

NEWS



Contact:

Bob Wayt
503/614-1218 (direct)
503/686-5134 (cell)

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NEW WESTSIDE TRAIL SEGMENTS NOW OPEN; CONTINUOUS PATH STRETCHES SIX MILES

The Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District has completed a long-awaited Westside Regional Trail expansion project, adding 1.5 miles of hard-surface trail that is now open to the public.

The year-long expansion, funded by THPRD's 2008 voter-approved bond measure, means users now have six mostly continuous miles of regional trail in the southern half of the Park District. The path extends north from Tigard city limits at Barrows Road all the way to the Tualatin Hills Nature Park and the MAX light-rail station at Merlo Road in Beaverton.



The bond-funded project filled in gaps that existed in the Westside Trail within the southern half of THPRD. One segment over Mt. Williams offers expansive views of Beaverton and beyond.

“It opens up a lot of recreational opportunities,” said THPRD project manager Gery Keck. “It connects Progress Lake and the Tualatin Hills Nature Park – two of our jewels – and provides a nice continuous stretch of trail for people who want to exercise, walk the dog, or enjoy a non-motorized commute.”

The \$4.1 million project entailed the completion of three trail segments that were previously unfinished because of construction challenges, including the need to protect sensitive wetlands. One new segment, over Mt. Williams, was particularly imposing because of steep inclines, trees and a gas line that required some ingenuity to work around. The result is a 40-foot bridge that briefly pulls the trail off the hillside.

“You see this bridge, with grass underneath it, and it’s barely off the ground. It looks like a bridge over nothing,” Keck said, “but it makes more sense if you know why it’s there.”

Completion of the project represents another milestone in THPRD’s efforts to create a mostly continuous 10-mile north-south backbone running through the district from Barrows Road to the PCC Rock Creek Campus in Bethany. The backbone is scheduled to be done in January 2016, after completion of a segment of the Waterhouse Trail and a segment connecting the Waterhouse Trail to the Westside Trail.

Meantime, the recently completed trail segments should delight users.

“People have been wanting on the trail since we started digging,” Keck said. “I’ve been out there every week for more than a year and every time I’m out, people ask when it will open or stop to say thank you.”

Formed in 1955, THPRD is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning about 50 square miles and serving 230,000 residents in the greater Beaverton area. The district provides year-round recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Offerings include thousands of widely diverse classes, 90 park sites with active recreational amenities, 60 miles of trails, eight swim centers, six recreation centers, and 1,400 acres of natural areas. For more information, visit www.thprd.org or call 503/645-6433.

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