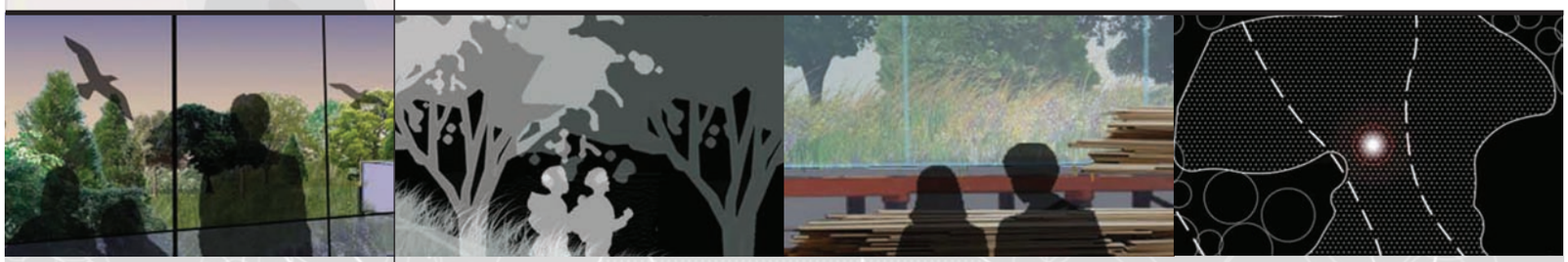
People's choice

CATEGORY 2

Commercial development and lowland hardwood forest

Nature in Neighborhoods:
Integrating Habitats Winners Series

designing flow



Confluence: flowing together

Stormwater as educational art

Skywalk: connections that conserve

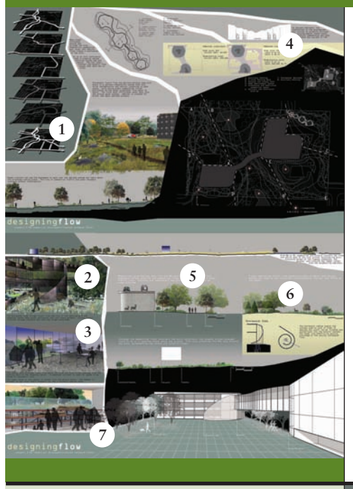
Micro-habitats

Wildlife underpass

Restored lowland forests

Eye-level habitats

Keep Nature in Neighborhoods METRO



Snapshot of a winner

How can we improve connections between humans and nature? From birds foraging to people shopping, *designing flow* creates confluences—places where the built and natural environments meet, allowing humans and wildlife to harmoniously inhabit the same site. Here, buildings, open space and parking lots are a working part of the environment, recognizing that every development project is an opportunity to improve the health of natural systems that we all depend on.

③ Skywalk: connections that conserve

Exiting the treetop-level Canopy Cafe, customers move from the shopping center to the parking deck via an enclosed bridge or skywalk. The skywalk's multi-functional design allows patrons to enjoy a bird's eye view of the conservation area below, while protecting the habitat from heavy foot traffic. A parallel corridor is used to transport goods to the customers' cars, enabling various flows of people, goods and wildlife to co-exist.

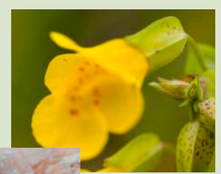
⑤ Wildlife underpass

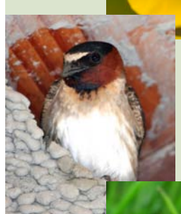
An underpass allows wildlife and pedestrians to safely navigate heavy traffic flows. Lush with native trees, shrubs and plantings, visitors can connect with and experience nature in an urban setting.

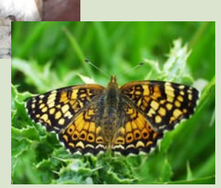
designing flow:

A confluence is designed to allow humans and wildlife to inhabit the same site in harmony.

