

# Our Big Backyard



Spring 2019



## Reclaiming spaces

Sprinavasa Brown co-founded Camp ELSO for children of color to explore the outdoors and science careers. She shares her journey and offers advice to White allies.

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### Oxbow nature play areas

Two new nature play areas will serve children of varying abilities

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New partnership coordinates efforts against weeds along Clackamas River

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### Affordable housing near transit

A new development on Metro property serves Jade District community



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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



Metro used money from the 2006 natural areas bond measure to acquire property that will become Chehalem Ridge Nature Park. Bond money will also support construction of the first phase of visitor improvements.

Metro Council considers potential parks and nature bond measure for November ballot

Story and photography by Yuxing Zheng

Voters across greater Portland may have the opportunity this November to renew a parks and nature bond measure that would continue protecting clean water, restoring fish and wildlife habitat, and connecting people with nature close to home.

The Metro Council has asked staff to develop a package of proposed investments with an initial framework focusing on racial equity and climate resiliency across six areas: land acquisition and restoration, improvements and maintenance at Metro parks, community grants, local government allocations, trails and urban transformation projects.

Councilors requested the potential bond measure land in the range of \$400 million to \$450 million, which would not raise current taxes. They could make a decision in May or June about whether to refer a measure to the ballot.

Voters approved Metro parks and natural areas bond measures in 1995 and 2006 as well as 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 measure winds down.

The content of the bond measure will be shaped in part by input gathered from community members since last summer. A public survey is expected to be available in April.

A 30-member stakeholder table representing conservation, recreation, agricultural, nonprofit, business, local government, neighborhood association, Indigenous and culturally specific interests has met since last summer to develop the potential bond measure.

In March, focused engagement in partnership with community-based organizations gathered more in-depth input around three Metro destinations: the Glendoveer Nature Trail, Blue Lake Regional Park, and Oregon City, where Metro owns and operates Canemah Bluff Nature Park and is working on providing public access to Newell Creek Canyon and Willamette Falls.

Several councilors earlier this year said they’d like to see a potential third bond measure place more of an emphasis on providing better access to nature for people compared to past bond measures.

“There are two different ways to get to habitat preservation,” Council President Lynn Peterson said at a January council work session. “One is to lead with it and the other is to lead with people, while getting to a secondary outcome of habitat preservation.”

For updates, including opportunities to share your thoughts, visit [oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturebond](https://oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturebond)

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**On the cover:** Camp ELSO participants visit Blue Lake Regional Park, where they receive fishing lessons from the founders of Get Hooked, Dishaun Berry and Philip Anderson. Camp ELSO (Experience Life Science Outdoors) provides Black and Brown children in greater Portland with opportunities to explore nature and environmental professions. *Photo by Joshua Manus*



# New inclusive nature play areas to open at Oxbow this spring

Story by Megan Zabel Holmes. Photography by Megan Zabel Holmes and Rod Wojtanik



For parents of children experiencing disabilities, even a trip to the park can pose frustrating challenges. When Metro planners set out to create two new nature play areas at Oxbow Regional Park, these parents were invited to have a voice at the table.

Over the last decade, Metro has invested in nature-based play areas across the region, with the goal of giving kids opportunities to connect on a deeper level with the natural world around them. Two nature play areas at Oxbow could open as early as mid-May.

“We’ve found that in nature-based play areas, where you provide things like rocks, logs, sand and water, kids are able to engage their minds as well as their muscles,” said Rod Wojtanik, parks planning manager at Metro. “They collaborate more and they spend more time in the play area. It also brings the parents or caregivers down into the play area with them, which has been fun to see.”

One of Oxbow’s new play areas will feature climbing structures and water and sand play stations. The other will be a kids’ “adventure camp” complete with a nature lab and small camp kitchen with access to water. Basecamp kiosks will display maps and information to give kids and parents resources and ideas to further explore other parts of the park.

Logs salvaged from the park were incorporated into the construction of the play areas by Five Rivers Construction, Inc. Other structures are being built by the Oregon Corrections Enterprise, a program where people who are incarcerated learn job skills like computer-aided design, metal fabrication and woodworking.

The two nature play areas cost a total of \$565,000. About \$375,000 came from the 2013 parks and natural areas levy and the levy renewal, with additional money from an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department grant.

Metro and Learning Landscapes, a design firm specializing in play and learning, began designing the play areas in 2013 with the goal of making them universally accessible to children of all abilities. Planners enlisted the



help of experts like Mara Kaplan of Let Kids Play, and FACT Oregon, an organization that provides resources and support to families experiencing disabilities.

Karen Houston is a parent who served on a focus group through FACT Oregon that helped design the Oxbow nature play areas. Her 8-year-old son experiences autism and loves being outdoors, especially at Oxbow.

“He really comes out and shines when he’s outside, so I really wanted to be involved,” Houston said. “Often in the disability world, we get handed a diagnosis for our child and we get caught up in a whirlwind of medical information and therapy. It can be so overwhelming. When an organization like Metro actually seeks out your input, invites you to the table, and furiously writes down this life experience of yours and assigns so much value to it — that’s really empowering.”

Wojtanik credits input from parents like Houston for improving Metro’s plans.

Because of parent insight, Metro planners were better able to gauge how easily children could be transferred from wheelchairs to play equipment. They planned accessible paths from parking areas, designed fencing around the play areas and even chose building materials that won’t interfere with the use of cochlear implants.

“They helped us understand what it’s like to go to a park and be met with certain barriers or limitations,” he said. “Once we had a better understanding, we were able to approach the design effort a bit more thoughtfully.”



## More nature play areas

Two other nature play areas are opening this spring in greater Portland with support from Metro’s Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants.

### Couch Park 551 NW 19TH AVE., PORTLAND

This inclusive playground will feature engaging activity stations like a boulder scramble, overlook and a group swing as well as gathering spaces like a log structure designed to provide kids with a quiet place to rest. The playground is expected to open in spring 2019. Metro provided a \$150,000 capital grant.

### Dirksen Nature Park 11130 SW TIEDEMAN AVE., TIGARD

A large play area for kids ages 5 to 12 features multiple log climbers, a secret rock cave, a vertical climbing log with handholds and a living willow tunnel. A smaller area designed for toddlers includes tools for kids to construct their own beaver lodges. The play areas are already open, and a celebration is scheduled for May 11. Metro provided a \$390,000 capital grant.





## 2 questions with Get Hooked founders Dishaun Berry and Philip Anderson

Story and photography by Elayna Yussen

On any given day in the summer, Blue Lake Regional Park bustles with activity from the beach to boat rentals to the picnic, garden and play areas. On Thursday mornings last summer, the fishing dock was the hot ticket. That’s where DiShaun Berry and Philip Anderson, founders of Get Hooked, made fishing fun. No equipment or experience required. Kids just showed up for family fishing days, and Berry and Anderson showed them how it’s done.

The two say the beauty of fishing is that it brings all kinds of people together; it’s a chance to slow down and to connect.

### Q. What is Get Hooked?

**Anderson:** It’s about empowering the community, empowering our kids and empowering families to live an active, healthy lifestyle fishing and (being) outdoors. We’re able to change lives by creating these opportunities for families to come out here and do that.

**Berry:** Get Hooked was founded as a way to reach out to at-risk youth in marginalized communities. We’re serving anybody who has a desire to get outdoors but doesn’t know how to do it or doesn’t have the resources.

**Anderson:** When DiShaun’s out there fishing, the kids want to do what he’s doing. They want to go catch a sturgeon; they want to go catch a salmon. It’s important to set that example and let them know they have opportunities like this.

**Berry:** One thing I’ve learned is that you’re inspired to do things differently if you see people who look like you doing them. I never saw a little black boy who wanted to be a golf player until Tiger Woods made it cool. You never saw a young girl who wanted to be a tennis player until Serena Williams made it cool.

### Q. What do you hope the kids and their families take away?

**Berry:** It’s not even about catching a fish. That is a bonus. My goal is just to get parents and kids outdoors and away from the things that are plaguing us today – like social media, the Internet and television. We’re almost in a health crisis because we don’t get outside enough.

**Anderson:** You have to learn patience with the fish. You see the families out here waiting in line. Everybody is patient. I think that translates on the water as well. It’s not always going to come easy. That’s how life is, too.

# Partners combine efforts to tackle invasive weeds along Clackamas River

Story by Cristina Rojas. Photography by Kristina Prosser



Garlic mustard. Japanese knotweed. False brome. These invasive weeds and dozens more spread fast in parks, trails, roadsides, streambanks and wetlands along the Clackamas River, crowding out native plants. They know no boundaries, taking root on public, private and tribal lands.

An initiative now in its third year aims to coordinate efforts between federal, state, regional, and local partners and private landowners in managing invasive species and preventing the introduction or spread of new species across the 600,700-acre Clackamas River Basin.

The Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership, or CRISP, grew out of conversations between the nonprofit Clackamas River Basin Council, the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District and Metro in late 2015 and now includes 13 public and nonprofit partners.

“The Clackamas River Basin has many different agencies and nonprofits working on various environmental issues, but until CRISP, there was little coordination of their efforts in general and particularly around weed control,” said Peter Guillozet, a former Metro natural resources scientist who helped spearhead the organization’s efforts. “You had one group spraying weeds over there, one group pulling weeds over there, one group worrying about weeds over there but not having any money to do anything, one group coordinating volunteers over there.”

The partnership brings everyone together to identify and prioritize the weed infestations that pose the greatest threat to the watershed and focus limited resources on where they would be most effective. Weeds are prioritized based on their potential impact, potential spread and feasibility of control, among other factors.

“There are some weeds we can’t control,” Guillozet said. “They’re too widespread already, too expensive or too difficult to control, so we try to focus on species that are just as bad but that we can control and contain.”

Partners say one of the biggest successes of the initiative has been the ability to improve coordination and address gaps in the inconsistent management of weeds across boundaries.

For example, Metro and Clackamas County actively manage weeds on their properties, but private landowners whose properties sit sandwiched between public lands might not have the knowledge or resources to control



**From top:** Crews in February installed native plants at Metro’s Richardson Creek Natural Area in the Clackamas River Basin. Crews also installed willow stakes along Goose Creek at River Island on the Clackamas River.

weeds on their property. Left unchecked, the weeds could spread and eventually reduce the value and productivity of both private and public lands, impair water quality and degrade natural areas important for fish and wildlife.

CRISP provides the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District and the Clackamas River Basin Council with additional support, resources and funding to work with private landowners to control the same weeds their public neighbors are tackling – ensuring that high-priority weeds are treated across the entire basin rather than in patches.

