

Special nature activities tear-out section! Pages 5 to 8

Summer 2020



“I want kids of color to know swimming and water safety are for them.”



What’s inside

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Nature educator Jason Ligons is Black and a talented swimmer. He wants that to stop being surprising **page 9**

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



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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.



Share your nature and win!



Winner: Patricia Kolberg, Troutdale

I was taking photos of a frog at the Kelly Creek Pond on the Mt. Hood Community College campus. I kept inching closer and closer to the frog. I took a quick break from my concentrated effort, looked away, and saw this little critter watching me. In my focus on the frog, I almost missed this incredible dragonfly.



Finalist: Jerry Porter, Portland

I love seeing the ducks, eagles, owls and the rest at Whitaker Ponds in the Columbia Slough, just south of the airport. But I also enjoy looking at simple things close up. I love the texture of these newly sprouted equisetums (horsetails).



Finalist: Robert Fuchs, Happy Valley

While spending my days at home during the pandemic, this downy woodpecker visited the tree outside my window many times. Although she was usually busy, this day in late April was gorgeous and she just relaxed in the tree and enjoyed the weather.

Submit your photo

Win an annual parking pass, a full-day picnic shelter reservation at Graham Oaks or Scouters Mountain nature parks, 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 greater Portland – 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 August 16 to: ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov

Like what you see?

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

On the cover: Jason Ligons stands by the Columbia River at Metro's Broughton Beach. Photo by Cory Eldridge

Metro breaks ground on two new nature parks

Story by Megan Zabel Holmes



Construction has begun on two new nature parks after years of research, planning and restoration. Chehalem Ridge, near Forest Grove, and Newell Creek Canyon in Oregon City will provide nature experiences close to home while supporting wildlife habitat and water quality. Both natural areas were protected as a result of voter-approved bond measures passed in 1995 and 2006.

Both parks are expected to open in 2021.

For over a decade, Metro scientist Kate Holleran has been managing restoration work at the 1,280-acre Chehalem Ridge natural area, which offers sweeping vistas of the Tualatin River Valley and the Coast Range. Her work has focused turning what had been a commercial Douglas fir farm into a healthy, diverse habitat. This included protecting dozens of upland streams that drain into the Tualatin River, thinning the tightly packed forest, reintroducing native plants, and restoring stands of Oregon white oak, a declining habitat in the Willamette Valley.

Diversifying forests expands habitat for native wildlife with the added bonus of creating resilience to climate change, an increasingly important factor in Metro’s restoration work.

“It’s interesting that the best practices for creating forests resilient to climate change are the same recommendations for just having a healthy forest,” Holleran said. “You maintain species diversity and manage the number of trees on a piece of ground so they can survive these hotter, drier summers.”

On the southern end of greater Portland, the 240-acre Newell Creek Canyon provides stunning scenery and important wildlife habitat – right in the heart of Oregon City. Work here has focused on restoring forest areas impacted by road building and logging and protecting Newell Creek itself.

“When forests are restored, wildlife species respond to those changes,” said Metro scientist Brian Vaughn. “The restored forest at Newell Creek Canyon will support water quality conditions that are favorable to spawning coho salmon, steelhead and Pacific lamprey.”

When it was time to plan each park’s amenities, the community showed up.



From top: A tour group stands on an overlook at Chehalem Ridge Natural Area during the planning and design of the future park. Orange fencing at Chehalem Ridge marks the beginning of construction at the future nature park.

At Chehalem Ridge, Metro partnered with Centro Cultural, a community-based organization in Washington County, to bring the area’s Latinx community into the planning process in an intentional and meaningful way.

“Centro helped us develop and design community outreach events,” said Karen Vitkay, the lead planner for Chehalem Ridge Nature Park. “They already had so many connections to the community and were a trusted resource.”

Surveys conducted in English and Spanish showed that Spanish speakers especially valued amenities like space for family gatherings and trails wide enough for groups with a gentle grade suitable for kids and aging adults, all considerations reflected in the final park plan.

