



Linn County Parks



NEWSLETTER

What's happening at Linn County (Oregon) Parks August 2021

Linn County welcomes newest park, Bilyeu Den



Randy Bentz and Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll talk about improvements made at the Bilyeu Den Park next to the Hannah Covered Bridge near Scio.

SCIO — A popular swimming hole under the Hannah Covered Bridge that was once an eyesore, has been turned into Linn County's newest wayside park, offering locals and visitors a place to picnic, swim or just enjoy the relaxing sounds of Thomas Creek.

Bilyeu Den Park (pronounced blue den) is just about one acre and was donated by the Bentz family, which has owned a 700-acre tree farm in the area since 1964.

Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll said his staff has been working with the Bentz family for several years. Although the park isn't finished, it already features a paved parking lot, vault toilet, picnic table with more to come and sturdy stairs that allow easy access to and from the creek.

"This site has significant historical significance," Carroll said.

The area was settled by the Bilyeu family in the 1850s. Before the Hannah and Jordan bridges were built, the winter rains made Thomas Creek unfordable, preventing the residents from leaving the area until late spring. This resulted in them calling the area "the Den" (like a bear's den.)

In 1904, the Bentz family moved to the McCully Mountain area in Linn County from the sand hills of Nebraska. Randy Bentz said his Grandfather John Bentz used to tell him stories about visiting "The Den"

Bilyeu Den Park ... See P. 2

To make campsite reservations visit www.linnparks.com or call 541-967-3917

Brian Carroll

**Parks
Director**



Linn County Parks are funded by many sources

Welcome to Linn County!

How is the Linn County

Parks Department funded?

I am often asked how the Linn County Parks & Recreation Department is funded or what happens to the fees that visitors pay when they come to a Linn County park?

In general the Linn County Parks and Recreation Department (LCPRD) is funded from user related fees and not property taxes or Oregon State income taxes. We receive funding from several sources, which include visitor fees, Oregon State recreational vehicle licensing fees, Oregon State marine boater registration/marine gas tax fees and Linn County transient lodge tax.

The Linn County Board of Commissioners decided in the 1990s to start moving parks funding away from general fund tax support. One of the reasons for this was so the Parks & Recreation Department would not be completing or taking funding from other county vital services, such as the Linn County Sheriff's Office, District Attorney, Clerk, Treasurer, Surveyor and other County agencies.

Brian Carroll ... See P. 6



Randy Bentz, left, and Brian Carroll chat at a picnic table at the new Bilyeu Den Park near Scio. More picnic tables will be added to the site.

Bilyeu Den Park ... From P 1

when he was young. He also talked about a nearby sawmill that was operated by Trappist monks, some artifacts of which the family has preserved on their property.

In 1964, Bentz's father, Ron, bought a cutover tree farm near the Hannah Covered Bridge. They have spent the last 60 years improving the farm and for many of those years, struggled with how to deal with trespassers on what is now the wayside.

"At first, it was only local folks who came down to swim on hot days," Bentz said. "Then in the 1980s, it changed and people started showing up from all over." They left trash and when the family put up a fence to gain some control

over their own land, it was often cut. "I spent a lot of time fixing the fence," Bentz said. "We also put out a lot of campfires people left that could have easily spread up the hill into our trees."

Bentz's father contacted Linn County officials 40 years ago, but there wasn't as much interest in the covered bridges as there is today.

In 2017, the family contacted Carroll with the idea of creating the wayside.

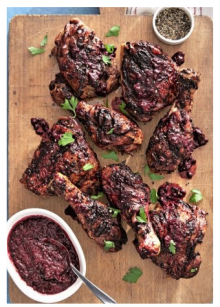
Carroll said he was immediately interested and the process of creating the new park began.



A rock shelf is an attractive gathering spot for swimmers under the Hannah Covered Bridge near Scio.

Bilyeu Den Park ... See P. 3

Campfire Cookin'



Glazed chicken wings

Ingredients

- 1 (6-ounce) package blackberries
- 1/4 c. water
- 2 tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. cold butter
- 1 tbsp. whole-grain mustard
- 4 chicken thighs
- 4 drumsticks
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- Fresh, flat-leaf parsley

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Cooking directions

Heat grill to medium. Combine blackberries, water, white wine vinegar, and sugar in a small saucepan; simmer, mashing occasionally, until liquid is reduced to about 2 Tbsp., 18 to 20 minutes. Stir in butter and whole-grain mustard. Transfer half the glaze to a bowl; reserve. Meanwhile, pat chicken thighs and drumsticks dry; season with kosher salt and black pepper.

Grill, skin-sides up, covered, 15 minutes. Uncover, baste with some of the glaze and grill, turning and basting occasionally, until cooked through, 10

to 12 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh flat-leaf parsley and serve with remaining glaze.