Metro and the conservation district worked together to inventory the invasive weeds on several islands in the river, said Lindsey Karr, a specialist at WeedWise, a conservation program of the district, who was hired as part of the partnership to carry out the CRISP management plan.

“They were covered in weeds and causing problems for everyone, but there were so many different ownerships,” Karr said. “Together, we figured out who was managing which island, where the gaps were, and now we’ve collectively been able to treat almost all of the islands.”

The work continues to pay off, and the partners are hopeful they’ll receive another round of funding from Portland General Electric. CRISP received a five-year, \$431,250 grant from the Clackamas River Habitat Fund in 2016 to help start its efforts.

“It’s been night and day,” said Sam Leininger, WeedWise program manager for the Clackamas SWCD. “Before, you felt isolated, but now everyone is investing resources, we’re gaining some ground and filling in the gaps. Consistent management across the whole watershed benefits everyone.”



# Field guide

COOPER MOUNTAIN NATURE PARK



Story by Ashley Conley. Photography by Elayna Yussen

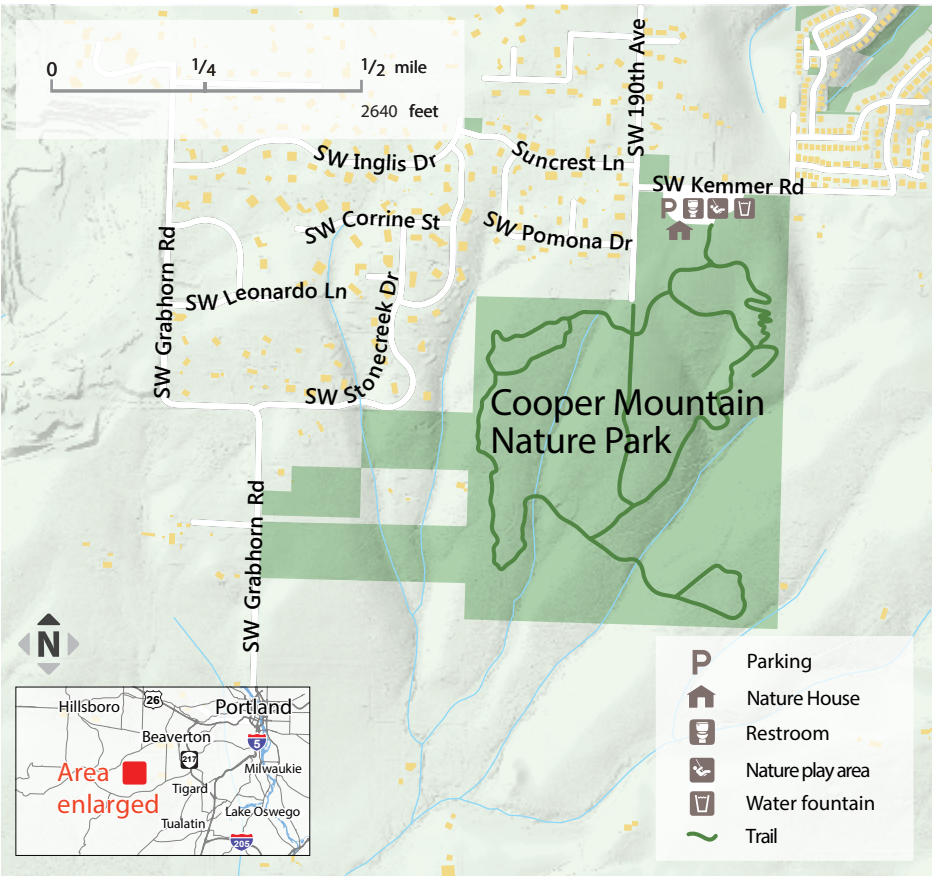
On the southwest edge of Beaverton, nature flourishes. Nestled between farmland and neighborhoods and rising nearly 800 feet above the valley floor, Cooper Mountain Nature Park offers spectacular vistas, opportunities to view wildlife and a variety of habitats to explore.

Cooper Mountain’s bedrock, formed from the Grand Ronde basalt flows, has been folded and uplifted over millions of years, giving rise to the mountain seen today. From the parking area, visitors can absorb a breathtaking view of the Tualatin River Valley and Chehalem Mountains. Even more outstanding nature awaits those who dive in and explore the 3.5 miles of hiking trails.

Walking along the paths in the 232-acre park, one enters a mosaic of rare habitats. Prairies and white oak woodlands abound, surrounded by conifer forests. Upland prairie habitats are rare in the Willamette Valley, and white oak habitats are among the most endangered ecological communities in the Pacific Northwest.

Cooper Mountain’s prairies retain several native grasses and wildflowers, including the pale larkspur and golden paintbrush, listed by the state as endangered. Combined, oak-prairie habitats support 52 native wildlife species and are used by at least 156 more.

Many traditional Indigenous land stewardship practices incorporate fire. Fires promote growth, give nutrients to soil, and provide food for an abundance of animals, including humans. Indigenous people of this region have known these connections since time immemorial and use fire to work with and care



**Cooper Mountain Nature Park**  
18892 SW KEMMER ROAD  
BEAVERTON

**DRIVING**  
From Southwest Farmington Road/Oregon 10, go south on Southwest 170th Avenue. Turn right at Southwest Rigert Road. Turn left at Southwest 175th Avenue. Make a right onto Southwest Kemmer Road. The park entrance is on the left in less than a mile.

**KNOW WHEN YOU GO**  
Open sunrise to sunset. No pets, please. Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District provides day-to-day management.

**AMENITIES**  
Bathrooms, nature play area, picnic tables, demonstration garden, 3.5 miles of trails. The Nature House offers year-round nature classes and is available for rent: 503-629-6350.

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

**In the neighborhood** Continue exploring the outdoors with a visit to the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. Or stop by nearby Cooper Mountain Vineyards to enjoy tasting wine. In the summer, pick berries or buy fresh produce at area farms, such as Baggenstos or Hoffman farms. Progress Ridge Townsquare is a short drive away with plenty of options for coffee, food, beer and shopping.

for the land. Since Metro acquired the site, fire has been incorporated as a restoration tool for the oak prairie ecosystem. By using controlled burns, the sun-loving white oaks flourish and produce acorns, wildflowers bloom and provide food to pollinators, and migratory birds stop to feed and raise their young.

For more details about all 18 Metro destinations, visit [oregonmetro.gov/parks](https://oregonmetro.gov/parks)

## Be on the lookout!



GOLDEN PAINTBRUSH



WESTERN BLUEBIRD



NORTHERN RED LEGGED FROG



PALE LARKSPUR

## Season-by-season highlights

**SPRING:** From the violet hues of the Oregon iris to the delicate white racemes of pale larkspur, the colors of the state’s finest wildflowers are well represented. Keep your ears tuned in to the songs of resident and neotropical birds. Colorful western bluebirds can be seen perched atop the tall grasses, while common yellowthroats sing the boundaries of their territory from elevated shrubs.

**SUMMER:** Long days and southern exposures make Cooper Mountain a great place to feel the warmth of Oregon summers. Sparkling vistas from atop the mountain offer views in all directions. Bring a picnic and enjoy the breeze. Then descend on the trails that wind through the oak woodlands. Look for western grey squirrels harvesting acorns in late summer and fall.

**FALL:** Listen for the calls of early nesting great-horned owls in late November. They begin to vocalize in late fall to establish their nesting territory and attract a mate. Nest sites of this nocturnal hunter can be found in tree cavities or old raptor nests, such as those used by red-tailed hawks.

**WINTER:** Lichen takes center stage on otherwise barren deciduous trees, allowing raptors to be seen with relative ease as they hunt for food. Red-tailed hawks cruise over the meadows looking for voles, while Cooper’s and sharp-shinned hawks maneuver quickly through the trees in search of songbirds. Northern red-legged frogs usually begin breeding in February. They may be seen near small water sources in the park.





# Reclaiming spaces

They encountered bias and obstacles as they pursued science careers. Inspired by their experiences, Sprinavasa Brown and Dr. Kellianne Richardson – two women of color – founded Camp ELSO in 2015 to provide Black and Brown children in greater Portland with opportunities to explore nature and environmental professions.

Story by Sprinavasa Brown  
Photography by Joshua Manus

**This page, from top:** Camp ELSO guides and participants explore the ancient forest at Oxbow Regional Park. Co-founder Sprinavasa Brown greets each of the students by name when they arrive for the day and helps lead field trips to destinations like Metro’s Blue Lake and Oxbow regional parks.

**Clockwise from top, opposite page:** Students observe aquatic macroinvertebrates with magnifying lenses, play in the Sandy River, and learn more about native plants and wildlife.

I recall the high school science teacher who doubted my capacity to succeed in advanced biology, the pre-med advisers who pointed my friend Dr. Kellianne Richardson and me away from their program and discouraged us from considering a career in medicine. I remember only three classes with professors of color in my four years at college, only one of whom was a woman. We needed to see her, to hold faith that as women of color, we were good enough, we were smart enough to be there.

These are the experiences that led Kellianne and me to see the need for more spaces set aside for future Black and Brown scientists.

The story of Camp ELSO (Experience Life Science Outdoors) started with our vision. We want Black and Brown children to access more and better experiences than we did, experiences that help them see their potential in science. We want Black and Brown kids to feel comfortable in a lab, navigating a science library and advocating for themselves with faculty. We hope to inspire their academic pursuits by laying the foundation with curiosity and critical thinking.

### Creating a sense of belonging

Camp ELSO’s Wayfinders program is our main program for youths in kindergarten through sixth grade. Wayfinders is all about creating a safe, uplifting and affirming space for youth to engage in learning around four areas – life science, ecology, community and cultural history – with an approach sharply focused on environmental justice.

We are creating a special place for Black and Brown youths to have transformative experiences. This can come with challenges, like how to mitigate the undertones of colonization, nationalism and co-opting of traditional knowledge – harmful practices ingrained in mainstream environmental education. To do so, we invest in training young adults of color as camp guides. We support them in developing skills to engage youth of diverse ethnicities, backgrounds, socioeconomic status and family structure.



Our guides develop discussion questions and lesson plans that are relevant and engaging. We know that the more our staff represents the communities we serve, the closer we get to ensuring that Camp ELSO is responsive to the needs of children of color.

In 2019 nearly 100 children of color from greater Portland will participate in Wayfinders over spring and summer break, spending over 40 hours in a week-long day camp enjoying the outdoors and engaging in environmental, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning. We reach more children through our family and community outreach events like “Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day: Women of Color Panel” and “Endangered Species Day: Introduction to Youth Activism.”

On Wayfinders camp mornings, we prepare the space by smudging cedar and sage to purify the air and spirit. We greet each child by name. We set the tone for the day with yoga and affirmations to the sounds of Stevie Wonder and Yemi Alade to expose our kids to global music.

When we arrive at Metro sites like Blue Lake and Oxbow regional parks or Quamash Prairie, we are often greeted by Alice Froehlich, a Metro naturalist. Our kids know Alice, and the mutual trust, respect and accountability we have shared over the last three years has been the foundation to create field trips that cater to the needs of our blended, beautiful group.

At Oxbow, we are also greeted by teen leaders from the Oregon Zoo’s ZAP (Zoo Animal Presenters) program. They join us each year as guest facilitators passing along knowledge





about environmentalists of color who shaped our region's commitment to preserving greenspaces. As we head into the ancient forest, the serenity turns our active bodies into quieted beings content to listen, observe, respond and reflect. Our brown skin baking under the hot summer sun, curiosity takes over as our youth search for objects and signs of life in the frigid waters of the Sandy River, music in the background and so much laughter. Like family, we enjoy one another's company.

Similarly, when we kayak the Tualatin River or canoe the Columbia Slough, they are keen to show their knowledge of local plants and take notice as the occasional bird comes into view.

These are the moments that allow Camp ELSO's participants to feel welcome, not just to fit in but to belong. To feel deeply connected to the earth, to nature and to community.

### Encouragement for my community

As a Black environmental educator, I always navigate this world as a part of two communities, two identities. One is grounded in my Americanness, the other in my Blackness, the lineage from where I pull my strength and affirm my birthright. One part of me is constantly under attack from the other that is rife with nationalism, anti-Brownness, and opposition toward the people upon whose lives and ancestry this country was built. I wear my identities with pride, however difficult it can be.

I am a descendant of African people and the motherland. I'm deeply connected to the earth as a descendant of strong, resilient and

resourceful Black people. The land is a part of me, part of who I am. My ancestors toiled, and they survived, they lived off, they cultivated, and they loved the land.

This connection is in my garden, where I grow greens from my great-grandmother's seeds passed down from my mother, who taught me how to save, store and harvest them. Greens from the motherland I was taught to cook by my Sierra Leonean, Rwandese and Jamaican extended family. It's in the birds that roam my backyard, short bursts and squawks as my children chase them. It's in the final jar of the relish my mother canned last summer.

Our connection to the land was lost through colonization, through the blanket of Whiteness that a dominant culture and set of values instilled upon us all, living on stolen Indigenous land and working in its systems. Laws set aside the "great outdoors" as if it were for White men only. These laws pushed us from our heritage and erased the stories of our forefathers, forgetting that the Buffalo Soldiers were some of the first park rangers, that the movement for justice was first fought by Black and Brown folks.

We lived in harmony with the natural world before our communities were destroyed, displaced or forcibly relocated. We must remember and reclaim this relationship for ourselves and our children.

We are trying to do this with Camp ELSO, starting with our next generation. We need more spaces for Black and Brown children to see STEM professionals who are relatable

## Community voices

Metro occasionally contracts with community members to write about newsworthy topics from their perspective as a member of a historically marginalized community, such as people of color, immigrants and refugees, low-income residents and people of varying abilities. These pieces are intended to provide important points of view for consideration and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Metro or the Metro Council.

through shared experiences, ethnicity and culture. Spaces that allow Black children to learn their ancestral history and experience the outdoors in a majority setting with limited influence of Whiteness.

Camp ELSO is working to be that space. We aren't there yet. We are on our own learning journey, and it comes with constant challenges and a need to continuously question, heal, build and fortify our own space.

*Sprinavasa Brown is the co-founder and executive director of Camp ELSO. She also serves on Metro's Public Engagement Review Committee and the Parks and Nature Equity Advisory Committee. To learn more about Camp ELSO and how to apply, visit [campelso.org](https://campelso.org). To read the full version of Brown's story, visit [oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews](https://oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews)*



# Advice for White environmentalists and nature educators

Story by Sprinavasa Brown. Photography by Joshua Manus



I often hear White educators ask “What should I do?” expressing an earnest desire to move beyond talking about equity and inclusion to wanting action steps toward meaningful change.

I will offer you my advice as a fellow educator. It is both a command and a powerful tool for individual and organizational change for those willing to shift their mindset to understand it, invest the time to practice it and hold fast to witness its potential.

The work of this moment is all about environmental justice centered in social justice, led by the communities most impacted by the outcomes of our collective action. It’s time to leverage your platform as a White person to make space for the voice of a person of color. It’s time to connect your resources and wealth to leaders from underrepresented communities so they can make decisions that place their community’s needs first.

If you have participated in any diversity trainings, you are likely familiar with the common process of establishing group agreements. Early on, set the foundation for how you engage colleagues, a circumspect reminder that meaningful interpersonal and intrapersonal discourse has protocols in order to be effective. I appreciate these agreements and the principles they represent because they remind us that this work is not easy. If you are doing it right, you will and should be uncomfortable, challenged and ready to work toward a transformational process that ends in visible change.

I want you to recall one such agreement: step up, step back, step aside.

