



Park.  
 The conservation group says that the decision to allow the parking lot was a discretionary land use decision. "As such," Connecting Eugene member Paul Cziko says, "the city is required to hold a hearing to assess whether it's allowed under the conditional use permit." The lot and the building would be right on the river, but Connecting Eugene says the Research Park's master plan specifically calls for development to occur south of the railroad tracks before construction occurs on the riverfront.  
 "What we're seeking is an official public hearing over whether this complies with the master plan," Cziko says. Opponents of the project also hope that a public hearing would force UO President Richard Lariviere to answer "questions of substance," which they say have not been addressed. Lariviere

did not respond to a request for comment by the time *EW* went to press.  
 Supporters of the plan say that the riverfront site isn't natural or pristine and should be developed, but Connecting Eugene and others say that the riverside land should be improved with natural enhancements, not by constructing an office building.  
 Cziko, a science graduate student, says he has no opposition to the construction of the private office buildings for research, but an alternate site should be selected with open public oversight. "Connecting Eugene is not against development," Cziko says, "we think that the public needs to have meaningful input on this." Information about Connecting Eugene's proposal for alternative sites can be found at [www.connectingeugene.org](http://www.connectingeugene.org) — Shannon Finnell and Camilla Mortensen

## IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

**O**ne of the great treasures of getting old is that my memory gives me a surge of pleasure each time I see a cycle of nature repeating itself in a familiar pattern. The neighbor's daffodils coming up; cottonwood buds releasing that fragrant balm on warm days; pussy willows getting fuzzy. Towhees searching for a nest; Bewick's wren warbling; migrating robins foraging for worms. Just like last year.

Most Oregonians are blessed with having natural areas close to home to walk to. We live where close by are little patches of woods and ponds that sport wildlife and native flowers, the parks and countryside. Walking in them every couple of days, no set pattern but often, keeps a soul in touch with the pulse of the natural world.

March is one of the most unpredictable for us in the Willamette Valley. Apple and cherry crops are determined by vagaries of weather. Suddenly warm and sunny days will inspire premature frenzies of gardening activity.

Woodland herbaceous perennials are visibly vigorous with the passage of Equinox, responding to stronger, longer daylight coming in before the trees in the canopy spread out their leaves and shade the understory. The emerging bugs that eat the burgeoning vegetation will provide nourishment for mommy birds gathering energy to make eggs.

The migratory song birds arrive in tune with the current season, as sensitive indicators as any weather station. They can't predict what's coming next week, but are reliable markers of the present status of the biological season.

David Wagner is botanist who lives and works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes and leads nature walks. He may be reached at [fernzenmosses@me.com](mailto:fernzenmosses@me.com)

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