

Bicycle Skills Parks Gains Student and Citizen Support

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ment whenever possible, and native plants for any landscaping. "I'll even suggest volun-

teers bring their own coffee mugs on work days, to reduce garbage," Balfour has been heard to say, "That's the way I

run my projects, as low impact as possible."

The planning group is getting ready to apply for the per-

mits needed to begin construction at the mill site, while attempting to narrow the focus of the project for work to begin this coming summer. A first draft for the Park Master Plan will be available by the end of February.

Necessary for this type of recreation site would be construction of a parking area, informational sign kiosks, and restroom facilities. Other activities currently being considered for the site, in addition to the skate board park, are a BMX track, a pump track, a loop trail with some skill obstacles built in, a children's and beginners' area, picnic areas, bike wash station and bike mechanics area. One idea that gained a lot of support at the meeting was the development of a cyclo-cross track. Cyclo-cross is a sport growing in popularity, especially in Oregon, and cyclo-cross sanctioned races can draw hundreds of riders for weekend events.

The planning group is hoping to build at least 3-4 of these features this summer, and raise money to complete the second and third phases over the next year or two.

The Bicycle Skills Park planning group is actively seeking

grants, donations, and fund raising ideas to finance this project. They were recently awarded a \$10,000 grant from Cycle Oregon. Much of the trail and track construction will, hopefully, be done with donations of volunteer labor and heavy equipment.

"We want to involve the community as much as possible at all levels. We will build as much as we can this summer, depending on how many of you turn out to help," Balfour told the crowd. Skills Park supporters also hope to partner with the Vernonia Community Learning Center to offer trail building classes, and would use the Learning Center as its base of operations for other events and functions.

The next public meeting for the Vernonia Bicycle Skills Park will be held Friday evening, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the Vernonia Community Learning Center.

If you would like more information about the skills park, would like to volunteer, or would like to be added to the email list, contact Donna Webb at the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce, at 503-429-6081 or <info@vernoniachamber.org>.

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Ric Balfour, Skills Park Project Planner, out at the mill site demonstrating his vision of using existing structures as he shows what he could do with a mountain bike at this spot.