would choose county government to administer parks and recreation facilities.

## **SECTION TWO**

# **FINDINGS and STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### *Parks System Trends*

Trends can be identified in 1) changing attitudes in the value of resource management and recreation, 2) the expansion of recreational opportunities and use, 3) parkland acquisition, and 4) site and facility funding and maintenance. These trends help assess how well a parks system is responding to the interests and needs of its current users. Trends also project the needs and expectations of future users and prepare a system for the next six to ten years. The following trends were identified as relevant to the Benton County Parks System.

#### *Increasing Appreciation for and Use of Resource Management and Recreation*

- A growing trend shows increasing recognition from elected officials and the public for the range of tangible and intangible assets of dedicated natural, historic, and recreational parkland.

There is public interest for providing a balance of regulatory and non-regulatory programs to protect both the natural landscape and provide access to recreational areas. Park management literature suggest that community members value parks for:

- 1 -- the sense of community togetherness and quality of life,
- 2 -- physical well being and recreation, and
- 3 -- solitude, reflection, and sense of self in the environment.

Recent articles from the LA Times-Washington Post Service and Knight-Ridder News Service advise millions of readers to use leisure and recreation as “a necessary component to human balance and satisfaction.” They warn society not to undervalue leisure – suggesting that time spent recreating is as important as sleeping, eating, and breathing. Caution is given to the weekend practice of escapism and “cocooning” – remaining indoors watching television or playing computer games with the kids.

The same public that is concerned with individual wellness and physical fitness will utilize outdoor recreation. The trend toward awareness and societal pressure generally leads to increased interest and use. This growing public education combined with increased sentiment for preserving natural resources will position parks systems as necessary investments rather than amenities.

### ***Expansion of Recreational Activities for Today's Park Users***

- In the 1990s, a diverse population looks close to home for individual health and fitness activities – increasing numbers of park users want to work hard, then play hard ... or rest quietly.

Outdoor recreation activities increased with the population growth and prosperity from the 1950s through the 1970s. Natural resource-based recreation sites and group sports facilities were developed by federal, state, and local agencies to serve the general public. By the 1980s, demographic and economic changes brought less time and available income for recreation with single parent households and more dual career couples.

In the 1990s, new recreational equipment including mountain bikes, jetskis, and all-terrain vehicles perpetuate this trend. Park management literature suggests that children, teenagers, young adults, and adults respond to market-driven demands in the 1990s and look for locations to “play hard”. It is often difficult for parks systems to keep up with these changing influences and facilities for new recreational equipment.

- A maturing generation of Baby Boomers, the first generation that experienced organized little league play and access to well-developed playgrounds, have become regular park users.

Trends literature explain that Baby Boomers look for traditional family-oriented recreational activities with organized activities and events, well-signed and maintained facilities, and plenty of descriptive information in pamphlets, tour books, entrance signs, and kiosks. Park management literature recommends expending the extra effort to attract this target market since by the year 2020 there will be 77 million senior and retired Boomers with discretionary time and income.

- Groups and families are interested in a greater mix of recreational activities.

The trend of something for everyone – from active to passive recreation at one site – will bring the shopping mall influence to the outdoors. Areas are to be both predictable and controlled as well as completely natural, wild, and full of adventure. All age groups and physical abilities are to be considered. Large

sites such as the regional/district size parks of 100 acres or more best serve the range of dispersed recreation activities and facility investments now desired.

### ***Information to Stimulate and Satisfy***

- Trends also suggest that the amount, type, and distribution of available information affects the use and level of satisfaction.

Recreational symbols on highway signs inform motorists and stimulate use. Some large urban parks have invested in computer-aided information kiosks to introduce park users to the various activities, policies, and significant features at a site.

- More and more park users are interested in learning experiences including scientific, historic, and cultural interpretation.

This extends productive recreation beyond its traditional goals of physical well-being, individual skill, exercise, or self-reliance. Education, understanding one's past, honoring local heritage, and preserving the ecological balance in nature broaden recreational interest. These same visitors are known to volunteer to research historic data, act as tour guides and docents, become campground hosts, and help develop and maintain facilities.

### ***Planning and Target Markets***

- Park management literature recommends that parks systems should match recreational interests and activities to target markets.

Target markets range from the traditional age, income, and lifestyle groups to participation and attitude profiles for those who are described as resource conservation enthusiasts, "excitement-seeking competitiveness," "health conscious sociables," "safe and satisfied," high-stressed, strained career professionals or unstressed, reflective absorbers.

Recreational opportunities for specific target markets often requires parks systems expand to new areas of focus and adaptation. Some examples of target market programming include:

- Measured walking trail routes which connect major recreational destinations;
- Year-round, accessible facilities including all-weather trails and indoor and outdoor soccer fields;

- More wilderness areas for scientific study of unmodified plant and animal communities;
- Adding asphalt or concrete paths (and policies) for running/jogging, bicycling, skateboarding, and rollerblading;
- Scenic routes and information for pass-through special interest or theme tours such as eco-tours;
- Identifying and signing peaceful sitting areas for solitude, contemplation, and spiritual refreshment; and
- Identifying and signing natural settings with fresh electrically charged air – or negative ions – from concentrations of moving water near streams and rivers for physical and mental health benefits and restorative outcomes.

### ***Limited Parkland Acquisition, More Costly Opportunities***

- Planners caution that there are fewer useful recreational and natural parcels available for purchase, and that the cost for significant natural, scenic, and historic properties is increasing. It is common belief that once open areas and wilderness are lost to development, they are lost forever.

As the population grows, development continues. Parks systems have become increasingly responsible for satisfying the recreational needs of the public at the same time it protects, conserves, and preserves the natural, historic, and cultural resources of an ever-growing area.

According to a *Survey of Values and Beliefs* conducted by the Oregon Business Council in 1993: "Oregonians treasure Oregon's physical qualities, and they acknowledge that these attributes underpin the state's economy. They fear the future impact of population growth on Oregon's environment and livability."

Private developers who preserve open spaces and add recreational areas such as a swimming pool, picnic area, and children's play equipment generally do so in combination with specific residential subdivision or commercial developments. Use is restricted to the residents and their visitors and the consumer.

### ***Collective Public-Private Acquisition***

- Land acquisition efforts currently underway are generally made possible through private, public, and personal financial commitments and donations.

According to a Greenbelt Land Trust Open Space Report, significant natural resource areas in Benton County are threatened or well-positioned for development. These sites include Owens Farm across from the Jackson-Frazier Wetland preserve, Grass Mountain along the crest of the Coast Range, and Cardwell Hill Road. Value is placed on preservation of natural areas, open space, and greenways through a trend in public-private partnerships.

### ***Creative Financing***

- Public sentiment indicates a strong support for quality recreational activities. The sentiment, however, might decline if increased taxes are the sole funding source.

Entrance and user fees, lodging taxes, and merchandise and food sales are increasing. Reasonable rates for “pay-as-you-go” recreation is considered justified if a site has activities of the right quality and quantity. Privatization or public-private partnerships are developing to offer major tourist and recreational developments such as guide services, restaurants, golf courses, marinas, and resorts and motels.

### ***Creative Constant Maintenance***

- Planning and maintenance partnerships between public agencies and volunteers are used as a way to share expertise, labor, materials, and maintenance.

Park management literature identifies the demands for site planning, site maintenance, equipment, and training as a constant. Creative maintenance is to find ways to do more with less even if park use and recreational activities are increasing. “Adopt-a-park” and “adopt-a-highway” programs illustrate a growing trend toward shared responsibility between government and its constituents as well as society’s acceptance of basic systems that can be acknowledged and maintained as the fabric of a healthy community.

## *Economic Impact of County Parks*

Economic impacts of parks systems have been used to justify everything from operational expenses, increased construction costs for facilities, and land acquisition within a community, to increased recreational programming, and marketing and promotion. Almost all levels of government are finding it difficult to fund existing public services. Government leaders are scrutinizing all operations and investments against the needs and expectations of citizens.

Park systems that have gathered evidence of economic impacts demonstrate both direct and indirect economic influences on communities. The following is an overview of such influences listed in order as to the perceived level of impact in Benton County.

- Parks, open spaces, and available recreation opportunities contribute to a community's quality of life – whether it is a desirable place to live and work.
- Natural and scenic areas strengthen the overall image and attractiveness of a community – for the aesthetic enjoyment, sense of community, and personal sense of well being.
- Parks serve to protect natural resources including scenic areas, plants, and animals for the preservation and enjoyment of future generations. If parkland investments are not made and unalterable development or damage occurs, the resources are lost forever.
- According to a former chief administrator for the City of New York, there are some properties where it would be financially advantageous to acquire land for open space or parks to preclude its residential development. The City of Boulder estimates that it costs approximately \$2,500 - 3,000 to provide public services to an acre of developed land and only \$75 per acre for public services to open space areas.
- Greenways, open space and park availability and design can have a positive economic impact on neighborhood property values, the sale and selling time of property, and new real estate development. A study of property values in Boulder, Colorado and Boise, Idaho showed that values of properties adjacent to greenbelts were 26 - 32% higher than values further away. And according to the International City Management Association, people may be willing to pay more for a house located closer to a park or greenway than they would for a comparable house further away.



- Recreational activity and time spent outdoors result in measurable benefits to health and wellness. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Healthy People 2000 are bringing together state and local health agencies with parks and recreation to promote increased availability and accessibility of physical activity and fitness facilities. Targeted activities include hiking, biking, fitness trails, public swimming, and acres of open space parks and recreation.
- In a report prepared by the non-profit Trust for Public Land, it was reported that crime drops in areas where adequate parks and recreational activities are available. The trust is helping to create hundreds of parks and playgrounds in inner-city neighborhoods through a five-year, \$2.5 million Green Cities Initiative.
- Development of historic sites have spurred economic renewal of depressed economies – some have generated as much as seven times the initial public investment in less than ten years. Cultural or heritage tourism is a growing trend in several states. According to the International City Management Association, preservation groups believe it is more attractive than recreational tourism in attracting families on vacation.
- A 1989 poll of tourists conducted by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors found that natural beauty was the single most important criterion in selecting a site for recreation.
- Park-related expenditure multipliers for counties average 1.4 - 1.8 for each dollar spent by a visitor. Once a dollar is spent by a visitor, the same dollar may change hands several times in the local economy. This multiplier represents the sale of gas, food, sporting goods, and t-shirts to a visitor.
- Keeping local money home – if parks were not available, park users would need to travel outside the area to find facilities, companionship, change, and solitude.
- Recreation activities and the need for equipment have a positive effect on related businesses in the community including purchases of sporting goods, clothing equipment, film, and picnic supplies. Below are average expenditures for participation in recreation activities. Some parks systems survey local retailers, summer camps, and youth clubs to estimate the number of new participants per year. The total economic benefit to local businesses is equal to the number of participants multiplied by the expenditures given below.

Activity	Equipment	Shoes	Clothing
Hiking	35.00	50.00	
Birdwatching	60.00		
Fitness walking		40.00	37.00
Jogging		39.00	42.00
Bicycling	190.00		75.00
Softball	42.00	40.00	
Canoeing	650.00		
Camping	225.00		

Source: National Sporting Goods Association

- Fishing and hunting licenses, recreational vehicle registrations, and marine fuel taxes generate revenue for parks and conservation and result in other equipment-related sales by related businesses in the community.
- Tour-guide businesses are appearing in communities to provide both horse-trail and hiking excursions to day-use and overnight visitors. Fees are charged for outfitting each visitor with equipment, gourmet meals, and a tour. Tour experiences generally result in return visits and additional equipment sales. Remote rural communities can attract visitors and outside dollars on a regular basis.

From theory to practice, such economic impacts have as much or as little value as a decision maker or taxpayer wishes to give them. Public parks systems like other government services should reflect the social values and preferences that are needed within society. Economic impacts are tools or measurements used to describe the utility of parks systems.

Systems are large and small, urban and rural, developed and primitive. Parks do not stand alone in a community but are a part of the overall composite of its quality of life. Growing public education combined with increased sentiment for preserving natural resources will position parks systems as necessary investments rather than amenities.

When placing a value on parkland investments and recreational activities, economic impacts should be used along side other indicators and outcomes involving health, the environment, social influences on children and families, and cultural heritage.