Amenities at both parks include day-use areas, multi-use trails, off-road cycling, scenic overlooks and opportunities for nature education. Chehalem Ridge will offer equestrian access. Future development phases include features like nature play areas and additional trails, trailheads and shelters.

Tannen Printz, Metro’s lead park planner at Newell Creek Canyon, is grateful for the support of passionate residents who’ve been involved every step of the way.

“There’s a whole community behind protecting this place and making it someplace special,” Printz said. “Metro is just trying to move that mission along.”



From top: A stream runs through a new section of North Fork Deep Creek Natural Area in Clackamas County.

Cazadero Trail connection

Story by Megan Zabel Holmes
Photo by Ryan Ruggerio

Metro has purchased 76 acres in Clackamas County that will complete missing sections of the Cazadero State Trail. The Cazadero connects to the Springwater Corridor Trail, creating linked multi-use paths that will eventually stretch from Portland to Estacada.

The property was a portion of the Salvation Army’s Camp Kuratli, which continues to operate. It cost \$850,000 and was paid for by the natural areas bond measure voters approved in 2006.

The purchase also creates opportunities to protect critical habitat and water quality.

The property is home to a relatively young forest that’s regrown after previous logging and streams that feed into Deep Creek and the North Fork of Deep Creek. Metro’s restoration work here will focus on maintaining species diversity, tackling invasive plants and managing erosion in order to reduce sediment in the streams.

“Those streams are really important for salmon recovery and other aquatic wildlife,” said Kate Holleran, a Metro scientist who creates restoration plans for newly acquired properties. The new property adds onto the 96 acres of forest and stream that Metro’s owns along the North Fork of Deep Creek.

“When we’re able to protect a large piece of land that already has pretty good habitat, and we can nudge it into a more resilient condition – it’s a wonderful opportunity that our voters give us,” Holleran said

The Cazadero State Trail follows a long-abandoned rail line, but disconnects where trestle bridges once spanned two canyons over Deep Creek. The bridges are cost-prohibitive to rebuild. Metro’s recent property purchase creates the space for switchbacks to be built to cross the canyons.

Like most regional trail projects, this one is made possible through cooperation between public agencies.

“Working together we can get a lot more done than any one agency can on its own,” said Robin Wilcox, who oversees the trails program at Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

Even though the gaps don’t represent a large portion of the overall trail, acquiring them is a significant step toward its completion.

“Sometimes those last bits are the hardest part,” Wilcox said. “This has been a long term effort.”



From top: A student in Club Aves looks through binoculars at wildlife at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area. Metro nature educator Alejandra Cortes reaches for a bit of nature during a hike.

Class is outside

Story by Cory Eldridge
Photography by Cristle Jose

At day and sleepaway camp, summer is when many kids discover nature for the first time. They’ve been outside of course, grasping nature in muddy handfuls or cloudy eyefuls. But summer camp is often the first time nature is presented as a wide-open classroom and teacher that they can both observe and be part of.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, though, many would-be campers have had their adventures canceled or shortened. Metro’s nature education team has stepped up to create educational materials and a series of YouTube videos showing kids the ways nature can teach them, whether they’re able to get to a park or a trail or just the closest crack in the sidewalk.

“Nature is the best classroom because it reaffirms the feelings of interconnectedness, with other humans or with other non-human organisms,” says Jazmin Bias, the nature education team leader. That can be as simple as following a bird flying by or thinking about what it took for a dandelion to pop through the sidewalk.

For caregivers dreading taking on the role of camp counselor after months of being homeschool teacher, Metro’s nature educators see you, and they’ve made these activities low stakes. They are for kids of any age and ability.

Some are quiet, sitting in a spot and listening to the sounds around you. Others are active, like making a shelter from sticks and fallen leaves. Then there’s exploration activities, like those on the opposite page. If it’s raining, there are drawing activities, like the leaf drawing on the back page.

“People like having a partner. So I think it can be really healing to do this together,” Bias says. Then she laughs. “But I also understand if you need some space, go over there and do a sit spot.”

