National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name  Riverside Park

other names/site number  Grants Pass City Park

Name of Multiple Property Listing  N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

street & number  304 S E Park Street

city or town  Grants Pass

state  Oregon  code  OR  county  Josephine  code  033  zip code  97527

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this  X  nomination  ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  X  meets  ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  ___ national  ___ statewide  X  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  X  A  ___ B  ___ C  ___ D

[Signature]
09/17/20

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  ___ meets  ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official  Date

Title  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register  ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register  ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
Name of Property: Riverside Park
County and State: Josephine Co., OR

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(private) 
(public - Local)  
(public - State) 
(public - Federal)  

Category of Property  
(building(s)) 
(district)  
(site) 
(structure) 
(object)  

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>object</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: Park
RECREATION & CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: Park
RECREATION & CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A
walls: N/A
roof: N/A
other: N/A
Riverside Park is a 24.83 acre city-owned park located on the south bank of the Rogue River, near downtown Grants Pass, Oregon. Generally rectangular, between SW Park and the river and bounded by SE Vista Street on the east and 6th Street, the south bound lane of Oregon State Highway 99, on the west, Riverside Park gently slopes down to the river, surrounded by small residential and commercial uses. Riverside Park includes 13 contributing resources and 9 non-contributing resources. The 13 contributing resources include: Park Caretaker’s House/Office (building); Upper Restroom and Garage (building); Playground (Lower) Bathrooms (building); Baseball Field (site); Horseshoe Pits (site); Paths and Walkways (site); Lower Lawn (site); Upper Lawn (site); Memorial Rose Garden (site); Veterans Memorial Drinking Fountain (object); Union Veterans Landmark (object); Victor Boehl Rose Garden Memorial (object); Gold Star Memorial By-Way (object). The 9 non-contributing resources include: Maintenance Yard & Building (building); Playground (site); Parking Areas/Roadways (Mixed) (site); Centennial Gazebo (structure); Riverside Pavilion (structure); Trevillian Pavilion (structure); Glen Woolridge Memorial (object); Josephine County Peace Memorial (object); Veterans Monument (object). With its groves of character-defining mature deciduous and evergreen trees, rose garden, wide lawns for sports and picnicking, multiple public gathering areas, a playground, boat ramp, ball field, and multiple community monuments and other amenities, all connected by a series of curvilinear pathways, Riverside Park continues to serve its original function and retain its historic integrity for the citizens of the city as a public recreation site, and the location of numerous community events.

Riverside Park, located on the south bank of the Rogue River, near downtown Grants Pass, Oregon, was established in 1906, when the city acquired the first portion of the land through donation, and remains one of the largest public parks in the city. Nearly twenty-five acres in size, the park is characterized by groves of pines, firs, cedars, and other mature trees, some pre-dating the park development, large lawns used for a variety of community events and picnicking, sports fields, and rose gardens (see Figure 8). Built resources, include historic and non-historic public restrooms, staff/service areas, and a contributing caretaker’s house/office, and multiple open kiosks or gazebos for public gatherings, connected by a series of curvilinear asphalt-paved pathways. Various small monuments and commemorative installations, typically of stone or concrete, reflect Grants Pass’ tradition of honoring veterans, groups, and individuals of significance at Riverside Park.

Riverside Park occupies a roughly rectangular site comprised of multiple tax lots owned by the City of Grants Pass. The park is located south of the Rogue River and north of East Park Street and is bounded by east by Vista Drive. On the west the park extends below the northbound bridge carries the Pacific Highway over the Rogue River as shown on Figure 3. Riverside Park is located within Township 36 South, Range 5 West, sections 19 and 20 and is shown on Josephine County Assessor plat 360519AD as lots 100 and 200 and on 360520BC as tax lot 2000, comprising, in total 24.83 acres.¹

The site is generally rolling and flat, dropping gradually in a generally northerly direction from East Park Street to the Rogue River. Surrounding uses are small, mixed age, residential on the east and south, ¹ The portion of city owned property west of the Cavemen Bridge (360519AD-100 and 101) were added to the park after the period of significance and are excluded from the nominated area.
with multi-family commercial and residential at the western end. The Riverside Inn Resort, the latest in a series of lodging uses, and the Clark-McConnell House, a National Register-listed private home, are located to the north, across the Rogue River. The Caveman Bridge, an iconic design by Oregon’s master bridge builder, Conde McCullough, carries south-bound traffic (6th Street) over the Rogue River and the park below, and is visible from most locations within the park. A second, more modern, highway bridge (opened in 1959) carries traffic northbound, on 7th Street, and traverses the park as well. Commercial uses of mixed design line the Pacific Highway, leading to downtown Grants Pass (north) and the intersection of the Pacific (OR-99) and Redwood (US-199) highways (south).

**RIVERSIDE PARK: Physical Description**

As shown in Figure 7, the park is largely a rolling, grassy, landscape with multiple groves of trees. Paved asphalt parking areas and curvilinear pathways connect outdoor spaces and amenities. Using the bridges as delineators, Riverside Park is comprised of three “sections” in plan, consisting of Vista Drive to the 6th Street Bridge, the Sixth Street Bridge to the Caveman Bridge, and the Caveman Bridge to the western boundary. The park includes large, mature, trees, including Ponderosa Pine, California Black Oak, Incense Cedar, Douglas Fir, and other dozens of other conifer and deciduous species, established rose gardens and large, multi-purpose grass-covered lawns, used for sports, picnics and various public events.2

Resources that were built during the Period of Significance that retain sufficient integrity to relate their appearance in 1968 and are associated with the significant functions of the park for recreation are counted as contributing in Section 5. Resources built after the end of the Period of Significance, earlier resources that have been altered and no longer reflect their appearance or design during that period, or those that have no association to the significant functions of the park, are counted as non-contributing in Section 5. Individual buildings, structures, features or landscaped zones within the park are as follows.

1. **Park Caretaker’s House/Office** (c1920): This small wood-frame gable roof cottage was built c1920 and was originally used as a park caretaker’s residence, a function that continued into the 1950s.3 By the 1970s it first converted for use as park offices and then used a museum. The house retains high integrity in materials and design. It currently provides support functions related to the adjacent maintenance yard, used to store lawnmowers and other materials related to the park operation with a fenced area (see below). The Park Caretaker’s House is counted as a contributing building in Section 5.

2. **Maintenance Yard & Building** (c1960, as modified): A fenced maintenance yard, located behind and joined to the caretakers House, includes a metal storage building of uncertain construction date. Due to lack of distinction, the Maintenance Yard & Building is counted as a non-contributing building in Section 5.

3. **Upper Restroom and Garage**: (c1968) Built of exposed concrete block, this gable structure houses public restrooms and equipment storage related to the maintenance yards. Built circa 1968, at the end of the period of significance, and essentially “as-built,” the Upper Restroom and Garage is counted as a contributing building in Section 5.

4. **Baseball Field** (c1968): Located at the extreme SE corner of the park, at the intersection of Vista Drive and East Park Street, the ball field is a fenced diamond surrounded by a chain link fence. A small trapezoidal shaped concrete block building houses restrooms and serves as the backstop for the diamond. An early or original score board is located near the fence line, in center field. The Baseball Field is counted as a contributing site in Section 5.

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2 A 1996 Inventory of Trees at Riverside Park documents 400 individual trees, included more than 70 pines, 63 Black Oaks, as well as spruce, redwood, ash, cherry, locust, chestnut, maples, beech, Mulberry and others.

3 Grace Ely, personal communication with the author, 21-Nov-2019. “Lou Grimmer was the Park Department Manager during the late ’40s and ’50s. He lived with his family in the little house facing Park Street.”
5. **Centennial Gazebo** (1984): Built with a $7000 federal grant and generous donations from the community to commemorate the Grants Pass Centennial, this octagonal gazebo rises from a concrete foundation and consists of a steel framework supporting a large asphalt-shingle clad roof with a central, vented, cupola. The gazebo foundation was originally built as a fountain by the Grants Pass Jaycees, beginning in 1970 but funding and construction problems continued until late 1975, when the project was terminated by the City Council. Although a compatible addition consistent with the park’s public use, the Centennial Gazebo was constructed outside the period of significance and so is counted as a non-contributing structure in Section 5.⁴

6. **Horseshoe Pits** (c1955): This basic feature, remodeled and slightly modified, has been in place at least since the mid-1950s, according to available photographs and consists of six modest concrete-rimmed grass-filled courts with metal posts and wood backstops, located below mature trees, near the southern park boundary. The Horseshoe Pits are counted as a contributing site in Section 5.

7. **Riverside Pavilion** (2017): This steel frame pole structure with a tensioned fabric roof system was built in 2017 on the site and duplicates the basic footprint of the historic bathhouse/swimming pavilion, to provide an outdoor meeting space. The Pavilion is counted as a non-contributing structure in Section 5.

8. **Trevillian Pavilion** (2011): Located roughly in the park center, connected via both the internal road system and the pathways, the steel framed open sided gazebo with a green metal roof was substantially rebuilt after damage in 2011. Buckner W “Buck” Trevillian (1896-1990) was a long time fixture in Grants Pass who frequented Riverside Park and was beloved for his habit of playing board games with kid’s in the park. ⁵ The pavilion was built to replace an earlier laminated timber feature at this location, that was designed by Al Gandt and built in 1968. That gazebo was destroyed by a falling tree in February 1975. Although a compatible addition consistent with the park’s public use, The Trevillian Pavilion is counted as a non-contributing structure in Section 5.

9. **Playground (Lower) Bathrooms** (c1960): A single story stucco-clad concrete block structure with a shallow-pitched metal roof, the bathrooms on the west end of the playground were built circa 1960. A curvilinear sign with characteristic pierced holes is located to the north, identifying the area as Riverside Park. A character-defining sign with incised lettering marks the entry to the playground. This building was minimally remodeled in 1990, to provide accessible access (Robert F. Fisher, Architect) and retains high integrity in design and materials. The Playground Bathrooms are counted as a contributing building in Section 5.

10. **Playground** (serially remodeled): This large area with play structures designed from children 5-12 years of age has been serially remodeled and renovated to meet safety and community needs. The current design, including a splash pond to the east, was installed in the mid-2000s The Playground is counted as non-contributing site in Section 5.

11. **Picnic Areas (Mixed)**: Throughout the park there are various picnic areas with tables, some with small outdoor grills or set on defined, curbed, concrete pads. Tables themselves are of mixed construction and design, none of which appear to be of any historic significance from a design standpoint. Minor elements, the picnic areas are not counted in Section 5.

12. **Paths and Walkways (Mixed)**: A series of asphalt paved walkways in a curvilinear pattern connect areas of the park internally, leading from parking areas and snaking to the various use-nodes. While of simple design and reflecting serial repair and replacement over time, the pathway system is essentially consistent with that shown in historic photographs of Riverside Park and plays a significant role in defining character. The curvilinear layout and shape of the

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⁵ Lindberg, Scott (personal communication with the author), See also [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/149276211/buckner-w-trevillian](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/149276211/buckner-w-trevillian), visited 19-December-2019.
pathways is considered the key characteristic, independent of material, that successfully relates their historic character. The Paths and Walkways are counted as a single contributing site in Section 5.

13. Parking Areas/Roadways (Mixed): Asphalt-paved, off-street parking areas are located near the Vista Drive entry, connected to additional parking overlooking the river, as well as just north of the city maintenance yard. A smaller parking area, directly accessible from East Park Street, supports functions at the Centennial Gazebo. While logically replacing some sort of earlier off-street parking features, these purely functional areas have little historic character. The Parking Areas/Roadways are counted as a single non-contributing site in Section 5.

14. Lower Lawn (n.d.): Divided into multiple parts but continuing along the entire north of the park, along the river, the lower lawn is a generally flat area that begins at the park’s NE corner and continues to west. The large field area (the Soccer Field), at the NE, provides for multiple functions and creates a long-distance, largely interrupted view toward the Caveman Bridge with trees lining the riverbank and increasing in density to the west, near the playground. Area to the east, more interrupted, include picking areas, Frisbee golf, and other public amenities. The Lower Lawn is counted as a contributing site in Section 5.

15. Upper Lawn (n.d.): Divided into two parts by the paved entry drive off East Park Street, the upper lawn contains a more varied terrain, punctuated by numerous large trees of multiple varieties that shade paths, seating, and gathering spaces. The Upper Lawn is counted as a contributing site in Section 5.

16. Memorials and Related Features (Mixed): Scattered throughout the park, multiple commemorative elements acknowledge important individuals or events with connection to Grants Pass and support the historically significant role of Riverside Park as a central feature in the community. These small features, many date from the Period of Significance and all of which support the character of Riverside Park, are in counted in Section 5 as objects, as cited.

a. Glen Woolridge Memorial (1990): Designed by Clyde Ellis, sculptor, this three-part vertical panel is made of coursed masonry and contains four bronze panels. A bas relief of Woolridge, is located in the center, dedicated in center, with a cast bronze panel on the east describing Woolridge (1896-1986) and his pioneering efforts in boating and whitewater rafting on the Rogue River. A panel recognizing donors and the members of the Glen Woolridge Memorial Committee is located on the west. The Woolridge Memorial is counted as a non-contributing object in Section 5.

b. Veterans Memorial Drinking Fountain (1931): Installed by the Julia Dent Grant Tent No. 10, Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, the small stone-faced, concrete trapezoidal-shaped memorial includes a drinking fountain (not currently functional) and bronze plaque identifying it as a "Memorial to Our Fathers." The Veterans Memorial Drinking Fountain was dedicated on June 14, 1931. The Memorial Drinking Fountain is counted as a contributing object in Section 5.

c. Union Veterans Landmark (1936): A capped block of concrete in a hipped-top pyramidal form, this was previously the base block for a flagpole that no longer survives. A bronze plaque states "In memory of Union Veterans of the Civil War 1862-1865. Erected 1936 by Sons on Union Veterans of the Civil War [and] Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The Veterans Landmark is counted as a contributing object in Section 5.

