

Agenda



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting: Smith and Bybee Wetlands Advisory Committee
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024
Time: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Place: [Zoom](#)

5:30 p.m.	Welcome and introductions	All
5:35 p.m.	Approve November 2023 meeting minutes	Carrie Butler
5:40 p.m.	Bridge and trail project update	Allan Schmidt
6:10 p.m.	Staffing and project update	Andrea Berkely
6:40 p.m.	5-minute break	
6:45 p.m.	Bylaws, change, process, procedure, and discussion	Jonathan Soll
7:20 p.m.	Goals and next meeting agenda	All
7:30 p.m.	Adjourn	

Upcoming SBWAC meetings:

Tuesday, March 26, 2024, on Zoom

For agenda/schedule information, contact Jonathan Soll at jonathan.soll@oregonmetro.gov.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR PRODUCTIVE SBAC MEETINGS

The following meeting guidance is meant to encourage equitable participation in our discussions and respect for one another's opinions and positions while allowing everyone an opportunity to be heard and provide valuable input.

Make space/take space

Participate in the conversation and be aware of your own time speaking. If needed, timekeeping will be used to allow room for all voices to be heard.

Listen to understand

Focus on what is being said rather than how you will respond. Be present and attentive, minimize distractions, and ask questions.

Ask genuine questions

Meaningful questions inspire curiosity and help us understand our different perspectives.

Succinctly state views and explain reasoning

Stating our views clearly helps us understand how we reached our conclusions and where our reasoning differs. Always be mindful of time and speak your truth.

Speak responsibly

Our own viewpoint is just one part of the whole. Share your views honestly and be mindful that your words could have a negative impact on others and cause harm.

Note: these were adapted from multiple sources including the EMSWCD The Agreements and the Harvard Business Review article 8 Ground Rules for Great Meetings by Roger Schwarz (2016).



Meeting summary

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Advisory Committee

January 23, 2024

Committee members in attendance

Carrie Butler Port of Portland
Daryl Houtman City of Portland, Bureau of Environmental Services
Eric Stern Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes
Jonathan Soll Metro
Eugenia Tam North Portland Neighbors
Troy Clark Audubon Society of Portland

Committee members not in attendance

Max Samuelson Columbia Slough Watershed Council
Pat Jewett 40-Mile Loop Trust

Others in attendance

Allan Schmidt Metro
Andrea Berkley Metro
Annie Toledo Metro
Jina Sagar Metro
Sofia Bermudez-Eredia Metro

WELCOME

The November 2023 meeting minutes were approved.

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

Jonathan Soll, during his recap, emphasized the advisory committee's role as a valuable platform for sharing community ideas and projects, receiving guidance, updates, and fostering networking opportunities. The committee has been actively involved in supporting various issues through written letters of support.

Allan Schmidt's project update

Allan Schmidt provided detailed insights into ongoing discussions with Metro, ODOT, and the City of Portland. The focus is on advancing a project beyond the 30% design phase, involving collaboration between the three agencies. Specific plans were discussed regarding accessibility improvements at a parking area near the lakes. The analysis of access points and maintenance improvements aims to address concerns without making dramatic changes, with the goal of implementing the improvements in the upcoming construction season.

Schmidt outlined the steps for the Prairie Trails landfill project, including the submission of land use applications, obtaining permits for preloading or surcharge, and initiating construction during the summer or fall. He emphasized the importance of gradually compressing the landfill, allowing it to sit for at least a year to a year and a half. The plan is to monitor and ensure minimal movement before proceeding with the next phases of construction.

Addressing specific issues at the site, Schmidt discussed the need to handle fallen bollards at the entrance and the intention to incorporate this into the project. He also highlighted the importance of keeping materials on-site, particularly for burying infrastructure around the landfill, due to DEQ certification.

Schmidt mentioned ongoing communication with Andrea about seed mixes, indicating a focus on using clean material and appropriate seeding. While emphasizing the forward movement of the project, he assured the group that major movements in the landfill were not anticipated, aiming for a carefully controlled compression.

As permitting progresses, Schmidt committed to providing more detailed information on the schedule, demonstrating a focus on obtaining necessary approvals for the project's advancement.

Evan Callahan Introduction and updates

Callahan introduced himself as a new project manager at the City of Portland. He provided updates on the bridge project, indicating a 30% design progress with well-defined boundary conditions, particularly where the trail intersects the slough bridge. The bridge project is considered a major catalyst, enabling public access to the property, and facilitating subsequent projects, such as access to St. John's prairie. Collaborative efforts with Metro, ODOT, and Parks are addressing scheduling and funding challenges.

Discussions last year focused on ODOT milestones and funding concerns, leading to considerations of alternative crossings at Columbia Boulevard. However, the primary focus remains on the bridge, and efforts are underway to identify funding for the preferred alternative. The project successfully signed a project change request form, allowing the design team to resume work in the first quarter of 2024.

The project is transitioning to the City of Portland, with dedicated community engagement staff assigned for involvement. Regular updates on the City's webpage will resume to foster open communication with the community. Callahan assures the committee of ongoing progress, with more content and introductions to community engagement specialists forthcoming.

COMMITTEE BYLAWS AND MEMBERSHIP

Jonathan initiated a discussion on proposed bylaw changes during the committee meeting. He communicated that the committee had voted to recommend formally advising Metro Parks and Nature rather than the Metro Council, pending further action from Parks and Nature Leadership and the Office of Metro Attorney team. He clarified that, in the meantime, the committee would continue to operate as usual.

Various topics were brought up for discussion. Jonathan raised considerations about committee membership, suggesting a reevaluation to identify potential gaps. He proposed outreach to additional organizations and the formalization of voting rights for appointed alternates. The relevance of stakeholders identified in 1990 and reaffirmed in 2013 was questioned, with Jonathan expressing openness to reassessing and potentially expanding participation for the benefit of the wetlands and the community.

The committee engaged in a comprehensive dialogue about building relationships and identifying interested organizations. Concerns were raised about groups showing disinterest, possibly due to a perceived lack of relevance. Jonathan proposed a more personalized approach, encouraging committee members to individually reach out to potential participants, inviting them to explore the committee's activities. He emphasized the importance of avoiding exclusion and suggested assigning responsibilities to re-engage absent members.

The discussion also included meeting dynamics, including the formalization of procedures for questions and feedback. Suggestions included posting meeting best practices online, attaching them to meeting minutes for feedback, and considering an anonymous survey to gather additional input.

Towards the conclusion of the discussion, Carrie expressed her intention to transition out of the chair position, indicating a future change in leadership for the committee. This announcement paved the way for a transition process and the possibility of new leadership in the near future.

CONSERVATION PROJECT UPDATES

Andrea Berkley presented comprehensive updates on the conservation project at Smith and Bybee. The bank integrity project, currently in its final stages, involves completing backfilling trenches, compaction testing, and re-graveling the road. Despite minimal issues, such as water seepage near the water control structure, the project has progressed well. Plans for February include closing the water control structure to restore a normal water management cycle, contingent on water levels and safety considerations.

Nutria control efforts have been ongoing, resulting in the removal of 48 nutria so far. This work will continue in different areas to prevent breeding, extending into February and the spring. A strategy for an Emerald Ash Borer to convert areas with ash cover was discussed, and ecological indicator analysis is set to resume in March.

Temporary office and storage structures will be introduced by WPES landfill staff by July 1st, with the aim of maintaining a presence on the site. WPES will vacate their current office location by June 30.

Jonathan emphasized the benefits of variability at Smith and Bybee, allowing for a more robust ecosystem. The water control structure provides opportunities for manipulating the system without resorting to expensive and chemical-intensive approaches. Andrea echoed this sentiment, highlighting the importance of adapting to natural variations over time.

Looking ahead, Andrea proposed a retreat for staff to deeply consider long-term projects at Smith and Bybee. The focus would be on projects that are important but not urgent, requiring dedicated time for thoughtful consideration. This retreat aims to provide an opportunity for staff to collectively reflect on the site away from other distractions. Andrea welcomed input and thoughts from others regarding this proposed retreat.

ST. JOHNS PRAIRIE PLANNING UPDATE

Funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has been secured for the fourth phase of St. John's Prairie, and plans involve starting site preparation in the summer of 2024. Power line work needs to get done that go across St. John's landfill and into the wetlands but there's a little bit

of communication circularity so it was decided that the attorneys for each of those departments will work directly with BPA on the details because it has to do with easements.

GOALS FOR NEXT MEETING AND WRAP-UP

- Evaluate and restructure committee membership.
- Assign responsibilities for engagement and encourage personalized outreach to additional folks and organizations that could be interested.
- Post best practices online.
- Initiate transition process for new leadership selection.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.