That last part is where I want to focus. It’s a radical call to action: Step aside! There are leaders of color full of potential and solutions who no doubt hold crucial advice and wisdom that organizations are missing. Think about the ways you can step back and step aside to share power. Step back from a decision, step down from a position or simply step aside. If you currently work for or serve on the board of an organization whose primary stakeholders are from communities of color, then this advice is especially for you.

Stepping aside draws to attention arguably the most important and effective way White people can advance racial equity, especially when working in institutions that serve marginalized

communities. To leverage your privilege for marginalized communities means removing yourself from your position and making space for Black and Brown leaders to leave the margins and be brought into the fold of power.

You may find yourself with the opportunity to retire or take another job. Before you depart, commit to making strides to position your organization to hire a person of color to fill the vacancy. Be outspoken, agitate and question the status quo. This requires advocating for equitable hiring policies, addressing bias in the interview process and diversifying the pool with applicants with transferable skills. Recruit applicants from a pipeline supported and led by culturally specific organizations with ties to the communities you want to attract, and perhaps invite those community members to serve on interview panels with direct access to hiring managers.

*“The best investment we can make for marginalized communities is to actively create and hold space for leaders of color at every level from executives to interns.”*

As an organizational leader responsible for decisions related to hiring, partnerships and board recruitment, I have made uncomfortable, hard choices in the name of racial equity, but these choices yield fruitful outcomes for leaders willing to stay the course. I’ve found myself at crossroads where the best course forward wasn’t always clear. This I have come to accept is part of my equity journey. Be encouraged: Effective change can be made through staying engaged in your personal equity journey. Across our region we have much work ahead at the institutional level, and even more courage is required for hard work at the interpersonal level.

In stepping aside you create an opportunity for a member of a marginalized community who may be your colleague, fellow board member or staff member to access power that you have held.

White people alone will not provide all of the solutions to fix institutional systems of

oppression and to shift organizational culture from exclusion to inclusion. These solutions must come from those whose voices have not been heard. Your participation is integral to evolving systems and organizations and carrying out change, but your leadership as a White person in the change process is not.

The best investment we can make for marginalized communities is to actively create and hold space for leaders of color at every level from executives to interns. Invest time and energy into continuous self-reflection and self-evaluation. This is not the path for everyone, but I hope you can see that there are a variety of actions that can shift the paradigm of the environmental movement. If you find yourself unsure of what action steps best align with where you or your organization are at on your equity journey, then reach out to organizations led by people of color, consultants, and leaders and hire them for their leadership and expertise. By placing yourself in the passenger seat, with a person of color as the driver, you can identify areas to leverage your privilege to benefit marginalized communities.

Finally, share an act of gratitude. Be cognizant of opportunities to step back and step aside and actively pursue ways to listen, understand and practice empathy with your colleagues, community members, neighbors and friends.

Camp ELSO is an example of the outcomes of this advice. Our achievements are most notable because it is within the context of an organization led 100 percent by people of color from our Board of Directors to our seasonal staff. This in the context of a city and state with a history of racial oppression and in a field that is historically exclusively White.

We began as a community-supported project and are growing into a thriving community-based organization successfully providing a vital service for Black and Brown youths across the Portland metro area. The support we have received has crossed cultures, bridged the racial divide and united partners around our vision. It is built from the financial investments of allies – public agencies, foundations, corporations and individuals. I see this as an act of solidarity with our work and our mission, and more importantly, an act of solidarity and support for our unwavering commitment to racial equity.





# Get involved

## CLASSES AND EVENTS

MON. MAY 27

### Remembering Vanport

Smith and Bybee lakes were once adjacent to Vanport, Oregon’s second biggest city until the devastating flood of 1948. In honor of the 71st anniversary of the flood, we will 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 or 1 to 3 p.m.  
Free. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

WED. APRIL 17    SAT. APRIL 27

### Learning the language of birds

Through vocalizations and movement, song birds are broadcasting daily stories happening on the land. Come to the evening lecture to find out how birds act as an alarm system for the forest and how you can tune in. At the field class, practice decoding bird language by listening, sitting and sound mapping in one of Metro’s off-the-beaten-path natural areas. Sign up for the lecture, field class or both.

April 17 lecture  
Oregon Zoo Education Center  
7 to 9 p.m.  
Free. Ages 12 and older.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

April 27 field class  
Clear Creek Natural Area  
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
\$10/person. Ages 12 and older.  
Registration required. Difficulty: moderate.

WED. APRIL 17    SAT. APRIL 20  
WED. MAY 15    SAT. MAY 18

### Free kids golf and tennis clinics

Has your child expressed an interest in tennis or golf and have they been wanting to give it a try? Have your child learn to play golf or tennis at a free beginner lesson taught by an instructor. No tennis racquets or golf clubs required.

Glendoveer Golf and Tennis Center  
Golf clinics: 4 to 5 p.m. April 17, May 15  
Tennis clinics: 1 to 2 p.m. April 20, May 18  
Free. Ages 6 to 13.  
Registration required: [playglendoveer.com/events/event-registration](https://playglendoveer.com/events/event-registration)  
Difficulty: moderate.

THU. MAY 2

### Introduction to mushrooms

Have you ever seen a mushroom in the woods and wondered what it was? In this talk, mushroom enthusiast Leah Bendlin will teach you the basics of mushroom identification. Learn how to start sorting species by their physical characteristics and ecology. Bring in your own finds for hands-on practice.

