

Metro/Clackamas County

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rock-climbing area

Clackamas commissioners ask for a study on the best use of land including a once-popular climbing wall near Carver

By SARAH HUNSBERGER
THE OREGONIAN

After years of posting no-trespassing signs at a once-popular climbing wall, Clackamas County commissioners decided Tuesday to consider reopening the area, possibly as a county park.

The forested 45-acre site near Carver is known as the Madrone Wall because of its stand of Pacific madrone trees and

its 100-foot-high rock cliff.

Commissioners will ask the county parks advisory board to meet with potential users, study options and make a recommendation by fall.

Possibilities include mining or logging the site, selling it to a private party for recreational use, designating it as a county park, allowing groups to use it for recreation if they provide upkeep and insurance, or keeping it off-limits to the public.

Commissioners said Tuesday that preserving the county-owned property as a park or open space could be the best option.

Please see **MADRONE WALL**, Page D2

Madrone Wall:
Residents write,
call in support
of public access

Continued from Page B1

Many climbers consider the wall to be one of the best rock-climbing sites in the Portland area.

The property, just off Oregon 224, was closed to climbers in the 1990s by a county risk management committee.

Keith Daellenbach of Portland, a climber who directs the nonprofit Madrone Wall Preservation Committee, said liability shouldn't be a concern.

He pointed out that state laws say public landowners aren't liable for injuries or deaths that arise out of recreational use of the land.

Part of the property has been mined, and the site also has been called the Hardscrabble Quarry. The wall is a natural feature.

The county studied the possibility of further mining the site in the late 1990s to obtain gravel for county road projects, but officials decided to buy rock instead.

Commissioner Larry Sowa suggested last year that the board take another look at allowing public access to the property, at least until the county might need it for mining.

The county has received letters and calls in recent months from residents wishing to protect the site or reopen it to the public, said Dan Zirzer, the county's transportation engineering and parks manager. Zirzer also has gotten several recent inquiries from miners looking for sources of rock.

An area that includes the wall also is being discussed as a possible conservation or park area as part of the planning process for the Damascus area. The wall is outside the new city.

Commissioner Martha Schrader said Tuesday that she thinks open space or a park would be the best use of the property and that she is unlikely to consider other options.

Commissioner Bill Kenemer also said Tuesday that the land "probably ought to be a park."

But he warned that "giving it away and not taking a careful fiduciary look" was a bad idea.

The county doesn't have an updated property value estimate. The county bought the property for \$2,000 in 1937.

Because interested users come from across the region, Kenemer also suggested that Metro or a group of regional partners could own or manage the site.

"I for one am certainly not interested in having a rock-climbing park that we're running," Kenemer said.

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Upcoming April Events:

5 April (Tuesday) at 7:00 p.m.: "Future of Madrone Wall" presentation to the Boring Community Planning Organization (CPO) at the Boring Fire Hall Annex (28655 S.E. Highway 212, Boring) by the Madrone Wall Preservation Committee.

12 April (Tuesday) at 7:00 p.m.: Informational meeting at Still Meadow Community (16561 S.E. Marna Road, Clackamas, www.stillmeadowcommunity.com) to discuss the lands along the Clackamas River under public ownership or conserved for their natural resource values, including the Madrone Wall. The Three Rivers Land Conservancy (www.trlc.org) has invited the MWPC to speak along with State Parks, Metro, and Clackamas County.

19 April (Tuesday) at 7:00 p.m.: Madrone Wall and Smith Rocks rescue litter fundraiser featuring Washington rock and ice climber extraordinaire Jim Yoder at Old Market Pub (6959 Multnomah Blvd., Portland) sponsored by American Alpine Club-Oregon Chapter, Mazamas, The Access Fund.

23 April (Saturday) at 10:00 a.m.: A special opportunity to tour the Madrone Wall and see first hand the bogs, wetlands, wildflowers, old growth Douglas fir, Pacific madrone, and inspiring naturally-created three million year old basalt cliff. We are co-organizing this site visit with Three Rivers Land Conservancy and will be first meeting at Still Meadow Community (16561 S.E. Marna Road, Clackamas, www.stillmeadowcommunity.com) at 10:00 a.m. and, from there, carpool to the site. We will finish around noon. Please RSVP to Keith K. Daellenbach (kdaellenbach@att.net) of the MWPC if you are interested in attending.

