

Jacksonville Woodlands Association

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Jacksonville Woodlands Association
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Membership Renewed?

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JWA Board members Will Naumann and John Isaak

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The JWA Board would like to thank the JWA partners – City of Jacksonville, Bureau of Land Management – Southern Oregon Land Conservancy - whose active support and ongoing contributions play a vital role in the Jacksonville Woodlands success. And, thank you to the JWA membership and Jacksonville community for the generous financial contributions which provide the financial resources to sustain the Jacksonville Woodlands!

Fall 2011

Get Ready to Walk into History

It may be hard to imagine the peaceful woods where now we walk or jog reverberating with the roar of a water cannon blasting out the earth. The Jacksonville Woodlands Association hopes to bring that era back to life for visitors with the French Gulch Hydraulic Mining Interpretive Trail. Work has been ongoing for several years, and now the final step of installing interpretive displays and old mining equipment is set for completion by April.

By 1876, it had been over 20 years since gold had been discovered in what is now Jacksonville. The easy-pickings were long since gone. Members of two families that had emigrated from France were determined to make a living from their new land. With a Chinese work crew helping, the Petards and Lorraines dug a two-mile ditch from Jackson Creek by hand. They then used the water to power a water cannon that blasted out the clay earth. Sluice boxes captured the mud, and, it was hoped, the gold flakes that had been buried inside.

The two families worked the hydraulic mining operation for nearly 70 years – changing the landscape by creating a deep gulch. Mining stopped in 1943. Now nearly 70 years have passed, and the forest is recovering. Brush and trees are growing over the past. However, with funds recently donated by the Bob and Ruth Root estate, the memory of that past life is being preserved. *Continued on page 2*



Eagle Scout Caleb Rayburn, Jacksonville Troop #17, built a 135-foot long replica of the sluice box used by the Petards to capture gold. He had help from his troop, including Mason Sash (left) and Noah Simdorn (right).



Eagle Scout Christian “CJ” Mundell (left), Troop 102, began the historical display project three years ago. CJ and his scout troop constructed the French Gulch Loop trail that circles through the gulch. In this photo from 2008, CJ is joined by his troop leaders.

Walking into History *(Continued from page 1)*

Three years ago, Eagle Scout Christian Mundell and his crew of Boy Scouts constructed a circular trail through French Gulch, located at the center of a wider mining area known as Rich Gulch. This past summer, another Eagle Scout project added to the historical experience when Boy Scout Caleb Rayburn rebuilt August Petard's gold-capturing sluice box. His materials were paid for by donations from local businesses. Rayburn also installed a new trail display.

The display, designed by artist Don Thomas and funded by the BLM, shows the Petards busy with their hydraulic water cannon blasting away at the steep headwall of the gulch.

The next Eagle Scout project will be the installation of 1880's mining equipment, including a hydraulic water cannon similar to the one used by the Petards and Lorraines (photo at right). It's hoped it will be complete for the 2012 JWA Hike-a-thon on April 21st.

Visitors to the Woodlands now come in search of other treasure – a quiet meditative stroll, a chorus of bird songs, or a colorful display of wildflowers. However, thanks to generous contributions, the work of dedicated Boy Scouts, and a productive partnership with the BLM, we can now visualize those who came before us, seeking a reward of a different kind.



Blasting Out French Gulch



Auguste Petard III
Jacksonville's
Youngest Miner

I took the Lorraine brothers and the Petard family nearly 70 years (1876 - 1943) of digging, searching, and water blasting to form the deeply incised gulch where you are now standing. Year after year the expectant miners inched their way up from Oregon Street into French Gulch.

Water powered hydraulic mining required large quantities of water to move ever-larger amounts of earth and rocks. The Lorraines and the Petards, with the help of Chinese work crews, hand dug a nearly two mile water ditch to the west that connected with Jackson Creek. The mining ditch brought pressurized water to a series of graduated water pipes that directed the head of water down over the upper ledge to a small "gun" or "cannon". The force of the water spraying out of the brass nozzle was used to blast out thousands of cubic yards of soil and rocks that eventually ended up in Tully Creek.

The mining scene recreated in front of you by artist Don Thomas is set in 1943. Auguste Petard II is shown at the controls of his small water cannon blasting away at the headwall of the gulch. Daily sitting on a pile of rock rubble and observing his father at work is ten-year-old Auguste III. A Rich Gulch neighbor has arrived for the day to assist the Petards by pulling out and piling stones that have been washed into the sluice box.

At the end of the workday the mining team would scrape out the mud trapped behind the sluice cherts and pan out the few flakes of gold that had hopefully been collected. Mining stopped in French Gulch about 1943 after Auguste II went blind, the Petards lost their water rights, and their water ditch began to require extensive repair.

