



“Nature is all around us. We want to help students understand we are a part of nature, and not separate from it.”



What’s inside

Opening soon: Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park
A new park provides connection to nature right in Oregon City.
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First hike
Jamartae Brown went on his first hike at 24. He didn't expect to feel so at home in nature.
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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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Bus and MAX information

503-238-RIDE (7433) or trimet.org

Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.

- oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews
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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: Roger Williams, Tigard

While walking at Jackson Bottoms Wetland, I came across this beautiful common garter snake. Several snakes were out in the sun warming up. Most of them moved away pretty fast, but this one started to move slowly away, holding still long enough to get its photo.



Finalist: Eric Johnson, Portland

Great horned owl on Sauvie Island.



Finalist: Jocelyn McAuley, Portland

Taken in July 2020, this photo captures one of my first covidventures outside of our house to pick blueberries at the Croft, a farm on Sauvie Island. Coming from our busy neighborhood, I was excited, anxious, cautious, but so relieved to be outside on this sunny day.

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 Nov. 15 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: Will Cortez, a Metro planner and an organizer for the cycling group BikePOC, takes the first ride on Newell Creek Canyon Nature Parks dedicated mountain bike trails. Photo by Cory Eldridge

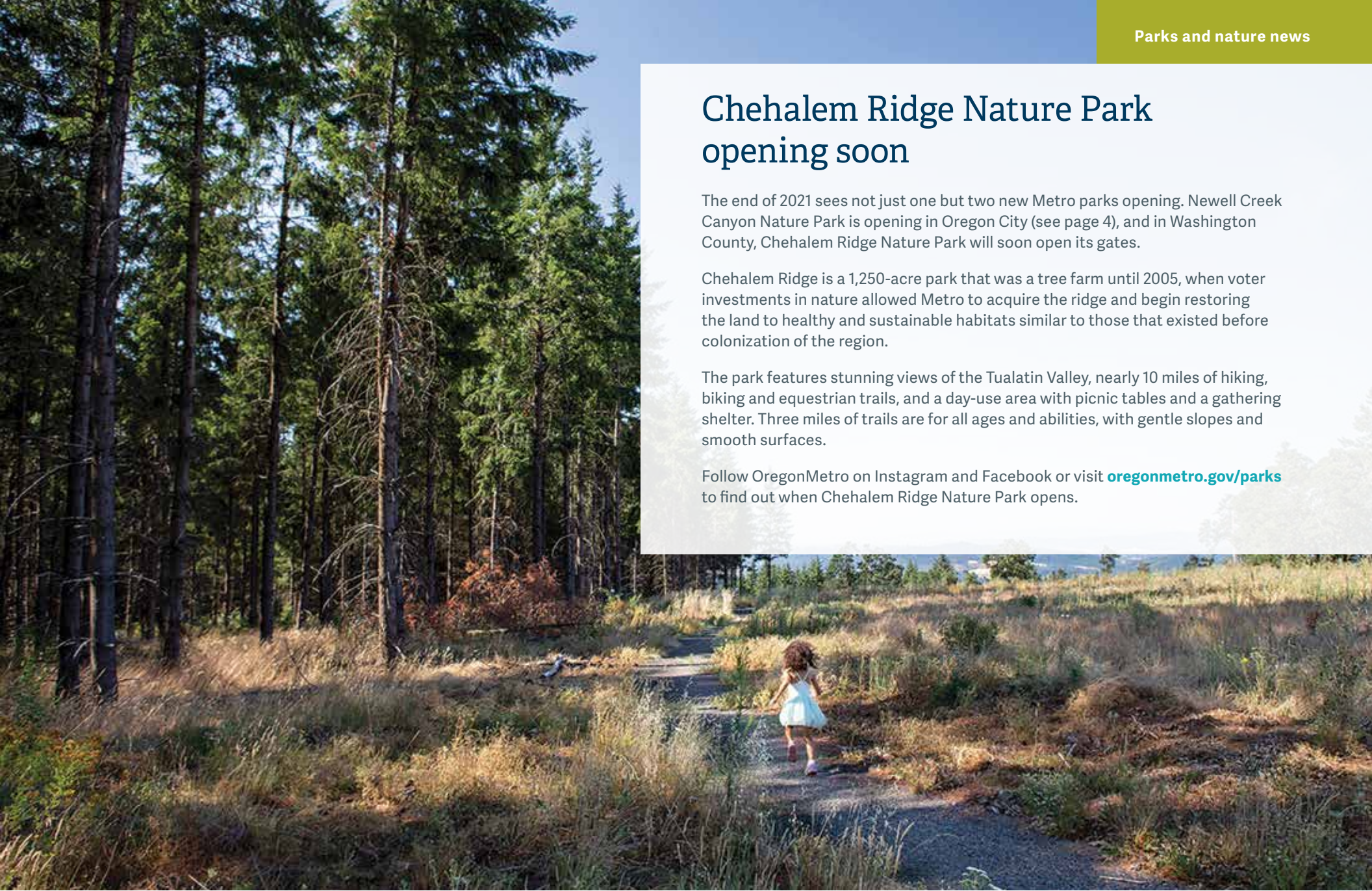
Chehalem Ridge Nature Park opening soon

The end of 2021 sees not just one but two new Metro parks opening. Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park is opening in Oregon City (see page 4), and in Washington County, Chehalem Ridge Nature Park will soon open its gates.

Chehalem Ridge is a 1,250-acre park that was a tree farm until 2005, when voter investments in nature allowed Metro to acquire the ridge and begin restoring the land to healthy and sustainable habitats similar to those that existed before colonization of the region.

The park features stunning views of the Tualatin Valley, nearly 10 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails, and a day-use area with picnic tables and a gathering shelter. Three miles of trails are for all ages and abilities, with gentle slopes and smooth surfaces.

Follow OregonMetro on Instagram and Facebook or visit oregonmetro.gov/parks to find out when Chehalem Ridge Nature Park opens.



A nature classroom in the city

Story by Cory Eldridge