d. Josephine County Peace Memorial (1994): A large vertical slab of dark granite, the Peace Memorial is located near the parking area and honors the men and women of Josephine County who have served in the wars of the 20th century. The memorial was dedicated on 6 Albany Democrat-Herald, "Rogue River Pioneer Glen Wooldridge Dies at Age 89, 4-February-1986, 8:1-3.
June 14, 1994, after a public funding campaign. The Peace Memorial is counted as a non-contributing object in Section 5 due to date of construction.

e. Veterans Monument (c2000): Located near the Centennial Gazebo, this small concrete monument with a granite top and bronze plaque is dedicated to veterans of the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. The Veterans Monument is counted as a non-contributing object in Section 5.

f. Victor Boehl Rose Garden Memorial (1966): A small stacked block monument topped with a stone slab and a bronze plaque, dedicated to Boehl by the Rogue Valley Rose Society. Boehl (1901-1965) was a premium rose gardener and active the society for many years. The Boehl Rose Garden Memorial is counted as a contributing object in Section 5.

g. Flagpole (n.d.): A steel column with small concrete base, located to the west of the Rose Garden. The flagpole, of standard design without any distinction, is not counted in Section 5.

h. Gold Star Memorial By-Way (n.d.). A small stone marker with a bronze plaque identified the park on part of the Gold Star Memorial By-Way, and was installed by the Grants Pass Garden Club, under the auspices of National Garden Clubs, Inc., as part of a national program to honor veterans. A Blue Star Memorial sign plaque, on a columnar post, is located to the north. The Gold Star Memorial plaque and columnar sign are counted as a single contributing object in Section 5.

17. Memorial Rose Garden (c1955, as modified): The Memorial Rose Garden consists of a series of at-grade rose bed arrayed in circle behind the Centennial Gazebo, interspersed with monuments to veterans and the flag pole. Some form of garden in this area appears on mid-1950s park plans and the Rogue Valley Rose Society has provided support for the gardens, including plant purchase and some maintenance at since the mid-1960s. A small bronze place affixed to a rock is located in the near the stars, dedicated to Millbank, “who was instrumental in bring this memorial garden plan into reality...” The plaque was dedicated on May 10, 1961. The Memorial Rose Garden, including the Millbank plaque, is counted as a contributing site in Section 5.

18. Site Sign (1999): Located at the NE corner of the intersection of Riverside and East Park street, the monument type sign includes a carved wood panel that was designed and fabricated by Fred Stevens, with funding by the Cavemen and the Golden Eagles Kiwanis, of Grants Pass. The Site Sign, a discrete minor resource built outside the Period of Significance, is not counted in Section 5.

SUMMARY
Established in 1906 and developed for recreational use by the City of Grants Pass, Riverside Park has substantially assumed its present character by 1912 and has, for over a century, remained a centerpiece of community and public activity in Grants Pass. The park was severely impacted by the Christmas Day Flood in 1964, when the Rogue River flooded much of the lower park area. Rebuilding, including the construction of new restrooms, the ball field, and other features, was completed by 1968. Historically modified over time to meet changing city requirements, the basic layout out along the river, with lawns, trees, and defined areas of use connected via a series of curvilinear pathways and roads, continues to reflect the original 1906-1911 development character and successfully relates the essential features of the historic design, with functional nodes, tree groves, and broad lawns interconnected by curvilinear pathways. As is typical of community parks, early buildings and features have serially replaced over time with more durable features, many in the same basic locations and providing similar function, to create public benefit. Playgrounds, sports fields, picnicking and other amenities historically associated with

7 Ford, Ginger, personal communication with the author, 7-July-2020.
Riverside Park continues to serve a wide range of park users. “Riverside Park is the pride of the Grants Pass Parks system.”

Retaining its basic shape, internal circulation pattern, numerous significant sites and buildings, and continuing to provide a mixture of recreational opportunities, Riverside Park accurately reflects its development and retains substantial integrity to the essential character of its original design. Riverside Park continues its historic function and role as the center of outdoor community activity within Grants Pass, Oregon.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:
- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance
1906 - 1968

Significant Dates
1906, Park Established
1964, Christmas Flood

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)
N/A

Architect/Builder
Boynton, N. C., Designer (1907-1911)

Period of Significance (justification)
Riverside Park was established by the City Council in 1906, substantially developed by 1912, and continues to serve its original public recreational functions. The Period of Significance continues through 1968, with the completion of the construction of the various park upgrades that followed the 1964 flooding of the Rogue River.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A
Riverside Park is locally significant under Criterion A, for its association with the Community Planning and Development of Grants Pass, Oregon. The period of significance is 1906-1968, which begins with the establishment of the park by the City Council and ends with the completion of the construction of the various park upgrades in response to the significant damage of the 1964 Christmas flood. Riverside Park was established on the bank of the Rogue River in 1906 and developed by the city as its first public outdoor recreational venue. Building upon the original layout and design, over the past century the park has been improved and upgraded to provide a wide variety of amenities that have changed over time as the city's needs shifted. Retaining its original basic form, with large grassy areas and groves of trees framing multiple functional nodes, a set of commemorative installations, and public meeting structures, Riverside Park continues to support public recreation activity and plays an important role in the Grants Pass community. The park remains the focal point of a wide range of community activities, events, and continues to play a key role in the community’s character.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The area that would become Grants Pass, located at Perkins ferry crossing over the Rogue River, was first settled in 1851 and became known as “Perkinsville.” Josephine County was formed in 1856, although the Grants Pass area was located in what was then Jackson County. The California-Oregon wagon route, the main route between Oregon and California, went through the area by 1860, but development was sparse. “All things continued pretty much the same for another fifteen years but in 1883 the railroad reached here... [and] completely changed the location of the town.” In anticipation of the railroad’s arrival, Jonathan Bourne, a well-connected Portland attorney, purchased a large tract of land and had it surveyed around the new railroad depot site. The town of Grants Pass was platted into lots and blocks and the first train arrived on December 24, 1883. By 1886 the Oregon legislature adjusted the boundary between Jackson and Josephine counties, placing Grants Pass in Josephine, where it immediately replaced Kerby as the Josephine County seat. The Town of Grants Pass was incorporated in 1887, becoming the City of Grants Pass on February 18, 1891, with a new charter, a new mayor, and six council seats. Bolstered by the railroad and surrounding agriculture, timber and mining, interests, the city grew quickly and by 1900 boasted a population of 2290 persons.

**PUBLIC PARKS**

The concept of public parks in the United States is usually traced to the development of picturesque cemeteries, beginning in the middle 19th century and the influence of nationally-prominent landscape designers such as Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux. “A major influence of cemetery planning was on the development of municipal parks in America.” Largely inspired by upper and middle-class individuals who saw parks, and nature, as a beneficial influence on city-dwellers and as an antidote to the increasing industrialization of American life, the drive for public parks is roughly coincident with the progressive movement that began in the late 19th-century. “A park’s goals should include not only providing people with access to fresh air and the beauty of nature, but [it] should also be a place where they can meet and enjoy each other’s company.”