## ***Findings and Observations***

The following findings describe the status or condition of Benton County investments and the viability of its parks system operation. The assessment was based on available information. The major findings were useful in identifying needs and framing Implementation Strategies.

### **SITE AND FACILITY USE**

- New and existing sites are in various stages of development. Some sites are not ready for public use until substantial improvements are made. Much of the recreational resource is undeveloped and unpublicized.
- Major park investments have been made in the *northeast* portion of the County including large parcels of 85 to 123 acres with a mix of recreational activities. Other areas lack the same major investments which result in a deficiency of large regional or district parks.
- All sites but one in the *southeast* portion of the County are undeveloped and unmaintained. Willamette River access is severely limited.
- Parks in the *southwest* portion of the County feature resource-based activities along the Alsea River. The largest parcel is 37.58 acres. No community-based activities are available for walking or bicycling, outdoor sports or games, or children's play areas.
- Only one site exists in the *northwest* portion of the County.
- Special interest natural and historic sites are beginning to receive attention. Out of 15 park sites, only two represent sites of unique natural and historic value.
- Out of 15 park sites, six sites are special use parks with single or limited activities. Limited facilities and an inadequate mix of recreational opportunities exist at some locations.
- There are insufficient opportunities for high growth activities involving measured and interpreted trails for hiking, picnicking, boating, camping, field sports, outdoor concerts and craft festivals.
- Barrier-free facilities are needed for park users with disabilities. Some existing facilities need improvement to comply with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **CITIZEN AWARENESS**

- Signage, park information, and marketing could stimulate additional park use.
- The perceived value of recreational parkland and natural areas is on the rise in Benton County.
- Park use and interest in participating in community activities is significantly influenced by the presence of children in a household.
- Barriers to park use include lack of time, lack of awareness of park locations and facilities, and lack of recreational skills or discipline.
- As found nationwide, citizens lack awareness of county parks distinct from federal, state, and other local parkland.
- Volunteers are an active resource for park management.

## **PARK PLANNING**

- Through the assistance of the Oregon Department of Natural Resources and Greenbelt Land Trust, unique natural areas have been identified. Continued assessment and additional public-private conservation agreements are now needed to preserve these areas for future generations.
- Small parcels of relatively undeveloped, unmaintained parkland (especially in the southeast portion of the County) should be evaluated and appropriate actions taken to develop or dispose of the properties.
- Due to budget constraints, additional park planning and development is severely limited.
- The criteria and processes for accepting donated parkland and property are relatively new.
- Recreational trends call for large sites of 100 or more acres with both passive and active activities and developed and undeveloped, natural areas.
- Infrastructure investments are costly and often cannot be made without additional resources from competitive grants and private donations.
- Parks systems need to include both traditional recreation sites and special interest sites of natural or historic significance.
- The Division draws upon outside expertise and experience for responsibilities involving real estate negotiations, property deeds and

easements, infrastructure design and management, plant and animal habitat conservation, historic preservation and restoration, communications and public relations.

## **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

- Active coordination, cooperation, and collaboration exists between the Parks Division and other public recreation agencies and community groups. There is a desire to pool resources and expertise to accomplish collective goals.
- Several areas with scenic and recreation potential could be developed through additional cooperative arrangements with state and federal agencies.
- Community groups and volunteers actively participate in parks system planning and management.
- Current Division staff are natural team builders and team players.
- Some public-private partnerships and privatization opportunities may be explored in the future to accomplish various improvements.

## **FUNDING**

- Few opportunities exist to attract substantial alternative resources outside of lodging taxes (e.g., hotel, motel, and campground taxes) and major bond issues.
- No substantial revenue can be gained from assessing additional fees and charges.
- A regular infusion of capital is needed to make significant, substantial improvements/additions to facilities.
- The current process to systematically pursue critical investments such as land acquisition in a timely fashion is relatively slow and underfunded.
- A lack of stable funding from federal, state, and local alternative sources makes financial planning difficult and continues the parks system's reliance on general fund monies.

# **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

## ***Management Strategies and Recommended Actions***

A list of priority management objectives of immediate and long-term needs and opportunities for the Benton County Parks System has been developed. To be feasible, the actions must be scaled to fit available financial resources over the next six to ten years. The list is optimistic. All barriers and obstacles have not been identified or resolved to insure completion of every action suggested. The concepts, however, represent the best judgments of what can and should be accomplished based on research, professional assessment, and creative drive.

### **RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

Below is a complete list of potential improvements and recommended actions. The list will be pursued as energies, opportunities, and funds become available. The list is not intended as a strict outline of what the Benton County Parks Division can and should do over the next six to ten years. Instead, the list should be used to identify and direct actions as barriers are removed and favorable conditions develop.

### **SITE AND FACILITY USE**

The Benton County Parks System needs to offer more river access points, hiking trails, scientific and historical interpretation, and large recreational sites with activities for all ages. It needs to develop a mix of recreational opportunities at strategic locations, respond to both traditional and market-driven recreational and educational interests of park users, coordinate inter-agency planning and management, protect investments, avoid deferring maintenance, meet ADA requirements for the physically impaired, and resolve areas of negative impacts caused by inappropriate park use.

***Recommended objectives and actions:***

**Site and Facility Use**

**OBJECTIVE 1 Develop more river access points for boating, bank fishing, and day use**

Investigate and develop potential sites that enhance current park locations: Digger Mountain on Alsea River, Anderson Park, Half Moon Bend (between Corvallis and Hyak Park), Irish Bend, near Mary's River Estates, along the Luckiamute River; along the Alsea River at South Fork, and near Lobster Creek

Explore undeveloped state parklands along the Willamette River for potential partnership arrangements to develop, manage, and provide additional river access points

Determine feasibility and interest in a joint management arrangement with the City of Corvallis to expand and improve recreational activities and river access at the Willamette Park Campground

**OBJECTIVE 2 Acquire and provide more open space and large sites of natural and cultural significance**

Define and establish Benton County's open space philosophy and role in maintaining and improving the quality of our natural environment

Work with such organizations as the Greenbelt Land Trust to investigate significant areas and assess their appropriateness and availability

Determine feasibility and interest in conservation easements, joint property management arrangements, stable funding sources, and establishing an efficient method for site acquisition

