



MOUNT PISGAH
ARBORETUM

Annual Meeting 2009

Executive Director's Message *Brad van Appel, Executive Director*

This has been a year full of great challenges and rewarding accomplishments for Mount Pisgah Arboretum. As 2009 began, we were bracing ourselves for a turbulent economy. We knew our supporters might not be able to give as much as they'd like this year, but the Board and staff were determined to keep the Arboretum moving forward and building on the community's long-term investment. We reduced staff hours, trimmed back a couple programs, and looked for every place possible to cut expenses in an organization that was already pretty frugal. In the end, our efforts have paid off. Thanks to our conservative spending, our selfless staff, and the generous support of the Arboretum's members and volunteers, we're on-track to achieve our 2009 budget goals.

In the midst of this challenging year, the Arboretum successfully completed construction of new Capstone Project buildings, providing four new restrooms, a small kitchen and dressing room for events, storage areas for education equipment and for new tables and chairs, and a beautiful new courtyard, all located behind the White Oak Pavilion. In 2009 we also:

- completed an important habitat restoration project in the Water Garden;
- hosted hugely successful Wildflower and Mushroom Festivals;
- taught 3,272 elementary school students about the Arboretum's natural wonders through our Discovery Tours;
- gave 106 children a week-long experience to remember in our Outdoor Adventure Camp;
- provided educational walks and workshops for hundreds of area residents;
- set a new record for the number of couples "tying the knot" at the Arboretum; and
- hosted the 2nd annual "Play in the Rain" event.

2010 will, no doubt, hold new challenges. One we're preparing for is replacement of the deteriorating Adkison Bridge that links a popular trail route through our Water Garden. Whatever next year brings, we'll move forward knowing that, with the community behind us, Mount Pisgah Arboretum is up for the test.

Site Report *Tom LoCascio, Site Manager*

By far the greatest feat for the MPA site crew is the day to day care of the facilities and preparing the site for all the special events and education programs. 2009 brought some other special achievements.

Big projects getting done: Our biggest accomplishment was completing the Capstone buildings for the White Oak Pavilion. We are all grateful to the many supporters who helped us complete the next phase of this valuable community gathering space. With its four new restrooms, a green room, storage rooms, and a patio with a perfect view of an oak savanna, it was a sure fire hit. This facility hosted events all summer including weddings and summer camp, plus our two festivals.

Habitat restoration: Last winter we completed a wetlands restoration project funded by the Oregon Water Enhancement Board in partnership with the Coast Fork Watershed Council. We planted hundreds of native shrubs, trees, and grasses to encourage habitation by birds and other wildlife. A turtle basking structure was built in the Water Garden pond to attract Western Pond Turtles and a turtle was out enjoying it the next day.

As part of our habitat management strategy, many hours are spent removing invasive plant species. An oak release project above the Quarry Road removed infringing firs to bring more sunlight into the 100+ years old oak trees. The area is now flourishing, with the architecture of the oak branches standing out against the sky and a lush understory of vine maples and osoberrries.

Volunteers make the difference: As the economy made cash donations more scarce, volunteerism skyrocketed. We increased our work party schedule to two days a week and there has been a great response from the community. Three huge group work parties took on habitat enhancement projects, one cosponsored by the Friends of Buford Park and REI, another with the University of Oregon's Masters of Business Administration students, and a third with a group from a local accounting firm. These work parties are a lot of fun and we get a lot of work done.

Bridge work ahead: MPA's first large capital expenditure from 26 years ago now needs to be replaced. After a routine bridge inspection by Lane County engineers, some of the Arboretum bridges were found to be deteriorating and the Adkison Bridge over the Water Garden was permanently closed. While the idea of another large capital campaign seems daunting, we are excited to be looking towards a new better bridge design for this area.

Administrative Report *Katura Reynolds, Office Manager*

This summer a partnership between Lane County Parks, Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah, and Mount Pisgah Arboretum formed to increase safety in the parking areas. Mount Pisgah Park Watch is a new volunteer team that keeps an eye on the parking areas, notes any safety hazards, and educates hikers on how to report break-ins to the Sheriff's office.

We're leaping further into the digital age with the launch of our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Hundreds of folks are getting updates on weather, wildlife sightings, upcoming events, and more. Hikers are also sharing their experiences by posting photos and stories of their own!