Even through the uncertainty of the pandemic, organizations like Ecology in Classrooms & Outdoors (ECO) and Wisdom of the Elders have continued to care for urban natural areas and help interns and students connect to nature.

The two organizations partner on a program at Wahoo Natural Area, which is tucked between Johnson Creek and Willamette National Cemetery in East Portland. The natural area is managed by Portland Parks & Recreation, a third partner. The natural area is part of the lands that have been home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

Metro was able to support the partnership with a Nature in Neighborhoods grant thanks to voters investing in nature by passing a parks and nature local-option levy.

Wisdom of the Elders, an Indigenous community organization focused on education and environmental sector job training, has brought several cohorts of paid interns to the site over the past two years to tend plants, conduct site assessments and build trails. The goal is to help the interns in the program gain conservation job skills and tie those to Native peoples’ traditional ecological knowledge.

“We need to know where the western science and the STEAM concepts connect to traditional ecological knowledge and lift both of them

up,” says Adrienne Moat, Wisdom of the Elder’s workforce development coordinator. “It’s important to know the plant scientifically and also spiritually.”

The natural area welcomes students from nearby elementary schools in East Portland. ECO brings environmental education lessons to elementary students, starting in the classroom and then going on field trips to natural areas. “We’ve been able to take kids to natural areas in their own neighborhoods,” said Sarah Woods, the acting executive director of ECO.

Since getting the Nature in Neighborhoods grant, ECO was able to bring nearly 900 students to Wahoo. The kids toured the site, putting their classroom knowledge to practice, and, best of all, getting their hands dirty putting native plants into the ground.

Those field trips had to stop when the pandemic began. Often, grant programs run off strict adherence to a contract or agreement, but ECO, Wisdom of the Elders and Metro worked together to adapt the program. That allowed ECO to create virtual field trips that gave more than 400 students the opportunity to experience the site. One internship season had to be canceled by Wisdom of the Elders, but they were able to use the grant dollars to pay their professional conservation crew to complete projects at Wahoo.

Even though the pandemic limited both partners’ plans, the young people they serve will still have another shot to experience the natural area. Both the young adults in Wisdom of the Elder’s internship program and the students in ECO’s field trips have the opportunity to come back to the site a year later to see how their work has helped strengthen the natural area.

Woods says that experience helps solidify two key lessons: “Nature is all around us. We want to help students understand we are a part of nature, and not separate from it.”

