

By Matt Miller
APRC Commissioner
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A Little-Known Commission Doing Big-Time Work

The Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission has commissioner liaisons within various City Commissions. I am fortunate to be the liaison to the Ashland Forest Lands Commission, a group of citizens who have provided expert direction for the management of City forestlands since 1992. This commission is comprised of seven members appointed by the mayor, many with professional resource credentials and technical savvy. These citizens volunteer their time and expertise toward improving the forest and ecosystem health of the 1,131 acres of undeveloped City-owned forestlands. The Commissioners work with the City consulting forester, City staff from Ashland Fire and Rescue, the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, and City GIS and engineering staff. Their stewardship has guided reduction of wildfire threat to our forestlands, homes, city buildings and infrastructure, and the municipal water supply that flows off these forestlands.

The Ashland Forest Lands Commission recently completed a monumental multi-year project that updated and overhauled the original 1992 Ashland Forest Plan, which has provided forest and resource management guidance to City staff for the last 25 years. The importance and significance of this project cannot be overstated, and its completion required thousands of hours of volunteer work. The 2016 Ashland Forest Plan is an extensive and impressive collection of scientifically-supported best practices and recommendations designed to manage our lands, water, and buildings to reduce wildfire threat and enhance wildlife and ecosystem health. The new Plan addresses a changing climate and includes a modern GIS mapping database. The 2016 Ashland Forest Plan is available on the City's website at www.ashland.or.us/forestplan or in hard copy form at the Ashland Public Library.

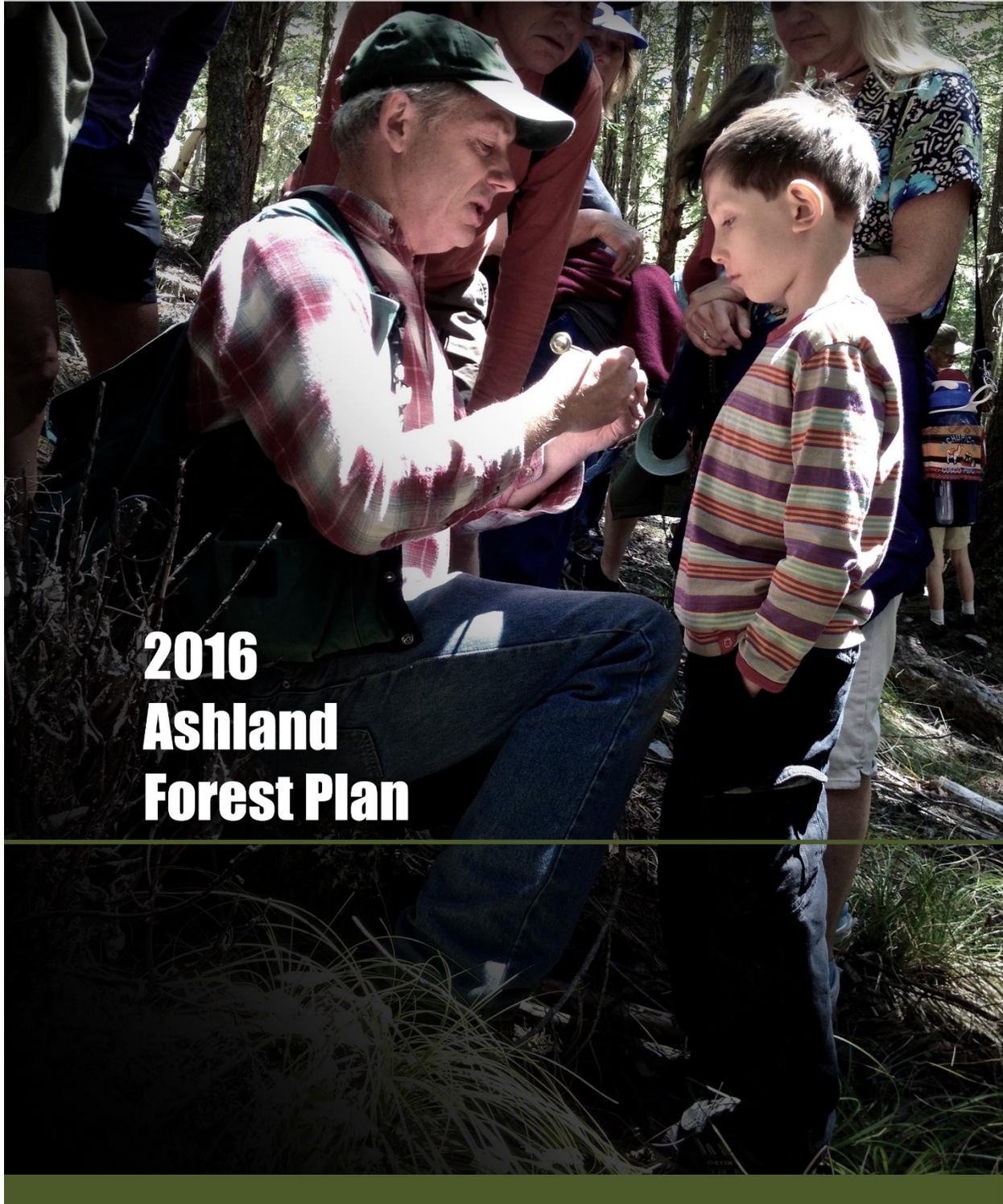
Previously administered by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, 172 acres of City land will now be under the guidance umbrella of the Ashland Forest Lands Commission's 2016 Ashland Forest Plan. This acreage is newly designated into nine parcels that include Hald-Strawberry Park and Ashland Ponds.

The Ashland Forest Lands Commission has also provided support for the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project. Launched in 2009 after considerable community and City input, this effort is a multimillion-dollar forest restoration project being conducted in the Ashland Watershed. It represents a stewardship agreement between the US Forest Service, the City of Ashland, The Nature Conservancy and Lomakatsi Restoration Project. Significant work in fuels reduction, thinning, and controlled burning has been accomplished and continues today on over 7,600 acres of Ashland Watershed forestlands.

In addition to overseeing and guiding the management of the Ashland Watershed and City forestlands, the Ashland Forest Lands Commission works with other organizations and commissions to implement safe and sustainable trail systems, minimize fire risk within the City itself, develop community volunteer programs, and educate the public on the values and responsibilities of our forestland health and sustainability. We are fortunate to have such an impressive and dedicated group of citizens looking after our forestlands and watershed.



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**2016
Ashland
Forest Plan**

Photo Courtesy Stefani Seffinger, City of Ashland Councilor