# Silver Falls to get new hiking trail in 2022

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

Visitors to Silver Falls State Park will have a new way to enjoy the park's waterfalls beginning around

Officials said an improved recreation site is being planned for the north side of the park that includes a hiking trail, waterfall viewpoint and parking area.

The first phrase of a larger project, the roughly \$2 million development is intended to offer a new recreation hub that helps spread out the 1.2 million annual visitors.

'We're pretty excited about it," Silver Falls park manager Guy Rodrigue said. "The intent is to provide an experience similar to what visitors see at the very popular South Falls area, but on a smaller scale and on the north side."

The goal is to begin construction in 2021 and finish by 2022 for the centennial of Oregon's state park sys-

The new site would be a redevelopment of the current North Falls Day-Use group campsite and nature play area, located just off Highway 214, past the North Falls Trailhead, on the side closest to Silverton.

"Few people go there now because it's so disconnected from the rest of the park," Rodrigue said. "There's a lot of opportunity to take this under-utilized area and turn it into something pretty special."

The plan is to expand what's now a tiny parking lot, add bathrooms and build a new viewpoint of the 136foot North Falls with a trail that connects to the Trail of

The hope is to breathe new life into an area that features a nature play area for kids while taking pressure off South Falls and the North Falls Trailhead, which both get overwhelmed during the summer months, Rodrigue said.

The group campsites are expected to remain at the site for now, but would likely be moved in the future,

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The view from behind North Falls at Silver Falls State Park. ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

## READYING THE FEAST



Cari Sessums, left grabs a mixed pan of dressing as Ruth Sessums, right, works on mixing the remaining pans of dressing Tuesday, as they prepare for their 14th annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner at their restaurant in Stayton. The Covered Bridge Cafe' has been serving the meal for no charge to those in the community in need since 2006. The meal is served Nov. 27, starting at 3:30 p.m. and goes until 8 p.m. KELLY JORDAN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

# Pet services give hospice patients peace of mind

Volunteers take care of animal companions while sick humans focus on their health

**Capi Lynn** Salem Statesman Journal **USA TODAY NETWORK** 

Nikki the longhair Chihuahua was noticeably thin with a cast on her hind leg and almost no hair when

She was nurtured back to health and grew to trust people again in what should have been her forever home, but then her adoptive mom became sick.

Her mom worried, as her health declined, how the sweet but timid dog would manage transitioning to a new home. Nikki couldn't come with her when it came time to move into an adult foster care home, so she turned to Willamette Valley Hospice's Pet Peace of Mind program for help.

The program turned to its network of local rescue groups, and a volunteer with Savin' Juice stepped forward.

Carol Gonzales not only provided a foster home for Nikki, but agreed to take the pooch for regular visits with her person, who was relieved to see Nikki in good hands.

The woman eventually died, and Gonzales adopted

Not all transitions go so smoothly, but hospice staff

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Charlie Arnold, 66, visits with his cat, Amethyst, after a volunteer brought her back home following a grooming appointment earlier this week. Willamette Valley Hospice's Pet Peace of Mind program ensures hospice patients, like Arnold, have the support they need for their animal companions, making sure pets get to grooming and vet appointments, so patients can focus on their health. ANNA REED/STATESMAN

and volunteers understand how knowing a beloved pet is cared for makes a difference in end-of-life quality for terminally ill patients.

Willamette Valley Hospice's pet program is being singled out for its success collaborating with local

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## **Groups object** to permit for Covanta incinerator

Tracy Loew Salem Statesman Journal **USA TODAY NETWORK** 

Nine health and environment groups have asked Oregon regulators to deny a proposed air pollution permit renewal for Covanta Marion, Oregon's only garbage incinerator.

The groups, led by Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, object to proposed increases in greenhouse gas and particle pollution limits for the facility near Brooks, just north of Salem.

They say the state doesn't require enough testing to ensure neighboring communities, including Keizer and Northeast Salem, are protected from toxic sub-

And they worry that an accidental fire, like those that have happened at two other Covanta facilities in the past few years, could contaminate nearby prop-"Scientific and policy review indicates that the Co-

vanta Marion waste-to-energy municipal trash incinerator represents a substantial short- and longterm risk to the public health," the groups wrote in a 32-page letter to the state Department of Environmental Quality.

Covanta spokesman James Regan called the opposition "misguided."

"This plant deals with societal issues," he said.

"We have to dispose of household waste. We have to deal with medical waste. This plant does it responsibly.

Covanta Marion has burned most of Marion County's trash for the past 35 years, producing about 13.1 megawatts of energy per day. It also accepts out-ofstate medical waste.

The permit renewal comes as Covanta officials

warn the plant could close next year. During the 2019 Legislative session, Covanta pushed for a bill that would designate garbage burning as renewable energy, allowing the company to sell credits for clean energy production. Company officials said that, without that extra revenue, the plant would be forced to close.

The bill failed, but Covanta plans to try again dur-

ing the February 2020 session. The permit renewal also comes just before Oregon launches its Cleaner Air Oregon initiative, which will evaluate health risks to people living near the state's

biggest polluters. Covanta is among the first group of companies that will be examined. Its review is expected to begin in April 2020, said Dylan Darling, a DEQ spokesman.

That review could require modifications to the

The incinerator's air pollution permit expired in April 2017. It's legal for companies in Oregon to operate with expired permits if they file a renewal application on time, which Covanta did.

A public comment period on the proposed permit closed earlier this month. In addition to the advocacy groups, 12 individuals submitted testimony outlining concerns, and 125 people signed a petition objecting

to the proposal. One person wrote in support of the proposed per-

#### Increased particulate matter

Under the proposed permit, the emissions limit for small particulate matter, or PM 10, will increase from 14 to 16 tons per year. The limit for fine particulate matter, or PM 2.5, will increase from 12 to 16 tons per

Regan said the company emits only about a third of the small and fine particulate matter currently allowed, both by weight and concentration.

But DEQ officials said results of tests of Covanta's emissions over the past 10 years show the facility's potential to emit small and fine particulate matter is higher than previously determined.

Small and fine particulate pollution pose the greatest risk to health, according to the U.S. Environ-

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