

Our Big Backyard



Metro

Winter 2019

Seeds of change in North Portland

St. Johns Prairie starts to blossom where a landfill operated for decades

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Cleaning up contamination

Community coalition to shape plan for Willamette Cove site

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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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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



The new welcome center at Oxbow Regional Park will open in early 2019. Visitors will find maps, brochures and information at the center, which also houses offices for park staff. *Photo by Megan Zabel Holmes*

Follow OregonMetro on social media

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



Long-toed salamanders, like this one at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area, get their names from a back toe that is much longer than the others. They’re often hard to spot since they like to be underground during the day. *Photo by Tyson Miller*



Wildlife cameras set up at Oxbow Regional Park capture the park’s wild side, including deer and many other animals that call the park home. *Photo by Tera Jarrett*



Volunteer Ron Beed pulled invasive English ivy and holly trees at Oxbow Regional Park. Thank you, volunteers! *Photo by Diego Gioseffi*



Native ringneck snakes love pine-oak woodlands, like the one along the Sandy River at Oxbow Regional Park. The snakes like to eat small lizards, salamanders, slugs, earthworms, insects, frogs and other snakes. *Photo by Demetra Toniolo*

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On the cover: As the former St. Johns Landfill transforms into St. Johns Prairie, native wildflowers and other plants are attracting rare birds, turtles and other wildlife. Plans are underway for a multi-use trail and scenic overlook. *Photo by Elaine Stewart*

Connect with Nature brings authentic community engagement to parks planning

Story by Cristina Rojas. Photography by Tony DeFalco



When planning for two new parks, Metro tried a different approach in an effort to encourage the participation of new and culturally diverse voices. Staff played a supporting role, giving control to community partners and empowering members from African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Indigenous, and immigrant and refugee communities to sit in the planner’s seat and help guide the park design process and outcome.

For many, the series of workshops were a long overdue opportunity for communities of color to take a more active role in the parks planning process and a chance for their ideas, critiques and aspirations to be heard.

Historically, the people who have turned out to open houses, served on steering committees, filled out surveys, and offered feedback on the planning and design of parks were white. The Connect with Nature initiative seeks to disrupt business as usual by meaningfully engaging communities of color, eliminating barriers that make it difficult for them to participate and letting them take the lead.

“It’s about being intentional about reaching out to community rather than just advertising in the same places, having meetings in the same places at the same times and wondering why we get the same crowds at all the meetings,” said Olena Turula, a Metro parks planner who led the Connect with Nature program.

Metro incorporated the Connect with Nature model in planning for parks at East Council Creek Natural Area in Cornelius and Gabbert Butte Natural Area in Gresham and hopes to replicate some of those efforts with future projects.

“We learned to engage community early and often and to give up some control about how we think a process should be implemented,” said Rod Wojtanik, Metro parks planning manager.

A new guide outlines recurring themes that emerged during conversations about community values and some of the amenities, programs and day-to-day operations that would make people of color feel more welcomed. The guide also offers recommendations about ways Metro and other parks providers, community

advocates, and policymakers can more effectively engage communities of color in the planning and design of parks and natural areas.

Turula says the guide is not a substitute for the earnest and time-intensive work of true community engagement and listening, but rather serves as a starting point.

Engaging communities of color at every step of the process meant having a project team led by community organizations, recruiting community leaders to facilitate discussions and act as liaisons within their own communities, and empowering participants to share their ideas. This allows participants to take a more active role in the design of the two new parks rather than choose from a series of pre-selected options.

It also meant making it easier for communities to participate by holding meetings in places that were convenient and familiar to them, providing hot meals and offering childcare, translation services, stipends, and incentives for participants’ expertise and time.

“We’re offering a lot of different tools that people can use to engage, and not everything is going to work for every community, but it’s important to have options,” Turula said.

Turula said Connect with Nature changed the way the department thinks about community engagement and helped implement policies for offering stipends and childcare that have since been adopted across Metro.

Metro demonstrated its willingness and patience to fundamentally rethink how it designs parks and open spaces, said Tony DeFalco, executive director of Verde, the community organization that led the project team.

“It has given Metro and other jurisdictions a really nice template for broadly understanding the needs and priorities of communities of color in the region and to better understand where they’re coming from when parks are being acquired, planned and developed,” he said. “But it doesn’t exempt planners from continuing to have key partnerships with organizations that serve those communities to understand the nuances of a given group.”



Work starts on potential 2019 parks and nature bond

Story and photography by Yuxing Zheng

After months of input from community members, the Metro Council late last year voiced support to continue developing a potential parks and nature bond measure for voters to consider in 2019 to protect clean water, restore fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

At a Nov. 13 work session, councilors supported further studying how a potential bond measure could support community projects, protect land, and improve local and Metro-managed parks and natural areas across greater Portland.

“Typically, we’ve had a large percentage going to regional land acquisition, a very important component,” Councilor Sam Chase said. “I cannot imagine that not continuing. But how to balance that with providing access to people, I think that has really stepped up. I see a significant shift there as something I would be enthusiastic about having more discussion on.”

Councilors also reiterated their support for using a racial equity lens to develop a potential bond measure, in line with Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Voters approved Metro parks and natural areas bond measures in 1995 and 2006 as well as two local-option levies in 2013 and 2016 to care for the land. The Metro Council is considering a potential third bond measure as spending from the 2006 bond winds down.

The first phase of community engagement wrapped up late last year. A 30-member stakeholder table representing conservation, recreation, agricultural, nonprofit, business, local government, neighborhood association, Indigenous and culturally specific interests has met four times since last summer to shape the potential measure. Participants also went on tours of parks and natural areas across greater Portland to see firsthand and learn more about previous bond-supported investments. Several stakeholder table participants said the group’s diversity contributes to a richer discussion.

“It’s changed how people see things. Having that input is an amazing way of doing this,” Bertony Faustin, owner of Abbey Creek Vineyard, said at the stakeholder table meeting Nov. 9. “What I appreciate about Metro is that they’re intentional.”

About 100 people, mostly from traditionally marginalized communities, shared their thoughts at two community forums in September. A second phase of community engagement in early 2019 will help to further refine the areas of potential investment. A new council president and two new councilors are scheduled to join the Metro Council in January, and the new council will ultimately decide the size and content of a potential bond measure.

For updates, visit oregonmetro.gov/nature

From trash to treasure – seeding change at St. Johns Prairie



The prairie is not open to the public yet, but plans are underway for a multi-use trail and scenic overlook.

Story and photography by Elayna Yussen

This page, clockwise from top: Elaine Stewart, a Metro scientist, has been working at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area for more than 20 years and is leading efforts to restore the former St. Johns Landfill into a prairie. Troy Clark stands at the edge of St. Johns Prairie, where planners envision a several-mile stretch of a multi-use paved trail could wind around the prairie and connect to the 40-Mile Loop trail. Clark is an avid birder, paddler, and co-founder of the Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes advocacy group. A network of pipes crisscrosses the grassy surface of the landfill, burning off the remaining methane-gas from the decomposing garbage. Protecting public safety and wildlife will be key considerations in planning for public access.

Where some see an old dump site, others see a special opportunity.

Troy Clark is one of those people.

Standing atop the highest point of St. Johns Landfill in North Portland, Clark can hardly contain his enthusiasm. “I love this place,” he declared while pivoting to take in the panoramic view. “On a clear day you see Mount Rainier, St. Helens, Adams and Mount Hood. This is a gem, a beautiful spot!”

With binoculars slung around his neck and leather-bound notebook in hand, he brimmed with excitement for the hours of birding ahead. Clark, a retired mail carrier and avid paddler, says he spotted 66 species on his “peak day” of birding last year at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area, which includes the landfill. Immediately enthralled upon discovering the area several decades ago, he formed the Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes advocacy group.

He spends two or three days a week bird watching at Smith and Bybee Wetlands, and he feels a great sense of responsibility to protect it.

For 50 years, nearly 14 million tons of trash generated across Portland was dumped in the St. Johns Landfill. Metro took over ownership in 1990 and closed it with a landfill cover system.

Now Metro is transforming the landscape of the 240-acre site. Through a multi-year habitat restoration effort, a beautiful prairie is emerging – alive with native wildflowers and other plants that attract rare birds like western meadowlarks and streaked horned larks, western painted turtles and other wildlife.

The landfill restoration offers a unique opportunity, since there are few large, protected prairie or grassland habitats in greater Portland. Much of it has been developed or sits on private farmland, says Elaine Stewart, a senior natural resources scientist at Metro who is leading the prairie enhancement efforts.

“When you look at St. Johns, you see it’s a closed landfill,” Stewart said. “But if you just step back and look at it, you see this expanse of more than 200 acres of grassland and you think, ‘Wow that could be really special!’”



The vision is to provide healthy habitat for insects, wildlife, grassland birds, and pollinators like butterflies and bees. Stewart began the restoration by seeding wildflowers in 2013. The effort is supported in part by voter-approved parks and natural areas levies and a federal grant.

Approximately 68 acres have already been planted, and preparations are underway to seed 75 acres in fall 2020.

Last spring the prairie exploded with color: pink meadow checkermallow, white and yellow popcorn flower, peach collomia and yellow tarweed. By late summer, yellow gumweed and white yarrow stood out. Stewart, with help from staff and volunteers, closely monitors the evolving habitat and wildlife that use it, applying lessons learned in each successive planting. “What native seeds are available?” “What do pollinators need?” “What plant mix ensures flowers bloom all spring and summer?” “How do we attract grassland birds?”

Birds are one indicator of healthy habitat, says Metro senior science analyst Katy Weil. Healthy birds mean healthy bugs, and healthy bugs mean healthy habitat. By that measure, St. Johns Prairie is succeeding.

“I’ve gone from seeing a handful of species 10 years ago during a bird breeding survey to well over 30,” Weil said. “That’s pretty significant for a piece of land this size in the middle of industry.”



She’s been happily surprised to see northern harriers training juveniles to fly, a doe giving birth and the occasional elk following her around the prairie. Weil is particularly excited about the nighthawks. Staff in recent years also created habitat and broadcasted recorded vocal loops specifically to attract streaked horned larks, which are federally listed as threatened. Staff happily saw a male lark in 2018.

The closed landfill is not open for public access, but visitors could soon enjoy a trail around it. Planners envision a multi-use paved trail from Chimney Park, winding around the prairie and connecting to the 40-Mile Loop a few miles north near Kelley Point Park. The trail would also connect to a prairie overlook with stunning views over North Portland, the wetlands and distant mountains.

Metro staff are determining the scope of the project, conducting feasibility studies and hoping to start community engagement on the design process as soon as fall 2019.

“It’s an opportunity to get people from very diverse communities to a quiet place with some of the best nature habitat and bird viewing in all of the city,” said Allan Schmidt, a senior parks planner at Metro who is overseeing the trail project.

The proposed St. Johns Prairie trail, paired with the City of Portland’s planned bridge over North Columbia Boulevard, would fill a major gap in the regional trail system.



“I’m excited about this section of trail because it will be heavily used by people in North Portland and accessed by people around the region when the full [40-Mile Loop] trail is complete,” said Francie Royce, co-founder of npGREENWAY, a group that advocates for the completion of the North Portland Greenway Trail.

Opening the site to the public while there’s still an active gas system is a concern, says Mike Guebert, the environmental supervisor at St. Johns Landfill. A network of pipes crisscross the grassy surface of the landfill, burning off the remaining methane-gas from the decomposing garbage. Protecting wildlife and public safety will be key. But in overcoming these complexities, a swath of land can transform from a liability to a thriving refuge for people and animals.

As a northern harrier swooped low along the prairie’s surrounding tree line, Clark, the founder of Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes, made a quick shorthand entry in his notebook. Marveling at the beauty around him, he wondered aloud, “Did I find this place, or did it find me?”

Group empowering community members to help shape future of contaminated Willamette Cove property

Story by Cristina Rojas. Photography by Joshua Manus and Katy Weil and courtesy of Portland Harbor Community Coalition



When Wilma Alcock was young, she fished all the time on the Willamette River, eating the bluegills, perch and crappie she and her family caught.

But that was before its waters and nearby upland areas became highly contaminated with decades of industrial pollution. A 10-mile stretch of the Portland Harbor from the Broadway Bridge to the Columbia Slough was designated a federal Superfund site in 2000, but Alcock knew long before then that it wasn't safe.

"It got to the point where we couldn't eat the fish because it was so toxic and dangerous," the now-80-year-old recalls. "That is something that has been taken from people that loved to fish that area."

She hopes that one day, the river will once again become a place where people can swim, fish and boat without fear of getting sick.

"I probably won't see it in my lifetime, but you have to start somewhere," she said.

Alcock serves on the steering committee for the Portland Harbor Community Coalition, a group that formed in 2012 with a mission to elevate the voices of disproportionately impacted communities with ties to the river and upland areas, including Indigenous communities, Blacks, immigrants, refugees, homeless people and local residents. The group wants to ensure that those most affected can benefit from and help lead the cleanup, restoration and redevelopment of the harbor.

The coalition helped educate community members about the river and submit more

than 5,300 comments about the federal Environmental Protection Agency's draft cleanup plan.

"We significantly pushed the dial based on how many people submitted comments in favor of a more robust cleanup plan," coalition coordinator Cassie Cohen said.

The group is gearing up again to steer a public involvement process as the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Port of Portland and Metro work to finalize a cleanup plan for the Willamette Cove property – one of the most complicated sites in Metro's portfolio of parks, trails and natural areas.

Metro purchased the 27-acre property in the St. Johns and Cathedral Park neighborhoods of North Portland in 1996 using money from the 1995 natural areas bond measure. Plans to redevelop it into an urban natural area and extend the North Portland Greenway Trail were stalled when high levels of contamination were found throughout the site. The focus, instead, shifted to cleanup efforts.

Since 2001, Metro has worked with the Port of Portland, a former owner of a portion of the site, to assume the role of potentially responsible party and determine the level of contamination, possible remedies and develop plans for the final cleanup of the site. "Potentially responsible party" means any individual or party potentially liable for cleanup.

In 2015, soils with the highest levels of contamination were removed from the upland areas and trucked to a landfill south of The Dalles. But contamination still remains

throughout the site and in the river that pose risks to human health and the environment.

"Here, you have a highly contaminated site where suddenly in and around the asphalt of old historical use, you have native trees growing," said Katy Weil, senior science analyst for Metro. "Many birds and bugs use those trees."

Cleanup options range from removing all of the contaminated soil to more of a hybrid approach, where the worst of the contamination would be removed and the rest of the site would be capped with clean soil and monitored to protect the public and wildlife from pollution.

"It's one of the few sections in the Portland Harbor Superfund site that's in public ownership, which means that everyone has a stake, and we have to define what level of access is safe and consistent with Metro's role in the region," Weil said.

She says keeping the public involved and informed is important, and groups like the Portland Harbor Community Coalition are helping to give voice to people who might not ordinarily be heard.

"You can get mired in the details, but it still comes down to people needing to know what's going on in the water, what's going on in the land around the water, and how and when it can be cleaned up," she said. "What we don't want is for people to say, 'That's an exercise in futility; I have no voice.'"

Taking public input into account, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will



decide which remedy is most appropriate for the upland portion of the site.

The coalition received \$9,000 from the Port of Portland to train four to six leaders who will then facilitate meetings within their own communities. The goal is to help people understand the cleanup options, encourage them to submit public comments and give them an opportunity to provide input about the future uses of the property.

“This is public land, so the public has a right to determine what happens with that land,” Cohen said.

She said the community’s input should dictate how extensive the cleanup will be. If, for example, community members say they want to be able to swim in the water, play on the Willamette Cove beach or enjoy the wildlife, then the remedy plan should be revised to fit those future uses.

“If you clean it up only enough for habitat and not people, then the cleanup level would be lower,” she said. “But if the community wants access to the site and water, that requires more money.”

Weil says it’s important for people to be able to share their hopes about the site. She also emphasized that it is important for the public to understand what it would take to achieve them.

Metro committed in 1996 to support the planning and development of a regional trail through the site, and has no funding or plans for additional public access. A range of access levels are reflected across the 17,000 acres that Metro manages, from habitat preserves where sensitive plants and animals are the main focus to large-scale parks with extensive amenities and activities. For example, Metro offers

From top: Wilma Alcock speaks to a crowd last May at a Lummi Nation totem pole ceremony. Alcock serves on the steering committee for the Portland Harbor Community Coalition, which partnered with the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club on the ceremony. In 2015, crews removed soils with the highest levels of contamination from the upland areas and trucked it to a landfill south of The Dalles.

hiking, boating and education opportunities a few miles north of Willamette Cove at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area.

Other partners have expressed interest in stepping up to do more with Willamette Cove, including possibly taking over management and ownership.

“Everyone would like to respond to what the public asks for and wants,” Weil said.

Field guide

MOUNT TALBERT NATURE PARK

Story by Dan Daly. Photography by Fred Joe

This beautiful forested oasis nestled between bustling Interstate 205 and Happy Valley rises 750 feet in elevation. Mount Talbert is a volcanic butte 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 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 prairie. For thousands of years the Willamette Valley was covered with prairies that were maintained by fires set by Indigenous communities, and that later settlers have since turned into farmland or developments.

Climb the butte’s southern slope through patches of Oregon white oak woodlands and savannas. Oaks grow slowly and are easily overtopped and shaded out by faster-growing trees. Less than 5 percent of historic oak woodlands remain in the Willamette Valley, and the surviving fragments need active management. At Mount Talbert, Metro strategically removes competing trees when necessary and controls invasive species that threaten native wildflowers and other plants.

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,



Mount Talbert Nature Park

10945 SE MATHER ROAD, CLACKAMAS

DRIVING
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
Bathrooms, picnic areas and shelters, boat launch, camping (tent, pull-through, ADA accessible), playgrounds, pedestrian/equestrian and bike trails, nature programs, summer campfire shows.

oregonmetro.gov/mounttalbert

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.

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 blacktailed deer buck, marking his territory with vigor.

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.

Be on the lookout!



ORANGE HONEYSUCKLE



RUBBER BOA



GREAT HORNED OWL



WHITE FAWN LILY

Season-by-season highlights

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 wildlife.

FALL: Fall rains bring a lovely assortment of mushrooms that rise from the duff beneath Douglas firs and Oregon white oaks. Move slowly, step quietly and watch carefully for an elusive native squirrel. Western gray squirrels are larger than the squirrels commonly seen in the city, and they sport pure white bellies and massive fluffy tails.



2017–18 Annual Report

Parks and Nature

Continued investments protect clean water, healthy habitat, connect people to nature close to home

More than 1,000 people move to greater Portland every month. As the region grows, so too does the need to protect clean water, restore fish and wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for people to enjoy nature close to home.

Over the past quarter century, voters have passed two bond measures that allowed Metro to create a unique regional park system with nature at its heart – and two levies to care for it. Today, Metro cares for more than 17,000 acres of parks, trails and natural areas.

June 2018 marked the end of funding from the original parks and natural areas levy voters approved in 2013. Thanks to voters who approved a levy renewal, funding has been extended to June 2023.

The levy renewal supports restoration work, such as tackling invasive weeds and restoring habitat for endangered wildlife. It supports nature education classes, volunteer opportunities and other activities – many developed with community partners. It also

supports park improvements and operations – the people and places that welcome more than 1.6 million visitors each year to hike forest trails, play on riverside beaches and enjoy lakeside picnics.

The levy complements the 2006 natural areas bond measure, which is winding down after a dozen years. The need, however, continues. Metro is starting to explore the possibility of referring a third bond measure to voters, perhaps in 2019, that could support continued investments in protecting land, improving parks and natural areas and supporting community projects.

Future work will continue to be guided by the Parks and Nature System Plan, a long-term strategic plan and framework for the future of the regional network.

It will also be guided by Metro Parks and Nature Department's Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. People of color, low-income residents and other historically marginalized groups continue to face

barriers to accessing nature. The action plan comprises more than 80 actions – some multi-year, department-wide undertakings, others short-term, discrete tasks – that work toward Metro's racial equity goals. The actions drive to three desired outcomes: economic equity, environmental equity and cultural equity.

As Metro begins crafting a potential bond measure, input from community members and partners will be crucial in helping ensure the benefits of clean water, healthy habitat and access to nature can be enjoyed by all of the region's residents.

To see the impacts of current investments and the opportunities ahead, listen to the stories on the ground. Learn more about how your tax dollars were spent from July 2017 to June 2018 to plan for new parks, protect sensitive land, provide for nature classes and events – and much more.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

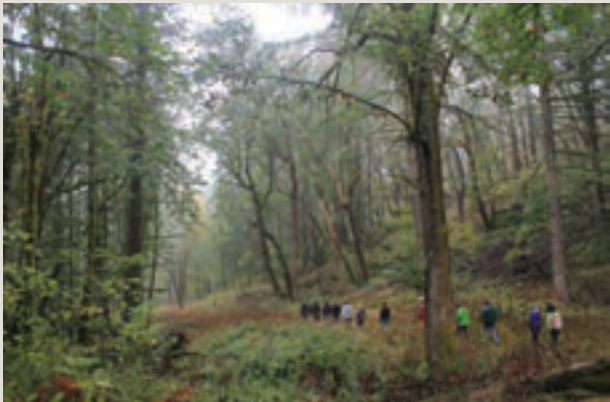
Communities of color, low-income residents and other historically marginalized groups have faced barriers to accessing parks and nature and enjoying the benefits of clean water and healthy habitats. Thanks in part to voter investments, Metro is working to rectify historic inequities and making a concerted push to create safe and welcoming spaces for all community members.

In 2016, the Metro Council adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The plan established that “Metro will concentrate on eliminating the disparities that people of color experience, especially in those areas related to Metro’s policies, programs, services and destinations.”

Over the past year, the Parks and Nature Department created its Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. The actions support three goals: economic equity, environmental equity and cultural equity.

One initiative now underway 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.

The department is also working to develop and implement a transition plan that would bring parks into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Metro, Centro Cultural partnership shapes Chehalem Ridge Nature Park

Construction could start in 2020 on Chehalem Ridge Nature Park. The 1,230-acre future park, 15 minutes south of Forest Grove, 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.

The Metro Council in October 2017 unanimously approved the master plan that will guide visitor amenities.

