



City of Coeur d'Alene Parks Department



2012

Natural Open Space Management Plan



Introduction

Site Description

Veterans' Centennial Park is a 16-acre parcel owned by the Coeur d'Alene Parks Foundation and managed by the City of Coeur d'Alene as a passive-use public park. The site was originally homesteaded in 1885 by Harry Seagraves. The Seagraves family lived and farmed on the site until 1997 when Emma VanLaken, Harry Seagraves daughter, donated the remaining sixteen acres of the family's homestead to the City of Coeur d'Alene. A condition of this generous donation specified that the property was to be named Veterans' Centennial Park in honor of Emma VanLaken's late husband and all other veterans while also celebrating the State of Idaho's Centennial. A second condition of the donation was that the park only be used for passive recreation, specifically, no ball fields or field lighting are to be installed on the property. Veterans' Centennial Park is located off of Fernan Hill Road next to the Fernan Hill Estates subdivision in an area of light-density residential development. The property is accessed through a dedicated easement from Fernan Hill Road and from the west end of Balcony Drive in Fernan Hill Estates. The northern property line of the site is approximately 300 feet south of French Gulch Road. The site is divided into two almost-equal parts. The southern half is an open field with scattered ponderosa pines and the northern half is a heavily-wooded, mixed coniferous forest.

Goals

Any facility at this should ideally be accessible to everyone and developed with fully-accessible facilities. The open area of this site could be developed as a native tree arboretum, possibly with a street tree display. Many other possible improvements and amenities in this park may be necessary to support this arboretum. The woodland section of Veterans' Centennial Park should be maintained as a diverse, uneven-aged, open-canopy, mixed coniferous forest with public access through trails. This facility needs to be connected to the greater community and be accessible to the public.

Access and Connectivity

Existing Site Access, Trails, and Service Roads

Current access to Veterans' Centennial Park is through an easement off of Fernan Hill Road. The existing, unimproved entrance road meanders off of the legal easement and also serves as the driveway for one of the abutting residences. At this time there is no dedicated parking area and the access road is not signed, making visitation to the site sporadic. A second access to the park is located at the end of Balcony Drive in the Victoria Place subdivision and is also not identified. Fernan Hill Road next to the park is planned to be a signed bike route in the Coeur d'Alene Trails and Bikeways Master Plan. Development of the site will necessitate the creation of a viable access with parking facilities. Due to the moderate topography of the site and the nature of the proposed facilities, all trails and walkways in Veterans' Centennial Park should be built to standards that would make them highly accessible.

Recommended Management Actions

Opportunities to provide greater public access to Veterans' Centennial Park and to connect this facility to the community should be explored and considered. These actions may include

1. Build an Entrance Road to the Park. An entrance road should be built utilizing the existing legal easement to the park from Fernan Hill Road. This entrance road should
 - Be aligned to use the existing legal easement
 - Be paved with shoulders wide enough to support bike lanes
 - Have signage clearly identifying the site as a public park off of Fernan Hill Road
 - Terminate in a public parking lot near the south side of the property
2. Construct a Public Parking Lot. In order to support public use and to provide access to the proposed facilities on the site, a public parking lot should be built. This lot should
 - Have adequate parking for the park (12 to 24 spaces) and enough room for school buses to turn around with at least two parking spaces for buses
 - Include two to four disabled parking stalls directly adjacent to any accessible walkways into the park
 - Be located near the south property line of the site so as not to intrude on the proposed facilities
 - Have physical barriers such as curbing, fencing, or boulders to prevent the public from driving into the park
 - Include a service gate for maintenance staff to access the property and facilities

Public Facilities

Existing Public Facilities

Presently public facilities and amenities at Veterans' Centennial Park are limited to a boulder identifying the site as a public park which includes information identifying the donors of the property. The location, layout, and deed restrictions of this property create the opportunity to provide a unique public facility. The relatively level and open southern half of the property provides a suitable site for the placement of public facilities. The facilities and amenities proposed for this site should take advantage of the scenic location and incorporate educational opportunities.

Recommended Management Actions

Proposed uses of this site, in addition to walking and hiking, may include environmental education, nature appreciation, picnicking, and small events. In order to support these uses and to create a unique facility appropriate for this park the following facilities should be considered

1. Arboretum. A native-tree arboretum should be developed in the open, southern half of Veterans' Centennial Park. This arboretum should be professionally designed to be an attractive addition to the community and should include

- A western white pine grove, ultimately with trees of a wide age range
- An area highlighting southern-slope type vegetation including ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir
- A grove of quaking aspen
- An area dedicated to moist forest including Pacific yew, western redcedar, western larch, and western hemlock
- A native hardwood section to include black cottonwood and paper birch
- A high elevation section to include Engelmann spruce, mountain hemlock, subalpine fir, and whitebark pine
- Access to public water to establish and maintain the landscape
- A walkway around and through the arboretum
- Provisions to maintain the expansive views out of the park by strategic placement of the trees
- Means of protecting young trees from wildlife, specifically deer and other large mammals
- Only native trees and plants
- Educational signage identifying the trees
- A water source to support small animals and birds and to possibly act as an attractive focal point for the arboretum

2. Street Trees Display Create a display of approved street trees either next to the proposed parking lot or along the planned entrance road. A street tree display will include

- Trees recommended by the Urban Forestry Committee
- Access to the water supply as the trees will need to be watered for a number of years
- A means of protecting the trees from wildlife by using physical barriers and/or chemical treatments
- Signage identifying the tree species

3. Veterans Plaza A feature recognizing veterans should be incorporated into Veterans' Centennial Park. This feature should be

- Designed as a simple, open plaza with bench seating and a memorial plaque
- Built with the flexibility to add a more elaborate memorial or artwork in the future
- Connected to the hard-surfaced, loop walkway
- Located in or next to the arboretum
- Designed to serve as an attractive focal point for the park

4. Gazebo A gazebo should be constructed in the park. This gazebo should be usable for environmental educational programs and for small events such as weddings and birthday parties. The income from renting this facility will be used in the Parks Capital Improvement Fund. A gazebo should

- Be located in the northwest corner of the open area of the park in an area of scattered ponderosa pines next to the heavily wooded section of the property
- Incorporate an open deck to take advantage of the expansive views out of the property
- Be directly connected to the paved or hard-surfaced pathway system in the park
- Be near an entrance to the hiking trails that lead into the wooded section of the park
- Be constructed of fire-resistant materials, especially the roofing material
- Use natural materials such as large diameter logs or timbers, and/or possibly stone work to give a rustic appearance
- Have a nearby connection to the potable water supply such as a quick coupler

5. Restroom Shelter: A structure to place and maintain portable toilet facilities should be installed in Veterans' Centennial Park. This shelter should

- Be constructed of natural materials such as large diameter logs or timbers and match the style of the proposed gazebo
- Be large enough to accommodate two portable units one of which would be accessible
- Have a drinking fountain located nearby and a station to wash hands
- Be located near the parking lot and adjacent to the accessible walkway system