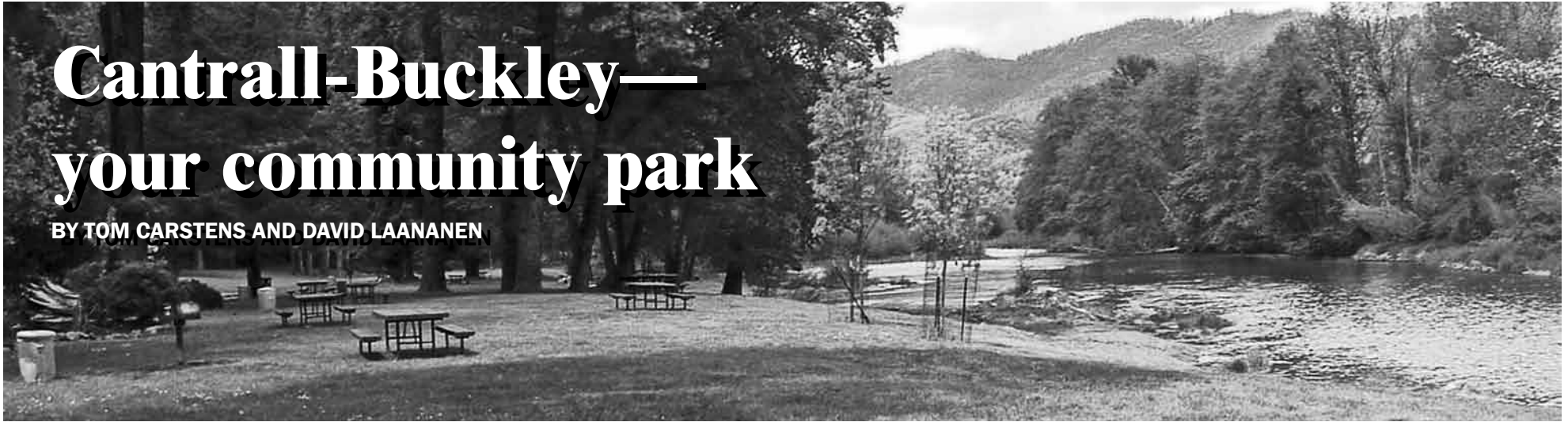


Cantrall-Buckley— your community park

BY TOM CARSTENS AND DAVID LAANANEN



The Applegate Valley is blessed to have a truly unique resource: our very own community park on the banks of the Applegate River. Cantrall Buckley Park is a real gem in that it gives us a place for groups and families to enjoy picnicking, swimming, and camping, with full recreational access to our river.

Have you ever looked at the park's entrance sign? It says: "Managed by your Neighbors." A lot of folks think that it's operated like other Jackson County parks. Until three years ago, the County did provide some money to help with major maintenance. Now, the park receives some money from the state tax on RVs; last year that covered about 40 percent of park operations. The rest is funded entirely by user fees. That means WE fund the park. How did this arrangement come about?

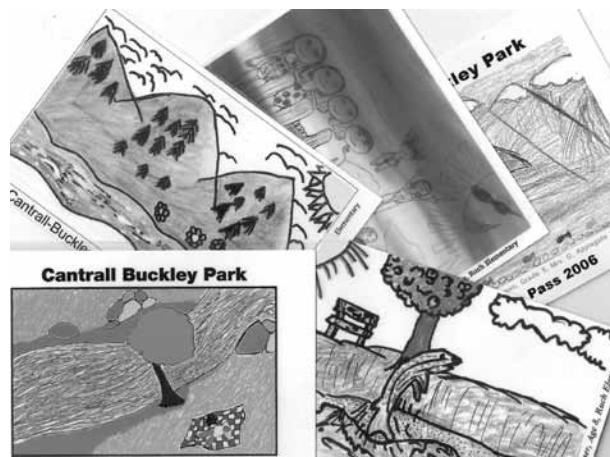
Well, back in the summer of 1996, the county closed the park because of funding issues (sound familiar?). The plan was to sell off the land. That would have left us without a park and without river access. A small group of concerned citizens came together to save the 88-acre park. Throughout that summer, these dedicated volunteers kept the lawns mowed and performed minor maintenance to keep the park in usable shape. The next year these folks formed a non-profit organization that formally took over management of the park. This group eventually became the nucleus of the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC). A committee of the GACDC consisting of five Applegate residents has been running the park ever since. From user fees, the park hires a full-time resident caretaker, Rick Barclay. Rick is assisted in the summer months by a part-time maintenance man and by a paid campground host.

