



ROTARY PARK ON THE GREENBELT

How it happened 2013-2020

A collaborative project by three Rotary Clubs, Boise Metro, Boise Centennial, Eagle-Garden City and the Daughters of the American Revolution to build a pocket park on the Boise River Greenbelt. The primary feature of the park is the 1932 NSDAR monument commemorating the early pioneers along the Oregon Trail.



ROTARY PARK ON THE GREENBELT – The Story 2013-2020

By John D. Biggs, Boise Metro Rotary, November 2020

The Players:

John Biggs, Project Manager, Boise Metro Rotary
Gene de Laveaga, Eagle/Garden City Rotary
Toby Norton, City Parks and Rec
Kelly Burrows, City Parks and Rec
Doug Holloway, City Parks Director
Brandi Burns, City Arts and History
Janice Beller, Regent, Pioneer Chapter, NSDAR, 2017-2019
Marsi Woody, Regent, Pioneer Chapter, NSDAR , 2019-2021
John Yarnell, Alex Caves and Kira Gruenhagen-Townsend , Trademark Design & Fabrication
Dave Snow, Clearwater Landscaping
Tim Hendrix, First Call Construction
Shayne Geib, Cutting Edge Landscaping
Members of Boise Metro Rotary, Centennial Rotary and Eagle/Garden City Rotary



IT BEGAN WITH AN EMAIL IN DECEMBER 2013

It's hard to imagine now, but by the early 1960s the Boise River was a dispiriting waterway rolling through the Treasure Valley. The water was fouled with industrial pollution, the flood plain was confused. The health department even proclaimed "don't touch the water!" It was to be avoided at all cost.

A group of Boise's leading citizens came to realize that this river was a community asset that needed to be cleaned up and protected for future generations. In 1962 an effort began to restore the river and procure easements and rights of way along both sides of the river with the intention of building a "Green Belt" of public lands for everyone to enjoy.

Now, more than 50 years later, the dream has been achieved. The newest Greenbelt section, on the south side of the river, between Joe's Crab Shack and Ann Morrison Park, is the very last section within the city limits. The Greenbelt is called the "Ribbon of Jewels" connecting numerous parks and is, along with the foothills trails system, among Boise's most recognized features, enjoyed by many throughout the year.

In December of 2013, as a member of Boise Metro Rotary Club and a Greenbelt lover, I inquired of Boise City Parks and Recreation department if there was some project that a Rotary club might sink its teeth into. Jerry Pugh, the Park's Volunteer Coordinator, responded to my email and, with a wink in his eye, said "come with me". He took me on a hike through the bushes and brambles from Americana Terrace to show where the new Greenbelt would be. Jerry explained that this final section was funded and the

project scheduled; that they'd really like to have a "pocket park" along this section but it was not in their budget. "Wouldn't it be awesome if an organization could build this park for us?"

As we continued on the walk along the proposed path and reached the area just east of the Fairview bridge we came across what would come to be known as the "Lugenbeel Monument". Here sat a tall sandstone monument, in the



shape of Idaho, with a commemoration to the 1863 visit to Boise of Major Pinkney Lugenebeel who had been sent by the US Army to find a site for Fort Boise. The Monument was placed there or at least



somewhere nearby, by the Sons and Daughters of the Idaho Pioneers in 1932. It was not visible from the road, or anywhere else. On March 6, 2014, I invited several members of our club to join me on a hike along the route.

As it happened, this Lugenebeel Monument would have to be moved as it sat right in the middle of the new pathway. The thought immediately came to mind: let's move it to our park and make it a focal point. With the discovery of the monument the project immediately became a very interesting prospect.



On September 13, 2014 Metro members were invited to a tour of the monument and the proposed new path. Mike Barker arranged for refreshments. On September 25 we met with Brandi Burns from the City Department of Arts and History to learn more about the monuments. A Steering Committee of Metro members met October 14, 2014 to discuss project feasibility and formulate a plan. We had enthusiastic support from Toby Norton, project manager from Parks and Rec. At Metro, we decided this might be too much for our small club, so we proposed that Centennial and Eagle/Garden City join us. After hearing our presentation, they enthusiastically came on board. The City would be the contracting entity, Rotary would supply the ideas, the money, and perhaps some manpower. Our park would include the monument, park benches, a bike repair stand and interpretive signs.