Oregon Zoo Education Center  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Free. Ages 12 and older.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

SAT. MAY 4

### Oxbow restoration

Help native plants thrive in the beloved forest and along the Sandy River. Volunteers will remove invasive plants like policeman’s helmet, ivy and holly trees. No experience needed. Gloves, tools and snacks provided.

Oxbow Regional Park  
10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Free. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

SUN. MAY 5

### Turtle walk in the wetlands

Oregon’s turtles are rare, shy and hard to find, but Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area is home to one of the largest populations of western painted turtles in Oregon. Learn about their natural history and examine shells of specimens found there in the past.

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area  
10 a.m. to noon or 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.  
\$6/person, \$11/family. All ages.  
Registration required. 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 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.

## Registration, accessibility information

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

For additional nature classes, volunteer opportunities and events, please visit [oregonmetro.gov/calendar](https://oregonmetro.gov/calendar)

SAT. MAY 11

### Oregon Historic Cemetery Clean-up Day

Oregon’s historic cemeteries are sites of great natural and cultural value. Discover and care for these special places, with activities at all of Metro’s 14 historic cemeteries. With Memorial Day coming up, these cemeteries will be host to many visitors and need your help to prepare. All tools and instruction provided. Projects range from litter patrol and pruning to headstone cleaning and edging.

All 14 historic cemeteries.  
9 a.m. to noon  
Free. All ages.  
Registration required. Difficulty: easy.

SAT. MAY 18

### Pollinator picnic

Metro is excited to partner with Sauvie Island Center for this annual fun, family-friendly educational event. Through interactive games and a scavenger hunt, visitors will learn about the world of pollinators, the challenges they face and the important role pollinators play in the food supply. Guests will enjoy a self-guided tour visiting a variety of hosted stations around the farm and the grounds of the park. For details and to pre-register (optional), visit [sauvieislandcenter.org](https://sauvieislandcenter.org)

Howell Territorial Park  
10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
\$10/family suggested donation to Sauvie Island Center. All ages.  
Registration not required. Difficulty: easy.

MON. MAY 27

### Memorial Day at Lone Fir Cemetery

Spend the day walking the grounds learning about the veterans, firefighters and police officers buried on the historic property. Join a guide from Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery to discover the past and present on an historic or veteran’s tour. Retired firefighter Don Porth will be available to share the stories of Portland’s early firefighters. Self-guided tours available on-site and at [oregonmetro.gov/lonefir](https://oregonmetro.gov/lonefir) will allow visitors to learn about Portland’s early police officers. In the morning, the crew of Portland Fire & Rescue Engine 9 will raise the flag in the Firefighters’ Section, followed by a short program with an Honor Guard and the chance to see a fire engine up close. Refreshments provided.

Lone Fir Cemetery  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Free. All ages.  
Registration not required. Difficulty: easy.





# Tools for living

RECYCLING: TURNING WHAT YOU TOSS INTO SOMETHING NEW

Story and photography by Faith Cathcart

Junk mail. Yogurt containers. Soup cans. These are items typically tossed in the recycling bin. It’s easy to forget that they are also commodities in a global market. But how do they get there? Let’s follow a load to its first stop along the recycling journey.

### From your bin to a truck to a sorting facility

You toss your recyclables into a container at home. Then they go to bins outside. A recycling truck collects them.

The truck ends up at a huge warehouse called a Material Recovery Facility. The MRF (pronounced “murf”) rattles and hums with conveyor belts and workers that separate recyclables by the type of material.

After trucks dump loads on a sorting floor, workers remove large items that don’t belong there – things like garden hoses and lumber.

Then, a front loader pushes the rest onto a long conveyer belt called “the line.” The line is where specific sorting gets underway, with the help of machinery and human hands.

Fans push bits of paper through sifting screens into one pile. Large magnets remove tin cans. Electrical currents pull out aluminum cans.

Workers along the line remove things that don’t belong there – including plastic bags, Styrofoam, trash and food.

They also pull out recyclable items – like plastic milk jugs and laundry detergent bottles – and toss them under the line into large cages on rollers. When the cages are full, workers feed the separated materials onto another belt leading to a baler.

At the end of the line, all that’s left are larger pieces of paper. They fall onto the floor in a pile also destined for the baler.



### Recycling challenges: New types of packaging and new markets

A lot has changed since recycling programs started in Oregon decades ago. For starters, what we purchase, and its packaging.

The popularity of convenience food has inundated us with new plastic containers. Online shopping has increased demand for cardboard and other packaging used to mail goods.

How we’ve managed recycling has changed, too.

With China’s rise as a major manufacturing hub, its demand for recyclable materials increased. For West Coast recyclers, it became easy and cheap to send materials abroad on the empty ships that unloaded goods here.

But in 2018 the Chinese government tightened standards for the recyclables they accept, shrinking global markets and sending ripples



through recycling systems across Oregon, the U.S. and Europe.

### The recycling system must evolve again

In the short term, that evolution largely falls on processors. Some have slowed down the line and added more workers to catch more of the stuff that shouldn’t be there. And they’re looking for – and finding – new markets.

So, those bales are loaded onto trucks and ships to be sold to other processors.

