



Gathering Space

Saving Madison Meadow will help build community.

Think globally, act locally. Now more than ever this phrase is apt. Why? Because as many of us struggle with the implications of the last election, we know we must pick ourselves up and move on with the just causes that will benefit our community and humanity.

Save Madison Meadow is such a project. As I pass through and within the meadow, located at 22nd and Madison in Eugene, in all seasons and weather I know deep in my heart we are better off with this field, this remnant orchard, as a community place rather than private houses. As we approach our first goal that will allow us to take ownership of the land or we find ourselves dreaming into her many possibilities. We can see an intricate two-acre haunted pathway for next year at Halloween, and for next summer, a movie and pajama party with star gazing and camaraderie. We see a natural meeting and gathering place without cement or structure that will bring us closer to nature and each other. Many of us can simply walk or bike there.

Think about the proposed exploitation of the pristine Alaskan wilderness and act to save Madison Meadow. Think about how large corporations get tax shelters and first priority for their needs and the city's coffers are empty for preserving quality open space, and support Madison Meadow. Think about how in our "civilized" nation there are still millions without basic health care and send a donation to Madison Meadow to take an important step in safeguarding our collective health and bringing us together as a community.

The meadow was definitely something we all took for granted, and like many such things, its loss would now be acute. We can use it to actively bring our neighborhood and

entire community together for autumn harvest gatherings, spring celebrations, educational opportunities, self-renewal and moments of solitude. We know that too many of us are isolated in our individual homes and in front of our television sets – unhappily this has become our way of life. The meadow will encourage village/neighborhood life like the plaza in all Mexican towns. A place for folks to meet and stroll after dinner. A place to walk when that translucent sun returns following a heavy rain. A place to greet others and feel connected. Not a café or workshop where we meet others, but a free, open space, that has its own rhythm – a taste of village life.

The march to fill in the urban growth boundary will happen regardless of the preservation of this land. Developing this meadow will not influence the in-fill process, but it will be a tremendous loss for the Friendly Street Neighborhood and the city as a whole. A key to wise development is knowing when not to build. This is the new "smart-growth."

Eugene is a unique and special place but we aren't really so unique unless we walk our talk and take chances to create something better. Restoring this natural habitat and creating a place for all who wish to come is our vision. You are invited.

Dec. 31 is our first deadline to make this dream come true. We still need more funds in order to set this example that will reverberate across the nation. Think about long grass and small creatures – dancing under the moonlight and seeing the stars more clearly. We can protect our quality of life by guarding what we value. So think globally and start right here in our special corner of Earth-Eugene. More than 200 families and individuals have already given. RSVP with a donation and then celebrate with us.

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Madison Meadow, PO box 50743, Eugene 97405. For questions call 683-3430 or visit www.madisonmeadow.org

Lorri Goodman is a photographer and entrepreneur living in Eugene. She is on the Board of the Save Madison Meadow Campaign.