**OBJECTIVE 3 Develop and maintain trails for hiking, interpretative routes, and biking and continue Inter-agency planning efforts**

Complete County-wide trail plan with general specifications and standards

Explore, develop and maintain potential cooperative trails including Corvallis to the Sea, Willamette River Greenway, Corvallis to McDonald Forest

Build interest in potential trails and develop volunteer pool to support trail development and maintenance

**OBJECTIVE 4 Pursue special projects and acquisitions which involve unique opportunities for recreation, education, and leisure**

Further develop existing sites including Jackson-Frazier Wetland and Fort Hoskins Historic Site

Investigate potential special interest sites including watershed management, and demonstration farms or logging operations

Continue to seek site development/preservation assistance from special advisory councils and volunteer task forces

**OBJECTIVE 5 Protect existing land, facilities, and equipment by completing a comprehensive management plan and database**

Develop plan scope and requirements

Secure the appropriate levels of staff and volunteer involvement to identify and record findings

Update and evaluate records to address repair and replacement needs

**OBJECTIVE 6 Provide regional/district parks that include a range of recreational activities for all ages in all four quadrants of the County (northwest, southwest, southeast, and northeast)**

<p>Select best sites for further development that provide adequate space, represent the unique natural characteristics of the area, and are accessible to residents and visitors (e.g., Adair Park, Clemens Park, Fort Hoskins Historic Site, and Irish Bend)</p>	<p>Determine appropriate mix of activities (e.g., camping, picnic and all-weather shelters, interpretative trails, boat access, and open field/family fun areas) and design master plans to further develop existing sites</p>	<p>Develop operational policies and practices for expanded sites such as on-site managers, entrance or reservation fees, promotion, and signage</p>
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**OBJECTIVE 7 Develop quality overnight camping near urban areas**

<p>Select best sites to develop fully serviced and maintained campgrounds near urban areas that may include use by youth groups</p>	<p>Pursue planning and capital investments with assistance from State of Oregon Parks Department</p>	<p>Develop operational policies and practices for campground sites such as on-site host, reservation or overnight fees, promotion, and signage</p>
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**FUNDING**

Planning and parkland acquisition, facility improvements, and increased recreational capacity are just some of the areas in need of immediate funding. Additional financial resources are required to ensure timely purchases, construction, and repairs. Some funding opportunities such as private-public arrangements require extensive research, increased liability, legal documentation, and policy enforcement. It is important to balance the appropriate level of service to park users with a standard for (free) access and availability for all. Increased fees, revenue-generating special events, bond issues, and privatization are not risk-free. After sufficient planning and analysis has been performed, only those funding opportunities which promote increased recreational use and organizational efficiency should be pursued.

***Recommended objectives and actions:***

**Funding**

**OBJECTIVE 1 Pursue bond opportunities and levies for a major infusion of capital for facility improvements**

<p>Outline scope, costs, and benefits for targeted park improvements and propose financing options (e.g., public facility bonds or special tax levies)</p>	<p>Draft a list of capital improvement sources in use and other matching grant sources that might be added or attracted (and their specific requirements and legal limits)</p>	<p>Survey taxpayer interest in and support for park improvements and financing options. If favorable, seek approval of County commissioners for proposed financing option and prepare informational materials for voters</p>
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**OBJECTIVE 2 Pursue creative funding ideas and future revenue sources such as a hotel/motel tax that can be dedicated to parks**

Identify general and special purpose revenue sources (e.g., hotel/motel tax, rental or user fees, sales revenues, service charges, craft fairs, historic celebrations, and park concerts) currently used by parks operations or by other visitor-related organizations

Investigate the utility and appropriateness of new sources for the County parks system  
Depending on the kind of additional revenue generation proposed, prepare revenue forecasts and sample operating budgets to demonstrate financial impacts

Organize or gain authority for additional revenue sources that involve significant proceeds, charges, or earnings

**OBJECTIVE 3 Review the criteria and processes for accepting donations of land to the County by private parties to ensure that the processes are effective**

Recognize that donations of land to the County by private parties account for a large part of Parks holdings and inventory any contractual requirements or standards currently being upheld

Review and revise criteria and processes for accepting donations of land to ensure that such agreements are effectively and reasonably carried out over the long term

Build interest in and awareness of County practices for accepting and managing donated lands

**OBJECTIVE 4 Establish a parks trust fund to be able to efficiently act on acquiring significant parkland property**

Evaluate requirements such as timeliness and capacity for future parkland acquisitions

Determine scope, feasibility, and trustee requirements for establishing a parks trust fund and outline method and manner for attracting and recording resources (e.g., gifts, bequests, and donations)

Present proposal to County commissioners for approval. If approved, establish trust fund operation and seek resources

**OBJECTIVE 5 Pursue additional state-approved tax and permit revenues similar to the marine fuel tax and recreational vehicle registration fee**

Identify ongoing alternative financial resources that could generate sizable revenues if adequately collected and dedicated to parks

Provide information to the legislature that demonstrates the need for and benefit of parks programming

**OBJECTIVE 6 Continue to evaluate pay-for-use opportunities**

Continue annual review of fees and charges

Evaluate where and when significant park developments warrant increased use fees or other reasonable charges such as an entrance fee

Investigate public-private opportunities for appropriate lease management arrangements and/or concessionaires

## PARK PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Public agencies are being asked to both steward the preservation of natural resources (e.g., wetland, endangered species, historical amenities) and provide for increasing traditional and non-traditional recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking, picnicking). Benton County can continue and enhance existing positive relationships with state, federal, and local recreation providers and community groups to provide both regional comprehensive and special project planning. Such cooperation and collaboration brings energies and expertise to County projects. It supplements the annual budget with in-kind service and accomplishes common goals.

