



"Blow minds about the magnitude of biodiversity."



What's inside

Eaglet in crisis
This bald eaglet took drastic measures to survive last year's heatwave.
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52 acres added to wetland
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300,000 plants
Yearly planting season strengthens habitat across the region
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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

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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: Susan Richmond, Hillsboro

My husband and I were sitting on our front patio when a persistent Anna's hummingbird flew around us to get to one of our feeders. Then he would fly over to a nearby Japanese pine and wait for us to leave. He perched there for the longest time ... long enough for me to capture this photo. His beautiful gorget shone in the sunlight. As soon as we left he went back to "his" feeder.



Finalist: Yvette Perez-Chavez

Would you like to build a snowman? During a walk through Lone Fir Cemetery after our latest snow event, I noticed visitors had made little snowmen and placed them throughout the cemetery. This squirrel seemed to be curious about them as well.



Finalist: Karine Kadyan

Blue heron mid-flight during a quiet, foggy October morning at Hagg Lake.

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 May 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.

Metro adds 52 acres to Killin Wetlands Natural Area

The purchase was possible thanks to voters passing the 2019 parks and nature bond measure.

Story by Cory Eldridge



Metro added 52 acres to Killin Wetlands Natural Area in Washington County, between Forest Grove and Highway 26. The purchase means more than 640 acres, one square mile, of connected habitat is being conserved, including two rare habitats that support dozens of plant and animal species. Killin Wetlands Nature Park offers visitors a chance to see the marsh.

The \$465,000 purchase was possible because of voters investing in nature by passing the 2019 parks and nature bond measure. The \$475 million bond measure includes \$155 million to protect and restore land, with a focus on protecting clean water and strengthening fish and wildlife habitat, especially for salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey.

Killin Wetlands is one of the few remaining peat wetlands in the region. It is also home to one of the few known natural populations of Geyer willow in the Willamette Valley. Seeds from Killin have been used to reintroduce the willows to other sites in the region.

Peat is made when the leaves from pond lilies, willows and other wetland plants sink to the wetland floor and then partially decompose. Think of it like wetland compost: it's dark and rich, light and spongy. This process draws carbon out of the atmosphere and stores, or sequesters, it in the wetland.

Forests are the most celebrated carbon sequesters, but wetlands store even more carbon in their peaty bottoms, and that carbon is much less vulnerable to being released back into the atmosphere during a wildfire. The new purchase adds 35 acres to the wetland.

“The additional protection of peat wetland acres add to the huge bank of land out there that. ... [It] acts as one of the planet’s most efficient carbon sinks, capturing carbon in plant material that is steadily buried in the



soil,” said Curt Zonick, a former Metro scientist who managed restoration at Killin for more than two decades.

Peat soil makes excellent farmland. When European Americans colonized the region in the mid-1800s, many wetlands, including Killin, were drained and turned into farms. The peat dried out and collapsed in the process. The wetland had already begun to refill with water when Metro acquired the first tracts of land. Beavers returned and made dams and lodges that have held more water in the wetlands.

The peat’s lower elevation created a habitat more like a lake, but as leaves and stems and other plant matter build back the peat, the habitat should be restored.

Samples have shown that peat has developed for the past 25 years, and scientists studying the site expect it will take another 100 to completely remake the peat. Each year’s layer will store carbon pulled out of the atmosphere.

The new purchase adds to the wetland, and includes land at a bit higher elevation that will be restored to oak savanna. These open spaces, dotted with Oregon white oaks, support 140 animal species and approximately 375 plant species. Oak savanna was one of the most common habitat type on the Willamette Valley floor before colonization.

The upland juts into the wetlands, creating a peninsula that Zonick expects will attract western pond turtles, a threatened species that has thrived in the wetland since restoration work began. “It’s a great place for turtles to lumber out of the swamp and bury eggs that will stay dry until hatched,” Zonick said.

Restoration work at Killin is funded by both the 2019 parks and nature bond measure and a local option levy voters approved in 2012 and renewed in 2016.

Get involved: classes and events

Olmsted200

Throughout 2022, park lovers across the country are celebrating the 200th birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted, a landscape architect who envisioned and championed the idea of city parks. Olmsted designed Central Park in New York City, setting the standard for parks across the country. Olmsted shaped greater Portland’s parks and natural areas through his sons, whose 1903 report to Portland’s park board provided a roadmap for the city’s parks and the regional trail system.