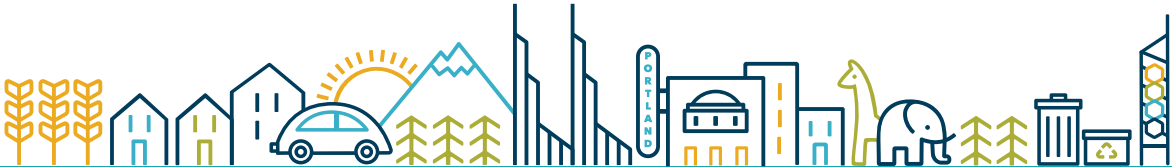
Metals go to smelters in the U.S. and abroad where they are melted and poured into new products. Paper and cardboard go to pulpers to become new paper. Sorted plastics go to plastic recovery facilities to get cleaned, melted and pelletized. Those recycled plastic pellets become the raw material to make new products and packaging.

It all starts with what goes in your bin at home.

### What to keep out of the recycling bin

Frozen and refrigerated food boxes go in the trash. The only exceptions are milk and juice cartons. Make sure you know what goes in the home recycling bin and keep everything else out.

## Recycling questions? Ask Metro.



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

503-234-3000  
oregonmetro.gov





# Regional roundup

NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING CLOSE TO TRANSIT  
SERVES PORTLAND’S JADE DISTRICT COMMUNITY

**Story by Ambar Espinoza**  
**Renderings and photography courtesy of SERA Architects**

Two years ago, the site of an old furniture store at the corner of Southeast 82nd Avenue and Division Street looked barren with no trees and narrow, eroded sidewalks. Now the sidewalks are wider and tree-lined. In place of the old furniture store, a four-story building stands tall in butterscotch yellow and a bold gray.

This new building, Orchards of 82nd, is home to 47 families earning between 30 and 60 percent of the local median income. Within days of the rental applications opening, more than 300 families applied for these one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. The waiting list is now closed at nearly 400.

“You can see the project is really meeting a huge need,” said Nick Sauvie, executive director of ROSE Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit serving Southeast Portland that owns and operates the apartments.

Metro bought the property in 2016 to reserve this land for affordable housing. The \$16.5-million project is managed by Metro’s Transit-Oriented Development Program, which often partners with the private sector to build more places where people can live and work near transit. In recent years, the program has evolved to better support affordable housing construction where it’s needed most.

ROSE partnered with different nonprofits and social service agencies to market these apartments to families enrolled in the Baby Booster Initiative, which aims to improve the health of babies and families with young children.

ROSE reserved most of the apartments for families in this program. “We did that based on research about how important the first [one] thousand days of development are for children,” Sauvie said.

TriMet’s first high-capacity bus service, the Division Transit Project, will serve this area with a station near 82nd Avenue and Division Street starting in 2022.

The private market often takes note of new investments in historically underinvested neighborhoods. Property values and rents go up, often pricing out people who need affordable rents and close access to transit.

“This [new] affordable housing is just so critical for us to have that opportunity to help stabilize



the neighborhood,” said Duncan Hwang, associate director for the nonprofit Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon.

Hwang is happy Metro thought ahead about investing in this property for affordable housing, so that people could benefit from living close to quality transit.

“This project is a real community win,” Hwang said. “It’s a good example of public dollars being well spent,” with support from the private sector.

The building features a private community courtyard and playground, and sheltered parking spots for cars and bikes. The first floor of the building houses APANO’s office headquarters and a community hub for cultural events, social services and job training programs.

For about two years, APANO leased the vacant furniture store from Metro as a test site for a community space that hosted poetry slams, theater performances and other events. APANO reports hosting 25,000 people a year, illustrating the demand for a neighborhood gathering space in addition to affordable housing.

A highlight of the new building is a street-facing community plaza that will not only support the annual Jade International Night Market, but also offer “a respite place for people to stop... and get some shade,” either from the sun or rain, said Gauri Rajbaidya, an architect with SERA Architects.

The firm oversaw the building’s design with input from people who live in the area and community partners.

The community engagement that Metro asked SERA Architects to do for this project was “a really powerful underpinning to drive what makes this design so rich,” said Travis Dang, an architect with the firm. “This area can be kind



of overlooked and neglected and that’s why this project is so exciting.”

As greater Portland continues to grow and develop, Hwang hopes other agencies will follow Metro’s lead. “I think a lot of these properties are going to get snatched up for private development unless our housing bureaus are able to act more quickly,” he said.

Hwang hopes the affordable housing bond measure that voters approved in November will give housing bureaus the resources needed to partner with developers to build more affordable housing.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony for Orchards of 82nd is scheduled for 4 to 6 p.m. April 25 at 8118 SE Division St., Portland.

## Greater Portland’s affordable housing bond

In November 2018, 59 percent of greater Portland’s voters approved a \$652.8-million affordable housing program to provide stable affordable housing for 12,000 people across the region.

The Metro Council in January appointed 13 people to the committee that oversees the program.

The committee reviews plans to develop housing from seven jurisdictions: Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, and the cities of Beaverton, Hillsboro, Gresham and Portland. It also tracks the construction of the planned 3,900 homes under the bond measure.

Affordable homes may take a few years to build, but projects will begin to move forward across the region this year.

Learn more at [oregonmetro.gov/housing](https://oregonmetro.gov/housing)



# Share your nature and win!



**Krissi Carson, Portland**

I love fog. I love its dreamy, mystical quality and the way things slowly emerge out of the nothing, like the magic we all wished for as children. This photo was taken on a fall day along a minor trail in Forest Park not far from Germantown Road.

**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 May 15 to: [ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov)