

Cantrall-Buckley Park Improvement Project

BY LAIRD FUNK



“What the heck is going on here?”

That was the gist of most questions asked by folks who stumbled upon the frenetic construction activity at Cantrall-Buckley Park these last few months. Well, what was going on was that after nearly three years of talking, planning, designing and fundraising, the Cantrall-Buckley Park improvement project got under way with a bang. Work was started on a three-phase project that will ultimately create a whole new potable water system and new parkwide wastewater treatment system (Phase 1); great improvements to the campground including a new restroom building with showers (Phase 2) (see photo above); and finally, full utility hookups for each vehicle campsite and the addition of four yurts (Phase 3).

The project is funded by grants from Oregon State Parks and The Small

Community Incentive Fund, as well as some assistance from Jackson County. It is under the direction of the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC) which has operated the park in partnership with Jackson County since 1996. The project began with a grant from the United States Forest Service for a sewer design for the campground. This was stretched far enough to obtain designs for a complete wastewater collection and treatment system that will use a wetland process to treat the wastewater and then disperse that treated water through underground drip systems in the campground landscaping.

Phase 1. The new treatment system includes replacing all existing septic tanks and adding an impressive 10,000 gallon tank for the campground sewer. These tanks will pump their effluent to the treatment cell where

it will flow below the ground surface through a constructed, lined wetlands planted with nutrient-loving water plants, which will not only use some of the nutrients themselves, but as importantly provide a growing surface on their roots for a complex bacterial mass to use more of the nutrients. This system is only the second one in Oregon (see photo bottom right), but is ideally suited to Cantrall-Buckley’s needs.

The next step in the process, the drip dispersal system in the campground, is also a fairly rare process in Oregon and this one may be the largest yet in the state. Initially the system will keep the meadow area in the campground green, and will be expanded as the campground is renovated to irrigate screen shrubbery plantings and fence line plantings (using native Oregon plants). Currently the campground has no irrigation rights to the Applegate River. This new system will allow it to be attractively landscaped to improve its ambience.

The work started in the middle of freezing January with the short-notice arrival of our 10,000 gallon tank which had to be installed immediately. Rising to the challenge, Jim Bottroff and Tuffy Decker and their crews arrived on site January 21 on a rare snowless day after an exciting time trying to get a giant tracked excavator and other equipment up an ice covered Cantrall Road and campground driveway. A driveway, mind you, which stayed ice-covered for the entire installation job. Two days later the giant hole was ready and when the truck with the tank finally struggled up the hill, the crews pulled out all stops and had that tank off the

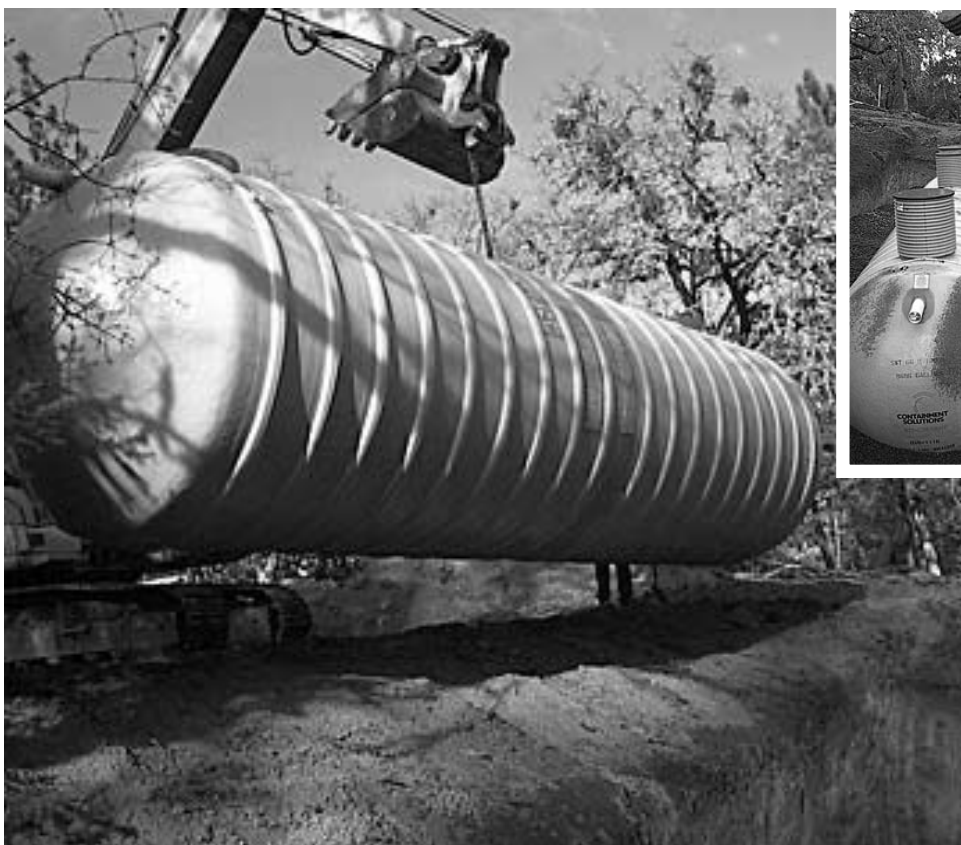
truck and in the ground, covered in just over five hours! (see photos bottom left and middle) Just then, the snow, which had held off for three days, resumed with a fury, but the job was done and to quote Tuffy, “It really was a good, fun, productive day!”

On March 20, everybody crawled out of hibernation and began the work of installing the pipelines that tie everything together. Tuffy and Jim’s crews were joined by Greg from Jacksonville Bore and Drill. Trench work began in the campground with three crews working. Hundreds of feet of trench per day got finished. Between March 20 and the end of April, 5600’ of various trenches were dug and filled with a total of 6600’ of 1”, 2” and 3” pressure pipe, and 4100’ of 1”, 2” and 3” electrical conduit, and seemingly thousands of cubic yards of gravel backfill.

At the same time, three septic tanks were installed and two 8’ square concrete block buildings constructed to house the control panels and electrical gear, which make the whole process go. Sometimes there were five crews working at once in various places in the park, quite a change from the normal sleepy pace during the early spring at Cantrall-Buckley.

Things have quieted a bit right now, and the park is getting ready for visitors. But pretty soon, maybe by the time you read this, we are jumping into constructing the wetland and installing a 15,000 gallon potable water tank. Stayed tuned for more of the story next time!

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