

Cleaning up Millrace part of Riverfront project

By Brian Bloch
Emerald Reporter

An enhancement program to clean up the Millrace has begun, although its completion depends largely on the availability of funds.

The University and the Eugene Planning and Development Administration are working jointly on an enhancement program as part of the Riverfront Research Park project.

Diane Wiley, University Planning Department Associate, said the enhancement project "is much more than a cleanup," and is set to include the introduction of biofiltration systems to treat runoff. Interpretive learning centers to study the waterway and mechanisms for increasing the Millrace flow are included in the program, also.

"They're talking about creating a bio-conditioning program that will go beyond the scope of traditional cleanup efforts," Wiley said.

Traditionally, a number of Greek houses and community volunteers initiate annual Millrace cleanups, pulling up bicycles, bowling balls and other assorted items from the murky water.

Although these annual efforts



Photo by Vince Ramirez

Efforts by the University and the City of Eugene to beautify the Millrace have largely been unsuccessful due to funding problems.

provide some improvement, they do little to enhance the long-term ecology of the water-

way. According to city planners, a technical team made up of con-

sultants from three Oregon firms recently evaluated the water quality, flow and sur-

rounding areas of the Millrace and made the improvement suggestions.

City planners have suggested the possibility of installing a bicycle and jogging path along one bank.

"We want a lovely amenity for the research park and its users," Wiley said.

Beside its recreational and ascetic value, the Millrace serves the University power plant. Wiley said improvements in the waterway would, in addition, enhance slated improvements and expansion of the plant.

The problem with the program, she said, is the lack of available funding.

"The city and the University just don't have the money for a project like this," Wiley said. "What we want to do would be very expensive."

However, she said the results of the study will provide the city and the University the information needed to apply for state and federal grants that could possibly fund all or part of the Millrace improvements.

Until funding is secured, Wiley said the program will be approached "project by project," until the Millrace is a more usable, attractive waterway.

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