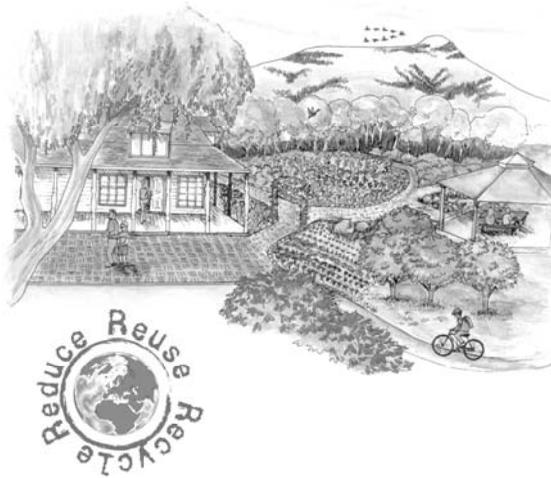


Green Living Guide North Mountain Park



Take our self-guided tour

North Mountain Park
Nature Center

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January 2010

Getting Started

Are you looking for ways to become more “green”?

Use this brochure on a self-guided tour of North Mountain Park to get some great ideas! The Nature Center is looking to inform and inspire people about things they can do to be more green with examples demonstrated on-site at North Mountain Park Nature Center and its surrounding grounds. This brochure can also be downloaded from the Nature Center’s website.

Outside the Nature Center

 **TREX decking** : The Nature Center’s porch was constructed using a composite product manufactured by TREX. This decking is made from recycled plastic and reclaimed waste wood and contains no toxic chemicals or preservatives. This unique combination makes for a product that is resistant to moisture, insects and sunlight and therefore much more durable than wood surfaces. TREX has recently expanded their product line to include fencing, railing and trim.

 **Energy-efficient windows**: Double-pane windows are ideal in the winter months for reducing heat loss. Windows manufactured with a low-emissivity coating allow outside light to enter, but prevent heat from escaping by reflecting infrared heat radiation back into the house. Covered porches, awnings, window blinds and arbors are effective in keeping the house cool in summer by shading windows.

 **Reduce outdoor electric lighting**: Installed near the roofline of the Nature Center, motion sensors activate outdoor security lighting designed to save energy

and reduce light pollution. You can easily install these at home and/or place earth-friendly solar lights around your yard.

 **Irrigate using weather data**: Visible on the roof of the Nature Center is a weather station that feeds data to a computer in our lab room. You can view the weather information displayed on this computer or access the same information on the North Mountain Park website to avoid overwatering your yard. One especially helpful tool is the current, local ET or Evapotranspiration rate. On the park’s website, click on the “Online Weather Station” tab, go to “Current Conditions” and check “Today’s Evaporation.” The amount of water your garden requires should equal the ET value.

 **Bicycling**: North Mountain Park encourages its employees and volunteers to commute by bicycle when they can. The Nature Center has a covered bike rack located in the parking lot. The next time you reach for the car keys, try walking or riding your bike instead. Consider the advantages: you won’t negatively impact the local air quality or contribute to greenhouse gases, you can breathe fresh air and explore some of the wonderful trails that the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department has developed; you won’t need to find parking; you’ll enjoy the exercise, and you’ll stay fit.

 **Bioswale**: Asphalt, roads, and parking lots are often covered with a layer of motor oil and other chemicals. When it rains, the runoff carries these pollutants downstream to wetlands and waterways. Man-made bioswales can catch this water so that plant communities can slowly filter the water before it reaches a nearby creek. The bioswales at North Mountain Park help improve the water quality in Beach and Bear Creeks.

 **Compost**: Recycle your garden wastes and improve your garden soil at the same

time! Creating a bin or pile of leaves, grass clippings, kitchen scraps and other yard debris will break down in a few weeks, thanks in part to the hard work of beneficial insects. By using compost as a soil enhancer, you can reap the many benefits of growing your own food. As a mulch, compost suppresses weeds, keeps soil moist, and maintains a cool temperature for plant roots in the summer and a warm temperature in the winter while also preventing soil erosion or compaction. Pick up a “Composting Tips” brochure at the Nature Center.

 **Sustainable gardening**: North Mountain Park Nature Center uses organic gardening methods in the maintenance of the Demonstration Gardens. Instead of using chemical herbicides or pesticides to control garden weeds and pests, environmentally safe methods are used, such as manual weeding and natural insect repellents. Compost and organic amendments are used, and organic mulch is applied to garden beds as an effective way to control weeds and conserve water. Landscaping with drought-tolerant native plants also conserves water.

 **Rain catchment barrel**: Rain barrels are designed to collect and store rainwater for future use. The barrels are placed under roof gutter downspouts, and the overflow can be reconnected to the downspout or connected to additional rain barrels. The single rain barrel next to the Nature Center’s greenhouse can collect about 55 gallons of water. Rain barrel water can be used anywhere non-potable water is needed — water your lawns and gardens, wash cars and dogs, or fill children’s swimming pools.

 **Solar panels**: The solar panels on the pavilion are used to generate electricity which, when not used by the Nature Center, is cycled back into the power grid. Beyond the initial costs, solar power systems generally require few recurring expenses and allow for substantial savings on electricity costs. Solar energy is both clean and renewable, requires no fossil fuels and releases no harmful emissions into the atmosphere.