Nature in your small backyard

Story and photography by Cory Eldridge



The COVID-19 pandemic has kept many people from heading out to their favorite nature spots. Trails have been closed, campgrounds and parks too. It’s like we’ve been social-distanced from Douglas firs, Douglas squirrels and anything else David Douglas slapped his name on.

But there’s nature just outside your door,



Under the rocks

The quickest place to find some of the creatures hiding all around you is to pick up a rock. Do it gently, pull the rock straight up and place it with its topside down. Why? Because there are delicate lives on and under the rock. Most likely, you’ll see multiple invertebrates (animals with no backbones) like earthworms, slugs, spiders, millipedes and centipedes. Make sure to put the rock back, very gently.



Predator of the garden

Lady beetles are little domes of pure springtime delight. Unless you’re an aphid. Then these spotted red and yellow jewels are voracious, unstoppable predators. From when they are spiky larvae through adulthood, lady beetles eat and eat and eat aphids and other small bugs. (Those are aphids behind the lady beetle in the photo.) So take joy at their sight, then watch the lion of the leaf.

often just as rich as nature deep in a forest or gorge. A yard, a parking strip and certainly the local park can hold dozens of species of native wildlife. Even just a patch of clover could be feeding multiple species of bees.

So let’s take a look in some likely places where nature might be and reconsider a couple common neighborhood friends.



In the blooms

Aside from birds, there’s no more beautiful group of animals outside your home than the pollinators fluttering and buzzing around flowers. But it’s easy to miss some of the tiny bees working in the pollen. The sweat bees above are the size of ants. If you take care, you can get close. These tiny, solitary bees won’t fuss you if you keep your hands to yourself.



The nectar boss

Anna’s hummingbird: They’re the smallest bird in your neighborhood, and they’re the bravest, too. Listen for a buzzing, almost electrical sound to find them. It’s not a pretty song, but they make up for it with stunning, iridescent plumage. While most birds will fly off if they know you’re watching them, Anna’s will eyeball you back. And if you’re by their favorite flowers, they may buzz a warning by your head.

Tear out these four pages!

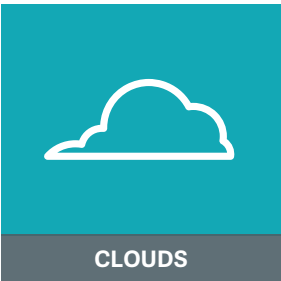
Discover nature near you

Neighborhood nature

Nature can be seen right outside your front door. While walking or rolling around your neighborhood, see how many of these marvels of nature you can spot. When you start looking for nature, you'll see it everywhere.



3 TYPES OF LEAVES



CLOUDS



SPIDER



MUSHROOMS



SQUIRREL



WILDFLOWERS



FERN



BUMBLEBEE



FEATHER



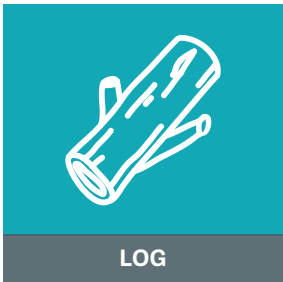
WORM



SNAIL



CATERPILLAR



LOG



PINE CONE



FLYING BIRD



GRASS

Nearby nature

The next time (or few times) you go for a walk or hike on a local trail, in a forest, along a wetland or at your favorite park, see if you can spot these plants and animals. With sharp eyes and a bit of luck, you might be able to find four in a row for bingo! But don't forget to use your ears, too. A lot of animals won't show themselves, but you can hear their songs and chatter. Those count for this game!

This game won't be easy. Happy searching!



