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## News Release

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**Prineville Oregon**

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## Wetlands Groundbreaking Ceremony set for April 22, 2016

The Crooked River Wetlands Groundbreaking Ceremony is slated for April 22, 2016 starting at 11:00 AM. The location of the groundbreaking is 4035 NW Rimrock Acres Loop in Prineville. Activities surrounding the event are expected to last about two hours.

The date chosen for the groundbreaking is very significant. For almost 50 years, Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Events are held worldwide to demonstrate support for environmental protection and sustainability. The Crooked River Wetlands project fits perfectly with these celebrations.

The Crooked River Wetlands came about through innovative and environmentally-conscious thinking on the part of the City of Prineville. The City was faced with a mandate to expand and improve its wastewater treatment capability. The normal solution, a new wastewater treatment plant, would have cost the City (and taxpayers) over \$57M. And it wouldn't be expandable or as environmentally sustainable as city staff desired.

The solution, 120 acres of ponds and lagoons along the Crooked River, will utilize the natural environment to treat wastewater. Additionally, riparian improvements along the river, as well as over five miles of hiking trails (three of which will be paved) will promote educational awareness, fitness, and environmental sustainability.

“This is a fantastic project, not only for the cost savings it has generated but for all its ancillary benefits. Two miles of riparian improvements will benefit the steelhead and salmon reintroduction effort which helps to ensure the success of the Habitat Conservation Plan. My favorite component of this project is the 13 educational kiosks being designed by our local school children. These will enhance future school field trips and learning experiences way into the future,” said Eric Klann, Prineville’s City Engineer.

Given the recent growth of Prineville, the city’s new wastewater system has been designed to service the city’s needs through the year 2030. And the beauty of the wetlands is that, as the city expands and grows, so can the wetlands – sustainably, environmentally, and with reasonable cost to the taxpayers.

“I am so excited to see this project finally underway. We really appreciate all the help we have received from our contributors. It takes many organizations to make a project of this size come together. A real asset to the environment of the Crooked River, the community, our students, and tourists will have a wonderful park-like setting to hike, run, and learn about the environment. I am so proud of our staff who worked so hard to accomplish this and save our tax payers a lot of money,” said Betty Roppe, Mayor of Prineville.

The City of Prineville wants to thank the financial contributors to this project. These include the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Infrastructure Finance Authority, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Portland General Electric, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and Oregon State Parks.

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The City of Prineville’s mission statement: “To consistently contribute to Prineville’s reputation as a safe, welcoming, and friendly place to live, work, play, and visit.” The City was established in 1868 and is one of Oregon’s first incorporated cities. The City is located in an ancient volcanic basin where the rim rock plateaus lend their scenic beauty.