Nature activities

From a guided walk at our brand new Chehalem Ridge Nature Park near Gaston, to a Spanish-language program about salmon on the banks of the Sandy River, Metro has a variety of outdoor programs for you and your loved ones. Other fall themes for programs include mushrooms, apples, bats, fire-making and cider-making. To sign up and learn more please visit: oregonmetro.gov/GuidedActivities

Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park

OPENING SOON

Almost ready

Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park is so close to being ready for your first visit. Before you head to the park, hop over to oregonmetro.gov/parks and follow [@OregonMetro](#) on Instagram and Facebook to find out when Newell Creek Canyon has opened.

Metro’s newest nature park offers Oregon City and the region a wooded wonderland.

Story by Kelsey Wallace

Photography by Cory Eldridge, Cristle Jose and Kelsey Wallace

Right in the heart of Oregon City, Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park is a haven of woods and waterways, providing neighbors and the region a new place to connect with nature close to home. The 236-acre forested park features a multiuse trail system that provides 2.5 miles of walking and hiking paths and nearly 2 miles of dedicated mountain biking trails.

Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park is part of the homelands of Indigenous peoples who have stewarded this region since time immemorial. The park was built because voters chose to invest in nature by approving parks and nature bonds in 2006 and 2019 and a local option levy. Those investments pay for the ongoing work at the park and other Metro parks and natural areas around the region.

On any given trip to Newell Creek, lucky visitors might see elusive animals like beavers, red fox and black-tailed deer, along with pileated woodpeckers and cottontail rabbits. Whether it’s an all-day exploration of the park’s trails, a quick off-road bike ride down the side of the canyon, or a leisurely picnic at the accessible day-use area, Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park is waiting to welcome you.





Clockwise from top left, this page: Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park's one-way bike trails are great for kids and beginners. Deer and other animals roam the park. You might not see them, but you can find signs all over, including their footprints in the red soil. A young park visitor holds a bigleaf maple leaf, one of the park's best fall features. The fork where Cedar Grove Trail meets the Red Soil Roller bike trail. Metro has done conservation work at Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park for 25 years. The dead vines on this tree are what is left from an invasive ivy that would have choked the tree. The park features some enormous western redcedars, none more impressive than this titan on the Cedar Grove Trail.

Clockwise from the top, opposite page: Nearly every foot of trail at Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park is dappled in leafy shade. Benches for rest and reflection are spaced regularly throughout the park. One of the park's key features is the streams and seeps that feed into Newell Creek. Small bridges span the many creeks that cross the trails. As a nature park, one of the joys of Newell Creek Canyon is watching the forest change over time. This dead tree, called a snag, is a key part of a healthy forest. They're basically the apartment complexes of the woods.



Clockwise from top left: The day-use area at the park's entrance offers picnic tables, restrooms and plenty of parking. Bigleaf maples are the park's main deciduous tree, and they line most of the trails. A close of up of a western redcedar snag. Along with being housing for animals, they are restaurants full of juicy bugs. Tumble Falls Bridge: the jewel of the park. Bigleaf maples are incredibly hardy trees. If one is knocked down, it often grows back with multiple trunks. Like every forest in the region, Newell Creek Canyon has a thick coat of moss. The park was made to create connections with nature. Bring yourself, bring your friends, bring your family.