ROBIN



WESTERN
PAINTED TURTLE



RED-TAILED HAWK



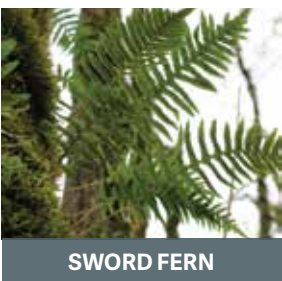
CANADA GOOSE



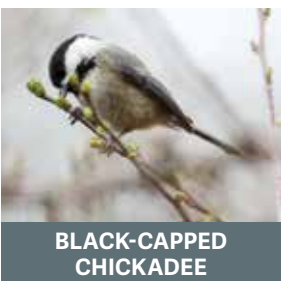
SNAG



PACIFIC MADRONE



SWORD FERN



BLACK-CAPPED
CHICKADEE



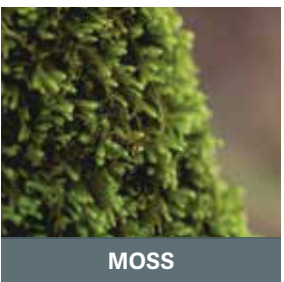
OREGON WHITE OAK



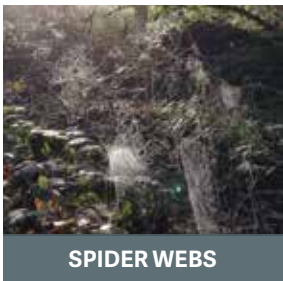
GREAT EGRET



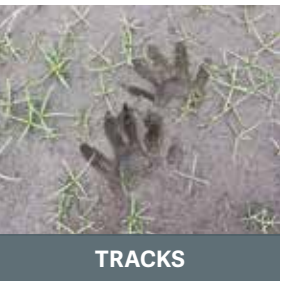
BANANA SLUG



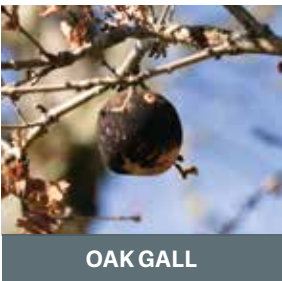
MOSS



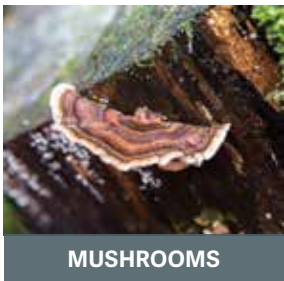
SPIDER WEBS



TRACKS



OAK GALL



MUSHROOMS

Explore more nature

Find nature and recycling activities at oregonmetro.gov/education
And for Oregon Zoo activities, visit oregonzoo.org/discover/activities
Watch Metro's nature and recycling educators on YouTube by searching Oregon Metro. And check out the Oregon Zoo's channel while you're there.



Nature by the trail: Grant Butte Wetlands

Illustration by Zoe Keller

Streams and small rivers wind through neighborhoods across greater Portland. Wetlands dot the region, pooled at most every low point next to a butte in east Portland and Gresham and tucked into the draws of hills in Beaverton and Tigard. Water is everywhere. And where there's water, there's wildlife, even in the heart of a city.

These waterways, especially the wetlands, offer some of the best chances to see birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and beautiful insects in your neighborhood. Many of them have a regional trail on their border, offering a great lookout for wildlife viewing.

The Grant Butte Wetlands stretches for a mile between Division and Powell, all of it

visible from the Gresham-Fairview Trail. On any day, raptors are on the hunt, beaver dens are busy, and dozens of small animals go about their lives right in front of you.

Share your coloring creation with Metro! Snap a picture and tag [@OregonMetro](#) on Instagram or Facebook.