Courtesy Country Living Magazine

Bilyeu Den Park ... *From P. 2*

Someone seated at the picnic table in the parking lot has an excellent view of the 105-foot long Hannah Covered Bridge and can enjoy the sound of wooden planks rattling as vehicles pass by.

Thomas Creek and Bilyeu Creek converge nearby.

Carroll said the county will soon install a new sign and he is working with the Bentz family to develop an interpretive sign that denotes the site's historical values.

Bentz said the new park is being very well received.

"It's great. We haven't noticed any

real problems. We knew the county would put in a good park and they have," Bentz said. "Usually every day someone from the county stops by, whether that is someone from parks or the Road Department, or the Sheriff's Office."

Bentz said the park's development also heralds a recognition that a natural asset of this magnitude should not be fenced off, but should be developed and responsibly enjoyed by all.

A dedication ceremony is being planned for sometime this fall.

Artist Registry seeks information

The Oregon Arts Commission, in partnership with The Ford Family Foundation, hopes to build a statewide [Artist Registry](#) to increase access to funding programs and build a case for greater artist resources.

Oregon's professional artists were especially hard hit during the pandemic. Most of them rely on public events to sell their work, and the statewide shut down dramatically reduced their opportunities for income. Many were forced to give up their art to seek other means of supporting themselves.

An Artist Relief Program led by the Arts Commission with funding from the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and Oregon Community Foundation offset some of those losses, but great need remains, according to Aili Schreinert, Oregon Cultural Trust manager.

Participants will:

- Receive information about upcoming programs and funding opportunities for individual artists.
- Help ensure statewide funding opportunities reach communities across Oregon by letting the commission know

who and where you are.

Help build the case for allocating resources to artists by demonstrating the number of artists and range of artistic practices in Oregon.

The survey can be found at <https://development.oregon4biz.com/acton/media/14786/artistregistrysurvey>.

The Oregon Cultural Trust was created in 2001 by the Oregon Legislature as a way to fund arts and cultural programs statewide.

In 2019 Oregonians gave \$4.5 million to the Cultural Trust. Sixty percent of that went straight back to the field. The remaining 40 percent helped grow a permanent fund.

For more information, contact Eleanor.Sandys@oregon.gov.

**Please take our survey
at [https://
linnparks.com/survey/](https://linnparks.com/survey/)**

Landslide repairs on Highway 20 will cause traffic delays

Travelers on Highway 20 east of House Rock Campground will experience some delays in traffic due to a major repair of an area of roadway that has been prone to sliding.

The Oregon Department of Transportation said the project — from MP 55 to MP 56 — will run from August through December 2021 and cost about \$4.6 million. It will be completed in 2022.

The area is known as the Double Gate and Upper Sunken Grade slide area and runs along the South Santiam River.

ODOT is also looking at issues at MP 53.7, but no construction is planned there.

ODOT plans to install a retaining wall on Highway 20 with the goal of slowing landslide movement. The wall will be along the inside of the horizontal curve in the roadway and will need a minor roadway realignment slightly toward the uphill side.

The wall will isolate the roadway from the landslide mass to prevent further movement of the roadway. As part of the work, ODOT will reconstruct 1,000 feet of roadway to establish the new alignment and grade.

ODOT installed several horizontal drains in 2019 to help water flow through the area. The current project will regrade and reconstruct the roadway at this site which has seen significant settlement.

During construction there will be 24-hour single lane closures controlled by flaggers through the work zone.

The project is expected to take two seasons and started in July 2021.

In addition to lane closures, during the first season (2021) there will also be a 2-3 day full closure of the road in Septem-



- 24 hour single lane closures August - December 2021.
- Three day full closure in September 2021.
- Two week full closure in May 2022.

Know before you go! Visit [TripCheck.com](https://www.tripcheck.com) for the latest information on traffic impacts.

ber 2021 (after Labor day but before the end of month). In May 2022 there will be a 2 week full closure of the road before Memorial Day weekend.

Exact dates will be shared two weeks prior to the closures.

TripCheck.com will have the most up to date information on road conditions and closures.

This project is being managed by Western Federal Lands.

Linn County Parks & Recreation Commission

Members of the Linn County Parks Commission Advisory Board meet on the second Thursday of the month in January, March, May, September and November.

Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and are held at various locations throughout the county.

Parks Commission members are Milt Moran, Michael Hurd, Ken Bronson, Gerritt Schaffer, Darryl Dukes, Rich Kellum, Rachel Maynard, Mellissa Barnard and Paul Timm.

(There are two open positions. Call 541-967-3917.)

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Meet Blake Nightingale

Diversity of work, people keep his job fun, interesting

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

SWEET HOME — Blake Nightingale spent a lot of time working on his grandparents' hazel nut farm near Brownsville.

It's where he cultivated a love of working outdoors, so the job as the park ranger for the Quartzville Corridor area suits him fine.

"I like farming and someday, maybe in 10 or 20 years, I might do some farming, but for right now, I really like what I do," Nightingale said.

Nightingale played football, basketball and track at Central Linn High School and attended Linn-Benton Community College.

"I started working for the parks department while at LBCC in the summers," Nightingale said. "I knew I wanted to do something outside."

After LBCC, he studied anthropological archaeology at the University of Oregon and graduated in 2017.

He started working fulltime for the parks department and spent four years at Sunnyside Park.

"I love my job. It's nice working outside and I like the diversity of people we meet every single day," Nightingale said.

Nightingale said he's getting to meet a new group of families now that he's working the Quartzville Corridor and Whitcomb Creek Park.

"I have a lot of dispersed campsites," Nightingale said. "There's a different atmosphere at Whitcomb Creek than other parks. It's definitely laid back."

He also has to plan his day more accurately, since his work area spans



Meeting new people and working outdoors on an ever-changing variety of projects keeps Quartzville Corridor Ranger Blake Nightingale's job interesting.

Name: Blake Nightingale

Age: 28

Occupation: Quartzville Corridor Park Ranger

Education: Central Linn High School; University of Oregon

Family: wife, Victoria; cat, Ellie

Hobbies: Watching sports, especially the Trail Blazers and UO football and basketball; playing board games such as the Settlers of Catan.

several miles.

"I can't be running back and forth to the shop to get stuff," Nightingale said. "I need to make sure I

have a variety of materials with me at all times."

Nightingale said he likes that he can use his college training as a member of the county's interpretive committee and working with programs like the Native American encampments each summer and the new Junior Ranger program.

"I really would like to see our parks be as user friendly as possible," Nightingale said. "That includes making sure all kids, including those with disabilities, can use our playgrounds."

Nightingale said this summer has been challenging since it's been difficult to find temporary staff.

"It's August and there are still openings," Nightingale said.

How Linn County Parks funding ... *From P. 2*

The goal was to have parks be as self-sufficient as possible through user fees. It was a slow process that was finally fully achieved in FY 2009-2010, when the department no longer received general fund tax support.

The Parks & Recreation Department operates on a business model of generating its own revenue to pay for operational, maintenance and staff expenses annually. A more detail explanation of the different funding sources is below.

Visitor Fees

The first and largest portion — approximately 80% — of our funding comes from the user fees visitors pay when they stay at a Linn County campground or reserve a group picnic site. These fees also include moorage, parking, firewood sales and any other revenues generated in the county parks system. The revenue from visitor fees pay for staff salaries, repairs, maintenance, operations and administrative expenses for the parks system.

RV Licensing Fees

Approximately 14% of Parks & Recreation Department funding comes from the state of Oregon's RV licensing fee program. When a camper licenses an RV in Oregon, Linn County Parks receives a portion of that fee. RV fees are dedicated funding to the Parks & Recreation Department and by state law must be used for parks and recreation related expenses.

In Linn County, RV fees are used to pay for campground operations, major repairs and park improvements. The expansion of the Whitcomb Creek Campground and much of the construction of River Bend County Park were paid for with RV licensing fees.

Marine Funds

The Oregon State Marine Board's maintenance assistance program provides approximately \$68,000 annually in funding to Linn County to help pay for the operations and maintenance of boat



Linn County Parks employees work on the steps down to Thomas Creek at the new Bilyeu Den Park next to the Hannah Covered Bridge near Scio.

ramps in Linn County. Marine funds are dedicated funds that must be used for boating facility maintenance and marine related expenses. MAP funds make up about 1% of the Parks Department annual budget.

Transient Lodging Tax (TLT)

The Transient Lodging Tax funding was first approved by the Board of County Commissioners in 2018 and is derived from a tax on overnight lodging facilities in Linn County. The Parks Department does not use TLT funding for operational expenses.

TLT funds are generally used for larger capital related projects. Some examples of TLT related expenses/projects are: The new Waterloo County Park playground, the water safety barrier at Lewis Creek County Park and the boom system at Edgewater Marina.

Depending on the projects completed, TLT funds can make up approximately 5% of our annual funding.

Grant Funds

An additional source of funding available to the Park's Department comes in the form of competitive grants, mostly from state agencies. Grant funds cannot be used for routine maintenance. Their main focus is larger capital improvement projects.

The Parks & Recreation Department applies for grants funds from state and federal agencies and competes with other Oregon counties and city parks departments for available funds.

The current Lewis Creek County Park planning project, the Stayton Bridge Boat Ramp replacement project and recently awarded Sunnyside County Park restroom/shower building project were all funded through Oregon state grant programs.

Most of the state grant funding received is derived from user fees but some funding comes from the Oregon state lottery and marine registration fees.