

Turn Lafayette Watershed Into Ideal Nature Park

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As the population in Lafayette has increased, the need for new parks and natural space increases. Unfortunately, park creation lags. Capital for purchasing land is unavailable. However, Lafayette is blessed in owning its watershed and forest - one mile east of town. It's an ideal location for a nature park.

A long history of public use has laid foundations. Infrastructure is largely in place; namely, splendid forest and scenic trails, barbecue pits and picnic table. Let's build on tradition and, in the spirit of Tom McCall, expand access and make de jure the public use. The more people to see and identify with this forest treasure, the safer and more secure it will be in the future.

Historically, the watershed served multiple functions: water production, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation. Generations drank its water, respected its animals and flora, integrating its beauty into their lives. This distinctive old forest is an important part of the local culture and landscape. Its aesthetic value alone is great and worth preserving.

Customary public use includes: trail hiking, horseback riding, forest exploration, picnicking, biking, family outings, and wildlife observation. It's also a place of solitude and retreat for meditation. Its health benefits to the community and spiritual value are estimable.

Recent logging and enforced prohibitions against customary use ended this laize faire tradition. Official park designation (or comparable formal status) is necessary now to encode and protect future public use. To facilitate this constructive process, access and parking on Forster property will be granted the public at the Northeast Duniway Road approach.

Further logistic challenges and practical steps toward construction involve acquiring permission from adjacent landlords for passage, adding liability coverage to existing parks policy, "Carry Out Your Own Litter" posted signs, etc., a \$65 monthly for chemical toilets for sanitation.

Residents of Lafayette deserve, and with title in hand, can well afford a new park. Such an exquisite park as this is appropriate to the dignity and station of the county's oldest city and the original county seat.

Walter Forster

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