From time to time, the park receives assistance from grant monies that are chased down by the park committee. This is how major improvements to the park are funded. Recent successes have been the state-of-the-art natural wastewater treatment system, brand new campground restrooms and improved water lines. These improvements were made with support from Oregon Parks and Recreation, the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, and of course, Jackson County. Last year a grant from the Four Way Community Foundation allowed the park to buy new picnic table frames. The table tops were made by Rick and his crew. The committee is currently trying to find a way to fund RV hookups for a much-needed campground expansion that would improve cash flow and attract tourist spending in the valley.

But there are a lot of other very mundane projects that are begging for funds. As examples, the park's road system is deteriorating, BBQ grills need replacement, playground equipment must be brought up to standard, pavilion roofs require repairs, and the picnic area restrooms require remodeling.

All of this costs money. Right now, the park takes in barely enough to stay viable. Last year, Rick trimmed expenses for operating the park as much as possible,

down to about \$70,000 compared with \$77,000 the year before. Park user fees taken in over the year added up to a little less than \$42,000. When added to the RV money from the state, there wasn't much left over to keep things running for the winter. As you can see, there's not a lot of leeway there. As Rick says, "The only reason we're still open is because nothing drastic has occurred."



Okay, you ask, "So how can I help?" It's really very simple: PLEASE USE THE PARK! The park committee tries to keep the user fees as low as possible.

A day pass costs \$4.00

per vehicle. The park is open all year.

A season pass costs just \$20.00, or \$10.00 for seniors over 65, and is good for the entire year. These passes go on sale the first of May. Previous passes are shown in the accompanying photo. The fun design is the winning entry from an annual contest held in art classes at the Applegate and Ruch Schools.

The park has four reservable areas that are ideal for weddings, family reunions, or organization picnics. These areas come complete with picnic tables and barbecue grills. There are also horseshoe pits, volleyball nets, and one area has a covered pavilion. Reservations are made through Jackson County Parks, but the reservation

money goes straight to our park. Call 541-774-8183.

A campground site costs only \$12 per night. The group campground can be rented for \$65 for the first night and \$50 per night after that. The campground is open from May 1st to the end of September.

Of course, tax-deductible donations would also be very much appreciated. If you'd like to contribute, give one of us a call or send a check to the following address:

GACDC, P.O. Box 3107, Applegate OR 97530. We'll mail you a proper receipt.

You might be able to help in other ways. Would you be interested in lending a hand with the park? The GACDC would love to have additional volunteer help. We'll be sponsoring community park clean-up events this summer. The first will occur after the 4th of July weekend on Wednesday, July 6. We'll meet at the park gates at 9:00 am.

And, if you'd like to participate with ideas, you're welcome to attend our park committee meetings. If you'd like to help or comment in any way, or if you'd like information about the meetings, just give either of us a call at home or leave a message at 541-245-4741. Someone will get back to you.

We're especially interested in your ideas about how we can raise extra funds to complete major repair projects. If you have some ideas on how to better run the park, let us know that too. Let us hear from you! To make it easier we've included a short form that you can fill out on line or mail or to us.

THANK YOU!

Tom Carstens 541-846-1025
David Laananen 541-846-0500

Help us with ideas to raise funds and be entered in a drawing for two FREE annual passes to Cantrall Buckley Park:

Name: _____

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To email ideas go to www.gacdc.org and click on contact us. or mail to GACDC, P. O. Box 3107, Applegate, OR 97530

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