Benton County should strive to continuously resolve and transcend inter-agency and public-private competition, barriers, and shrinking budgets. Partnership agreements and regional efforts provide a broad-base approach to planning, construction, and maintenance. The Division should continually seek to improve efficiencies and opportunities through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

### *Recommended objectives and actions:*

#### **Partnerships**

##### **OBJECTIVE 1 Utilize existing network with governmental agencies for regional planning efforts**

Identify goals and priority recreational needs for future acquisition, preservation, and management

Continue efforts to inform policy-makers of significant threats, barriers, and opportunities that influence service delivery

##### **OBJECTIVE 2 Continue to investigate opportunities for cooperation with community groups and governmental agencies**

Determine and act on opportunities that include such benefits as cost-savings, efficiencies, job sharing, equipment sharing, staff training, and additional revenue sources

Co-sponsor planning efforts that utilize existing staff, shared staff, community volunteers, or contracted consultants

Continue joint interests in regional planning for coordinated river access, trail development, wetland preservation, facility maintenance and improvements, recreational use and capacity, and land acquisition

## CITIZEN AWARENESS

There is need to demonstrate the positive community and personal benefits of parks and open space. Increased citizen awareness should lead to greater regard and value of investments for current and future generations. Citizens are unaware of existing recreational opportunities and their social, physical, and economic benefits. Information should be made available to help citizens use available facilities and appreciate the recreational values and influences.

### *Recommended objectives and actions:*

#### **Citizen Awareness**

**OBJECTIVE 1 Utilize existing network with governmental agencies for regional planning efforts**

Identify goals and priority recreational needs for future acquisition, preservation, and management

Continue efforts to inform policy-makers of significant threats, barriers, and opportunities that influence service delivery

**OBJECTIVE 2 Continue to investigate opportunities for cooperation with community groups and governmental agencies**

Determine and act on opportunities that include such benefits as cost-savings, efficiencies, job sharing, equipment sharing, staff training, and additional revenue sources

Co-sponsor planning efforts that utilize existing staff, shared staff, community volunteers, or contracted consultants

Continue joint interests in regional planning for coordinated river access, trail development, wetland preservation, facility maintenance and improvements, recreational use and capacity, and land acquisition

## ***Performance Measures and Benchmarking***

Parks systems exist to produce something of value to a community and its environment. These values or service “outputs” and “outcomes” are central to the management objectives and operation of the overall system. Outcomes are external, outside-the-organization. They focus on results rather than efforts. They identify the effects of services delivered in and for society. Change is measured by the percentage or amount of variation from one year to another.

General outcomes include:

- the experience the visitor receives,
- extended use of facilities for community purposes,
- preservation, education, and enjoyment of historical and natural resources,
- conservation of representative plants, animals, and natural landscape within the County,
- identification, interpretation, and restoration of significant landmarks and artifacts,
- transitions from urban to rural areas and parcels of undeveloped natural relief from urbanization,
- opportunities for volunteerism and training, and
- commitment to activities and investments which promote quality of life and sense of community.

The State of Oregon has developed *Oregon Benchmarks* to measure how the State and its communities are meeting current needs and shaping their future. Benton County is currently reviewing the statewide benchmarks and drafting organizational outcomes. It is expected that urgent and core benchmarks will help County government set program and budget expectations and act on the most critical needs over the next few years.

Below is a list of applicable *Oregon Benchmarks*. The Parks Division will revise and refine its benchmarks as the Benton County Strategic Plan is completed and adopted in early 1995.

## **APPLICABLE OREGON BENCHMARKS**

### ***Planning***

- Acres of primitive and wilderness public land in Oregon
- Acres of multi-purpose land available for recreation in Oregon
- Acres of Oregon/Benton County parks and protected land per 1,000 Oregonians
- Percentage of new developments where occupants are within 1/2 mile of a mix of stores and services, transit, parks, and open spaces
- Percentage of existing developments where occupants are within 1/2 mile of a mix of stores and services, transit, parks, and open spaces
- Acres of community parks designated recreation areas and designated open space per 1,000 Oregonians in communities

### ***Facilities and Site Use***

- Percentage of public buildings and facilities accessible to Oregonians with physical disabilities
- Real per capita capital outlays for facilities

### ***Citizen Awareness***

- Percentage of Oregonians who think Oregon/Benton County is doing a good job at protecting natural resource lands
- Percentage of Oregonians who think Oregon/Benton County is doing a good job at providing easy access to work, shops, parks, and recreation
- Percentage of Oregonians who think Oregon/Benton County is doing a good job at making available cultural and entertainment opportunities

### ***Infrastructure and Environment***

- Percentage of native fish and wildlife
- Percentage of native plant species
- Percentage of key sub-basins in which wild salmon and steelhead populations are increasing or at target levels

### ***Health***

- Percentage of adults who exercises aerobically for 20 minutes at least three times a week
- Percentage of children in grades 9-12 who exercise aerobically at least three times per week
- Percentage of adults with good health practices

# *Partnerships and Grant Opportunities*

## **EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS**

The Benton County Parks Division is very successful in developing and maintaining effective partnerships. Partnerships generally form around specific project areas to coordinate resources and collaborate planning efforts. A short list of existing partnerships appear below.

### ***Open Space Acquisitions***

**Purpose:** to protect resource lands through gift of property, conservation easements, or other forms of protection

**Partners:** Greenbelt Land Trust, donors

**Contract:** conservation easements

**Description:** The Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to review and identify open space areas that should be protected and/or acquired in and/or near Corvallis and Philomath. GLT acquires then transfers ownership of open space property to a public agency (such as Benton County Parks Division) who can manage the resources and hold a conservation easement. The easement identifies the main principals of property management. The GLT in partnership with the public agency maintains the right to enforce the conservation terms of the easement.

### ***Trail Agreements***

**Purpose:** to collaborate on specific trail projects including planning, construction, maintenance, and ownership of trails plus combined financial resources for recreational hiking

**Partners:** City of Corvallis, Trails 2010 (GLT) Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, various user groups

**Contract:** Benton County and City of Corvallis have written agreements regarding spending authority on joint projects

**Description:** Trails in and around Corvallis and Philomath, including development of the proposed Corvallis to the Sea Trail

### ***Fort Hoskins Preservation***

**Purpose:** to plan, purchase, and develop/preserve Fort Hoskins Historic Site

**Partners:** Oregon State University, Benton County Historical Society, Benton County Historic Resources Commission

**Contract:** Benton County Commissioners established the Fort Hoskins Task Force through an Executive Order

**Description:** Fort Hoskins Task Force was organized to assist Benton County in the purchase and initial development of the Fort Hoskins Historic Site

### ***Jackson-Frazier Wetland***

**Purpose:** to assist Benton County with the management of a wetland resource

**Partners:** Oregon State University, Division of State Lands, private resource consultants, citizens

**Contract:** Benton County Commissioners established the Jackson-Frazier Technical Advisory Committee through an Executive Order

**Description:** The committee assists the Parks Division with management issues

## **GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

Competitive public and private grant and loan funds are available for planning, property acquisition, facility construction (with limited rehabilitation and repair), and marketing. Preapplications and proposals vary in detail required and application submission cycle. Benton County Parks Division has been

successful in receiving funding assistance from most sources. Staff time is very limited to devote to drafting grant proposals. If major investments from alternative financial sources are to be received, application materials will need to be developed. Some federal and state grant programs are described below.

