

Friends of April Hill Park needs to raise \$24,000 to begin building bridges



Right now, people entering the wetland trudge through dense vegetation and standing water. Because there aren't any defined trails, narrow and muddy paths criss-cross through the wetland. (Photo courtesy Friends of April Hill Park)

By Melinda Hasting
The Southwest Portland Post

The Maplewood Neighborhood Association met November 13 and a key highlight was the ongoing fundraising campaign for April Hill Park improvements.

Friends of April Hill Park, of which Maplewood Neighborhood Association is a member, has launched an Indiegogo campaign to raise more funding to match its recent \$83,000 Metro grant to improve the park's wetlands and to create safer access to nature for park visitors.

The entire improvement budget is estimated at \$250,000, much of which will be provided through pro-bono and in-kind contributions. Friends of April Hill Park must raise the remaining matching funds of \$24,000 for the project to be green-lighted.

Due to weather sensitivities related to construction, the organization is pressing to achieve the goal quickly in order to undergo the necessary (and sometimes lengthy) permitting process. Construction could begin during the dry season in late spring 2014.

The concept plan for the project, which is subject to review and approval, includes creating 2,000 feet of sustainable soft surface trail, along with a 900 foot boardwalk with handrails. Two bridges would be constructed across Woods Creek to help protect the banks from erosion.

Soft surface trails are more sustainable and help prevent erosion. Organizers believe the trails will minimize other impacts to the water and will create a new access point from the dead-end street and entrance to the park and its natural area.

The boardwalk area would alleviate the negative impacts of social trails that currently exist, crisscrossing the wetland and potentially degrading the habitat. Bridges would allow vegetation along the creek to regrow, eventually increasing the stability of the banks.

In order to create outdoor classroom learning opportunities for children and youth, including Maplewood Elementary School students, a wetland observation platform is slated for construction and would accommodate an entire classroom of students.

Though the park is rich with opportunities to observe na-

ture, it is currently unsafe for groups of students to participate in outdoor learning opportunities.

Maplewood Elementary School staff intends to utilize the platform as a way for students to get outside in fresh air and observe nature firsthand.

Another important component of the plan is to introduce signage throughout the park that tells the story of the wetland, its uniqueness in an urban setting, and more about the variety of its inhabitants.

Moreover, the signage will underscore why off-trail and dog off-leash activities introduce bacteria and invasive plants that are harmful to the wetland.

Thus far the Indiegogo campaign has raised \$3,176. Maplewood Neighborhood Association has also paid to mail a flyer to more than 1,000 households in the neighboring area. The Indiegogo website is <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/wild-about-the-april-hill-park-wetland>.

Donations can also be mailed to Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI), at SWNI, 7688 SW Capitol Hwy. Portland 97219. In the memo line, it is important to note "April Hill Park."

COMMUNITY LIFE

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7 The No. 1 Hillsdale Knitting Society: Learn basic knitting skills or get help with an existing project. Crocheters welcome too. For children 5 years and older as well as adults. Saturday, December 7, 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd., 503-988-5388.

Garden Home's 29th Annual Holiday Bazaar: Saturday, December 7, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Join the community and 100+ vendors! Breakfast with Santa at 8:00 a.m. followed by all-you-can-

eat pancake breakfast, used book sale, entertainment and more! Held at the Garden Home Recreation Center on the corner of Southwest Oleson and Garden Home roads.

Used Book Sale: Saturday, Dec. 7, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Hundreds of books including children's, travel, mysteries, how-to, history, novels, cookbooks & more! Hard backs for \$1; paperback for 50 cents, and CDs, DVDs and tapes for \$1. Collectibles as priced. Entertainment books also for sale for \$30. All proceeds benefit the Garden Home Community Library. 7475 SW Oleson Rd. More info: 503-245-9932 or www.wccls.org.

Sellwood Bridge Project

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"To be certified for Greenroads attainment," Pullen described, "the contractor, Slayden/Sundt, must go above and beyond the minimum environmental requirements."

This includes efficiently using resources and reusable materials; managing waste; reducing emissions; designing accessibility for all; and creating new pavement technology.

Cedar trees that had to be removed on the westside were donated to local tribes to be made into traditional garments and ceremonial items.

And the bridge will never have to be painted since the arches are being constructed with weathered steel.

In addition to the project website (sellwoodbridge.org), project information is available by calling 503-209-4111 or by signing up for email or twitter updates at the project website.

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