

TRAIL MAINTENANCE (Jan. 2012 update)

Most of the seven miles of hiking trails and four miles of equestrian trails in the Park were completed within a few years of creation of the Park in 1971, with most work done by volunteers. The Friends sponsored "Trail Days" on a weekend in April of 1973. Friends' Board member Jean Siddall flagged trails and recruited leaders to supervise this major trail-building effort. Several miles of trail were cleared and graded, including the current loops near the Nature Center.

So they could withstand the wear of horses' hooves, the equestrian trails were surfaced with gravel early. In contrast the loop trails around the Nature Center were originally surfaced with wood chips donated by PGE. Replenishing the chips continued for years, until the decomposing chips became ankle-deep compost. To solve the problem, in the mid-1990s the Friends, with Park support, decided to scrape off the ooze and gravel the hiking trails. This effort was accomplished by once-a-month volunteer work parties, supported by gravel deliveries to accessible sites by Park staff. The trails where small vehicles could go were covered fairly quickly but Cedar and Lewis & Clark trails took about two years each, as the gravel could only be transported along them by wheelbarrow, with some hauls approaching a quarter mile.

Trail maintenance since then has continued to be primarily a volunteer operation, much of it by fourth Saturday work parties. A significant exception has been the occasional relocation of trail segments to skirt slides, which has often been led by Park staff. The latter have also typically led efforts to stabilize some small slides at trail edges.

Some trails have been completely rebuilt in recent years following substantial disturbance of them by crews protecting the Portland BES sewer line that follows the Creek. These segments are Iron Mtn. Trail E of the Creek, the S leg of N Horse Loop, the E leg and part of the N leg of W Horse Loop and Boones Ferry Horse Trail.

Volunteer-led trail maintenance efforts are ongoing through the wet season and have several elements:

- Scraping leafy debris and mud off trails down to the original gravel base. This is primarily done in autumn after the maple leaves have fallen. Starting in 2009 this became a progressively more comprehensive element. Multnomah County alternative community service crews covered the horse loops, some loop trails around the Nature Center and a few west-side trails, while volunteers handled many others.
- Spreading fresh, usually thin layers of gravel on trail segments that have become soggy. This has been ongoing for years since the original gravel surface was formed. By the very wet rainy season of 2010-2011, both Cedar and Lewis & Clark trails needed a fresh layer of gravel on many sections. A significant part of

the latter was graveled in 2011 and gravel piles were pre-positioned by Park staff in the summer of 2011 to facilitate 2012 work.

- Adding deeper layers of gravel mixed with dirt to spots that are ponding during rainstorms, to elevate them.
- Widening trail segments that have been narrowed by slow erosion from their uphill sides.
- Cleaning out and occasionally replacing culverts and adding new ones.
- Restoring or adding ditches beside and across trails, to keep water off them. On some trails, most notably the N Horse Loop, keeping ditches open is a constant battle during the wet months. Both leaf fall and siltation contribute to the problem.