PARKS & RECREATION GRANT PROGRAMS

State  
Administered

Program/ Agency	Applicable Objectives	Eligible Applicants	Eligible Projects	Grants	When to Apply
Public Works Grant Federal Economic Development Administration		Cities, counties, water districts, non-profits, in economically distressed areas	Public infrastructure	50 to 80% of cost. Typically does not exceed \$1 million.	Year-round. Phone 326-2735
Oregon Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) State Executive Dept./Intergovernmental Relations Division	improve the availability and adequacy of public facilities	cities & counties	public works, housing and community facilities, economic development, imminent threat and technical assistance	\$750,000 maximum, up to 100% of cost for construction. Up to \$100,000 for final engineering design.	Year-round. Phone 326-2735
Land and Water Conservation Fund National Park Service	for the acquisition, rehabilitation & development of public outdoor recreation areas & facilities	Cities, counties, park and recreation districts, port districts, Indian Tribes and some state agencies	sport & playing fields, picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing/hunting and camping facilities and wetland	up to 50 percent of the total project cost	submit to the Oregon State Parks & Recreation Division by January 1 of each year 503-378-5019
County Opportunity Grant Program	for the acquisition, development & rehabilitation of county park and recreation sites that provide overnight camping facilities	all counties		50 percent match basis	
Marketing Grants (Proposed) State of Oregon Tourism Division			Marketing & promotion projects to attract visitors/ no capital construction projects	\$5,000 1/matching Fund	proposed for FY 1995-97



PARKS & RECREATION GRANT PROGRAMS

Federally Administered

Program/ Agency	Applicable Objectives	Eligible Applicants	Eligible Projects	Grants	When to Apply
<p>Surplus Property Program National Park Service Department of the Interior</p>	<p>To transfer surplus Federal real property for public park and recreation use, or for historic preservation use.</p>	<p>Only State or local units of government are eligible to apply</p>		<p>Use of Property, Facilities, and Equipment</p>	<p>Recreation Grants Division National Park Service  206-220-4161</p>
<p>Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program National Park Service Department of the Interior</p>	<p>for the rehabilitation of recreation areas and facilities, demonstration of innovative approaches to improve park system management and recreation opportunities, and development of improved recreation planning.</p>	<p>Cities &amp; counties meeting the eligibility requirements as listed in the October 9, 1979, Federal Register.  MSA or population over 50,000  Jurisdictions must have an approved Recovery Action Program on file with the National Park Service in order to complete for rehabilitation &amp; innovation grants</p>	<p><i>Rehabilitation grant</i> eligible activities include: rebuilding, remodeling, or expanding existing facilities.  <i>Innovation grants:</i> to cover costs of personnel, facilities, equipment, supplies or services designed to demonstrate innovative and cost effective ways to enhance park and recreation opportunities at the neighborhood level  <i>Recovery action grant</i> Eligible activities include: resource and needs assessments, coordination, citizen involvement and planning, program development activities to encourage public definition of goals.</p>	<p><i>Rehabilitation grant:</i> matching capital grants (70 percent Federal-30 percent local)  <i>Innovation grants:</i> matching grants (70 percent Federal-30 percent local)  <i>Recovery action grant</i> Up to 50 percent matching grants</p>	<p>None  For more information: Recreation Grants Division 202 343-3700</p>

**PARKS & RECREATION GRANT PROGRAMS**

Federally  
Administered

Program/ Agency	Applicable Objectives	Eligible Applicants	Eligible Projects	Grants	When to Apply
Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (RTCA) National Park Service, Department of the Interior	To provide staff assistance to support partnerships between government and citizens to increase the number of rivers and landscapes protected and trails established nationwide.	Private nonprofit organizations and Federal, State and local government agencies.	New trails and greenways, protect and restore river resources, access and views; convert abandoned railways to multi-purpose trails, conserve open space	Advisory Services and Counseling. No fixed amount.	Varies from region to region. Proposals should generally be submitted in May.  For more information: Recreation Resources Assistance Division 202 343-3780

Note: The Oregon Department of Transportation's bikeway program information is handled by Benton County Public Works.

## *Expectations and Next Steps*

It is anticipated that through the Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan, a clearer definition and vision of parks system management will be demonstrated. The plan represents the direction and rationale for parkland investments and operation. Community and recreational trends as well as financial resources will influence service delivery. Planning goals, management zones, and standards remain constant to assess the existing inventory and form the framework for needed improvements. Much flexibility must be exercised to create the right combination of projects at the right time. The plan should help guide budgetary decisions, volunteer actions, staff energies (for the 6.2 current positions and volunteers), plus capital improvements.

Since 1957, the Benton County Parks System has continuously accomplished more with less. Officials, advisory board members, and staff are creatively positioned to move ahead to the future. This comprehensive plan should help frame the issues to be resolved and opportunities considered most pressing for system improvements. Regular updates should be made to measure progress and evaluate perceptions of performance outcomes.

## **APPENDIX A**

### ***Benton County Capital Improvement Program***

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Benton County estimates costs for planned projects that exceed \$ 10,000.00. Projects for roads, bridges, bikeways, fairgrounds, parks, and county government facilities are described with a total estimated cost for all project construction phases over a five-year period. Other capital improvements, or purchases of normal operating equipment are not part of the plan. Estimated costs, project descriptions, status, and projected funding sources are detailed. The program has a positive impact. It is an effective tool for organizing critical maintenance projects and leveraging/securing alternative resources. Although no constant designated CIP fund has been financially created as part of the annual Benton County budget process, the Board of Commissioners use the plan to allocate one-time major investments for a mix of projects.

