



**'IT'S EXCEEDING
OUR EXPECTATIONS.
IT PUT EUGENE ON
THE SKATE MAP, FOR
SURE. IT'S GOING TO
BRING PEOPLE IN
FROM ALL OVER.'**
DREAMLAND SKATEPARKS DESIGNER
BURKE MORRIS



**'THERE'S
ALWAYS
ACTIVITY
DOWN HERE.
I'VE ONLY SEEN
IT TOTALLY
EMPTY ONCE.'**
NOAH DAILEY-MCILRATH

PHOTO BY: TODD COOPER

And play they do. The sentiment at ground zero — where the boys and girls on boards show their stuff with endless ollies, carves, kickflips and crashes — is nearly universal: WJ is the shit. “I honestly think this park has every element,” says skater Burke Morris, who works for Dreamland, the Lincoln City company that designed the park. “It’s all contextualized. You have a piece of everything for transition skating.”

Portland-based skater Andrew Pugh, co-owner of Sasquatch Skateboards, says WJ is one of the best parks Dreamland has built. “It’s definitely a good spot for Eugene,” Pugh adds. “They needed something like this. Give it some time; some crazy kids are gonna be coming up. It’s definitely unique. It’s more than just a park. It’s almost artistic, too.”

Noah Dailey-McIlrath, who grew up skating the streets of Eugene, says the new skatepark — and the skaters that use it — has altered the landscape of this formerly down-and-out wasteland under the overpass where Occupy Eugene once camped. “There’s always activity down here,” he says, adding that most of the unsavory activity has been quashed. “People that use the park don’t want that kind of shit. Skaters are a demographic that’s comfortable with self-policing. It seems to have cleaned it up a lot.”

Conant from Tactics says that, save for “minor” issues here and there like parking and loitering, the response to the park has been overwhelmingly positive. “When you spend time at the park almost daily, what you see is a lot of youth having a great time, respecting one another, challenging themselves and encouraging each other,” he says.

Ramirez-Maddock from the city says the all-day grand opening Saturday, with events scheduled from 10 am to 8 pm, should give the community at large a change to witness first-hand the various benefits of such a site, as well as evidence of a city and its residents coming together for the common good. “It’s challenged our city departments to work more collaboratively than I’ve ever seen, which is exciting,” she says of the creation of WJ Skatepark. “This is, I think, how things might happen in the future. That’s one of the coolest things.” ■

The Grand Opening Celebration for WJ Skatepark + Urban Plaza takes place 10 am-8 pm Saturday, June 21, between Jefferson St. and 1st Ave. beneath I-105 bridge; bikers and skaters with decks can ride LTD free to the event; for more info and a full schedule, see this week’s EW Calendar or visit wjskatepark.org.

Living River Celebration ON GREEN ISLAND

Saturday, June 28, 7am - 5pm
Free & Family Friendly!

Tree Climbing • Guided Tours
Birding • Canoeing • Running
Ninkasi Beer • Music by
Don Latarski and more...



FULL SCHEDULE
AND DIRECTIONS:

mckenzieriver.org



TEAM RIDER: CALEB GRANT
PHOTO: SAM GEHRKE

**TACTICS
BOARDSHOP**

**EUGENE'S
PREMIER
SKATE SHOP**

**DECKS
TRUCKS
PROTECTIVE GEAR
WHEELS
HARDWARE
SKATE SHOES
CLOTHING**

JUST 3 BLOCKS EAST OF WJ SKATEPARK - 375 W. 4TH AVE

MONDAY - SATURDAY 11 A.M. TO 7 P.M.
SUNDAY 12 NOON TO 5 P.M.
SHOP ONLINE AT TACTICS.COM