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Education Report *Fran Rosenthal, Education Manager*

Spring Discovery Tours: This was the 29th year of Discovery Tours – our field trip program for K-5 grade students. 1,800 students attended this spring. A grant from EWEB covered the program fees and transportation for 798 students. Fran raised \$900 in private donations to assist an additional 300 students needing scholarship funds. The afternoon Environmental Education Activity Session was canceled this year due to the reduction in staff hours and the lack of grant-supported internships.

Summer Camp 2009: The camp this summer was almost filled to capacity! We had an average of 34 campers per session and served a total of 106 children. Net income from camp this year was \$8,064, as compared to \$2,630 in 2008 (these figures do not include scholarship funds.) The Arboretum distributed \$1,525 in scholarship funds to needy campers.

A new session, Tree Keepers, was added to the camp this year. This session highlighted a tree climbing experience (facilitated by MPA Board Member, Scott Altenhoff), tree identification, the planting of a camp tree, and building miniature tree houses. The camp had a superb staff of counselors and continues to receive rave reviews from both campers and their parents.

Fall Discovery Tours: 1,472 students attended Fall Discovery Tours this year. A generous grant from the OCF, Grey Family Foundation (\$7,060) provided program fee and transportation support for 868 students from 18 different schools. The Arboretum has a committed pool of 35 nature guides, 10 of whom completed their training this season. Florence and Norman Miller, our wonderful program hosts, are retiring after six years of assisting with the school program. We will surely miss them and thank them for all they have done for the kids.

Walks, Workshops, and Events

Peg Douthit-Jackson, Education & Events Coordinator

After two and a half years of dedicated service, Clare Bennett left her position as the Arboretum's Education and Events Coordinator last spring to take a job at the Corvallis Public Library. Clare was replaced by Peg Douthit-Jackson who joined the Arboretum staff with 20 years of experience in event management. In the transition the hours for this position were reduced and Peg was asked to plan a more limited Walks and Workshops schedule.

Walks and Workshops: The winter and spring Walks and Workshops program was similar to 2008 in terms of the numbers of participants and offerings. Summer offerings were kept to a minimum but in the fall we offered a wide range of popular walks and workshops including several mushroom classes, pumpkin carving, and a scarecrow making workshop that drew a record 200 participants. Check the Arboretum's website for the winter 2010 schedule.

Site Rentals: The Arboretum enjoyed a record number of site rentals this year raising more than \$39,000 to help run our other programs. One of the most talked about subjects was the addition of the courtyard, bathrooms, dressing room, kitchen closet and storage facilities. Feedback has been very positive and as of November 11th, 2009, there are already 11 wedding reservations for 2010.

Festivals and Special Events: In addition to very successful Wildflower and Mushroom Festivals, the Arboretum also took part in the Eugene Celebration with our MPA information booth and held our first ever Holiday Open House at the Visitors Center. And, on November 7th the Arboretum worked with Northwest Youth Corps, Friends of Buford Park, BLM, Nearby Nature, and other local partners to put on the second annual "Play in the Rain" event. Nearly 1,000 children and parents came out to the Arboretum for a day of fun in nature.

Goals for 2010 include: increasing site rentals; continued growth with publicity efforts; restructuring the Walks and Workshops program; and engaging the community in forest education by offering "Back to Basics" workshops.

Financial Situation *Brad van Appel, Executive Director*

In anticipation of a tight economy, and in an effort to repay a small operating deficit from previous years, Mount Pisgah Arboretum's 2009 operating budget anticipated an 8.5% reduction of income from 2008 and a 15% reduction in expenses. Through the first three quarters of 2009 the Arboretum's income and expenses are running within a few percentage points of that budget.

Total projected operating income for 2009 was set at \$300,000. As in previous years, dues and donations provide over 1/3 of our income. Festivals, site rental, contracted services and our education program account for nearly half while grants provide about 10%. This year MPA's Endowment provided about 7% of our operating income, and that number may go up next year.

In addition, over the last five years MPA has raised and spent about \$450,000 for capital improvements including the White Oak Pavilion and new infrastructure. In 2010, the Arboretum will look to raise about another \$45,000 to complete landscaping around the Pavilion complex and burial of utility lines. We will also need to raise an undetermined amount to replace the Adkison Bridge. Most of the funds raised for these projects are eligible to be matched by the Armes Fund through the Oregon Community Foundation.