Field guide

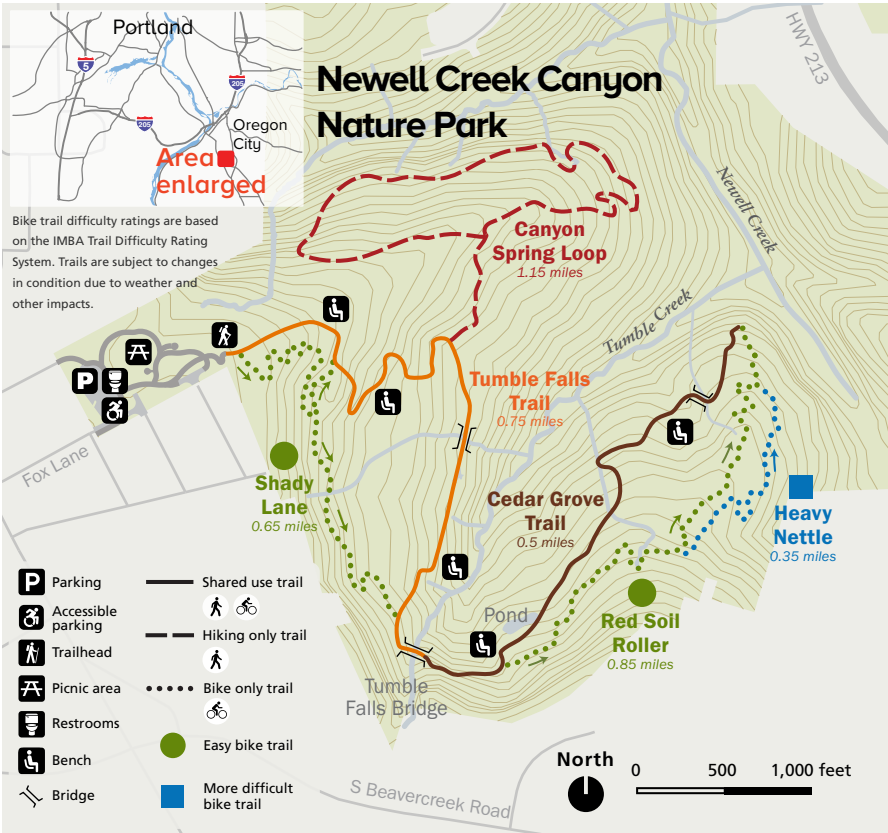
NEWELL CREEK CANYON NATURE PARK

Story by Kelsey Wallace
Photograph by Cory Eldridge

Bigleaf maples frame an open meadow as you exit the hustle and bustle of city life and arrive at Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park. Past the parking lot entrance, a winding trail and wooden bridges offer spectacular views of braided crystal-clear creeks and falls. This 236-acre forested canyon is a special space, offering a multiuse trail system for hikers, cyclists and wildlife viewers alike to take in scenic viewpoints and experience unique topography. In the park’s meadow, enjoy a picnic under the maple canopy sheltering this hidden gem.

Movement through the canyon brings you between 150 and 400 feet in elevation, inviting views of two geologic formations — the relatively level Boring lavas of the upper terrace, and the cemented sands and gravels that form the architecture of the canyon. The Boring lavas are made up of red soils with large embedded boulders, brought over by the cataclysmic Missoula floods more than 13,000 years ago. The sand and gravel layers are composed of the Troutdale and Sandy River mudstone formations. These were laid down by the Columbia River, which once flowed further south where Oregon City presently stands.

While Newell Creek Canyon was named through settler colonial practices, Metro acknowledges these lands as the ancestral



Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park

ADDRESS
485 Warner Milne Road, Oregon City

GETTING THERE
From Portland, head south on I-205. Take exit 10 onto OR-213 and head south. When the highway gets into town, turn right on Beavercreek Road. Follow it to Mollala Ave., then turn right. At the first light, turn right on Warner Milne Road. The park will be straight ahead. From Hillsboro, Beaverton, Tualatin and Wilsonville, head north on I-205. Take exit 10 onto OR-213, and follow the directions above.

KNOW WHEN YOU GO
Open sunrise to sunset
No pets, please

AMENITIES
Picnic tables, restrooms, plenty of parking.

oregonmetro.gov/NewellCreek

and contemporary homelands of Indigenous peoples of this place, and is currently tasked with careful stewardship in consultation with them.

Metro acquired parcels of this site over several decades, and has worked to restore its riparian forest that houses red alder, bigleaf maple and salmonberry as well as the upland conifer

forest dense with Douglas fir, western redcedar and western hemlock. Restoration work has included multiple projects to remove weeds and reintroduce native tree and shrub species. These efforts have helped create a nature park built for connecting community to the land while creating safe habitats for sensitive species like frogs and steelhead.

Be on the lookout!



NORTHERN
RED-LEGGED FROG



BIGLEAF MAPLE



COASTAL
CUTTHROAT TROUT



RED-BREASTED
SAPSUCKER

Photo credits: Northern red-legged frog, USFWS; Big leaf maple, USFS; Coastal cutthroat trout, sidalcea (iNaturalist CC).

Season by season

FALL: This transitional time brings a chill, and coaxes mushrooms into their fruiting form. Keep an eye out for angel wing and oyster mushrooms growing on the decaying wood of conifer trees, especially hemlock trunks. Below the tree line look out for black and orange caterpillars called wooly bears and banana slugs scattered along the trails.

WINTER: As shorter days loom and mist blankets the upland forest, listen for the leisurely pecking and piping call of the pileated woodpecker. This large red-capped forager seeks carpenter ants and larval insects in the wooded bark of downed or dying trees. Don't forget to look to the forest floor as well for signs of deer and cottontail rabbits who venture into the cold to find food.