The Master Lode of Rich Gulch never did live up to its storied name. In their frantic quest for riches the early miners completely stripped off the tree and vegetative cover of Rich Gulch. In the ensuing 60 some years, since the abandonment of French Gulch as an active gold mine, native plant cover has struggled to return. The scarred earth has begun its healing. The shaded floor of the deep gulch allows access to sub-surface moisture. This moisture, along with the gulch's steep walls, has allowed a localized riparian zone to develop. Riparian-type plants are normally found only along creek banks, but inside this gulch, mining activity has directly altered the floor of a naturally dry hillside.

Continue on up to the top of the gulch and enjoy the rest of your hike.

Produced by the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, protecting the natural and cultural heritage of Historic Jacksonville since 1989.

The Methodist District of the First continues to partner with the JWA to fund educational and trail building projects in the Jacksonville Woodlands such as this display.

The preservation of French Gulch is a cooperative project of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the City of Jacksonville, the Jackson Oregon Land Conservancy, and the Jacksonville Woodlands Association. 02, Box 1178 Jacksonville, Oregon 97208

Artist Don Thomas designed this plaque to help visitors understand the hydraulic mining process the families used in their search for gold. The mining operation lasted from 1876 to 1943.

To Learn More

Take the hike
To hike to French Gulch, park in the lot behind Britt Park at the end of Fir Street. Hike south for one mile along the Rich Gulch Trail. The French Gulch trailhead is at the junction of the Petard, Rich Gulch, Chinese Diggings and Oregon Street trails.

View more photos
See more of Caleb's Eagle Scout project at <https://picasaweb.google.com/Lsmithtwin/JacksonvilleWoodlandsEagleScoutProjects>.

For more information
Call Larry Smith at 541-899-7402 or send an email to info@jvwoodlands.org.

Woodlands Walking Commute Clears the Mind

By Whit Parker, JWA board member and publisher of the Jacksonville Review



One of my favorite things about living in Jacksonville is being able to walk to and from work. Several great routes connect my home and office, including ones that take me through the Historic Cemetery property and the Jacksonville Woodlands Trail system. This morning, my dog, Annie, and I chose to take the Woodlands' Sarah Zigler trail to work. Five minutes after footing our way from our home up on Mary Ann Drive, we picked-up the trailhead near the intersection of Reservoir Road/Mary Ann Drive and Highway 238.

The Sarah Zigler Trail meanders for a mile or so along Jackson Creek, surrounding one in large pine trees and rich riparian vegetation with Jackson Creek providing the sound of running water. Today, chirping birds and active squirrels played everywhere in dappled sunlight. As we crossed the Jackson Creek foot bridge, Annie tugged at her leash in hopes I'd permit her to wade into the water. After a brief respite that included a quick dip and drink, my leashed friend and I were again heading east toward the sun. Fifteen

minutes later, we found ourselves at the western edge of the Britt grounds where the sounds of a summer time concert played in my head. Minutes later, we were strolling down California Street -- my thoughts on this column and Annie's on a bowl of water!

Before I knew it, I was behind my desk, pecking away at my keyboard, checking email, and doing other newspaper-related stuff. Today, like many others, I would be without an automobile - a major departure from my life back in Denver where I'd spend hours a day behind the wheel navigating jammed streets to and from my glass and steel office complex.

What a difference it is living in a walkable town. For the better part of a year now, walking has become "normal" in my world, something made much easier thanks to The Jacksonville Woodlands trail system. Indeed, we are very fortunate to have the Jacksonville Woodlands in our backyard – it's a tremendous asset for a town of any size, let alone one with less than 3000 people. The Woodlands system has more than 14 miles of well-marked and maintained trails within 320 acres of open space, protected by a conservation easement and public ownership that will protect it from development for generations to come.

The Woodland's story began in November, 1989, when a small group of concerned citizens including Phil Gahr, Ray Foster, Larry Smith and Joe Reyman formed the non-profit Jacksonville Woodlands Association (JWA). The mission: saving wooded hillside land from the developers. The JWA's first purchase was the Beekman Woods property for \$135,000. Since then, more than 300 additional acres have been added to the system, each of which includes interconnected trails with names like The Jackson Creek Trail, Petard Ditch Trail, The Chinese Diggings Trail, The Old Catholic Wagon Trail, The Britt Ridge/Woods Trails, The Sarah Zigler Trail, The Rich Gulch Trail, the new 1.5-mile Liz Braislin Trail and others.

Today, an active JWA Board of Directors and Executive Director Larry Smith continue the initial 1989 mission to add trails and provide one of the finest outdoor, non-motorized recreation venues areas in the nation. The Woodland's story and success enjoys the partnership and support by the City of Jacksonville, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy (SOLC) working together to develop and manage the Woodland's habitat and trail system. For in-depth information about the JWA, including online trail maps, check-out the website at www.jvwoodlands.org.

I hope to see everyone out on the trails in our Small Town with Big Atmosphere!

Hike-a-thon Success Relies on Support

by Charley Wilson, JWA President



As always, this year’s hike-a-thon relied heavily on volunteers. Jacksonville’s Heritage Society opened the Beekeman House. Arboretum designer Alan Horobin answered questions about the flowers and habitat. Executive Director Larry Smith continued his annual tradition of leading the hike and sharing his vast knowledge of local and natural history.

I want to also acknowledge JWA Board Members and local artist Ray Foster and Warren Straus who contributed special Beekman House ceramic logo mugs sold in support of the JWA. Ray Foster also designed the Peter Britt Home T-Shirt sold at the event. JWA Board Member Skip Stokes underwrote the Jacksonville Woodlands t-shirts allowing all proceeds to be used in support of the Jacksonville Woodlands.

The event also couldn’t have happened without the invaluable support of local businesses: **Good Bean Coffee Company** and **Jacksonville Chiropractic Clinic** which supplied the coffee, refreshments, and lunch.

On behalf of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the JWA Members and the Jacksonville community for your financial support to the JWA which provides the funds to develop and maintain the Jacksonville Woodlands Historic Natural Park and Trail system.

JWA Donations -- How Are They Used?

Donations to the Jacksonville Woodlands Association are key to the ongoing Jacksonville Woodlands development and maintenance activities. For many projects, donations are used as matching funds to Federal and State Grants and private non-profit funds which support acquisition and development of lands for public open space uses. For example, the JWA and the Trust for Public Lands secured a Recovery Land Acquisition Act grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service which provided funds for the Woods-Grove acquisition. The JWA provided \$5,000 towards the purchase of the Woods Property.

The following activities are illustrative of how donations and grants are used by the JWA:

Trails - Each year, the JWA contracts with a private contractor to weed whack 14 miles of Woodlands trails following the spring rains, usually in June when the grasses begin to dry. The \$2,500 cost is split between the City of Jacksonville and the JWA.

Conservation Easements - A conservation easement is a restriction placed on a piece of property to protect the resources (natural or man-made) associated with the parcel. The easement is either voluntarily sold or donated by the landowner, and constitutes a legally binding agreement that prohibits certain types of development from taking place on the land. At present, 128.5 acres are under a Conservation Easement held by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. The Woods-Grove Conservation Easement was secured by the JWA at a cost of \$8,000.

Fuel Reduction Program – In 2005, the JWA participated in a Wild land/Urban Interface around Jacksonville reducing the fire hazard on 1335 acres in and around Jacksonville. The work that the JWA completed was funded through four grants that the JWA received through the National Fire Plan totaling \$908,500. In addition, the JWA also partnered with over 90 private landowners and reduced the fire hazard on their properties..

Noxious Weeds - Scotch Broom, an introduced non-native plant classified as a noxious weed in Oregon, is being brought under control in the Woodlands and surrounding lands. JWA is also currently looking to control yellow Star Thistle within a few areas of the Woodlands and around the Jacksonville Pioneer Cemetery in partnership with the City of Jacksonville, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and adjacent private landowners.

Woodlands Information Materials: The JWA has installed throughout the Woodlands historical markers and panels telling the story of past historical uses by Jacksonville’s pioneer residents. The JWA produces trail brochures, Plants and Wildflowers brochures of the Woodlands, Plants of the Beekman Arboretum, and Interpretative trails brochures. Brochure boxes are located at the major Jacksonville Woodlands Trail Heads and the Visitor Information Center.



Ruth and Bob Root



Eugene Bennett




Liz Braislin

Estate-Giving Provides Living Legacy

The Jacksonville Woodlands Association, the Friends of the Jacksonville Library and the Jacksonville Garden Club were the recipients of generous donations from the estate of Bob & Ruth Root. Bob and Ruth Root were active in the establishment of the JWA with Bob serving on the JWA Board of Directors. A portion of the funds left to the JWA has been earmarked to purchase 1860’s-era mining equipment which will become a permanent educational display in the Rich Gulch section of the trail system

In addition, the JWA received \$5,000 from the estate of artist, Eugene Bennett. Gene was a big supporter of the Woodlands and donated every year.

In 2008, the JWA received \$10,000 from the Liz Braislin Estate which provided critical funding leading to the completion of “Liz’s Trail, a 2-mile Loop Trail connecting to the Petard Loop Trail. Liz’s Trail was completed and officially dedicated as part of the JWA 2009 Hike-a-thon event with John Braislin and family in attendance to cut the ribbon ceremony opening the trail. For more information or to further discuss planned gifts, please contact Larry Smith, JWA Executive Director at 541-899-740, or email at info@jvwoodlands.org.