At North Mountain Park Events

 **“Zero-waste” events:** When planning events, our goal is to strive for “Zero Waste.” All eatware used at our events is reusable or compostable. By reducing the trash we generate, we can help create a healthier environment.

Resources for More Information

To irrigate using weather data: visit our web-site www.NorthMountainPark.org for local weather data.

For organic compost or green-bin service: www.RecologyAshlandSanitaryService.com

To design your own rain catchment barrel: Visit www.portlandonline.com/bes. Under “library” select Stormwater Solutions, then Rain Barrels.

To explore the benefits of solar energy: Helpful information is available at www.oregon.gov/energy. Click on Quick Picks and select Solar Information. Or, contact the City of Ashland Conservation Division www.ashland.or.us

To organize your own zero-waste event: Order compostable eatware products available at www.worldcentric.org

To learn more about recycling: Visit Recology at www.RecologyAshlandSanitaryService.com for specifics on what’s accepted in curbside recycling bins. For a current list of vendors and services accepting recycled items you can check the Jackson County Recycling Directory at www.RogueSMART.org

To research Energy Star appliances: Visit www.energystar.gov

To make earth-friendly cleaning products: Purchase recipe cards in the Nature Center.

Inside the Nature Center

 **VOC-Free Paints:** Many paint products contain high levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) including a variety of chemicals that are known air pollutants with negative health consequences. By using VOC-free paints you can minimize outdoor pollution and improve indoor air quality.

 **Thermostat settings:** In summer, air conditioners should be kept at 78 degrees or higher. Every degree the thermostat is raised above 75 degrees will save about five percent on your air conditioning bill and conserve energy. In winter, setting the thermostat between 65 degrees and 68 degrees will save a substantial amount of energy. Consider turning off the air conditioner and lowering heat settings when buildings are unoccupied.

 **Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs:** Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs) with an Energy Star rating use 75% less energy than comparable standard incandescent bulbs. CFLs also last up to ten times longer than incandescent bulbs. Although initially more expensive, CFLs will make up the difference in electric bill savings within 500 hours. *Because fluorescent light bulbs contain mercury they should be recycled. Ashland’s residential customers can recycle theirs at the Ashland Recycling Center.*

 **Ceiling fans and passive cooling:** Ceiling fans help to circulate air throughout the house and increase efficiency of heating and cooling systems. In summer, open doors and windows to flush air when outdoor temperatures are lower than indoors, then close up again to maintain desired temperatures.

 **Recycle printer cartridges & electronics:** These items can be safely recycled for reuse as well as many computer electronics, appliances and cell phones. (See resource list.)

In the Nature Center’s Kitchen

 **Buy local and organic groceries:** The Rogue Valley is home to many family-owned organic farms. Buying produce from them supports local agriculture, helps save farmland, saves on transportation and maintains a sustainable community. Local organic food is also fresher, healthier, less expensive and grown in ways that are better for the environment. It’s tastier, too, when it’s enjoyed “in-season.”

 **Brew “green” coffee:** Look for labels that indicate your coffee is shade-grown, fair-trade and organic. Shade grown coffee fields provide homes for many species of birds and butterflies. Shade trees also filter carbon dioxide and help to retain soil moisture to minimize land erosion. Eliminating clear-cutting keeps adjacent forests intact for birds and other wildlife. In addition to protecting the environment through organic gardening methods, coffee bearing these labels ensures that a fair portion of the profits is returned to the local coffee producers.

 **Recycle food and beverage containers:** Recycling glass, plastic and paper products is easy and convenient. Ashland Sanitary and Recycling Service offers curbside pickup and allows you to commingle most recyclables into one bin. Reduce your recycling further by reusing containers when possible.

 **Decrease paper and packaging:** Using cloth bags at the grocery store and a reusable mug for “on-the-go” beverages reduces the use of paper products. Purchasing snacks in bulk minimizes the consumption of excess packaging. Using cloth napkins and towels eliminates “one-use” applications of paper. For toilet and printer paper, use products with a high content of recycled material. Save office paper by using e-mail for mass mailings and by making double-sided copies.

 **Energy Star appliances:** ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy to save money and protect the environment. Energy-efficient choices can save families up to one-third on their energy bill with similar savings of greenhouse gas emissions without sacrificing features, style or comfort. Look for the ENERGY STAR label when shopping for appliances.

In the Nature Center’s Bathrooms

 **Xcelerator hand dryers:** The XLERATOR hand dryer dries hands in 10 - 15 seconds, uses 80% less energy than other hand dryers and represents a 95% cost savings versus paper towels. It also saves trees and does not create solid waste. And it’s fun!

 **High-efficiency toilets:** Replace old water-wasting toilets with new high-efficiency toilets. Modern high-efficiency toilets use no more than 1.28 gallons of water per flush. Rebates are available to replace older toilets. While you’re “greening” your bathroom, you can also install low flow showerheads to conserve water. The City of Ashland will install free showerheads in your home as part of their water audit program. Short showers are also water savers.

 **Earth-friendly cleaning products:** Synthetic cleaners are linked to many environmental and human health problems. Earth-friendly cleaning products are available at most grocery stores and offer a viable alternative to petroleum-based cleaners. There are numerous companies that market earth-friendly cleaning products. Look for those that are non-toxic and biodegradable. Or make your own by using the easy recipes available at North Mountain Park Nature Center. These select recipes cut cleaning costs, utilize many of the same simple base ingredients, and can be assembled in minutes!