



**BENTON COUNTY**  
Parks Department

**STAFF REPORT TO  
BENTON COUNTY PARK BOARD  
AUGUST 2024**

**FINANCIALS**

<b>Park Development Fund Cash Balance:</b>	\$ 777,943.13 (Jun 01 2024)
<b>2024 Revenue from Camping &amp; Donations:</b>	\$ 0.00 (Apr 05 2024)*

*\* We have revenue from camping, I just don't have it updated from the Parks Department. Obviously, it will be much less this year because of our partial closure.*

**GENERAL NEWS**

**New Park Board Member:** Welcome to David Cannon of Kennewick who will be joining us for the August meeting.

**Communications Coordinator:** Glenn Vaagen was with us for a year-and-a-half and has decided to return to his origins in radio. Glenn lifted our game for parks and for the County on the whole, and we will hope to continue to build on that. As of this memo there are 29 applications submitted for the open position which we hope to have filled by mid-September.

**Traffic Counters:** We ordered three traffic counters (car counters) from TRAFx Research and will be installing these at Two Rivers (x2 – main entrance and boat launch) and Horn Rapids (x1 – main entrance). If we wish to order additional counters we get those at a discounted price from this company, and I think there is a good chance we will be doing that.

**Upcoming Park Board Meetings:** The September meeting will be held at the Shotgun House at Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility, preceded by a tour of the new Law Enforcement Training Area (We will depart from the Shotgun entrance at 6:00). *If some members would like an expanded tour of the campus, we will need to set that up for earlier. I recommend 5:00.*

**Annual Joint Park Boards Dinner:** West Richland is hosting this year. The date is the evening of Monday, September 16, at the new police station. *I am in Washington DC for a few days that week and am not able to attend. I will create a short slide show presentation for a Board member to give and will work with the person on that over the next month. I hope all or at least most of you are able to attend as it looks good when we represent well.*

**Washington Invasive Species Council Annual Awards:** As I think most members know, I am a member of WISC representing Eastern Washington counties. WISC has started a new statewide recognition program. I made a personal nomination for one of the awards and the Board will consider a nomination of its own in another category at the August meeting.

**Shrub-Steppe Trails Alliance:** I plan to schedule another briefing for the Park Board by SSTA this fall.

**Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year:** The Tapteal Greenway created this award in 1995 and recognizes the recipient at its Annual Celebration each fall. The 2024 awardee will be **Rachel Little**, formerly of the Benton Conservation District and a longtime friend of Benton County and the Parks Department. You may best know Rachel via her two signature projects during her time at the District – Salmon in the Classroom/Salmon Summit and the water stargrass awareness/action campaign. Tapteal's Annual Celebration will be Saturday, October 12, 4:00, at the Richland Community Center; and Park Board members and guests are invited.

## **BADGER MOUNTAIN CENTENNIAL PRESERVE**

**Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve – Boot Brushes:** The boot brushes have arrived. We plan to install them later in the fall when things cool down and we get some moisture in the soil. There is one for Badger and one for Candy, plus Adam is donating one at McBee Grade.

## **CANDY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE**

**Candy Mountain Preserve – Weed Brigade:** The Friends of Badger Mountain noxious weed volunteers continue their work through the summer with two work parties most weeks.

**Candy Mountain Preserve – Rogue Trail:** There is a rogue trail on the lower north slope of the property that we need to investigate further.

## **HORN RAPIDS PARK**

**Horn Rapids Park – Campground:** The general closure continues with openings for reserved groups. It seems to be working out alright.

**Horn Rapids Park – Cleanup:** The Tapteal Greenway led a cleanup of the park on July 13. Save for one specific dump site, the area was not as badly littered as was anticipated. The cleanup area was from the base of the Sunsplash Bluff to Wanawish Dam.

**Horn Rapids Park – Boat Launch:** The Greenway will lead a fall work party at the boat launch, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, November 23. The purpose will be vegetation management in this area, starting with and focused around opening the access/visual mouth of the boat launch, which can be hard to see from upriver. Also included will be weeding, litter detail, and trail maintenance.

**Horn Rapids Park – Meacham Hall Garden:** We have a Life Scout that will take on this project and we will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to scope out the project.

## **TWO RIVERS PARK**

Carson is back at the park after his extended military obligation. The timing was not good for us, and it has shown this summer at the park. We have had a rough time keeping up with trash and general maintenance during our heaviest use time of the year. As part of our subcommittee work on the topic of funding and staffing, what we are able and not able to do in situations like this will be primary examples.

**Two Rivers Park – Boardwalk:** Okay. With both the Boardwalk and Hover parking projects we are at basically the same sticking point. We are waiting on building permits from our own Planning Department, and Robert Blain and I are trying to get them out of a sort of dead loop where they are waiting on comments from the CTUIR for the enth time. Sometimes no response is a response. We have now come full circle, where we had the Corps of Engineers taking jabs at us at the compliance inspection because we are not completing projects they have reviewed (it costs them time and manpower to do these reviews). So we can't blame it on the Corps anymore, and we really can't blame it on 'cultural resources' either. We are holding ourselves up. I might schedule a meeting with staff and interested Park Board members in the next week to let everyone hear the same story and see where we are.

**Two Rivers Park – Compliance Inspection:** Speaking of the compliance inspection, we have not yet received our report from the inspection.

## **OTHER COUNTY PARKS**

**Horse Heaven Cemetery:** Nothing new to report.

**Horse Heaven Vista:** Nothing new to report.

**Hover Park:** Please see Boardwalk under Two Rivers Park above.

**Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility:** Nothing new to report.

**Vista Park:** Nothing new to report.

**Wallula Gap Preserve:** A purchase and sale agreement has been executed between Benton County and the Bauder Estate for acquisition of the Yellepit Parcel. Cascade Title is handling the transaction. Title search/report is underway. Closing is slated for August 30 or sooner. Adam will schedule a site visit for September, possibly as part of a larger tour for the benefit of all members but especially our newer members. Adam will also be meeting with Corrections in the next few weeks to scope-out a clean-up project for sometime in the fall.

## **OTHER NON-COUNTY PARKS**

**Kennewick Paths & Trails Plan:** No update at this time.

**Horse Heaven Rim Trail:** Adam ground-truthed the short McBee-Chandler section (dashed red line) on August 11. The plan is to complete the Lincoln-Ward Gap section later in August and finally the middle Horse Heaven Vista-McBee section in late-September. Owner/contact information has been collected for the three parcels that the easternmost section crosses, and Adam will be reaching out to the owners about the possibilities of recreational easements or property acquisitions.



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