

# NO MORE TRASH

*Eugene woman joins with the homeless to clean up trash in the city's largest park*



VOLUNTEERS HELP CLEAN UP EUGENE PARKS

PHOTO COURTESY KATHY WALKER

**W**ith the help of a few volunteers and support from the city, one community member started a biweekly trash cleanup project at Alton Baker Park.

"I've said it many times, I'm not a protester or an activist," project organizer Kathy Walker says. But she has made significant efforts to start a dialogue between the city and its unprotected, unhoused citizens.

In July, Walker was asked to meet with Eugene Mayor Lucy Vinis, and the two decided to organize and run a "town hall type" meeting in Alton Baker Park on Aug. 1. According to Walker, representatives from the city were invited to meet with the homeless, with the hope of creating conversation between the unhoused and other members in the community.

At the meeting, Walker says, there was a clear piece of

common ground: "Both sides were sick of the garbage." She continues, "One 'camper' mentioned how hard it was to dispose of their garbage and how, if only they had the tools, they would even clean up other people's messes."

Walker says she tried to get Eugene Public Works to schedule garbage pickups on a regular basis, but the city department explained to her how overloaded they were and said it wouldn't be possible.

After a man pointed out that scheduled trash pickups would prevent full bags from being torn open and scattered everywhere, Walker decided to take matters into her own hands. And with the support of the mayor and the help of one other housed volunteer, "We did just that," Walker says.

Walker partnered with Eugene's Parks and Open Space, which granted her a three-month trial

period of support and supplies. Parks and Open Space provides trash bags and park patrols, an authorized vehicle access permit for the trial period and made arrangements for Walker to have easy access to a garbage dumpster.

Walker organized in less than a week and officially began on Sept. 12. She goes with a driver and a few volunteers every other week to empty trash cans and pick up trash bags at Alton Baker Park.

"Illegal camping and the large amounts of trash and waste left behind has a huge impact on the park, including sensitive natural areas and water quality," Carrie Peterson, Parks and Open Space resource development manager, tells EW. "Park staff struggle to keep up with the extraordinarily high demand, and couldn't do it alone."

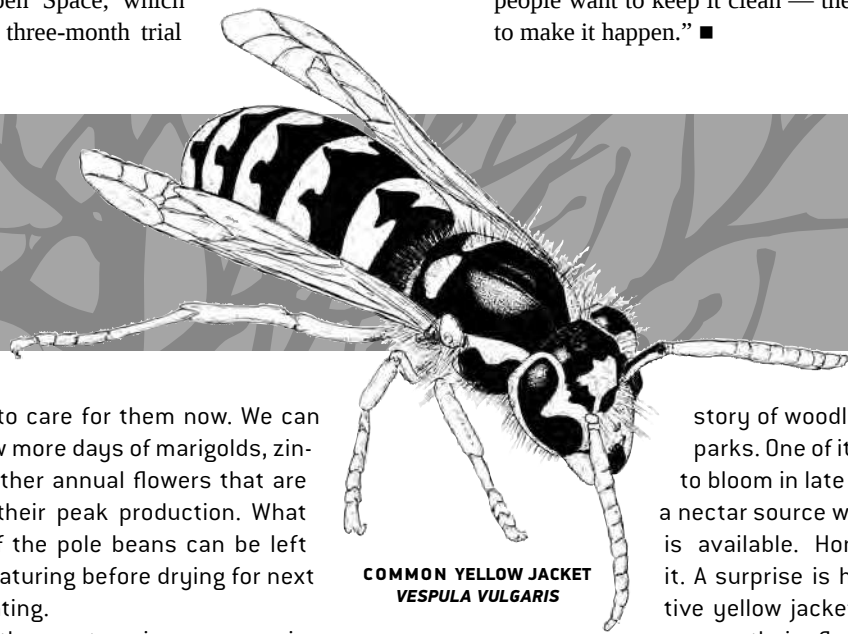
Walker started a GoFundMe campaign in mid-October to help offset the costs and give a little bit to the volunteers — all of whom are unhoused, according to Walker. "Our trial period ends in December, but I'm hoping we have made enough of an impact to continue indefinitely," she says.

"Efforts like Kathy's, ongoing river cleanup projects by Willamette Riverkeeper volunteers and the annual Great Willamette Cleanup are excellent examples of everyday people stepping up to make a big difference," Peterson says.

Walker says she also arranges unscheduled pickups on the off weeks when she can, and she spreads the word as much as possible. "All I did was put their idea into action," she says. "This helps us show the public that most of these people want to keep it clean — they just need a little help to make it happen." ■

# IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



COMMON YELLOW JACKET  
*VESPULA VULGARIS*

There is nothing like three days of hard rain to signal the proper end of summer and the beginning of the rainy season, aka our winter. We celebrate rain and cloudy skies for at least the next month or so. By February, many will tire of mist and drizzle, but for now we are happy to walk in the wet. The forest fires that have ravaged the nearby hills have been quenched. Deep pockets of coals will yet burn a while but the serious threat is over.

It is time to roll up the hoses and put away the hose timers. A sudden hard frost, which can happen with little warning, will ruin those timers so

it is good to care for them now. We can enjoy a few more days of marigolds, zinnias and other annual flowers that are just past their peak production. What remains of the pole beans can be left to finish maturing before drying for next year's planting.

Among the most noxious, aggressive, non-native plants is English ivy. It has been widely used as an easily established ground cover. English ivy will continue to be used in landscapes despite its tendency to escape and overwhelm the under-

story of woodlands in urban parks. One of its odd traits is to bloom in late fall, providing a nectar source when little else is available. Honeybees love it. A surprise is how many native yellow jackets and wasps swarm their flower clusters, and even some evening moths.

*David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes nature calendars. He can be contacted through his web site: fernzenmosses.com.*

## LivingLove Superfoods

FORMULATED BY A NUTRITIONAL THERAPIST

(541) 972-3262

SMALL BATCHES ARTISANALLY MADE IN EUGENE

Best Local Protein Powder!

REVITALIZE  
*Your*  
HEALTH



www.LivingLoveSuperfoods.com

FIND OUR SUPERFOOD PROTEIN POWDERS AT URBAN THERAPEUTIC, OREGON'S CONSTANT GARDENER, & SUNDANCE NATURAL FOODS



## OREGON'S GREEN RUSH SHATTERING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

NOW CARRYING CALYX CRAFTS PREMIUM SHATTER

**\$5 GRAMS** | **\$100 OUNCES**

OBAMA KUSH \* LEBANESE \* SUPER LEMON HAZE \* JACK HAMMER

\$100 OZ. is the medical price. \$120 recreational price

541.653.8523 \* 2644 RIVER RD. EUGENE, OR OREGONGREENRUSH.COM



Cannabis products are for users 21+, do not operate machinery or vehicles under the influence. Use responsibly.

