

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

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February 26, 2018

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Grants and Community Programs Division
725 Summer St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear OPRD Grant Committee:

My name is Mike Gardiner and I serve as the chair of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. I'm writing in support of the grant application by Nature Center Manager Elizabeth VanWyhe for financial assistance in building a Nature Play area at North Mountain Park located at 620 N. Mountain Avenue in Ashland, OR.

The Nature Center and surrounding park sit on 27.56 acres in a much-beloved section of the city that is surrounded by neighborhoods. The land includes a Nature Center and well-groomed baseball, softball and soccer fields as well as natural areas. The park is located adjacent to Bear Creek and close to the Bear Creek Greenway, a well-used pathway for pedestrians and cyclists. North Mountain Park is one of 17 developed parks in the City of Ashland.

The Nature Center provides environmental education opportunities for students ages 5-18 throughout the Rogue Valley. It is a unique, non-duplicated service that's highly valued in the region. In addition, the Nature Center offers many low-cost community classes about the natural world and volunteer opportunities for those of all ages. The Nature Center Manager is currently working on providing a "Nature Play" area for the community, a unique amenity for the city. The Nature Play area will provide children with opportunities to learn about their natural environment through hands-on play.

Ashland Parks and Recreation in Ashland, Oregon, has enjoyed a long and proud history of service to its citizens and visitors. The organization, founded in 1908, receives support in the form of a tax millage rate of \$2.09 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. In Ashland we recognize that our parks provide a critical service to our community. We understand that as a tourist town, we are judged by the quality and quantity of our parks. We also realize that our parks are a direct reflection of who we are and how we value our quality of life. A Nature Play area at North Mountain Park will demonstrate those values to citizens and visitors alike.

Please support the development of a Nature Play area for North Mountain Park.

Sincerely,

Mike Gardiner

Mike Gardiner, Chair
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission