

Spring 2023 Parks and Nature quarterly update

Covering bond activities and investments from January-March 2023



BOND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPLETED: JANUARY-MARCH 2023

From January-March 2023, staff have completed the following outreach across bond programs:

- Conversations with 41 landowners about land acquisition
- 16 conversations with park providers about land acquisitions opportunities
- Three meetings of the [Community Choice grants design and review committee](#) to codevelop and provide feedback on the idea submission process
- 25 community members attended two March information sessions about the [Community Choice grants](#). See list of organizations who helped spread the word about the event on page 3.

BOND REPORTING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

[A set of infographics](#) are posted on Metro's website to visualize bond progress over time to the public.

These are meant to serve as a compliment to the [storytelling](#) that we have been doing to highlight specific projects and bond wide progress. [The Parks and Nature annual report](#) for FY 2022 and the [Spring 2023 Our Big Backyard](#) are also published.

BOND ACTIVITIES AND INVESTMENTS COMPLETED: JANUARY-MARCH 2023

Protect and restore land activities from January-March 2023

oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land

The team continues to ramp up outreach to land-owners across the region to create a pipeline of opportunities for acquisition in alignment with the targets and goals approved by the Metro Council in 2022.

Most recently, Metro purchased a 92-acre property in the Abernethy and Newell Creeks target area. The purchase of this property protects several thousand feet of headwater streams in the Upper Holcomb Creek watershed, which will increase the watershed's resilience to climate change, provide cold and clean water downstream, increase stormwater capacity within the watershed, and may help mitigate the downstream impacts of flooding from severe storm events. At over 92 acres, the property's size will enable habitat restoration at a scale that will support healthy populations of native plants and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate. Restoration work will focus

on Oregon white oak plant communities that support culturally significant native plants.

The team also acquired 5.3 acres in the East Buttes target area via donation and have several more acquisition opportunities in the pipeline. This takes the total parcels acquired as of March 2023 to 13 purchases totaling 484 acres across 10 target areas. See more specific information about acquisitions in the [appendix of this report](#).

At the same time, the team is still building capacity by recruiting two real estate positions for a total of four real estate specialists.

Local share activities completed from January-March 2022

oregonmetro.gov/localshare

The local share team is working with the region's park providers to identify, submit and approve priority projects for bond local share funding.

There are seven projects in review.

- Portland Parks and Recreation has five projects: Whitaker Ponds Natural Area, Wilkes Headwaters Natural Area, Hoyt Arboretum Bristlecone Pine Trail ADA improvements, Park Pathway Lighting Renovation, and Rose City Golf Trails.
- Forest Grove's Stites Park, which will build a nature park with a community garden, picnic, and play areas.
- Wilsonville's Frog Pond West property acquisition, which will

protect natural park land within a neighborhood that is currently being developed.

Walking and biking trails activities completed from January-March 2023

Since Council approved [12 trail grant awards for \\$19.5 million](#) across the region from the Clackamas River trail to the Gresham Fairview trail to the Westside trail to Marine Drive trail, the Parks and Nature team is working with grant recipients to execute intergovernmental agreements with park providers by spring 2023 so that project work can move forward.

The team has received and reviewed scopes of work for twelve grant funded projects, a pre-requisite to finalizing and executing intergovernmental agreements with the park providers.

Take care of Metro parks activities completed from January-March 2023

Progress continues on health, safety and accessibility improvements at Blue Lake and Oxbow, where projects are heading towards breaking new ground.

Out at Blue Lake, utility improvements around Blue Lake Park, including municipal water connection and distribution, and sanitary sewer improvements are getting underway. The park will be open on weekends, but the construction project will affect amenities and facilities in a dynamic way as work moves through the park. Staff are working to minimize disruptions to visitors.

At Oxbow, two-car ADA accessible parking spaces will be built at the base of the boat launch. This is part of accessibility work we are doing across Oxbow, and it is the most visible project so far.

Staff are making progress on advancing accessibility improvements in alignment with Parks and Nature's ADA transition plan by developing a systematic process to verify the barriers identified in the ADA transition plan and identify new barriers with a goal to have substantial completion by the end of calendar year 2023.

Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants activities completed from January-March 2023

After receiving 16 letters of intent for the initial round of the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program ranging from outdoor classrooms to large scale restoration projects to public plazas to nature play, 10 projects were invited to submit a full application by the end of April. These projects include proposals for outdoor classrooms, large-scale restoration projects, public plazas, nature playgrounds and more.