Please visit our updated website at www.savemadrone.org



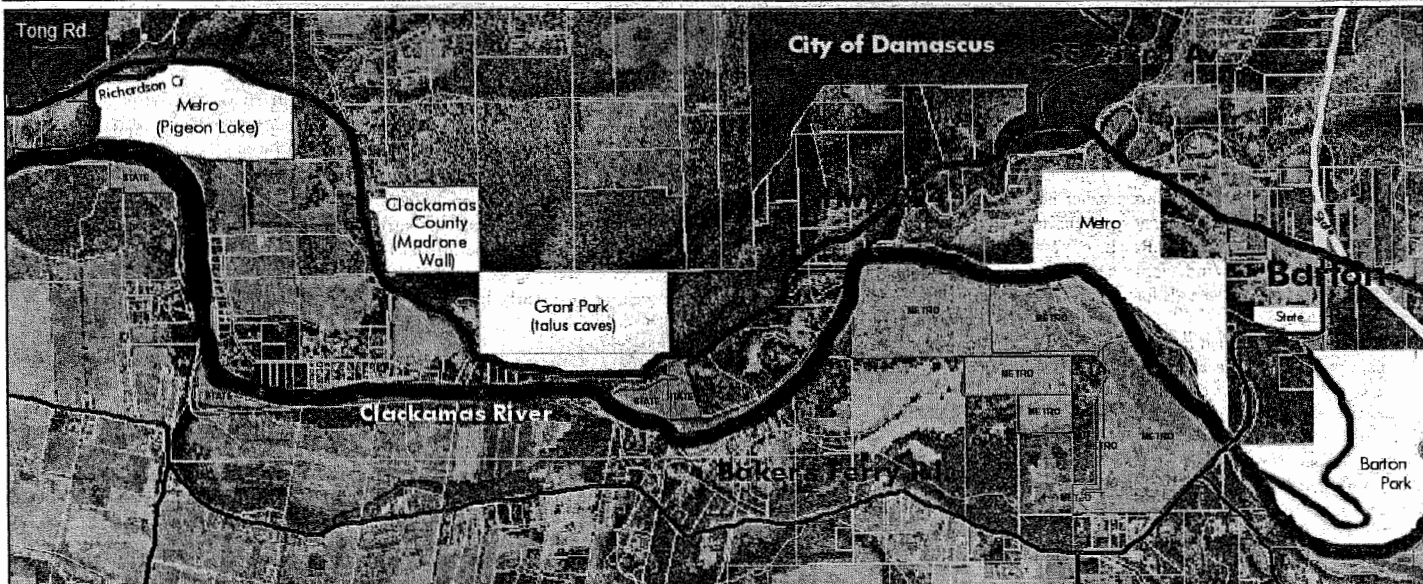
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OBSERVER

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White areas represent public lands and the privately held Grant Park. Some would like to see these areas combined to form a state or regional park between Damascus and the Clackamas River.

Greenway between Carver and Boring explored Park Proponents Discuss Options

by Marty Beaudet, political correspondent

During the summer of 2003, in the run-up to the 2004 Damascus incorporation vote, residents of the Damascus and Boring communities were surveyed on a number of issues the area would have to confront in the face of impending growth. When asked to state what they valued about the area in which they lived, 88 percent of respondents identified "green or open space."

It was not surprising then, when the official Damascus-Boring Concept Plan process began early last year, that the concept

River in Barton. The county also owns a unique piece of land near Carver, a defunct rock quarry known as the Madrone Wall (see update, page 4). This site was extremely popular among the region's rock climbers until the county recently prohibited access. Now only vandals and illegal dumpers frequent the site. County Commissioner Larry Sowa has expressed interest in returning it to use as a quarry at some future date. The nonprofit Madrone Wall Preservation Committee is actively opposing such a proposal.

"County officials are quick to point out that proposals for the creation of a new park in the area are still in their infancy and local residents should not expect to see any new restrictions placed on their land."

of an expansive park, bordering the new city of Damascus and the village of Boring, had widespread support among the participants. Described as a possible "Forest Park East" by many—a reference to the nation's largest park within a city, running northward for 26 miles along Portland's West Hills—the idea was first given form by Dean Apostol, a Damascus resident (and Observer contributor) with a background in landscape architecture and open space planning.

The idea of a park on the north side of the Clackamas River is not a new one. In 1995 Metro passed a bond measure to raise money to acquire open space for preservation and has already used many of those funds to acquire land in the Clackamas floodplain south of Damascus. "Metro has acquired 609 acres along the Clackamas River Greenway, particularly in the vicinity of Barton Park," says Jim Desmond, Director of Metro Parks and Greenspaces. "The Greenway is defined as 'the river corridor from Gladstone upstream to Barton Park.'"

