

Nature University

VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING



Discover the
naturalist in you!

2011 course catalog



Metro | *People places. Open spaces.*

Where do osprey nest? Why do beavers cut down trees? What do salmon eat?

Learn the answers to these questions and many more when you become a volunteer naturalist in Metro's parks. Every year thousands of children and adults visit Metro's parks and natural areas on school field trips and summer programs. Volunteer naturalists make these wonderful experiences possible by helping our staff naturalists lead these programs. If you love nature, enjoy working with children, and have access to personal transportation, consider becoming one of our volunteer naturalists by attending Nature University. No special experience is necessary but any background in natural history and biology or working with groups of people is helpful. You will receive the training you need to be a qualified and confident Metro volunteer naturalist.

Nature University is a 12-week training course that starts people along the path of becoming naturalists and teachers. Our staff of experienced naturalists will introduce you to time-honored techniques of nature observation and principles of discovery learning. They will also create opportunities for you to build community with other Nature University students and the larger circle of experienced Metro volunteer naturalists.

Nature University classes meet from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, Jan. 25 through April 12, at different locations. An additional meeting



on Sept. 28 is for salmon field trip training. There is some homework between class meetings. In exchange for this unique training, Metro volunteer naturalists are expected to provide a minimum of 40 hours of service within their first year, which is about 10 school field trip programs. Volunteer naturalists must be able to help with school field trips during school hours in the fall and spring, and on some weekdays or weekends in the summer. Volunteer naturalists also have opportunities to expand their service to other public outreach programs, such as special events and natural area tours, and to help develop educational materials.

Enrolling in the class of 2011

Application materials are available on Metro's web site at www.oregonmetro.gov/volunteer. Applications will be accepted through November 4, 2010. For more information, contact Metro volunteer resources at parkvol@oregonmetro.gov or call Sandy Jamison at 503-813-7565.

Volunteering – it's your nature!

Nature University Classes

Winter and Spring 2011

Trainees must attend all of the following classes scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 25 through April 12 (*there is one additional class on Sept. 28*)

Volunteer naturalist training orientation

Jan. 25, Metro Regional Center
Get to know Metro naturalist staff and other volunteer naturalists at this overview. Learn about Metro and the goals of the nature education program. Review the topics and schedule of training, the commitment and the benefits offered to you. Take a quick introductory walk at a Metro natural area and get your volunteer naturalist training manual.

Nature awareness

Feb. 1, Camp Collins
Our discovery of nature is based on observation, and good observation requires keen sensory skills. In this nature awareness class, you will practice new ways of using and combining your senses to heighten your awareness and increase the amount of information you absorb from any environment.

Tracking

Feb. 8, Camp Collins
Tracking is the science and the art of the detective naturalist. By learning to read the signs and trails that living things leave behind and by asking questions, we train ourselves to be naturalists in any environment. Tracking teaches us

to piece together clues and gradually uncover the unseen lives of animals, as well as deeply understand the ecological principals and interconnectedness with the environment that governs their lives. This class will cover the fundamentals of identification of animals from clear, individual tracks and signs. We also will introduce animal identification from patterns of tracks or trails.

Common wildlife and how animals work

Feb. 15, Metro Regional Center
If you were randomly beamed down to Earth by aliens, how would you know right away that you were in Oxbow Regional Park or Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area? Common characteristic plants and animals define the natural communities of our region; can you recognize them? Get your study of native Northwest fauna organized with the basics of animal classification. We also will discuss how animals work in terms of how they get the food, water, oxygen and proper environment they need to survive.

Teaching techniques

Feb. 22, John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center
This class is an opportunity to set your mind at ease regarding the anxieties you may experience in anticipation of teaching a real, live group of students. Topics and practice sessions include group management and safety, communication skills, teaching by asking questions and dealing with questions when you don't know the answer.

Site-specific field trip training

Naturalist students learn the specifics of leading school field trips by “shadowing” programs led by experienced volunteer naturalists in the first weeks of the season. These four “field classes” introduce you to the sites where our programs take place. School field trips occur in four locations: Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area, Oxbow Regional Park, Gotter Prairie Natural Area, and Sauvie Island Center. Metro coordinates all aspects of the school field trip programs at Smith and Bybee Wetlands and Oxbow Park. The programs at Gotter Prairie and Sauvie Island are offered through partnerships between Metro, Tualatin Riverkeepers, and the Sauvie Island Center. Each of the next four classes introduces volunteer naturalists to the basic ecology of the sites and the topics of the field trip programs.



School field trip program at Gotter Prairie or Sauvie Island Center

March 1, Gotter Prairie or Sauvie Island Center

Gotter is a 110-acre wet prairie that is undergoing restoration to its natural state. It is home to some species not common at our other sites, such as blue camas and cinnamon teal. It is on the Tualatin River near the tiny town of Scholls. Volunteers train to help students practice essential nature awareness techniques, search for animal tracks and sign, identify common birds, and learn about special wet prairie plants. This one-day training covers both basic ecology and leading field trips.

Sauvie Island Organics is a farm adjacent to Metro’s Howell Territorial Park on Sauvie Island. The Sauvie Island Center (non-profit) provides a school field trip program heightening students’ nature awareness and exploring concepts of food, farming, and the land.

Ecology of Oxbow Regional Park March 8, Oxbow Park, flood plain parking area

Oxbow’s abundant yet elusive wildlife reveal their life histories in the tracks and sign they leave behind as they hunt, browse, hide and rest on the banks of the Sandy river. This class will focus on further developing the core tracking skill sets in the morning, then shift into ancient forest ecology and the aquatic life of the Sandy river in the afternoon. Topics include identification of trees and plants, geology of the mountain and river, hands-on experience catching and identifying aquatic insects, and reading the signs of the abundant wildlife including deer, elk, coyote, and bear.

Ecology of Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area
March 15, Smith and Bybee parking area

Only a few miles from downtown Portland, this 2,000-acre freshwater wetland has lakes, riparian forest, and wet prairie. It is well known as one of the best bird watching sites in the region and is home to Oregon's largest population of Western painted turtles. Other residents that are occasionally seen include rabbit, beaver, muskrat, nutria, raccoon, and deer. In this class you will start to become familiar with the common plants and animals of Smith and Bybee and visit the water control structure that allows Metro to regulate the water level in the wetlands.

First Aid/CPR Training

(You will need to register with Metro for this training)

March 22, Metro Regional Center

Metro wants all volunteer naturalists to have current First Aid and CPR certification before they start leading school field trips. You can take this training class or one to be scheduled later in the spring. These options will be explained at the first class Jan. 25.

OR

Native Plant Center

March 22, Native Plant Center, Tualatin

Metro's native plant center is a working nursery that supplies local native plant stock to restoration projects in Metro natural areas and parks. Part of the NPC's mission is to provide educational opportunities for schools and other community organizations. We are developing a school field trip program at the NPC in partnership with a neighboring middle school. 7th grade

students visit the NPC 3 to 4 times a year and learn concepts such as native vs. non-native species, the importance of ecological diversity and the life cycles of plants while engaging in hands-on projects appropriate for the season. Volunteers attending this class will learn how the native plant center works and how to lead field trips. If you're interested in native plants and working with older children, this class is for you!

How to lead a school field trip at Smith and Bybee Wetlands
March 29, Smith and Bybee "Turtle Turnout"

We will model a typical school field trip program. Volunteer naturalists lead the "water bugs" activity and look for animal tracks and sign with their group of kids. While doing the water bugs activity there are opportunities to see frogs, ducks, herons, other birds, and the always exciting banana slugs and forest snails. The alternative activity that takes place when the water bugs are not at their best (summer and fall) is looking at our collection of pelts of the common mammals at Smith and Bybee and talking about their natural history.



How to lead a school field trip at Oxbow Regional Park

April 5, Oxbow Park naturalist's office

Volunteer naturalists will be trained to help guide a group of students on a richly multi-faceted journey through the ancient forest in search of edible plants, natural shelter, animal signs, bird alarms and other essential knowledge needed for the "survival" of their group. Learn tips for inspiring students to discover nature through this fun field trip. Later in the year, volunteers also will learn how to lead activities that focus on salmon and river ecology.

Mystery class and graduation

April 12, Oxbow Park flood plain parking area

Exactly as it says . . . we're keeping this class a mystery! After class, we will have a potluck lunch and graduation ceremony.

Salmon field trip training

Tuesday, Sept. 28

Oxbow Park naturalist's office

Autumn is the time we celebrate the return of fall Chinook salmon to spawn in the Sandy River at Oxbow as they have done for thousands of years. Our fall schedule is packed with school field trips about salmon. At this training, the last of your core classes, you'll learn to lead the fall field trip activities including guided salmon viewing walks, macroinvertebrate "critter catch" and river ecology hikes.



