Summer 2025

Metro

“Throughout my walk I realized how much I really knew about nature.”

What’s inside

oregonmetro.gov

Metro | Our Big Backyard Parks and nature news and events

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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.

Metro

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.

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Share your nature and win!

Winner: Joe Mealey, Portland

"I was birding on Sauvie Island with my camera. I walked out into a field and accidentally scared these snow geese who took flight, flying directly at me. I pointed my camera and recorded their flight head-on."

Finalist: Patti Bright, Portland

"I have lived in the Portland area for 45 years and recently went to Champoeg Park for the first time. There were lots of bluebirds, and this one posed nicely for me."

Finalist: Allison Lake, Portland

"I spotted an American kestrel at Powell Butte Nature Park."

Submit your photo

Win an annual parking pass, a full-day picnic shelter reservation at Graham Oaks or Scouters Mountain nature parks, or a choice between a tennis court session or 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 (including your name and hometown) between July 1 and August 1 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: *Kali Walker developed her love of nature after her family moved to the Pacific Northwest. Turn to page 6 to read her personal essay. Photo taken at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area by Cristle Jose.*

Get involved

Classes and events

Summer is a great time to take part in guided activities and community stewardship events at Metro parks and cemeteries! There are so many great opportunities that we can't list them all here, but follow these simple steps to see our latest offerings.

STEP 1

Visit **oregonmetro.gov/guidedactivities** to see upcoming offerings. Click on the event that interests you.

STEP 2

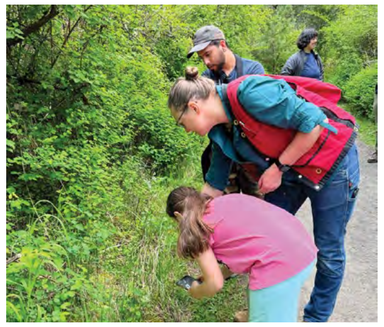
In some cases, you'll be asked to register for the event. This helps staff know how many supplies to bring. Some events have a limited capacity.

STEP 3

Check your email for additional instructions on participating in the event.

STEP 4

Attend the event and have fun!



Free Parking Days

Get out and explore nature this summer! Enjoy free parking at Oxbow and Blue Lake regional parks, Broughton Beach, M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp and Chinook Landing Marine Park on July 17, Aug. 21 and Sept. 18.

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

From top: *Cleaning headstones at Multnomah Park Cemetery; identifying plants during a bioblitz; guided activities at Cooper Mountain Nature Park; painting with natural pigments during "Azul Maya"*

Zip. Click. Pull.

Wearing a life jacket is the best thing you can do to stay safe in water. The jacket has to fit to do its job. Here's how to find the right jacket for the right fit.

1 Size

Life jackets are made for people of different sizes and weights.

Check the label for the jacket's weight range and chest size.

2 The kids

Life jackets for children include a leg strap. Life jackets for infants also have a collar.

3 Zip, click, pull

Make sure all zippers and clips are fastened. Pull straps tight.

4 Shoulder test

Pull the jacket up at your shoulders. If it slides up to your ears, it's too big. If it stays tight, you are ready for the water!

Learn more at oregonmetro.gov/watersafety

Parks and Nature News

By Hannah Erickson

What's new at Oxbow Regional Park

If you visit Oxbow Regional Park this summer, you might notice a few changes — and see signs of even bigger changes to come. Read on to find out what's happening at this beloved park in the Sandy River Gorge.

Erosion on the bluff

Metro staff have removed about a dozen parking spots in the lot at the top of the road leading to the boat launch, and one campsite (Campsite 27) has been decommissioned.

The reason, in one word: erosion. Significant portions of the park's northeastern bluff sit on deep layers of sandy soil from volcanic mudflows that are prone to erosion during periods of heavy rain. As the soil along the river washes away, new areas become unsafe and have to be closed.

This isn't the first time the park has been affected by erosion. In 2011, heavy rainfall and flooding caused more than 100 feet of riverbank to disappear over just a day or two. Then it happened again in 2012. The river washed away multiple campsites, an amphitheater, trails and portions of road.

As dramatic as that sounds, it's important to remember that erosion is a natural process at Oxbow. (After all, that's how oxbows get formed in the first place!) While Metro can and does take steps to slow the process of erosion on the park's riverbanks with logs and plantings, artificial solutions are costly and not a longterm fix for a natural geological process.

That's why Metro is instead looking at moving amenities to areas of the park that aren't at risk of erosion. One of those amenities is the park's popular boat launch. Currently Metro Parks and Nature staff are consulting with engineers and partner agencies to explore alternative locations for a boat launch at the park.

It's not an easy task. Many potential locations are also at risk of erosion. Beyond that, the ideal spot would also need to have easy access to the river, terrain that allows a road, and space for a parking lot and restrooms. But by researching options now, Metro can develop a plan for the time when the Sandy River claims more of the park — whenever that time comes.