Jacksonville Woodlands T-Shirts incorporating the historic Peter Britt Home designed by local artist Ray Foster are available for purchase at the following business sponsors:
The Good Bean Coffee Company
Willowcreek Gifts

Please Support the Jacksonville Woodlands Association with a Tax Deductible Donation
Please Mail Donations and make Checks Payable to:
Jacksonville Woodlands Association
P.O. Box 1210, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
 info@jvwoodlands.org

Woodlands Hosts Firehouse Run

Reprinted in part from the Jacksonville Review

On Saturday, July 16, a record number of runners hit the trails for the 10th Annual Britt Woods Firehouse Run. A hundred runners from across the state and western US took part – a record.

Founder and Race Director Dr. Doug Naversen of Jacksonville planned the event. The 5k and 10k races traversed several sections of the Upper Britt Woods – a beautiful section of hilly, tree-lined trails above the Britt music pavilion. The challenging course comprises part of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association’s 160+ miles of trails looping the southwestern reaches of Jacksonville.

This year, the event raised more than \$1000 for Jacksonville Fire Department Engine Company #1. This year’s top Jacksonville runner was event veteran Sarah Hyman (pictured left) who finished the 10k race as the 4th place overall finisher and 2nd place female with a time of 62:00.

The Britt Woods Firehouse Run is held every July in cooperation with the Southern Oregon Runners Association.



Hike-a-Thon 2011 Makes an Historical Connection

The morning was cool and cloudy. The forecast warned those fabled April showers were possible. However that didn't keep over 90 Woodlands' fans from turning out to celebrate at the 18th annual Hike-a-Thon. True to form, the rain held off. The first drops didn't start falling until just as the hikers returned to the luncheon under the tent.

This year's Hike-a-Thon, co-sponsored by the Jacksonville Chiropractic Clinic, the Jacksonville Heritage Society, and Cycle Analysis, offered something for everyone. For the walkers, JWA executive director Larry Smith led a narrated hike, providing information about the plant communities as well as the community of nature and history lovers who came together to preserve the 320 acres the trails pass through. There were few fritillaries opened yet, but numerous other wildflowers dotted the trail.

Sweet Visit Elaine Witteveen joined hikers on the trail dedicated to her husband.



Before the activities, the crowd gathered at Doc Griffin Park for the annual meeting and festivities. In discussing the progress the JWA and other local organizations have made in preserving local cultural, historical and natural areas, Smith noted they were grateful to an earlier group – the Siskiyou Pioneer Sites Foundation. He also noted that few people have heard of that group now, and that it is only with the continued support of dedicated JWA members that JWA will be able to sustain its role as caretaker of the Woodlands.



A New Old Design T-shirts this year were a slightly modified re-issue of the Britt House design. For the first time, the shirts and mugs were not included in the suggested donation, but were offered for sale separately. This allowed the suggested donation to be lowered to \$15, while still giving JWA a chance to recoup the cost of the t-shirts.



Custom-designed coffee mugs, with a design of the Beekman House on the front, sold quickly. The mugs were the creation of local artists and JWA board members Ray Foster and Warren Straus. Lunch was served by Jacksonville Chiropractic Clinic, Dr. Jason and Jackie Williams, and Cycle Analysis. Coffee was provided by long-time JWA supporter, The Good Bean Company.



Beekman House Visit The hike this year left from the historic Beekman House, where Carolyn Kingsnorth, president of the Jacksonville Heritage Society, and other docents from the Heritage Society were on hand to greet visitors and offer tours. The Heritage Society has taken on the care of the 1875 house, the former home of the Cornelius C. Beekman family. Beekman migrated to Jacksonville in 1852 from New York as a young carpenter. Here he worked as a gold freighter and a Wells Fargo agent. By 1863 he had founded Beekman Bank, the second bank in the Pacific Northwest. The Beekman family home, with the furnishings still intact, reflects life as it was for a well-to-do family in the early 1900's.

Future Wildflowers JWA board member Kate Williams set up a table where youngsters could get their hands dirty. They made mud balls that held wildflower seeds. To plant, the mud balls can be tossed into the garden.



Arboretum Tour Behind the house, walkers strolled through the three-acre Beekman Native Plant Arboretum, the creation of landscape designer Alan Horobin. Working with the Woodlands Association, Horobin has planted over 175 species of trees, shrubs and flowers from eight zones in Southern Oregon. Horobin was on hand at the Hike-a-Thon to answer questions and guide visitors to the beautiful just-opening white trillium that had been transplanted to the site.



Flower Creation A giant metal Fritillaria served as a backdrop for the gathering. The Mike Smith family loaned it to the Hike-a-Thon event, in the hopes of finding a permanent home for it somewhere in Jacksonville. The family has a metal sculpture studio in Central Point.