

Clackamas County Weekly

CANBY, ESTACADA, GLADSTONE, HAPPY VALLEY, MILWAUKIE, MOLALLA, OREGON CITY

OCTOBER 14, 2004

METROSOUTH BUREAU • 503-294-5920 • TOMWOLF@NEWS.OREGONIAN.COM

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YOUR OPINION

County must preserve Madrone Wall or lose it

Too infrequently do we have the opportunity to secure a wild treasure for future generations. We have this opportunity today with the Madrone Wall, a 44-acre site owned by Clackamas County, now facing a host of threats.

The foresight of civic-minded visionaries saved Lewis and Clark State Park (1936), Forest Park (1948) and Tryon Creek State Park (1975) from development.

Today, nobody looks at these investments and thinks they were a mistake. These preserves are urban oases receiving thousands of annual visits as people reconnect with nature.



MY TURN

Keith K. Daellenbach

They foster ecology education and offer recreational opportunities. Portland is growing at double the national rate and these treasures cannot be the final tally of what is protected. Their natural beauty help make Portland one of the best places to live in America.

It is a social imperative to preserve natural areas for current and future generations. Until this publicly owned site, along scenic Oregon 224 near Carver, was closed to access in 1997 as an ill-conceived quarry plan was pursued, the Madrone Wall provided a public benefit for decades as a recreational

treasure.

As the county sought a zoning variance, the grass-roots nonprofit Madrone Wall Preservation Committee incorporated and worked with local citizens. Studies determined it would be uneconomical to quarry the site. The county agreed and an environmental disaster of habitat destruction, noise, dust, traffic, and effluent discharge was narrowly averted.

The site is named for an uncommon stand of Pacific madrone and the only geologic feature of its kind in the northern Willamette Valley. A natural cliff face of 3 million-year-old Boring basalt soars over 100 feet.

The views of the Clackamas River, a National Wild and Scenic River, are stunning. A diverse and rare ecosystem includes over 100 plant species with old-growth Douglas fir and Western red cedar forests

and native wildflowers.

From wetlands at the cliff's nadir, a cool, clean, tributary stream emanates supporting threatened Clackamas River salmonid less than a half-mile away. A hiking trail system and rock climbing area were maintained by outdoor enthusiasts until the county closed access to the area.

In August, Commissioner Larry Sowa committed to members of the Madrone Wall Preservation Committee that he would direct county action that will decide the Madrone Wall's future soon. The site is within a mile of the urban growth boundary and this area is projected to grow 50 percent by 2015.

The county offers zero acres for parks in this area and the need for open space is increasing. Parks are a necessity reflecting community values, and the Madrone Wall

would make an outstanding park or open space close to half of Oregon's population.

Make no mistake, if not now protected, it will likely be sold for private quarrying or a development featuring trophy homes.

The Madrone Wall faces an irreversible demise and the time to act is now. The Clackamas County Board of Commissioners (www.co.clackamas.or.us/bcc/) needs to hear your support for preservation of this scarce and precious natural resource.

If the Madrone Wall is not preserved now, it is only a matter of time before it is gone forever.

Keith K. Daellenbach is director and secretary/treasurer of the Madrone Wall Preservation Committee, an Oregon-based, 501(c)(3) public charity organization. www.savemadrone.org

PLEASE CONTACT CLACKAMAS COUNTY NOW:
Clackamas County has committed to determining the future of the Madrone Wall soon. Please take a moment to write, email, or call the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners to express your views on the public benefit of preserving the Madrone Wall as a park or open space.

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Bill Kennemer
Commissioner Martha Schrader
Commissioner Larry Sowa
2051 Kaen Road
Oregon City, Oregon 97045
503/655-8581
www.co.clackamas.or.us/bcc/
bcc@co.clackamas.or.us