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10 Perkins ferry crossing was at or near the site that would become Riverside Park, “...near the mouth of Fruitleaf Creek and the present location of the Caveman Bridge, although the actual location is not known.” (Query, Charles. *Oregon Ferries Since 1826* (Bend, OR: Maverick Books, 2008:23). Alzono Skinner, a U.S. Indian Agent, reportedly met with native Takelma peoples on the park site in November 1851.


12 Jonathan Bourne Jr. (1855-1940), graduated from Harvard and arrived in Portland in 1878, almost immediately establishing himself as a highly successful entrepreneur and investor. In 1906 Bourne was elected to the US Senate, one of the first two US Senators to be chosen by voters. He served a single term. There is no record Bourne ever visited Grants Pass during its formative years.

13 State of Oregon, 1913:146.


In the mid-to-late 19th century, land adjacent to moving water was typically reserved for industrial development, even larger ones, boasted either formal picturesque cemeteries or recreational-focused parks until the last quarter of the 19th century. In Oregon large cities, like Portland, were drawn to the City Beautiful Movement earlier than smaller ones. In the early 1880s wealthy Portlanders purchased land overlooking the Willamette River south of the city and hired a German-born landscape architect to design River View Cemetery, the first “picturesque” cemetery in the state. Two decades later, in 1903, Portland hired the famed Olmsted Brothers firm to design a city-wide plan to guide park development.

The first step toward making Portland a City Beautiful utilized previous planning for a comprehensive park system. Ultimately Portland would retain John Olmsted to develop an influential park plan for the city that was published in May 1904.

Smaller cities, especially those in less populated portions of the state outside the Willamette Valley, typically offered little if any formal public open space in the 19th century. Often the city park was simply a dedicated block, set aside from development, as in Medford’s “City Park” with little improvement. Undeveloped, such parks boasted little design or amenity for the public but were nevertheless generally protected from construction. Some Oregon cities, including Grants Pass, developed small “parked” areas, typically meaning areas with some small lawn and a few planting beds or roses, adjacent to the railroad depot. These areas were often on private railroad-owned land. They were partially to benefit locals but served primarily to provide a good first impression for visitors arriving by train. “Depot parks” existed in Ashland, Medford and, eventually, in Grants Pass. These were places where travelers could “stretch their legs” during a train stop but were not public parks in the modern sense. Most small Oregon cities simply lacked any form of public park during the 19th century.

In the mid-to-late 19th century, land adjacent to moving water was typically reserved for industrial development, which relied upon hydropower, but as electricity replaced waterpower, rivers and creekside locations became options for public parks. Western Oregon, replete with rivers and creeks, saw many small and medium size cities develop public parks along moving waterways in the first quarter of the 20th century. The growth of the Chautauqua movement in Oregon created a need for publicly accessible gathering spots. The Chautauqua “circuit” developed as a series of “camp meetings” that brought nationally known figures and educators to rural and small town American beginning in the late-19th century. “[A]t the height of the Chautauqua Movement, about 1915, some 12,000 communities had hosted a Chautauqua.” Chautauqua grounds, or parks, were developed as the venues for lecture tents (or permanent structures) and sometimes camping areas, to serve the attendees. Ashland, Albany, and La Grande each developed some sort of venue for Chautauqua alongside a waterway. As noted, the unifying feature in Ashland’s Lithia Park was Ashland Creek, which was transformed into a public park beginning after a public vote authorized its development in 1908. The first public park in Albany, Oregon, was laid out along the bank of the Calapooia River in 1910. In Bend, while the Deschutes River provided industrial power for the city’s mills, a portion of land alongside its banks became Drake Park in 1921. Simpson Park, in North Bend, was developed on the Coos Bay peninsula by the

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16 River View Cemetery, in Portland, was designed by E. O. Schwagerl and opened on a lush forested site overlooking the Willamette River in 1882.

17 River View Cemetery was developed by Henry Corbett (1827-1903), William S. Ladd (1826-1893) and Henry Failing (1834-1898), three early Portland pioneer merchants and bankers who played major roles in the city’s development. Corbett served a term as one of Oregon’s United States Senators (1867-1873). See Kramer, George. Riverview Cemetery: Historic Overview. Eugene, OR: Heritage Research Associates, prepared for Multnomah County Public Works Department, July 2011.

18 Abbott, Carl. Portland: Planning, Politics and Growth in at Twentieth-Century City. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983:59. John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) was the nephew and adopted son of Frederick Law Olmsted. With his younger brother, Frederick Jr., he was a partner in Olmsted Brothers, a nationally-influential landscape design firm that developed park plans for Seattle and Spokane, in addition to Portland.

19 Medford’s city park was long the home of the city’s water tower, a key feature in its early drinking water system.


Riverside Park
Josephine Co., OR

A. M. Simpson family before 1907 and then donated to the city in 1916. In eastern Oregon, the city of La Grande had its own Riverside Park, on the bank of the Grande Ronde River, which like both Ashland’s Lithia Park and Albany’s Bryant Park, owed its development, in part, to the Chautauqua movement.

**A NEW CITY PARK -N.C BOYNTON**

In late 1905, a letter to the editor, published on the front page of the *Rogue River Courier*, offered some “timely suggestions” for civic improvement to help Grants Pass move forward as a progressive and successful city. Chief among those suggestions was the necessity of a public park.

Grants Pass, having no public park, it would be a wise move to secure from the railroad company that part of the depot grounds about the flagstaff and make it a place for recreation....Trees and ornamental shrubs of all species found in Oregon might be planted. Flowers and plants set out and walks and settees provided...then we would have a place where all could enjoy the beauties of nature, breathe the fresh pure air and that recreation that is helpful to the old and young.

The “stranger” that signed the letter, given that it was published on the paper’s front page, was quite probably the editor/publisher, Amos Voorhies, giving more weight than might be expected to an otherwise unsigned suggestion. Whatever the impetus, Grants Pass did soon establish a small “Depot Park” adjacent to the railroad station, on G Street in the community core, but it was insufficient to fulfill the vision “the stranger” had suggested for the community. Located on a small parcel near the railroad station, Depot Park failed to provide much of an opportunity to enjoy “nature,” and appears to have largely been a small group of flower beds amid an otherwise urban setting. By Fall 1905 the newspaper voiced support for a larger public park, to be located in a residential district, or on a nearby hill that would be “...easy of access yet so far from the main part of town as not to be a rendezvous for loafers, where mothers, children and elderly people could go and have an outing and enjoy the fresh air, the trees, the flowers and the birds.” This idea, clearly, resonated with leaders in the city’s business community, as a way to reinforce Grants Pass’ progress and continued development during a “boom” period of development in southern Oregon.

