

Cantrall Buckley Park

NEWS

Help create the community mosaic mural

BY JEREMY CRISWELL

Thank you to all who participated in the community mural input days during the summer and early fall, when we asked just what kind of mural you would like to see in your park. We received wonderful ideas and inspiration from well over 100 people and have come up with a terrific mural concept.

Common themes included Applegate Valley trees, river, and native plants, along with fish, turtles, flowers, butterflies, and local rocks. All of these have been incorporated into the concept—a mosaic mural that honors the environment in which we live. A sketch of the final concept will soon be displayed around the community. The mural itself will be 26 feet long by 7 feet tall and will cover the exterior wall of the Cantrall Buckley Park restroom next to the new playground. The restroom is scheduled for renovation this fall.

So what's next, you ask? Well, as this is a community project, it seems only fair to let the community take part—by creating some of the ceramic tiles that will make up the mural. We have already made plans for week-long tile-making workshops at Ruch and Applegate Schools in April, and are in talks with Woodland Charter School

and our local homeschool group to do the same. In these workshops, kids will have the opportunity to make ceramic fish, flowers, native plants, and bug tiles that will become part of the mural.

Beyond involving the local schools, I will be holding community tile-making days at my studio in Ruch. These will be fun afternoon and evening events where small groups will be invited to draw and paint in clay, while enjoying friends, music, and good times. Gather up to eight folks with whom you would like to share a few hours of fun, then call or email me to set a date for your own workshop. Consider a girls' or guys' evening out, bring your book club, garden club or art group! Maybe even a birthday event or wine tasting! There are dates available in March and April.

Come be part of this wonderful project and help bring the vision of the community to life. And if you'd like to donate to this wonderful project, please use the donation box at the Ruch Country Store or send a check to Park Mural Project, PO Box 3107, Applegate, OR 97530. Thank you!

Jeremy Criswell
541-899-9024
jerr37@jeffnet.org

Riverside trails at Cantrall Buckley Park

Access to the beautiful Applegate River is available year-round in your community at Cantrall Buckley Park. Most Applegate Valley residents do not live on the river or have a friend with riverfront property who is willing to let them recreate there. My wife and I live on a south-facing slope high above the river, so that free-flowing water is an attraction any time of the year and especially when summer takes hold.

In the past two years the Applegate Trails Association (ATA) has reopened two riverside loop trails at the park. The half-mile Upper River Trail is my favorite because of the view from the big boulders lining the edge of the river. The half-mile Lower River Trail has a whole different feel with lots of shade along the river, occasional short paths to the water, and, should you take it, a short but difficult loop trail back with a fantastic view of the valley as your reward. Both trails are well marked.

Park cleanup April 23

Want to get Cantrall Buckley Park ready for opening on May 1? Come on out to the park on Saturday, April 23! We'll meet at the new playground. You can see all the new stuff that's been added and help pick up trash and dead limbs. Receptacles and refreshments provided. We'll work from 9 to 11 am or thereabouts.



Upper River Trail at Cantrall Buckley Park.
Photo: Annette Trujillo.

Weather permitting, ATA will give these trails a shot of maintenance, perhaps with your help, on Saturday, April 23. Volunteers will gather at the park from 8:45 am to 1 pm. ATA will provide lunch and some tools. Bring gloves and your favorite digging tool or power trimmer/brush-cutter.

In partnership with the Cantrall Buckley Park Committee, ATA is working on the design and installation of new kiosks in the park and informational pedestals along the trails. A new map will soon be at strategic locations throughout the park. Once again, ATA says thanks to our map-maker, Annette Parsons, to our volunteers in general, and to a GPS.

ATA invites you to visit the park often. Flowing water is a powerful force. Stand by the river and give it a little time to let your stress flow right downstream. Amble along the river. It is amazing how restorative it can be. You might try this before you make that next medical appointment.

David Calahan
Chair, Applegate Trails Association
david@applegatetrails.org



Signing of the March 1997 Participating Agreement. Seated, from left to right: Jackson County Commissioners Ric Holt, Sue Kupillas, and Jack Walker. Standing: (unknown), Terry Mitchell, Dick Goble, Jack Shipley, (unknown), (unknown), Terry Black, Tom Fiske, and Tom Brovarney. Contact gater@applegater.org if you recognize the "unknowns."

