

CHAPTER **

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

OVERVIEW

Parks are important to citizens and organizations that live, visit, or work in Lane County, including people of all ages, abilities, and cultures. The purpose of a public involvement process is to obtain diverse feedback about their expectations with regard to the County Parks system and the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. A second purpose is to ensure all interested parties know that Lane County Parks thinks what they have to say is important.

This chapter describes public outreach efforts and results that occurred prior to development of the first draft of the Lane County Parks and Open Space Master Plan update. [** changes will likely be made to this chapter once the first draft is ready for review, and once comments are received from the Technical Advisory Committee, the Parks Advisory Committee, the Lane County Planning Commission, and the public.]

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH EFFORTS

Outreach efforts consisted of the following:

1. The initial step in the public involvement process was to take advantage of the summer 2004 season by quickly distributing a "short and simple survey" at parks with fee booths.
2. In October 2004, long range planning staff convened and facilitated a Parks Division Staff Visioning Retreat.
3. Staff produced and briefed the Parks Advisory Committee and Planning Commission on the Public Involvement Plan and requested its endorsement. Both the Committee and Commission unanimously approved the Plan, which is in Appendix **.
4. Staff requested participation on a Technical Advisory Committee from federal, state, and local agency staff with expertise in recreation, open space, and natural resources. The Technical Advisory Committee agreed to review and comment on the first draft and to provide advice as needed.
5. A website was created for the Master Plan effort and several informational materials were published on it including the 1980 Parks and Open Space Master Plan, an overview of the update effort, the short survey that was distributed at fee booths and elsewhere, and a more detailed questionnaire. Staff also began updating the Parks inventory, and placed draft maps and inventory data on the web site.
6. The next step was to ensure that Lane County citizens and other potentially interested parties were aware of the Parks and Open Space update, the web site, and how they could be involved.
7. Several approaches were employed to encourage public participation prior to development of a first draft. First, a contact list was developed from the following sources:
 - Park users, including moorage, picnic, and campground reservations, and event registrants
 - All County service districts, including fire, schools, soil and water, persons with specialized needs, transit, utilities, and youth organizations
 - Libraries
 - Media

- Potentially interested private nonprofit organizations including chambers, environmental organizations, granges, land use groups, nature enthusiasts, neighborhood associations, outdoor enthusiasts, service clubs, and watershed councils
- Commercial recreational interests
- Sand & Gravel Operators whose lands are adjacent to waterways and recreational areas
- State and federal land and recreational areas
- County Parks Advisory Committee and Planning Commission
- City and County Elected Officials
- Staff representatives from all cities, other County departments, and Lane Council of Governments

All those listed above were notified of the County Parks & Open Space Master Plan update effort, how to participate, and of the website, by one or more of the following: postcard, email, telephone call, or at a meeting.

Following is a description of the mechanisms used to collect comments. All comments are transcribed in Appendix **, and highlights of comments are in Section III below.

Staff Visioning Retreat – October 2004

Parks Division staff are an important stakeholder in the future of the County Parks system. To obtain their input for the Plan update, they were asked to attend an all day retreat at Camp Lane.

User Survey – August 2004 through May 2005

Fee collectors distributed a "short and simple" user survey at fee booths, and the survey was posted in English and Spanish on the Parks Division web site. Specifically, the user survey was distributed as follows:

1. The August 2004 Lane County Fair
2. Fee booth personnel distributed the survey during the 2004 summer season at Howard Buford Recreation Area, Baker Bay, Armitage, Orchard Point, Richardson, and Perkins Peninsula
3. Picnic reservation packets mailed during 2004 from the Parks Division office
4. A news release in November 2004
5. The Internet (Parks Division web site and Parks Master Plan web site; and temporarily on the Lane County main web page at the time of the news release)
6. Newsletters of organizations with parks-related activities (McKenzie Watershed Council, Mt. Pisgah Arboretum; Friends of Buford Park, Audubon Society)
7. Mushroom Festival at Mt. Pisgah, October 2004

Questionnaire – January through May 2005

A more detailed questionnaire was distributed by mail, the Internet, and at 22 public meetings. A separate Youth questionnaire was also distributed. Questionnaires were in Spanish and English.

Meetings – January through April 2005

Staff convened community meetings or attended pre-existing meeting forums. In all 22 meetings occurred to publicize the Plan update effort and solicit participation. Meetings varied as to the forum and time allotted. In 18 meetings, staff transcribed verbal comments from those in attendance. In the remaining meetings, staff provided a brief overview and distributed materials. At one of the two youth-oriented meetings, a Spanish interpreter provided translating services.

The Public Outreach Table in Appendix ** contains a listing all meetings and other outreach methods employed prior to the development of the first draft.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section contains highlights of all comments from all public processes that occurred prior to release of the first Parks and Open Space Master Plan draft. Transcripts of actual comments are in Appendix **, as is a detailed description about how they were handled, and responses to questions.

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

Included in this section are overviews of results of the staff visioning retreat, "short and simple" survey responses, questionnaire responses, and meetings.

Overall, highest priority issues expressed by both staff and the public, from a long range planning perspective, are as follows:

- Adequacy of infrastructure, equipment maintenance, and amenities for developed parks, to meet demand for developed recreational areas, for all ages and abilities;
- Long term financial stability and the need to establish permanent revenue streams. This includes generating revenues that cover the costs of maintaining undeveloped park lands and free recreational amenities.
- Population growth and corresponding demand for more open space;
- Natural habitat preservation for passive recreational pursuits such as hiking and wildlife appreciation.

