

Scout works to spruce up park

JUSTIN MUCH Statesman Journal

February 20, 2008

When spring weather brings more visitors to Mountain Fir Park in Independence, Phillip Beardsley's work will be noticed.

Last fall Beardsley of Monmouth was searching for a community project that would help him achieve Eagle Scout honors. Luckiamute Watershed Council Water Project Manager Michael Cairns was happy to oblige.

With a touch of guidance and a ton of toil, the park's bordering South Ash Creek bed will enter spring with a fresh look, including informative signs that Beardsley designed, constructed and erected to lend visitors an education about the riparian area, wildlife and newly installed native plants.

"Michael explained it was part of a large restoration project of the South Fork of Ash Creek," Beardsley said. "My job was to write and design five interpretive signs to be placed in Mountain Fir Park, which sits on the bank of south fork in Independence."

Beardsley said he had a \$750 budget to pay for materials. Working under Cairns' guidelines, he created numerous drafts on his computer.

"Michael had told me he wanted the main focus of the signs to be on the wildlife in the creek and the surrounding park, as well as the native trees and plants which had recently been planted in the area," Beardsley said. "I designed an entrance sign, a sign detailing the history of the park site, and three informative signs about local fish, wildlife and plant life, respectively, leaving \$350 for other materials. I managed to get those materials donated by Weyerhaeuser in Dallas."

With spring approaching, the adorning signs welcome visitors and highlight strides of recent years made in the once eyesore-saddled park grounds. Church groups and volunteers have planted 3,500 native trees and shrubs of 12 species at the park, and the council has removed the decades-old lumber mill dam.

"This Luckiamute Watershed Council project is truly a win-win situation," Cairns said. "The dam removal and riparian enhancement will be a plus for native fish and wildlife populations. The park is located between a residential area and an industrial zone, so it will be a great asset to the neighborhood."

Beardsley was able to install bird houses for nesting, and the troops contributed weeding and clearing of creek. A total of 268 hours were spent on the project.

jmuch@StatesmanJournal.com or (503) 399-6736

Mountain Fir Park

History: Located on F Street between south Seventh and Ninth streets, it was deeded to the city in the early 1990s and recently bolstered by ongoing collective efforts from a variety of groups, including volunteers from Monmouth Christian Church. It's the largest park in south Independence.

Information: (503) 838-1212 or go to www.ci.independence.or.us