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# Parks administer outdoor recreation

By Stephen Maher

Of the Emerald

As the Emerald City, Eugene is known for its green landscape and lush environment. Included in that appraisal are the city's 70 some-odd parks.

The most visible of these is Alton Baker Park, located on the north bank of the Willamette River. The park is bisected by numerous bike paths and is easily accessible by crossing the Autzen Stadium footbridge or the Ferry Street Bridge.

Used all year long, the 453-acre park is a haven for sunbathers, swimmers, kayakers, canoeists, joggers and bicyclists. It also boasts two large picnic shelters, the 5,000 seat Cuthbert Amphitheater and Pre's Trail, a jogging path located between

the river and Autzen Stadium and named after the late Steve Prefontaine.

Currently, the park is included in the Lane County Park system; however, it is expected to be deeded in the near future to the City of Eugene. The eastern portion of the park is also under consideration by the Lane County Board of Commissioners as the site of an 18-hole golf course.

On the eastern city limits lies what is considered by many to be the jewel of the Eugene park system, Hendricks Park. The park has become famous worldwide for its rhododendron garden, which now measures 10 acres in size and holds 6,000 plants. During April, the peak blossoming month for rhododendrons, an average of 5,000 automobiles enter the park every Sunday.

But people visit Hendricks Park for more than just rhododendrons. There are hiking trails that travel through 300-year-old forests, views of the city and the



Andy Cripe

### Alton Baker Park

Willamette River, picnic areas and a large fireplace shelter built by the Works Project Administration in the 1930s.

The history of the park dates back to 1906 when Eugene pioneers Thomas and Martha Hendricks donated 47 acres of land to the city, and the city, in turn, bought an additional 47 acres. The deed to the land requested that it be turned into a park.

The first development occurred between 1915 and 1924 when roads were constructed and the park became a tour site for new-fangled motor vehicles. In 1922, two elk were given to the park by the Eugene Elks Club, beginning what would become an extensive deer and elk exhibit for the next 50 years.

The rhododendrons were

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File Photo

Replica of Skinner's cabin

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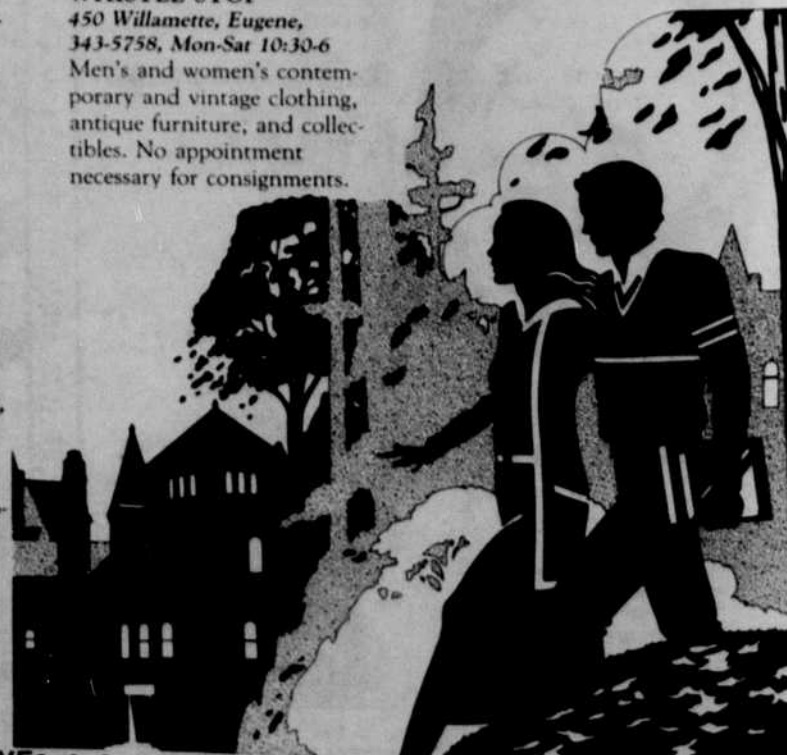
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