With regard to developed areas, all the amenities that contribute to recreational pursuits are important to respondents. This includes but is not limited to parking, picnic tables, playgrounds, ball fields, swimming and boating facilities, camping, and seating areas. Not surprisingly, security, cleanliness, and adequate restrooms are a high priority. There is broad support for more camping facilities, although one participant indicated that the high demand for camping on a few days of the year does not warrant the creation of additional camping areas.

With regard to undeveloped parks, many people commented that they would like to see more and better maintained toilet facilities in unimproved areas, and listed the control of invasive, noxious vegetation and protection of native vegetation as a high priority. They would also like to see more trails constructed to promote more use and enjoyment of these areas.

Many people wrote or spoke about user fees, particularly at Howard Buford Recreation Area, where they generally do not think a fee for hiking is justified.

There is consensus that collaborative efforts are critical to the overall parks system, including city, county, state, and federal lands. There is also a strong willingness on the part of the public to volunteer in parks. Many people indicated they would like to see more opportunities to take care of areas that are important to them. Finally, the number and kinds of questions asked demonstrated that the Parks Division could disseminate more information about County Park features and amenities, including marketing to youth. Many people are unfamiliar with the parks system and would like better access to information about all park and recreation lands in the County.

STAFF VISIONING RETREAT

Long range planning staff not employed in the Parks Division facilitated an all day retreat in October 2004 for All Parks Division staff. The Assistant Public Works Director also attended. Several topics were covered with an emphasis on looking to the future, using the Parks Division Vision and Mission Statements as a basis for discussions (information about the Vision and Mission Statements may be found in Chapter **). Highlighted below are comments from the retreat relating to long range planning issues. A transcript of the retreat comments is in Appendix **.

Visioning Topics

Critical Issues

Participants were asked to name the most critical issues facing County Parks. They identified the following:

- failing and old infrastructure and equipment
- inadequate staffing
- financial problems
- population growth
- natural resource preservation

Infrastructure & Equipment

Comments regarding infrastructure, equipment and maintenance identified a need for increased standardization by establishing an Infrastructure Plan and an Equipment Plan.

Park Amenities and Developed Areas

Participants listed several amenities important to provide in developed parks. At the top of the list are clean, ADA-compliant, well maintained restrooms. Also mentioned were play structures, picnic tables, barbecues, adequate parking, ball fields, event venues such as amphitheaters, drinking water, camp sites, marinas, picnic shelters, interpretive and bilingual signs, and trails.

Park Lands and Natural Resources

Participants were asked to visualize how parks should look in 20 years. Important features identified were that they be green; include blooming foliage; that trees be well maintained; landscaping decisions consider maintenance factors; and the inclusion of native habitat.

With regard to total acreage in the County Parks system, participants thought it important that acreage of parks increase relative to population. Acquisitions should prioritize unique areas that have adequate access, including to water features, provide connections between park lands; and preserve important habitat.

Specific Parks

Parks staff identified parks that generate revenues, or Class A Parks, as being the most important to the Lane County Parks system. Parks staff also want to see a County Parks presence reestablished in the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed. Parks with difficult access, which are difficult to maintain, or which possessed other management problems and possibly negligible public benefits were identified as possible candidates for removal from the Parks system.

Customer Service

The Lane County Parks Division identifies its customers as highly varied. They can be categorized by age, income, and culture. They include boaters, campers, swimmers, fishers, birders, families, treasure hunters, hikers, bikers, sun bathers, dog walkers, campers, event attendees, and disc golfers.

What all customers have in common is the need for access, and signage. Most important to customers, based upon anecdotal information, are safety, security, cleanliness, and simply outdoor areas for recreational use. They also value information, a staff presence, and medical and non-medical emergency assistance.

Other feedback customers provide to Parks personnel, with regard to developed parks, is there is a demand for more event venues, multi-use fields, playground equipment and other youth activity facilities; better lawn care, dog waste removal, better and more picnic tables, and improved on-line services.

Community Interests

In addition to individualized customers, Lane County serves a variety of community interest groups. An increased emphasis on partnering and building relationships is desirable to Parks Division employees. This would also include

working more with other public agencies. The Parks Division would also like to emphasize enhancing the lives of children, a Lane County 'super goal'.

USER SURVEY

In evaluating survey and other written comments, it is important to consider certain facts:

1. Parks where fee booth, hosts, and caretakers were more active in distributing survey forms may have experienced a higher submittal rate.
2. Since surveys were primarily available from fee booths at developed parks, these parks are more likely to be emphasized in survey responses.
3. People could have submitted more than one survey. This generally doesn't seem to be the case, however.

Due to the above factors, the information from the surveys cannot be considered statistically valid. It is simply one tool for reaching out to actual park users.

Staff received 106 completed survey forms. Respondents identified their places of residence, as follows:

Eugene - 51
Veneta or Elmira – 21
Springfield – 10
Junction City – 4
Santa Clara/River Rd. – 4
Cottage Grove – 3
Florence – 3
Fall Creek – 1
Finn Rock – 1
Noti – 1
Corvallis – 1
Portland – 1
Yamhill – 1
Vancouver, WA – 1
Oregon – 1
Left Blank – 2

The short survey asked people to list their favorite parks and why, changes they would like to see, and the highest priority needs for parks. Responses were highly varied. They are categorized below by watershed and by the favorite park listed by the respondent.

Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Parks

Bohemia Saddle Park

One respondent listed this park as their favorite park due to the natural beauty, history, hiking, being close to home, uniqueness, alpine setting, and view. This individual wants to see a permanent toilet at the Park and believes the highest priority need is continued maintenance of existing parks.

Baker Bay Park

Five respondents listed Baker Bay as their favorite park due to availability of camping, fishing, moorage facilities, natural beauty, large group area, family atmosphere, and good concession services.

These respondents would like to see changes related to fees, moorage facilities, park rules, and enforcement. The highest park priorities listed by these respondents are cleanliness, maintenance, and safety.

Mt. Pisgah/Howard Buford Recreation Area (HBRA) (Also Middle Fork Willamette Watershed)

21 respondents commented that Mt. Pisgah/HBRA is their favorite park. The major reasons this is a favorite park are the natural, diverse habitat and wildlife, hiking trails, and opportunity for getting away from the city bustle and noise without traveling a great distance.

Changes that these respondents would like to see in parks include: reduction or changes in fees, more funding and park land acquisition for habitat purposes, more habitat preservation, more river trails, staff with natural resource expertise on the trails, more bike trails, more trail and other maintenance, removal of noxious weeds, more bathrooms, and changes or restrictions on equestrian trail use.

The highest priority needs for Parks listed by these respondents are funding, trails, maintenance, cleanliness, land acquisition, safety, collaboration with other park agencies, natural resource stewardship, activities for children, family space, and access.

Long Tom Watershed Parks

The Long Tom Watershed includes County Parks surrounding Fern Ridge Reservoir.

Orchard Point Park

One person listed Orchard Point as their favorite park due to the large trees, concession, and swimming area. This respondent would like to see access to open space for everyone, including recreational amenities such as trails, picnic areas, and water access.

Perkins Peninsula Park

28 respondents listed Perkins Peninsula as their favorite park. The primary reason given is that it is close to where they live, with most of these respondents residing in Veneta and Elmira. They indicated that they liked the water access for sailing and fishing, that it is well maintained and clean, because of the flowers, restrooms, safety, large and open areas, that it is quiet and away from the jet boats, and is dog friendly.

Changes in Lane County Parks these respondents would like include a senior discount, more trails, picnic areas, and water access, more green grass and bathrooms, children's play areas, clean drinking water and restrooms, dock improvements, dog control & clean-up enforcement, and longer hours.

The highest priority needs for Parks listed by these respondents include lower fees, more funding, parking, maintenance, clean water, restrooms, trash receptacles, children's play areas, picnic areas, dock facilities, law enforcement, safety, being family friendly, and dog control.

Richardson Point Park

11 respondents listed Richardson Point as their favorite park. Proximity to home was the most common reason listed. Its cleanliness, shade, and boat access were other reasons why it is a favorite park. Changes that respondents would like to see in Lane County Parks include full hook-ups, later check-out time, earlier season opening, more emphasis on cleanliness, more trees, seating areas near the water to monitor children and watch birds, more docks, showers, BBQ pits, more wheelchair accessible paths, senior discounts, and irrigation.

Highest priority needs listed by these respondents included more camp sites for RVs, cleanliness, BBQ pits, more parks, maintenance, and hours of operation.

Non-County Parks

Other respondents listed several City of Eugene and State parks as their favorite park, including Alton Baker, Hendricks, Emerald (River Road Park District), and Honeyman. Changes that other respondents would like to see

include more natural spaces, more ball fields, limited developed parks, more acquisitions, disc golf courses, more camping, no fees, and bicycle access.

Highest priority needs listed by these respondents include maintenance of existing parks, acquisition of new park land, more wild areas, more restroom facilities, safety, cleanliness, RV facilities, and bicycle access.

McKenzie Watershed Parks

Armitage Park

Five respondents listed Armitage Park as their favorite due to native vegetation, bicycle access, picnic facilities, and the overall park atmosphere due to a combination of woodlands, green grass, and water access.

These respondents would like to see changes in fees, more paths, habitat connectivity, more control of dogs, more amenities such as playgrounds and drinking water, more emphasis on maintenance and bathroom cleanliness. The highest priority needs noted by these respondents are river access, removal of non-native vegetation, open space preservation and restoration, drinking water, playgrounds, maintenance, and dog control.

Forest Glen Park

Two respondents commented that Forest Glen Park and other McKenzie River boat access parks are their favorite because of river access, proximity to home and importance to the local area economy. They commented that Forest Glen Park needs an upgrade including better restrooms and more parking. They believe the highest priority park needs are to improve and develop existing parks.

Old McKenzie Hatchery Park

This park was listed by one respondent as their favorite park, who also noted they would like to see more boat ramps on the Siuslaw River.

Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Parks

Fall Creek

Two respondents listed parks in the Fall Creek area as their favorite parks due to proximity to home. Changes they would like to see in County Parks are more walking paths, year-round toilet facilities, and free hiking. The highest priority needs listed by these respondents are removal of non-native vegetation, toilets, and camping facilities.