A series of events will examine Olmsted’s legacy in greater Portland, looking at how his ideas and his sons' plans shaped the region’s parks, trails and natural areas. The series looks at the downsides and failures of this legacy as well, examining who parks were made for and how communities of color often bore the cost of park creation.

Find events at theintertwine.org/calendar



SUN. APRIL 10

Mushroom hikes at Oxbow

Discover the fascinating and weird world of mushrooms! Join local mushroom guide Leah Bendlin on this woodland hike at Oxbow Regional Park. Learn about the ecological roles of fungi, their forms, and how they eat and reproduce. Enjoy hands-on exercises and learn how to identify mushrooms. Field guides will be provided. Morning and afternoon sessions available.

Oxbow Regional Park
3010 SE Oxbow Parkway, Gresham
9:30 to 11:45 a.m.
12:45 to 3 p.m.
Registration fee: \$6, fee waivers available.
Parking fee: \$5.
Registration required:
oregonmetro.gov/GuidedActivities
Ages: All ages
Difficulty: Easy
Wheelchair accessible? No

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 21; May 19; June 16, 19; July 15; Aug. 18; Sept. 15; Oct. 10, 20; Nov. 11, 17 and 25; and Dec. 15.

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

300,000 plants in 6 weeks

WINTER PLANTING STRENGTHENS HABITATS



Story by Cory Eldridge

Every winter, a warehouse in northwest Portland fills with hundreds of thousands of plants and hundreds of pounds, sometimes a couple tons, of seeds. Rather than a sea of pots and greenery, it's shelf after shelf stacked with hundreds of brown paper bags.

Each bag is a bundle of serviceberry or red osier dogwood or tall Oregon grape or another of dozens of native plants. There's no soil in the bags; each plant looks like it's just been pulled out of the ground. Which it has, and these bare-root plants needs to be planted quick.

This year, plants went to 18 Metro nature parks and natural areas. Planting crews unbundled the plants, stashed them in shoulder bags and then planted them in forests, along streams and across prairies. They even waded through winter-cold wetlands to place the plants.

In six weeks, they planted 300,000 plants.

Beefbend Natural Area

Just west of Tualatin and north of Sherwood

Beef Bend Natural Area lies across the river from the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. Nearly 109,000 bulbs went into the natural area, including more than 60,000 oonow bulbs. There was also camas, wild onions, star tulips, white rock larkspur, chocolate lily; prairie plants that support pollinators and draw in birds. To top it off, crews spread out 2,000 pounds of fescue and slender hairgrass seed.



Dairy-McKay Confluence Natural Area

Between Hillsboro and Cornelius

Dairy-McKay Confluence Natural Area received the most bare-root plants this year, with 35,700 going to upland and wetland planting areas. Nearly 55,000 live stakes were stuck into Dairy Creek's banks. The live stakes are 2- to 3-foot cuttings of willow branches with a pointy end. Four types of willow made up the live stakes. They'll root and then grow to shade the creek, creating stronger habitat for native fish.

Clear Creek North Natural Area

South of Happy Valley and east of Oregon City

Metro manages a 700-acre complex of natural areas along Clear Creek, one of the Clackamas River's tributaries. Clear Creek North spans 107 acres of canyon filled with big trees and shrubs typical of the area's upland forest. Nearly 22,000 bare-root plants went to the natural area this year. They ranged from future mighty big-leaf maples and western hemlocks to



Clockwise from top: Restoration professionals plant the Multnomah Channel Marsh in 2020. A crew member plants a bare-root plant. A bundle of bare-root Scouler's willow. Metro scientist Adrienne St. Clair holds a bundle of Douglas fir saplings. Packages of bare root plants awaiting planting.

fruitful understory plants like thimbleberry and red flowering currant. To see a similar habitat, visit Metro's new park in Oregon City, Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park.

Pecan Creek Natural Area

South of Lake Oswego

Pecan Creek Natural Area is typical of many of Metro's small natural areas. Just 25 acres, it runs much of the length of its namesake creek, one of the Tualatin River's tributaries. Like Clear Creek North, the natural area's upland forest was planted with woody, berry-rich shrubs like salmonberry, red elderberry and cascara. It also has 100 new western hemlocks.



Fleeing the nest

AN EAGLE FAMILY FACES CRISIS
DURING LAST YEAR'S HEAT WAVE



Fish-skin tug-of-war



Squirrel for breakfast



Wing exercises

Story and photography by Eric Johnson

I was raised to have great reverence for bald eagles. I spend a lot of time observing eagles, and over the last several years I've discovered several nests in the Portland metro area. Last spring, a mated pair hatched an eaglet at the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in Portland.