The opportunity for Grants Pass to secure a larger publicly-owned park took a major step forward in 1906 when a local bank, presumably in the spirit of civic boosterism, offered the city a tract of land on the south side of the Rogue River, just outside the city’s limits, provided the city improved it for park use. The parcel was largely undeveloped, just upstream from the bridge across the Rogue River. The Grants Pass Water, Light and Power Company dam, built in 1889, created a backwater pool in the river at that point; an opportunity for a swimming hole. The dam was of timber construction, probably timber-crib, typical of late-19th power dams. “A wing dam located downstream from the bridge across the Rogue River diverted water to a low-head hydro plant.” In 1905 the Gold Ray Dam and Powerhouse went into operation at Tolo, upstream from

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24 *Evening Observer* (La Grande), 6-October-1906, 3:2.
28 Although owned, developed, and managed by the City, the Riverside Park site remained outside the city limits until 1947, when Grants Pass voters approved annexation of the park into the city (*Coos Bay Times*, “Grants Pass Votes Bonds, Annexes Park”, 21-Jan-1945, 5:3).
29 This dam goes by multiple names, including the Grants Pass Dam, the Grants Pass Diversion Dam, and the Grants Pass Power Dam, among others. The correct name of the company is Grants Pass Water, Light & Power Company.
30 Momsen, Joan. *Bridges and Dam at Grants Pass, Oregon* (Grants Pass, OR: Josephine County Historical Society), 2017:4. The dam created a “bump” in the river that made it impassable for boating and diverted river water into a powerhouse that served the city until 1905.
31 See, for example, the first dam at Gold Ray or the Winchester Dam, on the Umpqua River. The timber crib Winchester Dam (NRIS #96000627) was later encased in concrete, becoming more permanent. The timber crib dam at Gold Ray, replaced by a larger concrete dam just downstream in the 1940s, was exposed during the removal of the concrete dam in 2010.
Riverside Park

Name of Property

Grants Pass. That much larger project, developed by the Ray interests, eventually became the California-Oregon Power Company, known as Copco. The Ray interests quickly purchased the earlier Grants Pass utility and contracted to provide power to the city, eliminating the need for the diversion dam. It is unclear, but entirely likely that the south bank of the Rogue River, above the dam, that became the park, was part of the power operation holdings and so determined “surplus” by the utility after they ended generation activity at this point on the river. Giving it to the city, and requiring its use as a park, eliminated any opportunity for future power generation.

In July 1906 L. B. Hall, of the “Park Committee,” (a sub-group of the City Council) reported to the full council and the Mayor that the First National Bank of Grants Pass was willing to donate land for park use. Councilor Fetsch, also of the committee, additionally reported that “…Mr. Schallhorn had offered to donate a certain piece of land adjoining that of the bank to the city, providing they would make certain improvements.” The motion to accept both donations passed unanimously. Once the deeds were final, the City of Grants Pass now owned about ten acres on the south bank of the Rogue River for the expressed purpose of park development. By August 1906 the park committee was in negotiations with Dr. C. R. Ray, president of the power company, regarding water and power for the new city park. The paperwork in connection with the land transfer to the city was largely complete by the end of the year.

In early 1907 the Park Committee began to take steps to physically transform the land for public use. In early April, Council authorized the park committee “….to buy a pumping plant and incur all needed expenses in fixing up the park.” Pipe for irrigation was ordered and hydrants were in place.

By May 1907 Council voted to create a new position to oversee the park operation “On motion seconded and duly carried, it was ordered that the City Attorney be instructed to draft an ordinance creating the office of Superintendent of the City Park, and also to fix salary for same at $50 per month from March 1st to November 1st, and from November 1st to March 1st salary to fixed at a nominal amount. In addition to keeping the peace and acting as a special police officer within the City’s parks, the Park Superintendent job included the following duties.

He shall aide and assist in repair and construction work and in beautifying said parks and make immediate report to the Park Committee upon matters requiring their attention.

In July 1907, the Council appointed N. C. Boynton to serve as the first Park Superintendent. Nelson Cambridge Boynton (1844-1927), was born in Palermo, Maine and served with the 31st Maine Infantry as a private in the Civil War. Boynton was living in Los Angeles, California according to the 1880 Census, where he listed his occupation as “farmer” and, with his wife Robena, was raising three children. By 1890 he had relocated to Grants Pass and had divorced and remarried. In 1910, newly remarried again, now to Hattie, Boynton was living on a farm south of Grants Pass and listed his occupation as “Gardener.” Although little is known about Boynton’s background or training, he remained park superintendent at least through early 1911, as documented in local newspaper accounts and city council minutes. Boynton appears to have been, more than anyone else, the person primarily responsible for the initial design of Riverside Park and the process of transforming the raw riverfront land into a designed space for public benefit after it came into city ownership.
[M]r. Boynton, our able landscape gardener...more than three years ago laid out the park and has kept at work [on it] constantly...⁴⁰

Under Boynton’s direction, improvement at Riverside Park apparently continued, albeit slowly, during 1908 and 1909. “The city park, just across the river, is being improved this spring and put in such shape that it is a great credit to the city as well as being a pleasant resort where the populace may gather on Sundays and other leisure time.”⁴¹ In March 1909, the Parks Committee reported to Council that “...some shrubs had died in the park” and that they would be replaced. The city also acquired an option to purchase an additional five acre tract, generally called “the east addition,” adjacent to the park for a total cost of $800.⁴² The City Park was the sufficiently established that is served as the locus of a three-day celebration of the “Glorious Fourth” in 1909, with a grand parade over a one mile long, music by the “famous Central Point Band” and oration by the Hon. B. F. Mulkey and Dr. J. Whitcomb Brougher,” followed by a day of events including a ball game, water sports, and log-sawing.”⁴³

In 1910 the City, recognizing the public’s interest in the park, authorized significant improvements to “....the old and new portions of the city park. Last year it was demonstrated that this place of amusement was one popular resort for the people and the majority of our residents visited the place from once to several times a week.” The city also approved new planting, including “...a considerable variety of shrubs and rare trees,” and hoped to install electric lights along the pathways, “...so that park pleasures can be enjoyed during the summer evenings.”⁴⁴

Superintendent Boynton again oversaw considerable development work in the park during the Summer 1910 season. The east addition and the original donated lands were merged into a more contiguous whole. In a long article detailing the park’s development, described as “...what landscape gardener Boynton is doing,” the park was becoming a key element of the community.

Since the taking in of the new ground the main entrance to the park proper has been made on the south side. Here skill has been shown in the graceful curves which make room for the double iron gates which guard the driveway...and a granite walk for pedestrians...

The old part of the park is too well known to describe here except to say the lawn in looking nice and green and the trees and shrubs are making a fine growth.⁴⁵

By 1911, as Boynton’s involvement was ending, the park was developing nicely. The park commission reported to city council that the park contained over 330 trees.

[A]mong them being Chestnut, Hickory, English Beech, English Birch, Dogwood, Elm, Buckeye, Red Bird, Faburnum, Linden, Black Locust, Rose Locust, Magnolia, Maple, Tulip, Birch, Mountain Ash, Mulberry, Gigantic Sequoias, Irish Yew, Juniper, Sycamore, Poplar, Black Walnut, Ambrilla, Olive and Laurel; and among the native trees in the park, the Oak, Pine, Red Cedar, Oregon Fir and Sugar Pine.