Siuslaw Watershed Parks

Harbor Vista Park

Five respondents listed Harbor Vista as their favorite park, because it is close to the ocean, has a good view, is quiet, well maintained; and because it is close to Eugene. These respondents would like to see better permit information, and more camping spaces with views. They listed the following as the highest priority needs for Parks: reduced fees, maintenance, cleanliness, and access.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A more detailed questionnaire was distributed at public outreach meetings and on the web site. A separate Youth questionnaire was also distributed at two youth meetings and on the web site. The questionnaires for both youth and adults were published in English and Spanish. A press release about the web site and questionnaire was distributed County-wide, and postcards were mailed to approximately 1,500 park users who made reservations for moorages,

picnic shelters, and camp sites, or who ran in Run for the Mountain, or were Adopt-A-Trail participants, during 2003-2004. A notice or questionnaire and general information was sent to approximately 400 other contacts including all County school districts, service districts, city councilors, and city staff; potentially interested nonprofit organizations including land use, recreational, culturally based, and other organizations; neighborhood associations, watershed councils, chambers of commerce, recreational businesses, and individuals from the County Planning Commission mailing list. The Parks Advisory Committee and Planning Commission also received a mailing. A notice was placed in *Hispanic News*, a weekly newspaper serving Eugene and other areas in Oregon. The Hispanic version was also placed at El Centro LatinoAmericano, St. Mary's Church in Eugene, and area Hispanic businesses. The questionnaire was also distributed at meetings that are described below in Section IV.

61 completed questionnaires were submitted from:

Youth (10)

Individuals (35)

Organizations and Agencies (11)

Caretakers, Hosts, and Concessionaires (5)

As was true for the "short and simple" survey comments, questionnaire responses varied widely. Following are highlights of written questionnaire comments.

Youth

Respondents were from Creswell, Eugene, Lowell, and Marcola, and ranged in age from 4 to 22. All indicated they go to parks, including Creswell and Eugene area parks, Emerald Park in the River Road area, and Elijah Bristow State Park. The things they like about parks include play structures, swimming, hiking and climbing, solitude, playing sports, and being with the family. Other outdoor activities they listed included running and walking, getting fresh air, bicycle riding, and enjoying the sun.

Youth were asked what they would change if they were in charge of the parks. They indicated they wanted a swimming pool near Creswell, more shade trees, to get rid of fees, open the parks at night, bigger play structures, more maps and directional signs, more ball fields, and more seating areas. They also want more "kid-friendly" information on the Internet.

Individual Adults

35 individual adults submitted completed questionnaires. Comments varied as widely as the number of individuals, but responses demonstrate that park users have strong feelings about their parks. There is a good deal of ownership, a desire to be involved in park decisions, and a high level of willingness to help improve parks through volunteering.

General issues mentioned by respondents included maintenance, planning, funding, control of invasive plant species and emphasis on native vegetation, and a desire for more bicycle and off-road vehicle recreational areas.

Respondents also want to see an estimation of the carrying capacity of parks, more day use facilities for nearby residents, and more boating facilities.

Respondents listed the following as some of the highest priorities for parks: safety, meeting diverse recreational demands, an accurate evaluation of the parks system, long term financial stability, partnering and strategies for increased collaboration with other Park agencies, maintaining the existing system, connecting park lands, protecting natural areas, building more trails for passive recreation, park land acquisitions, and controlling vandalism. They would also like more family-oriented parks and playgrounds, more river and lake access, and better accessibility for seniors and disabled.

Individual suggestions for dealing with high priority issues included taking a pro-active, leadership role in partnering efforts, establishing a Parks Foundation for long term funding resources, establishing a state-of-the-art campground facility, more active promotion of volunteer opportunities, more outreach to disabled and diverse populations in decision-making, looking at other park system models, and better marketing and information about parks.

Regarding park operations, many people would like changes in the way fees are charged, particularly at Howard Buford Recreation Area. One suggestion was to charge fees more specifically for services rather than for park access. Other desired changes include more interpretive signs and multi-lingual signs, low maintenance structures, and policies that support natural resource and watershed protection.

Respondents would like to see master planning for natural areas, a nature observation platform on the Siuslaw River, bike paths, more attention to certain parks such as Hileman, Whitely, Siuslaw Falls, and Zumwalt, and information about Blue Mountain Park timber management. They would like to see Three Mile Prairie Park developed with trails, and the recent Glenada land acquisition made into a passive recreation park.

Respondents would like to see collaboration with other agencies, nonprofit organizations, and "friends of" groups, community farms, local communities, and watershed councils. Suggestions for collaboration include working with other agencies and groups on acquisitions or management agreements for specific areas, such as with Lane Community College who owns lands adjacent to Clear Lake Dunes Park, educational programs, accessibility, watershed restoration projects, trail and park maintenance, and monitoring activities.

Caretakers, Hosts, Concessionaires

Like Parks Staff, Caretakers, Hosts, and Concessionaires have specialized knowledge about the parks system because of their daily presence and use of the parks, and interactions with staff and park users. General comments included prioritizing maintenance before adding additional acres, better restrooms, more BBQ pits, better picnic tables, more play apparatus and youth-oriented activity areas, more picnic shelters for small groups, and more Ranger patrols on weekends at Richardson Park campgrounds.

Respondents also conveyed comments they hear from park users, including a desire for more events in the parks, statements that parks are too "commercialized" and unaffordable, not enough playgrounds, not enough repairs, not enough mowing, desire for more information about where fees are allocated, and a need for parks to meet day-use demand as opposed to only catering to moorage holders, campers, and reservations.

These respondents listed funding, promoting volunteerism, meeting demand for family-and child-oriented recreation, maintenance, and need for picnicking facilities, as high priority issues. In addition, "uniformity" of the parks, in particular campgrounds, was listed as a high priority issue.

Respondents indicate that several park users have offered to provide services. In addition, they would like the access fees used for play areas and equipment, swim areas, day use docks, maintenance, and restroom cleaning. Another suggestion was to enlist the help of area businesses to fund park needs while publicizing their assistance.

Respondents want to see replacement of deteriorating, inefficient equipment, more cost analysis, and maintenance of existing facilities before building new structures. They would like to see County Parks run more like a business, reduced rates for seniors, new hiring and firing policies for seasonal workers, and more trees and flowers. They suggest making campground reservations and information available on-line and to all other campgrounds, and to make seasonal passes available on line. They would also like to see adequate staffing levels.

Respondents listed Camp Lane as deserving immediate repairs and more revenue dedications. Perkins Peninsula Park is mentioned as needing a water filter, revetment repair, new changing rooms, new roofing, pump house repair, and more parking for boaters.

Organizations and Agencies

A listing of organizations and agencies that submitted questionnaires is in the transcript in Appendix **.

General comments include a desire to see a pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area and the City of Veneta via Fern Ridge, a need for more publicity about Parks, a need for more maintenance, acquisitions, and to resolve funding issues, desire for more collaboration between park agencies, and more natural area management.

With regard to highest priorities for parks, one respondent would like County Parks to define its role relative to other providers in the area. Other comments identified maintenance of current park lands, acquisitions, connectivity, and funding as being the highest priorities. One respondent stated the highest priority is for Parks to educate the public about parks funding issues, so County government would provide more funding for Parks based upon community demand.

Suggestions for Parks from these respondents included to identify a target level of funding necessary to meet goals, partner with others, promote volunteering through the formation of "friends of" organizations, liquidate certain lands to acquire others, and develop a diverse funding base.

With regard to operations, one organization would like to see more accountability regarding how fees are used, and a change in the fee structure. They also want lower Parks administration expenses, and an updated Parks inventory. Other comments include the desire for more natural areas, environmental education in the parks, gating at dusk, more hosts to reduce vandalism, and a greater emphasis on passive recreation.

Comments about specific parks include Bohemia Saddle Park needing a vault toilet, and more boat ramps at Hendricks Bridge Park. The Friends of Buford Park want more active and full implementation of the Howard Buford Recreation Area (HBRA) Master Plan. Mt. Pisgah Arboretum would like to see development limited at HBRA, especially at the southern portion of the Park, and acquisition of adjacent lands at the confluence of the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers.

With regard to system-wide goals and policies, respondents favored various priorities. One suggested that all Parks include sanitary restrooms, drinking water at a limited number of parks, and to provide other facilities, such as pet areas, equestrian facilities, camping, and hiking areas, at cost. Other respondents believe natural resource protection, education regarding open space protection, accessibility for the disabled and for an aging population, more active grant seeking, and collaboration with other agencies, should be high priority goals.

Several suggestions included ideas for partnering with other agencies and organizations. A respondent listed the Siuslaw Estuary Trail and the Ridgeline Trail as opportunities for collaboration between the County and other recreation providers. Another listed catering to birders and suggested that the County work with Audubon to provide a County birding map. Bohemia Mine Owners Association, and Cottage Grove Prospectors and Golddiggers, noted their ongoing volunteer and financial contributions for the Bohemia Saddle Park, and intent to continue in these efforts. Other comments listed partnering, such as on the Rivers to Ridges Vision Strategy, as the highest priority for Parks. Another suggestion was to partner with private parties such as river guides, outfitters, and instructors, to stage activities in the parks.

One respondent proposes that Lane County Parks explore management partnerships for all parks and offered to take on a larger management role at HBRA. Another indicates that they use Hileman and Whitely Parks for children's educational forays, and desires an extension of the Willamette River bike path to this area. Another respondent invites Lane County Parks to explore opportunities for them to provide volunteer or other assistance. Existing

agreements to help oversee Bohemia Saddle Park, and the McKenzie River Maintenance Partnership, are also mentioned.

MEETINGS

Staff organized or attended 22 meetings to publicize the Parks and Open Space Master Plan update effort. The meeting formats varied. In 18 meetings, staff recorded verbal comments made by those in attendance. In the remaining meetings, time was limited and the presentation consisted of an overview, distribution of written information, and briefly answering questions. A Spanish translator assisted staff at one of the two youth-oriented meetings. A briefing was also held with the Board of County Commissioners. A mailing list sign-up sheet was circulated at all adult meetings.

The table in Appendix ** includes a listing of all meetings. The table also shows all other public contact methods employed prior to release of the first draft.

There were numerous requests for more information about Lane County Parks, indicating there is an opportunity to increase marketing of the Parks system. It was also apparent that funding mechanisms for the Parks system are not well understood by County residents. In addition, user fees were mentioned at almost all meetings, with most comments expressing dissatisfaction, while some were supportive. Fees at Howard Buford Recreation Area (HBRA)/Mt. Pisgah were a particular source of opposition. Many people, however, expressed strong support for increased funding of the parks system, saying they would like to see a stable, permanent funding stream, and some suggested floating another parks bond. Collaboration, and establishing more "friends of" park relationships, was mentioned at some venues, and many people showed interest in volunteering for County Parks.

Frequent comments regarding the parks system included a desire for improved maintenance at developed parks, and more trails, toilet facilities, and attention devoted to undeveloped parks. Other comments showed broad support for acquiring additional lands to meet increasing demand for parks, open space, and connections between parks. On the other hand, many comments indicated a desire that the Parks Division take care of the existing system before acquiring more land –or even reduce the existing system to improve its maintenance and stabilize funding. Moorage facilities, camping areas, natural resource protection, and removal of invasive plants, were the subject of many comments. The Fern Ridge Dam repair work status was a common question.

Following are highlights of individual meetings.

Youth Meetings

Two youth meetings were held, one with the County-sponsored Positive Youth Development (PYD) forum, and the other with Youth in Action (YIA) at the Lane Education Services District. The PYD meeting drew interest mainly from City of Eugene youth, while the YIA meeting included youth from rural Lane County. Approximately 12 youth and 3 educators were at the PYD meeting and approximately 20 youth attended the YIA meeting. A few of the youth submitted completed questionnaires which are highlighted (along with others that were submitted by youth who did not attend the meetings) above in Section III. Youth at the meetings were mostly high school-aged or in their early 20's.

The PYD meeting format was developed with PYD committee members –consisting of several representatives from community youth, educators, and agencies and nonprofit organizations serving youth. A "mind mapping" exercise was used in which participants imagined they were in a park and drew what they saw and were doing. Participants then described their drawings. Descriptions were recorded and are transcribed in Appendix **. Pictures are included in **.

In the YIA meeting, the youth questionnaire was used to facilitate the meeting.

Common favorite park activities at the two meetings were sports, picnicking, and spending time with family and friends. Basketball was the most frequently mentioned team sport, and other sports included frisbee, tennis, volleyball, skateboarding, football, soccer, and baseball. Swimming, walking, hiking, climbing, exploring, and bike riding were mentioned, as well as play structures, fitness trails, kiddy pool, horseshoe pits, kite flying, dancing, concerts, trampoline, and water slide. Park amenities that were frequently mentioned included drinking fountains, restrooms, covered shelters, green grass, trees, paths, lights, directional signs, and seating areas. A few of the youth showed a fountain in their pictures or mentioned they'd like a fountain at one of the parks. They would also like parks to be easier to get to and closer to home, and don't like day use fees. They would like everything to be in good working order.

Watershed Council Meetings

County staff attended four watershed council meetings, with McKenzie, Middle Fork, Long Tom, and Siuslaw Watershed Councils. The Councils provide an excellent forum to reach Lane County residents in both the metro and rural areas, because each is composed of diverse interests from throughout the watershed. All meetings were well attended.

At the McKenzie Watershed Council meeting in Eugene, time was limited so a brief presentation was given, materials distributed, and people were encouraged to submit comments and let others in their respective organizations know about the Parks and Open Space Master Plan update.

At the Middle Fork Willamette Council meeting in Springfield, Parks staff was able to display maps and take comments. In addition to many questions, the comments included a desire to receive more information about County Parks, suggestions to serve a wide diversity of users and promote transit transportation to Parks, and a request to expand moorage facilities at Fern Ridge and on the McKenzie River. Other comments expressed a desire to see natural resources and sensitive or endangered plants in Parks protected.

At the Long Tom Watershed Council meeting in Santa Clara, comments included a desire to see more mountain bike trails, and a belief that acquisition of future park lands should be the highest priority. There was also a suggestion that Parks organize privately sponsored multi-sport events, such as off road tracks, adventure races, and triathalons between parks. There were several other suggestions and comments regarding funding, and opposition to user fees was expressed.

The Siuslaw Watershed Council meeting took place in Mapleton. Members expressed general dissatisfaction with County Parks and with the presentation. Council participants had many questions and were somewhat dissatisfied that many answers could not be provided at the meeting. Substantively, the biggest problem mentioned was inadequate maintenance, including boat launches, invasive vegetation, and toilet facilities. Siuslaw Falls Park was mentioned specifically as needing more attention. Another complaint was that Lane County does not show interest in working with the Watershed Council on stewardship projects.

City Meetings

Meetings were held at the Cities of Coburg, Creswell, Florence, and Oakridge. For all but one meeting, invitations were sent to all organizations known to have a community presence, and recipients were encouraged to invite their friends, neighbors, and colleagues.

For the City of Coburg meeting, invitations were distributed to the City Council, Parks Advisory Committee, Chamber of Commerce, and an announcement was placed on the City Hall Announcement board on the street. The City of

Creswell meeting was held with the Parks Advisory Committee. In Florence, invitations were sent to 50 organizations and people in the area, a news release was issued, and the meeting was advertised on the City web site. The City of Oakridge meeting was a Council meeting, was publicly noticed by the City, and the City of Westfir was invited. Invitations were also sent to 18 people and organizations in the area.

In Coburg, Planning Commissioners expressed support for County Parks, and for an Armitage Park camping facility that families with small children could easily reach for weekend trips, and they would like to see a bike path connection between Armitage Park and the City of Coburg. A suggestion was made to make first aid facilities available near the McKenzie River parks. Another comment was to increase the visibility of staff at County parks.

At the Creswell Parks Advisory Committee meeting, there were several questions about the Quamash Prairie wetland mitigation site, interest in a green connection between Creswell and Cinderella Park, and between cities in general. Another comment suggested that the County should fund the inclusion of cities in the Rivers to Ridges effort and should meet regularly with all cities at least twice per year. Support for camp hosts and employees at moorage facilities was expressed, and for overnight parking at moorage facilities. Other comments concerned the HBRA and equestrian use, and promoting wildlife. It was suggested that the County should "grow tourism" through collaboration with other natural resource agencies, promote multiple uses in parks, and dedicate permanent funding for the Parks Division.

The City of Florence meeting was well attended and offered a variety of comments. Comments demonstrated that residents are strongly attached to their parks. They had many questions about which lands might be considered for sale. They commented that Parks should be funded by the general fund or otherwise permanently funded. They suggest any money from land sales be used only for new acquisitions and capital improvements.

One observation was that there are several park management entities in Florence, including Federal, State, County, and City. Citizens want to know which jurisdiction manages which parks so they know who to contact with questions and comments. A map of all area parks in all jurisdictions is desirable. People would also like to see more directional and interpretive signs to and within parks, and more parking facilities. They are also concerned about wheelchair access, pet control, trash pick-up, and access to lakes. It was noted that Florence is not represented on the Parks Advisory Committee. There was also interest in learning more about volunteer opportunities to benefit parks and a suggestion that Parks sponsor events to promote volunteerism, education, and stewardship.

Other comments indicated that many residents want to see preservation of natural areas and opportunities to appreciate birds and other wildlife. They suggest creating linkages between active and passive recreation areas, between Highway 101 and the North Jetty, and trails at Three Mile Prairie. They also envision a "trails to the sea" effort using logging roads and public lands. They would also like to see more waysides along Highway 126 between Walton and Eugene, and on Highway 36.

The City of Oakridge meeting was a City Council meeting with staff and other participants in attendance. It was somewhat unique from the other meetings, in that Lane County does not currently have any park lands in the Oakridge area, having exchanged most County parks in this area with the State several years ago to improve operations efficiency (the closest County park is Fall Creek Park). Most of the public lands near Oakridge are managed by the U.S. Forest Service. As a result, residents are not frequent users of County Parks. However, they are interested in a Parks presence in the area. Participants had several suggestions for funding, and were generally supportive of user fees. Recreational visions for the area include interpretive tours, European-style hiking tours, a multi-use trail between forested areas and urban interest points, and a facility to tie together and support these recreational and tourism opportunities. Oakridge would also like to explore a collaborative effort to establish a County park and marina at Packard Creek on Hills Creek reservoir.

Accessibility Meetings

Meetings were held with Lane Independent Living Alliance and the Disabled Services Advisory Council. Participants provided invaluable information about how Parks can better serve the visually impaired, people in wheelchairs, and others with special accessibility needs.

In attending these meetings, it became apparent that transportation is a key consideration for disabled persons' ability to use parks. It was noted that an aging population will necessitate increased attention to accessibility issues. One participant stated that the parks and recreation areas in Lane County are the reasons she chose to live here. However, another comment was that a source of frustration for many people with accessibility issues is a lack of public transit to the parks, since many in this population are dependent on transit. HBRA was mentioned as a park in particular where public transit is needed. A trail extension to Fern Ridge was also mentioned as desirable to improve access, as well as construction of other pathways.

Several features within parks could be improved for accessibility, and an inventory of accessibility features available by voice mail would be helpful. Yurts are preferred in campgrounds for a variety of reasons. Campgrounds with electrical outlets for mobility devices, textural improvements and log liners along paths, signage for the blind inside cabins providing directional information to restrooms, wheelchair accessible picnic tables and playground facilities, would all be significant assets to this segment of the population. Participants also want to see ongoing maintenance of existing shelters that are especially important to people in wheelchairs and their ability to enjoy the outdoors during rainy weather. They would like to have access to fishing areas and would like the site off of Bloomberg Rd. previously proposed as an Armory to be designated as a park. A suggestion was made to operate a wheelchair accessible van and provide transport during events.

"Friends Of Parks" Meetings

Meetings were held with the Mt. Pisgah Arboretum Board, and the Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah. Both groups provide volunteer services within the Howard Buford Recreation Area that are important to the Parks System and its visitors. They also include individual representatives who have been associated with Lane County Parks for many years, and who therefore have valuable historical perspective.

The Mt. Pisgah Board noted they fought hard to help pass a park levy approximately 5 years ago and were disappointed it did not pass. They wonder if such an effort would be reconsidered. They also noted that in the past, parks were eligible for funding from the state gas tax, but this was changed in the 1980's, after which the County Parks system experienced critical funding shortages. They asked if room taxes would be available to fund parks, and whether land acquisitions are contemplated. They would like to see 'Friends of' organizations established for other parks, and would like to see increased funding for Camp Lane.

