



# Chehalem Ridge

## Frequently asked questions

Thanks to voters, regional parks and natural areas are getting healthier and more fun. A 2013 levy allows Metro to restore habitat, add visitor amenities and improve maintenance at sites across the Portland metropolitan area.

### Learn more

[oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge](http://oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge)

### Get in touch

503-797-1545 or  
[parksandnature@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:parksandnature@oregonmetro.gov)

### What is a nature park?

Protected for their scenic, natural or historic features, Metro's nature parks are carefully developed and opened to the public as places to connect with nature. Nature parks offer unique recreation and education experiences in outstanding natural settings.

In these places, Metro promotes activities like hiking and quiet enjoyment of nature and wildlife, sharing the story of some of the region's most unique cultures, landscapes and natural systems. Metro continues its efforts to restore and protect water quality and wildlife habitat.

### Can we access the site now?

We are doing this master plan to get Chehalem Ridge ready for visitors. During site stabilization our sites are closed to everyone for safety reasons. Otherwise the land we manage is public land and people may access it as long as they follow posted rules. This is the case at Chehalem Ridge.

If members of the community choose to visit the site, they should be aware that Chehalem Ridge is not formally developed for public access and closures may occur at any time. There currently are no improvements or facilities like a parking area, access location, trails, signage or restrooms to accommodate visitors. Also, ongoing restoration projects with heavy machinery require us to close the site for safety reasons for periods of time. Unless there are such posted signs however, the public may access the site.

### Will there be tours, and how can I sign up?

We are in the process of planning site tours so that the general public may visit Chehalem with project representatives at designated times during summer 2016.

### How will I be able to get to the site in the future?

The route into the site and parking area has not yet been determined. We are working with a traffic engineer and Washington County to evaluate options. It will be important to consider many factors, including road configuration, directness, site lines, neighbor concerns and costs.

### How will Metro address tensions between different types of activities, such as walking, riding bikes and restoring wildlife habitat?

Although we don't know yet what activities will be supported at Chehalem Ridge, we are developing the master plan with the goal of minimizing conflicts. Once the nature park is open, Metro will monitor how people use the park and assess whether the plan is playing out as expected on the ground. If not, we will adapt our policies and management practices in response to what we learn so the outcomes desired in the plan are achieved.

## **Will there be a place for walking dogs? How will Metro's dogs policy be maintained and enforced?**

We understand how important it is for people and families with dogs to have a place to take their four-legged friends. Many of us own and love dogs as well, but Chehalem Ridge will not be a place to take our pets. Studies show the presence of dogs, even on a leash, disrupts normal wildlife behavior in a variety of ways. Also people are able to see and enjoy more wildlife in parks and natural areas where dogs are not allowed. The policy that prohibits visitors from bringing pets to most of Metro managed parks and natural areas was initiated by Multnomah County in the 1980's and continued in practice after Metro assumed management of those parks in the early 1990's. After a review of the scientific literature and meaningful public discourse, Metro formally adopted the pets policy into its code in 1997 (Metro Council Regulatory code Title 10.01 adopted in Ordinance 96-659A). Service dogs will continue to be welcome.

We aim to be clear about our policy throughout the planning process so that people are aware of why Metro will not allow dogs at Chehalem Ridge. Within Washington County, dog walking parks include: L.L. Stub Stewart State Park, Hyland Forest Park, and Lowami Hart Woods Park. People have many options when they want to spend time outdoors with their pets, but very few places they can depend on to experience nature without dogs. The policy will continue to apply at all of our sites, including Chehalem Ridge. Site rangers will patrol the site for compliance.

## **The nature park will be adjacent to agricultural fields. How will the livelihood of local farmers be protected?**

Metro appreciates and respects the essential role of the farming community to Oregon's economic well-being. We will work with local farmers and our adjacent neighbors to address specific concerns. Strategies used in the past have included clearly defining boundaries, providing a wide buffer from property lines when improvements are made, decommissioning existing access paths, alerting visitors to the presence of farm vehicles in the area, and being clear about site rules and responsibilities. Prior to opening Chehalem Ridge Nature Park, Metro will complete an operations plan to determine the level of staff presence and site monitoring.

## **How will increased use affect medical calls and incidents of fire and accidents?**

We are investigating this question as part of our master plan process. We will coordinate with local fire districts and emergency responders and have an updated incident action plan in place prior to formally opening the nature park to the public.

## **How will crime and fires be controlled?**

Studies show that crime levels within parks and natural areas are similar to their surrounding areas. We will work with local emergency responders to assess any locations needing expanded surveillance or patrol. Local fire and emergency personnel currently have access to the site should an incident need a response.

Metro's restoration work and long-term management strategy includes identifying and reducing fire risks where possible. We follow the Oregon Department of Forestry Industrial Fire Precaution Levels and restrictions, may close areas in very high fire conditions, prohibit fires on all properties outside of designated campsites (if provided), and work with local fire prevention and suppression agencies.

## **Who will patrol the site?**

Metro will operate, patrol and maintain the site. Additional contracted security services may be added if a need is discovered.

## **How is the work funded?**

Metro Parks and Nature protects clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, and creates opportunities to enjoy nature close to home through a connected system of parks, trails and natural areas. Over the past 25 years, voters have made this mission a reality by approving two bond measures to purchase natural areas – and, in 2013, a levy to care for this growing portfolio of land. All three voter investments have called for public access as an important part of Metro's work.