Metro and Centro Cultural partnered during the community engagement phase to ensure the plan incorporates 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 co-hosted Spanish-language events, translated materials and hosted 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 director of Centro Cultural, who will be joining the Metro Council in January. “This partnership has fostered a way for communities of color to really authentically engage with the planning process.”

The partnership with Metro provided a lot of value for the Centro Cultural community, said Maria Caballero-Rubio, the executive director.

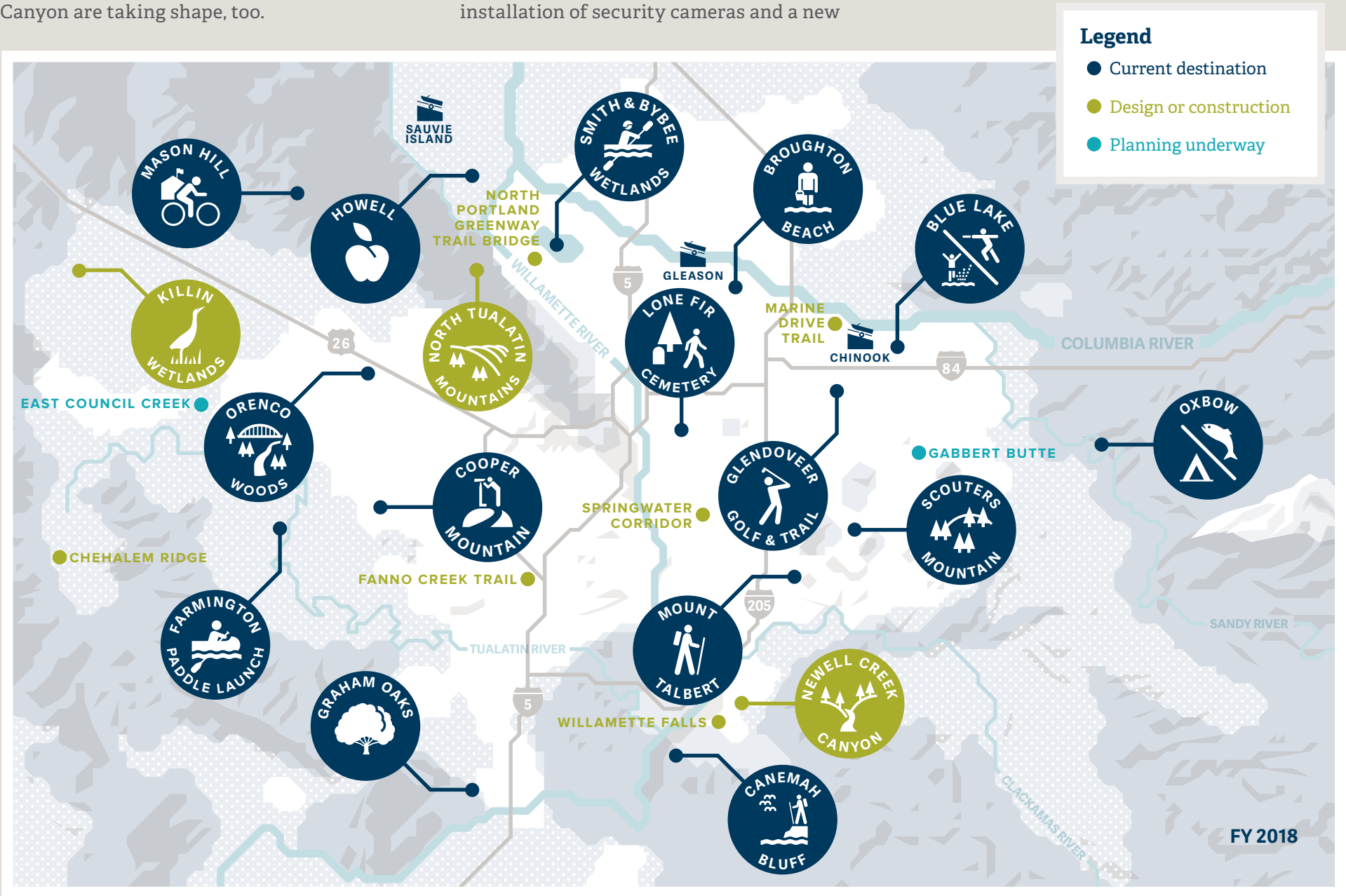
“For me, the highlight has been that we’ve been able to engage our entire staff in going out and becoming engaged and learning about Metro,” she said. “We’ve claimed this park. It belongs to us. We have a lot of pride, and we’ve internalized that.”

Access to nature

Metro is expanding opportunities to hike, explore, see wildlife and learn about the landscape at voter-protected destinations. Killin Wetlands Nature Park opened in September, and places like Newell Creek Canyon are taking shape, too.

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 the installation of security cameras and a new

HVAC system at Blue Lake and replacing a pumpout and dump station at popular M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp.



Restoration and maintenance

Protecting clean water and restoring fish and wildlife habitat are at the core of Metro's parks and nature mission.

Nearly half of the money from the levies 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 management 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 the forests, rivers, wetlands, prairies, oak savannas and other habitats. It can often take years or decades to restore a site, after which it transitions to maintenance.



Oxbow restoration, improvements benefit people, wildlife

Big changes are taking shape at Oxbow Regional Park. Improvements at the beloved park include a new welcome center, a pair of nature-based play areas, 17 more campsites and continued efforts to restore salmon habitat in the Sandy River.

“We’ll be able to provide visitors with a memorable and unique experience and understanding of the natural world at Oxbow,” said park operations manager Monty Woods, whose team welcomed about 195,000 visitors to Oxbow last year.

The projects cost about \$3.2 million combined. Funding comes from grants, the 2006 natural areas bond measure and the 2013 parks and natural areas levy.

The new welcome center, scheduled to open in the fall, will serve as a gateway to the park. It will house interpretative displays and materials about the park and provide office space for staff. The 2,600-square-foot center will take the place of the small, 1960s ranger station, which has been demolished.

“It’ll be one-stop shopping for information,” Woods said. “People can feel confident and understand the lay of the land before they head in.”

The number of campsites has expanded from 67 to 84. New sites, which opened before Memorial Day weekend, were built on a new access road. The area was reconfigured to create a more

streamlined entry to relieve congestion near the day-use and boat launch area.

The two new children’s nature play areas – a sand and water area and an adventure camp area – include features that tell the story of Oxbow. Construction is expected to be completed by spring 2019.

Metro is intentionally making sure the amenities can be enjoyed by kids who use wheelchairs and cochlear implants and those on the autism spectrum, said Mary Rose Navarro, a Metro grants coordinator.

“I hope they’ll feel really immersed in their play and that it will spark curiosity in the natural world and inspire them to continue to explore,” she said.

Last summer, Metro and the Portland Water Bureau worked on separate but related restoration projects along the banks of the Sandy River. The work is part of a multi-year project to improve water quality and restore habitat for native fish.

Two side channels and an alcove were restored to create deep, slow-moving pools for fish. Hundreds of logs and boulders were placed in the water to provide resting and hiding spots. The restored channels provide cold water in the summer, when warmer temperatures in the main river become lethal for fish. In the fall and winter, crews will plant native trees, shrubs and grasses.

Community investments

Each year, Metro provides millions of dollars in grants and local share money to support local community nature projects. Over the last 25 years, more than \$90 million has been invested across greater Portland to acquire land, restore habitat, build visitor amenities and more. All of the grants available through the 2006 bond measure and 2013 levy were awarded prior to 2017-18. Using money from the levy renewal that started in July 2018, the Metro Council last summer awarded \$800,000 to 14 nature education and outdoor experiences programs.



Grant to Depave transforms parking lot at M&M Marketplace into greener, urban plaza

It’s hard to find a parking spot at Hillsboro’s M&M Marketplace on a Sunday afternoon as a constant stream of cars rolls past the bright blue warehouse. Colorful portraits of the artist Frida Kahlo gaze down at cars gliding past a new patio of permeable pavers, where women make pupusas and a man turns pollo asado on a large grill.

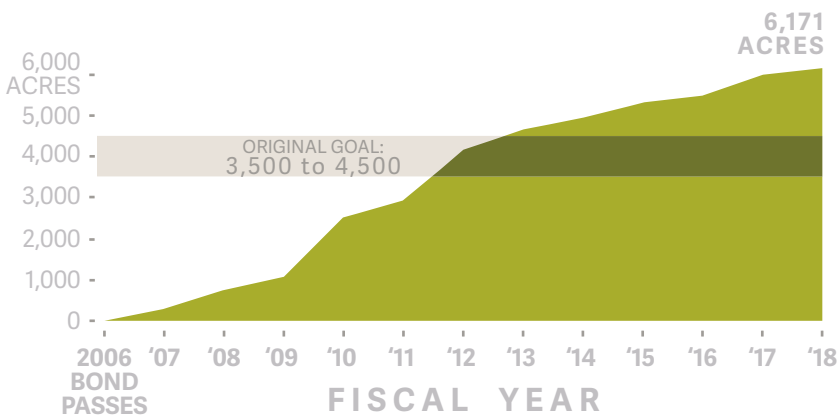
At the market’s main entrance, founder Jaime Miranda points at rain gardens along the front of the building planted with native red osier dogwood, rushes, sedges and shrubs. “It used to be a swamp right here,” he explains. “Some winters, water would flood right into the building. Now these islands absorb the water.”

Local nonprofit Depave installed the rain gardens as part of a project to transform the busy parking lot into a greener, urban plaza. The work was largely paid for by a \$30,000 Metro Nature in Neighborhoods grant in 2016.

Miranda, who was born in Mexico and moved to Oregon as a child, opened the business with his sister in 2000. The two wanted to give people an opportunity to start small businesses without onerous leases and huge overhead costs. They rented a former industrial warehouse and opened the weekend market with a dozen vendors.

Now, more than 70 vendors sell food, goods and services from densely packed stalls. Customers can get clothes altered or made, photographs taken, or jewelry, watches and computers repaired. Occasional dance, wrestling or mariachi performances and regular events connect customers to information and services, including a health fair. “It’s not just a business, it’s a community hub,” says Eric Rosewall, former executive director of Depave.

Retrofitting the parking lot involved excavating asphalt and building rain gardens to mitigate flooding and to filter pollutants from stormwater. Volunteers laid a patio of permeable pavers, planted street trees around the perimeter, installed a pergola over an outside seating area and added an extra entrance to the lot to improve traffic flow. Artists were also commissioned to add to the existing murals.



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 gaps in regional trails, providing key connections for commuters, bicyclists and joggers.

Nature education
FY 2018



6,568

Youth participants in nature education programs



22

Sites where nature education programs took place

Volunteers
FY 2018



12,088

Total volunteer hours at parks and natural areas



48

Sites where volunteers worked
Target = 33 sites

Promises made,
promises kept

Metro’s system of parks, trails, natural areas and historic cemeteries is the result of more than a quarter century of commitment, action and investment by the region. It exists because of voter support for two bond measures and two levies.

Spending from the 2006 natural areas bond measure is winding down, though some money remains to protect more land and support locally significant projects. Conversations are underway now about the possibility of continued investments to protect land, improve parks and natural areas and support community projects.

The final year of funding from the original levy expired in June 2018, and money from the levy renewal kicked in the following month. Continued funding builds upon the successes from the first levy. More sites will be restored to provide healthy habitat. New nature parks will welcome visitors. Popular parks will continue to see improvements 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, from left: Councilors Bob Stacey, Sam Chase, Shirley Craddick, Metro Council President Tom Hughes, Councilors Kathryn Harrington, Betty Dominguez and Craig Dirksen

Parks and Nature spending*
FY 2018

	General fund	2013 parks and natural areas levy	2006 natural areas bond	Total
Restoration/maintenance of parks and natural areas	\$2,529,369	\$4,049,997	\$0	\$6,579,366
Access to nature	\$551,595	\$2,517,002	\$725,397	\$3,793,994
Park improvements and operations	\$5,364,506	\$2,517,002	\$0	\$6,464,683
Cemeteries	\$779,263	\$0	\$0	\$779,263
Nature education and volunteer programs	\$279,652	\$909,075	\$0	\$1,188,727
Community investments	\$58,863	\$1,316,097	\$3,959,994	\$5,334,954
Land acquisition/stabilization	\$0	\$0	\$5,637,390	\$5,637,390
Administration**	\$2,330,505	\$4,771,162	\$3,665,743	\$10,767,410
Total	\$11,893,753	\$14,663,510	\$13,988,524	\$40,545,787

* 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 2018



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

	Restrooms		Playground
	Picnic facilities		Camping
	Trails		Wheelchair accessible
	Classes events volunteer		Cost \$5/car, \$7/bus (except Oregon Zoo)

Blue Lake Regional Park

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



Broughton Beach

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



Canemah Bluff Nature Park

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



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.



Farmington Paddle Launch

Farmington accommodates non-motorized watercraft and is a great starting point to bike nearby rolling hills.



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.



Graham Oaks Nature Park

Bike through a restored oak woodland, stroll in a conifer forest and spot birds from a wetland overlook.



Howell Territorial Park

Watch for birds that flock to the wetlands, enjoy a picnic and explore a piece of the region's history.



Killin Wetlands Nature Park

Enjoy a picnic or visit the trails and viewpoints in search of rare plants and animals.



Lone Fir Cemetery

Enjoy a stroll or jog in this tree-filled community greenspace and treasured historic cemetery.



Mason Hill Park

At this charming, small park, bicycle the rolling hills beyond Forest Park, enjoy amazing views of the Tualatin Valley and picnic under the shelter.



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.



Oregon Zoo

Enjoy community events and learn about wildlife and habitats from the Northwest and around the world.

Admissions and more information: oregonzoo.org



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.



Oxbow Regional Park

Explore 12 miles of trails through ancient forests, camp year-round or find the perfect adventure on the Sandy River.



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.



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

Chinook Landing Marine Park \$

M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp \$

Sauvie Island Boat Ramp



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

Who’s visiting your feeder?

Story by Cory Eldridge

Winter is the season of up-close observation of little birds. With food scarce, little birds create multi-species flocks to guard against predators and find food – often in feeders strategically placed outside windows. Here are the birds you can expect to visit and the treats they love best.



PINE SISKIN

Thistle seeds

Drab at first sight, this finch flashes yellow highlights in its wings. Built to hang from pine cones, it challenges chickadees for the avian gymnast crown. Photo: NPS



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

In winter, this small, bright yellow finch turns dull and teams up with other little birds in mixed flocks. The males become more colorful every month. Photo: USFWS



LESSER GOLDFINCH

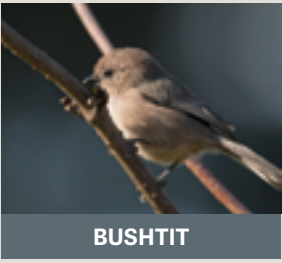
A miniscule finch, the females flash a dusky yellow while the males wear a black hood and greenish cape. They group in big flocks and mob feeders.

Photo: USFS

Suet

These bouncing balls of gray-drab fluff may be the smallest and dullest-looking birds at your feeder, but their acrobatics are endless fun.

Photo: USFWS



BUSHTIT

Small and gray and always on the move in evergreen trees. Its yellow-fringed wings are gorgeous but the males’ golden crown blows minds.

Photo: Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren



GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET

The smallest woodpecker in the United States, the black and white bird with a red cap hangs upright from trees and braces its tail against branches and boards.

Photo: Sunny



DOWNY WOODPECKER

Sunflower seeds and suet

Found only on the West Coast, this tiny brown, black and white acrobat dangles and dances around feeders and nearby bushes.

Photo: Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren



CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE

A long, oval-shaped bird that loves to point its long-beaked head straight down, this nuthatch has a red belly, blue back, and black-and-white streaked head. Photo: USFWS



RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH

Sugar nectar

This is the only winter hummingbird in greater Portland, and it only sticks around because people feed them. A full feeder will keep neighborhood hummingbirds happy all winter. Photo: USFWS



ANNA’S HUMMINGBIRD

What’s that rustling in the yard? Fallen leaves and dead wood help wildlife

Story by Lori Hennings, Metro senior natural resource scientist

Photography by Chris Helzer and courtesy of the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Service



Most of us like a tidy yard. This is the time of year when we rake leaves, pick up dead tree limbs and prune plants into submission.

We like our wildlife, too. You might be surprised to learn how important dead plant matter is to bugs, birds, small mammals and other creatures.

Leaves and dead wood house and feed wildlife, build healthy soil and help provide the foundation of food webs in forests. As you tidy up your yard, there are some things you can do to help our native critters.

Let’s start with dead leaves. Do you have towhees in your yard? Then you probably have leaf “litter.” Towhees and other sparrows spend a lot of time rustling around on the ground, doing a double-hop leaf kick to glean seeds, spiders and other tiny critters by kicking up leaves. Towhees make so much noise in their search that I look around in alarm for a much larger animal. They depend on leaf litter, particularly in fall and winter when food can be hard to find. So do the tiny critters.

Dead or “downed” wood pieces – twigs, branches, root wads and logs – are also vital to a variety of native wildlife. At least 71 Pacific Northwest wildlife species rely on downed wood. Salamanders spend a lot of their lives in and under old logs. Pileated woodpeckers, northern flickers and other woodpeckers forage for insects in logs and snags. Small mammals such as Townsend’s chipmunks and deer mice rely on dead wood. In fact, studies in western Oregon show that deer mouse abundance and survival are closely linked to the amount of dead wood in their habitats.

Now let’s talk snags, or standing dead trees. Snags are critical, with at least 93 animal species in the Pacific Northwest requiring snags for nesting, foraging and the like. Woodpeckers are “cavity engineers,” excavating holes in snags



From top: Deer mouse, northern flicker.

for foraging and nesting. They excavate more cavities than they need, which is a happy circumstance for other animals that can’t excavate their own, such as bluebirds, many owls, wrens, swallows, American kestrels and flying squirrels. I recently had two old pine trees removed from my yard due to a bark beetle infestation. The arborist left snags, and a flicker was on top of one recently.

With a little thought, you can build all of these elements into your still-tidy yard. Here are some ideas to make wildlife feel more at home:

- Don’t rake it all away: Leave some leaves around shrubs and trees, or in that unseen corner of the yard. Leaf piles are beneficial, too.
- Build a brush pile: Instead of putting all the dead branches into the yard debris container, pile some of them up in a corner of the yard. Put larger pieces on the bottom as a foundation so the pile will last longer.
- Leave a log or two: You can incorporate logs as landscape features. For example, logs make nice boundaries between different areas of the yard.
- Consider leaving a snag: Do you have a dead tree, or need to have one removed? Although taller snags are more beneficial to wildlife, even a short snag will provide a home to a variety of wildlife.

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Get involved

CLASSES AND EVENTS

MON. JAN. 21

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.

Glendoveer Nature Trail,
Northeast 148th Avenue, just south of Northeast Halsey Street
10 a.m. to noon.
Free. All ages.
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

Photography by Lupine DeSnyder, Guadalupe Triana and Julie Cash



SAT. JAN. 26

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, Clean Water Services, Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District and Tualatin National Wildlife Refuge, trainings will also be held in early 2019 at other locations. Visit oregonmetro.gov/calendar for details.

Metro Regional Center, council chamber
600 NE Grand Ave., Portland
9:30 a.m. to noon. Ages 16 and older.
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate.



SAT. JAN. 5, 12, 26 SAT. FEB. 2, 9, 23
SAT. MARCH 2, 16, 30

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 snacks provided.

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

SATURDAYS JAN. 12 – MARCH 23

Yoga at Cooper Mountain

Practice Vinyasa Yoga in a beautiful glass door room overlooking Cooper Mountain Nature Park. This class is a 75-minute vinyasa flow for all levels. Modifications will be made for beginners as well as challenges for the advanced. There will be pranayama breath work with meditation, stretching, balancing and vinyasa flow postures for a full-body workout.

Cooper Mountain Nature Park
9 to 10:15 a.m.
\$80/person for 10-week series. Ages 16 and older.
Registration required: thprd.org, class #CM32509. Difficulty: moderate.

THU. JAN. 17

Oregon Zoo pub talk: polar bears and penguins

Join Oregon Zoo director Dr. Don Moore and Amy Cutting, who oversees the zoo’s marine life area, as they discuss the similar conservation challenges faced by polar bears and penguins. Visit oregonzoo.org/talks for details.

Oregon Zoo Cascade Grill
Doors 6 p.m., event 7 p.m.
\$15 (free for kids ages 2 and younger). All ages.
Tickets: oregonzoo.org/talks. Difficulty: easy.

Registration, accessibility information

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 or to request communications aids, sign language interpreters and other modifications: Nature education team, 503-220-2782.

For cancellation and refund policies and information about THPRD classes: thprd.org/activities/registration or 503-629-6350

SAT. JAN. 26

Lichen of the Pacific Northwest


Diminutive but darling, Northwest 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 lichens. Learn about their ecology and how to identify them.

Orenco Woods Nature Park
10 a.m. to noon or 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
\$6/person, \$11/family.
All ages but geared toward adults.
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

SAT. FEB. 2

World Wetlands Day

Zookeeper talks will highlight the many animals that depend on wetlands, such as river otters, crocodiles, flamingos and turtles. Biologists from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will lead wetlands-themed activities inside the zoo’s Nature Exploration Station.

Oregon Zoo
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Free with zoo admission. All ages.
Registration not required. Difficulty: easy. 

SAT. FEB. 9

Raptor road trip

Explore Sauvie Island in search of magnificent eagles, hawks and falcons. Naturalists and hawk experts host activities at three sites around the island. Enjoy guided bird viewing 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. 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.

TUE. FEB. 12

Oregon Zoo pub talk: training animals for better welfare

Animal-behavior specialist Barbara Heidenreich has trained thousands of animals, from rats to rhinos. Learn about her work with universities, veterinary professionals, zoos, pet owners and conservationists to help foster the bond between humans and animals. Visit oregonzoo.org/talks for details.

Oregon Zoo Cascade Grill
Doors 6 p.m., event 7 p.m.
\$15 (free for kids ages 2 and younger). All ages.
Tickets: oregonzoo.org/talks. Difficulty: easy. 

SUN. FEB. 24

Winter survival shelters

The driving wind and rain can be held at bay with simple skills that every squirrel uses. In this family-oriented class, learn the basic principles of survival, then work together to build a survival shelter that can keep you safe and warm without a sleeping bag or fire.

Oxbow Regional Park
10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
\$6/person, \$11/family; \$5/car, \$7/bus.
Ages 10 and older.
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate.

SUN. MARCH 3

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 12:30 p.m.
\$10/person. Ages 12 and older.
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate.

THU. MARCH 14

Nature of love


Each spring, see and hear love everywhere: in the bloom of flowers, the songs of birds and the chorus of frogs. Enjoy a glass of wine and views of the Chehalem Mountains at sunset, as you learn about the ways animals communicate to find their mates, the lengths they will travel to find love and the amazing adaptations nature will go through to reproduce.

Cooper Mountain Nature Park
6 to 7:30 p.m.
\$19/person. Ages 21 and older.
Registration required: thprd.org, class #CM35553. Difficulty: easy.

TUE. MARCH 19

Oregon Zoo pub talk: protecting endangered painted dogs

British wildlife biologist Dr. Greg Rasmussen, founder of the Painted Dog Research Trust, talks about his work in Zimbabwe training the next generation of conservationists and using scientific data to help save African painted dogs. Visit oregonzoo.org/talks for details.

Oregon Zoo Cascade Grill
Doors 6 p.m., event 7 p.m.
\$15 (free for kids ages 2 and younger). All ages.
Tickets: oregonzoo.org/talks. Difficulty: easy. 



Free Parking 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, 17, 21; Feb. 18 and 21; March 21; April 18; May 16; June 20; July 18; Aug. 15; Sept. 19; Oct. 17; Nov. 11, 21 and 29; and Dec. 19.

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

MON. MARCH 25 – FRI. MARCH 29

Wild adventures camp

This camp for elementary-age children is filled with discovery, fun and wild adventures. Play nature games, make new creations, and explore the trails and habitats of the park with brand-new friends. Every day is filled with adventure as participants head into the park and learn what it means to be a wilderness explorer. Learn about tracking, use maps to find your way and develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world. Campers need to bring two snacks, lunch, drinking water and a backpack daily.

Cooper Mountain Nature Park
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
\$199/child. Ages 5 to 8.
Registration required: thprd.org, class #CM37202. Difficulty: easy.

SAT. APRIL 6

Park after dark

Journey into the forest to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature at night. Spend the first part of the program indoors learning about nocturnal residents, then head out into the park for a guided night hike.

Cooper Mountain Nature Park
7 to 9 p.m.
\$11/person. Ages 6 and older.
Registration required: thprd.org, class #CM45505. Difficulty: easy.



Tools for living

ON THE JOB WITH SHAREE TOLIVER-HILL

Story and photography by Faith Cathcart

Sharee Toliver-Hill works at Metro Central transfer station on what they call “the line.”

Whether it’s a load of trash from a garbage truck or from someone’s basement clean-out, the stuff that arrives at Metro’s garbage and recycling facility makes its way down a conveyor belt to be sorted and sent to its next destination – a landfill or someplace to be processed for reuse.

The line is a constant stream of demolition scraps, metal and cardboard. Toliver-Hill manages and trains the sorters who work it.

They pull as many recyclables off the line as they can and drop them into huge bins beneath the belt. Leftover garbage continues down the line to a compactor, and then to a truck, and ultimately to a landfill.

Toliver-Hill is also responsible for spotting hazardous waste – anything from pesticides to propane tanks – and removing it from the belt for safe disposal at the hazardous waste facility next to the transfer station. Typically, another worker will pull aside things like discarded refrigerators and air conditioners before they head down the line – those items can leak Freon, putting workers at risk.

But they can get missed when people bring in portable storage units. “Think about how big they are,” she says. “It’s not as easy as you think to catch everything.”

Hazardous waste shouldn’t get tossed out with garbage because leaking chemicals put sorters, including Toliver-Hill, at risk.

We visited Toliver-Hill on the job to hear her thoughts about working the line.



Q: What’s something you like about your job?

A: The recycling part. Everything we pull out of there is not going to a landfill. And, you know, I’ve got grandkids. We want to try to clean everything up and not leave such a mess – that has been left to us.

Q: What’s something that’s not so great about your job?

A: Cleaning the pits. When they are loading the compactors and they are pushing the garbage onto the belts, a lot of it will fall down under the belt into a pit. So, we go down there and we shovel it out.

Q: Has your job made you think differently about garbage and recycling?

A: I never realized how much waste there is in this country. Seriously. It’s a throw-away society. I mean, we used to have TV repairmen. And now, you think, “Oh, it’s broken. Throw



it away and go buy a new one.” No one actually thinks about where it’s going when you take it and throw it away. They don’t think about it.

Q: If you could change one thing about what we throw away, what would it be?

A: An awful lot of the stuff I see get thrown away should be donated. I mean, we just had a whole load of clothes that was mixed in with some other stuff come up on the line. It should have all been taken, cleaned up, and donated instead of just being thrown away and wasted. That’s pretty sad.

Q: Tell us about one of the most memorable things you’ve seen come through here.

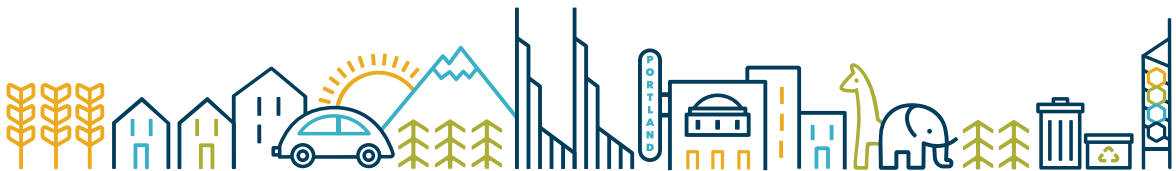
A: Portland’s definitely weird. (She laughs.) Once we had 50 to 60 dead skunks come through. It was not pleasant. For days after, all I could taste was skunk. Also, we get stuff from house clean-outs – when people die. I have seen family photos and letters from WWII. That’s really sad.

Prep your load and pay less

Taking a load of garbage to a Metro facility? Proper prep can save you time and even a few bucks. Pay a lower rate when you separate and cover your load.

For more information: 503-234-3000 or oregonmetro.gov

Recycling questions? Ask Metro.



Arts and events
Garbage and recycling
Land and transportation
Parks and nature
Oregon Zoo

503-234-3000
oregonmetro.gov



Story by Frankie Lewington
Photography by Sally Painter and Justin Sherrill

Greater Portland’s urban growth boundary protects farms and forests as people move here and businesses create jobs. The boundary also promotes economic development, encourages equitable housing and supports developing new neighborhoods when the need arises.

In June 2018, the Metro Council and its advisory committees looked at the population and jobs forecast for greater Portland to inform whether regional leaders should expand the boundary. Metro asked cities where and how they would grow.

Four cities – Beaverton, Hillsboro, King City and Wilsonville – submitted proposals to expand greater Portland’s urban footprint by 2,181 acres, with hopes to develop about 9,200 homes. These cities proposed expanding into nearby urban reserves.

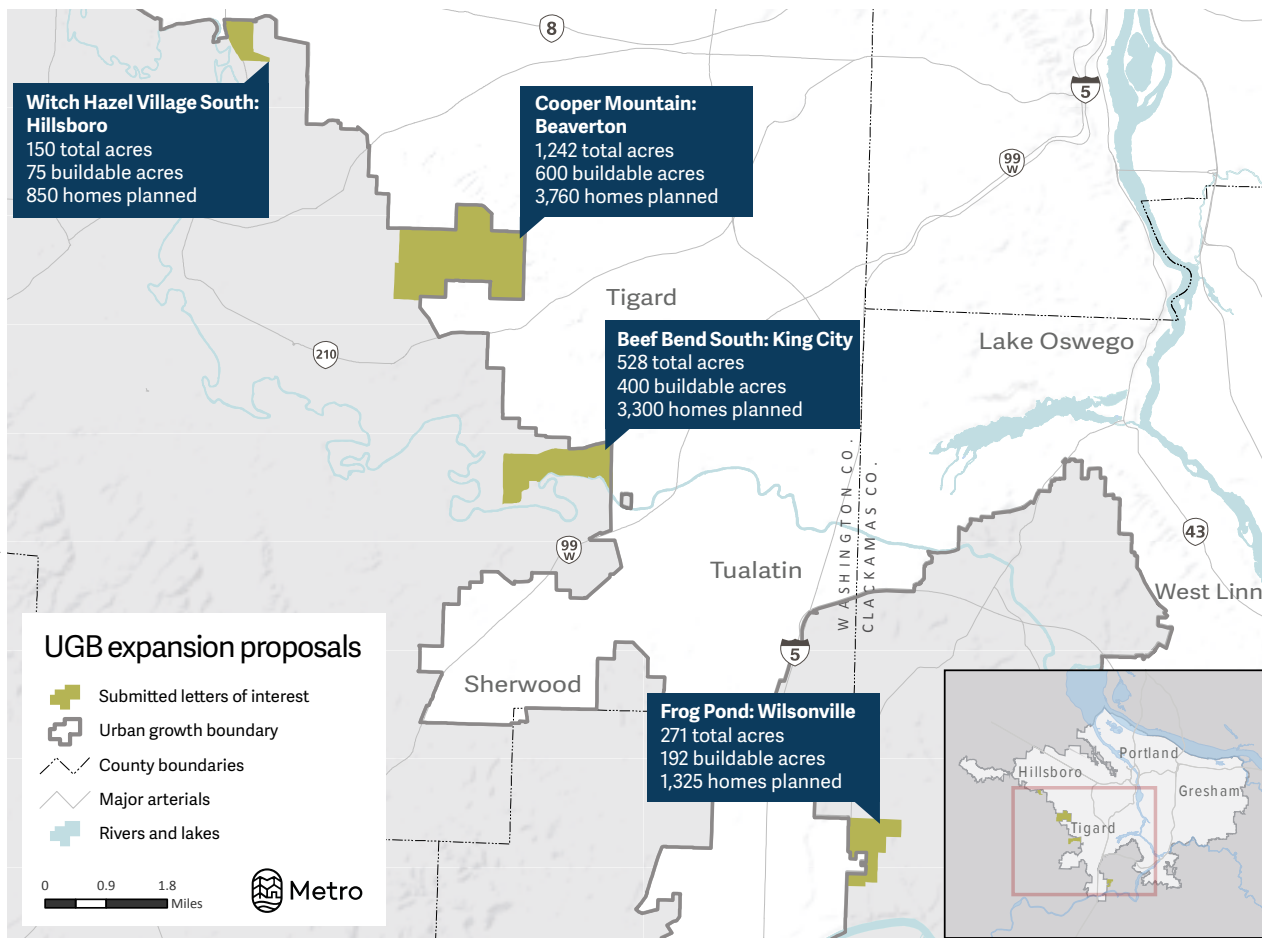
Generally, proposals had to show that cities:

- Consider the region’s housing needs.
- Have workable plans to pay for the infrastructure – pipes, roads, sidewalks – in expanded areas.
- Encourage developing walkable communities in their downtowns and main streets with a mix of businesses and housing.
- Use best practices for preserving and increasing affordable housing in urban areas.



Regional roundup

GREATER PORTLAND MAY GET A LITTLE BIGGER IN 2019



- Take action to advance Metro’s six desired outcomes, such as safe and reliable transportation choices and vibrant communities, with a particular focus on meaningful engagement with communities of color in the planning process.

In September, Martha Bennett, Metro’s chief operating officer, recommended accepting

all four expansion proposals. The Metro Council determines if the proposals will accommodate future population growth. The council was scheduled to make a final decision on the urban growth boundary expansion in December 2018.

Learn more at oregonmetro.gov/ugb

Blueprint for region’s transportation plan gets an update

An update is in the works for the Regional Transportation Plan, the blueprint to guide investments for all forms of travel – driving, walking, biking and taking transit – and for moving goods throughout greater Portland.

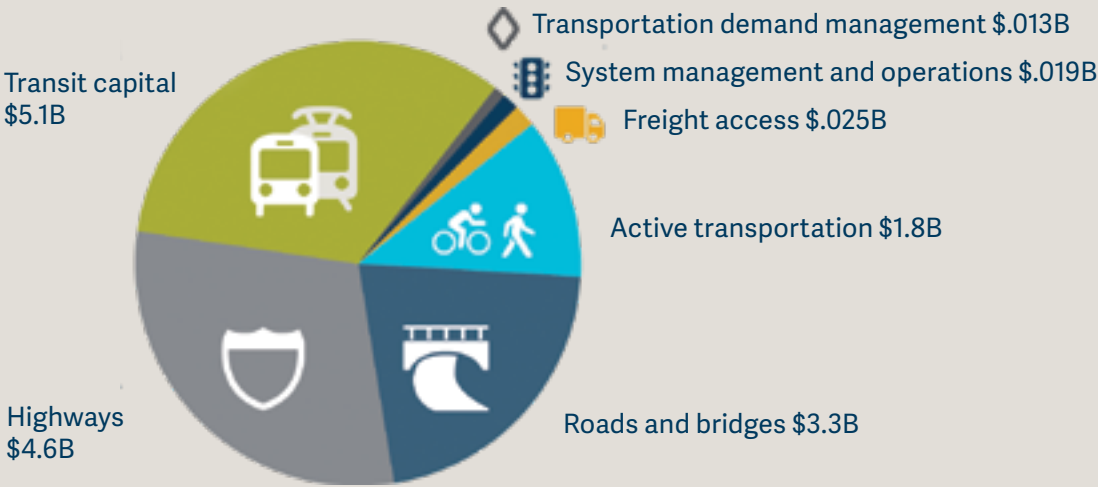
The transportation system must meet multiple needs for everyone who shares the roads. Regional leaders need to make tough decisions to meet their goals and address the needs of a growing, thriving region. By 2040, the region is expected to have 500,000 more people and 350,000 more jobs.

Since 2015 Metro has worked with the public and local, regional and state partners to update the region’s shared transportation vision and investment strategy for the next 25 years.

The updated plan will inform how to invest federal, state and local money through 2040. It includes a draft list of projects representing \$15.4 billion of investment in the region’s transportation system, with more than half of that dedicated to thoroughways, roads and bridges. It also establishes policies and best practices to guide these priority investments. An additional \$26 billion is included in the plan – \$13 billion for transit operations and maintenance, and \$13 billion for highway, road and bridge maintenance.

The Metro Council was scheduled to consider approving the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan in December.

Learn more at oregonmetro.gov/rtp



Share your nature and win!



Lydia Agundez, Portland

My son and his hiking buddy hit the trails of Portland at least four times a week. They love the openness of hiking and exploring trails. We love Canemah Bluff’s Old Slide trail and decided we would take a late afternoon hike. The beauty of Canemah Bluff is a hidden gem. The trees and leaves look gorgeous year-round.

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