I visited the nest at least once a week, sometimes going up to three times. The eaglet, just a gray feather ball, grew fast. Dad brought its eaglet squirrels to eat. Mom and the chick played tug-of-war with a fish skin. The youngster began beating its wings. Both parents brought the eaglet squirrels, fish and an occasional duck in an effort to keep the eaglet well fed.

Then, in June, the heat wave hit. The temperature reached 116 degrees. I checked on the eagle family. The eaglet was gone.

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.

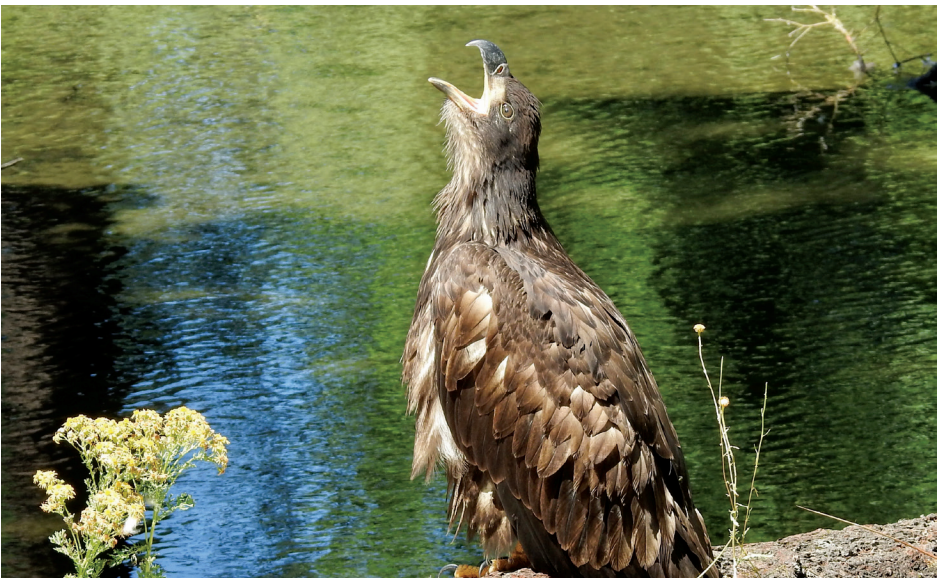
Eric Johnson is an avid nature lover and spends time observing its wonders both far from and close to home. He feels a strong connection to his Native American heritage, and through his mother is a tribal member of the Hunkpapa, part of the Lakota Sioux nation.



Eagle parents looking for lost eaglet



Dad delivers fish dinner



Hungry, hungry eaglet

The heat had driven the eaglet from the nest. This happened to hundreds of birds of prey in the region. The eaglet couldn't fly, but it somehow made it 75 feet to the ground and then to the park's pond. It drank and cooled off.

With so much human activity around, including people walking dogs, there was a chance the parents wouldn't feed the eaglet. I talked with the park staff who graciously closed that section of the park. Another volunteer and I took shifts watching over the eaglet during park hours. Park staff subbed in on their lunch breaks.

Three days after the eaglet fled the nest, I witnessed one of the parents deliver a fish to the eaglet. There was also evidence the eaglet had been fed a duck.

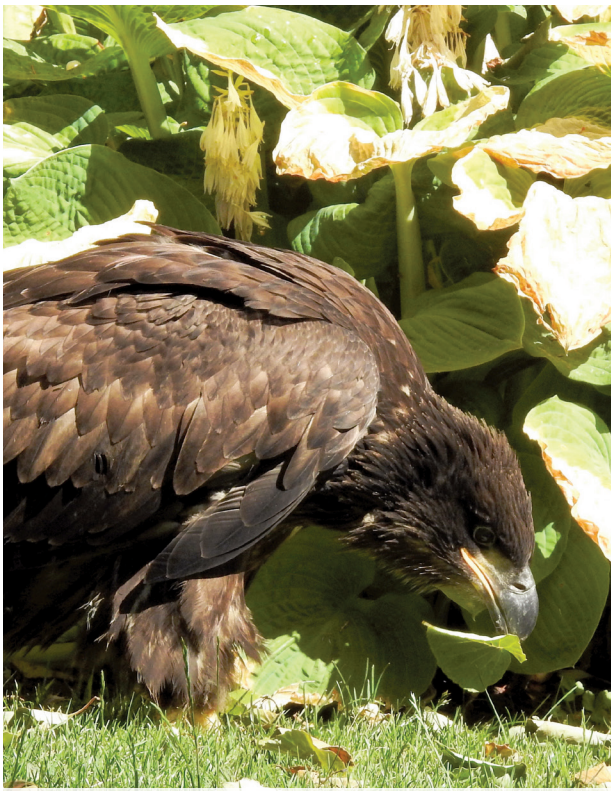
It was still 90 degrees or hotter. The eaglet would go to the pond and cool off with a bath, then dry off on a nearby log. It explored its small section of the park, eventually settling on a stump as its favorite spot.



Staying cool to stay alive



Drying and preening after a bath



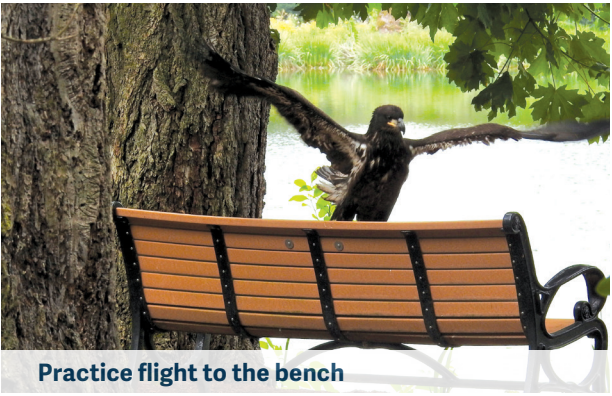
Exploring the garden



Making a nest of a stump



Wings getting stronger every day



Practice flight to the bench



The eaglet has crash landed



Back home



Last call for a meal

The eaglet began short flights of less than 12 feet, once reaching the back of a bench. On day 16 the eagle officially fledged with a 50-foot flight across the pond, where it crash landed on a branch about 15 feet above ground.

The next day it flew into a tree about 25 feet high. The following day, I discovered the youngster in another tree about 40 feet off the ground. Three days after it had fledged, I returned to find the eaglet back in the nest.

It was a powerful sight to see the eaglet, now a fledgling, back in its nest. It had been almost three weeks since the heat wave hit us, and it was clear the eaglet was going to survive.

I returned a few more times to find the fledgling in various trees around the park and across the street at Reed College.

A few days later I got one more look at this beautiful creature before it flew away.



Leaving home for the last time

Eagles and connectivity: regional restoration brings downstream benefits

Story by Cory Eldridge

Behind the high-stakes drama of an eaglet in crisis, the story of the eagle family at Portland’s Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden is about the importance and success of the region’s conservation efforts.

In 1995, when voters approved the first Metro bond measure to fund restoration in greater Portland, bald eagles were already making a strong recovery after a pesticide called DDT had nearly wiped them out. Eagles might again be spotted on the coast or in the Columbia Gorge, but seeing an eagle soaring in an urban area was still something to brag about. In part, that's because there wasn't much to draw them to town.

In the late 90s, the City of Portland kicked off a big effort to bring salmon back to its creeks and streams. With help from Metro’s bond funding and many other partners, the City of Portland has restored salmon habitat on long stretches of Johnson Creek and its tributary, Crystal Springs.

Old, narrow culverts that blocked fish were replaced with wide, passable culverts. The creek banks were planted to provide shade to cool the water. The concrete-rimmed pond in Westmoreland Park was reformed as a creek and wetland, which further cooled the water.

In 2014, after a 40-year absence, coho salmon came back to Crystal Springs.

And where there’s salmon, there are bald eagles. But in an urban habitat, it takes more than one type of prey in one place.

Eagles, like many big predators, need multiple hunting spots. From their nest in the garden, this eagle family can quickly reach other restored sites along Johnson Creek. Those stretches of the creek, in turn, benefited from restoration work up to and even out past Gresham.

Restoration of Johnson Creek has involved dozens of organizations, from its champion, the Johnson Creek Watershed Council to government bodies like the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and the City of Gresham to community-based organization like Wisdom of the Elders and the African Youth and Community Organization. Even the Centennial School District has been part of restoration efforts, giving young people a chance to strengthen a piece of nature in their neighborhood.

Voter investments in nature have allowed Metro to support many of these projects with grants and restoration work. Voters have also allowed Metro to purchase and restore land along Johnson Creek, from the east buttes between Gresham and Happy Valley that produce dozens of tiny tributaries all the way down to a length of the creek in the Sellwood neighborhood, just a mile from its confluence with the Willamette River.

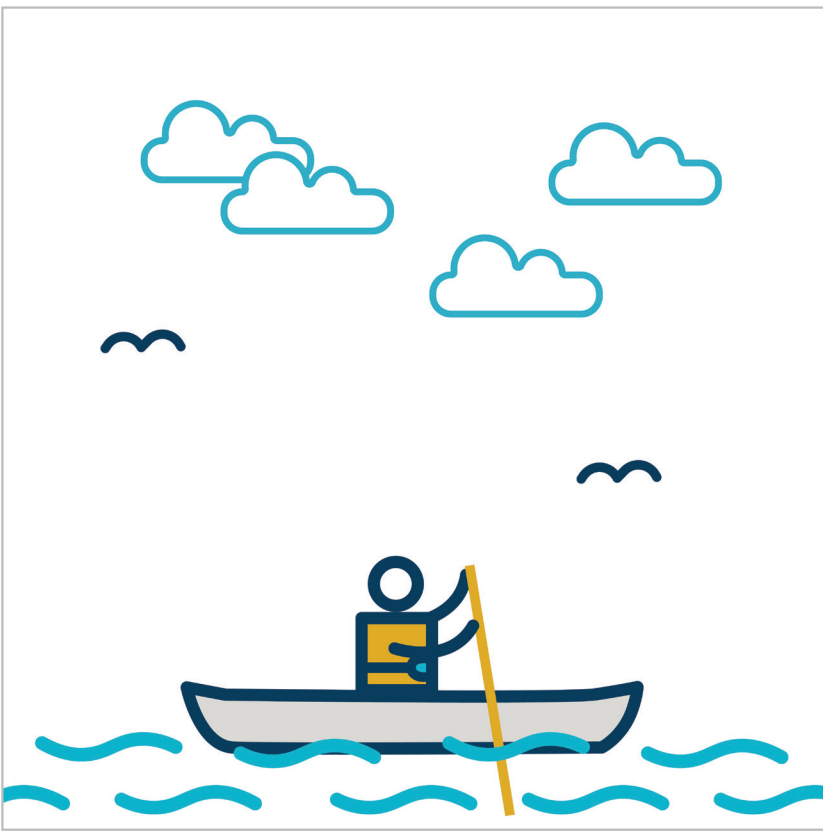
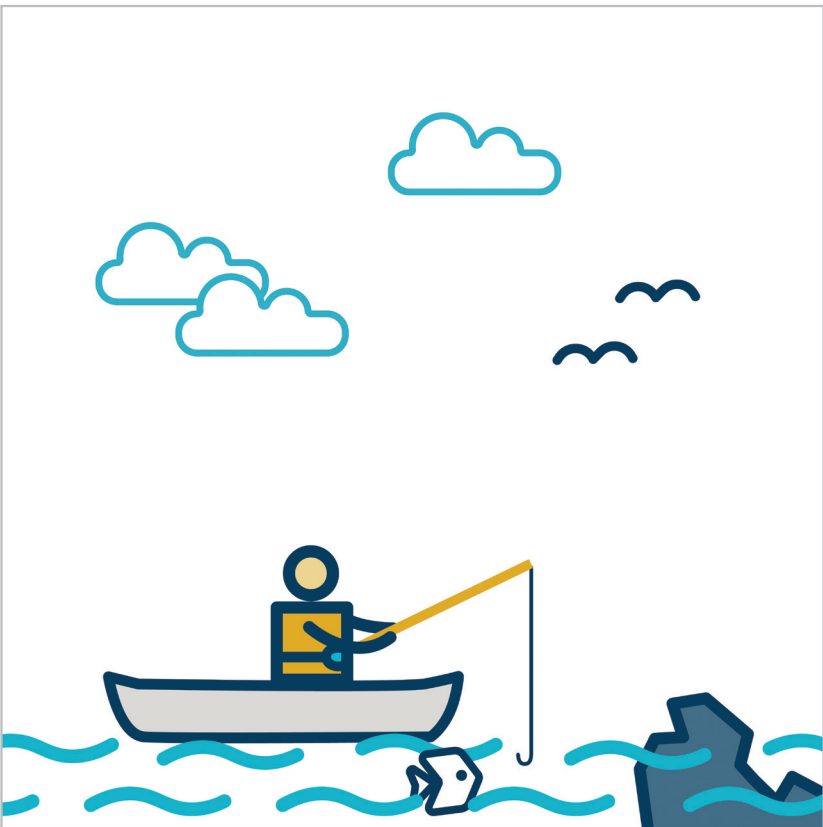
Each of those restoration efforts by all of these organizations, funded by you, built on one another to create an ecosystem resilient enough to help an eaglet survive the worst heat on record.

You don't float. Life jackets do.

Accidents happen in an instant.

Whether fishing, sailing, paddle boarding
or canoeing always wear a life jacket.

oregonmetro.gov/watersafety



Questions?



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

Field guide

METRO BOAT RAMPS

M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp



Chinook Landing Marine Park



Sauvie Island Boat Ramp

Story by Kate McKenney

In the final stretch of its journey from the Rocky Mountains in British Columbia to the Pacific Ocean, the mighty Columbia River flows through the Columbia Gorge, creating numerous recreational opportunities for boaters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. Metro operates two boat ramps along the Columbia River and one on Multnomah Channel, providing boater access and land-based recreational opportunities such as picnicking, beach access, archery and more.

Since time immemorial, the Chinookan, Multnomah and Wapato tribes sustained thriving river cultures along the Columbia and Willamette rivers. An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Chinook lived in the lower Columbia in a complex of villages and trade routes. The rivers remain vital sources of culture and livelihood for many Indigenous people.

Chinook Landing Marine Park

Chinook Landing Marine Park makes an excellent starting point for exploring the Columbia River or the Marine Drive Trail. One of Oregon's largest public boat ramps, Chinook Landing features six lanes for launching boats, many picnic spots and an archery range.

Chinook Landing's 47 acres also provide habitat for wildlife. Seasonal wetlands are home to frogs and other native amphibians. Enjoy a picnic along the river, watch osprey soar overhead searching for their next meal, or watch blue herons and snowy egrets hunt in ponds near the entrance and archery range.

M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp

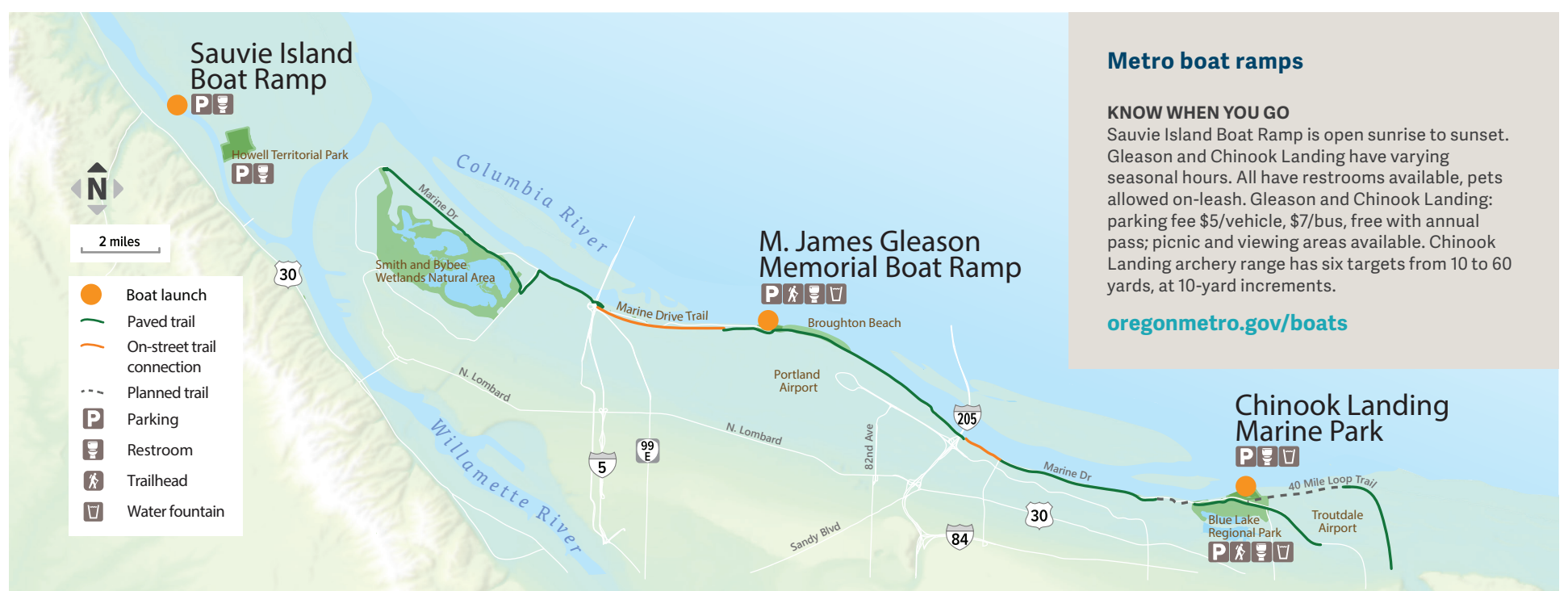
Nine miles west from Chinook Landing along Marine Drive is M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp. With four launch lanes, Gleason is slightly smaller than Chinook Landing but no less popular.

Next to the boat ramp is Broughton Beach, one of only a few sandy beaches in the Portland metro area. Broughton Beach is a popular spot for sunbathing, kite flying, picnicking or simply playing in the river. The Marine Drive Trail passes by both Gleason and Broughton Beach.

Sauvie Island Boat Ramp

Located on Sauvie Island along the Multnomah Channel of the Willamette River, Sauvie Island Boat Ramp is one of Metro's hidden gems. While much smaller than Chinook Landing and Gleason, Sauvie Island Boat Ramp offers boaters access to the Multnomah Channel, which eventually connects to the Columbia.

This boat ramp is frequented by kayakers and boaters looking for a quieter experience, and it offers a resting spot for those exploring the island by bicycle or car. Nearby is Metro's Howell Territorial Park, home to one of Sauvie Island's oldest farmhouses.



Metro boat ramps

KNOW WHEN YOU GO

Sauvie Island Boat Ramp is open sunrise to sunset. Gleason and Chinook Landing have varying seasonal hours. All have restrooms available, pets allowed on-leash. Gleason and Chinook Landing: parking fee \$5/vehicle, \$7/bus, free with annual pass; picnic and viewing areas available. Chinook Landing archery range has six targets from 10 to 60 yards, at 10-yard increments.

oregonmetro.gov/boats



Bronze jumper

Up-close invertebrates

Story by Cory Eldridge

Out in the forest, we’ve usually got our eyes up. We look for the birds we hear chirping, we peer into the trees for a raccoon or a deer or something a bit more thrilling. When we look down, it’s usually to sidestep rocks and roots.

Professor Greta Binford took her Lewis and Clark College invertebrate zoology class out to Oxbow Regional Park to look down. In the leaf litter and loam of the Ancient Forest, the students explored the tiny habitats that support the macro plants and animals above. The main lesson was how to identify and classify invertebrates. “Other goals,” Binford says, “were to blow their minds about the magnitude of biodiversity, how poorly we know it, and what a difference intact forests make, particularly for biodiversity on the forest floor.”

This is a world where tiny jumping spiders count as big predators. The animals here are measured in millimeters. And while they make up the majority of a forest’s animals, we rarely recognize them or their names: bristletails, harvestmen, springtails, hacklemesh spiders.

After a nighttime collection at Oxbow and a few other sites, Binford’s students photographed the invertebrates up close – real close – bringing us nose-to-antenna with animals near us every time we go to the forest.

Bronze jumper

Often small and not particularly long of limb or body, jumping spiders can be easily overlooked. Up close, though, these diminutive arachnids are wondrous to behold. If you are spellbound by this spider’s eyes, you are far from alone. Jumping spiders’ prominent front pair of eyes may be cute, but a feature like this evolved for a reason. This female bronze jumper uses the acute color vision of her large eyes to locate and pounce on prey with extreme accuracy. Combined with three smaller pairs of eyes positioned at other angles on her head, she can see nearly 360 degrees around. – Nicole Oliver



Harvestmen

The harvestmen are a diverse order of arachnids that inhabit ecosystems from the tropics to the poles. They have adapted varying levels of exoskeleton hardening to prevent water loss and to protect themselves from external threats in this wide range of environmental conditions. This harvestman, which doesn’t seem to have a common name, was dubbed *Hesperonemastoma modestum*. The thorns that appear in a “V” on the back of harvestman serve as a viable defense against predation. – Michael Stein



Jumping bristletail

These nocturnal, wingless insects are said to be evolutionarily primitive, due to their inability to fly. However, jumping bristletails have the ability to use their three-pronged tails to spring about a foot in the air, hence their name. Their partly retractable mouthparts allow them to feed on algae, lichen and plant debris. Because their exoskeleton is so thin and prone to dehydration, jumping bristletails commonly reside under cool, damp areas, especially under bark on logs. – Josie Graydon



Globular springtail

These animals are called springtails because they possess a furcula, a tail-like structure on the underside of their abdomen that they snap against the ground to fling themselves into the air for rapid movement and evasion of predators. They are some of the most abundant macroscopic animals in soil and leaf litter habitats. With estimates of up to 100,000 individuals per square meter of leaf litter, their abundance in these habitats is second only to mites. They play a critical role in soil habitats around the world. – Bryce Gaudern



Cobweb spider

This cobweb spider’s Latin name, *Rhomphaea fictilium*, could be translated as “javelin made of clay.” Its abnormally long abdomen is incredibly flexible, which allows the spider to change its shape and camouflage itself. Unlike most of their close spider relatives that feed on insects, this spider hunts other spiders. They often enter the webs of other spiders, which they pluck, producing vibrations that imitate entangled prey in order to lure the web’s owner into an attack. – Grace Bird



Tackle clutter with a purpose

Story and photography by Arashi Young

The days get longer, the weather gets warmer and the neighborhood plants toss pollen into the air. There's no denying it – spring is here.

Spring is the perfect time to turn over a new leaf and let go of the winter hoard of stuff. If you've come out of hibernation with too many acorns, consider donating your lightly used items before throwing them away.

There are lots of places in greater Portland that can help you cut clutter while supporting great causes. Check out these local nonprofit organizations – but be sure to contact them before you drop off your stuff to make sure they can accept your donation.

Home goods

Furniture, kitchenware, appliances – all the things that make a house into a home. Consider giving to The Community Warehouse in Portland 503-235-8786 or Tualatin 503-347-2147. Their mission is to connect neighbors in need with essential home furnishings.

The Community Warehouse is one of the few places in greater Portland that accepts mattresses. They are also a great place to donate small appliances like blenders, coffeemakers, toasters and vacuums.

Similarly, Habitat for Humanity 971-229-8888 has four local ReStore outlets that can receive home goods and building materials too. ReStore is a great place to donate gently used large appliances.

Building materials

Check out the Rebuilding Center 503-331-9291 in North Portland either before or after your next home improvement project. They are looking for reusable building materials like lumber, mirrors, cabinets, flooring materials and more. And they just might have what you need to complete your spring DIY project.

Tool-lending libraries

So, you've put up that fence and now you have a post hole digger gathering dust in the garage: consider donating your used tools to a local tool library. Tool libraries are volunteer-run community resources that allow people to borrow tools for free. They save people money on tools and allow tools to be reused instead of discarded.

Green Lents Community Tool Library:
librarian@greenlents.org

North Portland Tool Library:
northpdxtoollibrary@gmail.com

Northeast Portland Tool Library:
donations@neptl.org

Southeast Portland Tool Library:
use the contact form at septl.org

Creative Reuse

The organizations above focus on rehoming or loaning used items. But what if those items could be transformed into entirely new things? That's the philosophy behind creative reuse or upcycling. SCRAP Creative Reuse collects a wide variety of materials that can be repurposed.

Leftover art and craft supplies are almost always accepted at SCRAP. In addition, there are many offbeat things that SCRAP will take such as metal keys, small glass jars, coated wire, seasonal decorations, gift wrap and more.

To see if you have materials that are useful to SCRAP, call 503-294-0769, visit their donation page at portland.scrapcreativereuse.org or email portlanddonations@scrapcreativereuse.org.

There is a thriving reuse community in greater Portland with lots of great places willing to accept donations. But please call first before dropping anything off.

For questions about reuse and donation, Ask Metro.

oregonmetro.gov/askmetro

503-234-3000

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Color and discover!



Illustration by Zoe Keller

Graham Oaks Nature Park

This prairie in Wilsonville erupts into color and activity in the spring. Flowers carpet the park, drawing pollinators like bees and butterflies to this once-common Willamette Valley habitat. Prairie grasses stand tall, their tops filled with seeds. And wherever insects and seeds are plentiful, birds come in droves. Multiple species of sparrows and woodpeckers feast on the bounty. Many birds nest in snags, the standing dead trees around the park. The easiest to spot are northern flickers, a crow-sized woodpecker. Look for them in packs on the ground gorging on an anthill.

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