Naturalist training elective classes

These classes cover natural history topics and summer program activities in more detail than we can in Nature University. Volunteer naturalists should take a minimum of three electives, with more preferred. All of our evening natural history classes offered to the general public in the Greenscene qualify as Nature University electives. Field trips to sites with education programs are also excellent training for volunteer naturalists. Check the current Greenscene, in print or on-line, for specific dates and times. Class fees are waived for active volunteer naturalists.

Raptor identification

Weeknight class in January at Metro

Hawks, eagles and falcons have always fascinated people. In this class, we will discuss how to tell these major groups of raptors apart and the key points for identifying the most common species. We'll also discuss the amazing adaptations of these birds for catching and killing prey. *Instructor: James Davis*

Ducks 101: Waterfowl identification

Weeknight class in January or February at Metro

Thousands of ducks, geese and swans spend the winter in our region's wetlands. Come to this class to find out who's who in the waterfowl world and get ready for some great winter bird watching. *Instructor: James Davis*

Raptor road trip (event)

First Saturday in February

What could be better than seeing bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks and other raptors outside on a crisp, clear winter's day? How about while you are drinking a nice cup of coffee and munching on a donut? At this special event on Sauvie Island, you will enjoy a morning driving tour of raptor viewing spots and educational exhibits.

Instructors: James Davis with partner organizations

Mammals of Portland identification class

Weeknight class in February at Metro

Mink at Smith and Bybee? Bear at Oxbow? Coyote at Blue Lake? Many people are surprised when they hear about some of the mammals that are regular residents of our parks. This class will be a general "who's who" of the common mammals living in the metropolitan region, especially our parks and natural areas. We will have some pelts, tracks, skulls and scat to examine as well as photos and slides. *Instructor: James Davis*

Introduction to bird language field class

Weekend morning in spring at Oxbow Regional Park

What can you learn from birds as they communicate with each other and other wild animals? Can birds really tell you where predators are hiding in the forest? Discover the fascinating art of interpreting the meaning of bird songs and calls, using methods learned from well-known tracker Jon Young. This indoor/outdoor class combines modern birding tools and techniques with ancient awareness skills known to native people worldwide. *Instructors: Dan Daly and James Davis*



Bird watching for beginners

Weeknight class in March or April at Metro

If you're curious about the birds around you and want to figure out what they are and what they are doing, this class is for you. We'll discuss the basics of bird identification, including field guides and binoculars, and have a show of the "top 30" birds of Portland. *Instructor: James Davis*

Identifying spring birds

Weeknight class in April at Metro

Spring brings thousands of migrating birds to Portland. Some stay and breed while others just pass through. Get ready for some great spring birding with this guide to identification of our spring migrants and summer breeders. We'll simplify what seems like a confusing variety of birds to many beginners. *Instructor: James Davis*



Wildflower identification field class

Weekend afternoon in spring at Oxbow Regional Park

We have a great variety of wildflowers in our area and a blooming season from March through July, depending on location. Learning to identify wildflowers is easy once you get familiar with the most common wildflower families and learn what to look for to tell them apart. This class teaches the basics of wildflower identification, giving you enough knowledge to get started and the resources to keep going on your own.

Instructor: Deb Scrivens

Ethnobotany field class

Weekend afternoon in spring at Oxbow Regional Park

Ethnobotany is the study of how humans use plants. This entertaining workshop will include the ethics and safety protocols involved in plant harvest, a walk in the springtime woods of Oxbow Regional Park to get to know plants traditionally used for food, medicine, baskets, etc., and a resource list for further study. Half of the class will be a practicum focused on creating cordage and tea from stinging nettles.

Instructor: Deb Scrivens

Roving naturalist training field class

Weekend afternoon in June at Oxbow Regional Park

Roving naturalists walk the trails and campground, greeting and talking with visitors at Oxbow Regional Park on summer weekends when the park is busy. You'll receive training to share information about the park's abundant wildlife, help children earn their Junior Ranger badges, and help educate visitors about the importance of taking care of this special place. *Instructor: Dan Daly*

Campfire host training field class

Weekend evening in July at Oxbow Regional Park

Help put on the Oxbow Park evening campfire programs in the outdoor forest amphitheater. Be part of a summer park tradition, and enjoy some good natural history shows and music! Campfire hosts set up the lights, introduce the performer, and then put away the gear at the end of the program. Hosts should plan to commit to a minimum of two campfires (Friday or Saturday evenings). Stay free in the campground the nights you volunteer. For the training, we will set up for an actual campfire performance.

