

OUR BIG BACKYARD

*Explore great places and more
with Metro*

CHEHALEM RIDGE

At more than 1,400 acres, the natural area south of Forest Grove offers expansive forests, sweeping vistas and – soon – opportunities for visitors. Help shape what the next regional destination will look like.

pg. 8

ANNUAL REPORT

Learn how voter investments are improving parks and nature across the region

pg. 9

EXPLORE NATURE

Sign up for a year-long outdoor immersion series

pg. 15

TRASH TRIP

Where does garbage go?
Discover the journey of trash

pg. 18



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Explore

Cover Story pg / 3

Parks and Nature News pg / 6

Conserving Nature,
One Acre at a Time pg / 7

Unearth

Annual Report pg / 9

Destination Guide pg / 13

Get Involved pg / 14

Field Guide pg / 16

Intertwine pg / 17

Discover

Tools for Living pg / 18

Regional Roundup pg / 19

It's Your Nature Contest pg / 20

If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we’ve already crossed paths.

So, hello. We’re Metro – nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

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If you have a disability and need accommodations, call 503-220-2781, or call Metro’s TDD line at 503-797-1804. If you require a sign language interpreter, call at least 48 hours in advance. Activities marked with this symbol are wheelchair accessible:

Bus and MAX information
503-238-RIDE (7433) or trimet.org

Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.
oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews
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No-dogs policy
To protect plants, wildlife and people, Metro does not allow pets at regional parks and natural areas. Pets can damage sensitive habitat and threaten wildlife the region has worked to protect. In natural areas where dogs are not allowed, people see more wildlife and get closer to it. Seeing-eye dogs or other service animals are allowed. Please bring cleanup materials.

It used to be that nature wasn’t a place we went to. It was already all around us. At some point we forgot how much nature matters – but nature never forgot about us. And that’s pretty inspiring. So let’s get out there. Let’s get back into balance with the nature around us and within us. Together, let’s rediscover our big backyard.

Like what you see?

Sign up for the print edition of the quarterly magazine, change your address or save paper by switching to a digital subscription. Email ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov or call 503-797-1545.

Chehalem Ridge



On the cover: Lisa Sardinia, a neighbor and associate professor of biology at Pacific University in Forest Grove, leads students conducting research on streams at Chehalem Ridge. Above, from top: Native beavers play a critical role in the ecosystems at Chehalem Ridge. Oregon iris bloom in the spring. Puffball mushrooms release a puff of spores when tapped, such as by wildlife or raindrops. Right: Viewpoints offer visitors grand views of the Coast Range and surrounding valleys.



STORY BY Yuxing Zheng / PHOTOGRAPHY BY Joshua Manus, C. Bruce Forster and Yuxing Zheng

Is Chehalem Ridge the future Oxbow Regional Park of the west side?



It’s a crisp autumn day,
and the air is filled
with the sweet smell of
evergreens and fresh rain.

Chirps come from all
directions, vocal teases
from the Pacific wrens
hidden among the
Douglas fir forest.

Underfoot, deer scat hint
at the wildlife that call
Chehalem Ridge home.

At more than 1,400 acres, Metro’s Chehalem Ridge is one of the largest publicly owned natural areas in Washington County. Although it’s approximately the same size as beloved Oxbow Regional Park in east Multnomah County, Chehalem Ridge isn’t yet open for official public access and is largely unknown beyond its rural neighbors 15 minutes south of Forest Grove and Cornelius.

But Chehalem Ridge is on the cusp of a new chapter. Over the next year, the community is invited to help guide Chehalem Ridge from a hidden jewel to Metro’s next regional destination. What that nature park looks like will be up to community members to shape.

“Chehalem is a treasure on the west side that not many people know about,” said Justin Patterson, visitor services director for Metro Parks and Nature. “This project represents a great opportunity to continue to preserve and protect wildlife habitat and water quality while at the same time providing people access to nature in that part of the region.”

POSSIBILITIES AROUND

Before the housing market crashed, Chehalem Ridge had been proposed for development into large-lot homes, worrying neighbors.

Things took a turn in 2010, when Metro purchased the main 1,143-acre parcel for \$6.1 million from Stimson Lumber, in a transaction facilitated through the Trust for Public Land. It remains Metro’s largest and most expensive acquisition. Over the years, Metro added smaller adjacent properties.

“People appreciate it so much that it’s not developed,” said Peggy Harris, a neighbor and chairwoman of Citizen Participation Organization 15. “It’s going to be a natural place to get people

out in the country and to show them what restoration of native habitat is like, with the white oaks especially. It’s going to be a great walking, hiking area.”

The acquisitions, as well as initial restoration work, were possible thanks to voter investments in Metro’s 2006 natural areas bond measure. A 2013 parks and natural areas levy makes it possible to provide formal public access.

The opportunities ahead excite Forest Grove City Councilor Malynda Wenzl, who first visited Chehalem Ridge with her 5-year-old son as part of a Metro tour last summer.

“We like to go out and do outdoor activities, so having access to someplace close, either hiking trails or recreation activities, is definitely really appealing to me,” said Wenzl, whose family also includes her husband and a 14-year-old daughter. “It’s really great that the citizens get to use their voice because they’re going to be the ones utilizing it.”

There’s a need for family-friendly opportunities in the area, Wenzl said. At Chehalem Ridge, “all these families can hopefully go and create all these memories with their families and friends,” she said.

HEALTHIER HABITATS

Centuries ago, open forests with Douglas firs, maples, madrones and oaks would have shared the space with native shrubs and grasses. Later, about 500 acres of the forest was cleared for agricultural use.

When Metro purchased the site, a commercial tree farm on those old farm fields grew so dense that light didn’t reach the forest floor. This summer will mark the fourth year in a five-year plan to strategically thin Douglas firs to promote forest health and create gaps for meadows and



Clockwise from top left: Forest Grove City Councilor Malynda Wenzl and her son, Cullen Morelli, 5, take in the sweeping views at Chehalem Ridge during a tour last summer. Lisa Sardinia's biology students from Pacific University use Chehalem Ridge as a living laboratory to study streams. Many logs strategically thinned from the dense forest remain on site to create wildlife habitat. Kate Holleran, senior natural resources scientist at Metro, has led restoration efforts at Chehalem Ridge. Native false Solomon's seal and a beehive peek out from the landscape.



native plants. Other firs have been strategically removed to give native Oregon white oaks and madrones the sunlight they need to thrive.

Last winter, crews planted native shrubs, such as snowberry and thimbleberry, setting the stage for a diverse layer of native shrubs that previously didn't exist.

The habitat is crucial to native wildlife, such as bobcats, deer and beavers. Chehalem Ridge and nearby Wapato Lake provide critical habitat connections for wildlife as they move between the Coast Range and the Willamette Valley.

"We want to maintain that large, core habitat," said Kate Holleran, a senior natural resources scientist at Metro Parks and Nature who has led restoration efforts at the site.

Chehalem Ridge's five permanent and 26 seasonal streams all eventually empty into the Tualatin River.

On a recent visit, Holleran looked over a stream restoration project where branches and small trees were placed into channels – eroded seven feet deep in some spots – that formed when the site had previously been cleared.

"This is so cool to see this filled up with wood," Holleran said. "The idea is to slow the water down and to let it soak in the ground, so it doesn't send sediment into the Tualatin River."

A LIVING LABORATORY

Lisa Sardinia recalls going to a neighborhood meeting shortly after Metro purchased the property. As an associate professor of biology at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Sardinia realized immediately that Chehalem Ridge would be the perfect laboratory for her students.

"It would be interesting and accessible, it was research they could perform and understand what they were doing, and it had a civic

engagement aspect to it," she said. "Here is a very intentional process on a large scale that is impacting waterways that drain into the only river in Washington County that provides drinking water for a couple hundred thousand people. That's a huge impact – and it's within 20 minutes of campus. It's just kind of stunning that this has fallen into our laps."

For several years now, Sardinia's students have visited Chehalem Ridge to conduct water microbe surveys, bacterial counts and other research. Last spring, 32 students in her microbiology class analyzed the water quality in two different streams – one that ran through an area that had been previously clear cut and sprayed with pesticides, another that ran through a native riparian zone.

Chehalem is a treasure on the west side that not many people know about. This project represents a great opportunity to continue to preserve and protect wildlife habitat and water quality while at the same time providing people access to nature in that part of the region.

–Justin Patterson,
Metro Parks and Nature visitor services director

"What they found was two pretty healthy streams, which I'm thrilled," she said. Her students will expand their research visits this spring.

Sardinia lives down the road from Chehalem Ridge and, like other neighbors, has concerns about the potential impact of visitors and traffic.

She looks forward to the community conversation about the site's long-term vision, though she already knows that she would like to see an education center, interpretive signage on the trails or something similar to educate future visitors.