History: Saving Cantrall Buckley Park

The story of Cantrall Buckley Park's salvation begins in the spring of 1996. By then, declining timber revenues had put Jackson County parks in financial jeopardy. After 15 years of decreasing revenues, Jackson County finally closed several parks, including Cantrall Buckley.

This closure sent a shock wave through the Applegate Valley. Cantrall Buckley Park was beloved by people from all over the region. It was, after all, one of the few places where folks could access the Applegate River. Generations of settlers and farm families had used the old "Cantrall swimming hole." Thousands of people from all over the Rogue Valley had enjoyed the park for picnicking, camping, swimming, fly-fishing, boating, and hiking.

In this crisis, Jack Shipley broached an idea. Why couldn't the residents of Applegate Valley run the park? At the time, Jack had retired as director of public works field services for the City of Grants Pass and now served as chair of the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC). He had a good sense of how to run a park and how this vibrant community could help.

He talked things over with Su Rolle of the US Forest Service (USFS), who was then the coordinator for the Applegate Adaptive Management Area. Su liked the idea and asked Terry Black to give Jack a hand. Terry was community planner at the Star Ranger Station on Upper Applegate Road.

So, with tremendous energy and passion, Jack and Terry organized the effort to save this precious site. Many people were thrilled with the idea of a community-run park and offered to help. The Cantrall Buckley Park Ad Hoc Committee, representing several community organizations, local service clubs, valley businesses, and staff from the Bureau of Land Management and USFS (Star Ranger Station), was formed. The committee wrote a letter to Paul Korbulic, program manager for Jackson County Parks, offering to assume responsibility for irrigating the park through the summer while more options to keep the park open were being explored. Paul saw this as the beginning of solving the county's problem and agreed to the proposal.

Over the next year the committee worked in the now-closed park, trimming grass, picking up trash and downed wood, and irrigating trees and shrubs. That winter the flood of 1997 hit the valley hard, increasing the clean-up work. Tuffy Decker donated heavy equipment and his expertise. The Applegate Lions Club repaired the picnic tables. The

Applegate Grange and other neighbors helped with cleanup. Federal flood relief grants eased the financial strain.

In the meantime, Jack, Terry, and Paul worked on a unique legal agreement to keep the park open. The resulting Participating Agreement, signed by the Jackson County Commissioners at a March 17, 1997, ceremony at the park (see the fuzzy old *Applegater* photo above), codified a collaborative relationship between the county and the citizens. Cantrall Buckley Park, now a county park in name only, would be run entirely by volunteers with a budget, a marketing plan, and an operating schedule. The Jacksonville-Applegate Rotary Club worked with Dave Clayton to sponsor several fundraising concerts, which made thousands of dollars. The Ad Hoc Committee opened a bank account. Terry Mitchell was hired as the on-site superintendent, and by the spring of 1997, the park was back in business. This was the first time any public park in Oregon was to be managed entirely by the community it served.

Initially the Ad Hoc Committee operated under the umbrella of APWC. But because park management did not fit within the charter of APWC, the committee formed a new nonprofit organization, the Applegate Valley Community Center. In 1998, this group morphed into the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC). Although it has been modified over time, the agreement is still in place, and the volunteer Park Committee is alive and well.

The list of citizens who helped keep our park open is a long one. Many local businesses and organizations lent their time, equipment, and expertise. There are, however, several key individuals without whom this effort would not have been successful, who truly put spade to dirt to make it happen. We all owe them a debt of gratitude for the time and effort they devoted to save our park.

If you have more information or want to know more, give me a ring.

Tom Carstens • 541-846-1025

Key individuals who helped keep Cantrall Buckley Park open

Terry Black, Bud Childers, Dave Clayton, Chuck Dahl, Tuffy Decker, Tom Fiske, Ed Frutchey, Dick Goble, Pat Gordon, Jerry Hyde, Larry Hyde, Ellen Levine, Hal Macy, Vivian McAleavey, Dale McFall, John McKelligott, Terry Mitchell, Abbey Rodgers, Phil Schwimmer, Jack Shipley, Thalia Truesdell, and Greeley Wells.

Many of these folks are still here. If you see them, give 'em a pat on the back.