Early references to Grants Pass’ park on the river generally refer to it simply as the “city park” although as early as 1908 the local paper refers to the new park “Riverside Park.” It is unclear if this was primarily a descriptor, rather than a proper noun, and used simply to differentiate the park from the other “city park,” located on the railroad depot grounds. As late as 1916 “City Park” and “Riverside Park” are still used by the local newspaper in nearly an interchangeable fashion.

⁴² City of Grants Pass Council Minutes, 25-March-1909 (11:248) and 4-February-1909 (11:228), see also 27-January-1910 (11:337).
⁴³ *Rogue River Courier*, 25-Jun-1909, 8:3-5.
1912- THE PARKS COMMISSION
N. C. Boynton apparently left his position as Superintendent of City Parks sometime around 1911 and the Council shifted responsibility for management of its parks to the Ladies Auxiliary, authorized to spend up to $80 per month on park expenses. The auxiliary, part of the Grants Pass Commercial Club, was a private entity that was actively engaged in promoting the arts, culture and civic improvement, having earlier focused their efforts on the Depot Park. "In order to transfer the care of the parks to the ladies, it was necessary to repeal ordinance No. 284, which had created the Superintendent position."  

The Ladies Auxiliary oversaw the park until 1913, when the Council created a new Park Commission and Mayor Smith then formally appointed seven women to serve two-year terms on that body. There followed a series of what appears to have been short-term park managers, including Ambrose Orpwood, O. G. Gregg, and E. Mayer, each of whom brought varying skills and experience to the task. “Under the expert direction of E. Mayer, the florist and landscape gardener [Riverside] park is being transformed, and many changes for its improvement are now in progress.” After reviewing the potential for the park, the commission recommended the city install tennis courts and an artificial pond, which would serve as a reservoir to supply the park irrigation system. "Riverside Park, on the banks of the Rogue, is one of the beautiful playgrounds of the west, and the city is going to considerable expense to add convenience and attractions to the natural scenic beauty." In 1915, a bathhouse was constructed in the park, the cost of which was supported in part by the Grants Pass Commercial Club.  

As a result by 1915 the general character of Riverside Park, while not the result of any known formal landscape design, was largely in place. Curvilinear pathways winding past groves of trees, planter beds of roses, and various, built, focal points that included fountains and wading pools, large grass lawns for picnicking and sports, as well as public access to swimming and boating in the Rogue River, were all well established.

FORMER ELEMENTS OF RIVERSIDE PARK
Deciphering the history of change at Riverside Park is stymied by the limited amount of documentation retained by the City of Grants Pass. Other than land ownership and references in council minutes, no documentary evidence regarding the original design of Riverside Park was located. Historic photographs and US Army Corp aerial views provide the best indicators of the park's earlier configurations. Major known modifications, mostly identified through this process and small references in the newspaper or city records, are as follows.

Auto Camp
As early as 1910 there was some sort of campground near the Park, located near its SW corner, that was at least directed toward "autoists," travelling on what would soon become known as the Pacific Highway.

Construction of the Pacific Highway, which crossed the Rogue River over the bridge at the park's western border, was already envisioned as a statewide route, when the Oregon State Highway Commission was created in 1913 and Pacific Highway was completed through Oregon by 1924, making it the first western state to offer a completely paved route. In 1915, as traffic on the highway was growing, Grants Pass opened a

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46 Boynton remained in Josephine County after leaving the city’s employ. He played an important role in the creation of the Grants Pass Irrigation District. Boynton died in Grants Pass, in 1927.
47 Rogue River Courier, “ Beautifying our Own City,” 8-April-1910, 1:3.
49 Rogue River Courier, “ Mayor Appoints Park Commission, ” 18-April-1913, 1:5. It is not clear how many of the new appointees were previously involved with the park through the Auxiliary, but it is considered likely that many were.
54 In 1926, following completion of the route through northern California, the 2400-mile long Pacific Highway, from Vancouver, B.C., to Tijuana, Mexico, touted as the “Road of Three Nations,” was considered the longest paved route in the world (American Motorist, “ Along the Road of Three Nations, ” June 1915, p347).
free municipally-owned auto campground in Riverside Park, as a way to encourage auto tourists to spend time in the community. “This was the first free camping ground to be opened in the state of Oregon...it appealed to a large majority because of its rustic beauty and its accessibility.”55 The camp was widely popular, drawing an estimated 700 auto parties during the May-October season. Locals, spearheaded by the Commercial Club, provided periodic clean-up crews for the camp grounds, especially at the start and end of summer, adding amenities to the campgrounds and the park. By 1917 the free auto camp had grown to encompass 10-acres, “adjoining the city park.”

The site borders the Pacific Highway on one side and the Rogue River on the other. Five stone fireplaces were built, 15 lots, each 50x100 were staked off and two cords of firewood were provided for the use of campers.56

The names of guests at the Riverside Auto Camp were reported in the local newspaper, much as hotel guests were. “Almost every night the park is well besprinkled with tourists from almost every part of the country.”57 The auto camp remained a feature at Riverside Park, under the management of the city into the late 1920s and, under private operation, the camp survived through World War Two.

**Bathhouse**

The abandoned Grants Pass Water, Light and Power Company dam located just downstream form the park created a large pool of calm water in the river. Bathing, boating, and swimming in the river were a primary attraction of the park, and it became a centrally-located, publicly-accessible, “swimming hole” for the community. As early as 1912 the city Parks Committee advocated for installing a fenced area to project out into the river to create a “...safe bathing place for women and children.”58 During the summer of 1915, at the behest and expense of the Commercial Club, a municipal bathhouse, a large rectangular gable structure elevated above the bank and providing changing rooms and secure clothing storage, was constructed in Riverside Park, where swimmers could change into suits.

The week the matter was taken up by the Grants Pass Commercial Club and within a week contracts were let, and the building will be completed in another week. The bathhouse will cost in the neighborhood of $500.59

In October the City Council considered a request from H. J. Schmidt to lease the bathhouse for a period of ten years, paying the city 5% of his revenues but the issue proved controversial. “...Councilman Burke came forward with an objection, stating that he could see no reason whatsoever for turning the park over to private interests and he registered vigorous objection.”60 The following month Theo. P. Cramer, on behalf of the “Bathhouse Committee,” wrote a letter to the Council objecting to the lease of the building, pointing out the club had donated the structure to the city on the expectation the city would operate and maintain it. “It is only within the last two or three years that Grants Pass has awakened to the fact that the park is one of our most valuable and attractive assets.”61 At its following meeting, all council members but one voted against the lease, and the bathhouse remained a city-operated facility. “The move voluminous petition ever read before the council was presented in protest to the leasing of the bathhouse to private parties...”62 Patrons of the bathhouse could purchase tickets ($1 for twenty visits), rent towels and suits, and gain access to the boardwalk into the water.63

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Riverside Park

The original bathhouse, built in 1915, deteriorated and was removed in 1936. "It was torn down April 22 and by July 18, 1936 the new bathhouse opened."64 Swimming remained popular at the park until the 1950s, when concerns about polio resulted in a decline. The old timber-crib dam that created the calm water washed out in the 1964 flood and the bathhouse was apparently removed shortly thereafter. In 2017, the current concert pavilion was built on the former location of the bathhouse, roughly replicating its footprint.