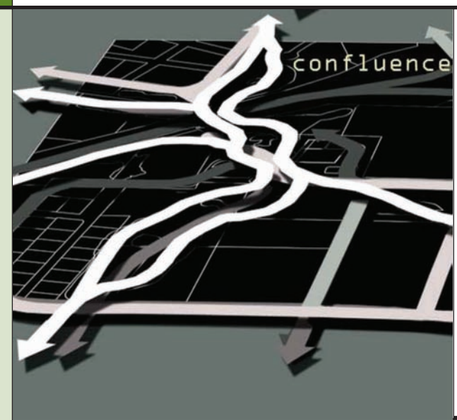
Inhabitant profiles







Monkey flower, Cliff swallow (U.S. Fish and Wildlife), Mylitta crescent butterfly



① Confluence: flowing together

A confluence exists where vegetation, wildlife, pedestrians, buses, bikes and vehicles move and circulate – or flow together – through a site. At this confluence, creative design solutions blend and balance these man-made and natural flows. The site's multi-functional landscapes and amenities ultimately connect to other networks of trails, roads and ecosystems within the region.

② Stormwater as educational art

The stormwater system transports stormwater runoff from the parking deck and shopping center through beautiful glass "whirlpools" and into rain gardens and the seasonal wetland. Customers witness first-hand how runoff can be filtered back into natural systems via artful design and aesthetic features that also improve environmental health.

"A place can have power in creating the essential dialogue of our time. How we connect with, remediate and sustain natural habitats with human settlement is crucial to the conversation of the 21st century"

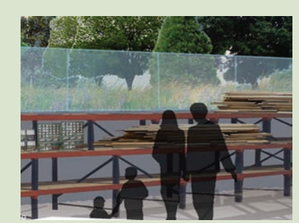
– Susan Szenasy, jurist

④ Micro-habitats

Small variations in vegetation, soil types and topography create "micro-habitats." Proving that even small spaces are environmentally significant, micro-habitats improve biodiversity and can be crucial to wildlife survival. The varying environmental elements of these small areas create safe places for birds, insects, reptiles and other wildlife to forage and nest, thereby creating robust, healthy plant and wildlife communities.

⑥ Restored lowland forests

Employees and neighbors participate in tree planting events. Over 200,000 sq. ft. of additional lowland hardwood forest provides habitat for many species of wildlife.



⑦ Eye-level habitats

The building's ground level provides views of the stormwater art, restored forest and wetland. Shoppers can see how the site elements work together, while enjoying a unique shopping experience.

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Multi-functional design for diverse flows

A big box store can be more than a place to buy things! Every built environment exists within a watershed. Therefore, even highly developed, commercial sites can improve stream health and water quality by soaking up rainfall and stormwater runoff rather than routing it to sewer systems. Planning for the natural, simultaneous flows of water, wildlife and people through a site involves designing structures and buildings that contribute to natural system performance and integrate native habitats, such as wetlands and lowland hardwood forests. This holistic planning process creates unique, dynamic places that people want to visit, support and experience.

Team member

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"Let's face it: integrating habitats is pretty hard to start with. There's no one absolution. But the job ahead is not impossible; these designs are roadmaps to healthier cities; healthier streams."

– Tom Schueler, jurist

Jurists

Stefan Behnisch, principal
Behnisch Architects
Stuttgart, Germany
and Venice, Calif.

Joan Nassauer, professor
Landscape architecture
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Tom Schueler, founder
Center for Watershed Protection
Ellicott City, Md.

Susan Szenasy, editor-in-chief
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Jim Winkler, president
Winkler Development Corporation
Portland, Ore.

David Yocca, director
Conservation Design Forum
Elmhurst, Ill.