The State of Oregon's Parks and Recreation Department has previously suggested a linear park following the defunct Cazadero railroad grade between Boring and Estacada. Governor Kulongoski has said he would like to create a new state park every year for the next decade.

Clackamas County, for its part, already operates Barton Park on

"Big Park," from page 8

are still in their infancy and local residents should not expect to see any new restrictions placed on their land. Indeed, the recent passage of Measure 37, which would

require compensation to landowners for any limitations that reduced property value, is likely to make such restrictions untenable. Instead, says the county, "any acquisition of lands in the future would be under a willing-seller basis only."

Three Rivers Land Conservancy, a Lake Oswego-based nonprofit organization, seeks landowners willing to donate property for preservation purposes and is active in the current dialog regarding possible parklands along the Clackamas River. TRLC has recently received grant monies from Clackamas County with which it hopes to negotiate a conservation easement on a 120-acre site along Highway 224 just south of the Damascus city limits. The site, formerly known as Grant Park, is said to contain the largest talus cave system in the US, including an underground lake adjacent to the Clackamas River.

The combination of the many considered sites—the Madrone Wall, Grant Park, Metro's 97 acres near Pigeon Lake, Barton Park—have been suggested by Apostol and others as the basis for a "big park" running the length of the Clackamas River bluffs from Carver to Barton, and extending

northward beside North Fork Deep Creek along the state-owned Cazadero right-of-way. This area roughly corresponds to the present eastern border of the UGB. Metro councilors have at times tossed around the idea of using the area's stark and distinct geographic features to define a "hard edge" beyond which the UGB would not pass. Park proponents see a state park here as an ideal way to accomplish that.

The City of Estacada has also expressed support for a revival of the state's proposal—originally floated in the eighties—to extend the Springwater Trail system, which begins near the Sellwood Bridge in Portland, all the way to Estacada. While the state already holds title to the former Cazadero railroad grade, previous attempts to establish a linear park were halted when owners of adjacent property disputed that ownership. Says Apostol, "State Parks

is interested in moving forward with the trail, particularly if there is strong local support. They would like some time to begin a survey and title search, do some maintenance, and perhaps start some outreach to local property owners." (For more on the Springwater Trail, see the Trailhead Park story on page one.)

Metro might also be able to help in the acquisition of more acreage from willing sellers. Says Desmond, "The Metro Council has indicated its intention to ask

the voters to approve a bond measure in November 2006 to acquire or restore critical fish and wildlife habitat. ... While it is too early to say exactly which properties might be eligible for purchase, a site like the Clackamas Bluffs area represents an interesting opportunity and is exactly the type of potential project that the Metro Council may want to consider."

Shrader and other officials who met recently had originally planned a February 24 community forum to discuss park ideas, but the consensus that emerged from the meeting was that such an event would be premature, as there are still no concrete proposals to present to the public. Proponents also worried that without a well-researched and definitive plan to put forward, the idea might unduly alarm local residents who fear their land would be adversely affected. Several participants went to great lengths however, to stress that no one intends to impose any new restrictions on unwilling landowners.

It is likely that whatever proposal is finally put forward will dovetail with the concept plan for the entire area, scheduled to be completed at the end of this year. And even if a park plan is finally adopted by one or more government bodies, it will almost certainly take many years to make it a reality. If the polls hold true, any such proposal will garner overwhelming support from the

citizens of Damascus and their neighbors in Boring.

For anyone interested in learning more about the area in question, TRLC will be hosting a meeting and field trip on March 26th to talk about the parks issue and visit some of the sites being discussed. For more information, contact Three Rivers Land Conservancy at 503-699-9825 or information@trlc.org, or visit its

For more information on the Madrone Wall site, contact Madrone Wall Preservation Committee 5815 NE 31st Avenue, Portland, 97211, or visit its website at www.savemadrone.org.

Both organizations are nonprofit advocacy groups accepting tax-deductible donations.



Please address your letters and emails supporting the creation of a Madrone Wall Park to Commissioners and to the Parks Advisory Board:

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Martha Schrader, Chairperson
Commissioner Bill Kenemer, Vice Chairperson
Commissioner Larry Sowa
2051 Kaen Road
Oregon City, Oregon 97045
www.co.clackamas.or.us/bcc/
bcc@co.clackamas.or.us

Clackamas County Parks Advisory Board
c/o Parks & Property Management
9101 S.E. Sunnybrook Blvd.
Clackamas, Oregon 97015

