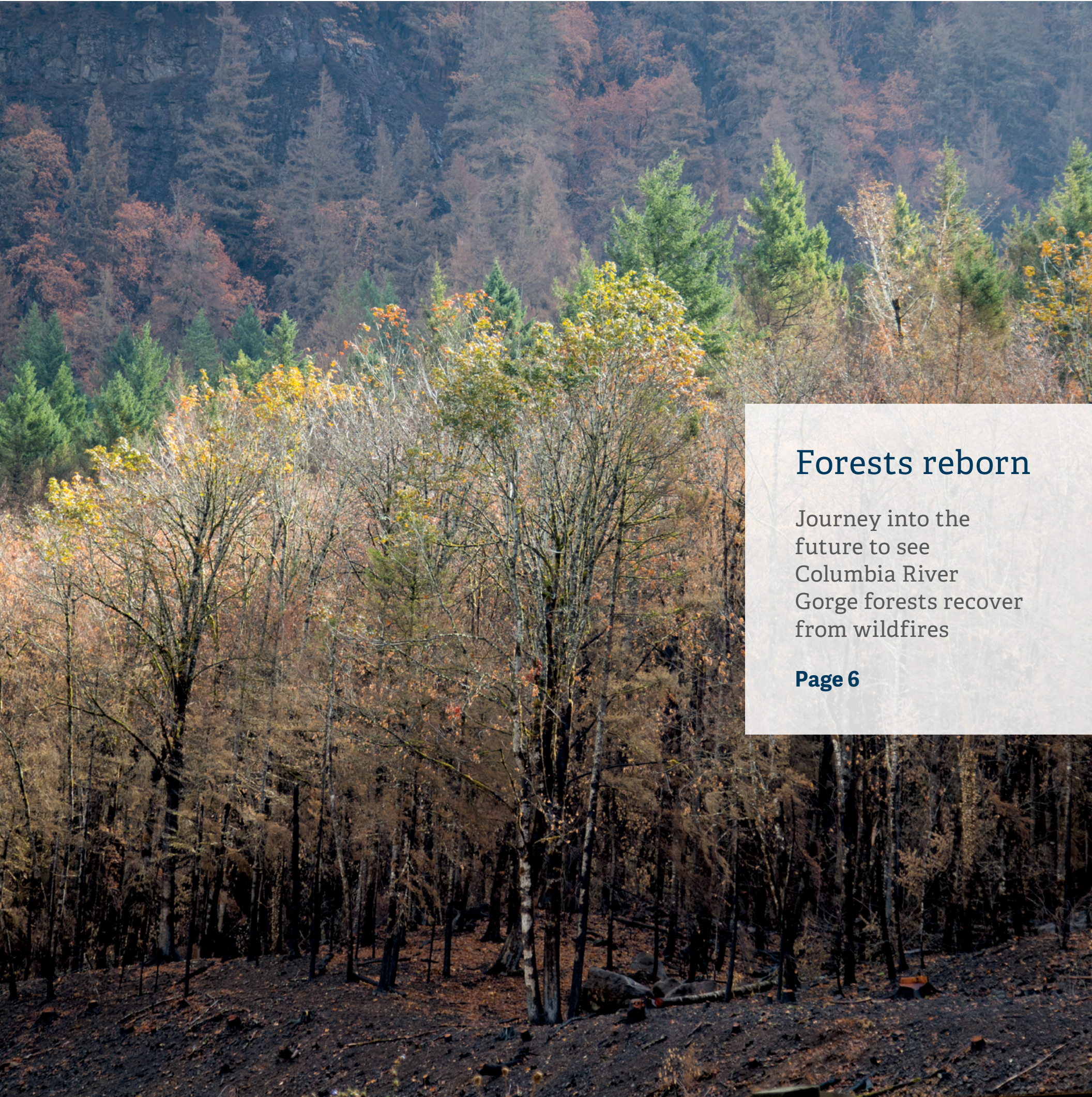


# Our Big Backyard



Winter 2018



## Forests reborn

Journey into the future to see Columbia River Gorge forests recover from wildfires

Page 6

3

### Chehalem Ridge

The future nature park will feature trails, views and more

4

### Cabin fever solutions

Find tips to enjoy the outdoors with kids in the winter

18

### Diversity, equity and inclusion

Learn about efforts to create a more equitable region



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Parks and nature news 2

Field guide 5

Cover story 6

Annual Report 9

Destination guide 13

Get involved 14

Tools for living 17

Regional roundup 18

Share your nature 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.

Metro Council President

Tom Hughes

Metro Councilors

- Shirley Craddick, District 1
- Carlotta Collette, District 2
- Craig Dirksen, District 3
- Kathryn Harrington, District 4
- Sam Chase, District 5
- Bob Stacey, District 6

Auditor

Brian Evans



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

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- oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews
- facebook.com/oregonmetro
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Pets policy

To protect plants, wildlife and people, Metro does not allow pets at most regional parks and natural areas. Pets can damage sensitive habitat and threaten wildlife the region has worked to protect. In natural areas where pets 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.

Parks and nature news



Rough-skinned newts, like this one along the Cazadero Trail, love to eat spiders, insects, insect eggs, worms and other salamanders’ larvae. They secrete a toxic substance to protect from predators, so very few animals can touch or eat them without getting sick. *Photo by Olena Turula*

Follow OregonMetro on social media

See more photos from Metro parks and natural areas by following OregonMetro on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.



Banded alder borers camouflage themselves well, but this one stood out at Baker Heaton Confluence Natural Area west of Tigard. This native long-horned beetle lays its eggs in the decaying wood of downed trees like alder, oak, willow, maple and others.

*Photo by Mary Meier*



Candlestick fungi, also known as carbon antlers, can be found at Oxbow Regional Park. This type of fungus is bioluminescent, meaning that in a really dark place, it gives off a little light as phosphorus accumulated within reacts with oxygen and other chemicals in the fungus.

*Photo by Amanda Martinez*



A rehabilitated red-shouldered hawk flew to freedom at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area in October. The bird was found in Northeast Portland with a shoulder injury, but recovered well and fast at the Audubon Society of Portland’s wildlife care center. *Photo by Cory Eldridge*



Participants in the Zoo Animal Presenter internship program visited Howell Territorial Park on Sauvie Island in August to gather 125 juicy organic apples from the historic orchard to feed to zoo animals.

*Photo by Bonnie Shoffner*

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**On the cover:** Alders and Douglas firs along Interstate 84 show signs of damage from the September fire in the Columbia River Gorge. Although many trees won’t survive, the forest is already beginning to repair itself. *Photo by Cory Eldridge*



# Metro Council approves plan for future Chehalem Ridge Nature Park

Story by Yuxing Zheng. Photography by Ellen Wyoming DeLoy, Yuxing Zheng and Punneh Abdolhosseini



Chehalem Ridge Nature Park could open as early as 2020 after the Metro Council on Oct. 19 unanimously approved the master plan that will guide future visitor amenities.

The 1,230-acre future park 15 minutes south of Forest Grove and Cornelius will provide visitors with opportunities to enjoy picnics, take in views from the Coast Range to the Cascade Mountains, and hike, bike and ride horses on about nine miles of trails.

“I’m so pleased that we’re able to open up a portion of this property, while also protecting a good deal of it for the benefit of nature,” said Metro Councilor Kathryn Harrington, whose district includes Chehalem Ridge.

Construction is expected to be completed in phases, with the first phase possibly starting in summer 2019.

The first phase would build most of the southern portion of the site, including about three miles of trails, restrooms, a trailhead at Southwest Dixon Mill Road, a picnic area, barbeques, equestrian parking area and a parking lot for 70 to 80 cars with a bus drop-off spot. A multi-purpose shelter to accommodate groups up to about 50 people is also planned, with the possibility of a smaller multi-purpose shelter.

The first phase is estimated to cost in the range of \$2.5 million to \$3.9 million.

Future phases would be built once additional money is identified. Those improvements would include building the rest of the trail network, a nature play area and a second, smaller trailhead at the northern end of the park.

## Connecting with the community

Planning started in early 2016, and more than 6,000 comments were submitted over the course of seven open houses, community events, online surveys and more.

“This plan was one of the most thorough, well thought-out public processes I have ever seen in my career,” said Tom Gamble, the Forest Grove parks and recreation director and a member of the Chehalem Ridge stakeholder advisory committee.

A key part of the community engagement was the partnership between Metro and Centro Cultural, a nonprofit based in Cornelius, to ensure that the plan serves the needs of the fast-growing Latino community in Washington County. For instance, people of color and Spanish-speaking people said that activities for families, youths and people with disabilities were particularly important.

Metro and Centro Cultural translated materials and co-hosted Spanish-language events and outreach booths at cultural events. Metro staff also trained Centro Cultural staff and volunteers to lead public tours of Chehalem Ridge in English and Spanish.

“Most importantly, we’re able to advance the way communities of color engage with nature,” said Juan Carlos González, the development and communications director of Centro Cultural. “This partnership has fostered a way for communities of color to really authentically engage with the planning process.”

The partnership provided a lot of value for the Centro Cultural community, said María Caballero Rubio, the executive director.

