

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	Dawson & Foster Rds Bellfountain, Benton County	historic name:	Bellfountain Campground
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Bellfountain Park
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	14S 6W 11
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	district	height (stories):	
elig evaluation:	eligible/contributing	total elig resources:	
prim constr date:	1851	second date:	
		total inelig resources:	
primary orig use:	Outdoor Recreation	NR Status:	
second orig use:		date indiv listed:	
primary style:	Not Applicable	orig use comments:	
secondary style:		prim style comments:	
primary siding:		sec style comments:	
secondary siding:		siding comments:	
plan type:		architect:	
		builder:	
comments/notes:			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Type of Grouping	Date Listed	Date Compiled
Benton County RLS Survey 2009	Survey & Inventory Project		2009
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	N/A	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:	09/30/2009	Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>Bellfountain Park is located on the north side of Dawson Road approximately one mile west of the town of Bellfountain. Located in the foothills of the Coast Range, the park is situated on a hill overlooking the Reese Creek and Oliver Creek valleys. The park today has large, forested areas of Douglas Firs with scattered individual trees of 100 years or older. Oak trees, some over 100 years old, are scattered throughout the park. The center of the park is cleared and consists of an open grassy space. A softball field is located in this area. Bellfountain Park is notable for what has been referred to as the longest picnic table in the United States cut from one continuous piece of wood. This table is located beneath a rectangular shelter built in the Northwest Regional style. The table, which was milled at the Hull-Oaks Lumber Co. in Dawson (several miles west of the park), was probably built around 1965, with the shelter being even more recent. In addition to this shelter, there is an octagonal shelter and restrooms, recently built. Picnic table and outbuildings added, post-1965. - The park itself is in good condition, however it lacks integrity given all of the modern additions to accommodate recreation. (Parking lots, kitchen shelter, softball field, etc.) - A sand volleyball court and jungle gym have been added since the previous survey, just south of the long picnic table and shelter. -</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>Written by Mary Weber & Kathy Schutt in : Bellfountain Park is significant as Benton County's oldest "park." As the location of religious camp meetings in the 19th Century, the park was a focal point in the religious and social life of the Belknap Community. Early settlers of the Belknap Community voted to have a Methodist Camp meeting in 1851. Apparently, the camp meeting was an established tradition for many members of the Belknap Community prior to emigrating to Oregon. A committee was selected to choose a site for the meeting. The site chosen was located on the Orin Belknap Donation Land Claim. The site was chosen because of a large spring of cold water and a natural amphitheater in this location. From 1851 until the turn of the century, camp meetings were held in this location each year during the week between the last Sunday in June and the first Sunday in July (between haying and harvesting.) the wide, level space above the "amphitheater" slope provided a place to set up tents and room for the horses to be stabled. In addition to the religious function of camp meetings, the meetings were a time to renew old acquaintances. The meeting also included baptism and marriage ceremonies. When the Orin Belknap land was sold, the Methodist Church trustees decided to purchase the land. On November 8, 1871, the site was purchased from George and Cynthia Humphrey for \$250.00. Camp meetings were discontinued in 1904. At this time, trustees of the Simpson Chapel of the Methodist Church transferred the land to the trustees of the Bellfountain Park Association and their successors. Original trustees included J.M. Edwards, J.R. Buckingham, George W. Humphrey, S.C. Starr, and J.P. Gragg. Since that time, the land has been used as a public park. For many years, it was the site of reunions for the descendants of the pioneer families of the area. In 1961, the Bellfountain Park Association leased the park to the Benton County Park and Recreation District and in 1970 the deed to this land was transferred to the County. Religious revival meetings are still held in the park occasionally.</p>			
RESEARCH INFORMATION			
Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	
Local Library:		University Library:	
Historical Society:		Other Respository:	
Bibliography:			
<p>Benton County Deed registry. Gazette-Times. Corvallis, Oregon. June 10, 1959. Hull, Ralph. Personal Communication. Jan, 30, 1985. McCallum, Vernetta. "Notes on the History of Bellfountain Park." Manuscript, n.d. Mintoyne, Edna. "They Laughed Too." The Naylor Co., San Antonio, Texas. 1968. Teal, Marion. "Diary Tells of 1851 Camp", in Gazette-Times. Corvallis, Oregon. April 30, 1952.</p>			