Chehalem Ridge will provide the perfect setting for local students to learn about nature, said Cecilia Girón, the Chicas youth development director at Adelante Mujeres, a nonprofit based in Forest Grove that serves low-income Latina women and their families. Chicas provides educational programming to Latina girls from third grade through high school and helps them explore careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

"It'd be awesome to have an environmental education center for tours, where children can see, touch, smell and feel the richness of Chehalem and what is out there, what animals migrate there, what plants, all of that," Girón said. "It'll be a great opportunity for them to learn about natural resources and habitat and to get them exposed at an early age about the importance of taking care of our environment."

To learn about upcoming community events, get involved and to watch a video about the project, visit

oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge

Parks and Nature News



4 QUESTIONS WITH DANIEL CARTER

STORY BY Ellen Wyoming / PHOTOGRAPHY BY Joshua Manus and Laura Oppenheimer Odom

Daniel Carter is a troop leader with Cub Scout Pack 740 in Gresham. He is also a graphic designer and woodworker. Last July, Carter volunteered with Metro for Graham Oaks Park Day in Wilsonville. He and his Cub Scouts assembled and built 100 mason bee boxes to hang at Metro destinations and local parks. Scouts and other volunteers put roofs on the boxes and inserted rolls of parchment paper into the tubes for easy maintenance.

Q: Can you tell us a little about the mason bee?

A: They are great native pollinators. The mason bees dive into flowers and get coated in pollen. In contrast, honeybees don't get as much pollen as they travel from flower to flower. They don't look like bees people are used to; people might expect they are flies until they recognize them. They are solitary bees and make homes in hollow reeds or tubes. They need habitat that provides a hole about 3/8-inch in diameter and 3 to 8 inches deep in size to lay their eggs. The deeper the space for the bee, the more female eggs that will be laid. Male eggs are laid nearer the entrance to the hole. They don't sting, so you really want to bring them into your garden at home to pollinate.

Q: How did you decide to provide habitat for bees?

A: I noticed mason bees making a home in the tubes of my metal wind chimes on my front porch. I couldn't imagine how nice that could be for habitat, so I decided to make homes for the bee. I'm a woodworker, and it was something I could do with our scout troop, and then I got a call from Metro for an event to make 100 and it just kept going.

Q: How do you build your bee boxes?

A: You can use any type of material. I have used recycled wood so the boxes I've made are 3/8-inch holes drilled 3 inches deep into pine wood blocks. The "roof" on top of the box is aesthetic but can help keep water out as bees lay their eggs. If you want to be able to use the bee box again, it's good to roll up a tube of parchment or similar paper to line the holes that have been drilled. That way, after the bees have hatched and left the bee box, you can pull the paper tubes out to "clean" the holes, put new paper parchment tubes inside, thus providing refreshed habitat.

Q: If we build our own at home, what should we consider?

A: Hang your bee boxes in late winter or early spring. You want to have the habitat ready for when they hatch, so they have the right place to lay their eggs.

Watch a video and learn how to build your own mason bee boxes at oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews



Something's Different Here

STORY BY George Winborn
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Chris Woo



NEW WETLANDS TRAIL, RESTROOMS ARRIVE AT BLUE LAKE

Metro continues to make improvements at Blue Lake Regional Park with money from the 2013 parks and natural areas levy.

The latest work includes four new restroom buildings and a rebuilt wetland trail and viewing platform.

Each new restroom building has eight single-occupancy, gender-neutral restrooms. Two restrooms in each building are wheelchair accessible. The buildings were pre-fabricated off site, saving money by decreasing the cost of on-site construction, and making them less expensive to operate, and easier to clean and maintain.

The previous restrooms, some of which were more than 50 years old, had outlived their lifespan and needed a lot of maintenance, said Chris Woo, a Metro construction project manager.

More than 1 million annual visitors will also enjoy an improved, wheelchair-accessible wetland trail. The current asphalt trail will be replaced with compacted gravel. A new fiberglass and steel viewing platform atop new metal pilings replaces an aged wooden structure.

All of the architects and engineering firms for the projects are minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses.

TRAIL USERS TO SEE 400 NEW SIGNS

Nearly 400 new trail signs will be installed across the region in early 2016 thanks in part to a \$262,000 grant to Metro from the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Visitors will see new signs along the Rock Creek Trail in Hillsboro, the Fanno Creek Trail in Tigard, the Tualatin River Greenway in Tualatin, and the Trolley Trail in Milwaukie, Oak Grove and Gladstone.

The signs will make it easier for visitors to navigate the trails by providing a consistent look and feel across the trail system, said Robert Spurlock, senior regional trail planner at Metro.

Mile markers every quarter mile will boost safety by making it easier for trail users to know their precise locations.

The new signs will be co-branded with Metro, The Intertwine Alliance and local parks providers, such as the North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District and the cities of Hillsboro, Tigard, Tualatin, Durham, Milwaukie and Gladstone.

RESERVE ADDITIONAL PICNIC SITES

Visitors can now reserve picnic areas and shelters at Howell Territorial Park and Graham Oaks and Scouters Mountain nature parks.

Reservations are required for all three sites from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend as well as holidays. Reservations can be made year-round for picnics, weddings and celebrations.

For more details about shelter reservations, rates and sites, visit oregonmetro.gov/picnic or contact Sue Lowe at 503-665-4995 option 0 or susan.lowe@oregonmetro.gov.

Conserving Nature, One Acre at a Time.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Kate Holleran*



As a Metro natural resources scientist, Kate Holleran sees nature's biggest challenges and most glorious surprises – and she has the muddy boots to prove it. Go behind the scenes on her journey to restore the region's voter-protected land.



OLD-GROWTH FORESTS PROVIDE UNIQUE WINTER REFUGES

Though it is a foggy autumn day, the view clears as I duck under the canopy of tall firs along the North Fork of Deep Creek. The fog is filtered by deep layers of arching tree branches. Steep as the land is, I am happy to climb up and down the canyon walls above the creek.

Thanks to voter support, Metro now owns 27 acres along the North Fork of Deep Creek, including a nine-acre patch of forest acquired in 2015. Though small in size, the natural area contains a habitat uncommon in the developing landscape of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties.

The forest I'm exploring is an old-growth forest with trees more than 400 years old; some 5 feet in diameter and more than 200 feet tall. Many of our resident wildlife evolved in a Pacific Northwest landscape that wore this mantle of towering old trees and dense underbrush. For these resident wildlife, the ones that stay put during our temperate winter, old forests provide the best winter refuge.

It is hard to see the tops of trees as they reach far above the lower canopy layers of small trees, shrubs such as wood rose and red huckleberry, and a carpet of sword fern, Oregon grape and many species of mosses. A hundred and fifty years ago, most of our low-elevation conifer forests were old forests already 250 to 750 years old. Old-growth forests were common. But not today.

Along the way to becoming a forest of giant trees, hundreds of disturbances happen in a forest – trees die, small landslides occur, or lightning strikes smolder unattended – creating interruptions in the forest world. These innumerable changes over hundreds of years create a decadently rich diversity of habitat niches for wildlife.

Wintering birds are good representatives of wild residents that benefit from big, old trees in complex forests. In winter, the Pacific wren, brown creeper, red crossbills and the iconic pileated woodpecker forage for arthropods in the canopies and deeply furrowed bark of long lived conifer trees.

All of our amphibian species utilize old forests, seeking refuge from hot summer days or freezing winter nights by hiding under and inside of decaying wood. Many of our native bat species, such as the silver-haired bat, roost under the bark or in the crevices of large, old trees.

Put into human perspective, these old forests are a wild, one-stop shopping habitat for many of our common species. Over the course of the seasons, these forests are where our native wildlife thrives.

What kind of restoration work happens in an old growth forest? Not much! Instead of spending time and money trying to restore a degraded habitat, I get to kick back and enjoy the natural processes already underway in old-growth forests.

OK, invasive plants are always an issue. Birds have deposited the seeds of holly and ivy along the North Fork of Deep Creek. Those plants, if not controlled, will over time change the rich variety of native forest shrubs and herbs into a smothering blanket of simplicity.

Metro will cut, pull and remove these invasive weeds. We will work with our neighbors to protect adjacent forest habitat to buffer the older forests along Deep Creek. The rest we will leave to the slow passage of time.

It has done a good job so far.



Dip into ponds to help monitor amphibian egg masses

STORY BY *Jim Caudell, Metro park ranger*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Amber Basting*

Words like “Darwinian” and “primordial” tumble through my head as I splash waist deep through slow-moving ponds along Multnomah Channel. I juggle an armful of bamboo stakes and ribbon and scan the tall grasses and branches that sprout along the edge.

“Walk slowly, use a hiking pole and pay attention to your body temperature,” I was told as I was fitted for Nylon waders that morning in February 2015.

We had passed the three days of 50 to 55 degree temperatures that signal pond-breeding amphibians to get going, said Katy Weil, senior science analyst for Metro Parks and Nature and the head of the volunteer amphibian egg mass monitoring program.