My friend Larry Boyd successfully created two watercolor images of our vision. I had asked him to draw what was in my mind. He nailed it! These would become our “logos”.



Discovery of this heretofore unseen monument sparked a research project into Boise’s history which ultimately would become the focus of the Rotary Park on the Greenbelt. What was this monument? Who was Pinkney Lugenbeel? Who are the Sons and Daughters of the Idaho Pioneers? Did the U.S. Army find the site? How did the Greenbelt start back in ‘60s? Who built the trestle bridge?

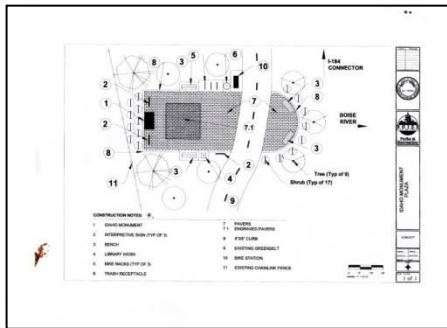
The New Greenbelt Section is Built

Construction of the new section of Greenbelt began in November 2015 and would be completed by May of 2016. This was quite a project, mainly because tunnels had to be built under Main St and Fairview Ave. The ribbon cutting ceremony occurred on September 16, 2016. Our project could not be finalized until after this project was completed. We couldn’t co-mingle with the federally funded project.



Projected Costs

Now that the new section was complete we could finalize the location of our project and begin visualizing the final design. Our committee selected the ultimate location on July 6, 2016. (We had initially thought we could build on the western side of the connector, but the location of the new tunnel made that impossible). In September, Toby and Kelly Burrows at Parks and Rec provided an initial design plan and an “Estimate of Probable Cost” for \$48,000. The estimate included two items that would become problematic - \$15,000 to move and refurbish the Lugenbeel monument and \$7,500 for three interpretive signs.



The estimate included all the elements of the plan – four benches, the bike repair stand, bike rack, landscaping, pavers, etc.

Now that the pieces were in place, a fund raising plan was implemented. We initiated a commemorative brick program with Fundraisers, Ltd. and applied for grants from various places. We made presentations to many groups, including all the Rotary clubs in the valley, went on Ch 7 and had a great article in the Statesman.

By the end of 2016 we had nearly reached our goal of \$50,000!

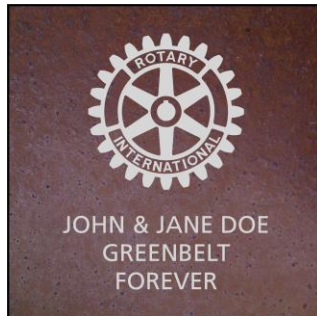
Approvals needed

Before we could think about any actual construction some permissions were needed. The City had to obtain an easement from the Idaho Transportation Department. On March 16, 2017, I made a presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission, which approved the project and recommended it to the City Council. I made a presentation to that group the following month; it was unanimously, and enthusiastically approved. The City would approve a Donation Agreement in June of 2018.



Approvals in hand, on April 1, 2017, we placed a sign at the site announcing the Future Home of Rotary Park on the Greenbelt. That sign would be updated as the project progressed.

The Bricks



From the beginning, we figured a good source of funds would be the sale of commemorative bricks. This was a popular fund raising tool seen all over the city. Not knowing anything about it, I Googled “fundraising with bricks”. The first entry that appeared was a company called Fundraisers, Ltd. Their website was most impressive, with some spectacular projects all over the country. Some major league sports stadium projects were featured. Turns out, Fundraisers, Ltd is located in Garden City, Idaho, right on the Greenbelt! Who knew? They had to become part of the team.

We offered 4x8 bricks with three lines of text for \$50; a larger 8x8 with the Rotary logo and five lines of text for \$95. Fundraisers would provide the online sales platform, which worked very well.

We started selling bricks online in April of 2017. We had sold 262 bricks by the end of 2018, well below our original goal of 500. The first order of bricks was placed in November 2017 to take advantage of Fundraiser’s promotion with a discount. (In the end, we sold 367 bricks, grossing \$20,000, and netting about \$10,000).

