



Cantrall Buckley Park NEWS

Turtle playscape is a home run

BY RICH HALSTED

Cantrall Buckley Park recently added a new playscape, one of many new improvements planned for the park over the next couple of years. Excited children and parents took in the new addition at the ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 19. The Ford Institute Leadership Program selected this particular project over the many that were submitted, developed the concept, and constructed the project

with help from some local members of the community.

The Ford Institute Leadership Program is part of the Ford Family Foundation and was first offered in 2003. It is designed to enhance rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The Institute selects four new communities to enter the program each spring and each fall.

The playscape is centered around a 1,400-pound cement turtle affectionately known as "Tuffy" after

Applegate's own Tuffy Decker, who donated multiple days for the excavation required for the project. The turtle was constructed by Ruch's own Jeremy Criswell, who designed the project in collaboration with leadership program members. The turtle also represents part of the educational themes in regard to the restoration of turtle habitat. The playscape includes logs and boulders to play on and a bench. The improvement to the park is very successful based on the excitement of the children playing on and around the new play area. "It was just amazing," Jeremy said,

describing the children's reaction to the playscape. "Kids don't think about it. They take right to it." In all, over 225 volunteer hours and 1,600 pounds of concrete were needed to install the playscape.

Future planned projects for the park include replacement of the playground equipment and restoration of the existing area, enhancement of turtle natural habitat areas, restroom renovation, and improvements to the campground. The park received generous donations from the community and a matching state grant for the playground project, as well as grants from nonprofit foundations. The playground project will begin late this fall.

Thanks to the Ford Institute Leadership Program seminar participants as well as community members who contributed numerous hours to make this project possible. Particularly notable community contributors include Tuffy Decker, Sebastian Klinefelter, and Bjorn Everson, who all made generous donations of time and equipment.

Cantrall Buckley Park is a treasured resource of the residents of the Applegate Valley, and its day-use and campground areas are heavily utilized in summer by residents of the greater Rogue Valley and by tourists. The park offers public access to the Applegate River and its natural environment and is used for camping, picnicking, fishing, swimming, family gatherings, and community events. Cantrall Buckley Park comprises approximately 88 acres. Co-managed by Jackson County and the nonprofit Greater Applegate Community

Photos below—Top: Tuffy Decker, for whom the turtle is named, donated his excavation expertise to the playscape project.

Photo: Tom Carstens.

Bottom: Tim Balfour cuts the ribbon at the official opening of the Enchanted Turtle Playscape.

Photo: Sara King Cole.

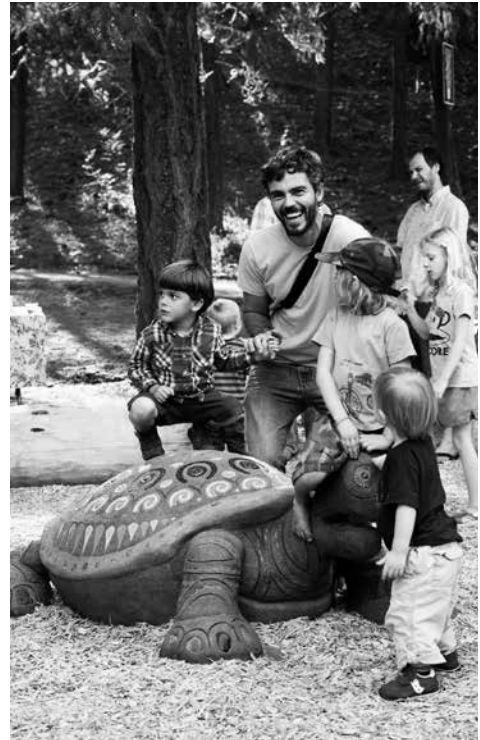


Help with Cantrall Buckley Park history

Your Cantrall Buckley Park Committee is putting together a short history of our park.

If you or anyone you know were involved in either the park's initial founding in the mid-1960s or in its salvation as a community park in 1997, please contact Tom Carstens at 541-846-1025.

Your help is appreciated!



Jeremy Criswell, creator of "Tuffy" the turtle, enjoys playtime with children at the ribbon-cutting event on September 19. Photo: Sara King Cole.

Development Corporation (GACDC), the park provides the closest campground to the population center of Medford.

The Cantrall Buckley Park Committee, part of GACDC, is always looking for additional members and citizens who want to participate in improving the park. Please contact Tom Carstens at 541-846-1025 if you'd like to get involved.

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