Many times in the past, Weil had told me, “You have got to volunteer with the amphibian monitors. You will love it.”

And, of course, she was right. It made me excited to just think about wading through some of the region's most beautiful properties searching for and compiling data on the wildlife indicators upon which further restoration decisions would be made.

Metro's amphibian egg mass monitoring program tracks four native pond-breeding amphibians: the Pacific chorus frog, Northwest salamander, long-toed salamander and Northern red-legged frog, which is listed by the state as under threat.

The four amphibians serve as indicator species, which can be used to help gauge whether regional restoration efforts are helping more native amphibians thrive. Surveying for the egg masses each winter helps scientists survey their numbers as well as the overall health of wetlands in the region.

You never forget your first egg mass. “I think I found one!” I shouted hesitantly. The size of a gelatinous baseball, it hung off a branch half in and half out of the water.

“Yes, you have,” said Amber Basting, my scientist guide for the day.

I didn't feel the wind skittering across the water as we began collecting and recording the data.

“What stage is the egg mass in?” Basting asked. “Is it round, an embryo or tailing?”

Each new discovery brought an added excitement as I studied the egg mass, gauging to see where it was in its development.

Make sure you join the fun this year.

SAT
23
JAN

AMPHIBIAN EGG MASS
MONITORING ORIENTATION

Learn the basics to volunteer as an amphibian egg mass monitor.

WHERE Metro Regional Center, council chambers, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland

WHEN 9:30a.m. to noon

REGISTRATION REQUIRED Katy Weil, 503-797-1688, Katy.Weil@oregonmetro.gov



Metro, Verde team up to diversify ranks of restoration experts

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Sofía Basto*

To most people, large-scale ecological restoration of a natural area seems intimidating. It requires meticulous preparation of the land, site-specific calibration of equipment, identification of plants already at the site and those to replace them, and more.

In short, implementing large-scale restoration is better left to the experts. But how does one start on the path to become an expert?

“The best way is to do it and be guided through it,” says Jonathan Soll, science and stewardship manager for Metro Parks and Nature.

Starting in summer 2015, Metro and Verde teamed up to restore a 50-acre forested wetland at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area dominated by invasive reed canarygrass and other stubborn weeds.

The partnership also helps to diversify the ranks of restoration experts by providing training to landscape crews with Verde, a nonprofit based in the Cully neighborhood of Northeast Portland that works to boost environmental wealth for low-income and minority residents.

The project involves a crew of Metro natural resources scientists and restoration experts from Mosaic Ecology working with the Verde landscape team.

“The crew was excited to learn all the steps a project requires from beginning to end, like plant identification, proper equipment use, how to prepare for the day, and also the business side, like project management, problem-solving and how to deal with the client,” says Ricardo Moreno, Verde’s landscape program manager.

Money from the 2013 parks and natural areas levy is helping Metro create new partnerships with community organizations to provide people of color and low-income residents with training in environmental fields.

The partnership with Verde also aims to create long-term economic opportunities for Verde’s landscape team members.

“We want to draw connections and have good alignment of highly skilled crews doing something good for the environment, while making a good living, particularly people of color and low-income residents,” says Alan Hipólito, executive director of Verde. “Some crew members are very interested in restoration as a career and may start their own business or become part of a high-skilled restoration crew.”

Metro y Verde se unen para diversificar las filas de expertos en restauración

ARTÍCULO Y FOTOGRAFÍA POR *Sofía Basto*

Para la mayoría de la gente, la restauración ecológica a gran escala de un área natural puede resultar un poco intimidante, ya que requiere preparación minuciosa del terreno, calibración del equipo relativa al sitio, identificación de plantas del lugar y de aquellas que las remplazarán, y mucho más.

En resumen, la implementación de restauración a gran escala es mejor dejarla en manos de los expertos. Pero ¿cuáles son los pasos a seguir para convertirse en un experto?

“La mejor forma es hacerlo y ser guiado a través del proceso,” asegura Jonathan Soll, gerente de ciencia y administración de parques y áreas naturales de Metro.

A partir del verano del 2015, Metro y Verde se unieron para restaurar 50 acres de humedal arbolado en Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area, plagado por hierba cinta y otra maleza dañina.

La alianza también ayuda a diversificar las filas de expertos en restauración, ya que ofrece capacitación al equipo de jardinería de Verde, una organización no lucrativa con sede en el barrio Cully del noreste de Portland que busca potenciar el valor ambiental para residentes de bajos recursos y minorías del área.

El proyecto incluye científicos de Metro especializados en recursos naturales y expertos en restauración de Mosaic Ecology, quienes entrenan al equipo de jardinería de Verde.

“Nuestro equipo tenía muchas ganas de aprender todos los pasos necesarios para ejecutar un proyecto de principio a fin, como la identificación de plantas, la forma correcta de utilizar el equipo, cómo prepararse para el día de trabajo, y también el aspecto empresarial, como la administración de un proyecto, resolución de problemas y cómo tratar con el cliente,” afirma Ricardo Moreno, gerente del programa de jardinería de Verde.

Fondos procedentes de la recaudación de un impuesto aprobado por los votantes en el 2013 para beneficiar parques y áreas naturales le permite a Metro crear nuevas alianzas con organizaciones comunitarias y proporcionar capacitaciones en el campo ecológico-ambiental a minorías y personas de bajos recursos.

La alianza con Verde también se enfoca en crear oportunidades económicas a largo plazo para los miembros del equipo de jardinería de Verde.

“Queremos establecer conexiones y tener buen alineamiento de trabajadores altamente calificados haciendo algo positivo por el medio ambiente, que ganen bien y tengan buen nivel de vida, particularmente personas de color y de bajos recursos,” explica Alan Hipólito, director ejecutivo de Verde. “Varios participantes están muy interesados en la restauración ecológica como carrera y puede que terminen creando su propia empresa o uniéndose a un equipo de restauración especializado.”

METRO PARKS AND NATURE 2014–15

ANNUAL REPORT



Metro

Building on 25 years of success: Protecting water, habitat, exploration – and planning for more

No matter where one stands in the greater Portland metro region, nature is never far.

With 17,000 acres, Metro manages parks and natural areas across every community in the region – from Chehalem Ridge on the west to the Sandy River Gorge on the east, from Blue Lake and Broughton Beach on the north to Graham Oaks on the south.

In 2015, Metro celebrated its 25th year as a parks provider. Although Metro's portfolio of land represents a big opportunity, it's also a big responsibility.

Voters have trusted Metro to wisely spend the money they've invested through two regional bond measures and a levy – more than \$400 million dollars – to protect and care for these special places while also creating opportunities for people to enjoy them.

Across the region, habitat is healthier, water is cleaner and more fish, wildlife and people are reaping the benefits. None of this work would be possible without voter investments in the 2006

natural areas bond measure and the 2013 parks and natural areas levy.

But a strong plan is needed to continue building a world-class regional Parks and Nature system that will serve the region's residents for another 25 years and beyond. To launch that effort, Metro began working with diverse community members and partners in 2014 to craft a Parks and Nature system plan.

The system plan will play out on the ground in many important ways, determining how Metro operates parks and natural areas, what a park looks and feels like when visitors arrive, which natural areas have top priority for significant visitor improvements – and much more.

Community members, partners and equity advisers are helping to develop strategies that will ensure Metro Parks and Nature serves diverse audiences and needs. By spring 2016, the Metro Council is slated to approve the system plan, laying the foundation for regional Parks and Nature work through the next decade and beyond.

To see the impact of 25 years of voter investments and the exciting possibilities ahead, you have to hear the stories from the people on the ground. Learn more about how your dollars were spent from July 2014 to June 2015 to restore marshes, improve parks, and connect diverse and under-served communities with nature.