Planning on visiting Oxbow Regional Park?

Check the park's web page for alerts about upcoming closures and construction:

oregonmetro.gov/oxbow

Above: *To keep visitors safe, amenities at Oxbow Regional Park must adapt to the natural forces of erosion.*

Closures coming in 2026

Lots of work will be taking place at Oxbow Regional Park next year. Some of it, like smaller roadwork projects, may require temporary closures of some park areas. One project will close the whole park for about four months.

This project is replacing and improving the park's aging water system. It's a huge undertaking — so big that Metro will need to close the park entirely beginning in fall of 2026 to complete the work safely and efficiently.

"We know a full park closure is going to be disruptive for people who use the park regularly, so we've been working to get the word out well in advance," said park planner Ben Hedstrom. "The project will help ensure that the park is able to serve visitors for generations to come."

This work is made possible thanks to voters choosing to invest in nature through the 2019 parks and nature bond.

Creating a "learning forest" in the Tualatin Mountains

This spring brought an announcement with long-lasting benefit for the greater Portland region: the acquisition of 3,110 acres of timber land from Weyerhaeuser Company to become a research forest owned and managed by Oregon State University (OSU).

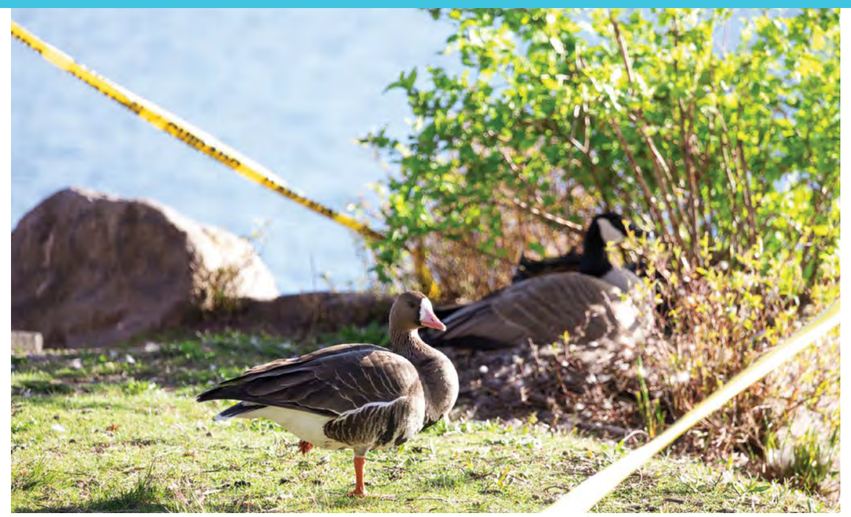
The forest is located 10 miles west of Portland in the Tualatin Mountains, near Forest Park. Conserving it has been a years-long project led by OSU and the Trust For Public Land in partnership with Metro, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), and local community organizations.

"Conserving and opening access to the Tualatin Mountain Forest is an investment in the health and well-being of communities across the Portland metro area, for those here now, and for future generations," said Kristin Kovalik, Oregon program director for Trust for Public Land. "We're deeply grateful for the collaboration between partners, which will help ensure that everyone can connect with the outdoors and experience the benefits of nearby nature."

OSU's College of Forestry will manage the land as a living laboratory for researchers from OSU and other institutions, tribes, agencies and organizations to advance research in forest resilience, habitat restoration, sustainable timber production and wildfire risk reduction.

OSU also plans to create opportunities for public access to the forest, which currently holds more than 40 miles of trails. In the coming years, the College of Forestry will develop a visitor use and recreation plan that ensures ecological integrity of the forest. Additionally, OSU plans to explore new partnerships focused on K–12 nature-based education to expand outdoor learning experiences for Portland-area youth.

The acquisition was funded with grants from the U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and from Metro's voter-approved 2019 parks and nature bond. Additional partners on the project include the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, Northwest Trail Alliance, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and other community organizations.



Birds of a (different) feather flock together

Every spring, geese flock to Blue Lake Regional Park to nest and raise their young. This April, one mated pair brought an element of surprise to the familiar event: The female was a Canada goose, the most common type of goose seen at the park, while the male was a western white-fronted goose — a completely different species.

"I took a look at them and thought, 'I should ask Katy about this,'" said park ranger William McDonald.

"Katy" was Katy Weil, Metro Parks and Nature senior natural resource scientist. She confirmed the geese's respective species and the unusualness of their pairing.

"It's not unheard of for these two species to hybridize, but it's uncommon," she said. "It happens more often in other parts of North America. This is the first documented case I've heard of in this region."

Quickly, park staff went into action to protect the unlikely couple, who had chosen a very public nesting spot between a picnic table and the park's popular swim beach. McDonald and his teammates put barriers around the nest area and posted signs asking visitors not to disturb the nesting pair.

For weeks, the male goose defended the nest, pacing back and forth and occasionally issuing high-pitched squeaks at birds, animals or people he perceived as threats. Meanwhile, the female stayed on the nest to keep the eggs warm.

Sadly, the story doesn't end in adorable fluffballs. In late April, McDonald let Weil know that the geese had left their nest. Weil and a colleague investigated and found that at least four of the nest's eggs weren't fertile. She found remnants of empty eggshells, but since no goslings accompanied the couple, it seems likely that any hatchlings were victim to predation, illness or other fatal circumstances.

Weil said this didn't necessarily have anything to do with the geese being of different species, noting that it's common for all geese to lay some infertile eggs and that these two species have successfully produced healthy offspring in other instances. Other factors may have played a role, like the stress caused by nesting in such a heavily trafficked part of the park.

"It probably seemed like a nice, quiet spot when they first chose it," Weil noted. "They couldn't know that it would be full of people as soon as the weather warmed up."

Weil also pointed out that mated geese frequently make yearslong — even lifelong — bonds and return to the same nesting grounds year after year. So it's possible that the unsual pair could nest again at Blue Lake next year. In fact, as of the time of this writing in early May, it's possible the pair could make a second attempt at starting a family during this nesting season. "Hopefully, not right next to a picnic table," Weil noted wryly.

Honoring hospital patients at Lone Fir

The tall, prominent grave marker of Dr. James Hawthorne, who co-founded Oregon's first mental hospital, is a well-known landmark in Lone Fir Cemetery. Now, thanks to recent research, the graves of some of Hawthorne's patients have new markers of their own.

In 2021, Metro hired historians to research the history of the far southwest corner of the cemetery, called "Block 14" on cemetery maps, as part of its due diligence before building a memorial at the site. At the time, it was widely believed that Block 14 had been the location of burials for both people of Chinese ancestry and patients of the Oregon Hospital for the Insane.

However, the researchers discovered that it was highly unlikely that patients had been buried at Block 14. Rather, records showed that many patients had been buried at Block 10, about 150 feet north of Block 14. This block was called "the asylum grounds" in old cemetery records.

The Oregon Hospital for the Insane, also called the Hawthorne Asylum, operated in Portland from 1861 to 1883. During that time, hundreds of people were institutionalized there with diagnoses that included not just mental illnesses but also other conditions that were lumped together by 19th-century medicine, including developmental disabilities, epilepsy, age-related dementia and addiction.

The hospital had a contract with Lone Fir Cemetery to bury patients whose bodies were unclaimed. It is believed that Hawthorne paid for many of the burials himself.

The research commissioned by Metro determined that the remains of 185 patients are buried at Lone Fir. Due to spotty record-keeping in the 19th century, only 61 grave sites could be located; of those, 54 were in Block 10. However, most of those graves lacked markers.

"It's possible they had wooden markers originally, which would have been destroyed by decay or fire over the years," said Metro cemeteries program coordinator Emma Williams, who has overseen other projects at the cemetery to install headstones at unmarked graves of firefighters and veterans. "Looking at the records we've found, I wouldn't be surprised if they never had markers at all. That's why I was so excited about this headstone project: It's like saying, 'There, now you aren't forgotten!'"

Williams worked to install stone markers for those known unmarked graves identified through the research. In all, 49 grave markers were installed.

The markers are flat and simple, bearing just the deceased's name (when known) and year of burial. Metro is now working on a new welcome sign for the cemetery that includes Block 10's hidden history.

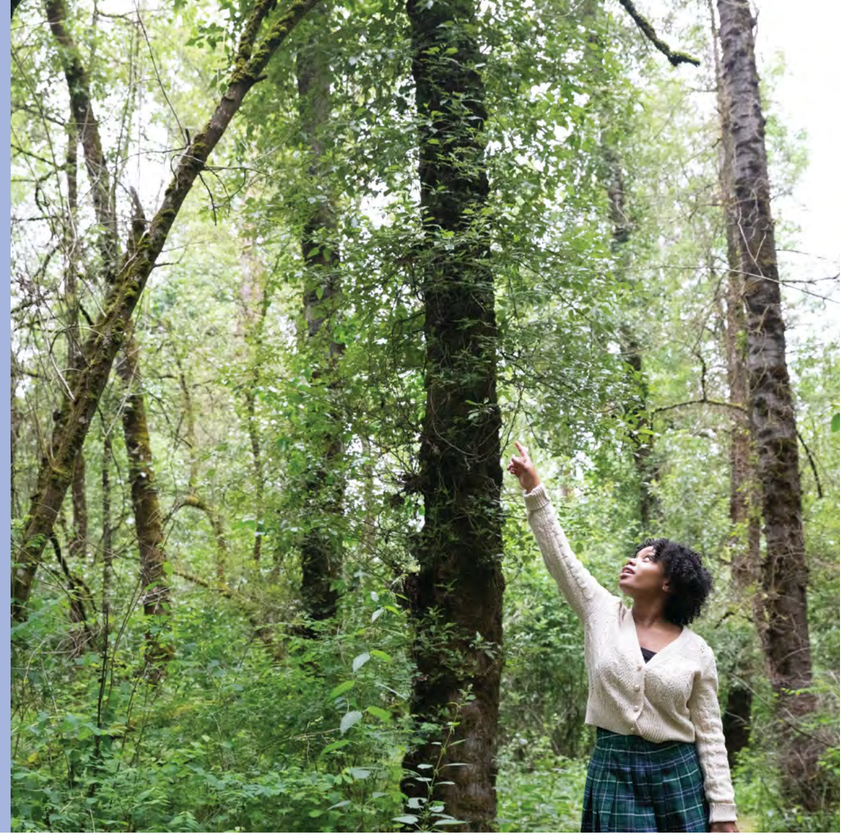
Learn more

Read about the history of patient burials at Lone Fir Cemetery and about the memorial project at Block 14:

oregonmetro.gov/lonefirgarden

From reluctant hiker to nature ambassador

One young person's journey into leadership starts in the woods



By Kali Walker. Photos by Cristle Jose

When my family first moved to the Pacific Northwest a few summers ago, I often complained, "There's nothing to do here." The idea of hiking up a mountain felt foreign to me, and I dismissed the abundance of trees as mere scenery and overlooked their value.

I have previously lived in New York, Missouri and Mississippi. In those places, outdoor spaces were not as valued. As a result, little to no money was invested in creating or maintaining things like community gardens, creeks and trails.

Portland was a city that embraced nature instead of removing it. A large number of people in the community cared about preserving natural areas, addressing climate change and advancing climate justice. It took me a while to recognize that the difference between Portland and those other places was actually a positive thing.

I didn't want change — I wanted comfort and stability. Instead, my mom made me go on a hike.

When I said, "There's nothing to do here," I really meant I simply was not interested in experiencing something new. Coming from a military family, I frequently moved, and I was anything but happy about moving to Portland.

I had become comfortable in one place, and moving meant stepping out of my comfort zone, again. I didn't want change—I wanted comfort and stability.

Instead, my mom made me go on a hike.

Our first hike was the Cape Horn Loop Trail in Washougal. It wasn't an easy introduction to hiking. The trail is nearly seven miles long and climbs 1,400 feet. I mostly remember it was extremely long, and that I didn't like hiking.

Mom planned another hike and then another. One day, I went for a hike on my own. Slowly, I started going on family hikes and exploring trails alone while learning the history of the city and the importance of nature.

During my time of connecting with nature, my mom was diligently searching for youth programs that could help me find something I loved. That's how Tappin Roots first came to my attention. I was at the Black Community Science Night at OMSI and, as usual that summer, I didn't really want to be there. Just as we were about to leave, my mom spotted their table and encouraged me to check it out. In the end, though reluctantly, I left with my very first internship application to fill out.

Pictured here: *Kali Walker identifies plants and wildlife during a visit to Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area.*

Tappin Roots is an environmental internship program for Black- and Brown-identified high school students run by ELSO Inc. (Experience Life Science Outdoors). The goal of the program is to train and empower the next generation of environmental leaders and community leaders using storytelling, mentorship, career exploration, place-based learning and healing practices.

Soon I found out that I got accepted along with 19 other participants. My role was to work with kids, teaching them things like how to identify both native and invasive plants. When I started, I knew nothing. But I gained some knowledge after my training week with the staff at Tryon Creek State Park.

When it was time to step into my role as a counselor, I wasn't confident. I felt I didn't know enough. Then my mom reminded me that everything is a learning moment: Even when you're teaching, you can learn a few more things you didn't know, no matter how experienced or knowledgeable you are.

After taking that into consideration, I went on a solo hike at Tryon. Throughout my walk I realized how much I really knew about nature. I could easily identify lemon balm by its round, bright-green leaves with ragged edges and its mild lemon scent. I could tell the difference between a western red cedar — with its reddish-brown bark and its flat needles that spread out like a fan — and the flat, dark green needles that grow in a spiral on the branch of a Douglas fir. I didn't need to look at my plant guide or use Google — it was just me using prior experience to connect with the nature that surrounded me.

I never would have expected these experiences to help me in a Zoom class.

In the summer of 2024, the year after my role as a counselor at Tryon Creek State Park, I joined another ELSO program. Studio Justice is an eight-week urban design workshop created to engage youth in the impact of climate change on the Black and Brown community and how we can design justice through a socially conscious lens. I applied and got accepted, which amplified my newfound interest in nature.

Our project focused on designing a vision for the future of Willamette Cove after its cleanup. Willamette Cove is located along the Willamette River in North Portland's St. Johns neighborhood, and Metro and the Port of Portland are working to address 70 years of industrial contamination there. The goal is to restore the land, ensuring it becomes a safe environment for people, plants and animals once the cleanup is completed.

In this eight-week cohort, I learned the fundamentals of design, including lines, shapes and colors and how they influence our emotions and perceptions. I also explored different concepts like unity, which is the harmony of elements within a design; contrast, the use of opposing elements such as light or dark, large or small; and variety, adding different shapes, textures, sizes and colors to capture visual interest.

One aspect that personally interested me was understanding why sustainability should be prioritized in design. Sustainability became an important topic for me during this program due to its significant impact on both our planet and our future. Sustainable designs are long-lasting and durable. They also reduce the use of harmful materials and lower energy consumption, ultimately helping to preserve natural resources and to reduce our ecological footprint. While creating my project, I made sure to highlight the importance of sustainable building materials.

With this cohort I felt I had so much freedom with what I could create and I had so many ideas to implement into my design. I took the chance to challenge my imagination and creativity.

At first it was overwhelming. I didn't know where to start. How would I design something that I felt the community would benefit from? I soon realized that first I had to scale my project down. What did I want to see when I came to Willamette Cove? That sparked a train of thoughts and ideas. I envisioned walking a trail along the river, passing by a playground, watering the fruits and vegetables in a community garden, and making a stop at a resource center that provides assistance to the community.

After I generated some ideas for my project, I decided I wanted my project to revolve around inclusivity. How do I make Willamette Cove a place for everyone? If I want to design a space that everyone in the community can benefit from, I need to ask the community. So, I asked for feedback from the community members I knew, my family and friends. This inspired me to start laying out my ideas on paper and draw up my first draft. The playground, for instance, would include elements that kids and youth with disabilities could enjoy.

When I found out that doing designs like these could positively impact the community, I was really proud. It makes me feel good when my community feels good, and getting everyone involved is my favorite part. I decided right then that I loved helping create a sustainable future for my family and my community, educating the youth about nature, learning the value of nature, and adopting new principles and ethics.

I wanted to pursue this work long term. I started researching possible career options and told my parents about my passion to keep doing this work. I've connected with architects, engineers, city officials, nonprofit professionals and people who do similar work to what I was doing to set up interviews about their careers.

I applied for, and was accepted into, various internships and programs.

I couldn't have expected this on that first hike. Over the two years I've lived here, my perspective shifted from being resistant to change to being open to new experiences and embracing the change. I have different motives and a different mindset. With everything that I've learned, I hope to inspire my peers to always be open to new opportunities and experiences because you truly don't know what will happen until you give something a try. I never took that saying seriously before, but it definitely is an important lesson to grasp.

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 with disabilities. These pieces are intended to provide important points of view and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Metro or the Metro Council.

Kali Walker is a college student studying civil engineering. She loves exploring new hobbies and learning new things. She's especially passionate about anything that supports or uplifts her community, and is always looking for ways to get involved and make a difference.

Living with wildlife: bears

By Metro staff

Above: *This black bear lives at the Oregon Zoo. If you're close enough to take a photo like this of a bear in the wild,* ***that's too close.***
Left: *Black bears are expert tree climbers.*

Occasionally bears wander into Metro parks. When they do, Metro staff post alerts at the park and on the park's web page on oregonmetro.gov. The bears usually do not stay long, preferring less populated areas.

Even when no bear sightings have been reported, it's possible there may be bears quietly roaming through some Metro parks, especially the larger and heavily forested ones. The following tips are always good practice for coexisting peacefully with the bears who call Oregon home.

Oregon is home to nearly 30,000 black bears, the only species of bear found in the state. Despite the name, black bears come in a wide range of colors, from gold to cinnamon to black. Strong, nimble and dexterous, these bears can run quickly, climb trees and open simple latches. They have a keen sense of smell that lets them detect food from long distances.

Black bears normally prefer to avoid humans, but sometimes their inquisitive nature and bear-sized appetites lead to encounters with humans. When this happens, it is almost always the bear who suffers most — many bears have had to be euthanized because they became too accustomed to humans and their food.

Hiking

- Hike with at least one other person. Talk, sing or otherwise make noise once in a while to let bears know you're there.
- Pay attention to your surroundings: Don't wear headphones, keep an eye out for bear tracks and poop, and look around you regularly.
- Consider carrying bear spray, but first learn how to use it properly and don't let it give you a false sense of confidence.
- Never try to feed a bear.
- Never approach a bear cub. Its mother is probably nearby.

Camping

- Keep your campsite clean and store all food in airtight, bear-proof containers and/or in your vehicle.
- Don't leave food or scented products (candles, lotion, etc.) in your tent.
- Clean all dishes, pots and utensils promptly after use.
- Promptly dispose of garbage in park trash cans.

