

# Friendly Chat

What's Happening at Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park

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## New Neighbors

### Part 1

It is said that a turkey is so stupid that if it looks up into a rainy sky and its beak drops open, it will drown.

Maybe so, but the wild Rio Grande turkeys that moved into the ranch house area at Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park a few months ago are smart enough to be a headache for park host Dennis Egenhoff.

One of his responsibilities is to feed 25 or 30 peacocks that meander the vicinity (now called the Day Use Area). What could be more rib-tickling if you're a peacock than dried peas, corn mixed with the peas, scratch (wheat and corn), or duck pellets? Egenhoff dispenses about five pounds daily in feedings around 8 a.m. and 3 in the afternoon.

Alas, the turkeys discovered what was going on.

"Once they find a food source, you can hardly get rid of them," Egenhoff says of the birds, introduced into Douglas County in the 1970s. When he became park host last October, there were five tom turkeys in the ranch house area.

"Then a flock of about 20 moved in right behind that one—the word got around that there was food at the house—and they've become more aggressive feeders. They have taken over around the house. Now that it's getting close to spring mating season, the turkeys are attacking the peacocks."

Feeding the peacocks without feeding the turkeys is tricky. Egenhoff will selectively broadcast handfuls of feed according to how the birds are momentarily grouped or moving. He also uses deception, which our camera caught (right), whenever he can.

But he thinks the only lasting solution is to round up the turkeys and relocate them. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has successfully used two techniques in Douglas County for the last couple of decades. Both employ a net dropped over the birds. In one, the net is propelled into the air by small rockets. In the other, the net is dropped from the tops of poles arranged

much as they are in holding up a circus tent. Not many years ago, 30 or 40 turkeys were removed by netting them, Egenhoff has heard.

"We're in desperate need of that again."

*Fish and Wildlife arrives at the trouble spot in part 2 of this story, coming to your in-box soon.*



*Fancy footwork by Dennis and a few handfuls of feed sometimes distract the turkeys...*

*...so the peacocks can get a beak in.*



## Welcome – Free to Visit All Year



- 14 miles of multi-use trails, open year-round
- Historic farmstead and school
- Picnic ground
- Campground (March 15-October 15)

**Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park, Oakland, Oregon**

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