Staff have convened an external review committee to help review applications in May, with the hope of bringing a slate of grant awards for Council consideration and approval in June 2023.

[Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice grants](#)

activities completed from January-March 2023,

The Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice grants is live

and accepting parks and nature project ideas from community members across the region through a web portal and information gathering events in April. The pilot has \$2 million in funding to support projects in District 4, western Washington County. The team hosted two information sessions in March for community members and partner organizations to learn about this process in partnership with park providers—Beaverton, Forest Grove, Hillsboro, THPRD and Washington County.

Large scale community visions activities completed from January-March 2023

Three applications were submitted to the pilot round of large scale community visions for up to \$10 million pilot based on the Council-approved [pilot program handbook](#) to fund larger-scale projects that uplift communities by improving access to nature and/or climate resilience in urban areas with a minimum budget of \$6 million including a minimum \$2 million investment in habitat uplift.

- Trust for Public Land/OSU – Forest Acquisition (\$3.5 million)
- OMSI+CRITFC– Waterfront Education Park (\$10 million)
- Albina Vision Trust – Acquisition/Development (\$5 million)

The Metro Council is expected to review these applications and make a determination on next steps in late Spring 2023.

Spring 2023 Parks and Nature quarterly update

Covering bond activities and investments from January-March 2023

*In anticipation of March 2023 information sessions and April 2023 idea generating events to get people interested in the process and ready to submit project ideas, staff reached out to the following organizations in western Washington county with a focus the Elmonica and Aloha communities to attend and share with their networks. Over 25 attendees participated in March information sessions.

- Schools and youth focused organizations (*Merlo Station High School, Meadow Park Middle School, Beaver Acres Elementary School, Chinmaya Mission, Rock Creek Community Association, Westview High School, Raymond Arthur Brown Middle School, McKinley Elementary, 4 Youth, Beaverton High School, Multilingual Department, Beaverton School District, APANO, International School of Beaverton (barely outside of District 4, Quatama Elementary School, Orenco Elementary School, Family Justice Center of Wa. Co, Hillsboro High School, Poynter Middle School, Lincoln Street Elementary School, Eastwood Elementary School, Neil Armstrong Middle School, Cornelius Elementary School, Forest Grove Community School, Forest Grove High School, BSD Black Parent Union)*)
- Organizations focused on the disability community (*People with Disabilities, CACA*)
- Cultural organizations (*Ka'Aha Lahui O 'Olekona Hawaiian Civic Club of Oregon, Asian Health and Services Center, Center for African Immigrants, Latino Network, Centro Cultural, Adelante Mujeres, Muslim Education Trust, Bilal Masjid, Southwest Somali Community, Wisdom of the Elders*)
- Community services organizations (*Homeplate, Beaverton Resource Center, School, Lifeworks NW, Community Action Family Shelter, Bienestar, Vision Action Network, Unite Oregon, Virginia Garcia Wellness Center*)
- Conservation organizations (*Tualatin River Watershed Council*)
- Advocacy organizations/alliances (*National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)*)

Staff also shared information about the April idea generating events through Metro's social media and through press releases in local newspapers

**BOND SPENDING:
JANUARY-MARCH 2023**

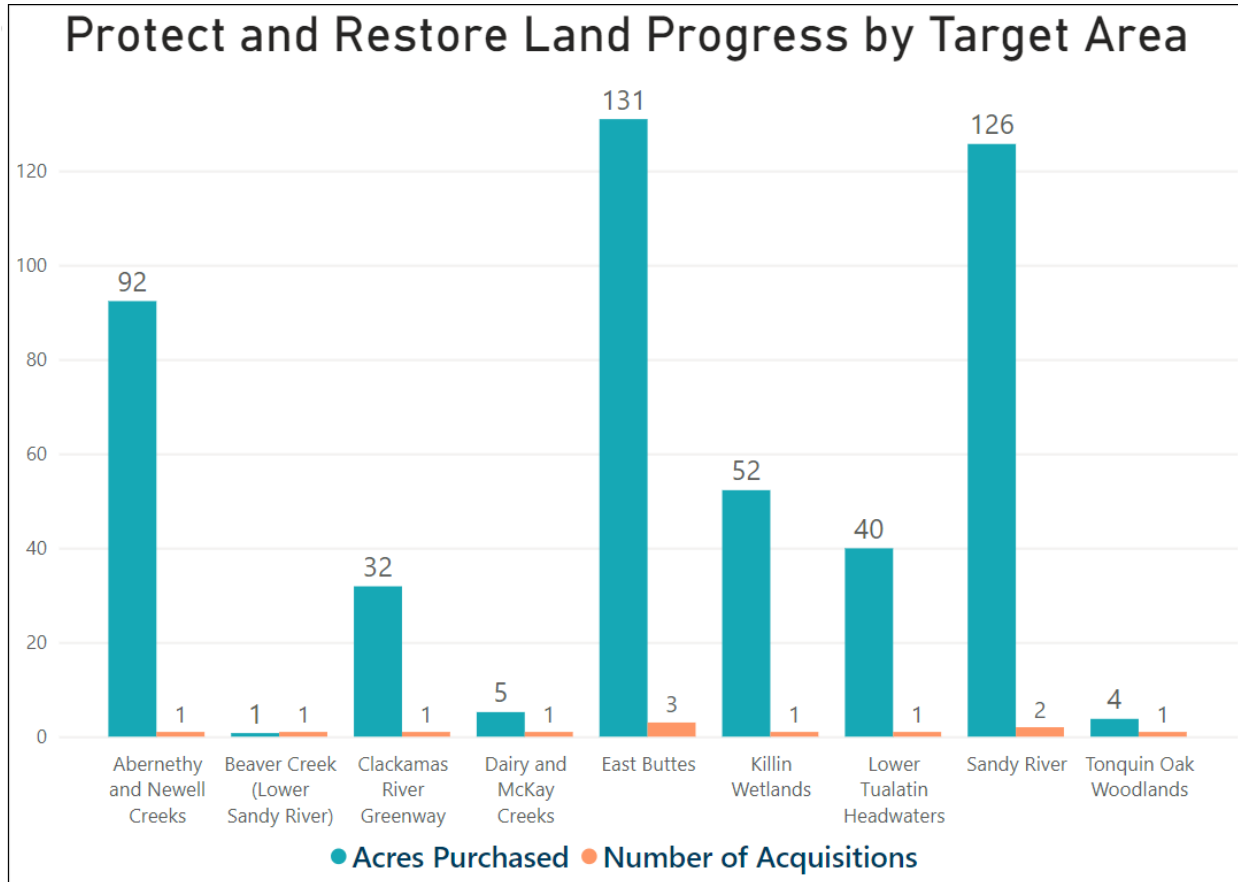
As March 2023, Metro has spent \$38 million of bond proceeds available and allocated an additional \$24.8 million in local share and trail grant awards. The full bond spend report as of April 10, 2023 can be found in the appendix. As with other voter investments, administrative expenses tend to be highest in the first few years as new programs are being built. Once the programs are up and running, the administrative expenses as a percentage of total spending decrease significantly, before a small uptick in the last few years of the life of a bond measure.

2019 Parks and Nature Bond - Spend by Program Area						
		FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23YTD	Total Spend
Protect/Restore						
	Personnel	8,897	1,027,574	1,318,586	1,106,795	3,461,852
	M&S or Capital	120,063	843,385	5,104,935	3,793,079	9,861,462
	Total	128,960	1,870,959	6,423,521	4,899,874	13,323,314
Take Care of Metro Parks						
	Personnel	8,897	642,133	1,334,500	749,078	2,734,608
	M&S or Capital	221,847	3,051,112	2,279,728	1,587,037	7,139,724
	Total	230,744	3,693,245	3,614,228	2,336,115	9,874,332
Local Share						
	Personnel	29,397	213,678	240,033	143,050	626,158
	M&S or Capital		2,464	2,492,200	1,582,157	4,076,821
	Total	29,397	216,142	2,732,233	1,725,208	4,702,980
Grants						
	Personnel	12,847	184,414	240,528	227,929	665,718
	M&S or Capital		2,061	85,755	49,539	137,355
	Total	12,847	186,475	326,283	277,469	803,074
Trails						
	Personnel	8,489	243,278	233,358	194,770	679,895
	M&S or Capital	3,825	818	148,071	15,784	168,498

	Total	12,314	244,096	381,429	210,554	848,393
Community Visions						
	Personnel	-	3,480	121,359	-	124,839
	M&S or Capital	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	3,480	121,359	-	124,839
Total Program Spend						
		414,262	6,214,397	13,599,053	9,449,219	29,676,932
Admin						
	Personnel (tax exempt bonds)	100,692	555,696	591,933	413,776	1,662,097
	M&S or Capital or Transfer (tax exempt bonds)	402,467	990,481	2,934,472	1,784,236	6,111,656
	Personnel (taxable bonds)	10	330	395	-	735
	M&S or Capital or Transfer (taxable bonds)	309,359	27,344	544,812	324,286	1,205,801
	Total	812,528	1,573,851	4,071,612	2,522,299	8,980,290
Total Bond Spend						
		1,226,790	7,788,248	17,670,665	11,971,518	38,657,221
	Administrative Spending as a % of Total Bond Spend	66.23%	20.21%	23.04%	21%	

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020 – March 31, 2023)

Acquisitions to date by target area

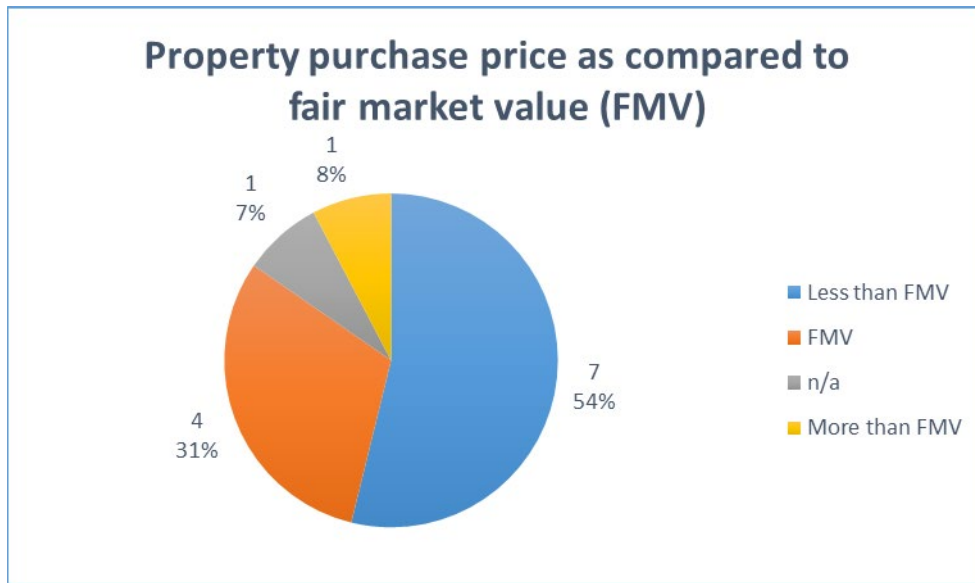


What is this chart?

Through the policy established in the [2019 parks and nature bond measure](#) and the [target area refinement plans](#) the Metro Council has directed staff to acquire properties in 24 regional target areas that meet the refinement plan goals. Each property varies in size and other features. This chart displays the both the number of properties purchased and acres protected in each target area through the Protect and Restore Land program over the lifetime of the 2019 bond. Through March 31, 2023, Metro staff have acquired 12 properties totaling 483 acres across 9 target areas, along with one trail acquisition. This number will expand over time as more properties are purchased across all target areas and trail corridors.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020 – March 31, 2023)

Purchase price vs. market value

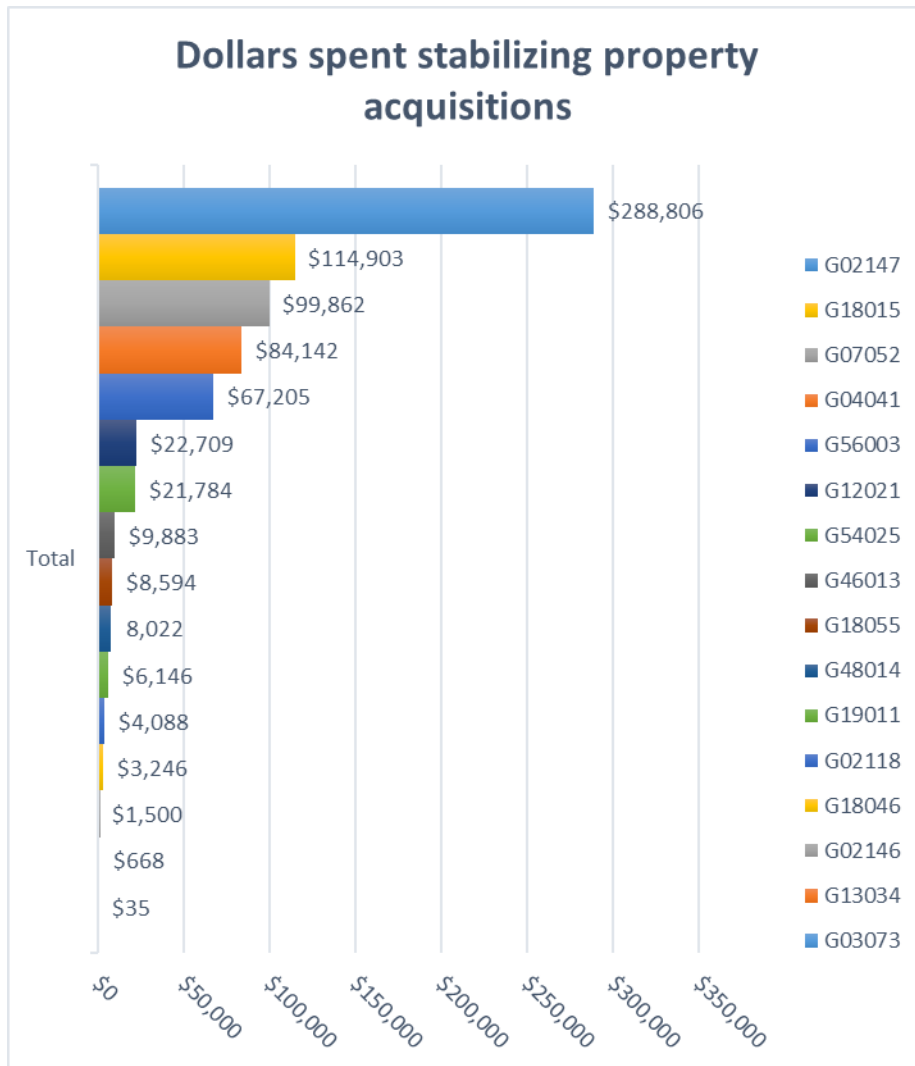


What is this chart?

The Metro Council may direct staff to purchase property at any price, but through the policy established in the Natural Areas Work Plan, the Metro Council has delegated authority to staff to acquire properties for fair market value as supported by an independent appraisal (with the exception of properties purchased for less than \$50,000, which do not require an appraisal). The Chief Operating Officer may purchase a property for up to 10% more than the value established by an appraisal provided certain conditions are met. This chart shows that most properties purchased to date were for fair market value or an appraisal was not required (i.e., the purchase price was less than \$50,000). This includes all purchases funded through the protect and restore land and create trails for walking and biking programs.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020 – March 31, 2023)

Cost of stabilization to date



2019 bond dollars spent through March 31, 2023

Note; labels starting with "G" are financial project codes; each one represents one property.

What is this chart?

Stabilization is one of the four program activities eligible for protect and restore land funds. Stabilization is the phase of management that follows acquisition. During stabilization Metro uses bond funds to address threats that would otherwise compromise the values for which a new natural area is acquired. As no two properties are the same or have the same conditions present, stabilization plans and costs will vary by property and the conditions present. Metro uses a function-based approach to identify and implement stabilization activities appropriate to each site. Function-based stabilization focuses on actions that protect high ecological function and shift currently degrading conditions to a positive trend leading to Metro to meeting the conservation objectives for which the property was purchased. Common stabilization actions include natural resource enhancement and property management and security actions. Important ecological



Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020 – March 31, 2023)

functions addressed include key features such as: soil erosion control, habitat quality and trend, temperature and flow modification of streams, and public safety.

Constraints

The market continues to be dynamic and challenging for off market transactions. The largest challenges in the market are still related to timelines and seller expectations of value – but Metro real estate staff are now also seeing impacts of low inventory and high interest rates on willing seller cultivation, i.e., the desire for people to sell their property and move. To overcome this barrier the real estate team is utilizing tools such as land use actions to purchase portions of property with conservation values while sellers retain ownership of portions with homes and other structures, however, land use actions add 4-6 months on to a transaction timeline.

Additional constraints related to the team's ability to complete transactions quickly include the desire to work with public agency partners on acquisitions, primarily in the urban target area and the regional trail network. Metro must be willing to work on the partner's timeline and within their capacity to complete these purchases, which can vary.

Capacity is stagnant as one new hire referenced in the last quarterly report is no longer with Metro, however, a recruitment is underway for two real estate positions. When the recruitment is complete (expected July 2023) there will be 4 FTE (full time equivalent) working on acquiring real estate for Metro which will double capacity in FY24, though when allowing time for onboarding, landowner relationship development and acknowledging the timelines referenced above, realistically we should not expect to see an increase in closings until calendar year 2024.

Total COBID participation percentages by fiscal year for the 2019 parks and nature bond

Fiscal Year	2019 bond
FY20	1%
FY21	29%
FY22	46%
FY23 YTD	46%

