

Discover a trail: The McConnell Arboretum Loop Trail popular with families -- and firefighters

By Arlene Kallis Special to the Record Searchlight

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The McConnell Arboretum Loop Trail at Turtle Bay is a well-known hiking and biking trail within Redding's gem of Turtle Bay Exploration Park.

Opened in 2005, one year after the opening of the nearby Sundial Bridge, this trail has become a favorite of many Redding residents who love to go out and enjoy the natural scenery while they get in a mile or two at the same time.

You will find this is a friendly trail that welcomes joggers, walkers, bikers, and families with dogs and children. This is a perfect place to take a walk with friends and family after that big holiday feast.

South Redding residents Bob and Diane Bly enjoy the "beauty" afforded by the trail and commented that the managers are "taking good care of it." They also enjoy bringing their grandkids with them when they are in town.

The Arboretum Loop is full of interesting natural features. The oak savannah, riparian forest and wetlands are always changing with the seasons and support a wide variety of wildlife species. Interpretive signs along the trail will educate you on the types of trees, plants and animals found in this habitat. A few of these native species include: cottonwood, gray pine, valley oak, California buckeye, California poppy, miniature lupine, ceanothus, California wild grape and native California blackberry.

If you are looking for a little more aerobic exercise, you can add on the steep half-mile climb up to Hilltop Drive that takes off on the east side of the loop trail or you can enter the park coming down this steep grade from Hilltop Drive. Parking is available on Hilltop Drive near the water tower. Some of the impressive regulars you might see on this part of the trail are the firefighters from Engine Station 8 in Redding. They like to workout on this part of the trail as part of their daily physical fitness requirement. Having to stay fairly close to their engine on Hilltop, they get a challenging workout on the steepest part of the trail.

The city of Redding, Turtle Bay and the McConnell Foundation have made great

strides working together to build a great trail system and restore this area to its original, natural habitat.

Invasive species are being removed, native plant species are being reintroduced, and stream channels are being stabilized and reopened to migratory fish.

When you are taking this trail it is easy to sense the restoration theme and the progress being made that everyone can enjoy.



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