Original Gazebo (1919)
The Grants Pass Band was reorganized in 1917, under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, apparently replacing an earlier effort that existed at least as late as 1908.65 “A concert, to be given in about six weeks, will mark the reorganized band's first public appearance.” 66 The first concert was held in early June 1917 and became a regular Sunday event during the summer season over subsequent years.67

The band is developing rapidly under the instruction of band master J. H. Williams and has won recognition from every side as the best band in Southern Oregon. These free open-air concerts should be enjoyed by all the people in the city.68

In 1919 the First National Bank, who had donated the land that led to the creation of Riverside Park in 1906, offered to erect a new bandstand in Riverside Park, to support the city band and provide a platform for presentations. “The bank has been interested in the park at all time and in fact made the park a possibility by presenting the original...tract to the city.”69 As shown in historic postcards and photographic images, the band shell, the Gazebo, was an octagonal wooden structure built upon a raised foundation with what appears as braced log-columns supporting a conical roof. The gazebo as nestled in a grove of trees with a small concrete fountain that, at least for time, held goldfish. By 1971 the gazebo was in poor condition, only used on “…infrequent occasions,” such as Boatnik or the Annual River Races.” Its limited use did not warrant the cost of repair and the building was removed.70

**RIVERSIDE PARK COMMUNITY USES – 1906-1963**

From its inception, as intended, Riverside Park became a focal point for family outings, picnics, and swimming for Grants Pass residents. Larger groups, and organized events were also held at the park, increasing as the facilities amenities were improved. “Riverside park, on the banks of the Rogue, is one of the beautiful playgrounds of the west, and the city is going to considerable expense to add convenience and attracts to the natural scenic beauty.”71 “Riverside park had a throng in it all day long.”72 In 1915 the city held a “Railroad Jubilee, to mark the arrival of the trains and the birth of the city, with the final celebration including a “Salmon Bake,” in Riverside Park. Churches held outdoor services in the park on Sundays, which supported the city band concerts. Associations, including “Iowans Annual Picnic, for former residents of that state, used the park,73 Riverside Park also served as the location for the city’s Easter egg hunts, 4th of July celebrations and other community events. “Before the Josephine County Fairgrounds was purchased and developed in the late-1920s, the park was the hub of all major civic celebrations, fireworks displays, traveling shows, circuses and horseracing.”74

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64 Momsen, Joan. *Bridges and Dam at Grants Pass, Oregon*. (Grants Pass, OR: Josephine County Historical Society, 2017), 39.
CHL RIVERSIDE PARK

Name of Property: Riverside Park
County and State: Josephine Co., OR

CHRISTMAS FLOOD OF 1964

Work at Riverside Park largely halted in the 1930s, as the Great Depression impacted the local economy and little work was possible during World War Two.75 In the late-1940s and early-1950s, as Grants Pass population ballooned from its pre-war totals and the economy boomed, the city again was able to work and make improvements to Riverside Park.76 The city continued to upgrade the park in the late-1950s and continuing into the 1960s, at least partially in response to damage to the park during the 1964 Christmas Flood. “There was big trouble on the Rogue River, where 8.51 inches of rain came down in less than a week and the river crested at 24.3 feet at Medford, twelve feet above flood stage.”77 Grants Pass was especially hard hit. “The Rogue River has widened its course through Grants Pass and environs, cutting steep banks and chewing 25 to 100 feet off valuable properties along the river’s south shoreline.” There were heavy monetary damages at Riverside Park. “Some equipment was lost at Riverside Park and the repair and cleanup will be costly.”78 Aerial photos of the park in the aftermath of the flood show water covering most of the lower area (see Figures 24-25). The flood caused widespread damage and washing away the Riverside Park bathhouse and severely damaging much the park’s lower portion.79

As a result of the damage to park, the City undertook considerable restoration and rehabilitation in the aftermath of the flood. New, durable, concrete restrooms were built near the playground and, on the upper lawn, near the park maintenance yard. The baseball diamond and the memorial gardens were installed and other upgrades to improve and expand the utility the park were developed, including increased off-street parking areas. Work retained the basic form of the park, respecting the original layout and maintaining the curvilinear path system and planting areas. The large trees generally survived the damage.

RIVERSIDE PARK COMMUNITY USE – MODERN ERA

Today Riverside Park hosts numerous regular community events, including the on-going Concert in the Park series, car shows, outdoor church services, balloon, and kite festivals, and “Rally on the Rogue,” a vintage travel-trailer and “glamping” event. “Back to the 50s” a classic car event and concert series, has been held at the park for thirty years.

The park is the premier venues for other community events as well, including the Right-to-Life March, community Easter egg hunt, Vietnam Veterans Barbeque, March of Dimes’ Walk for Babies, Native American Arts Festival & Mother’s Day Pow-Wow, Frog O’Faire, Kennel Club Canine “Good Citizen” classes, Duck Derby, and Church of the Valley worship services. Sporting competitions are also a big draw. YMCA “Biddy Soccer” teams kick the ball around on Saturday mornings in the spring. Grants Pass Youth Soccer Club teams take the field in spring and Fall….Women’s softball is played on the diamond in the eastern corner of the park.80

One of the largest events in Grants Pass, the Boatnik Festival, sponsored by the Grants Pass Active Club, has been held over Memorial Day weekend at Riverside Park since 1959.81

Each year about this time an annual aquatic fever seems to seize the people of Grants Pass. It reaches a climax with a two-day festival known as the “Boatnick...” Saturday afternoon in the

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75 Information on the development in Riverside Park, as well as community use, after the late-1920s is complicated by near total lack of city park department records and the inaccessibility of local newspapers, which are not digitized. Microfilm newspapers were not accessible during the research for this project. Evaluation relied on available aerial photos, informants, and physical information.

76 Grants Pass population rose from 4,666 in 1930 to more than 10,000, in 1960, according to US Census data (Oregon Bluebook, 1961:327).


79 Ellis, op cit., 1965:30.

80 “Riverside Park,” Southern Oregon REC. 2017-March-2017, 32

city’s Riverside Park, a Boatnick Queen will be crowned...from the same point in the city the white water race to Galice and back will get underway...\textsuperscript{82}

On a smaller scale, numerous gardening events, such as rose pruning demonstrations, and nature walks, continue at Riverside Park on a regular basis throughout the calendar year.

**SUMMARY**

Established in 1906 following the donation of land to the City, Riverside Park was the first large public recreation open-space in Grants Pass, Oregon and almost immediately became a focal point for a variety of community recreation and events. Located on the bank of the Rogue River, the park’s initial focus on the water and swimming was enhanced by the development of specific amenities including a boathouse and swimming hole, and slowly augmented by additional features, including a band stand, picnic areas, and expanded lawns, groves of trees, and other plantings. Riverside Park’s central role in the community made it a natural focus for a wide variety of commemorative monuments, a role that continues, with various areas dedicated to veterans, and significant individuals in the park’s, and the region’s, history.