“For me, the highlight has been that we’ve been able to engage our entire staff in going out and becoming engaged and learning about Metro,” she said. “We’ve claimed this park. It belongs to us. We have a lot of pride, and we’ve internalized that.”

## A shared experience

About six miles of trails would be available for hikers, off-road cyclists and equestrian riders. The trail network at Chehalem Ridge includes a 1.5-mile all-abilities trail that could be used by visitors with varying physical abilities.

Peggy Harris, a Chehalem Ridge neighbor and chairwoman of Citizen Participation Organization 15, said she can’t wait for her daughter and grandchildren to ride horses at Chehalem Ridge. “I’m going to be bringing all my friends from Portland here,” she said.

Chehalem Ridge is the third Metro nature park in the works that would allow off-road cycling.

Matthew Weintraub, a member of the board of Northwest Trail Alliance, said the group was “in full support” of the plan. Off-road cyclists



**Clockwise from main:** Centro Cultural staff and volunteers lead visitors on a tour of Chehalem Ridge. Alberto Rodríguez (left), a Centro Cultural information specialist, points out bear markings on a branch to tour participants. Juan Carlos González (right), the development director of Central Cultural, shows additional bear markings to Roger González, Metro policy analyst. Metro councilors and Centro Cultural staff gather after the council approved the Chehalem Ridge master plan at an October meeting in Forest Grove.

would have preferred to have seen bike-optimized trails but are happy with access to multi-use trails, he said.

John Charles, the president of Cascade Policy Institute, a libertarian think tank, said he would have preferred to see many more miles of trails at Chehalem Ridge, including separate trails for hikers and off-road cyclists.

## A legacy of nature

The mission of Metro’s parks and nature system is to protect clean water, restore fish and wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for people to experience nature. When planning for future parks, staff reviews the location of sensitive natural resources, prioritizing visitor amenities for areas that might have the least impact on water quality and habitat.

Native wildlife such as bobcats, beavers, spotted towhee and more live in Chehalem Ridge’s Douglas fir forests, oak woodlands and riparian areas. The habitat at Chehalem Ridge also provides important connections to nearby natural areas, including Metro’s Wapato View, Penstemon Prairie and Spring Hill Wetlands natural areas.

Money from the voter-approved natural areas bond measure in 2006 and the parks and natural areas levy in 2013 was used to acquire land, restore habitat and plan for public access. Design, engineering and construction will also be paid for with money from voter investments.

To learn more about plans for Chehalem Ridge, visit [oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge](https://oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge)



# Llueva o truene: ideas para pasear con tus niños por la naturaleza este invierno

**Por:** Ellen Wyoming y Punneh Abdolhosseini  
**Traducción:** Sofía Basto  
**Fotografía:** Guadalupe Triana, Fred Joe and Matthew Herbert

Salir a pasear por la naturaleza con niños durante el invierno puede resultar abrumador si no sabes a dónde ir. Sin embargo, es posible salir, mantenerse abrigados y divertirse en familia al aire libre.

Primero, viste a los niños con una capa de ropa abrigada, seguida de otra a prueba de agua y viento para mantener el calor adentro y el frío afuera. Ponles un gorro cálido, guantes, medias y botas de lluvia, y lleva aparte una muda de ropa en caso de que se mojen. Considera comprar un calentador de manos instantáneo en una tienda local de artículos deportivos y ponlo en las manos de los niños si empiezan a sentir frío mientras caminan. Por último, lleva un termo lleno de una bebida caliente y nutritiva – un chocolate caliente es reconfortante después de una caminata de invierno.

## Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area

Esta área natural situada en el norte de Portland es hermosa en el invierno. Trae binoculares para buscar águilas calvas, garzas morenas, castores y venados. Disfruta el sendero circular de 1.6 km (1 milla) apto para cochecitos de bebé y sillas de ruedas. También encontrarás baños y refugios cubiertos para hacer pícnic. Tras una caminata de 91 metros (100 yardas) desde el estacionamiento, te encontrarás en un paraíso invernal en la naturaleza.

## Orenco Woods Nature Park

Visita los divertidos juegos infantiles de este nuevo parque natural en Hillsboro, y quédate otro rato para que los niños traten de avistar garzas morenas en los humedales. Orenco Woods también es hogar de venados y aves de rapiña. Para tu comodidad, el parque ofrece senderos pavimentados para cochecitos y sillas de ruedas, baños y una zona de pícnic cubierta. La línea azul del MAX te dejará en la parada Orenco, a solo 1.2 km (¾ de milla) del parque.

## Scouters Mountain Nature Park

Scouters Mountain en Happy Valley tiene un sendero circular de 1.6 km (1 milla) que atraviesa el bosque, y otro en lo alto del cerro también circular y de medio kilómetro (1/4 milla) que acomoda cochecitos y sillas de ruedas. El sendero de 1.6 km (1 milla) tiene una sección con escaleras y el camino es natural y sin pavimento; es cómodo de caminar hasta con bebés entre un fular o una mochila portabebés. En este lugar maravilloso puedes darles a tus hijos una pequeña canasta para recolectar piñas de pino, hojas, musgo y ramitas para crear manualidades en casa.

Si quieres más información sobre otros destinos naturales de Metro, pasa a la página 13 o visita [oregonmetro.gov/parks](http://oregonmetro.gov/parks)

# Rain or shine: getting outside with kids in winter

**By** Ellen Wyoming DeLoy and Punneh Abdolhosseini  
**Photography by** Guadalupe Triana, Fred Joe and Matthew Herbert



The outdoors can seem daunting with kids in winter if you're not sure where to go. But it's still possible to head outside, stay warm and have fun.

First, wrap the kids in a warm layer topped by a water- and wind- resistant layer to seal in the heat and keep out the cold. Add a warm hat, gloves or mittens, socks and rain boots, and bring a spare set of warm clothes in case they get wet. Consider buying a batch of instant hand warmers from a local sporting goods store and give the kids one to hold if they start to get a chill while walking. Finally, bring a thermos of something filling and warm and know that hot cocoa goes a long way for a treat after a winter walk.

## Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area

This natural area in North Portland is gorgeous in winter. Bring binoculars and look for bald eagles, blue herons, beaver and deer. Enjoy a one-mile loop on a concrete path, accessible for strollers and wheelchairs. There are bathrooms and a covered picnic shelter. A 100-yard walk takes you from the parking lot to the natural area, where you'll feel tucked into a winter nature wonderland.

## Orenco Woods Nature Park

Visit this new nature park in Hillsboro for the nature playground, and stay to see if the kids can spot the blue herons in the wetlands below. Deer and raptors also call Orenco Woods home. You'll be at ease with stroller- and wheelchair-friendly paved trails, restrooms and a covered picnic area. The Orenco stop on the MAX Blue Line is about ¾ mile from the park.



**Clockwise from top:** Rock Creek Trail bridge at Orenco Woods Nature Park, nature playground at Orenco Woods, Scouters Mountain Nature Park, Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area

## Scouters Mountain Nature Park

Scouters Mountain in Happy Valley has a one-mile loop trail through the forest and a ¼ mile stroller- and wheelchair-accessible loop trail at the top of the hill. The one-mile loop trail has a section with stairs, and the path is unpaved and natural. It is ideal for walking, with the youngest of children in carriers. It's a great place to give kids a small basket for collecting cones, leaves, moss and twigs to take home for a nature art project.

For more information about Metro destinations, turn to page 13 or visit [oregonmetro.gov/parks](http://oregonmetro.gov/parks)





# Field guide

## SMITH AND BYBEE WETLANDS NATURAL AREA

Photo by Dylan Abel

Story by James Davis, Punneh Abdolhosseini and Maiya Osife

Smith and Bybee Wetlands is a big surprise to many first-time visitors. Passing warehouses and railroad tracks in North Portland, you don’t expect to find two seasonal lakes bursting with trees, plants and animals. But this 2,000-acre natural area provides some of greater Portland’s best wildlife viewing.

Your first big choice: whether to explore by foot or boat. The Interlakes Trail passes along huge cottonwoods, alders, willows and grasslands, to several spots with great views of the natural area’s two namesake lakes. This mixture of habitats provides homes for many kinds of wildlife, especially birds.

From mid-April through late June, see the lakes up-close by paddling a kayak or canoe. Start from the boat launch on Smith Lake. Paddling west through the channel that leads to Bybee Lake gives you a front-row view of many mammals. In late summer and fall, watch for hearty leaves of wapato on the mudflats. Wapato is an important first food to indigenous people.

You’ll find something exciting no matter when you visit. Discover basking turtles in the spring, creepy-crawly insects in the summer, migrating birds in the fall and soaring raptors in the winter. You can nearly always spot muskrats, beavers, black-tailed deer, raccoons, cottontail rabbits, river otters, minks, long-tailed weasels or coyotes.



### Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area

5300 N. MARINE DRIVE  
PORTLAND, OR 97217

#### GETTING THERE

Take Interstate 5 north to exit 307, Delta Park/Marine Drive. Head west 2.2 miles on North Marine Drive and look for Smith and Bybee on your left. Or take TriMet bus line 11 to the 5300 block of North Marine Drive, which stops at the park entrance.