SPRING: In this season of renewal and awakening, look for the bloom of trillium and fairy bell flowers that paint the forest understory with hues of white and pink. With waters returning and warmer days, keep an eye out for breeding amphibians and egg masses that belong to the northern red-legged frog and Pacific chorus frog near the water's edge.

SUMMER: With beaming sun-filled days and perfect weather twilights, opportunity unfolds to spot elusive wildlife like beavers, red fox and black-tailed deer. In the tributaries, juvenile coho salmon, trout and Pacific lamprey can be found in several ponds and winding waterways seeking protection from predators and nutrition from the forest's many insects.

The first hike



At 24, Jamartae Brown went on his first hike. Chaperoning middle schoolers, he didn’t expect the trip to be anything special.

Story by Jamartae Brown
Author photograph by Cory Eldridge
Other photography courtesy US Forest Service

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 and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Metro or the Metro Council.

Jamartae is a teaching assistant at Beaumont Middle School in Portland. He is currently studying for his teaching certificate.

Black people do not do the wilderness. Black people do not go camping. I thought your kind was not into this type of stuff. What made you come out here? Is this your first time?

These are the assumptions people have and questions people ask when they see a Black person or a group of Black people in a new setting. But many people who come from where I come from – North Portland, Oregon’s historic Black neighborhoods – enjoy the outdoors.

I wasn’t one of them.

At least I didn’t think I was.

Walking up these trails together, me seeing the excitement on the kids’ faces, them seeing the excitement on my face, it was priceless. And it was nerve racking.

Then, at 24 I went on a school field trip that changed my life and my view on the outdoors. I am an educator at Beaumont Middle School, so I go on plenty of field trips.

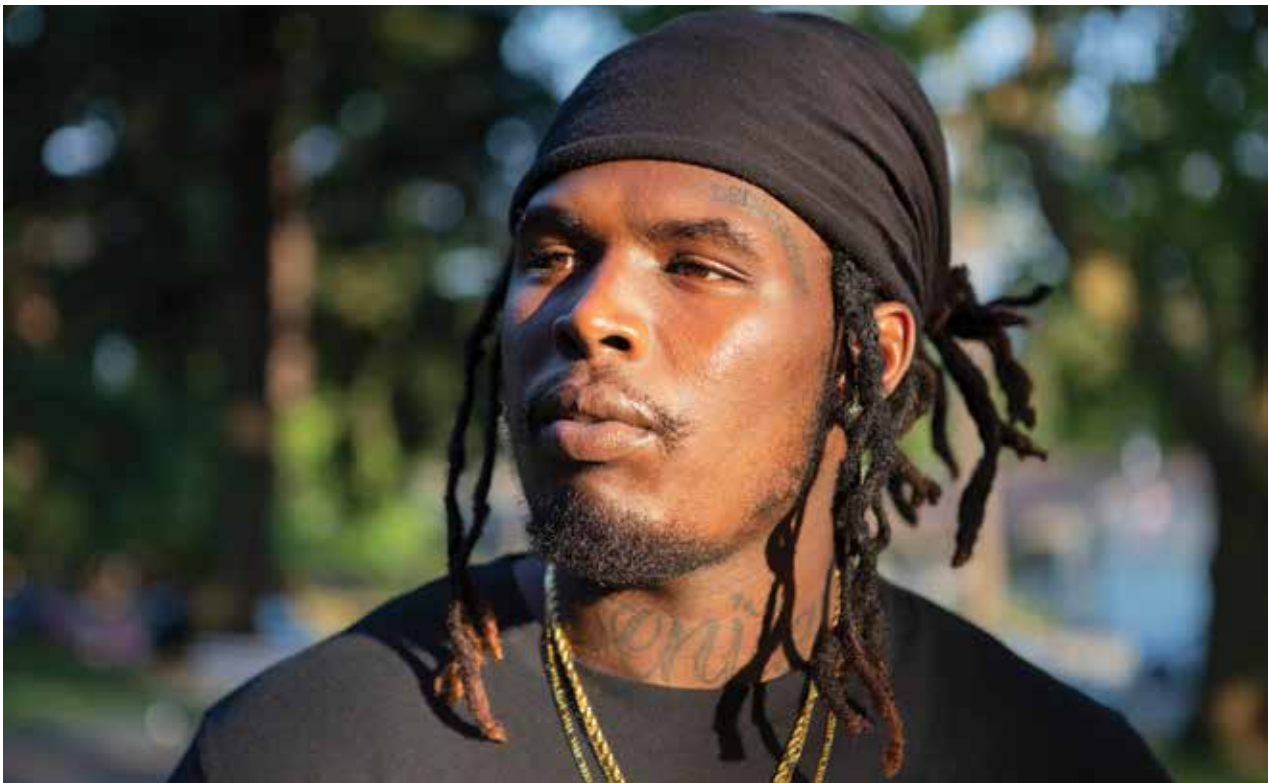
A lot of folks have strong memories of field trips they went on as kids, but we don’t really think of them as being a big deal for the teachers. During most field trips, all I’m really worried about is keeping the kids on track and safe. The trips are nice, don’t get me wrong, but they’re for the kids.

The trip to Mount Saint Helens two years ago, was something new. And experiencing it along with students who look like me, who were having their first nature adventure as well, meant I could see it all through their eyes too. Experiencing this as one made it that much more special.

We started our trip at Lava Canyon. It was my first hike ever. Walking up these trails together, me seeing the excitement on the kids’ faces, them seeing the excitement on my face, it was priceless.

And it was nerve racking.

Parts of the trail are steep, and if you get too close on the edge, bad situations can happen. One of the students even grabbed my arm and said, “Anything go wrong Mr. Martae, you have my back, right?” I responded, “You know I got you. We in this together.” We shared a huge smile by both of us, which let us know we got this.



We made it up to the top of the trail. It was breathtaking – tall trees just taking over the whole view.

Students tried to spot the tree line in the canyon that marks the edge of the lahar flow. We could see the old trees that survived the 1980 eruption and the young growth that has come back since then.

If Lava Canyon gave me an exciting, even a little scary, experience outdoors, the Trail of Two Forests gave me calm and a chance to just appreciate nature. The trail is a short, easy loop. It was a chance to inhale the fresh air together, take in every sound, watch the clouds moving and see every tree blowing in the wind.

During this trail walk, I remember just having life conversations with the students. Questions like, "You never been here before Mr. Martae?" "No." "You never been somewhere like this before?" "No." As I answered questions the shock on some of their faces was priceless.

Having a moment to reflect and having the students ask me questions as we shared a bond of being in nature together, with no judgment about our past experiences, was exciting. And it was fun.

One of the highlights for this trail was students crawling through small tunnels that were made when trees were covered by lava about 2,000 years ago. I could hear echoes of laughter and giggling coming out of the tunnels. I felt pride because I felt I had helped bring that sense of joy.

After the peace of the forests, we visited the strange world of the Ape Cave, which was most of the students' favorite because of the adventure it takes you through. The cave was formed by lava flows from an eruption two millennia ago.

It was dark, wet, windy and cold at 42 degrees. Bats were in this cave, though we did not see them. There were strict rules to protect the environment. For instance, you could not touch the wall because it was covered with fungus and bacteria called slime that feeds the cave's ecosystem.

Equipped with flashlights, we looked for things we'd never seen before: flow marks that show how high lava flows reached; railroad tracks, which are ridges show lava flows that entered the tube after it was already formed.

The learning was great, but this was a middle school field trip. In the midst of the cave, competitive spirits came out in a race to see which group could make it the end of the tunnel first.

It was pure middle school: energy and goofiness. Flashlight beams were everywhere, the wet sounds of our feet like we were running in the rain.

One of the students in my group told another group and fellow teacher, "We have Mr. Martae with us so you guys don't stand a chance with us."

Near the finish line we saw The Meatball: A block of cooled lava that fell onto moving, liquid lava and got wedged in a tight spot high in the cave. The name itself made us all think of spaghetti and gave us motivation to reach the end. I called out to my group, "If we make it to the finish line, spaghetti on me at Beaumont."

On our bus ride back to the school, I understood that the students and I had created a new avenue in our road of Mother Nature. We drove down a street that we didn't know, that we all were afraid of taking, but it led us to our destination, together.



Clockwise from left, opposite page: Mt. Saint Helen's exploded dome rises over its surroundings in Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Jamartae Brown, the author, near his home in Portland. The Muddy River falls through Lava Canyon, where Brown took his first hike. Snags stand tall in the middle of the forest.

Most Black and Brown children do not have the chance to step outside of their comfort zones due to society's stereotypes and the prejudice and suspicion that come with them. Here we had the opportunity to trust our outdoor instincts to have fun and allow learning.

As a Black man too, I did not feel unwanted or like I did not belong, which was huge for me. That was my first time feeling like that outside of my community. I opened my mind and senses to a new place, and I am grateful I experienced it with other Black and Brown faces who had the same first feelings as me.

As a Black man, I did not feel unwanted or like I did not belong, which was huge for me because that was my first time feeling like that outside of my community.

As a Black man, I do not want to be limited to what society and other people think of where I should be. Just like everywhere else, I belong in the wilderness. I deserve the right just as anybody else to experience nature, explore, and learn.

Knowledge and history about every area we visited were given to myself and my students, and that is an experience nobody can take away from me as a Black man living in America.

Tiny to small(ish) predators



Vagrant shrew

Shrews, including the vagrant shrew, are among the most voracious predators on Earth. They must eat every couple of hours to live. Unless you’re an insect or worm, you don’t have much to fear. Vagrant shrews are less than four inches long, counting their tails, and weigh about a quarter ounce.



Townsend’s mole

Digging under your feet, Townsend’s moles are hunting and chomping earthworms and other underground bugs. Moles live nearly their entire lives underground, carving tunnels and burrows with their enormous shovel-shaped paws.



Long-tailed weasel

Long-tailed weasels rarely weigh more than half a pound, but they regularly hunt rabbits five times their size. Slender, sleek, stealthy and strong, these weasels don’t shy from living in neighborhoods, as long as there are enough rodents and rabbits to eat.



River otter

A distant, aquatic cousin of the weasel, river otters live in wetlands and streams in the middle of our cities. The best chance to see these whippet-sized hunters is along a stream bank, where they bring fish to chow on for dinner.



Big animals in the city

Story by Kate Holleran.
Photo courtesy of Camden Bruner (iNaturalist CC).

Out for an early morning visit to a recent oak restoration project, I was walking through a natural area along Fanno Creek listening to birds and looking for wildlife.

Looking down and searching for animal tracks, I stopped suddenly and looked around when I realized I was seeing cat tracks. My next reaction was, those are big cat tracks. And then, I said to myself, those are cougar tracks. The tracks were freshly printed in the moist soil of the trail and not yet covered by the footprints of trail runners. For the rest of the walk, my alert level was definitely elevated, but I was also cautiously glad to know a cougar was moving through the area.

It might be a surprise to some that a cougar would be walking through a natural area in the center of Tigard. This cat might have been a young male in search of a home territory. If so, he probably had to travel many miles to find a place not claimed by an older male. The park I was visiting had water, hiding cover and a field browsed often by deer, which are cougars’ preferred prey.

Even with the natural area’s attractive qualities, it’s most likely this cat was passing through. The high number of human visitors on the trail and the proximity of busy streets and neighborhoods would discourage a long stay. Fanno Creek is one of our region's great wildlife corridors, connecting the North Tualatin Mountains to the Tualatin River. Following the green ribbon of riparian vegetation along Fanno Creek, this cougar, as well as bears, coyotes, deer and other wildlife, could make its way north or south to larger, less disturbed forests and a possible home range.

Cougars, bears, coyotes and other predators play an important role in keeping our natural areas healthy. They help control population numbers of their prey, reducing the pressure on the food source for other animals. Since vulnerable individuals – older, injured or sick animals – are easier to kill, predators also help regulate disease and population health. Carcasses of animals killed by predators provide food to many other species. Crows, ravens and turkey vultures scavenge carcasses,

as do other smaller animals, including insects.

Metro and our partners work to conserve habitat that keeps larger predators in our broader landscape. There are abundant examples of how the loss of major predators in ecosystems has led to declines in biodiversity.

A key example is overpopulations of deer. Only large predators prey on deer, and without that check on their numbers, deer can overgraze on plants, lowering the diversity of species in the habitat. And not just plant species: the overconsumption of a plant species can reduce the population of birds or butterflies or other insects that rely on that plant for food, shelter and reproduction.

Depending on where you live in Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah counties, sightings of larger mammals will vary. One thing these animals have in common is movement. All animals move for many reasons: to find better food, a safe refuge or protection from heat of cold.

Climate change is also creating conditions that push animals into new places. Most animals also share a desire to hide from predators, including humans. So they travel through forests, along streamside vegetation and other wild corridors into and out of our neighborhoods, often at dawn or dusk.

Visitors to natural areas should assume they are sharing it with native wildlife. To be safe, stay alert to your surroundings, explore with friends and move away from wildlife you encounter. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has a helpful brochure called “Oregon is Cougar Country” that explains how to keep you, your family and your pets safe.

Most likely, the closest you’ll ever get to laying eyes on a cougar or black bear is like I did: seeing signs that it was there, but never seeing it itself.

Metro and our partners work to conserve habitat that help all native species move through, around and in the built environment. The large predators and the many smaller animals and plants that depend on them benefit from this valuable work.



Reimagined DC Latourette Park opens in Oregon City

Oregon City Girl Scout Troop 45064 worked for years to turn a neglected city block into a revitalized park that's accessible for all play levels and abilities.

Story and photography by Arashi Young

On an overcast late spring day, the Latourette Army descended upon Oregon City. Clad in matching green shirts, Girl Scout Troop 45064 – the group's official name – were there to complete a mission years in the making: the revitalization of D.C. Latourette Park.

These young leaders spent years advocating to turn a neglected space into a community asset. Through their efforts a decommissioned pool and crumbling tennis court have been transformed into a natural play area and new basketball court.

The Latourette Army stood beside elected representatives from Oregon City, Metro, and neighbors on June 5 to celebrate the opening of the park.

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis spoke about investing in gathering spaces.

“Metro really believes place matters,” Lewis said. “And there’s nothing like looking around this and the transformation it’s gone through over the past months to recognize that this place, this park, this intersection matters.”

Place matters and people do too. The reimagined D.C. Latourette Park was designed so that people of all abilities can use the park features. Previously the park was accessible only by stairs and a steep ramp. Now a ramp with a gentle slope flows from the entrance to the far end of the park.

This pathway curves up and around the playground, ending at the top of a slide. It allows for easy entrance without requiring a climb up a ladder. For those who want a climb, the slide is flanked by a cascade of large rocks.

The park features two bird nest swings which can be used by people of different ages, sizes and abilities. The overall theme of nature play, found in the arranged rocks and logs, was chosen for ease of use.

Metro contributed to the park renewal through its Community Enhancement grant program that invests in the communities that surround garbage and recycling facilities. For every ton of trash processed at local transfer stations, \$1 is put into this grant fund. Oregon City’s enhancement grant program is funded by the customers who use the Metro South transfer station.

The park project received \$124,900 in enhancement grant funds over three years. Lewis, who also serves on the grant committee, said the Girl Scouts were very persuasive advocates for the park.

16-year-old Girl Scouts Kate Buehrig and Lucy McKay talked about taking on a years-long endeavor while in elementary school. They



Clockwise from left: Youth enjoy the natural play area at DC Latourette Park in Oregon City. Kids swing on new bird nest swings. Tons of concrete were removed to renovate the park and replaced with natural landscaping.

spent their free time raising awareness about the park, and attending city meetings, funding sessions and design workshops.

Buehrig described going to city hall in Oregon City as a twelve-year-old and learning public speaking skills from her mother.

“She showed me how to advocate and how important it is to commit to something that you are passionate about, a lesson I will carry for life,” Buehrig said.

Oregon City Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith praised the community collaboration that made the new park possible. She thanked those involved, including the Girl Scout troop, the Oregon City commissioners and their parks team, Metro and the organizations The City Repair Project and Depave.

“I am so proud to live in a city where grassroots efforts can make such a big impact for all our community members,” Lyles Smith said.

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

11

Color and discover!



Illustration by Zoe Keller

Fall in Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park

All along the canyon, small streams – some seasonal, some year-round – cascade down to Newell Creek. The water is cleaned as it flows through the ferns and loam between bigleaf maples and western redcedars. The bigger streams have cleared away vegetation, leaving rocky traces that open up views into the forest. These are good spots to look for woodpeckers on snags, bird-hunting hawks flying in the trees, and maybe even raccoons and other larger animals walking by the streams.

Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park will open later this year. Follow OregonMetro on Instagram and Facebook or visit oregonmetro.gov/parks to find out when the park opens.

