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Terra Firma Times

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Parks Conserved in Central Point

It's the kind of deal that makes everyone – even the fish – excited!

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy has successfully created a conservation easement in Central Point to permanently protect 17 acres of public land. Bret Moore, owner of the Twin Creeks Transit Oriented Development, donated the easement to protect open space along two creeks that run through the neighborhood.

According to Bret it's a win-win for the area. "We wanted to create a new kind of development," he says, "that will give residents a nice community where they can not only live, but also enjoy nature and connect with each other."

The Twin Creeks development is named after two streams – Jackson and Griffin Creeks – that run through the property. Twin Creeks LLC has restored sections of the creeks that run through the subdivision and constructed three large wetlands next to these creeks to handle stormwater runoff from the development. These measures will enhance

the water quality for both creeks, which had been impacted by past practices. Jackson and Griffin Creeks both enter Bear Creek to the north of the Twin Creeks Development.

Griffin Creek is identified as a priority stream for assessment and restoration. It is also listed as "critical habitat" for coho salmon under the Endangered Species Act. The Or-

regon Department of Fish and Wildlife recently observed summer steelhead in the stretch of Griffin Creek that runs through the property.

In addition to improving water quality, fish habitat, and storm water management, Moore and his partners, John Duke and Noel Moore, wanted to provide a natural area and outdoor educational opportunities for the citizens of Central Point. As the Twin Creeks site was developed, the streams were a key component in plans for a network of parks and open space for residents.

Ample park land has been established around the creeks and at central locations in the neighborhood. This parkland will be connected through a network of trails, sections of which



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Twin Creeks Con't.



Open space along Griffin Creek

will run alongside both creeks as they meander through the development.

In order to permanently protect the restoration work done on the streams, as well as to ensure the natural area along them remains intact and accessible to the public,

Bret Moore donated a conserva-

tion easement to the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy on the parcels of land that contain the streams. His foresight guarantees that generations of Central Point residents will benefit from the more naturally functioning streams and the values they provide.

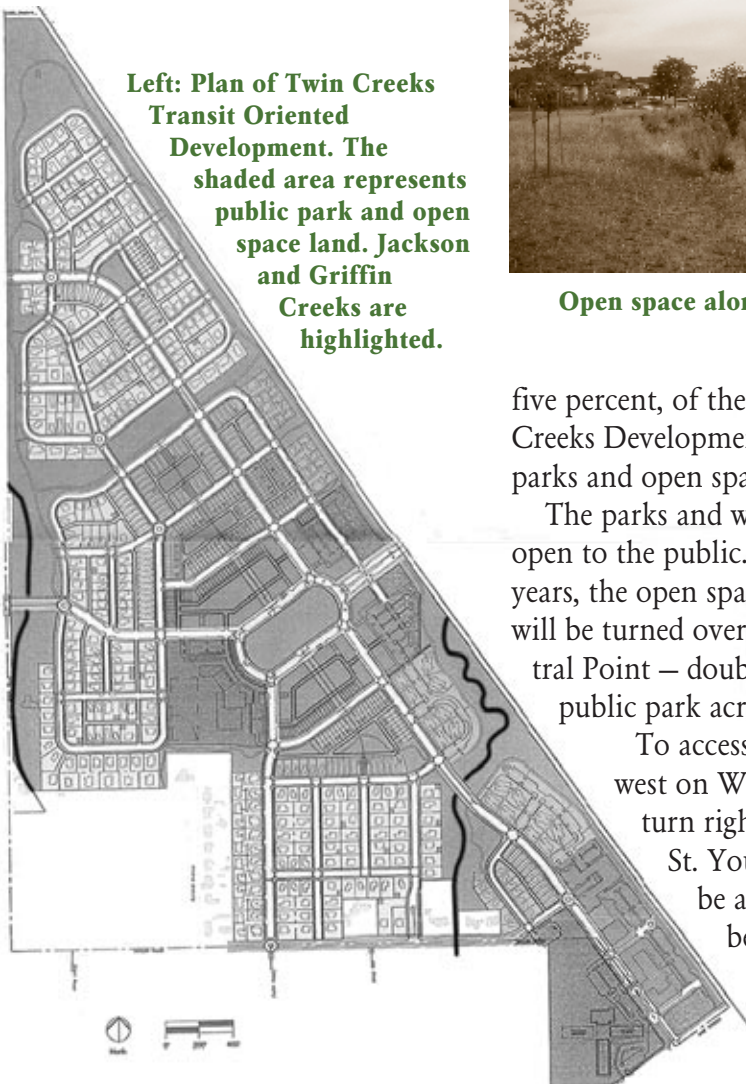
Diane Garcia, Executive Director of the Land Conservancy, sees this project as a model. "Bret and his team have developed a neighborhood that not only improves the local environment, but creates a model for working with developers to retain natural areas for public enjoyment," she says.

Nearly 50 acres, approximately twenty-



Open space along Jackson Creek

Left: Plan of Twin Creeks Transit Oriented Development. The shaded area represents public park and open space land. Jackson and Griffin Creeks are highlighted.



five percent, of the 200 acre Twin Creeks Development is devoted to parks and open space.

The parks and walking trails are open to the public. In the next few years, the open space and park land will be turned over to the City of Central Point – doubling the City's public park acreage!

To access the property, travel west on West Pine Street and turn right on North Haskell St. You will immediately be astounded by the beautiful new parks and views of Table Rocks!

Tax Incentives Extended

by Alex Liston Dykema

Congress recently renewed a powerful tax incentive that has helped conserve over a million acres of farms, ranches, and natural areas across the United States. The 2008 Farm Bill provides a significant expansion of the tax benefits for private land protection through qualified conservation easements. The incentive applies to conservation easement donations made in 2008 and 2009.

The expansion of conservation easement tax benefits is a time-limited opportunity for private landowners to benefit financially, while also helping preserve our region's natural landscape.

A conservation easement, when donated to a qualified conservation organization like the Land Conservancy, is considered a charitable contribution by the IRS. The contribution is the value of the donated easement, which is determined by a qualified appraiser who calculates the difference in value of the property with and without the conservation easement.

For years landowners have been taking advantage of the federal income and estate tax benefits of donating conservation easements on their private land. Those benefits were enhanced in 2006. The enhanced benefits increase the limit a landowner may deduct in any given year and extend the number of years the deduction may be carried over. Furthermore, for those who make more than half of their income from farming, ranching or forestry, the deduction limit is increased to 100% of their AGI.

To take advantage of these enhanced benefits landowners must act before December 31, 2009. Contact the Land Conservancy at 541-482-3069 for more info.