Instructor: Dan Daly



Volunteer naturalist position

Metro

Purpose

Thousands of children visit our parks each year on school field trips and summer programs. Volunteer naturalists are needed to help provide environmental education programs for these groups weekdays in the spring, summer, and fall at Oxbow Regional Park and Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area. Spring field trips also take place at Gotter Prairie Natural Area and the Sauvie Island Center. Volunteer naturalists are also needed for summer programs at Oxbow Park on weekends as well as on weekdays. Volunteer naturalists have additional opportunities to help with other specialized programs for both adults and children year-round at other parks and natural areas around the region.



Essential job duties

- Guide groups through environmental education activities, ensuring educational messages are delivered and that participants have a positive and safe experience.
- Regularly help lead school field trips during April, May, June, October and November. Time commitment for each school field trip ranges from four to six hours.
- Help lead youth group field trips, roving naturalist programs, or other education programs regularly during the summer months of June, July and August and occasionally in winter in parks and natural areas. The time commitment for each of these programs averages from two to three hours.
- Take initiative to sign up for upcoming field trips posted in the Volunteer Information Center and noted in the monthly volunteer naturalist newsletter.
- Coordinate and confirm with Metro staff details about field trips including location, time, meeting spot, materials and education activity plan prior to field trip.
- Maintain good working relationship with Metro Regional Parks and Natural Areas staff, volunteers and park visitors.

Continued

Required knowledge, skills and abilities

- Passionate and curious about nature and the outdoors
- Enjoy working with people
- Good interpersonal skills
- Ability and comfort speaking to groups or a desire to learn
- Self-directed, responsible and with good judgment
- Reliable – able to be on time and prepared for each volunteer commitment
- Able to walk on uneven surfaces and lift up to 20 pounds
- CPR/first aid certification (can be completed during training)
- Able to act as a professional and friendly Metro representative while in the park, on or off duty.

Time commitment

After the initial commitment of the training classes, Metro volunteer naturalists are expected to provide a minimum of 40 hours of service within a year (about 10 school field trips). It is recommended that all volunteer naturalists average two to four field trip programs per month during the spring, summer and fall months (April through October) as well as some summer programs.

Training and benefits provided

- Volunteer naturalist training
- Nature University course and training notebook
- Free First Aid/CPR training
- Opportunities for continuing education and training on various natural history topics
- Fee waiver for Metro classes
- Annual park entry pass
- Guidance from Metro staff naturalists



Meet Metro's naturalists

Deb Scrivens

Deb plans educational programs, nature centers and signage for our region and began the education program at Oxbow Regional Park on the Sandy River. She brings a wide variety of travel and work experience ranging from fire ecologist to wilderness ranger, from bear biologist to forester, and from animal tracking to emergency wilderness medicine. Deb has worked for the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She loves many ways of interacting with the environment, including kayaking, scuba diving, animal tracking, gardening and travel. Deb spends time both in Portland and in her home on the Sandy River with her husband, a park ranger, and their cat.

James Davis

James is the naturalist for Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area and for Metro's newly acquired natural areas. Spring of 2011 marks his 13th year at Metro. He began his nature studies as a young lad chasing lizards in the desert near Tucson. With a master's degree in zoology, he spent several years teaching junior and senior high science, and did stints as the "Zoomobile Guy" for two zoos. During the 1980s, he was education director of the Audubon Society of Portland and continued to do tours and programs for Audubon while teaching at Marylhurst University. His book "The Northwest Nature Guide" was published in early 2009 and he was a contributor to "Wild in the City," a comprehensive guide to Portland's natural areas. Music is the other main interest in his life – James played in the

local rock 'n' roll band "The Jitters" for 17 years. He and his wife Sally live in Northeast Portland and he is pleased to have his grown daughter here in town at Lewis and Clark's law school.

Dan Daly

Dan Daly is Metro's newest naturalist, though he is not new to Metro. Over the past twelve years, Dan has worked with the Audubon Society of Portland, WolfTree, TrackersNW, Trackers International, the Breitenbush Hot Springs Community, MESD Outdoor School, Portland State University and with Metro as a seasonal naturalist. Dan's life of adventure led him to the Amazon to complete a Masters of Science in Educational Leadership from Portland State University with a focus on ecology, culture and learning. His thesis was based on the experiences of being immersed into the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Napo Runa Indians. Love found a way, and Dan married a Peruvian woman named Mary Elena whom he met in the Amazon on his first trip there.



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Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

www.oregonmetro.gov

Metro

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