1. Northern harrier

2. Turkey vulture

3. People

4. Violet green swallow

5. Great blue heron

6. Cattails

7. North American beaver
8. Black-tailed deer

9. Red twig dogwood

10. Red-winged blackbird

11. River otter

12. Kestrel

13. Western tiger swallowtail
14. Common merganser

15. Raccoon

16. Skunk cabbage

17. Green heron

18. American bittern

19. Garter snake

20. Western spirea
21. Eight-spotted skimmer

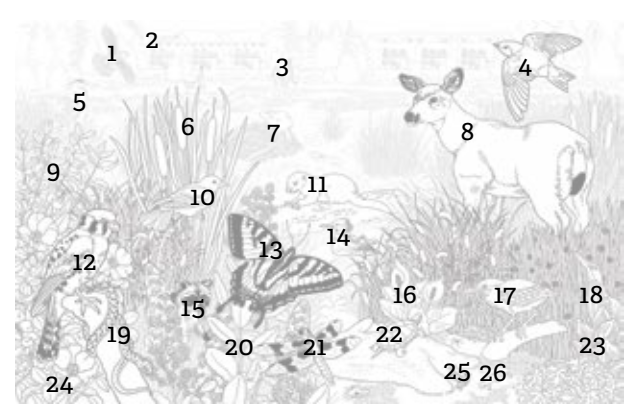
22. Western painted turtle

23. Pacific waterleaf

24. Swamp rose

25. Northern red-legged frog

26. Rough-skinned newt



You don't float. Life jackets do.

Wearing a life jacket is the best thing you can do to stay safe in water. The jacket has to fit to do its job. Here's how to find the right jacket for the right fit.

1 Size

Life jackets are made for people of different sizes and weights. Check the label for the jacket's weight range and chest size.



2 The kids

Life jackets for children include a leg strap. Life jackets for infants also have a collar.



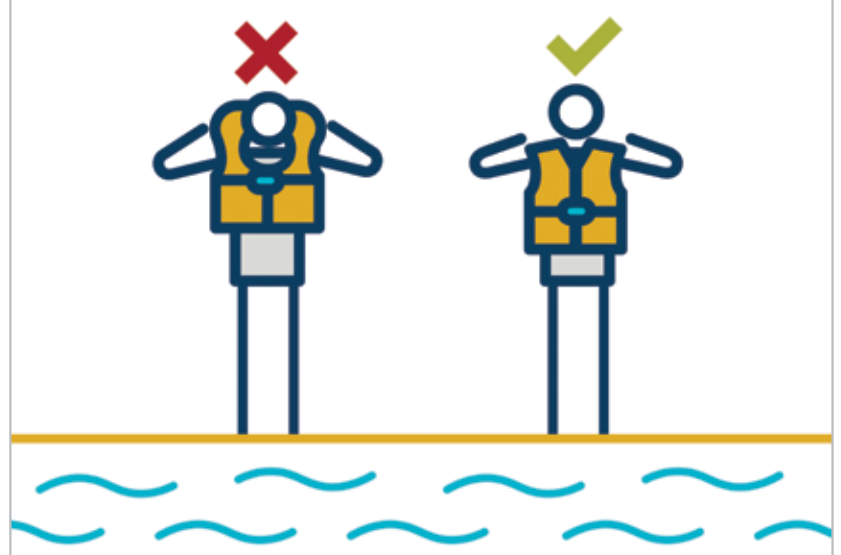
3 Zip, click, pull

Make sure all zippers and clips are fastened. Pull straps tight.



4 Shoulder test

Pull the jacket up at your shoulders. If it slides up to your ears, it's too big. If it stays tight, you are ready for the water!



Questions?

Contact Metro staff at 503-797-1545.
For updates on Metro parks visit oregonmetro.gov/parks

Black waters



Swimming is integral to Black and Brown history. Jason Ligon wants youth of color to know why.

Story by Matan Gold
Photography by Cory Eldridge
and courtesy of Jason Ligon

Black people don't know how to swim, has been a near constant refrain throughout Metro naturalist, Jason Ligon's, life – and he is tired of it.

Ligon spent his early years surrounded by water in Eagle River, Alaska, a bucolic community within the municipality of Anchorage. He was instilled with reverence and respect for water: Always wear a life jacket. Don't go past your knees.

In high school, his family settled in Vancouver. A strong swimmer, Ligon easily made the school's team though quit after a single year, unwilling to suffer the constant barrage of racist remarks from his teammates.

Post-graduation, unable to pay for college, Ligon made the very same decision countless Brown and Black folks have made before him and headed to the military recruitment offices, with the intention to enlist with the Air Force.

At the time, all the recruitment offices were in the same strip mall. Strangely, on a Wednesday afternoon, the Air Force office was closed. Undeterred, Ligon headed to the Navy office only to be intercepted by a Coast Guard recruiter, whose sole question was, "Do you know how to swim?"

Two days later, Ligon was sent off to boot camp "with an Afro, a little overweight" and little knowledge of the Coast Guard. He was asked to fill out an assessment; regarding swimming skills, he chose the option Above Excellent. As Ligon lined up for his swim test, his Black drill sergeant let him know he was the only recruit to make such an audacious claim and advised, "You best swim better than me."

When Ligon's turn came around, nearly no other swimmer had passed the test. Ligon

entered the water, and his sergeant jumped in after him. Ligon backed up his claim and beat the sergeant.

Seemingly furious, the sergeant grabbed a 250-pound dummy, threw it into the pool and told Ligon to dive after it – and though exhausted, he managed to retrieve the dummy. The sergeant pulled Ligon from the water, told him to stand at ease and informed him that he would be a rescue swimmer.

To deal with the grind and demand of Coast Guard service, Ligon found strength in history. "It meant a lot to me to know other Black people had gone through what I was going through."

He was particularly inspired by the rescue crew of Pea Island, a U.S. Life-Saving Service (the predecessor to the Coast Guard) station off the coast of North Carolina. It was the first and only station in this nation's history to have an all-Black rescue crew.

Richard Etheridge, a former slave and Civil War veteran, took command of the station in 1880. Under his keep, his crew saved 30 vessels and nearly 200 lives, only losing seven. Let us remember these rescues occurred during Jim Crow, at the height of lynch mobs; these men were saving the lives of their tyrants. Their heroics and grace would be ignored by the Coast Guard for nearly a century.

While a Black commanding officer was remarkable, Black people swimming would not have been. Swimming, fishing and diving were integral skills for peoples living off the west coast of Africa, skills that then survived the Triangle Trade. Before the Civil War, there was higher swimming competency among Black folks than whites. In fact, we do not see the swift degradation of swimming skills within Black communities till desegregation prompted white flight to suburbs, where private, home-owner-association-owned pools replaced public pools. Municipal pools were closed, even filled in, rather than allow integration. A continuum of inequitable access to water was expanded.

That is how, within a generation, there was a near complete erasure of swimming skills among Black communities, leading us to today where nearly 70% of Black children have low-to-no swimming ability. Nor is it much better for other communities of color: 66% of Asian



From left: Jason Ligon, a nature educator at Metro, looks at two Brewer's blackbirds on the shore of the Columbia River. Ligon's has been a strong swimmer his entire life. Out of high school, he joined the Coast Guard and became a rescue swimmer.

and Pacific Islander and 56% of Latinx children have low-to-no swimming ability. Indigenous children are twice as likely to drown as their white counterparts.

After Ligon was discharged from his service, he returned to the Pacific Northwest, set about getting a degree and supporting his family. Eventually, needing a career change, Ligon decided to attend a veteran's career fair at which he was approached by a rep for the Forest Service. In high school, Ligon had participated in an urban youth program with the Forest Service; he left the program with the impression the outdoors weren't for people who looked like him.

However, the recruiter was persistent, and Ligon needed out from his sales job. He was soon hired as a ranger for Multnomah Falls. To his surprise, he enjoyed the job, fell in love with working outdoors. But the best part was, "talking to the kids and educating people who looked like me," on conservation and how to protect natural resources – resources that Ligon wants to make sure everyone has equitable access to.

Before the Civil War, there was higher swimming competency among Black folks than whites.

A few years later, Ligon brought this passion and care to Metro's Oxbow Regional Park. As the sole Black ranger at Oxbow, he was intentional about providing youth of color a positive interaction with a badge. It is difficult work to be placed in a position of representing an entire community, but worth it when he would hear, "Hey, it means a lot to have someone who looks like me in uniform."