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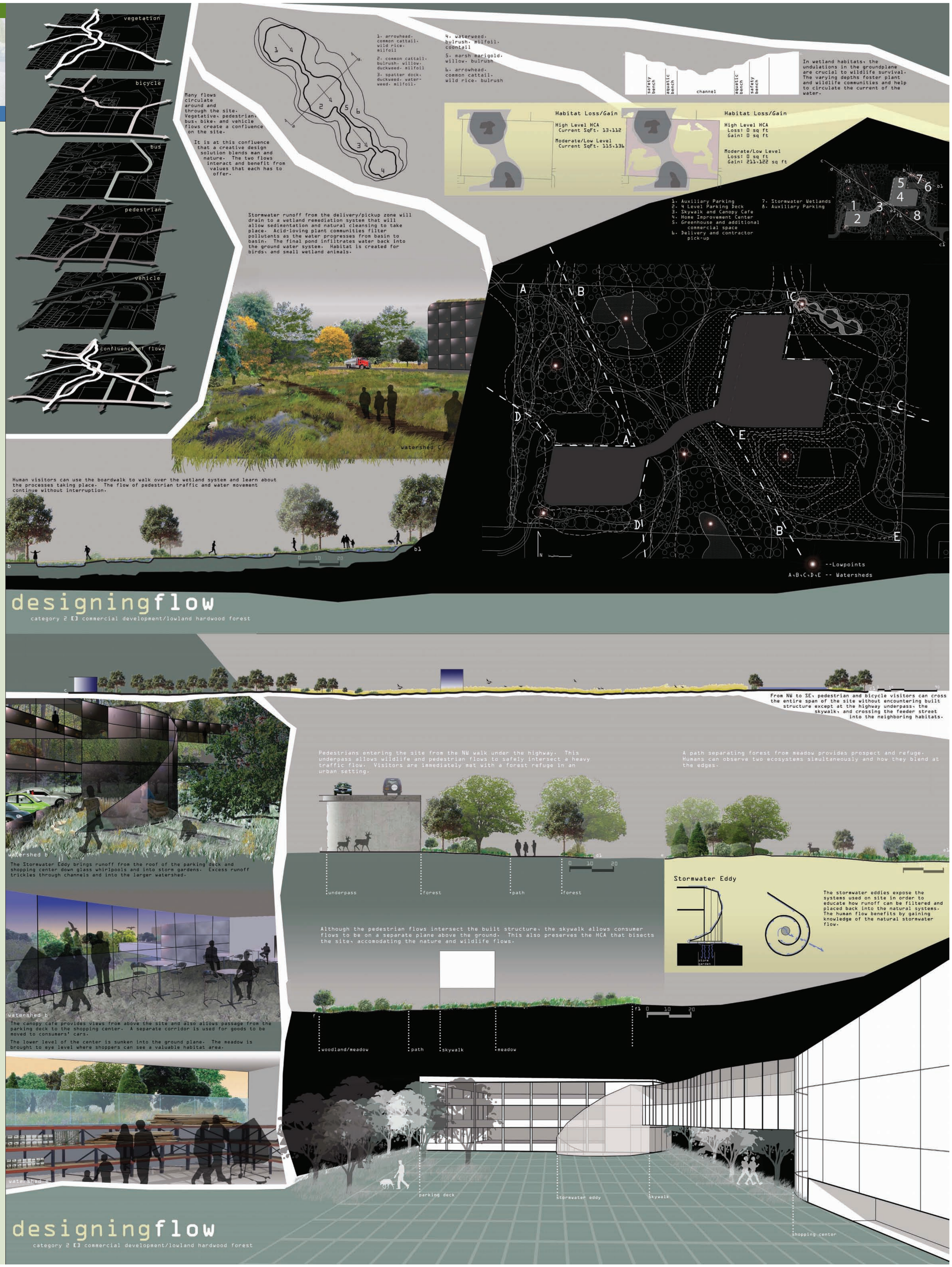
Integrating Habitats Winners Series



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Nature in Neighborhoods:
Integrating Habitats Winners Series

Blend. Balance. Integrate.

Collaborate to redefine the built environment and restore nature.

More than 100 teams from around the world submitted entries to the Integrating Habitats design competition, proving that every space in which we live, work, shop and play can create places for both people and nature. These designs redefine current standards of environmental sustainability. The award winners illustrate new types of nature-friendly designs that balance development, human needs and the health of natural systems we all depend upon.

www.oregonmetro.gov/integratinghabitats

"Some of the most memorable designs open up as many new questions about how to engage the built and natural environments as they seem to answer, hinting at the beginnings of a new era of design innovation." **—Josh Cerra, project advisor**

Metro regional government

serves 1.4 million people who live in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative brings the regional government and local jurisdictions together to help ensure that the region's wildlife and people thrive in a healthy urban ecosystem.

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