The Little Free Library and Bird Boxes

We only incidentally noticed that JUMP was offering a class in their woodshop to build a little free library. All materials included. That would make an interesting feature at our park! So, on February 16, 2017, Dave Gott, Gene de Laveaga and I built a library! Gene painted it with Rotary colors and it was eventually located at the park.

We also knew the city was promoting the idea of building bird boxes for city parks and riparian areas. Jerry Pugh, City’s Volunteer Coordinator, provided us with construction plans. In the summer of 2019 Jim and Cathy Sears of Eagle/Garden City Rotary built two duck boxes and one kestrel box. They have been installed near our park.

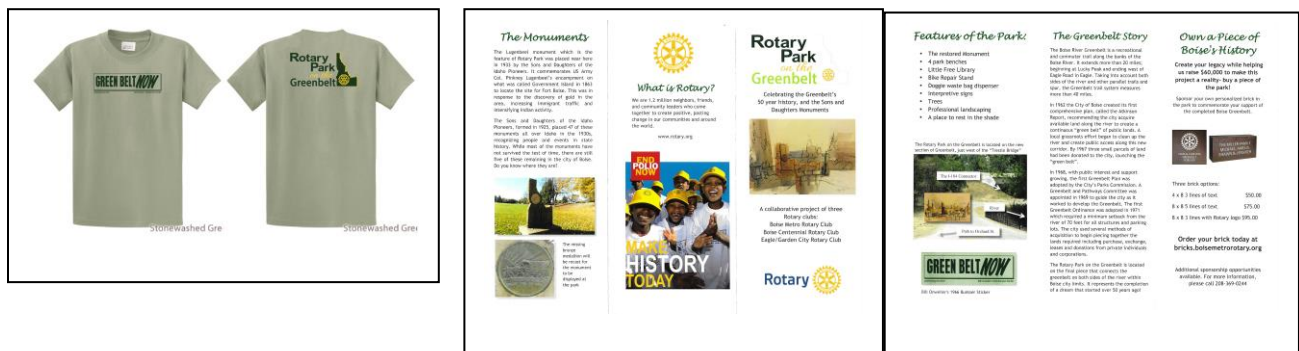


Marketing Efforts

Our early efforts to bring community awareness to the project were primarily aimed at brick sales. We produced a three-fold brochure for general distribution. We also had McCu Sports make a special T-shirt for our Rotarians. We held a fund raising event at Telaya Winery and opened a GoFundMe account.

We also enjoyed three major newspaper articles in the Idaho Statesman and the Idaho Press in May and November of 2017 and June of 2019.

A number of grant applications were filed during this time as well. Refer to the final financial report for details.



Our First Delay – the Flood

The spring of 2017 presented Boise with the worst spring flooding in decades. The river washed away many sections of the Greenbelt, requiring that many sections be closed – for months. Our site is well



above flood level but the closures all around dramatically reduced the traffic. In fact, the Greenbelt was technically closed. We had to abandon a fundraising plan at the site. With Parks and Rec now faced with major repair projects, other projects that had been in the pipeline were moved to the back burner, including ours. Our project had to be put on hold and would not come alive again until early 2019.

The Monuments – Change of Plans

The Sons and Daughters of the Idaho Pioneers and the Daughters of the American Revolution placed 49 monuments around southern Idaho in the 1930s, commemorating people, places and events in Idaho history. Our research discovered that there were five of these the monuments within Boise's city limits. This became the quiz of the day – do you know where they are? Here's the answer:

- The Lugenbeel Monument, near our site
- In Front of the Chapel by BSU stadium
- In a parking lot at The VA Hospital
- At a private residence off Geckler Ave
- Next to the Boise Inn on Garden St

The initial plan was to move the Lugenbeel monument to the site of our park. But in November of 2017 we were mysteriously called to a meeting with Doug Holloway, Director of Parks and Rec, to receive some troubling news. The monument's inscription read in part, " ...the beginning of civilization in Boise Valley". We all knew that wasn't exactly true, but it was deemed as possibly offensive to some, so the Mayor decreed that it could not be used on city property. This was a blow to our project since the monument was the most critical piece. Rather than promote a controversy, the story we would tell is that it was determined that the monument was in such poor condition that it was not feasible to refurbish it. It did have a large crack across the top section and there was a bronze medallion missing that would have to be replaced.