CIP FY 95-99

FINANCIAL SUMMARY BY PROJECT — Benton County Parks Department

Parks	Estimated Budget	Funding Source					
		Road Fund	Fair Fund	Previous or Carry over	Federal Sources	State Sources	Private Sources
Hyak Park Boat Ramp	157,400					137,400	
Bald Hill/Open Space Park Trail	28,500			3,500	6,000		
Bellfountain Restroom Rehab.	20,000				10,000		
Wetland Boardwalk & Bridge	72,000				30,000		
Open Space Park Expansion	150,000						150,000
Clubhouse Water Line	20,000			10,000			
Fort Hoskins Development	260,000				50,000	10,000	100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>707,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>147,400</b>	<b>250,000</b>

CIP FY 95-99

FINANCIAL SUMMARY BY PROJECT (continued)

Parks	Funding Source						
	Special Assessment	Other Local Gov'ts	Volunteer Value	Internal Service Charge	General Fund Confirmed	General Fund Request	Other or Unknown
Hyak Park Boat Ramp						20,000	0
Bald Hill/Open Space Park Trail		7,500	11,500				0
Bellfountain Restroom Rehab.						10,000	0
Wetland Boardwalk & Bridge		2,000	20,000			20,000	0
Open Space Park Expansion							0
Clubhouse Water Line						10,000	0
Fort Hoskins Development							100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>

Note: Bikeway projects are developed and managed by Benton County Public Works Department.

## **APPENDIX B**

### ***Historical Background***

In 1957, the Benton County Board of Commissioners established a parks board of citizens familiar with rural properties in Benton County and land appropriation. Following a belief that property could be acquired at little or no cost to the taxpayers, Parks Board members T.J. Starker, Margaret Hull, Dr. Quisenberry, Otto Vollstedt, Dee Simpson, and Dr. Pepper, worked countless hours identifying undeveloped sites and negotiating donations or reasonable purchases. In 1960, Benton County held six parks. Development was primarily the responsibility of the Board members who worked with volunteers and donated materials to accomplish their goals. Benton County Public Works Department was responsible for park maintenance once improvements had been made.

The first park planning effort at the County level was a preliminary report prepared in 1967 for the Benton County Planning Commission entitled *Benton County Urban Area Park Plan*. This document outlined general park needs for the urbanizing areas of Corvallis, Philomath, and North Albany. The report recommended a study of the entire County at a later date.

#### **THE 1970'S**

In early 1970, four additional park sites increased the size of the parks system by two and one-half times. Development of these sites was considerably more complex and expensive than before. From a recommendation of the Parks Board, the Benton County Board of Commissioners established a separate parks department.

The initial department staff (i.e., one part-time and two full-time positions plus two positions funded under the CETA program) with no department equipment or tools, set out to develop and maintain 245 acres of parkland. The FY1974-75 operations budget was \$124,000 with \$77,000 for capital improvements. Realizing the need for a system-wide park plan, the Parks Board enlisted the services of a private consulting firm to develop a comprehensive plan. The 1974 document was never formally adopted by the County, but led to the formation of some general park planning policies.

By the late 1970s, the annual department budget declined from \$124,000 to \$75,000. This budgetary decline, coupled with the fact that approximately 70% of the county parklands were undeveloped or unusable, led members of the Parks Board and other concerned citizens to form the Citizens for Benton County Parks Committee. This group, with the support of the Board of Commissioners, successfully placed a five-year capital improvement serial levy on the November 1976 General Election ballot.

During the next seven years, the Parks Board and staff planned, engineered, and constructed \$780,000 of capital improvements to the parks system. Property taxes contributed approximately \$500,000 with the remainder from state and federal grants and donations. There were improvements made to virtually every County park.

### **THE 1980'S**

In 1982, an update and revision to the original Benton County Comprehensive Plan from 1974 was released including policies on Natural Resources and Hazards; Public Facilities; Open Space, Scenic, and Historic Areas; Parks and Recreation; and the Willamette Greenway. The revised plan provided a set of guidelines for parks development, listed deficiencies in the existing system, and recommended future improvements for the parks system. The recommendations assumed continued (or increased) financial support and stability, even though the serial levy was ending. The revised parks and recreation plan was not formally adopted by the Commissioners.

The flow of serial levy monies ended in 1983. Some State of Oregon grant-in-aid programs helped fund additional improvements but the major investments had been made. The recession of the early 1980's brought further constraints to parks planning and development. Status quo was maintained but no new developments could be made. Expensive maintenance items had to be deferred. Late in 1989, Benton County began surveying the public to examine their interests and needs.

### **THE 1990'S**

A series of needs assessment surveys followed from 1990 to 1993. The surveys indicated not only an interest in the traditional recreational activities of hiking, picnicking, and fishing but also strong interests in conserving areas of natural and historic value. During this time, three significant opportunities were visualized, creatively planned and organized, and secured. The opportunities included one wetland site – obligated to the County through tax foreclosure (Jackson-Frazier Wetlands Preserve), one site of great panoramic quality with mixed recreational opportunities (Open Space Park), and one extremely valuable historic site (Fort Hoskins property). With the assistance of active citizen groups and the approval of the Board of Commissioners, the Parks Director and Advisory Board members negotiated acquisition and development

proposals. General tax fund monies, grants and donations, including over \$90,000 from the Meyer Memorial Trust was dedicated to securing these sites.

The investments expanded the Benton County parkland inventory of traditional recreation areas to include new special interest sites for scientific and cultural education and exploration. The Parks System's enlarged responsibilities emphasized a new role for conservation, preservation, and restoration. A Management Plan for Jackson-Frazier Wetland preserve was approved by the Board of Commissioners. Additional initiatives including trail systems planning and significant open space assessment were launched. The Parks Division participated with related federal and local agencies and community groups such as the Greenbelt Land Trust to identify recreation and conservation opportunities.

In 1993, a 20-unit campground was constructed at Salmonberry Boat Landing. A unique connecting trail linking public and private property between the Benton County Fairgrounds west to City of Corvallis' Bald Hill Park opens. Planning begins on a Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan and an overall Benton County Trail Systems Plan. Benton County Parks Division focuses on:

- Protecting, providing, and maintaining opportunities for recreational use of scenic and recreational parkland not only for the present generation but generations to come.
- Conserving, preserving, and protecting natural, scientific, historical, and archeological areas and explaining and portraying the significance to park users and researchers.
- Coordinating, cooperating, and collaborating programs and related services with other jurisdictions, community groups, special districts, and state and federal agencies.
- Assisting in planning actions that provide for an orderly and efficient transition between rural and urban land use. And involving the public in all phases of the planning process.