The Friends of Buford Park meeting was held in Harris Hall and attended by approximately 12 -15 persons. Participants asked several questions (that can be viewed in the transcript in Appendix **). They noted there is demand for more camping areas, and would like to see an ambitious vision for land acquisition, such as described in the Rivers to Ridges strategy. Others said they didn't want park lands reduced to provide camping areas or other development such as parking lots. They would like to see more parks that are accessible, and minimal development. They would like to see increased accountability with regard to fees charged at HBRA. Specifically, they were concerned that Parks Division made certain revenue projections and actual results were different with regard to analyzing the need for an automated fee collection device. The fees should not be charged for non-motorized and unimproved areas, and the fee collection should not be automated. It is thought that the automated fee collection equipment cost is not justified by the amount that can be collected in fees. They do not think the Board of Commissioners, nor staff, understand the HBRA planning documents. They would like to ensure that the 1980 plan is used in developing the Master Plan update.

Other Nonprofit Organization Meetings

Meetings were held with the Audubon Society and Native Plant Society.

Only 15 minutes were allotted for the Parks and Open Space Master Plan update briefing at the Audubon Society, so no comments were taken. However, there were probably more than 100 people in attendance so the information reached a large audience. Materials were distributed and participants were able to take a few minutes to ask questions. They asked about the Fern Ridge Repair, the Eugene to Pacific Crest Trail, and about whether lands in the Coburg Hills would be acquired.

The meeting at the Native Plant Society was attended by approximately 12 people. The NPS has taken a long standing interest in County Park plants and has inventoried several sites, including Vickery Park, Cinderella Park, and Kinney Park.

One participant noted that the NPS is 26 years old, and has participated in efforts throughout the state related to their mission. The NPS was active in the County's Integrated Management Plan effort. NPS also surveyed plants along County Roads, and provided training to the Road Maintenance/Vegetation Management staff, which staff seemed to appreciate. They would be interested in providing similar education for Parks staff, since they are concerned that maintenance activities can harm sensitive plants. They would also be willing to do additional plant surveys and slide shows at County event forums, and would like to be consulted when new park development occurs to survey the area for native plants and help to minimize impacts on such plants.

Participants also asked for clarification about plans for the horse arena at HBRA, and would like more bike trails to HBRA and other parks. They expressed opposition to the HBRA fee and the fee machine. It was also noted that vandalism at the HBRA parking lots, particularly the north parking lot and on Ridgeway Road, was high, and a human fee collector could help reduce this. They suggested a bike trail between Mt. Pisgah and Lane Community College. They would also like to see transit services to the HBRA. One participant stated that the highest priority concern is the presence of invasive species, in particular green canary grass, false brome, and shining geranium.

Rivers To Ridges Working Group Meeting

The RtoRWG consists of staff from the Cities of Eugene and Springfield, Willamalane, LCOG, and Lane County. In 2000, Lane County contributed \$20,000 for initial development of the Rivers to Ridges concept. A *Vision and Strategies* document was subsequently published, in 2003. The concept is for public land acquisitions to form a greenbelt ("greenway/blueway") around the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area. The document was endorsed by all the Metro jurisdictions. More information about the Rivers to Ridges Vision is in Chapter **.

In the meeting with the RtoRWG for the Lane County Parks and Open Space Master Plan update, approximately 12 participants of the working group did a round table discussion providing comment to Lane County staff as to how to incorporate the RtoRWG vision into the County Parks and Open Space Master Plan update. Participants named specific areas where they would like to see lands acquired to promote the RtoR vision. Numerous locations surrounding the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area were listed as high priority acquisition areas. Other comments were to emphasize collaboration, with several suggestions for how to do so including emphasizing fund leveraging, trails, and strategies such as integrating tourism and open space preservation.

Awareness of transportation and development issues related to recreational lands and open space, promoting bike touring, and a focus on regional parks and trails were some of the recommendations. English-model trails that run along property lines or use agricultural lands as buffer areas was one idea. Support for policy statements regarding the preservation of vistas was expressed. Another suggestion was that the County Parks plan did not necessarily

need to take responsibility for all future initiatives mentioned in the plan, but could simply state support for these initiatives even if they are carried out by other entities.

Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County Oregon (Cvalco) Meeting

The briefing to CVALCO was limited to an overview of the County Parks and Open Space Master Plan update and answering questions. Questions concerned identifying gaps in recreation services, such as the lack of adequate ball fields, and identification of revenue streams.

Sand and Gravel Producers Meeting

A meeting was held with major sand and gravel producers because their lands are often near or adjacent to parks and other areas popular for recreation. The major concern expressed by participants was trespassing and potential liability when recreational activities occurred near sand and gravel operations.

HOW COMMENTS WERE USED (still in progress)**

Public comments are one piece of the analysis needed to develop the updated County Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The public comments are analyzed in detail according to a variety of factors, in Chapter **. Results of the analysis is integrated with data from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and other sources** such as the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Many comments may or may not relate to long range, parks planning issues, but all are nevertheless important. As part of the analysis, comments were categorized as follows:

1. Comments used to develop the Master Plan
2. Suggestions for simple changes to operations
3. Comments contributing to Action Planning items
4. Questions
5. [other categories to emerge during analysis]
6. Comments about parks outside of the County system

All comments are categorized as above and a staff response shows how each comment was handled, in Appendix **