In his new role as a Metro nature educator, Ligon combines his expertise with water and love to teaching, by connecting youth of color to the natural resources they have systematically been denied. He strives to promote equitable access to water, show these youth that swimming is indeed their heritage, educate youth on how water has been weaponized against communities of color, and provide the tools for how best to be safe and have fun around open water.

He says, "I've gone my whole life hearing Black people can't swim. I want to shut that up. I want kids of color to know swimming and water safety are for them."



On the job with Annelise Tuitavuki

Story by Talullah Blanco
Photography by Faith Cathcart

Hazardous waste technician, Annelise Tuitavuki, known as “Tui” to her coworkers, whizzes through her workplace. She’s dressed from head to toe in a gray hazmat suit – her wrists and ankles sealed with silver duct tape, her eyes shielded with protective goggles.

Tuitavuki is responsible for safely disposing waste that could harm human health or the environment. She works at the Metro South Hazardous Waste Facility in Oregon City, where the region’s waste is sorted before going to landfills, recyclers and composting facilities.

“I honestly love everything about the job because there is always a learning opportunity,” she says. “I didn’t realize how toxic some chemicals are – like bleach. If you mix bleach and ammonia, it creates a toxic [gas]. I used to be one of those people pouring bleach in the drain to clean the sink.”

Tuitavuki prepared for her career through the Oregon Tradeswomen Trades and Apprenticeship Career Class, a free seven-week program that helps women prepare for high-skill careers with family-sustaining wages and benefits.

“Our mission, as an organization, is economic empowerment through leadership training and mentorship,” says Jay Richmond, Oregon Tradeswomen workforce equity manager. “We want to give women the skills so they can lift themselves out of poverty. If you are talking about deep equity and ensuring everyone deserves a living wage, that is what the trades provide – public agencies have a huge part in pushing for that to happen.”

Garbage and recycling system and related businesses in greater Portland generate \$537 million annually and employs thousands. Historically, this workforce has been disproportionately male. Oregon Tradeswomen helps Metro increase the number of women working in garbage and recycling. It’s an investment in people who have been left out of the industry’s economic benefits.

Tuitavuki is the first woman employed at Metro South from a partnership between Metro and Oregon Tradeswomen.

What sold her? The mystery of unmarked containers: it’s like CSI without the crime.

“When I’m in the lab, we get unknown bottles – and I go in there and test it,” explains



Clockwise from left: Annelise Tuitavuki takes household materials the public bring in and separates them to be donated to area non-profits that will use them. Hazardous waste technicians George Lee and Tuitavuki wheel out 55-gallon drums containing poisonous, flammable or corrosive material. A freight truck, filled with hazardous waste, gets ready to leave Metro South transfer station.

Tuitavuki. “That excites me because that’s something I never did growing up. In high school I dropped out and got my GED so I didn’t get to experience that part of it.”

Tuitavuki never anticipated working as a hazardous waste technician before meeting fellow Oregon Tradeswomen students while playing rugby.

“Everyone here I really enjoy being around,” says Tuitavuki. “This is more of a family-friendly workplace even though the things that come in here are not family-friendly.”

Tuitavuki approaches each shift eager to learn. She and her fellow coworkers sneak Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups from their five-gallon communal candy bucket in between greeting customers, working in the lab and making the region safer by protecting people from toxins.



Here to help

To aid greater Portland’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Metro South and Metro Central transfer stations donated over 1,500 protective suits to Oregon Health & Science University.

While the crisis has disrupted many aspects of life, Metro transfer stations remain open for you to recycle or safely dispose of hazardous household products. For more info check: oregonmetro.gov/tools-living

THANK YOU essential workers for keeping garbage and recycling moving in greater Portland.



 Metro

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

oregonmetro.gov



Regional roundup

AS THE STAKES RISE, PORTLAND YOUTH TAKE ACTION

Story by Samantha Kar and Maria Peña Cornejo
Photos courtesy of Jeremy Clark, Charlie Abrams, Gabby Cosey, and Amira Tripp Folsom

Young adults in Oregon are leveraging the power of activism and social media. Meet four young activists at the center of local organizations working to drive change on issues from civic engagement to gun violence to climate change.

