

CVNA article April 2015 for SWNI News

River View Natural Area (RVNA) is a steep 146-acre forested parcel in Collins View, from Palatine Hill Rd to Macadam Ave. RVNA has significant ecological value with seven free-flowing streams, wetlands, and multiple plant mammal and avian communities within the ecosystem. Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) and the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) jointly own the natural area. Passive recreational uses - hiking, wildlife viewing, stewardship activities, environmental education, and research - are allowed. Mountain biking is prohibited as of March 16, 2015, in order to protect RVNA's sensitive natural resources. PP&R will develop a Citywide Off-Road Bicycle Master Plan to identify the most appropriate mountain biking opportunities within the City park system. However, the mountain biking community has mounted a determined, well-funded and vociferous campaign to have RVNA become a "world-class" destination for their sport. A "world-class" destination for mountain bikers has been established at Brightwood, Oregon where 40,000 bikers visit and ride each year.

Most neighbors are opposed to the re-introduction of mountain bikes to RVNA. It goes against the "Vision for RVNA" (letter dated April 1, 2015 from Portland Environmental Services and Portland Parks and Recreation: "Design Criteria for River View Natural Area Management") which includes: protection and enhancement of watershed health of the site; provision of recreation experiences for users that are compatible with the protection of natural resources; and fostering environmental stewardship and education.

In addition to the fragility of RVNA's still-in-the-process ecological recovery, and the inherent danger of pedestrians and bicyclists sharing muddy narrow trails, Palatine Hill Rd. and adjacent streets cannot support the increased traffic and demand for parking places. Traffic flow through Collins View is already at critical density and parking a continual contentious issue. The April 1 letter that designated "parallel parking for approximately 35 cars" along the east side of Palatine Hill Rd. does nothing to mitigate these fears.

The city encourages folks to attend the Open House on Monday, May 4th from 5:30pm — 7:30pm at the Multnomah Arts Center. The Open House will focus on the broader community's involvement in the River View Nature Area.