



Metro's parks and natural areas levy

Making a difference in Clackamas County

Across greater Portland, Metro's parks and natural areas levy protects clean water, restores fish and wildlife habitat and connects people with nature close to home.

Voters first approved the levy in 2013 and then renewed it through June 2023. It raises approximately \$16 million a year and supports restoration and maintenance, park operations, public access improvements, nature education and volunteer programs, and community grants and sponsorships.

Since 2013, the levy has made a significant difference across Metro's 17,000 acres of parks, natural areas and trails – and a number of community nature projects and programs.

River Island Natural Area

(pictured above)

Metro worked with partners on a major restoration at River Island, where record flooding devastated a 240-acre former gravel mine on the Clackamas River. A more natural habitat with logs in the water and native plants support wildlife, birds, turtles, and endangered salmon and steelhead. Reconnecting Goose Creek to the Clackamas River now provides cooler water and access to better habitat for fish.

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Restoration and maintenance

Clackamas River

Salmon, steelhead and lamprey of the Clackamas River are a major focus of restoration efforts. Metro and our partners are implementing a series of projects on the Clackamas River and key tributaries (Clear Creek and Deep Creek) and streams (Newell Creek and Abernethy Creek) to enhance fish habitat and improve water quality. These projects include reopening side-channels, improving fish passage and restoring native plants.

Diversifying restoration workforce

With the latest round of restoration contracts, Metro worked to make the bureaucratic process of government contracts more accessible to diverse business owners, including people of color, women, veterans and emerging small businesses. The latest process included interviews with potential contractors so people could talk more freely rather than relying on the traditional request-for-proposals process that emphasizes writing skills. The effort supports economic equity for people who plant native trees and shrubs, remove invasive weeds, and help improve water quality and restore habitat.

Park operations

More than 1.7 million visitors enjoy Metro's developed parks each year for walking, hiking, canoeing, camping, bird watching, and fishing, in addition to family and community events. The levy allows Metro to operate, maintain, and upgrade Metro sites so that they are safe, welcoming and inclusive, including at places like Scouters Mountain and Mount Talbert nature parks and the future Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park.



Public access improvements

Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park

Located in Oregon City, Newell Creek Canyon spans 300 protected acres. Community members have worked with Metro to define a vision for Newell Creek Canyon, shaping the landscape for decades to come. This collaborative work has taken shape in the Newell Creek Canyon Access Master Plan and the nature park is anticipated to open in fall 2021.

Canemah Bluff Nature Park

Canemah Bluff is located just upriver from Willamette Falls. Thanks to the nearby falls and a natural harbor with deep, placid water, Canemah was a major canoe landing and continues to be a significant gathering location for Native Americans. The nature park includes more than a mile of unpaved trails through habitats that include rare Oregon white oak and Pacific madrone trees as well as heartier and faster-growing Douglas fir, maple and alder.

Nature education and volunteer programs

Metro offers school field trips, drop-in nature activities and volunteer opportunities, with a focus on serving people of color, low-income communities, people with disabilities and other underserved groups. Programming in recent years have included education and stewardship activities at Scouters Mountain such as youth camps, pre-kindergarten family trips, and family nature walks hosted by the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization. The Oregon City Service Learning Academy participated in multiple stewardship activities at Canemah Bluff Nature Park and Metro's Native Plant Center such as invasive species removal, mulching and transplant, as well as visits to surrounding historic cemeteries.



Community grants and partnerships

Ecology Education in North Clackamas

The grant for this two-year program supported 1,200 third- through fifth-grade students and 40 teachers each year at five Title I elementary schools in the North Clackamas School District. Each year, every classroom received four ecology lessons and a service-learning field trip thanks to the \$57,700 grant.

McLoughlin-to-Canemah Trail plan

Oregon City received a \$25,000 grant to help with planning for a crucial, one-mile portion of the Oregon City Loop Trail connecting the McLoughlin neighborhood with Canemah Bluff Nature Park. The plan for this trail was completed and is now part of Oregon City's adopted Trails Master Plan and the proposed Oregon City Loop Trail.

Sieben Creek landowner stewardship engagement project

A grant to the Clackamas River Basic Council helped restore a riparian area and provide stewardship education at the Clackamas River Community Cooperative, a nonprofit, resident-owned manufactured home community along the Clackamas River in Happy Valley. The project involved hands-on learning, nature walks, community outreach, invasive plant removal, trash pickup and gardening with native plants.