At that November meeting, while we grappled with the news and how it would change our project, I floated a new idea, with no prior aforethought. One of the Boise monuments was located nearby next to the Boise Inn on Garden Street. It appeared to be in very good condition and was located in such a place that very few people would ever see it. What if we moved that monument instead? We wondered who owned it. It had an inscription indicating it was placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1932. The inscription was harmless enough, talking about Government Island and the Pioneers. Those present thought it might be a fine alternative and we should proceed to determine the feasibility.

The City didn't seem particularly interested in trying to track down the monument's ownership and uncovering title issues, etc. But then a remarkable coincidence occurred. At an update meeting with Toby and Kelly on November 9, 2017, we were introduced to Janice Beller, Regent of the local National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) chapter. She had been totally unaware of our project and contacted Toby Norton, explaining that the chapter had, for years, been trying to figure out how to move that monument where it would be more visible. They were sure they owned it. Toby invited Janice to our meeting and, Voila! Pioneer Chapter, NSDAR would become a partner in the project and explore moving their monument to the park to replace the Lugenbeel monument as our feature element!



This is the last we saw of Lugenbeel

Now a new challenge arose – how to move the NSDAR monument and how much would it cost? It was a more difficult procedure than first imagined. It would involve cutting the monument from its base, moving and re-setting it on a new base, removing the old base and restoring the landscape. The monument looked good but nobody could be sure it could survive a move. The new base for the monument was part of the specs in the overall design. In July, 2018, after considering options, First Call provided Toby with an estimate for \$9,000.

More delay in 2018

The pieces were coming together in 2018 and it was time to find out how much this project would REALLY cost. However, in that year Boise and surroundings were booming with construction activity! It was a hostile bidding environment. Toby suggested it was not a good time to bid the job as it would certainly come in way too high, if anyone would even bid on this small job. So, we decided to wait for a more favorable time.

A Rotarian Provides an Estimate

In June of 2018 Brian McCoy, a member of Boise Metro Rotary and owner of Straight-Line Building Solutions suggested that his company might take on the project. Toby Norton approved the idea that a no-bid offer might be acceptable to the city. Brian spent considerable effort to estimate the project and

we were dismayed that the city then changed its mind and decided they could not permit an “outside” bid. Interestingly, his bid number was \$81,000, not far from the actual cost.

The interpretive signs

We must not forget that, even though we couldn’t use it, our discovery of the Lugenbeel monument back in 2014 resulted in an interest in Greenbelt history. By this time we had discovered many fascinating stories which we wanted to tell. Accordingly, we ended up with five stories that would be told on the interpretive signs:

- **The 50 year history of the Greenbelt**
- **Government Island**
- **The Monuments**
- **The Trestle Bridge**
- **Rotary and the Greenbelt over the years**

Brandi Burns at the City’s Art and History Department and her team will have the final say on the content and graphics of these signs, but we have early editorial license. In fact, I ended up creating most of the text and supplying the photographs

Originally, Toby’s estimate included \$7500 for three signs. Brandi Burns cautioned that this was a very low estimate. Arts and History generally prefers to use what’s called “porcelain enamel”, which would cost easily twice that amount. After conversations with John Yarnell at Trademark (the company that makes almost all the signs for the city), Brandi agreed we could use a process called “high pressure laminate” from a company in New York called Fossil.

John Yarnell was not prepared to give a precise estimate, but he offered to work within our budget of \$7,500 to \$10,000. Alex Caves and Kira Gruenhagen-Townsend at Trademark would help us with graphic design.

Pioneer Chapter members were helpful in designing their interpretive sign. In particular, the story of Ezra Meeker and the coin was a surprise. Marsi’s husband, a coin collector, actually had one in his collection which we could use for a photo. (See the sign for the story).



April 2019 – We find out

The environment seemed a bit better now, so the invitation to bid went out in mid-March, with bids due back on April 3rd. The bid specs do not include moving the monument (we already have an estimate) nor does it include the three interpretive signs. The winning bid came in from Clearwater Landscape of Nampa for a figure of \$54,000. So, based on information we had about the signs and the monument move this number is about \$25,000 higher than where we started! That’s 50% higher!

In order to proceed, we'd need to raise an additional \$28,000 over the next three months. So the question put before the Rotarians was: do we go for it, or wait for another bid later, after the construction season ends in the fall....or next year?

I made presentations to the three clubs in April and a special meeting was called on April 16th. The group enthusiastically decided to forge ahead. If we were short by July 1st, we'd have some options in terms of scaling the project into parts, perhaps holding off on moving the monument or fabricating the signs.

Fundraising re-start 2019

Now we knew what we were dealing with: \$54,000 for Clearwater, \$9,000 to move the monument and \$10,000 for the interpretive signs. Clearwater gave us a generous credit allowing us to provide the landscaping materials and the labor to install it, reducing their bid to \$47,000. Materials would be donated by Far West Nursery and Terra Vita. Rotarians would supply labor to install the landscaping.

We had two Rotary District Grants approved. Centennial Rotary applied and was approved for \$5,000 for the interpretive signs; Eagle/Garden City applied for and was approved for \$ 4,113.00 infrastructure, benches and the bike repair stand. (There had been two previous District grants approved early on but those had to be returned as their time had expired).

The NSDAR ladies had accepted the challenge to raise \$2300 toward moving their monument. We had applied \$6700 already. Marsi Woody, the new Regent of the chapter, led the effort and by mid-September had achieved the goal. Now we could proceed with arranging to have the monument moved to its new home.

We were anxious to get Clearwater started first. The monument and signs could wait until the basic park was completed. By July, we had reached our fundraising goal with two Rotary District grants totaling \$9,000, the sale of more bricks (we now offered a brick with the NSDAR logo), and a few other generous donations. (See the exhibits for detail on the sources of funds).

Construction begins

By the end of July 2019, we had deposited \$47,000 with the city and the contract was let to Clearwater. Dave Snow and his crew got right to work and had this phase one completed by the middle of August. It looks great! All the bricks were installed, four benches, irrigation system, etc.



September 1, 2019

The Clearwater piece is complete; Pioneer Chapter's funds had been raised; the funds for the interpretive signs are secured. We have delivered proposed text and images for the signs to Brandi Burns at Art and History. She will "sign off" and Trademark can get started on the graphics. The second brick order, the final one, had been placed with Fundraisers. Those last 80 bricks should be ready for Clearwater to install by the end of October. Our Rotary landscaping team scheduled the installation for September 14th.

September 14, 2019

A crew of about 22 Rotarians, family and friends, successfully planted six trees and 17 rose bushes. We also picked rocks and spread lots of wood chips/mulch. We were advised that the water would be turned on as soon as we said "go". It looks great!! (Happily, everything would survive the coming winter!)



September 26, 2019 Things are Moving!

Janice Beller and I met with Alex Caves at Trademark. Alex and Kira unveiled their first idea of what our three interpretive signs might look like. We were generally impressed and liked the overall direction they were taking. They would be making some modifications and get back to us in about 2 weeks. Brandi



has signed off on the text and photos. We'll have to decide on the standards and colors. Do we go with all black like the other features in the park, or go with an orange that matches the bricks and the trestle bridge? We went with black.

We were advised that the second order of bricks would be ready for delivery on October 11th. Clearwater will install them for us. Kelly reports that the monument contractor has submitted a revised estimate (which we never saw)

and will be in touch soon about moving it. (We'd delivered \$9,000 to the city and we told them that there is no more).

Winter Sets In to Delay Us Again!

The contractor moving the monument has decided it would be too risky to move it in cold weather. The monument is made of sandstone so it could be fragile. So we had to wait to spring. We are hoping the original estimate we have for \$9,000 still holds! Since we can't move the monument, we can't install the second batch of bricks or the signs.

In the meantime, the interpretive signs have been completed and are ready for installation. But that has to wait for the monument to be moved. The signs were delivered to my house for storage.



April 24, 2020 New Base is Enlarged

The original new base for the monument was too small, so the contractor has poured the concrete to increase the size of the monument's base. I'm hoping this means the monument move might happen soon! Once that's done, the second batch of bricks will be laid and the interpretive signs will be installed. We're getting close!



April 29, 2020 Planning the Move With the Boise Inn

When Pioneer Chapter finally received word the contractor was ready to begin the monument move, very little lead time was given. Pioneer Chapter reached out to the Boise Inn to notify them of our plans and asked for access to their property to move the monument. While this process got off to a bit of a rocky start because the hotel owner lived in Texas and was unable to meet in person, Pioneer Chapter worked diligently with the owner to explain the process and the time line. Once both sides were

satisfied with the project parameters, the Inn granted access to their property, allowing the contractor to remove Pioneer Chapter's monument.

June 11, 2020 Monument Move Begins

Finally some progress! Any legal issues have been resolved and our contractor, Tim Hendrix of First Call, has started the process of moving the monument to its new location. The plan is to break the monument away from its base. They will cut a slot in the new base and place the monument in the slot, securing it with some additional concrete. It looks like a tedious project! The contractor is being very cautious so as to make sure the monument doesn't break during the move.

June 18, 2020 It's Moved!

The monument was moved to its new location today!

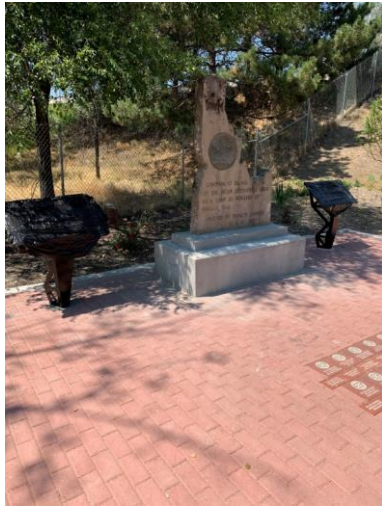


July 2020 Clearwater Bails Out!

We have received a message from our brick contractor that he won't be able to complete the job. He can't fit it into his schedule.

Kelly will look for another contractor to finish the job.

In the meantime, by the last week of July, the monument contractor has returned to replace the bricks around the base of the monument.



We didn't want to install the interpretive signs until the last thing, after that second batch of bricks was installed. This meant that we couldn't make the final payment to Trademark, since it was Rotary District grant money requiring installation but they wanted their final installment. So we went ahead and installed the signs but we wrapped them in plastic so we could reveal them at the appropriate time.

By the end of July it became clear that we weren't finding another contractor to finish the bricks. Kelly went back to Clearwater. Dave is now saying his calendar might be clear the last week of August. So we've asked him to schedule for August 19-28.

By mid-August it became clear that Clearwater Landscaping had abandoned our project. The good news, however, was that Kelly had arranged with Shayne Geib at Cutting Edge Landscaping to complete the job, with apparently no additional cost to us.

September 11, 2020 It's Finished!

The Rotary Park on the Greenbelt is finished! Cutting Edge Landscaping spent the day putting down that last batch of bricks. It looks fantastic! The interpretive signs are still covered, pending our plans for a "Grand Unveiling"!



October 4, 2020 The Grand Unveiling

Sunday afternoon October 4 was our official Grand Unveiling celebration. It was a warm sunny day for 50 or so people to hear about the Park and uncover the heretofore unseen interpretive signs. The NSDAR ladies rededicated their monument, complete with flags and a wreath. The DAR Idaho State Regent, Martha Schmidt, also attended the event and offered her remarks. We had invited everyone who had purchased bricks or was otherwise involved in the project. Channel 2 News had their reporter there. They did a short piece on that evening's news.

<https://idahonews.com/news/local/new-park-opens-on-the-greenbelt?video=1a2b2459-438d-4e19-a830-9736c05ffd83&jwsourc=cl>



It took almost seven years, but we couldn't be happier!

This is a story of patience, perseverance, adaptability, cooperation, creativity and compromise. It all started with that email inquiry in December of 2013. Now that it's complete, nearly seven years later, we couldn't be more pleased with the way it turned out. It's just like we imagined it!

The total cost ended up at about \$85,000. We had major financial support from Rotary District 5400, the Greater Boise Rotary Foundation and the Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation. We had in kind contributions from Far West and Terra Vita. We sold about 350 bricks.

We are greatly appreciative of the city Parks and Rec Department, particularly Kelly Burrows who held our hand all the way through.

Without the support and partnership with Pioneer Chapter, NSDAR, the finished project would look very different. Their willingness to donate their monument and additional financial resources to the park helped us make our vision for the park a reality!

We hope the people traversing the Greenbelt in the years to come will stop for a few minutes and learn some fascinating history of our city.