Amira Tripp Folsom began working with local nonprofit Next Up because the group helps youth get involved with democracy through expanding voter rights for young people, broadening leadership opportunities for youth in politics, and mobilizing peer-to-peer registration to educate and pre-register 16- and 17-year-olds to vote. Tripp Folsom, the youngest board member of the nonprofit, recently graduated from La Salle Catholic College Preparatory.

Since her involvement with Next Up, Tripp Folsom has publicly spoken in favor of lowering the voting age for local and state elections to 16 and is a member of the youth advisory board at Vote16, the national campaign advocating for the issue.

Social media has been an important tool for Tripp Folsom to spread awareness, she said.

“When a platform is given to us to speak about the issues that affect our lives and our futures, we will use it because there is always more work to get done,” Tripp Folsom said.

The Parkland school shooting in Florida in 2018 prompted Gabby Cosey to join Next Up, too. She’s a sophomore at Swarthmore College and another young leader in Portland’s student activism scene. Cosey said she realized it was her responsibility to do something about gun violence.

“It’s this real notion of ‘these are problems that affect me, so I am going to speak out about it, and I am going to do things about it’ in greater numbers than previous years,” Cosey said.

Cosey co-founded Oregon Youth for Gun Reform “with the explicit intention to address gun violence in communities of color.” She said the mainstream gun violence prevention movement underrepresents the experiences and narratives of gun violence of Black Americans like herself.



It’s why Cosey focuses her activism on marginalized populations, equity, racial justice and dismantling oppressive power systems. She speaks and participates in national summits and is as an active board member for Next Up.

“There is really something that is quite remarkable going on with activists, where we’re championing systemic change and structural change, alongside personal growth and awareness,” Cosey said.

Last March, Cleveland High School junior Jeremy Clark and fellow classmate Charlie Abrams used Instagram and Snapchat to spread the word about Portland’s participation in the Global Climate Strike for the Future. They expected between 100 and 200 people to attend, but 3,000 students showed up, in large part because their followers on Snapchat reposted their event graphic more than 100 times.

“We were able to see every high school in [the Portland Public School system] recognized at the strike, along with other private schools, middle schools and even colleges,” Abrams said. “That was almost 100% due to social media.”

Clark and Abrams regularly educate their peers about the effects of climate change through their blog and a youth lobby project called Affected Generation.

They were both finalists of the Children’s Climate Prize in 2017 for their testimony to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources and the House Energy and Environment Committees. Abrams and Clark say they have witnessed firsthand the exponential growth of youth activism.

“We saw this a couple of years ago that people were shocked to see two 9-year-old boys getting their voices heard and speaking out



Clockwise from top: Jeremy Clark, Charlie Abrams, Gabby Cosey, and Amira Tripp Folsom are four activists working in greater Portland to drive change on issues that affect young people.

about climate change,” Abrams said. “Now we see youth standing up on climate change being driven so much in the media, that other youth think, ‘Oh, I can do that too.’”

Both Tripp Folsom and Cosey, who will be eligible to vote in the election this fall, plan to vote.

Amplify

This story is possible because of Amplify, a community storytelling initiative of Pamplin Media Group and Metro. Amplify supported three summer internships in 2019 for high school journalists in greater Portland to cover important community issues. The program aims to elevate the voices of student journalists from historically underrepresented groups, such as communities of color, low-income residents and others. Pamplin Media Group editors oversee the interns.

Maria Peña Cornejo is a student at the University of Oregon and a graduate of Parkrose High School. Samantha Kar is student at the University of Oregon and a graduate of La Salle Catholic College Prep.

Learn more at oregonmetro.gov/amplify

Complete the leaf!



Cottonwood



Pacific willow



Hazel nut



Lady fern

Draw the other half of the leaf by mirroring the other side.

Plane or bilateral symmetry (it's also called reflective symmetry) is seen in anything that can be divided in halves that form mirror images of each other. Human beings, insects and these leaves all show bilateral symmetry. When you go outside, you'll see symmetry almost everywhere.

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