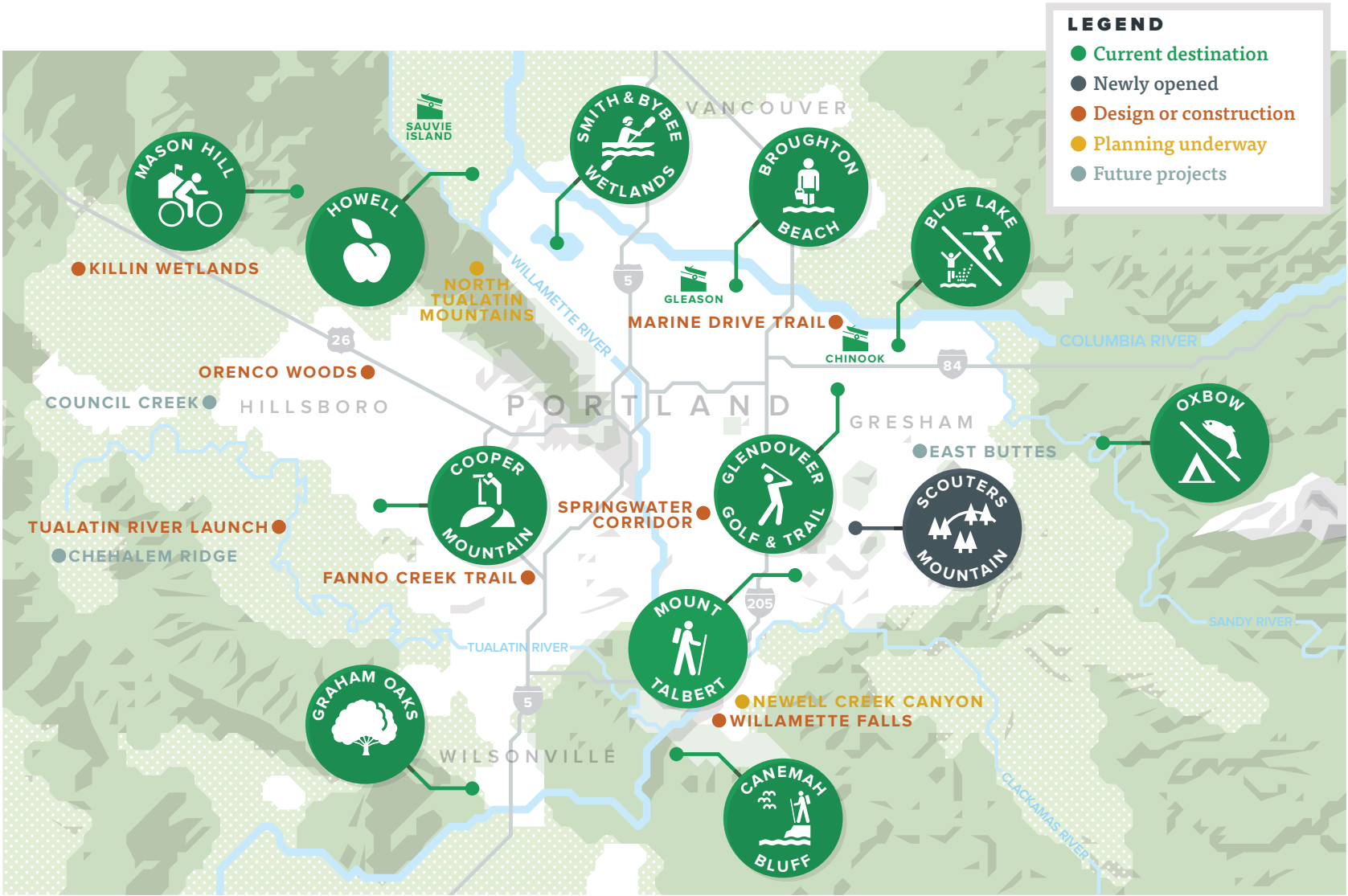


Get the whole report online with more photos, stories and details at
oregonmetro.gov/parksandnature2015

ACCESS TO NATURE

Metro aims to provide opportunities for residents to immerse themselves in nature with access to new parks, trails and natural areas. Access to Nature projects focus on safety and low-impact improvements, and opportunities for residents to hike, view wildlife, or enjoy a picnic. The projects

begin with extensive conversations with community members to ensure the projects provide the opportunities they’re seeking, while also incorporating habitat restoration and volunteer and conservation education programs.



FY 2015

Habitat, visitor improvements go hand in hand at Killin Wetlands

For years, devoted birders in the Portland metro region have headed to an area about two miles west of Banks in search of the prized American bitterns and soras.

But with no formal public access to Metro’s Killin Wetlands Natural Area, birders often park on the side of Northwest Cedar Canyon Road and set up their scopes on the roadway. A project soon entering the design phase aims to improve safety by opening up public access to a portion of the 590-acre site, while also restoring habitat and allowing farming to continue on another portion of the property.

“I’m very excited about the new access,” said Stefan Schlick, a Hillsboro resident and a birder involved with the Audubon Society of Portland who helped shape the access project.

Community members and partners attended two open houses in the winter and spring of 2015. Many of the features they requested, such as trails and viewing stations, are included in the access

plan, which is designed to maintain a light touch on the landscape and habitat. The site includes significant wetlands and a very rare example of Willamette Valley scrub-shrub marsh habitat.

The Audubon Society has designated Killin Wetlands as an Important Bird Area. The site also supports an abundance of rare plants and animals, including Geyer willows and the state-sensitive Northern red-legged frog. Beavers, ducks and the occasional elk also call the place home.

Agricultural heritage will remain intact. Part of the site will continue to be farmed, and an old dairy barn will stay. The barn could also qualify to join the Quilt Barn Trail in Washington County with a large, painted quilt block mounted on the side.

Permitting and final design is expected to be complete by the end of 2015, with construction tentatively set for 2016 and 2017 – and a grand opening in 2017.



Killin Wetlands

Park improvements

Even as Metro moves to open new destinations, work is underway to improve the parks and facilities that 1.3 million visitors a year already enjoy. Park improvement projects are aimed at upgrading aging facilities, improving sustainability features, and enhancing safety and security. For instance, a new entryway now greets visitors to Blue Lake Regional Park. Other projects include improved signage, repaired roads, new play areas, building and amenity renovations and more – all the little things that make a visit to a Metro destination more fun, convenient, safe and memorable.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Communities of color, low-income residents and other underserved groups have long faced barriers to accessing nature. But several innovative programs help underserved communities experience outdoor activities, foster environmental stewardship, nurture career opportunities and create new models for designing parks.

Through Partners in Nature, Metro teams up with community-based organizations such as Self Enhancement, Inc. and the Center for Intercultural Organizing to develop unique programs. In spring 2015, the Latino Greenspaces project launched in partnership with Latino Network and Hacienda Community Development Corporation to introduce youths to outdoor opportunities and careers.

Metro is working with community-based organizations to develop a new approach to designing parks that are welcoming to diverse communities. Metro is contracting with Verde to explore a new model for community groups and landscape architects to jointly develop project proposals.

And Metro is making a concerted effort to ensure restoration and maintenance contractors include as many minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses as possible.

Partnerships connect students and nature

While it may not seem like that big of a deal to go for a walk in the woods, many Portland-area youths never have that opportunity. For them, nature can be an intimidating place, said Jackie Murphy, a career development manager at Self Enhancement, Inc.

She points to a project where middle school students in an SEI program visited Metro's North Abbey Creek Natural Area near Forest Park. The plan was to teach the children how bees help pollinate plants.

But for many of the children, this was primed to be their first exposure to bees that didn't involve a stinger.

"They think bees will attack," Murphy said. "There are some misconceptions of what's out in the environment. It's just not something they see in their day-to-day neighborhood."

A lot of that, Murphy said, is simply because of lack of exposure.

After the SEI program with Metro, students, by a wide margin, said they felt more comfortable in nature. About a third said they'd be interested in

exploring careers tied to natural resources and the environment.

"In natural resource and environmental jobs, a low percentage of people of color are employed in those areas," Murphy said. "With this relationship with Metro, exposing kids early on, they're gaining interest, and we can connect their interest in an area they can explore and pursue into college and a career."



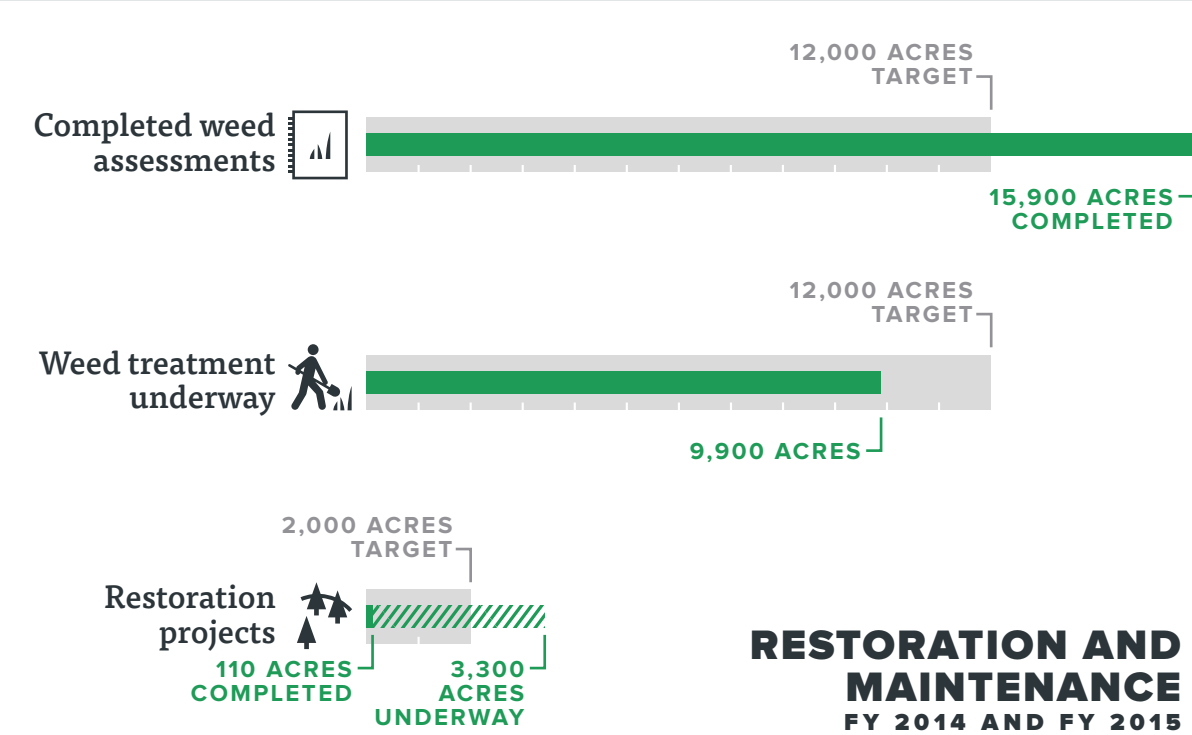
RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE

About half the money from the 2013 levy is dedicated to protecting water quality, controlling invasive weeds, boosting native plants and animals, and improving habitat for fish and wildlife.

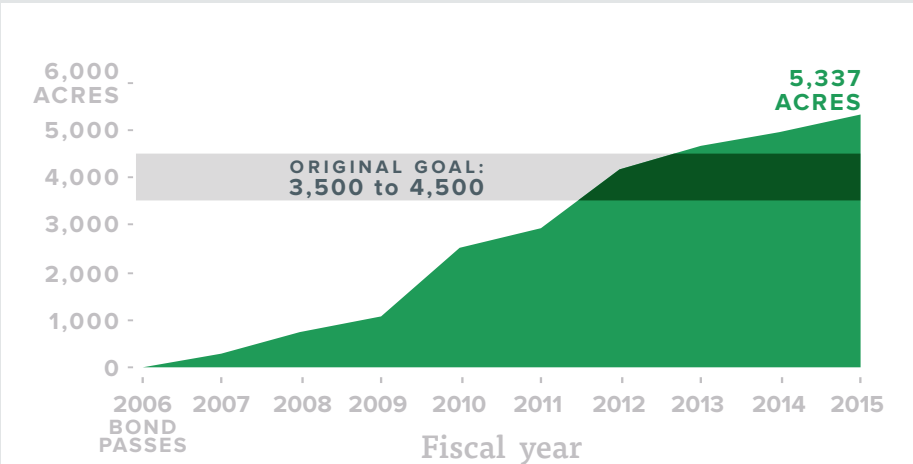
Restoration takes different forms across wetlands, oak prairies and savannas, forests and rivers. It means thinning overcrowded forests to allow sunshine to reach native oaks and madrones. It means treating invasive weeds choking out native

wildflowers. It means creating habitat for endangered fish. It means planting native shrubs and trees that help filter rainwater.

After Metro acquires a property, "stabilization" starts the restoration process by addressing immediate threats such as weeds. Next, a restoration plan helps return a site to its natural, wilder roots – and transition to long-term maintenance.

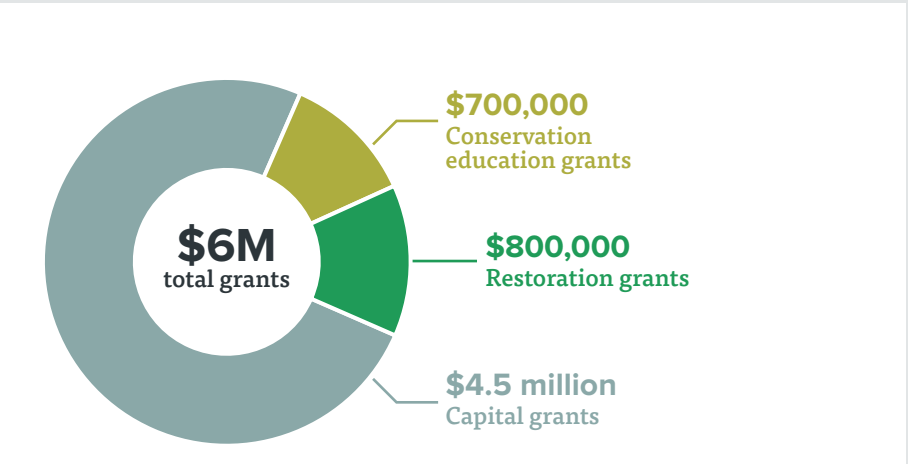


An egret quickly took advantage of waters around a new bridge at Multnomah Channel Marsh a day after construction ended in fall 2014. With help from partners, Metro is restoring native wetlands at the 350-acre natural area across from Sauvie Island and making it easier for juvenile salmon, trout and lamprey to swim into the marsh. Crews breached an earthen berm along the channel and replaced three culverts with a bridge. "What we've done is to try to get water back onto the site," said senior natural resources scientist Curt Zonick, "and then get it moving through the site."



LAND ACQUISITION WITH 2006 BOND MEASURE (CUMULATIVE)

The biggest portion of the 2006 bond measure earmarked \$168 million for land acquisition from willing sellers. More than 5,300 acres have been acquired and protected – significantly surpassing the original goal. Thanks to voters, Metro has been able to conserve some of the last swathes of native prairies, wetlands and other valuable habitat – home to rare plants and endangered or threatened fish and wildlife. Other properties fill key gaps in regional trails, providing connections for commuters, bicyclists and joggers.



NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS GRANTS FY 2015

Direct community investments, such as Nature in Neighborhoods grants, are one of the most popular and important parts of the Parks and Nature portfolio. Through the 2006 bond measure and the 2013 levy, three types of grants gave a collective \$6 million boost to innovative projects across the region this year. Partners are restoring salmon habitat, protecting land, improving parks, connecting diverse communities with nature and much more. In 2016, trail grants will be awarded for the first time.

PROMISES MADE, PROMISES KEPT

Thanks to voter investments, the greater Portland metro area can enjoy a world-class regional Parks and Nature system with healthy habitats, clean water, more native wildlife and more opportunities for residents to explore nature.

Although spending from the 2006 bond measure is winding down, some money remains to acquire more special places, pay for locally significant projects and award one last round of Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants.

The next three years of the 2013 levy will build on successes in the first two years and the important work underway now. Native plants will flourish where invasive weeds once grew. More new parks will open while existing parks will see many upgrades. And there will be more opportunities for residents of all backgrounds to connect with nature through classes, events and volunteering.

More work remains. Stay tuned for next year's annual report to learn about the exciting opportunities ahead.



Metro Council at Blue Lake Regional Park, from left: Councilors Bob Stacey, Kathryn Harrington, Carlotta Collette, Shirley Craddick, Craig Dirksen and Sam Chase, Metro Council President Tom Hughes

PARKS AND NATURE SPENDING* FY 2015

| | General fund | 2013 parks and natural areas levy | 2006 natural areas bond | Total |
|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Restoration/maintenance of parks and natural areas | \$1,833,209 | \$4,803,483 | \$0 | \$6,636,692 |
| Access to nature | \$0 | \$1,288,909 | \$96,612 | \$1,385,521 |
| Park improvements and operations | \$6,018,179 | \$1,432,336 | \$0 | \$7,450,515 |
| Conservation education and volunteer programs | \$119,216 | \$512,676 | \$0 | \$631,892 |
| Community investments | \$45,992 | \$429,949 | \$1,818,752 | \$2,294,693 |
| Land acquisition/stabilization | \$0 | \$0 | \$9,305,952 | \$9,305,952 |
| Administration** | \$296,189 | \$2,423,550 | \$2,585,272 | \$5,305,011 |
| Total | \$8,312,785 | \$10,890,903 | \$13,806,588 | \$33,010,276 |

* Unaudited
** Administration spending includes expenses for department administration and support services, such as the Office of the Metro Attorney, the Data Resource Center and communications.

2013 PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS LEVY

Promised to voters



Actual levy spending THROUGH JUNE 2015



IMPROVING PUBLIC ACCESS TO NATURAL AREAS

REGIONAL PARK OPERATIONS

NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS GRANTS

RESTORING NATURAL AREAS FOR WILDLIFE, FISH AND WATER QUALITY

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEERS

Destination Guide

Key

- RESTROOMS
- PICNIC FACILITIES
- TRAILS
- CLASSES, EVENTS, VOLUNTEER
- PLAYGROUND
- CAMPING
- WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE
- COST
\$5/car, \$7/bus
(free with annual pass)

1

BLUE LAKE REGIONAL PARK
Enjoy a fun game of disc golf, or explore a nature-themed playground, a discovery garden, sports facilities and a wetland with a viewing platform and trail.

2

BROUGHTON BEACH
Head to one of Portland’s best urban beaches and enjoy a picnic, beachcombing, or a stroll along the Columbia River.

3

CANEMAH BLUFF NATURAL AREA
Gaze at the Willamette River below, marvel at oak trees overhead, hike and admire colorful spring wildflowers.

4

COOPER MTN. NATURE PARK
Hike or jog more than three miles of trails, watch wildlife or enjoy views of the Chehalem Mountains and Tualatin Valley.

5

GLENDOVEER GOLF COURSE & FITNESS TRAIL
TEE TIME: playglendoveer.com
Play a game of golf, footgolf or indoor tennis, or enjoy a scenic stroll on the two-mile fitness course.

6

GRAHAM OAKS NATURE PARK
Ride bikes through a restored oak woodland, stroll through a conifer forest and spot birds from a wetland overlook.

7

HOWELL TERRITORIAL PARK
Watch for birds that flock to the park’s wetlands, enjoy a picnic, and explore a piece of the region’s natural and cultural history.

8

LONE FIR CEMETERY
Enjoy a stroll or jog in this tree-filled community greenspace, one of Oregon’s most treasured historic cemeteries.

9

MASON HILL PARK
At this charming, one-acre park, bicycle through the rolling hills beyond Forest Park, take in spectacular views of the Tualatin Valley and picnic under the shelter.

10

MOUNT TALBERT NATURE PARK
Slip into the forested oasis to explore four miles of trails, enjoy gorgeous views, and keep an eye out for deer, pileated and hairy woodpeckers, white-breasted nuthatches and Western tanagers.

11

OXBOW REGIONAL PARK
Explore 15 miles of trails through ancient forests, camp year-round or find the perfect adventure on the Sandy River.

12

SCOUTERS MTN. NATURE PARK
Climb the steep, fir-lined road to the top of this extinct lava dome to enjoy unrivaled views of Mount Hood.

13

SMITH AND BYBEE WETLANDS NATURAL AREA
Take the Interlakes Trail or go by kayak to explore one of America’s largest urban wetlands while spotting beavers, otters, deer, osprey, bald eagles and turtles.

Boat Ramps | oregonmetro.gov/boats

- 14

CHINOOK LANDING MARINE PARK
- 15

M. JAMES GLEASON MEMORIAL BOAT RAMP
- 16

SAUVIE ISLAND BOAT RAMP

For more information about each destination, visit oregonmetro.gov/parks



Get Involved

Raptor Road Trip

Explore Sauvie Island in search of magnificent eagles, hawks and falcons. Naturalists and hawk experts host activities at four sites around the island. Enjoy guided bird viewing, meet live raptors and see hawk identification displays. Free hot drinks and donuts in the morning. After check in at Kruger’s Farm Market, you’ll receive a parking permit, event guide, birding map and picture handouts. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Allow about three hours. Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Portland, Metro, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Hawk Watch International.

SAT
06
FEB

WHERE Sauvie Island

WHEN 9a.m. to 2p.m.

COST \$10/vehicle, cash only

AGES all ages

REGISTRATION NOT REQUIRED

DIFFICULTY



Classes and events

SAT
09
JAN

WINTER PRUNING TECHNIQUES

Join Metro arborist Howard Rasmussen for a hands-on class on winter pruning. Learn about safety, tree diseases and pruning techniques and watch demonstrations. Then practice in the orchards by the popular Bybee-Howell House. Bring gloves and dress accordingly for this rain-or-shine class. Tools will be provided, though participants are free to bring their favorite loppers. Hot drinks provided.

WHERE Howell Territorial Park

WHEN 9a.m. to noon

COST free

AGES 16 and older

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

DIFFICULTY



SAT
30
JAN

GEOLOGY OF NEWELL CREEK CANYON

The Pacific Northwest is filled with geologic wonders, and the densely populated metropolitan area is no exception. Newell Creek Canyon in Oregon City has layers of stories written into the landscape. Join a naturalist to learn about the geology in this steep canyon and the surrounding area.



WHERE Newell Creek Natural Area

WHEN 1 to 3p.m.

COST \$6/person, \$11/family

AGES 12 and older

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

DIFFICULTY



SAT
23
JAN

LICHEN AND MOSS

Lichen and moss are all around, living on trees, rocks, houses and sidewalks. This class will focus on the natural history of lichen and moss and how to identify them. Magnification lenses and field guides will be provided. Put on your rain gear, and let’s take a walk in the woods together!

WHERE NW Portland. Directions will be provided to registered participants.

WHEN 1 to 3p.m.

COST \$6/person, \$11/family

AGES 12 and older

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

DIFFICULTY



SAT
27
FEB

DUCKS AND BEAVERS

Some say the ducks and beavers will never get along. Come see for yourself at Blue Lake’s best-kept secret: a wetland that hosts our rival species. Beavers ramp up territorial marking at this time of year, and the ducks are warming up for a long journey north.

WHERE Blue Lake Regional Park

WHEN 9:30 to 11:30am

COST \$5/car, \$7/bus

AGES all ages

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

DIFFICULTY





SUN
28
FEB

BEGINNING BIRD LANGUAGE

February marks the beginning of a rapid increase in daylight. Experience how the birds react to the expanding daylight by ramping up their vocal activity, and learn how to recognize many of their distinct songs and alarm patterns.



WHERE Cooper Mountain Nature Park
WHEN 10a.m. to 12:30p.m.
COST \$10/person
AGES 8 and older
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District,
503-629-6350
DIFFICULTY



SUN
06
MAR

WINTER TWIGS OF MOUNT TALBERT

Do you want to identify shrubs and trees by looking at the bark, twigs and buds? Winter’s barren branches offer subtle yet observable clues to help identify plants. Join a Metro naturalist in exploring the flanks of this extinct cinder cone to identify common Northwest plants before they leaf out in the spring.

WHERE Mount Talbert Nature Park
WHEN 10a.m. to noon
COST \$5/person
AGES 12 and older
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District,
503-794-8092
DIFFICULTY



FRI
08
APR

Stayin’ alive
WINTER SURVIVAL SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES

Take shelter! The driving wind and rain can be held at bay with simple skills that every squirrel uses. In this family-oriented class, learn the basics of building a winter survival shelter that can keep you safe and warm without a sleeping bag or a fire. Younger participants will have free time to build forts.

WHERE Oxbow Regional Park
WHEN 11a.m. to 2:30p.m.
COST \$6/person, \$11/family; and \$5/car, \$7/bus
AGES all ages
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
DIFFICULTY



It’s Our Nature
SIGN UP FOR YEAR-LONG OUTDOOR IMMERSION SERIES

Want to find mushrooms, follow cougar tracks and watch wild salmon spawn? Join a team of experienced naturalists to explore some of the region’s most spectacular places during Metro’s It’s Our Nature year-long field trip series.

From February through November, a group of adults will immerse themselves in the region’s natural areas, learning about natural history topics including geology, animal tracking, birding and ethnobotany. Monthly adventures give you opportunities to dive into the natural world by learning through hands-on experiences. If you crave the behind-the-scenes story, learn by doing and don’t mind getting muddy, this year-long journey could be for you.

Classes combine theory with place, all in an outdoor setting. Naturalists take you on journeys in some of Metro’s hallmark parks and natural areas, such as Oxbow Regional Park. Additionally, many of the classes will be held at Metro natural areas that are not officially open to the public, providing participants with a sneak peak of some of Metro’s hidden nature jewels.

It’s Our Nature is limited to 18 adults (ages 18 and over) who can attend orientation and at least eight of the 10 classes. Additionally, participants need to be willing and able to learn outdoors in all weather conditions and in a variety of terrain.

Classes will usually be held on the third Saturday of the month, and will typically run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Some time changes may be necessary for certain programs. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, and applicants are assessed on their level of interest and ability to commit to the program. No deposit is required. Tuition of \$300 is due upon acceptance into the program.

Details and applications:
oregonmetro.gov/natureimmersion

SAT
16
JAN

SAT
30
JAN

SAT
13
FEB

SAT
27
FEB

SAT
12
MAR

WINTER VOLUNTEER VENTURES

Help care for rare native seeds, bulbs and plant materials that support regional restoration projects. Winter activities include harvesting and planting native bulbs, cleaning seeds and transplanting seedlings. Dress for the weather. No experience is needed. Gloves, tools, water and snack provided. This event is wheelchair accessible with advance arrangements.

WHERE Native Plant Center, 2661 SW Borland Road, Tualatin
WHEN 9a.m. to 1p.m.
COST free
AGES all ages
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
DIFFICULTY



How to register

Unless otherwise noted, register and pay at oregonmetro.gov/calendar

Registration and payment required at least 48 hours in advance for all classes. Classes with low enrollment will be canceled; registered participants will receive full refunds. For more information: Yuliya Klichkova, 503-972-8550.

DIFFICULTY KEY

EASY MODERATE STRENUOUS

Field Guide

MOUNT TALBERT NATURE PARK

STORY BY *Dan Daly*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Fred Joe*

Discover the beauty of this forested oasis nestled between bustling Interstate 205 and Happy Valley. Rising 750 feet in elevation, this volcanic butte has been shaped for nearly 3 million years by fountains of lava, floods, fires and people. A mosaic of habitats and more than 4 miles of trails offer a year-round getaway for those looking to exercise, picnic or experience nature as it changes throughout the seasons.

Visitors that enter from the Mather Road Trailhead will be treated to a picnic shelter, restrooms and a short, wheelchair-accessible loop that circles through a native prairie. Early settlers found much of the Willamette Valley covered with similar prairies that have since been turned into farmland or developments.

Climb the butte’s southern slope through patches of Oregon white oak woodlands and savannas. Native American communities and wildlife alike value the acorns as an important staple food. Oaks grow slowly and are easily overtopped and shaded out by faster-growing trees. Traditionally, Native Americans set fire to the oak woodlands and savannas to burn off faster-growing trees and keep the oaks in full sunlight. These days, chainsaws do the work, and evidence of restoration efforts to free the oaks can be seen on Mount Talbert.

Round the west side of the butte on the Park Loop Trail to find deep red soils that hint at a once active cinder cone volcano, spewing and frothing iron-rich lava into the air. Watch for a large grove of cascara trees with shredded bark at the base that give testimony to a large black-tailed deer buck, marking his territory with unusual vigor. Dense patches of beaked hazelnut shrubs seem to murmur of homesteading days gone by.

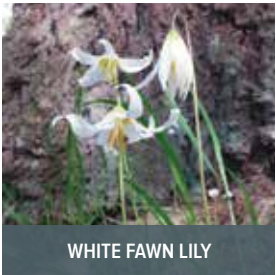
Entering the park from the Sunnyside Road trailhead will take visitors through a series of meadows and across Mount Scott Creek, a small salmon-bearing stream.

For more information, visit oregonmetro.gov/mounttalbert

BE ON THE LOOKOUT!



GREAT HORNED OWL



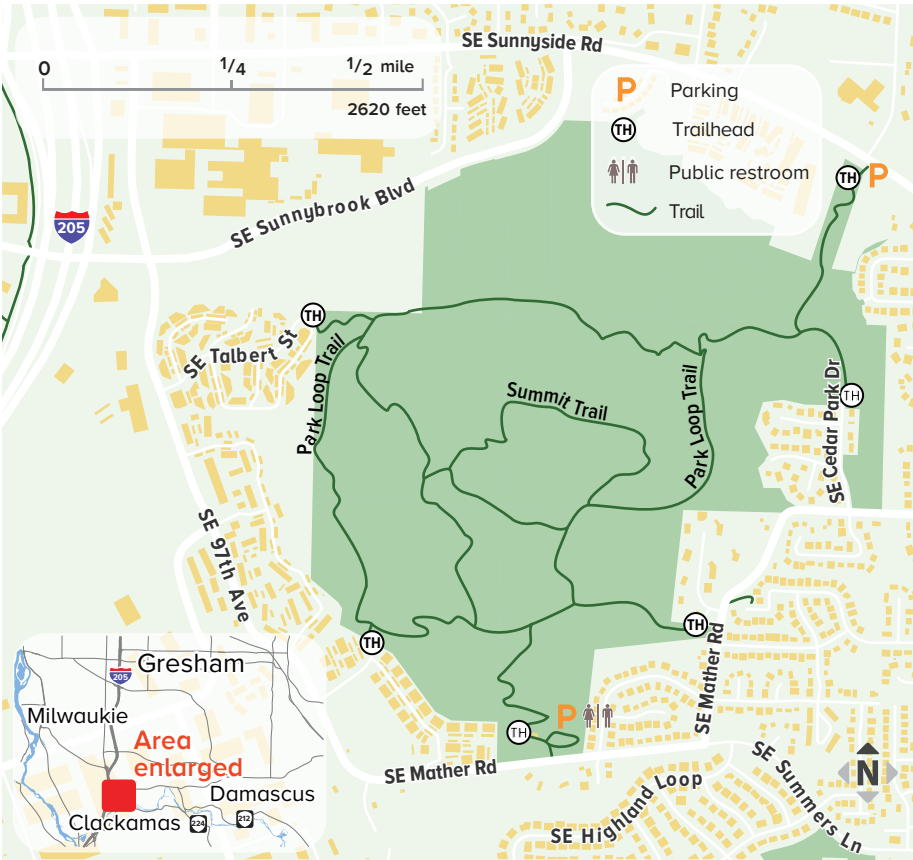
WHITE FAWN LILY



ORANGE HONEYSUCKLE



RUBBER BOA



MOUNT TALBERT NATURE PARK

10945 SE MATHER ROAD, CLACKAMAS

DIRECTIONS

From I-205, take exit 14 for Sunnybrook Road and head east briefly. Take a right immediately onto Southeast 97th Avenue, which curves onto Southeast Mather Road. The main park entrance is on the left. TriMet buses 155 and 156 also run near different entrances to Mount Talbert.

KNOW WHEN YOU GO

Open sunrise to sunset. No bikes or pets, please. The North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District provides day-to-day management.

AMENITIES

Restrooms, picnic shelter, picnic tables, hiking trails, and a short, gravel trail that is wheelchair accessible.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

For another dose of nature, enjoy a hike in the nearby Three Creeks Natural Area. Or take the whole family for a splash at the North Clackamas Aquatic Park. Looking for a spot of shopping? Hit up Clackamas Town Center, just across I-205. The area also offers plenty of restaurants, a theater and more.

SEASON BY SEASON

WINTER: Bare trees make geologic features easier to see. Ice age floods about 20,000 years ago likely caused the major landslide features on the Park Loop Trail. As you climb, notice rounded river cobbles in the trail that reveal the mystery of an active river system that somehow buried the volcano nearly to its summit.

SPRING: Wildflowers ranging from white fawn lily to common camas adorn the wet meadows and mixed woodlands in spring. Because Mount Talbert is an island of natural habitat in a sea of development, it is an ideal spot for migrating neotropical songbirds to rest, feed and nest. Warblers, vireos, orioles and tanagers can be seen.

SUMMER: Mount Scott Creek, accessed from the Sunnyside Road trailhead, is a lesser-known spot to take the kids for a splash in the creek. Native shrubs such as salal, serviceberry and red huckleberry offer sweet edible fruits for those who know their plants.

FALL: Fall rains bring a lovely assortment of mushrooms that rise from the duff beneath Douglas firs and white oaks. Move slowly, step quietly and watch carefully for an elusive native squirrel that you will not see in the city. The western gray squirrel is huge and sports a pure white belly and massive fluffy tail.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE PARTNERS OF



LOADING DAYCATIONS



YOUR SCENIC ROUTE IS ABOUT TO GET
smarter

Explore The Intertwine like you never have before and take a Daycation!

Daycations are multi-stop adventures throughout the 3,000 miles of parks, trails and waterways of the Portland-Vancouver metro area — created by those who know and love this place the best: YOU! The new Daycation mobile app, coming in spring 2016, will be your ticket to these amazing experiences. With the app, you'll find and embark on Daycations, track wildlife sightings, get expert tips from local naturalists, then share your experiences and love of nature with the world on the "Daycation Stream."

www.theintertwine.org/daycations

EMAIL DAYCATION@THEINTERTWINE.ORG TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN THE APP IS AVAILABLE

Tools For Living

Where does your garbage go? The journey of trash

STORY BY *Rebecca Koffman*

Everyone knows the sounds of trash night. Roll-cart wheels rumble and dumpster lids slam as neighbors haul their garbage and recycling out for pick-up.

This ritual has a kind of mundane magic: Set out rotting shrimp, cat litter, empty gin bottles and unopened phonebooks, and soon growling trucks with robotic claws tip them into their bellies and take it all away.

But where is “away?”

In 2013, in 25 cities across Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, more than 64 percent of what businesses and residents threw away was recycled, composted or converted to energy. What was left over was garbage.

A million tons of garbage.

That much garbage would fill 2,500 Olympic-size swimming pools.

All that trash has to go somewhere. But what happens to garbage is largely invisible once you’ve closed the lid of your trash bin. Here’s a look at the journey of trash.

FROM THE GARBAGE TRUCK TO THE TRANSFER STATION

The grinding compactors and piercing backup alarms of garbage trucks are part of our daily soundscapes.

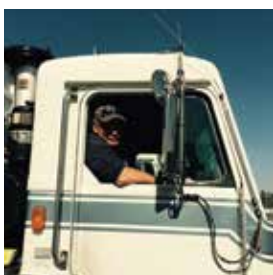
Mark Hillison of Walker Garbage Services is the sole operator of an automated side-loading truck. He’s out on his Cedar Mill and Forest Heights route in Northwest Portland at 6 a.m. sharp picking up household trash.

Not much surprises him. “I’ve been doing this for 25 years. I’ve seen everything.”

Drivers like Hillison take their 5-ton loads to one of several transfer stations in the region. Metro operates two of them, and there are four privately run transfer stations, too. At a transfer station, garbage is transferred from local trucks to long-haul trucks, which take garbage to its final destination.

“The garbage must go – we’re kind of like the postal service in that way,” says Penny Erickson, a solid waste planner at Metro.

Erickson has worked with trash in one way or another for 29 years, and she loves her job. “It’s a



mixture of operations, customer service, safety, environmental compliance and politics – all influenced by market forces,” she says.

But a transfer station is more than just a stopover for garbage. Metro’s Central Transfer Station in Northwest Portland is loud, bustling – and smelly at times. Haulers bring garbage, food scraps and yard debris from homes and businesses. Contractors bring construction waste. And residential customers bring what they can’t get rid of through their home collection service.

SOME GARBAGE GETS A SECOND LIFE, THE REST GETS BURIED

That “self-haul” and construction waste goes onto a sort line where pickers pull out cardboard, metals, plastics and other recyclables.

From the sort line, trash tumbles onto a garbage mountain where a wheel loader grinds back and forth. “He’s mixing stuff into a consistent density before sending it up the chute into the compactor,” explains Erickson.

From the compactor, trash is fed – 34 tons at a time – into the containers of long-haul trucks. Every week, about 300 trucks set off from Metro’s Central and South transfer stations.

They go east for 150 miles to the Columbia Ridge Landfill near Arlington, in the dry sage brush plains.

Then they drive the 150 miles back, empty, to be filled again.

Find more online

Watch videos and learn more about where garbage goes at oregonmetro.gov/wheregarbagegoes

Questions about what to toss or where to recycle? Ask Metro at 503-234-3000 or oregonmetro.gov/toolsforliving

What do I do with old batteries?



Ask Metro.

oregonmetro.gov/batteries

503-234-3000 |  Metro

Ask Metro ABOUT TOOLS FOR LIVING.
503-234-3000 oregonmetro.gov

Regional Roundup

A housing snapshot

STORY BY Craig Beebe

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Kevin Mealy and Justin Sherrill

You've no doubt heard the news, maybe even seen it on your street. The Portland region is growing – and so are the numbers of houses, apartments and condos.

Yet, two things also seem clear: housing supply isn't keeping pace with growth, and housing rents and prices are increasingly out of reach for many middle- and low-income residents.

How is the region changing, and what does it mean? That's the topic of Metro's new Regional Snapshots series: a bit of data and a bit of storytelling to explore things that matter to us all.

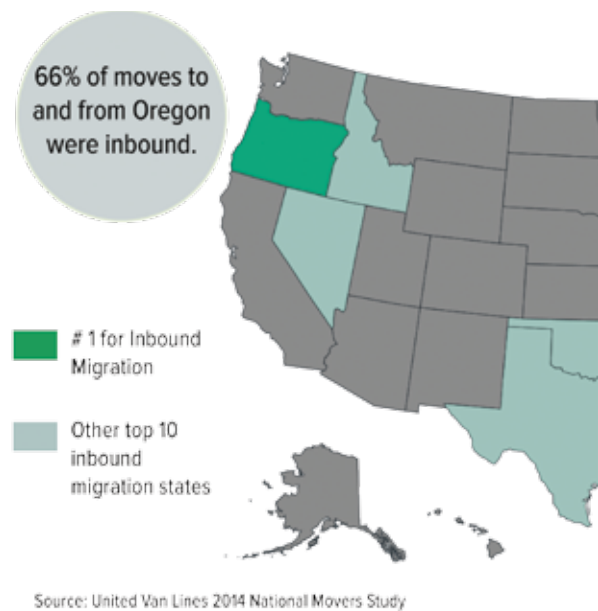


The first Regional Snapshot focuses on housing. Find it and future installments by looking for the YOU ARE HERE dot at oregonmetro.gov/snapshot

BY THE NUMBERS

A few key points:

- People are moving here – a lot of people. Oregon is the top state for inbound migration – that is, more people are coming here than leaving.
- Oregon is a state of migrants, with 51 percent of Oregonians born elsewhere. The average for other states is 32 percent.
- Though still dominated by single-family houses, the region's housing stock will change somewhat over the next 20 years. Today, 65 percent of homes in the region are single-family. In 2035, that number is projected to shift to 60 percent.
- The region's urban growth boundary has been expanded dozens of times since its creation in 1978, but many of those expansion areas still sit vacant. In fact, just eight percent of expected housing in expansion areas has actually been built.
- In November, the Metro Council decided to hold the line on the urban growth boundary at least until 2018.



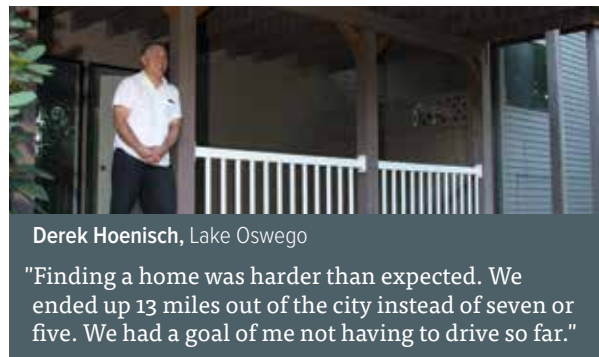
WHAT'S HOLDING HOUSING BACK?

If housing is in short supply, why aren't builders developing more? Why is housing so expensive? Here are some reasons to consider:

- Simply having land to develop isn't enough without roads, sewers and such. But infrastructure is expensive to build, and it's not always clear who should pay.
- People increasingly prefer to live in walkable neighborhoods, many of them already established – raising concerns among existing residents about what it will mean for livability.
- If financing is hard to find, it's harder to build housing – particularly certain kinds of housing that fall outside the norm. For-profit builders and lenders shy away from some projects, while affordable housing advocates say public financing isn't enough.
- Builders need a variety of local permits to build. But in times of high demand, local governments can be stretched to keep up with demand, creating a bottleneck that holds up new housing.
- There's a lot of vacant land and dilapidated buildings around. Why is new housing not being built there? One reason can simply be low demand: builders sometimes can't make projects profitable, usually because the market won't support the rents or housing prices needed.
- Despite sometimes rapid change, homes aren't getting built fast enough in the region's most popular neighborhoods, so prices are still going up.
- If you can afford a house but have to drive an hour to work and spend hundreds of dollars on gas monthly, is that house really affordable? This is an aspect of housing affordability that's often forgotten.

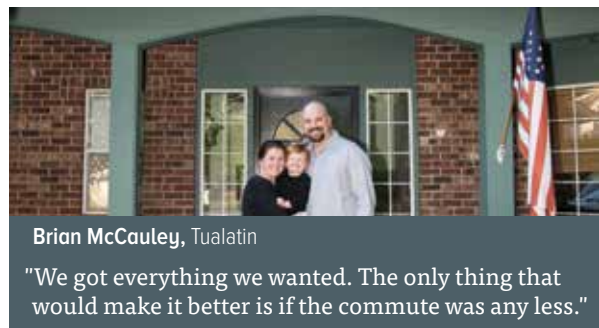
FINDING HOME

Housing trends affect us all. We talked with residents across the region to learn about their experiences finding a place to live. Here are excerpts from some of their stories.



Derek Hoenisch, Lake Oswego

"Finding a home was harder than expected. We ended up 13 miles out of the city instead of seven or five. We had a goal of me not having to drive so far."



Brian McCauley, Tualatin

"We got everything we wanted. The only thing that would make it better is if the commute was any less."



Freddie Carthy, Northeast Portland

"We got heartbroken once or twice a week for two and a half months. It was really tough to stay with it."



Victoria Davis, Southeast Portland

"Everything I asked for I got. It makes me cry when I think about it, because it really came true. It really came to life."



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Share (Y)our Nature and Win!

Ashley Rojo | Fanno Creek Trail

I have the Fanno Creek Trail right behind my house. One morning I decided to take my dog for a walk on the trail. While on the trail I happened to look over and this great blue heron was standing on a branch on a tree. After a while, he hopped into the creek and fished out a creature of some sort.

- Ashley Rojo, Beaverton



SHARE (Y)OUR NATURE, WIN PRIZES

Win an annual parks pass, an overnight camping trip at Oxbow Regional Park, a tennis court session, or a round of golf for four people including cart at Glendoveer Golf and Tennis Center.

To enter, submit a photo taken at a park or natural area in the Portland metro region – your friends and family, a view of wildlife or a sunset, for example. Include a description of your experience in a 50-word caption. Where were you? What were you doing? What captured your attention?

The winner will appear in this space. By submitting a photo, you consent to Metro’s future use and publication of your photo.

Send your picture and description by Feb. 29 to:
ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov

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