Focus groups and the general public participated in identifying issues and opportunities related to park improvements and long-range planning needs.

In early 1994, the property rights and management for the neighborhood park Riverview Heights was transferred to the City of Albany. Funding for boat ramp improvements at Hyak Park was committed by the Board of Commissioners and State Marine Board.



## **APPENDIX C**

### ***Planning Goals and Policies***

Land use and natural resource planning goals and policies guide park planning. Policies represent how growth and development can meet the needs of the public without complete unalterable harm to nature. They form the framework for decision making regarding housing, transportation, energy, natural resources and hazards, parks and recreation, open space and historic resources, and the Willamette Greenway.

#### ***Benton County Parks Division must comply with:***

- statewide land conservation and development planning goals and guidelines;
- planning policies directed by the overall Benton County Comprehensive Plan, the official guide to growth and development;
- public contracting, public facility, and public meeting ordinances as dictated by the State; and
- recreational need guidelines identified in the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

#### ***Benton County Parks Division is guided by:***

- a range of community initiatives including open space and natural resource conservation, economic development and tourism, and historic preservation,
- quality and leadership initiatives adopted by the Benton County Commissioners in 1993;
- organizational goals and objectives identified in the Benton County Strategic Plan to be adopted in August 1995; and
- performance outcomes identified as part of the Oregon Benchmarks and Benton County Strategic Plan.

## STATEWIDE PLANNING GOALS AND GUIDELINES

Statewide planning goals (ORS 197.175) implemented by the Land Conservation and Development Commission and directed in the Benton County Comprehensive Plan outline responsibilities for local government including:

**Goal 1 Citizen Involvement:** To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

**Goal 5 Open Space, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources:** To conserve open space and protect natural and scenic resources.

**Goal 8 Recreational Needs:** To satisfy the recreational needs of the citizens of the State, and visitors.

**Goal 11 Public Facilities and Services:** To plan and develop a timely, orderly, and efficient arrangement of public facilities and services to serve as a framework for urban and rural development.

**Goal 14 Urbanization:** To provide for an orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land use.

**Goal 15 Willamette Greenway:** To protect, conserve, enhance, and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational quality of lands along the Willamette River as the Willamette River Greenway.

State law (ORS 197.190) also requires that "... each county, through its governing body, shall be responsible for coordinating all planning activities affecting land uses within the county, including those of the county, cities, special districts, and state agencies, to assure an integrated comprehensive plan for the entire area of the county."

The *Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, currently being updated, also utilizes the statewide planning goals in its assessment of recreational needs. The plan outlines the primary objectives of state land use law ORS 197 and identifies Goal 5, Goal 8, and Goal 15 as well as Goal 17 (Coastal Shorelands) and Goal 18 (Beaches and Dunes) for recreation, resource, and land-use responsibilities. Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions for needs assessment and comprehensive plan revisions.

*Oregon Benchmarks: Standards for Measuring Statewide Progress and Government Performance*, prepared by the Oregon Progress Board, identifies performance measures to guide institutional goal setting, resource allocation,

and government performance. Benchmarks are identified for parkland planning and acquisition, public infrastructure/public facilities investment, and recreational programming. The Oregon Progress Board is currently assisting Benton County in planning and implementing an organizational benchmark program. Recommended benchmarks for the Parks Division will be revised and adopted during the Benton County strategic planning process.

## **BENTON COUNTY PLANNING POLICIES**

The Benton County Comprehensive Plan is the official policy guide for decisions about growth, development, and conservation of natural resources in Benton County. Plan policies related to the parks system include Natural Resources and Hazards; Public Facilities and Services; Environmental Quality; Open Space, Scenic, and Historic Areas; Parks and Recreation; and the Willamette Greenway. The Benton County Parks System Comprehensive Plan compliments the policies and guidelines of the overall County comprehensive plan. Although revisions will be recommended for some policies of the overall plan, the general plan elements are sound. A sample of these policies follows:

### ***Natural Resources***

- (54) Benton County shall determine what land with significant native vegetation are owned by (local, state, and federal governmental agencies) and encourage the use of appropriate management measures to protect those lands. Some lands may be federal forests, ... Willamette Greenway parcels, county parks ....
- (58) The County shall encourage state, county or city open space or park land acquisitions, and the protection and enhancement of woodland and native vegetation within large existing parks.

### ***Historic Resources***

- (2) Benton County in cooperation with the Benton County Historical Society, shall actively promote the identification, preservation, restoration and protection of historic resources.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

- (22) Trails and pathways suitable for pleasure walking should be incorporated into existing and future recreational sites. They should be well marked (signed). (Trail) maps showing natural features in the vicinity should be developed ....
- (13) One-half to two-thirds of the picnicking needs of Benton County residents should be met by picnic sites within Benton County. This means that 226-301 additional picnic sites should be provided by 1990.

These sites should be provided at existing parks or at parks acquired primarily for other recreational purposes. (*Policy 13 to be revised and updated.*)

Policies such as these guide and support planning decisions. Since park systems require at least some tax monies for development and operation, policies should reflect the public preferences, needs, expectations, and values of its citizens.

## **APPENDIX D**

### ***BENTON COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD***

Caryn Johnson  
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Phillip Hays  
J.T. Bucy  
William N. Perry  
Gary Hallett  
Mary-Lynne Yamada  
Richard P. Bryant  
Betty Starker Cameron (term ended 6/95)  
Roger N. Dunn (term ended 2/95)  
Cleve Williams (term ended 6/94)

### ***BENTON COUNTY PARKS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOCUS GROUP***

Jerry Davis, *Benton County Fair and Parks*  
Sheryl Bennett, *Comprehensive Plan Consultant*  
Rene Moye, *Corvallis Parks and Recreation*  
Debbie Deagen, *Trails Consultant*  
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Benton County Parks staff:  
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    George McAdams  
    Charles Goodrich