As Grants Pass’ first publicly owned and developed outdoor recreation area, Riverside Park is a key element of the community and continues to play a major role in the city’s character and quality of life. Created during the “City Beautiful” area, Riverside Park marks a major milestone in the city’s development and growth into a mature community that could, and did, provide a broad range of public amenities to its citizenry. The ongoing variety of uses that rely upon the park’s open spaces and facilities reflect that tradition.

While modified and upgraded over time, Riverside Park retains its essential layout, design and character and continues to reflect its significant role in the history and development of Grants Pass, Oregon, providing a large, multi-purpose, publicly-owned, landscaped setting that has remained a source of pride, and community focus, for over a century. Riverside Park retains substantial integrity in design and feeling and accurately reflects its historic development. Riverside Park is significant under Criterion A, within the history of Grants Pass, Oregon in the area of community planning and development.

Riverside Park

Name of Property

Josephine Co., OR

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


City of Grants Pass. *Council Minutes, Parks files and misc.*


Oregonian. Misc. articles as cited in text by date:page.


*Rogue River Courier.* Misc. articles as cited in text by date:page.


Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository: City of Grants Pass

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A
Riverside Park
Name of Property

Josephine Co., OR
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 24.83 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter “Less than one” if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: N/A
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The nominated area consists of a 24.83 acre tract located on the south bank of the Rogue River, extending west from SE Vista Drive and north of East Park Street, extending below the highway bridge that carries Oregon State Highway 99 (Northbound, 7th Street) over the river, and ending at the Caveman Bridge. The boundary consists of three municipally-owned tax lots, identified by the Josephine County Assessor Plats 36-05-20BC-2000, 36-05-19AD-100 and 36-05-19AD-200, the area defined and known as “Riverside Park,” as historically maintained and operated by the City of Grants Pass.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The nominated area consists of the entire park site as first donated to the City of Grants Pass for park development in 1906 and subsequently augmented and developed to provide for community park use, with all land within the nominated area incorporated into the park by 1920.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title          George Kramer, M.S, HP  date    April 2020
organization        Kramer & Company, for the City of Grants Pass  telephone  (541) 482-9504
street & number     386 North Laurel  email    george@preserveoregon.com
city or town         Ashland  state    OR  zip code    97520

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

• Regional Location Map
• Local Location Map
• Tax Lot Map
• Site Plan
• Floor Plans (As Applicable)
• Photo Location Map (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form  
NPS Form 10-900  
(Expires 5/31/2025)

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### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

#### Photo Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Property:</th>
<th>Riverside Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City or Vicinity:</td>
<td>Grants Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County:</td>
<td>Josephine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographer:</td>
<td>George Kramer, M.S., HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Photographed:</td>
<td>October/November 2019</td>
</tr>
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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

**Photo 1 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0001)  
Looking West, toward Glen Woolridge Memorial and Caveman Bridge

**Photo 2 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0002)  
Looking East, across lawn toward Trevillian Pavilion

**Photo 3 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0003)  
Looking NE, past Veterans Fountain, toward River & Riverside Pavilion

**Photo 4 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0004)  
Looking East, along pathway of lower lawn/Soccer Field, toward boat dock (Vista Dr)k

**Photo 5 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0005)  
Looking SW, toward East Park & Seventh St

**Photo 6 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0006)  
Looking East, toward playground

**Photo 7 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0007)  
Looking South, past Peace Memorial to Rose Garden and Centennial Gazebo

**Photo 8 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0008)  
Looking NE, at Blue Star Highway/Memorial Garden

**Photo 9 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0009)  
Looking East, Union Veterans Monument, toward Trevillian Pavilion and Playground

**Photo 10 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0010)  
Looking E, along riverbank

**Photo 11 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0011)  
Looking NE, to Centennial Gazebo and Rose Garden, ball field at right

**Photo 12 of 15:** (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0012)  
Looking West, across Rose Garden to Upper Restroom/Garage Bldg.
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Photo 13 of 15:  (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0013)  
Looking NW, across horseshoe courts, to Upper Restroom/Garage Bldg.  

Photo 14 of 15:  (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0014)  
Looking North, along ballfield fence, toward scoreboard  

Photo 15 of 15:  (OR_JosephineCounty_GrantsPass_RiversidePark_0015)  
Looking NE, along walkway at East Park St, showing Park Caretaker’s House/Office  

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).  
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering, and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Riverside Park
Name of Property

Josephine Co., OR
County and State

Photo Location Map
Riverside Park
Name of Property
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County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

List of Figures
(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

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Figure 5: Josephine County Assessors Map 36051AD, Showing Tax Lot 100 and 200 (14.27ac)
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Figure 21: HISTORIC PHOTO: Grants Pass Park on the Bank of the Rogue River, Showing Swimming Pavilion and Caveman Bridge, Postcard View c1940
Figure 22: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, General View, January 1953
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Figure 28: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, Group Gathered at Glu-Lam Gazebo, Sept 1970 (City of Grants Pass)
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**County and State**
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Figure 8: Riverside Park, Park Map Tree Inventory, c1990 (City of Grants Pass)
Riverside Park

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### Additional Documentation

**Figure 9:** HISTORIC AERIAL VIEW, Riverside Park (USACOE Image), 1939.

![Figure 9: HISTORIC AERIAL VIEW, Riverside Park (USACOE Image), 1939.](image)

**Figure 10:** HISTORIC AERIAL VIEW, Riverside Park (USACOE Image), 1957.

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Figure 15: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, Postcard View, Postmarked 1909

![Riverside Park, Postcard View, Postmarked 1909](image1)

Figure 16: HISTORIC PHOTO: “City Park,” Postcard View, c1910

![“City Park,” Postcard View, c1910](image2)
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Figure 17: HISTORIC PHOTO: “Drive in River Side Park, Grants Pass,” Postcard View, c1910

Figure 18: HISTORIC PHOTO: City Park, Postcard View, c1910
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Figure 19: HISTORIC PHOTO: Drive in City Park, Postcard View, c1925

Figure 20: HISTORIC PHOTO: City Park (Band Stand), Postcard View, Postmarked 1929
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| Figure 22: | HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, General View, January 1953 (City of Grants Pass) |
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Figure 23: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, General View, July 1958 (City of Grants Pass)

Figure 24: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, Looking North toward River, Christmas Flood, 1964 (City of Grants Pass)
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Figure 25: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, Aerial View, Looking West, Christmas Flood, 1964, Park on Left, (Josephine County Historical Society Image)

![Aerial View of Riverside Park](image-url)
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**Figure 28**: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, Group Gathered at Glu-Lam Gazebo, Sept 1970 (City of Grants Pass)

![Figure 28](image1.png)

**Figure 29**: HISTORIC PHOTO: Riverside Park, Looking SE to Playground, c1989 (City of Grants Pass)

![Figure 29](image2.png)
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