

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

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Leslie Eldridge
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STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners

FROM: Interim Director Eldridge

DATE: Nov 8, 2023

SUBJECT: Salmon Safe System-Wide Certification for APRC (Action)
(Goal #5 Develop an environmental sustainability and implementation plan)

Situation

APRC has the opportunity to achieve system-wide Salmon Safe Certification through a Pacific Northwest region peer-reviewed certification program.

Background

In the Spring/Summer of 2023, APRC partnered with Southern Oregon University (SOU) to evaluate options for enhanced environmental stewardship on the East Main Park project. Lulu Brazeau, a recent SOU graduate from the Environmental Science, Policy and Sustainability Department was hired by SOU's Institute for Applied Sustainability to work as a paid Intern for Terrain Landscape Architecture. Terrain is the firm contracted by APRC for the design of East Main Park.

On Oct 11, 2023, Lulu Brazeau presented the results of her research on Salmon Safe. At the November 1, 2023 Study Session, Dan Kent, the co-founder and Executive Director of Salmon Safe will provide more information about the certification background and process.

Assessment

Through consultation with Terrain, SOU's Institute for Applied Sustainability and APRC, it was determined that the system-wide Salmon Safe Certification was appropriate to our region, scientifically rigorous and achievable by APRC. Subsequent meetings with Salmon Safe staff and review of certification requirements reinforced these findings. Certification provides the following benefits to Ashland and APRC:

- Recognition for existing environmental practices.
- Rigorous science-based site development and land management practices to inform future APRC projects and goals.
- Increased focus on water quality and protection of sensitive aquatic and upland resources.

- Reflects the culture and values of the region- complements the imminent Klamath Dams removal project.
- Honors a critical resource of the indigenous peoples of our region.
- Promotes Ashland as a legitimate eco-tourism destination, where environmental stewardship and science-based management is prioritized.
- Provides leverage for acquiring grant funding for restoration or other projects.
- Initiates a long-desired mutually beneficial collaboration between SOU students/faculty with municipal government.

SOU has agreed to share the cost of certification (~20K) with a 10K cost match. Additionally, SOU will provide scientific support in the form of paid interns, capstone projects and faculty engagement.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Parks Commission approve APRC to pursue a system-wide Salmon Safe Certification.

Possible Motion:

I move to approve APRC to pursue a system-wide Salmon Safe Certification.



3 November 2023

1195 E Main St
Ashland, OR 97520

Dear Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission,

The Institute for Applied Sustainability at Southern Oregon University has a vested interest in supporting the Salmon Safe park system certification for Ashland Parks. While Ashland's park operations are taking our local environmental issues into consideration, many of the current protocols need to be updated as scientific understanding evolves. We feel that this certification would provide a holistic approach to sustainability in park management and ensure operations within each of Ashland's parks is universal. Targeting the entire park system will make a greater impact in protecting our freshwater resources as well as honor the APRC goal of developing an Environmental Sustainability and Implementation Plan.

This certification aligns with the Institute's values, as we are committed to supporting sustainable development and land practices, not just on campus, but on a larger scale. Our contribution would help bolster our mission to drive change towards a more sustainable future as these parks could become a demonstrative model that serves to inform sustainable park development for communities beyond our own.

If APRC decides to pursue this certification, we have offered to cover half of the initial certification costs up to \$10,000. In addition, we would be willing to extend staff and student support where necessary to foster collaboration between our two organizations and help ensure project success. We hope that our support for this certification is considered during the voting process.

Sincerely,

Vincent Smith

Vincent Smith, PhD

Director, School of Science and Business
Director, Institute for Applied Sustainability
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