Fishing

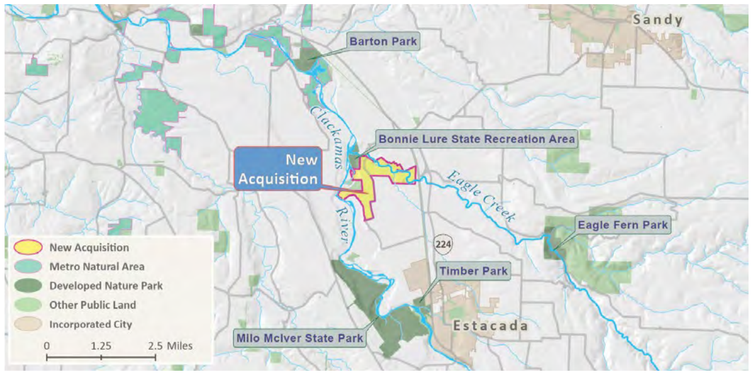
- Fish with at least one other person. Make noise on occasion to let bears know you are there.
- Keep all food in sealed, bear-proof containers. Pack all your garbage out when you leave.
- Clean fish at designated locations. If you clean your fish riverside, you can drop offal (fish guts) into the river to wash away, but don't leave anything on land.
- Don't bury fish offal. Bears can smell it and are attracted to it.

If you see a bear

- If you see a bear, don't approach it. Leave the area slowly and report your sighting to park staff.
- If a bear has noticed you, try to stay calm. Speak slowly and in a low tone and move your arms. This lets bears, which are near-sighted, know you are a human. They will likely leave the area.
- Do not scream or run. This could cause the bear to confuse you for prey.
- Move away slowly and sideways; this allows you to keep an eye on the bear. Moving sideways is also non-threatening to bears.
- Black bear attacks are extremely rare. Bears may display aggressive behavior, or charge at you in an attempt to scare you away. Do your best to stay calm and keep speaking in a firm voice until the bear leaves.
- If a black bear does attack, fight back. Do not play dead.

Protecting more than 550 acres next to the Clackamas

By Hannah Erickson



Above: *The former Eagle Creek Golf Course is already home to many mature Oregon white oaks, making it a perfect place to create an oak savanna habitat.*

For 20 years, the Eagle Creek Golf Course was a landmark in unincorporated Clackamas County, just north of Estacada. But when the owners decided it was time to sell, the question arose: What would become of this 553-acre property that held not just a golf course but also woods, a 1,550-foot stretch of the Clackamas River and more than a mile of the salmon-bearing Eagle Creek?

Earlier this year, the answer became clear when Metro announced it had purchased the property and would be restoring it as the new Eagle Creek Natural Area.

"This is truly a historic moment, both for Metro and for the region as a whole," said Metro Council President Lynn Peterson. "The chance to purchase and restore this much land at one time is rare, especially in a location with such potential to improve the surrounding area's ecology. We are doing what voters entrusted us to do when they passed the 2019 parks and nature bond: Protecting and restoring the green spaces that make our region so special."

The $6.4 million sale was made possible by funding from the Protect and Restore Land program of the 2019 voter-approved parks and nature bond, which has so far protected more than 1,500 acres across the region. It is the second-largest acquisition to be made with parks and nature bond funding in Metro's history.

Transforming a former golf course into a natural area presents unusual challenges for Metro Parks and Nature's team of scientists, restoration technicians and other specialists. Golf courses have a lot of hidden infrastructure like water lines and drainage systems that will need to be decommissioned. Sometimes the work done to create lush and gently rolling golf greens can have long-lasting effects on the soil.

"Restoring developed land to a natural state is a big job, but we have a lot of experience with this work and are more than ready for the challenge," said Dan Moeller, Metro Parks and Nature conservation program director.

The first steps have already begun: After taking over management of the property in April, Metro started studying the site in order to develop a plan for its restoration. Scientists are getting to know the site's biology and hydrology.

Initial work has begun on removing invasive plants and old structures. In a move that could seem counterintuitive to passersby, workers have killed most of the grass on the golf course in preparation for planting native species.

Eventually, some of the golf course will be restored into Oregon white oak savanna, an endangered habitat in the state.

"Our work here will have profound benefits for this region for generations to come," said Moeller. "Increasing the region's tree canopy helps to lower ground temperatures and to clean air. Meanwhile, restoring floodplains helps to keep water cleaner and cooler for fish and amphibians. It also allows the land to hold onto water, which helps decrease the effects of both drought and flooding."

Metro's work will also improve the experience of visitors at Bonnie Lure State Recreation Area, located just downstream from the property, as well as at many other nearby public parks (see map). The restored area will improve water quality for visitors recreating in the Clackamas River. Also, because many plant and animal species thrive best in larger areas of habitat, it will provide a richer and more varied experience of nature for park visitors.

This kind of large-scale transformation takes years, if not decades, to fully take place. Much of the initial work requires using heavy machinery and planting native species.

To protect the safety of both people and tender seedlings, Metro is restricting access to the site for the first five years of its restoration work. But you can still follow along on Eagle Creek Natural Area's journey of transformation, even if you're not physically at the site — we'll be posting updates on the property in future issues of Our Big Backyard, so keep reading!

Field guide

Mason Hill Park

Story by Renea Perry

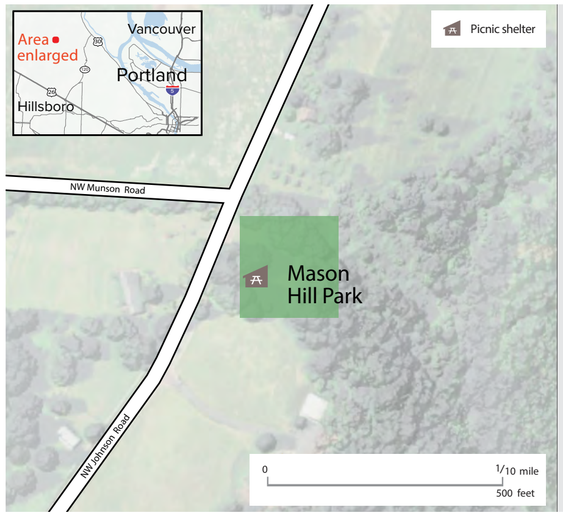
Located in the North Tualatin Mountains, Mason Hill Park rests on the original homelands of the local Indigenous tribes and bands, whose families and communities continue traditional healing practices to care for ancestral lands, foods and medicines for present and future generations.

Nestled among a forest of cedars and Douglas fir trees, a scattering of maple trees creates shade and sun-dappled light for gatherings in the spring and summer, and a retreat for quiet repose any time of the year. A covered picnic area provides shelter from the rain or summer heat, as well as bench seating for group story sharing. Painters love this gem of a park for the changing light and the natural wildlife that claim their home here — such as robins, red-tailed hawks, black-tailed deer and coyotes.

Located off of Northwest Johnson Road, the park is a respite for long-distance cyclists and those taking scenic drives through the North Tualatin Mountains and the surrounding settled farmlands.

The shelter at Mason Hill

The picnic shelter at Mason Hill was a one-room schoolhouse built by colonizers for their children after the forced removal of the Tualatin people in the 1850s. A bell remains from the original structure, which stood on the site from 1891 to 1944.



Mason Hill Park

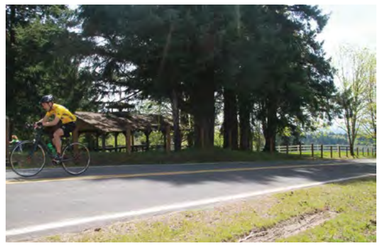
Address
16498 NW Johnson Rd., Portland

Getting there
From Portland, head west on U.S. 26. Take exit 61B and head north on Northwest Helvetia Road. Shortly after the road curves left, take a right on Northwest Logie Trail, which naturally becomes Northwest Johnson Road. Mason Hill Park will be on the right at the intersection with Northwest Munson Road. If you come by car, be prepared to park in a narrow roadside spot.

Know when you go
Park open sunrise to sunset. No pets, please.

Amenities
Picnic shelter.

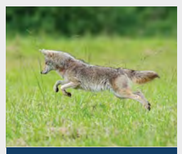
oregonmetro.gov/masonhill



For more details about all Metro Parks and Nature destinations, visit

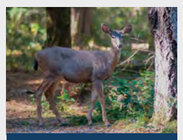
oregonmetro.gov/parks

ROBIN



COYOTE

RED-TAILED HAWK



BLACK-TAILED DEER

Be on the lookout!

Though the park is just one acre in size, many animals call Mason Hill home. Listen and look for black-tailed deer leaping through the trees, coyotes calling to one another across the meadow, red-tailed hawks soaring through the air and robins singing in the trees. The grassy hills also attract pollinators like hummingbirds and mason bees.

Drive and bike around Mason Hill

Traveling along the Valley Scenic Tour Route takes visitors near the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, through the Forest Grove wine region and by old colonial churches and farm houses.

The Tualatin Valley Scenic Bikeway captures some of the best scenic views of the northern part of the Willamette Valley. The trail starts in Hillsboro at Rood Bridge Park and heads west to Forest Grove. Cyclists can find their way onto the iconic Banks-Vernonia State Trail, a 21-mile paved trail that travels through L.L. Stub Stewart State Park, and over to Mason Hill Park for a ride through the hillsides.

Bring a lunch or stop at one of the u-pick farms during the summer for berries or other fresh fruits and vegetables. Or stop by one of the vineyards with breathtaking views of the valley below.

Learn more about these tours at **traveloregon.com** and **tualatinvalley.org**

Tools for living

Summer fun disposal quiz

By Arashi Young

Now that summer is finally here, many people will pull out gear for their favorite hobbies. From barbecues to pool parties, from camping outside to staying cool indoors, it's a lot of stuff.

Some of that stuff ends up broken or worn out after years of use. When the time comes to get rid of your summer fun supplies, do you know what to do?

Take this quiz to test your disposal knowledge.

1. Need a new air conditioner? What should you do with the old one?
   a) recycle it at home
   b) toss it in the trash
   c) take it to a facility for proper handling
2. What about all those used sunscreen containers?
   a) recycle them
   b) toss them in the trash
   c) it depends on the container
3. Any leftover mosquito spray should be taken to a hazardous waste facility.
   a) true
   b) false
4. Is your pool noodle overcooked and saggy?
   a) toss it in the trash
   b) recycle it
5. Are your propane tanks out of gas?
   a) take them to a hazardous waste facility
   b) take them to a metal recycler
   c) toss them

Have more disposal questions? Call Metro's Recycling Information Center at 503-234-3000 or visit

oregonmetro.gov/askMetro

6. Those wraparound sunglasses not your style anymore?
   a) recycle them
   b) donate them
   c) toss them in trash
   d) either b or c
7. Metal barbecue utensils can be recycled in your home bin.
   a) true
   b) false
8. You can throw fireworks in the trash if you've soaked them in water overnight.
   a) true
   b) false
9. Has your beach towel lost its fluff?
   a) toss it in the trash
   b) put it in your recycle bin
10. Your favorite plastic water bottle just cracked, what do you do?
    a) recycle it
    b) throw it away
    c) it depends
11. Out of ice cream? Toss your empty cartons into the _____.
    a) recycling
    b) trash
12. Has your hose sprung a leak? Hoses can clog up recycling machines, so it is best to toss them in the trash.
    a) true
    b) false

Answers

1. c 2. c, empty spray cans go in the recycling. Starting July 1, bottles that are 2 ounces or larger and their screw on caps may be recycled at home. Squeeze tubes and sticks go in the garbage. 3. true, but empty containers can go in the garbage. 4. a 5. both a and b answers are correct, but metal recyclers will take only empty containers. 6. d, before tossing anything, ask if anyone else could use it. 7. true, metal items that are under 18 inches long and less than 10 pounds apiece can go in the recycling bin. Larger metal items can go to a facility for recycling. 8. false, even if fireworks have been soaked in water, they may still have chemicals and heavy metals in them, so it is best to bring them to a hazardous waste disposal facility. 9. a 10. c, you can toss the bottle in the recycling, but any chipped off pieces of plastic should be thrown away. 11. b 12. true

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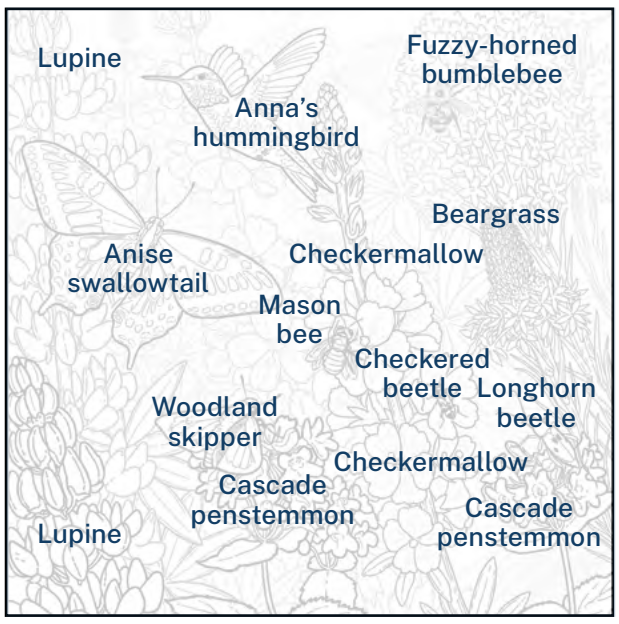
Color and discover!

art by Zoe Keller

So many pollinators!

The first image that comes to mind for a lot of people when they hear the word “pollinator” is a honey bee. But the European honey bee (which is not native to the Pacific Northwest) is only one of hundreds of different species of bee that can pollinate plants in our region. And bees are just the beginning! Many species of beetles, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps and birds spread pollen — keeping our region full of beautiful flowers. You can help keep native pollinators healthy and thriving by planting native plants. Learn more about pollinators on your next visit to the Oregon Zoo by visiting their Wildlife Garden.

For more fun facts, follow @OregonMetro on Instagram and Facebook or visit **oregonmetro.gov/parks**



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