



PROTECT AND RESTORE LAND

\$155 million allocated for acquisition and restoration of priority habitat across 24 target areas, <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land>

Program description: The protect and restore land program builds on the successes of the 1995 and 2006 natural areas bond measures in protecting greater Portland's special places, by purchasing land from willing sellers and restoring it to help preserve regional watersheds, protect some of the region's rarest habitats, protect culturally important plants and provide opportunities to create future potential access to nature. With funding from the 1995 and 2006 natural areas bond measures, Metro has completed over 500 individual transactions resulting in over 15,000 acres of protected habitat funded. Since many of the opportunities for straightforward land acquisitions in the region have already been completed, staff anticipates that most of the transactions funded by the 2019 bond will be more complicated from a land use or process perspective.

This program will also invest up to \$10 million of the create trails for walking and biking program to buy land where park providers will one day build regional trail connections.

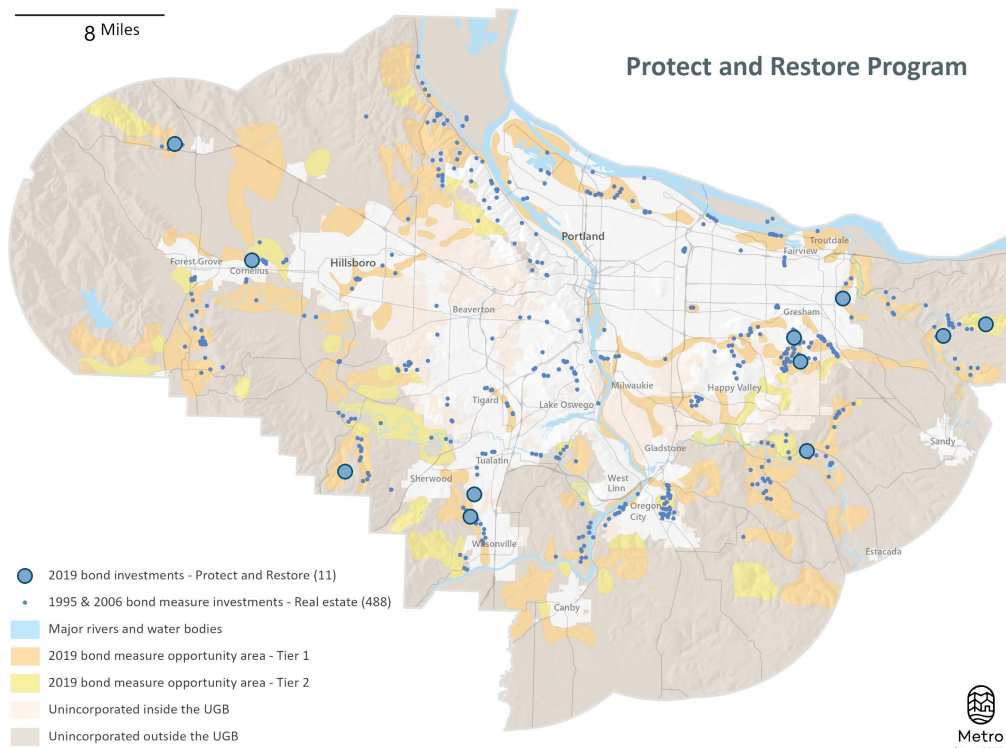
Protect and restore land program milestones completed as of calendar year 2022

- [Council approved land acquisition road maps](#) in April 2022 articulate strategic priorities and goals for land acquisition
- Hired real estate staff with the goal of having four full time employees working on real estate
- Developed real estate strategies for each target area to further identify targets for priority acquisitions
- From 2020 through December 2022, completed a total of 11 acquisitions across 8 of the 24 target areas, protecting 386 acres and spending a little over \$6 million on the properties
- Developing measures of success for land acquisitions, especially related to the bond measure's climate resilience criteria
- Refined reporting on land acquisition activities to the Natural Areas Oversight Committee including updating memos to Council and the oversight committee summarizing how individual property purchases meet bond goals and criteria
- Conducted outreach to over 100 landowners about acquisition opportunities

- Conducted community engagement activities to shape land acquisition road maps including: affinity group roundtables, in English and Spanish, for BIPOC and people with disabilities, engagement sessions for all community members, continuous engagement with members of the urban Indigenous community and an online survey on land acquisition priorities translated into 5 languages received over 1,700 responses
- Conducted interviews and surveys with community members who helped shape the development of the land acquisition road maps to understand experience of participating in that process

Protect and restore land program milestones complete (by the numbers) during calendar year 2022

Category	During calendar year 2022
Number of acquisitions made	5
Acres purchased	115
Total trail gap feet purchased	0 feet
Number of landowners contacted by Metro staff (including some we have existed conversations with and some who are new)	100
Number of detailed real estate strategies completed for each of the 24 target areas in the Council approved land acquisition road maps	23 out of 24 target areas



Looking ahead

With the Council approved refinement plans setting direction on acquisition and near completion of real estate strategies for each of the 24 target areas, the protect and restore land program has built the tools needed to effectively and efficiently conduct land acquisition through a willing seller program. The team will continue ramping up outreach to landowners across the region to create a pipeline of opportunities for acquisition in alignment with the targets and goals approved by the Metro Council this past spring.

Staff anticipate being at full capacity by fall 2023 with a team of four real estate negotiators, along with the expansion and maturation of the acquisition pipeline. While the size of the pipeline helps expand the number of deals moving through each phase of negotiation towards completion, the fact that this is a willing seller program, that the acquisition opportunities have been absorbed by previous measures and the reality of current market dynamics may all increase the amount of time it takes to fully ramp up the anticipated pace of acquisitions.

The real estate market continues to be dynamic and challenging. The largest challenges in the market on willing selling cultivate are still related to timelines and seller expectations of and real estate staff are now also seeing the impacts of low inventory and high interest rates.

As the portfolio of land acquisitions continues to grow, the protect and restore land team will refine a framework that measures success by connecting the features of individual properties acquired to the bond's climate resilience criteria. The team will also explore opportunities to identify community partners to pilot the community led acquisition included in the protect and restore land program definition in the bond measure.

Markers on progress for protect and restore land in 2023 and beyond

- Number of acquisitions made in each of the 24 target areas (status below as of December 2022)
- Number of trail gap acquisitions across the region
- Status and balance of acquisitions focusing on key habitat types
- Status and balance of acquisitions focusing on primary climate resilience strategies
- Bond criteria met by acquisitions

Figure 1

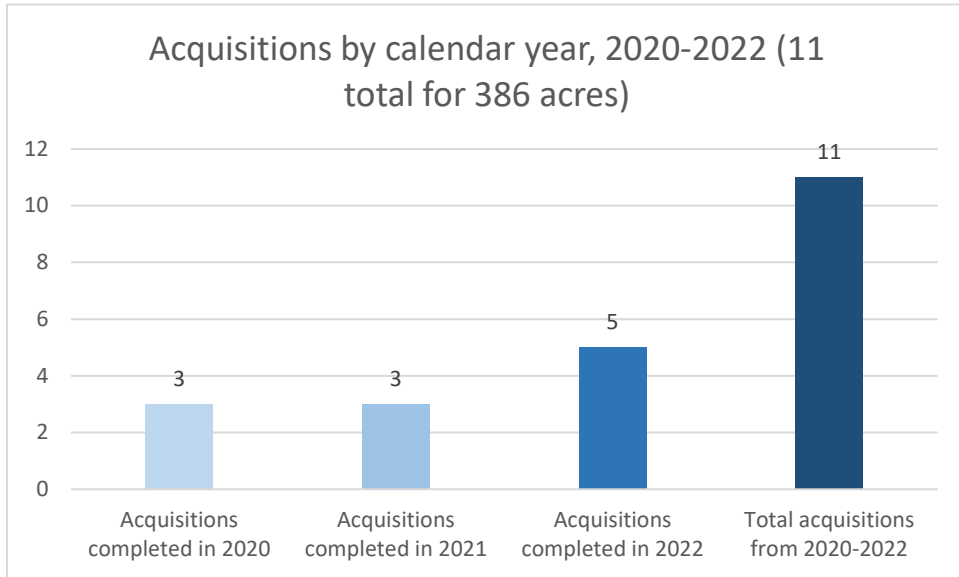


Figure 2

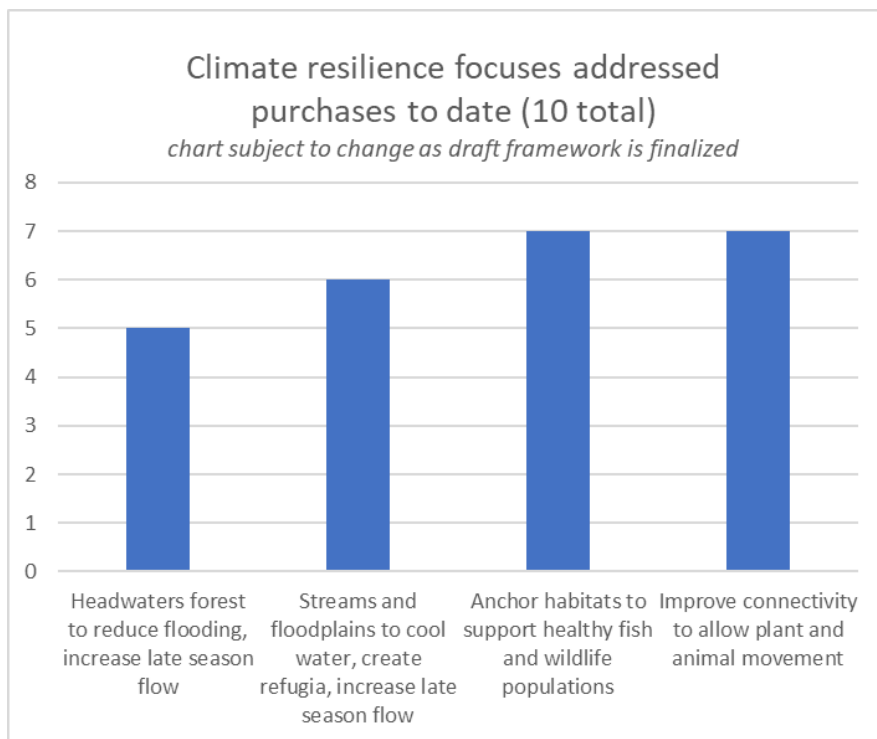
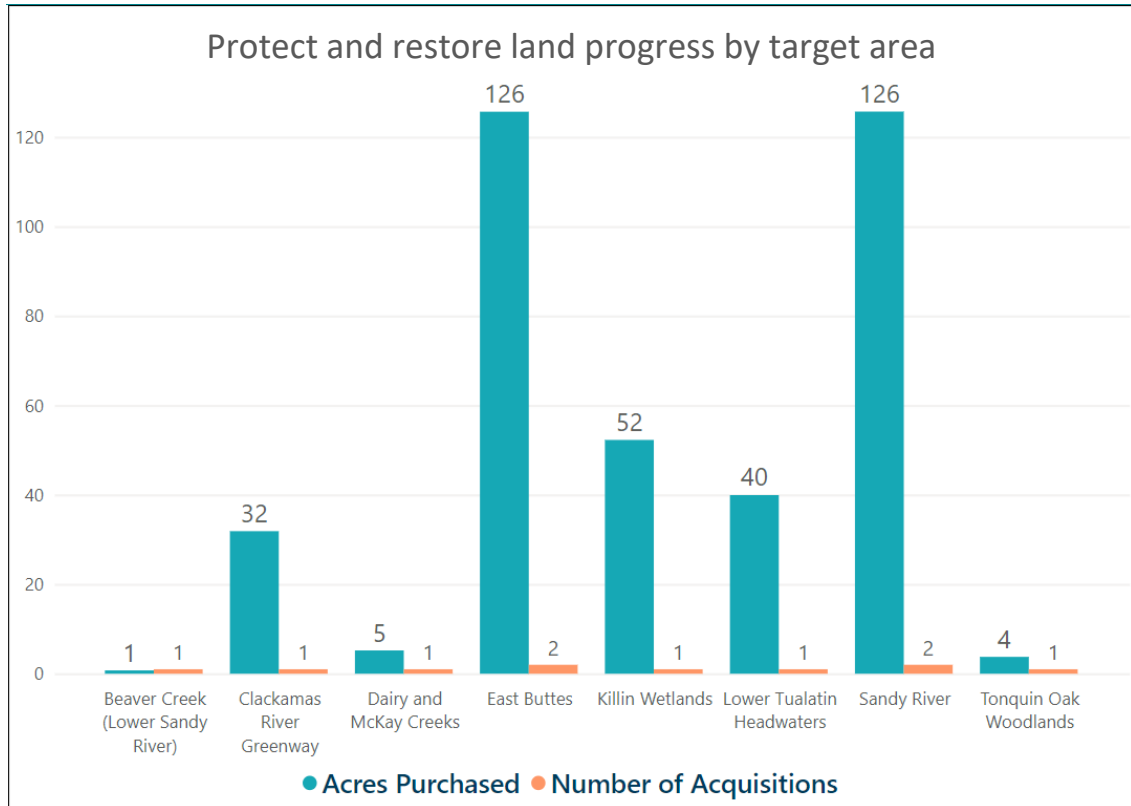


Figure 3



Stabilization activities

Each property acquired through the protect and restore land program has some stabilization needs that involve land management activities undertaken during the first approximately 5 years that ensure the values of the subject property are not lost during the development of long-term restoration and stewardship plans. These actions include infrastructure removal or improvement, replacing invasive species with natives and reducing stream erosion. From 2020 to December 2022, \$563,000 of 2019 parks and nature bond funding was spent on 13 stabilization projects including the 11 properties acquired with the 2019 parks and nature bond. The other two stabilization projects occurred on properties acquired with the 2006 natural areas bond.

During stabilization Metro uses bond funds to address threats that would otherwise compromise the values for which a new natural area is acquired. Metro 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 functions addressed include key features such as: soil erosion control, habitat quality and trend, temperature and flow modification of streams, and public safety.

Figure 4

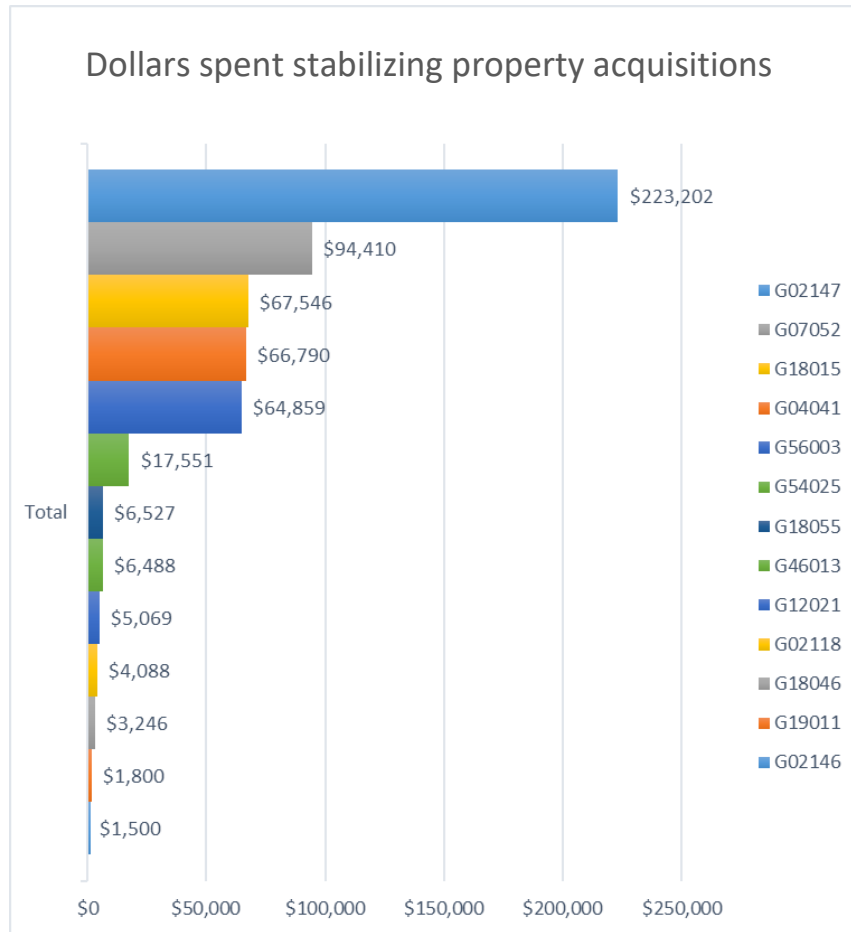


Figure 5, list of properties acquired with the 2019 parks and nature bond as of December 2022

Target Area	Close Date	Acres	Purchase Price
Ice Age Tonquin Trail 2019 (22-5250)	06/29/2020	0.88	\$113,500.00
Sandy River 2019 (22-5250)	09/08/2020	86.76	\$350,000.00
East Buttes 2019 (22-5250)	12/08/2020	8.59	\$340,000.00
Dairy and McKay Creeks 2019 (22-5250)	02/10/2021	5.21	\$9,000.00
Killin Wetlands 2019 (22-5250)	11/24/2021	52.28	\$465,000.00
East Buttes 2019 (22-5250)	12/09/2021	117.09	\$1,422,000.00
Clackamas River Greenway 2019 (22-5250)	01/26/2022	31.88	\$1,681,485.00
Sandy River 2019 (22-5250)	05/12/2022	38.95	\$75,000.00
Lower Tualatin Headwaters 2019 (22-5250)	08/08/2022	39.95	\$1,000,000.00
Beaver Creek (Lower Sandy River) 2019 (22-5250)	10/06/2022	0.75	\$475,000.00
Tonquin Oak Woodlands 2019 (22-5250)	11/30/2022	3.77	\$110,000.00