

Comments to PAB 9/15/16  
by Landa Baily

Friends board, members, contributors and supporters comprise business owners, elected officials, civic groups and individuals from myriad backgrounds and political persuasions who believe Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park is more valuable in its present form. We are not a group of extreme environmentalists.

We are here because of the county's financial mismanagement of Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park. (MKMP).

In mid-June 2016, Susan Morgan demanded OET and Friends of Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park Association, Inc. (FMK) pay the county \$16,000 in shortfalls and \$10,000 in unauthorized spending, or the county would close, sell or log MKMP, and said that frankly logging was on the table.

FMK and the county have an agreement that 1. allows the county to log to meet park expenses only after the county reasonably considers and pursues other options. 2. requires the county to give due consideration to the intent and spirit set forth in Mildred Kanipe's Will, and 3. requires the county to partner with all other interested stakeholders in applying for grants and exploring other funding sources for ongoing maintenance, capital improvements and major projects, and to partner with MKMP stakeholders to establish a Master Plan for MKMP. (See Agreement at [www.mildredkanipepark.org](http://www.mildredkanipepark.org) ).

That agreement required FMK to raise \$65,000 for the campground construction, which FMK did. While fund raising, business owners, individuals and civic groups contributed generously, and business people agreed: "The county has mismanaged MKP for over 30 years, so let's comply with the terms of the Agreement between Friends and the County, and let's use the county's proposed campground project, and the county's proposed budgets to properly manage the park." The public consensus is that the park and its trees are a critical component of economic diversification and business development.

The county created a budget **income of \$42,600 and expenses of \$36,600 if the campground was constructed. Friends and contributors relied on those figures.** See attached.

The 8/2/12 General Judgment states the county yearly management and operation costs are \$22,000.

Personal services (wages and benefits) for MKMP have increased from \$16,417 in 2013 to \$48,849 in fy 16-17. See county budgets at [www.co.douglas.or.us/finance/documents/2017/FY16-17GENParks.pdf](http://www.co.douglas.or.us/finance/documents/2017/FY16-17GENParks.pdf)

In June 2014, the county represented that parking fee boxes were installed at MKMP. They were not functional until August 2014, and could not collect fees until sometime around April 2015; the county realized they needed to pass an ordinance before they could even collect parking fees.

The campground opened in July, 2015, closed in November 2015, and reopened in March, 2016. The barely six months of operation in fy 15-16 provided a limited revenue stream compounding the county's budget increases and unauthorized spending of public funds.

Logging for operations and maintenance is not consistent with the spirit and intent of Mildred's Will. See Aitken letter. See also the Agreement between Friends and Douglas County.

The county has failed to in good faith apply for grants and administer them:

FMK wrote a STEP (Stewards for Trails, Education and Partnerships) grant in August 2015 and agreed to fund the match requirement. **The county as landowner refused to even approve the grant's submission.**

FMK helped the county obtain a Certified Local Government grant totaling \$11,600 in April 2015, with \$7,500 for an assessment of Mildred Kanipe's Home. Friends and Restore Oregon matched this grant with \$7,500. After a full year of prodding the county, the county finally approved the contract **less than four weeks before the grant expired.**

The county did lose a large grant in 2012: The county applied for a grant of \$60,000 to clear hawthorne at the Park. See page 2, [www.co.douglas.or.us/parks/minutes/2012-08-12\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.co.douglas.or.us/parks/minutes/2012-08-12_Minutes.pdf)

The grant was awarded in the amount of \$79,000. See page 1, [www.co.douglas.or.us/parks/minutes/2012-10-12\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.co.douglas.or.us/parks/minutes/2012-10-12_Minutes.pdf)

There is no record the grant was ever administered.

Although the county did submit an RTP (Recreational Trails Program) grant in 2015, the grant was denied because it was "not trail building related." See [www.co.douglas.or.us/parks/minutes/2016-05-27\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.co.douglas.or.us/parks/minutes/2016-05-27_Minutes.pdf).

It is time to actively and in good faith, research alternative funding options, decrease costs, and market the park to increase revenues, and begin working with MKMP stakeholders to develop a Master Plan for MKMP.

There are reasonable ways to solve the county's budget issue as outlined in FMK written comments.

You have seen the powerful and untiring efforts of our community to partner with you. We come from many walks of life, have many and sometimes conflicting political and philosophical beliefs. We are able to put those differences aside, because we all love our parks and we all believe their natural states as parks benefit our economic diversity in Douglas County.

Logging the park is not a wise solution to the county's outright financial mismanagement.

Please do not adopt this agenda item; instead, please begin partnering with all stakeholders as required by the terms of the Agreement between FMK and the county. Thank you.