



Sustainable Solutions: Your Guide to Healthier Homes and Communities

April 2023



State funding helps cleanup greater Portland

Cleaner parks, cleaner roadsides, cleaner communities – all thanks to a one-time \$10 million investment from the state of Oregon to support immediate cleanup needs in greater Portland.

The funding, from [House Bill 5202](#), was created to address the waste impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding enables Metro, in partnership with local governments, nonprofits and community organizations, to more effectively tackle public dumping, litter, graffiti and abandoned vehicles.

The people of the region are seeing roadsides that are regularly cleared of litter. The two largest abandoned vessels in greater Portland have been removed from the Columbia River. Government partners and community organizations are helping people to get rid of hard-to-dispose trash before it gets dumped in public spaces.

Check out more project [highlights and success stories](#).



Photo courtesy of Trash for Peace

Community Spotlight: Trash for Peace

[Trash for Peace](#) is a Portland-based nonprofit that builds innovative waste reduction and recycling systems that are created by and for community members. One of their programs is [Ground Score Association](#), a peer-led initiative that provides low-barrier employment to people who collect cans and bottles as their main source of income.

Thanks to funding from the \$10 million cleanup investment, Trash for Peace is able to provide new litter and tent side collection services for houseless camps across the region. Collection crews have four new electric tricycles to aid their carbon-neutral collection efforts in hard-to-reach areas in downtown Portland and the Central Eastside.

Since the start of the program in 2021, an average of over 10,000 pounds of trash has been collected weekly. This year, crews have already collected over 145,000 pounds using the tricycles and initiating clean-up efforts in high-priority areas.



LoveOne crew helps neighbors remove unwanted items

Metro's Regional Refresh Fund

Regional Refresh Fund had a busy quarter reviewing proposals for spring cleanup events across greater Portland. Various groups and organizations are gearing up for Earth Day by organizing community-wide collection events for bulky waste and volunteer-powered litter cleanup events.

Several organizations have been working throughout the winter months to remove trash from our streets and natural areas. [LoveOne](#) tackled a massive cleanup this past December, hauling away a whopping 80 tons of abandoned trash! The Clackamas County-based nonprofit is committed to providing essential services like clean laundry, showers, meals and community connections to neighbors in need.

Feeling inspired? Funds are still available for cleanup projects focused on trash removal, bulky waste collection or graffiti abatement. Nonprofit organizations, public agencies, schools and business district associations may be eligible for up to \$5,000 per cleanup project. Learn more by visiting www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalrefresh, or by emailing Cayla Pruett at cayla.pruett@oregonmetro.gov.





Certifying your backyard habitat

The [Backyard Habitat Certification Program](#) encourages sustainable gardening and landscaping practices that benefit people and wildlife within urban and suburban neighborhoods in the Metro region. The program works with individuals and community organizations to create wildlife friendly spaces.

This program is co-managed by the Columbia Land Trust and Portland Audubon and focuses on five core elements:

- removing priority weeds
- planting local native plants
- reducing pesticide use
- supporting wildlife
- managing on-site stormwater

Participants can enroll their residential yards smaller than one acre. Community sites, like schools, apartment complexes, businesses or places of worship can be any size. They are guided by habitat technicians, who will meet with them, assess their green space and create an individualized site report.

Participants also receive coupons and resources to help them accomplish their rehabilitation goals. Once they have met all certification requirements, they are able to get their space backyard habitat certified.

Since the program's beginning in 2006, over 10,500 participants have enrolled, including Metro. You can visit Metro spaces that are Backyard Habitat Certified, including the welcome center at Metro's [Scouters Mountain Nature Park](#) in Happy Valley, [The Wildlife Garden](#) at the Oregon Zoo Education Center and The Discovery Garden at [Blue Lake Park](#).

Individual yards and community spaces can merge to create wildlife corridors within the urban setting, increasing the impact of local parks and green spaces. Together we can support wildlife and reduce the effects of climate change, one yard at a time. To enroll in the program or learn more about how to care for your outdoor spaces, visit backyardhabitats.org.



Tips for creating a wildlife friendly space

Whether you have a large yard or a small container garden, these tips will help attract wildlife to your home and provide food, water and shelter for nearby animals.

1. **Create a diverse garden space:** Choose a variety of food, drink and shelter sources in your garden to create a year-round habitat for insects, birds and other wildlife that control pests and pollinate your plants.
2. **Grow food:** Plants provide leaves, nectar and pollen that small creatures eat. These creatures then become food for other wildlife. Adding native plants from your area and plants of different heights, shapes, colors and blooming periods will attract more wildlife to your garden space.
3. **Supply water:** Bird baths, bug baths, water features and leaves that catch rain, provide clean water sources when you avoid using pesticides in your garden space.
4. **Make shelter:** Add a variety of plants, rocks, logs and mulch for shelter and nesting materials.
5. **Keep it safe:** Avoid pesticides that can unintentionally harm wildlife. Protect wildlife from cats and dogs and use bird-friendly window decals.

For more backyard habitat tips, visit oregonmetro.gov/backyardhabitat.



April 22 is national prescription drug take back day

Unused medicine should never be put in the garbage or flushed down the toilet. You can take your expired or unwanted prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines to some local pharmacies for safe disposal. Visit medtakebackoregon.org and medtakebackwashington.org to find drop off locations.

Calendar of Community Events

Be sure to visit our [website calendar](#) to learn more about upcoming community events, educational programs and volunteer opportunities. Follow the links below to connect directly with our community partners to find out how you can support their work, find upcoming events, classes and volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood.

Celebrate Earth Day with MetroPaint!

MetroPaint is partnering with Earth Day Oregon to host a paint drive and giveaway from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 22. The event will take place at the MetroPaint Outlet, located at 4825 N Basin Avenue in Portland. Drop off leftover latex paint and **get up to 10 gallons of limited-edition paint for FREE** while supplies last, plus 20% off MetroPaint's standard [12-color collection](#). Learn more at metropaint.org.

More Ways to Take Action this Earth Day

Earth Day Oregon and its partners are offering ways for you to make a difference [this Earth Day](#), wherever you are in Oregon! [Review the calendar for opportunities to take part in the collective action this Earth Day \(April 22\) and all April long \(plus a few events in May too\).](#)

Stay Informed

Subscribe to Metro's quarterly newsletter, Sustainable Solutions, which provides resources for waste prevention from Metro and community partners. Learn helpful tips for recycling, gardening and reducing toxic chemicals in your home and yard.

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