



## BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

150 BEAVERCREEK ROAD  
OREGON CITY, OR 97045  
WWW.CLACKAMAS.US/BCS

July 15, 2021

SARAH ECKMAN, ORCEMS  
INTERIM DIRECTOR  
SARAHSTE@CLACKAMAS.US  
503-742-4303

ALLEGRA WILLHITE, MPA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
AWILLHITE@CLACKAMAS.US  
503-742-4399

### DIVISIONS

#### NORTH CLACKAMAS PARKS & RECREATION DISTRICT

KANDI HO  
PARKS MANAGER

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOREST & AGRICULTURE

PROPERTY DISPOSITION  
SARAH ECKMAN, ORCEMS  
INTERIM DIRECTOR

#### COUNTY PARKS & FORESTRY

TOM RIGGS  
MANAGER

#### STONE CREEK GOLF CLUB

GORDON TOLBERT, PGA  
OWNER, TOTAL GOLF  
MANAGEMENT

#### LINCC LIBRARY SERVICES

KATHRYN KOHL  
MANAGER

#### OAK LODGE LIBRARY

MITZI OLSON, MLIS  
MANAGER

#### COUNTY FAIR & EVENT CENTER

LAURIE BOTHWELL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To: Gary Schmidt, County Administrator  
From: Sarah Eckman, BCS Interim Director

RE: Request for Thimble Forest School discussion item on July 20, 2021 Administrator's Issues

Administrator Schmidt,

**Summary:** I respectfully request to add a Thimble Forest School discussion item to the Administrator's Issues agenda on July 20, 2021. The purpose of the item is to brief the Board of County Commissioners on a request from Thimble Forest School to operate a forest school on the recently donated Wetten property in Oregon City. BCS requests approval from the Board to move forward with the development of a Facility Use Agreement between the County and Thimble Forest School for the school to hold a forest school on the Wetten Property. County Counsel has recommended this type of agreement based on the needs of the project.

**Background:** On December 17, 2020, the County accepted donation of 12.86 acres of land on South May Road south of Oregon City from John and Marilee Wetten. John Wetten, a retired educator and principle, expressed a vision of the property serving as a place for nature education, and in accepting the donation, the County committed to preserving the property as a "park or natural area for educational or conservation purposes so future generations can explore and enjoy the woods, springs, and creek on the property".

On April 26, the County transferred control of the Wetten Property to BCS/Parks. On May 13, BCS Parks and Forestry Manager Tom Riggs met onsite with representatives from Thimble Forest School to consider the site as a possible location for a "Forest Kindergarten".

On June 29, 2021, Thimble Forest School submitted a detailed proposal for use of the site, which would involve the school and their volunteers making site improvements to accommodate their logistical needs, such as adjusting a fence line and graveling a parking area, trail clearing and improvements, brush mowing in some clearings, erecting temporary structures for school use, assessing and possibly shoring up an existing barn structure for intermittent goat housing for brush clearing goats, adding a porta-potty, and installing a sign indicating the school's presence.

The school proposes to operate on site 4 days a week during the school year, and would have a 5 day a week summer camp for two weeks in July/August.

Parks anticipates charging \$100/month for use of the property. This rate is lower than they have paid elsewhere, but also recognizes their significant commitment to volunteer work and improvements at this site, as well as their striving towards greater income accessibility for forest schools.