#### KNOW WHEN YOU GO

Smith and Bybee is open sunrise to sunset. No bikes or dogs, please.

#### AMENITIES

A picnic shelter, bathrooms, bike rack, seasonal drinking fountain and site map can all be found in the parking area. The Interlakes Trail is paved, flat and wheelchair-accessible.

**In the neighborhood** You’re a short drive from St. Johns, where you can fuel up with coffee, grab a bite to eat or browse local shops for books, toys, cameras and more.

Like all land along the Columbia, this area changed dramatically as the region’s population grew. During WWII, Vanport, then Oregon’s second largest city, housed the workers of the Kaiser Shipyards that built boats for the war. The famous Vanport flood occurred on Memorial Day 1948 when the dike on Smith Lake’s east side failed, displacing 40,000 people.

From 1940 to 1990, part of the site served as the St. Johns Landfill, which accepted most of the region’s trash. Metro took over management, closed the landfill and started restoring it to become St. Johns Prairie.

[oregonmetro.gov/smithandbybee](https://oregonmetro.gov/smithandbybee)

### Be on the lookout!



OSPREY



WESTERN PAINTED  
TURTLE



MUSKRAT



WAPATO

### Season-by-season highlights

**WINTER:** From the Interlakes Trail, you can look right through the trees and see the lakes – an opportunity to spot mammals and big, perched birds. This is the best time to see bald eagles, red-tailed hawks and other raptors. By February, male Pacific chorus frogs call for mates in big gatherings at the edge of the water. If snow sticks, you might be lucky enough to see rabbit, deer or coyote tracks.

**SPRING:** Explore by kayak or canoe for an up-close look at lush scenery and abundant wildlife. Many migrating birds pass through, and 35 species of songbirds nest here. Watch for western painted turtles basking in the sun on floating logs. Smith and Bybee has one of the biggest populations in Oregon. For reliable views, visit “Turtle Turnout,” a wooden railing overlooking the slough on the right side of the Interlakes Trail. Look for Pacific chorus

frog tadpoles in the water, and garter snakes sunbathing on logs or along the trail.

**SUMMER:** July and August are quiet as birds eat, hide, molt and grow to survive the coming seasons. Mammals cruise around near sunset looking for food, but they’re the hardest animals to spot; they can sense people, especially if we’re talking! One group of animals that’s pretty obvious: insects and spiders. Spider webs laced with cottonwood seeds nearly cover the trees, creating a “haunted forest.”

**FALL:** Migrating birds leave with their young, while thousands of ducks that nested in the Arctic arrive for the winter and feast on water plants loaded with seeds. Shorebirds, like killdeer and sandpipers, fill up on food while they head south. Look for black and orange caterpillars called “wooly bears,” which drop to the ground and dig a place to hibernate until spring.





# Rebirth of a forest

## Journey into the future to explore how Columbia River Gorge forests recover from wildfires

Story by Cory Eldridge, Jonathan Soll and Katy Weil  
Photography by Cory Eldridge

**This page, clockwise from top:** Forest fires in the rainy parts of the Northwest don’t burn the landscape uniformly. Here, all the ground-level plants were cleared by the fire, but the ferns and shrubs just feet away were spared. The thick bark of large Douglas fir armors them against flames. Undamaged bark survives just a quarter inch under the charred trunk. The alder tree next to it, however, was burned so badly a good push would knock it over.

**Opposite page, clockwise from top:** The fire in the gorge was generally worse on steeper mountains. In the top photo, the light brown trees have needles that were roasted but never ignited, while the dark brown and black trees were consumed by flames. Below it, a ridge lined with matchstick trees indicates the type of area at risk of landslides. While the ground in this part of the forest was burned badly, newly fallen leaves are already beginning to repair the soil.

When the first images of the Eagle Creek fire reached social media, the bereaved lovers of the Columbia River Gorge wrote post after post eulogizing the places that, from the awful photographs, seemed lost forever. Nearly all included words like “destroyed,” “death,” or “memory.”

The fire caused significant economic and emotional damage. But the gorge as a natural wonder was neither lost nor destroyed. The Eagle Creek fire, tragic as it was, has created an opportunity for people to witness a natural process often hidden in far-flung wilderness. For the rest of our lives, we have the opportunity to see the rebirth and coming of age of a forest.

Let’s take a walk in the forest, starting immediately after the fire and trekking to see the forest in the first spring, a few years from now, and five and 20 years in the future.

### After the flames are out

The forest is not as charred as you imagined. There are cliff faces that seem as though a charcoal waterfall flowed over them, leaving nothing but matchstick trees. From the top of one Douglas fir tree, flames reached to ignite the low branches of its upslope neighbor, creating a wall of flames.



For every burned-out mountain slope, there’s another that’s as green as it ever was. Even the heavily burned areas are dotted with half-scorched trees and trees that didn’t seem to even notice the fire. More common are the swathes of rusty brown where the needles of evergreens roasted but never ignited.





Walk under the canopy, and you’ll see a similar mosaic. In one spot, the ground is covered in charcoal limbs and carbonized fern fronds. Ten yards away, saplings, shrubs and ferns soak up the sun. One side of a big Douglas fir is scarred, the other hardly touched. There are damaged trees everywhere. Many of them won’t survive their injuries or the diseases that follow but many will carry on.

The soil tells the same story. Areas baked hot by smoldering logs and the collective heat of hundreds of burning tree trunks are dead, but only temporarily. Leaf litter and decomposed leaves and twigs burned off the surface. Roots, seeds, mycelia (mushroom roots) and the bacteria that make soil a living thing are consumed or killed by the heat. Already, though, the trees are dropping needles and twigs that will fertilize the soil. In many places, the soil and its mysterious unseen world remain alive to launch a new forest.

Most heartening: Just weeks after the fire, grasses are growing.

### First spring

Spring has arrived, and young greenery explodes in all but the most intensely burned areas. Shrubs like mock orange, snowberry and kinnikinnick stretch into open spaces. Post-fire specialists like fireweed and morel mushrooms boom. Resprouting trees like maples, oaks and madrones bounce back with new growth from their undamaged roots.

For animals, the action is in the dead but still standing trees called snags.

Trees killed in forest fires are not ghosts of the forest past; they’re vital members of the forest community and stand witness to the cycle of life. Before the fire, the nutritious insides of the trees were off limits, but now the trees’



defenses are diminished. To insects, the snag is like a grilled onion: burned on the outside, sweet and tender on the inside. This first spring, insects are already feasting and laying broods that will have more food than their kind has seen in hundreds, maybe thousands, of generations. Their populations will erupt, and the birds will come.

Some birds are fire specialists rarely seen in the gorge. Olive-sided flycatchers arrive for the bug bonanza and several types of woodpeckers move into some of the most burned areas, drilling and digging out holes in the snags to get after bark beetles. The woodpeckers are also creating habitat for other animals slowly making their way back to the forest.

### The next few years

When you hike in the gorge two or three years from now, you’ll see the regrowth from that first spring filling out. Shrubs are maturing, and grasses and wildflowers are abundant. This is called the early seral stage. Because of current fire management and modern forestry practices, early seral habitats are rare in the area’s forests. But they are an important component of a healthy landscape.

Early seral plants are mega food producers, pumping out nectar, pollen, seeds, and tender leaves and shoots. That attracts pollinators like bees and flies, grass-eaters from tiny insects to massive elk, and seed-loving wildlife like mice and birds. All of these, of course, bring in predators, from hawks and owls to foxes and cougars. Everyone has plenty to eat.

Even severely burned areas now show signs of recovery as the soil is slowly renewed by nutrient-rich dust and seeds carried by wind and animals. Little conifer sprouts start to grow.

## Rebirth of a forest

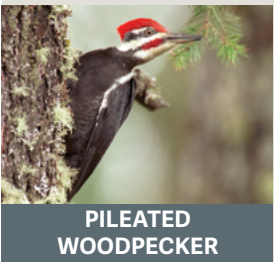
### The early arrivals

Every stage of a forest has its specialists, and that’s true for burned areas. Woodpeckers, fruit-filled shrubs and morel mushrooms thrive in post-fire forests.

When you head back to the Columbia River Gorge for a hike, keep an eye out for these birds and plants that make up some of the first species to return to the forest after a wildfire.



NORTHERN FLICKER



PILEATED WOODPECKER



GRAY JAY



HOUSE WREN



SNOWBERRY



KINNIKINNICK



FIREWEED



MOREL MUSHROOMS

This large woodpecker lives throughout the region, even in urban neighborhoods. It uses its powerful beak to create nesting holes in trees.

Its bright red mohawk and noisy call make this crow-sized woodpecker easy to spot. Its massive beak rips apart trees as it looks for bugs.

Opportunistic like other jays, the gray jay may come to pick over the destruction at higher elevations in the gorge.

Photo: The Forest Vixen / CC BY

Another common bird in the region, the house wren may be easier to spot in burned-over areas. Keep a close eye for mouse-sized shadows moving on the ground.

Photo: USFWS

This hearty plant is among the first to return to burned areas. Its striking, namesake fruit is a prime food for early post-burn arrivals.

Photo: born1945 / CC BY

The quality that makes this a favorite groundcover for gardeners – it’s robust – allows it to bounce back quickly from fire.

This plant earned its name by being adept at spreading through a burned-out area. The gorgeous pink flowers attract pollinators.

Photo: Kristi / CC BY

This family of mushrooms has several members that thrive post-fire. Take caution and follow the law if you decide to harvest morels.





# When wildfires strike at Metro parks

Story by Chris Hagel,  
Metro lead natural resources specialist  
Photography by Ariel Whitacre

On the morning of July 20 last summer, I was driving to work on Interstate 205 southbound near Oregon City when I smelled heavy smoke in the air. I thought to myself, “Please don’t tell me Canemah Bluff Nature Park is on fire!”

As I came over the hill, I could see Canemah Bluff across the Willamette River. There was a large column of smoke rising up. As I looked closer, I could see flames on the ground and emergency lights from a fire engine trying to figure out how to get to the fire.

Luckily, our office is just down the road and as I arrived, I grabbed Ryan Jones, my fellow natural resource specialist, and quickly mobilized to go to the incident. Meanwhile, the rest of Metro’s natural areas land management team prepared our fire equipment for transport. Jones and I worked with Clackamas County Fire District #1 to find that a human-caused fire had burned roughly ¼ acre. After Metro’s land management team arrived, we integrated our staff into the fire control efforts.

The team dug a control line to contain the fire and worked hard throughout the day to extinguish the flames and hot spots. Members of the team worked over the weekend to ensure the fire stayed out. The risk of the flames sparking back up were high since temperatures were in the 90s. The team did a great job putting out the fire, and it did not spread any further.

After any wildfire on Metro land, staff works hard to stabilize the soil and restore the area. This usually involves putting in erosion control measures, restoring fire lines back to their pre-fire conditions, seeding the site with native grasses and forbs, and replanting trees and shrubs if necessary. Sometimes we find the best thing to do is nothing. Sometimes letting Mother Nature recover on her own is the best thing we can do. It all depends on the situation and how intense the fire burned.

The Canemah Bluff fire reminded me that, as scary as wildfires are, they’re also part of the natural ecosystem and provide great benefits under the right conditions. Metro conducts prescribed burns at places like Cooper Mountain Nature Park to promote native prairies and oak woodlands, reduce fire danger and manage invasive weeds.

With Canemah Bluff, I remain positive and see nothing but benefits. The area that burned allowed us to have an opportunity for bare soil and to spread native grass and wildflower seed. Next spring the area will turn green, and in the next year or so, you will see a flush of wildflowers that will benefit native pollinators.



## 5 years later

By now it’s difficult to spot signs of the fire in many places. But your keen eye knows that the snags are the clearest legacy. At this point, it’s hard to argue that a snag is dead: its tree life may be over, but it’s full of life. In this area, more than 100 animals live in snags, including mammals, amphibians, birds, bugs and reptiles.

Since they arrived, the woodpeckers never stopped excavating new holes. Now there are more holes than woodpeckers, but the forest provides plenty of new tenants. Wood ducks, owls, bluebirds, chickadees, brown creepers and nuthatches move in. Northern flying squirrels and Douglas squirrels make homes in the smaller holes while raccoons, gray foxes and pine martens den up in the big ones. Without the woodpeckers, these animals would be homeless.

Reptiles struggle to escape fires, and their populations suffer mightily. It’s not until now that the gorge’s scaly residents like garter snakes and northern alligator lizards make it back.

## 20 years later

For us, the fire seems like a long-ago event. The hardest-hit areas, the places that lost most or all of their trees, will largely be meadows of grasses, shrubs, and wildflowers abuzz with insects and birds, crawling with mice and lizards. But you’ll see trees making

**Above:** A Douglas fir lies amid a grove of burned alders near Interstate 84. This tree, though destroyed in the fire and felled by firefighters, will take decades and maybe more than a century to decompose. The whole time, it will nourish the forest’s plants and animals.

a slow march. The conifers, maples and oaks that began to grow the first spring after the fire have birthed their own seedlings and saplings.

About now, snags enter the last stage of their post-tree existence. For two decades, beetles, worms and fungi have eaten away at their roots, and the trunks finally fall. Still, the log has decades – maybe even two centuries – of life to give. Lying there, it shelters wildlife, adds nutrients to the soil and even becomes a nursery for the tree seedlings that will take its place.

This is why scientists call large snags and logs legacy trees. They are an inheritance for the young forest from the old. The fire in the Columbia River Gorge didn’t take away that inheritance. The fire gave it.

*Want to visit an ancient forest near the gorge? Explore Oxbow Regional Park on the Sandy River or discover another Metro destination. To see all the options, visit [oregonmetro.gov/parks](https://oregonmetro.gov/parks)*





Metro

2016–17 Annual Report

# Parks and Nature



## Levy renewal provides boost for Metro's unique park system

In November 2016, voters overwhelmingly approved a five-year renewal of Metro's parks and natural areas levy, providing stable funding through 2023.

The renewal by 74 percent of voters provides a boost for Metro's unique park system, one with nature at its heart. Thanks to more than two decades of voter investments, Metro manages 17,000 acres of parks, trails and natural areas across every community in the region.

Extending levy funding will allow Metro to continue to protect clean water, restore fish and wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for people to enjoy nature close to home.

Just like the original 2013 levy, about half of the money from the levy renewal will go toward restoring and maintaining natural areas to improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. About 20 to 30 percent will go toward regional parks operations. The rest will go toward improving parks and natural

areas for people, grants for community nature projects, and nature education and volunteer programs.

Levy money will also be aimed at diversifying the contractors that Metro hires, as well as improving programs and facilities for underserved communities such as communities of color, low-income communities and young people.

The levy renewal is another chapter in the growth of the region's parks and natural areas system, which started to take shape in 1992 with the Metropolitan Greenspaces Plan. The plan paved the way for the 1995 and 2006 natural areas bond measures, which allowed Metro to acquire some of the region's rare and special habitat areas, provide money for capital grants and support local parks providers.

Money from the 2006 bond measure is winding down, though the renewal of the levy will buy Metro time to secure funding for the program's long-term future.

Metro's future work will be guided by the Parks and Nature System Plan, a long-term strategic plan to guide the future of the regional network that the Metro Council approved in February 2016.

The system plan lays out Metro's mission and role, the state of the portfolio, trends that will shape this work, and a slate of strategies to guide the future. The plan also provides strategic direction in investing the money that voters have approved – a long-term commitment that now totals more than \$480 million to date.

To see the impact of these investments and the opportunities ahead, listen to the stories from people on the ground. Learn more about how your tax dollars were spent from July 2016 to June 2017 to plant more than a million native trees and shrubs, provide opportunities for diverse communities to access nature, offer grants to support community nature projects – and much more.

Get the whole report online with more photos, stories and details at  
[oregonmetro.gov/parksandnature2017](http://oregonmetro.gov/parksandnature2017)

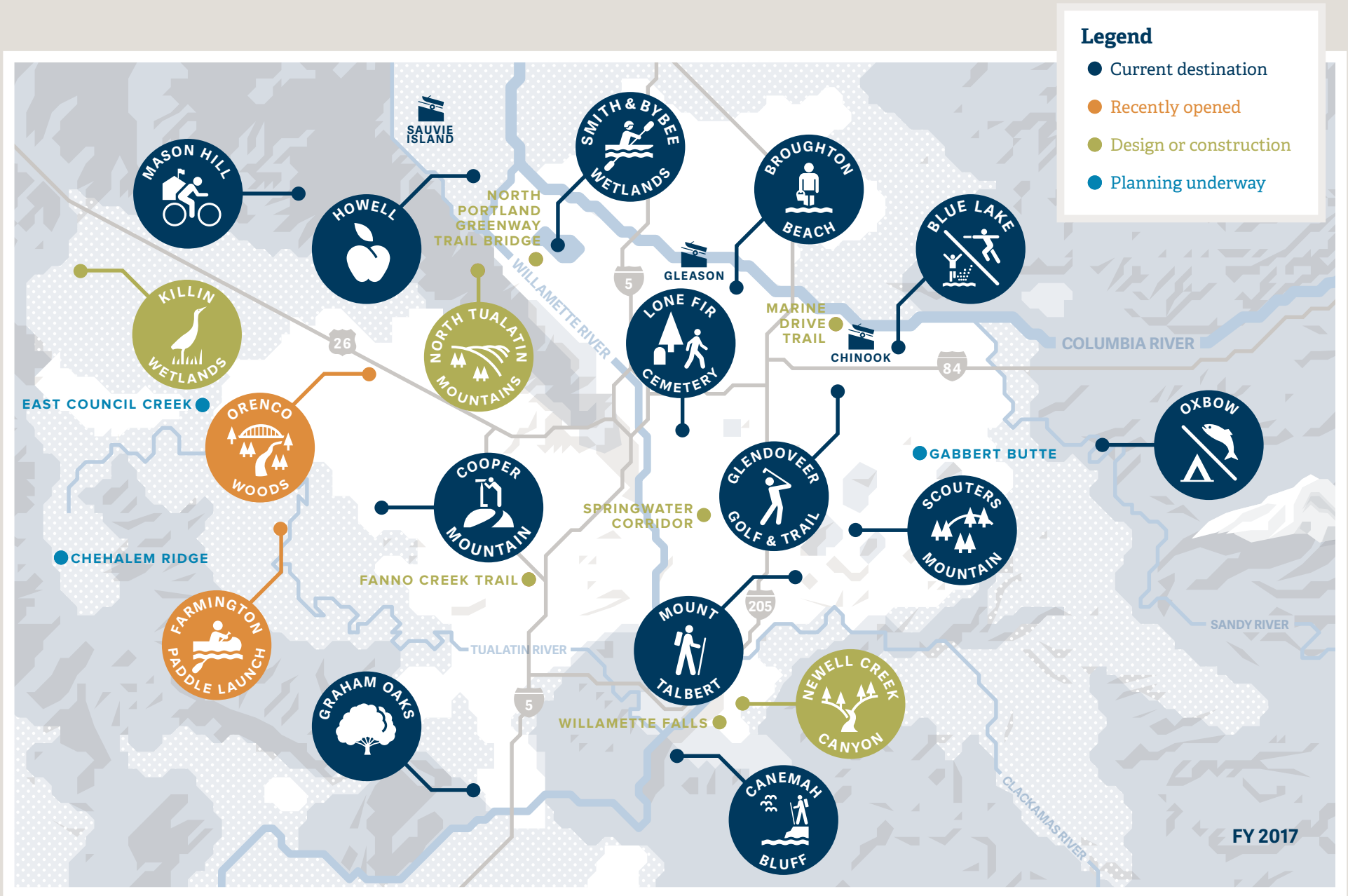


# Access to nature

Metro is expanding opportunities to hike, explore, see wildlife and learn about the landscape at voter-protected natural areas. From Newell Creek Canyon to Killin Wetlands, new destinations are taking shape.

Work is also underway to improve parks and facilities that more than 1.6 million visitors a year already enjoy. Projects focus on upgrading aging facilities, improving sustainability, and enhancing safety and security – such as

a new dock at Sauvie Island Boat Ramp and improvements for new camp sites in the works at Oxbow Regional Park.



# Diversity, equity and inclusion

Thanks in particular to the 2013 levy, Metro is providing more nature programs to historically marginalized communities, planning more inclusive parks, working to support more minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses – and more.

Partners in Nature projects collaborate with organizations that serve specific cultural groups to co-create programs relevant to each community. These programs provide guided

opportunities for community members to enjoy the outdoors, introduce young people to potential careers in conservation and nurture a growing interest in nature. Metro is now working with more than a dozen culturally specific organizations through Partners in Nature collaborations.

Another initiative called Connect with Nature is contracting with Verde, a community-based organization, to develop a new approach to

designing parks that are welcoming to diverse communities. The information gathered from Connect with Nature participants is being used to plan for visitor amenities at East Council Creek Natural Area in Cornelius and Gabbert Butte Natural Area in Gresham.



## Muwafaq Alkattan: discovering nature and finding home

When Muwafaq Alkattan arrived in Oregon from Iraq five years ago with his wife, Lubna, and their four grown daughters, they had to learn not just a new city but a new culture, new pretty much everything.

Alkattan didn't have to learn or translate nature. Metro's Cooper Mountain Nature Park near Beaverton quickly became a respite, a place he didn't have to strive to understand but could just enjoy. Now, four years later, he's brought many fellow Iraqis to parks across the greater Portland region, helping them connect to nature, discover a favorite place and make this more of a home.

"Nature is part of my life," he says.

The Alkattan family fled Iraq during the war and applied for refuge in the United States. In 2012, the Alkattans settled in Tualatin.

Alkattan quickly connected with the newly formed Iraqi Society of Oregon and became a

board member. Not long after, he participated in leadership development programs at Unite Oregon, a nonprofit based in Portland that advocates for multicultural social justice issues. That led to an internship with Metro.

The internship was through a Partners in Nature collaboration between Metro and Unite Oregon that's now in its fourth year. He began photographing Metro's parks, showing the trails, views, picnic and play areas. He shared the photos on the Iraqi Society of Oregon's Facebook page in Arabic so that others in the community could know about and enjoy the parks. Then he organized outings, taking fellow Iraqis to parks across the region, introducing them to special places in their new home they might not have connected to without him.

Now, Alkattan is working on a new internship to design a system to catalogue park amenities across Metro's system.



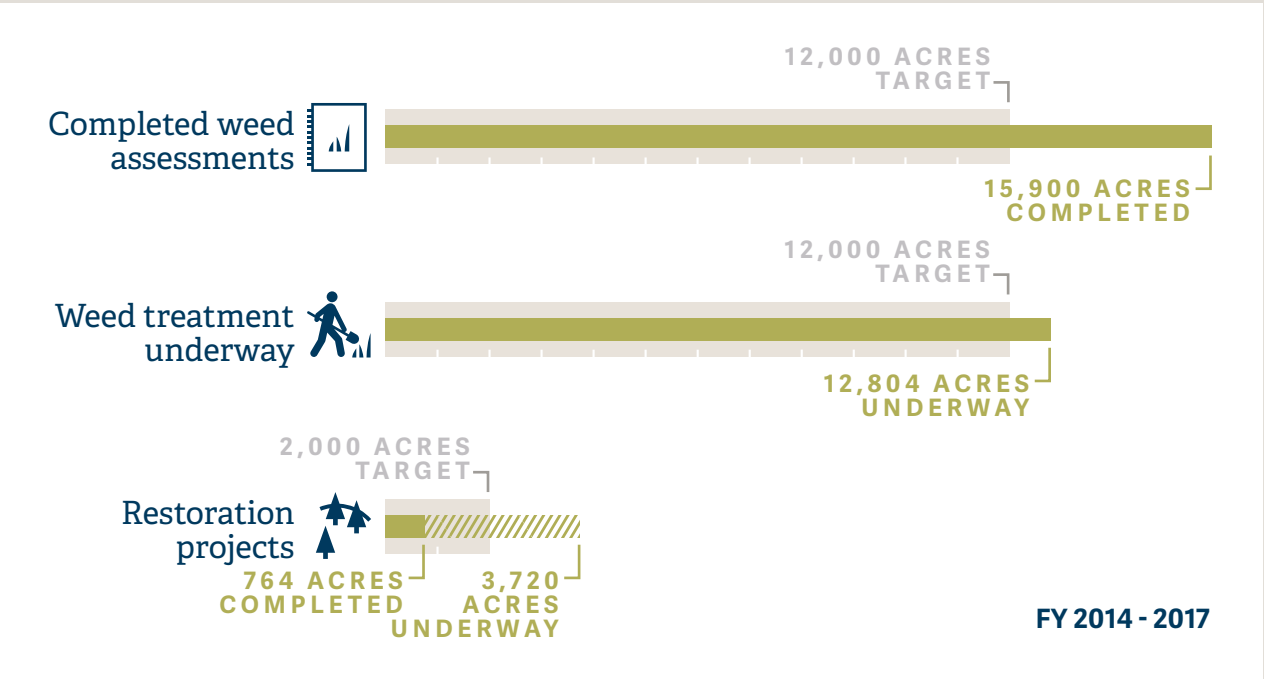
# Restoration and maintenance

Protecting clean water and restoring fish and wildlife habitat are at the core of the Metro Parks and Nature mission.

Nearly half of the money from the 2013 levy is dedicated to protecting water quality and habitat. Restoration and maintenance work includes controlling invasive weeds, planting native trees and shrubs, removing unnecessary culverts and roads, maintaining existing roads and infrastructure, decommissioning unauthorized trails, improving connections between streams and wetlands, and improving habitat for fish and wildlife.

After Metro acquires a property, a plan is drawn up as the first step of the restoration process. Invasive weeds start getting treated. Sometimes, dilapidated buildings, septic systems and other manmade structures are removed. This initial work is paid for with money from the 2006 natural areas bond measure.

Restoration takes different forms across forests, rivers, wetlands, prairies and oak savanna and other habitats. Restoration work can take years or even decades to complete, after which a site transitions to long-term maintenance.



## Native seeds, plants help restore habitat

The Big Prairie at Cooper Mountain Nature Park offers sweeping views over the Tualatin River Valley. But on a sun-scorched summer morning, Adrienne Basey, botanist and science assistant at Metro’s Native Plant Center, focuses on the earth at her feet.

She walks through tall grass searching for *Sanicula bipinnatifida*, better known as purple sanicle, a native plant in the carrot family. It’s gone to seed, so she can’t look for its flower.

“It’s fun when your eye picks up the pattern and you see things that were invisible a moment ago,” she says. Soon, she bends to a twiggy plant almost indistinguishable from the brown stalks around it.

“Yes!” she says. She’s there at the right time. The seed is ripe and ready to collect.

In fall 2016, 3,500 pounds of native seeds were sown at Metro properties. In the winter,

approximately 1,025,000 plants, live stakes and bulbs went into the ground at parks and natural areas across greater Portland. Collecting wild seed by hand is the first step in restoring oak woodlands, upland prairies, wetlands and other threatened ecosystems that are being preserved at Metro sites throughout the region.

Next, Basey heads to the pond to meet Julie Hawkins, a volunteer in Metro’s Seed Scout program. Hawkins has been trained to identify wildflowers by their seedheads and carries a GPS tracker and paper bags filled with seeds of native larkspur, iris and geranium. She has volunteered to collect seeds for six years, usually at Graham Oaks Nature Park in Wilsonville near her home.

On Hawkins’ last visit, she tied small mesh bags over the seed capsules of Tolmie’s cat’s ears. Since then, the pods have burst open and flung their dark brown seeds – but only so far as the mesh.

At the end of the morning, Basey takes the gathered seeds to Metro’s Native Plant Center in Tualatin, where they will be dried, cleaned, then planted and grown out to make more seeds.

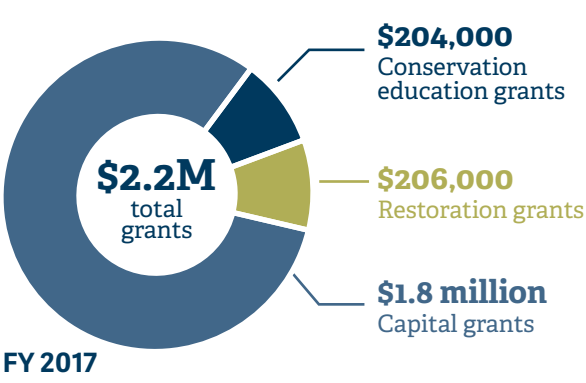
The Native Plant Center focuses on collecting seeds that are not commercially available. Some seeds come from habitats where rare and specialized plants flourish, such as the spring gold or Cascade penstemon that grow on the basalt bluffs at Metro’s Willamette Narrows south of West Linn. Others, like the seeds in the mesh bags, come from plants such as Tolmie’s cat’s ears that are rare in the metro area because development has severely reduced their habitat.

“I get really excited about seeds,” says Marsha Holt-Kingsley, the coordinator of the center. “Finding rare species, then making more – to do that conservation work feels good.”



# Community investments

Each year, Parks and Nature provides millions of dollars in grants and local share money to go toward local community nature projects. Over the last 25 years, the public – through Metro – has invested more than \$90 million to support a broad range of community nature projects across the greater Portland region, helping to acquire land, restore habitat, build visitor amenities and more. Over the past year, Metro awarded the last rounds of grants available through the 2006 bond measure and 2013 levy. Nature in Neighborhoods grants will be offered again starting in 2018, when funding from the renewed levy becomes available.



## Future nature stewards explore Columbia Slough

On a cool spring morning, 24 students from George Middle School stepped off a school bus in Kelley Point Park at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers. The seventh graders were only a few miles away from their North Portland school, but some didn’t know this park existed.

The students had come to paddle the last stretch of the 19-mile Columbia Slough before it spills into the Willamette. Their field trip was sponsored by the Columbia Slough Watershed Council’s Slough School and funded in part by a Nature in Neighborhoods grant from Metro. It would be the first time on water for many of these young students, even though they’d just built a rowboat in their science classroom.

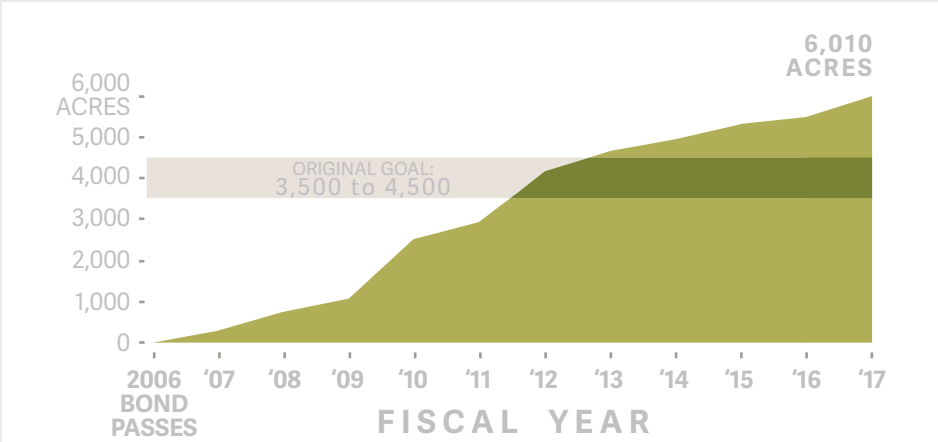
As the tandem canoes launched, the noise of industry gave way to the sounds of birds and the splashing of paddles. Some spotted geese in the cloudy sky, and a lucky few caught a glimpse of a blue heron. “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream,” one boatload of students sang as the four rowing crews settled into competition and teamwork.

The journey was a highlight of a multi-year focus at George introducing students to North Portland’s abundant but often overlooked natural environment. Educational activities, paid for in part with Metro grants, also extend to students in other schools within the Columbia Slough watershed.

“We want to give them an opportunity to form relationships with natural areas,” said Jennifer Starkey, the Columbia Slough Watershed Council’s education director.







### Land acquisition with 2006 bond (CUMULATIVE)

The biggest portion of the 2006 bond measure earmarked \$168 million for land acquisition from willing sellers. More than 6,000 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 education FY 2017



6,479

Youth participants in conservation education programs



6,155

Total hours Youth Ecology Corps  
A job training program for low-income youths

### Volunteers FY 2017



35

Sites where volunteers worked  
Target = 33 sites



12,325

Total volunteer hours at parks and natural areas

## Promises made, promises kept

Metro’s system of parks, trails, natural areas and cemeteries is the demonstration of a more than a quarter century of commitment, action and investment by the region.

None of this would be possible without voter support for two natural areas bond measures and two parks and natural areas levies.

Spending from the 2006 natural areas bond measure is winding down, though money remains to acquire and protect more land and support locally significant projects.

The final year of funding from the 2013 levy is scheduled to expire in June 2018, with money from the levy renewal kicking in the next month. Continued funding from the levy renewal will build upon the successes in the first levy. More sites will be restored to provide healthy habitat. Future nature parks planned for in the first few years of the levy will soon open to visitors. And popular parks will continue to see improvements with new facilities and more programming.

The work continues. Stay tuned for next year’s annual report to track how your tax dollars are spent to improve parks and nature.



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

### Parks and Nature spending\* FY 2017

	General fund	2013 parks and natural areas levy	2006 natural areas bond	Total
Restoration/maintenance of parks and natural areas	\$2,469,446	\$3,180,086	\$0	\$5,649,532
Access to nature	\$587,444	\$1,468,365	\$6,307,813	\$8,363,622
Park improvements and operations	\$5,321,726	\$784,213	\$0	\$6,105,939
Cemeteries	\$757,091	\$0	\$0	\$757,091
Nature education and volunteer programs	\$117,730	\$661,794	\$0	\$779,524
Community investments	\$59,074	\$1,824,762	\$3,662,481	\$5,546,317
Land acquisition/stabilization	\$0	\$0	\$9,007,667	\$9,007,667
Administration**	\$1,980,160	\$4,942,823	\$3,878,438	\$10,801,421
Total	\$11,292,671	\$12,862,043	\$22,856,399	\$47,011,113

\* 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 2017



Improving public access to natural areas      Regional park operations      Nature in Neighborhoods grants      Restoring natural areas for wildlife, fish and water quality      Nature education and volunteers










# Destination guide

	<b>Restrooms</b>		<b>Playground</b>
	<b>Picnic facilities</b>		<b>Camping</b>
	<b>Trails</b>		<b>Wheelchair accessible</b>
	<b>Classes events volunteer</b>		<b>Cost</b> \$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 Nature Park**  
Gaze at the Willamette River below, marvel at oak trees overhead, hike and admire colorful spring wildflowers.




4

**Cooper Mountain Nature Park**  
Hike or jog more than three miles of trails, watch wildlife or enjoy views of the Chehalem Mountains and Tualatin Valley.




5

**Farmington Paddle Launch**  
The launch site accommodates non-motorized watercraft.

6

**Glendoveer Golf Course & Nature Trail**  
Tee time: playglendoveer.com  
Play a game of golf, footgolf or indoor tennis, or enjoy a stroll on the two-mile nature trail.



7

**Graham Oaks Nature Park**  
Ride bikes through a restored oak woodland, stroll through a conifer forest and spot birds from a wetland overlook.




8

**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.



9

**Lone Fir Cemetery**  
Enjoy a stroll or jog in this tree-filled community greenspace, one of Oregon's most treasured historic cemeteries.




10

**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.






11

**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.









12

**Orenco Woods Nature Park**  
Enjoy a leisurely jog, stroll or bike ride on a network of trails while taking in views of the gently rolling hills, open meadows and forests. Children will have fun exploring the nature play area.





13

**Oxbow Regional Park**  
Explore 15 miles of trails through ancient forests, camp year-round or find the perfect adventure on the Sandy River.

14

**Scouters Mountain Nature Park**  
Climb the steep, fir-lined road to the top of this extinct lava dome to enjoy unrivaled views of Mount Hood.


15

**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](https://oregonmetro.gov/boats)

16

**Chinook Landing Marine Park** 

17

**M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp** 

18

**Sauvie Island Boat Ramp**





# Get involved

CLASSES AND EVENTS

SAT. FEB. 24

## Raptor road trip

Explore Sauvie Island in search of magnificent eagles, hawks and falcons. Naturalists and hawk experts host activities at four stations around the island. Enjoy guided bird viewing, meet live raptors and see hawk identification displays. Free hot drinks and donuts in the morning.

Event check-in is at Kruger’s Farm Market. You’ll receive a parking permit, event guide, birding map and picture handouts. Dress for the weather and allow about three hours to visit all the stations. Two of the four stations are wheelchair accessible. Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Portland, Metro, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Hawk Watch International.

Check-in at Kruger’s Farm Market, 17100 NW Sauvie Island Road, Portland 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
\$10/vehicle, cash only. All ages.  
Registration not required. Difficulty: easy. ♿



Photography by Julie Cash

SAT. JAN. 6, 20, 27   FEB. 3, 10, 24   MARCH 3, 24

## Volunteer ventures

Help care for rare native seeds, bulbs and plant materials that support regional restoration projects. Winter activities include transplanting bulbs and plants, maintaining plant beds, mulching and weeding. No experience is needed. Gloves, tools, water and snack provided. This event is wheelchair accessible with advance arrangements.

Native Plant Center  
2661 SW Borland Road, Tualatin  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Free. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate. ♿



SAT. JAN. 13

## Winter pruning techniques

Join Metro arborist Howard Rasmussen for a classroom session on the many aspects of pruning trees in the winter. Emphasis will be placed on fruit trees, but the basic principles apply to ornamental and wilderness trees. Subjects will include safety, tools, terminology, desired outcomes and how to get there. A follow-up hands-on session in the field will be offered on a future date if there is strong interest from class participants.

Blue Lake Regional Park, Lake House  
10 a.m. to noon.  
Free. Ages 16 and older.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy. ♿



# How to register

Unless otherwise noted, register and pay at [oregonmetro.gov/calendar](https://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: Nature Education team, 503-220-2782.



## Free Parks Days

Get out and explore nature!

Enjoy free parking at Oxbow and Blue Lake regional parks, Broughton Beach, Chinook Landing Marine Park, and M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp on Jan. 1, 15 and 18; Feb. 15 and 19; March 15; April 19; May 17; June 21; July 19; Aug. 16; Sept. 20; Oct. 18; Nov. 11, 15 and 23; and Dec. 20.

Parking at all other Metro parks and boat ramps is free year-round.

MON. JAN. 15

### MLK Day of Service

Honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. by coming together to restore habitat on the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.” The event brings people together to strengthen communities and tackle challenges, moving closer to realizing King’s vision of a “beloved community.” Tools, gloves and snacks provided. Visit [oregonmetro.gov/calendar](https://oregonmetro.gov/calendar) for location information.

10 a.m. to noon.  
Free. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

MON. JAN. 15

### Remembering Vanport

Smith and Bybee lakes were once adjacent to Vanport, Oregon’s second biggest city until the devastating flood of 1948. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, learn about the culture and history of Vanport while exploring and learning about Metro’s largest natural area.

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area  
10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m.  
Free. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

SAT. JAN. 27

### Moss and lichen of the Pacific Northwest

Diminutive but darling, Northwest mosses and lichens are renowned for their abundance and diversity. Grab your hand lens and join a naturalist in taking a closer look into the enchanting world of mosses and lichens during winter, one of their most active seasons. Learn about their ecology and how to identify them.

Scouters Mountain Nature Park  
10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
\$6/person, \$11/family. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate.

SAT. FEB 3

### Winter twigs

Do you want to know shrubs and trees by looking at bark, twigs and buds? Winter’s barren branches offer subtle yet observable clues to help identify plants. Join a naturalist to explore Metro’s newest nature park and learn common Northwest plants before they leaf out.

Orenco Woods Nature Park  
10 a.m. to noon.  
\$6/person, \$11/family.  
All ages, but geared towards adults.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.



SAT. FEB. 10

### Ducks and beavers

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

Blue Lake Regional Park  
9:30 a.m. to noon.  
\$6/person, \$11/family; \$5/car, \$7/bus. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.



SAT. JAN. 20

### Amphibian egg mass monitoring orientation

Learn the basics to volunteer as an amphibian egg mass monitor. From late January through April, volunteers pull on chest waders and visit wetlands throughout the region to search for four types of frog and salamander egg masses. The four amphibians serve as indicator species, which can be used to help gauge whether regional restoration efforts are helping more native amphibians thrive. It also helps scientists survey their numbers as well as the overall health of wetlands in the region.

No field experience required. The orientation will cover amphibian egg mass identification, survey techniques and field methods. Trained volunteers are then asked to conduct at least four separate surveys throughout the winter totaling approximately 12 to 25 hours. In partnership with the Wetlands Conservancy and Clean Water Services, trainings will also be held Jan. 13 and 27 at other locations. Visit [oregonmetro.gov/calendar](https://oregonmetro.gov/calendar) for details.

Metro Regional Center, council chamber  
9:30 a.m. to noon.  
Free. Ages 16 and older.  
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate.

SUN. MARCH 4

### Bird language for beginners

March days have 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. Class will be both indoors and outdoors. Meet at the Nature House.

Cooper Mountain Nature Park  
9:30 a.m. to noon.  
\$10/person. Ages 10 and older.  
Registration required: Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District, 503-629-6350.  
Difficulty: moderate.



DISCOVER

"CAR-FREE IN WA. PARK"



DAYCATION

BY LEWIS KELLEY

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# Tools for living

GROUPS GET A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF GARBAGE AND RECYCLING



Story and photography by Guadalupe Triana

On a warm Saturday afternoon, Angelica Perez, clad in an orange safety vest and a hard hat, stood behind a glass wall looking down on heaping piles of garbage at Tualatin Valley Waste Recovery in Hillsboro.

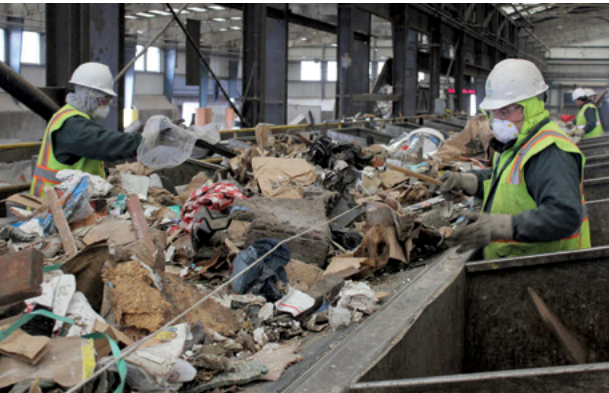
“I was shocked at how much waste is generated, at everything that’s processed,” Perez said. Perez was one of about 100 people in eight local groups who toured waste facilities this summer to learn about the garbage and recycling system in greater Portland.

Metro worked with community-based organizations to coordinate the tours. Two of them, including the one Perez attended, were conducted in Spanish with the help of Centro Cultural de Washington County and Trash for Peace. Both are local nonprofits that provide services to Latinos living in the region.

## Garbage and recycling facilities

A mix of publicly- and privately-owned facilities around greater Portland serve as “transfer stations,” where garbage and recycling from both homes and businesses is sorted. Some are open to the public and take a range of garbage, recycling, wood waste and yard trimmings. The facilities pull out materials, such as cardboard and wood, to be reused or recycled. The rest is packed into containers and trucked to landfills.

To find a facility near you, call 503-234-3000 or visit [oregonmetro.gov](http://oregonmetro.gov)



The tours are part of a larger effort to gather a range of opinions and perspectives that will help shape the 2030 Regional Waste Plan. The Regional Waste Plan is the blueprint for managing and reducing the environmental impacts of garbage and recycling in greater Portland. The 2030 plan is now in development.

Daniela Torres Hernandez, a junior at Portland State University who also went on the Tualatin Valley tour, said she’s glad she had a chance to attend a tour and share her thoughts. “It’s surprising they’re considering our opinions because I’ve never participated in this kind of thing,” she said.

### From purchasing to toxic waste, participants think about impact

While the tours were held at different facilities, groups shared similar questions and concerns about the system and a desire to protect human health and the environment. People also shared uncertainty about knowing how to safely dispose of certain household items, like batteries and cell phones.

Elizabeth Andrade, who toured the Metro Central Transfer Station with Trash for Peace, says these conversations are important to her because ultimately, she knows they’re for the common good.



“The most interesting thing was what they do with the trash like furniture and toxic waste, because most of the time, we don’t know where all of that ends up,” said Andrade. “I think about the harm to the environment we cause – all because we choose to get rid of stuff like that.”

Andrade, who’s from Mexico, has lived with her family in east Portland for six years. She says that learning about sustainable choices, such as more conscious purchasing, is worth it, though it could take time to change habits.

After the tours, several of the participants expressed interest in continuing the conversations in their own communities. “It impacted me in that I want to create awareness and give advice to the rest of the community so we can all change together,” Hernandez said.

## Your voice matters

Greater Portland generates more than 2 million tons of trash every year. Join family, friends and neighbors to help Metro update the Regional Waste Plan, the 10-year blueprint that guides how garbage and recycling is handled.

Find out when and how you can weigh in at [oregonmetro.gov/letstalktrash](http://oregonmetro.gov/letstalktrash)



# Regional roundup

METRO, COMMUNITY PARTNERS WORK TO CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE REGION



Story by Cristina Rojas  
Photography by Joshua Manus and courtesy of Raahi Reddy

The Portland metro area is growing quickly and becoming increasingly diverse, but it faces challenges in the years ahead as income, housing and other inequities persist for communities of color.

Metro has committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive region where everyone has the opportunity to share in and contribute to a thriving, livable and prosperous region. The agency took a major step forward last June when the council adopted its strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion. The strategic plan had been in the making for years and incorporated significant input from culturally specific community organizations.

“It’s sitting down with the communities that we’re trying to serve and saying, ‘Let’s talk about what your needs are, let’s talk about how you think we should approach it, let’s work together and collaborate,’” Chief Operating Officer Martha Bennett said. “That is just profound in terms of building relationships, but also designing programs and services that better meet their needs.”

Bennett says research shows that when communities make diversity and equity a priority, it doesn’t just benefit the most vulnerable groups; it benefits everyone as the region becomes stronger and more prosperous.

Part of Metro’s efforts is making sure that diversity, equity and inclusion are at the core of how the organization operates at every level. The 106-page strategic plan lays out five broad goals:

- convene and support regional partners to advance racial equity;
- meaningfully engage communities of color;
- hire, train and promote a racially diverse workforce;
- create safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations;
- allocate resources in a way that advances racial equity.

Each department and venue is also tasked with developing its own five-year action plan.

“The proof is going to be in whether we see different outcomes for communities of color,” Bennett said. “Do we actually see that some of the disparities that exist between groups shrink and/or disappear?”



The Committee on Racial Equity, a 15-member group formed in spring 2017, will play a key role in holding Metro accountable and transparent. The committee will help the agency measure its progress and provide honest feedback about what’s working, what’s not and which issues to prioritize.

Duncan Hwang, a committee member and associate director of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, says that Metro’s influence is wide-reaching, and it needs to fully embrace all aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion.

“There’s a housing emergency going on, super dangerous streets, people without access to parks and greenspaces,” he said. “It needs to permeate through the entire organization so we can begin to address these big problems facing folks in the region.”

It requires new ways of engaging with historically underserved communities, he said.

“The more traditional ways like public forums or online surveys are really accessible for a mainstream audience,” he said. “But if you want those underrepresented voices, it takes different strategies and hard work, especially if you haven’t been there before and just show up wanting something – that doesn’t work very well.”

### Long-term efforts

Metro’s push for greater diversity, equity and inclusion began to take shape in 2010. Around the same time, the council adopted equity as one of its six desired outcomes for the region, leading to the creation of an equity strategy program.

Metro’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team, which serves as a resource for staff, will be instrumental in helping the organization carry out the strategic plan, both by helping



**Clockwise from top:** The Committee on Racial Equity, or CORE, meets frequently to discuss ways to advance the strategic plan and hold Metro accountable to the five core goals. Youth provide feedback on the development of the strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion. Raahi Reddy is Metro’s new DEI program director.

to improve the internal culture and by building trust and stronger relationships with community partners.

“We want to integrate and help people really live this work,” said Raahi Reddy, the DEI program director. “But I think the challenge is people saying, ‘How does that apply to me in the work I do when I’m modeling for growth numbers in the region or when I’m out restoring habitat?’ We’re really trying to think about how we apply that racial equity lens to all the kinds of work even in places where it may not seem so obvious.”

There have been successes so far, like the Connect with Nature initiative that’s working with community-based organization Verde to bring more diverse voices into the parks planning process. But a lot more work remains to be done, especially as Metro makes decisions about programs, policies and budgets that could impact communities of color.

“We have to internalize and externalize the racial equity lens at the same time because we can’t afford to wait,” Reddy said. “Communities have been calling for this for a long time. It’s not a new demand, and we’re just trying to ramp up and catch up so we can actually work with our partners to get the work done.”

To learn more about Metro’s diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, visit [oregonmetro.gov/equitystrategy](https://oregonmetro.gov/equitystrategy)





# Regional roundup

LOCAL COMMUNITIES FIND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO 3 HOUSING CHALLENGES



**Story by Ambar Espinoza**  
**Photography by Ambar Espinoza and courtesy of Parklane Church**

Many residents are struggling to find homes to buy or rent. This is because demand for housing still outpaces supply, though construction equipment and cranes dot the landscape. Anxiety runs especially high for both low- and middle-income renters.

Different communities throughout greater Portland are responding to a range of housing challenges from affordability to displacement to homelessness.

### The challenge: housing affordability

In Milwaukie, the majority of residents are spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing and transportation, said Alma Flores, the city’s community development director.

“That tells me that people are stretched thin, and those are just two needs,” she said.

Milwaukie offers developers temporary property tax breaks on mixed-use projects throughout downtown, central Milwaukie and the north industrial area. City officials hope developers will reinvest those savings by building more homes and businesses in Milwaukie.

Metro’s Transit-Oriented Development program has historically supported mixed-use, market-rate projects near transit in such suburban areas as Milwaukie and Beaverton, where regional leaders want to create dense, walkable cities. The TOD program awards grants to help housing projects become feasible.

In January 2016, Metro responded to the need for more affordable housing by adjusting its TOD program so that affordable housing projects would be more competitive. The agency took into account the fact that people with lower incomes tend to rely more on transit, and affordable housing developers often can’t afford to buy land near transit. As a result, a higher number of affordable housing projects have secured TOD grants.



“We have 825 units in our pipeline of approved projects that haven’t been built yet,” said Jon Williams, project manager for Metro’s TOD program. “This is compared to 729 affordable projects supported in the program’s entire previous history.”

### The challenge: housing insecurity and homelessness

Three times a year, Parklane Christian Reformed Church in East Portland offers a free car oil change to anyone who needs it. “Everything is connected,” said Rev. Pete Armstrong. “If people can’t get to work, they can’t pay to stay in their homes.” Other area nonprofits pitch in, too.

“Last year we were seeing loads of community members asking for help with housing payments,” said Jenny Glass, executive director of the Rosewood Initiative. The nonprofit teamed up with Human Solutions to provide emergency rent payments for up to three months, with support from Multnomah County.

The number of homeless people in Oregon increased by six percent in 2017, according to statistics from the state. This includes increases in both the number of sheltered (three percent) and unsheltered (eight percent) people.

In Oregon City, the police department appointed its first homeless liaison. Since July, Officer Mike Day has helped people sign up for addiction treatment, food stamps and temporary housing, and reconnect with family members who may be able to help.

### The challenge: displacement

Investing in historically under-invested communities is often a double-edged sword. The private market takes note of new investments, and property values and rents go up, often pricing out longtime residents.

The Portland Community Reinvestment Initiative kicked off an effort in October to help reverse those trends in North and Northeast Portland. Through its Pathway 1000 initiative,

**Above:** The Portland Community Reinvestment Initiative kicked off a new project that will give people priced out of North and Northeast Portland an opportunity to return over the next 10 years either as a homeowner or renter.

PCRI aims to build 800 new affordable homes and 200 rental apartments over the next 10 years.

“The initiative gives those families and individuals an opportunity to return to Portland,” said PCRI executive director Maxine Fitzpatrick.

In the Southwest Corridor, regional leaders want to ensure investing in a new MAX line from downtown Portland to Bridgeport Village in Tualatin won’t push out people living and working in the area.

Metro secured a federal grant to examine job, housing and economic development needs and opportunities in this growing area.

“We want to be thoughtful about the opportunities that exist beyond the transit element of the project,” said Brian Harper, a regional planner at Metro.

Metro planners will work with community partners to develop a plan to create access to job, housing and education opportunities, particularly for people with low incomes and people of color.

“In many ways our job strategy is also our housing strategy,” said Jeffrey Raker, a regional planner at Metro.

A traditional way of examining a project’s impacts is through environmental impact assessments. But this approach “is a much more robust, involved way of engaging the community in conversation and trying to address both the positive and negative impacts of this investment,” Raker said.

Read more stories in Metro’s latest Regional Snapshot, which examines how the region is responding to housing affordability. View maps, charts and videos at [oregonmetro.gov/snapshot](https://oregonmetro.gov/snapshot)



# Share your nature and win!



**Rick Hafele, Wilsonville**

Graham Oaks Nature Park: Though smaller than fox or gray squirrels, Douglas squirrels make up for their lack of size with a bold “get out of my space” attitude. Normally I only hear them barking at me from some high-up limb in a Douglas fir. This frisky character was out foraging for pine cones and wasn’t willing to let go of his breakfast as I approached.

## Submit your photo

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 50-word description of your experience. 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 photo and description by Feb. 15 to: [ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov)