

Metro's Natural Areas Program progress report

In November 2006, voters asked the Metro Council to safeguard water quality, protect fish and wildlife habitat and ensure access to nature for future generations.

Working with local partners, Metro's Natural Areas Program has already protected nearly 2,500 acres of land across the region.



The \$227.4 million bond measure protects natural areas, rivers and streams, helping manage growth and maintain quality of life throughout the greater Portland region.

Metro's Natural Areas Program is designed to work at the regional, local and neighborhood levels.

Regional natural areas

\$168.4 million in bond funds available

When voters approved the bond measure, they signed off on 27 target areas to protect. The Metro Council spent most of 2007 crafting a strategy for each area, with lots of input from natural resource and land use experts, scientists, local land managers and residents. Nearly 1,000 people completed questionnaires, ranking priorities, suggesting partnerships and offering ideas to stretch the public's investment. Now, each target area has a map and detailed goals – all available online at www.oregonmetro.gov/naturalareas.

At the regional scale, Metro's Natural Areas Program has already protected nearly 2,400 acres of land in 17 target areas. Among the acquisitions:

- A rare type of wetland called a "fen" was the prime attraction on 13 acres in the Willamette Narrows area near West Linn. A fen, which features a shallow lake with a floating bed of peat moss, provides habitat for very important – and very unusual – plants. Metro acquired part of this fen in 1998 with funds from a previous bond measure, and completed the job in 2009.

Counting our successes

Acres protected with regional funds: 2,356

Portion of 4,000-acre goal fulfilled: 59 percent

Number of transactions: 49

Target areas where land has been protected: 17

Dollars spent on regional land acquisition: \$53 million

Rivers and streams protected: More than 11 miles

Smallest acquisition: .38 acres (Johnson Creek area)

Biggest acquisition: 1,143 acres (Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge area)

Acres protected by local governments: 139

Dollars spent on local acquisitions: \$12.4 million





- Metro continued preserving Council Creek with the purchase of 7 acres near Cornelius, west of Susbauer Road. Plans are under way to restore a 670-foot section of creek and improve a small wetland and upland forest. Metro crews share the property with beaver, river otter, deer and ducks.
- An 1,800-acre swath of land near the Sandy River is now in public ownership, thanks to Metro's purchase of a 42-acre gap along Gordon Creek. The new property, which provides spawning areas for threatened Sandy River fall Chinook and winter steelhead, is close to Metro's Oxbow Regional Park, other Metro natural areas and Bureau of Land Management property.

Get out and go

Metro leads many nature hikes and sneak preview tours at regional natural areas. For the latest offerings, go to

www.oregonmetro.gov/greenscene



Natural Areas Program reaches milestone with biggest-ever acquisition

Imagine standing on top of Chehalem Ridge, looking out over Tualatin Valley farmland and five Cascade mountain peaks: Rainier, St. Helens, Adams, Hood and Jefferson.

You might spot deer tracks, beaver carvings or an uncommon oak-madrone woodland. Explore the starting point for a network of streams flowing to the Tualatin River, nestled in a landscape of young Douglas fir trees. With generations of careful management, they'll mature into old-growth forests that support diverse wildlife and clean water.

Now you have an inkling of what it's like to experience Metro's newest natural area: a 1,143-acre expanse of forestland south of Forest Grove. Metro began 2010 by purchasing Chehalem Ridge Natural Area, the largest acquisition in the history of the region's two voter-approved bond measures.

The new natural area is one of the metropolitan area's biggest remaining swaths of undeveloped forest. At about the size of Oxbow Regional Park, this land is positioned to protect water quality and wildlife habitat in the Tualatin River Basin and serve as a scenic and recreational resource for the region.

"This acquisition nearly doubles the amount of land the Metro Council has protected with the latest bond measure, but Chehalem Ridge is much more than a number," Metro Council President David Bragdon said. "It's also a milestone in terms of scenery, restoration potential and partnerships."

Protecting Chehalem Ridge was a team effort. The Trust for Public Land negotiated a \$6.1 million purchase from Stimson Lumber Co. and immediately sold the property to Metro for the same price.





At 1,143 acres, Chehalem Ridge Natural Area offers views of five Cascade peaks – including Mount Hood.



Metro Council President David Bragdon tours Chehalem Ridge Natural Area.

Because of its scale, Chehalem Ridge Natural Area can make a big impact on the Metro Council’s goals for land acquisition in this area: enhancing wildlife habitat and water quality. Restoration work on this property has the potential to affect the health of the Tualatin River.

“It’s home to my drinking water, and that of 200,000 of my friends here in western Washington County,” district 4 Metro

“This acquisition nearly doubles the amount of land the Metro Council has protected with the latest bond measure, but Chehalem Ridge is much more than a number.” – Metro Council President David Bragdon



Councilor Kathryn Harrington told the Hillsboro Argus, one of many media outlets that featured the news about Chehalem Ridge.

Metro also hopes to provide more public access to nature. An existing gravel and dirt road network at Chehalem Ridge Natural Area could form the basis for a future trail system.

The science staff will spend a year or so getting to know the property before Metro makes long-term decisions about public use. The Natural Areas Program will develop a plan to guide forest management and habitat restoration, while organizing guided hikes and other short-term opportunities for the public to see Chehalem Ridge.

Follow the evolution of this regional gem through photos, videos, maps and tour announcements at www.oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge.



Cooper Mountain Nature Park offers trails, wildflowers and vistas.



Cooper Mountain visitors get close-up view of nature – and a legacy

Visitors traverse forest, prairie and oak woodlands at the new Cooper Mountain Nature Park, which opened in the summer of 2009.

Some may not realize they're also exploring another type of landscape: the legacy of two voter-approved bond measures to acquire and improve natural areas.

Metro used the region's 1995 bond measure to buy this 231-acre natural area at the southern edge of Beaverton, overlooking the Tualatin River Valley. Funds from the 2006 bond measure – along with an Oregon State Parks grant – transformed Cooper Mountain into the recreation destination it is today.

Three-and-a-half miles of gravel trails meander through the park, rewarding hikers with close-up views of Oregon white oaks and wildflowers and, once in a while, rare animals such as the Northern red-legged frog and the Western gray squirrel. Viewpoints offer panoramas of the Tualatin Valley and the Chehalem Mountains.

The Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District manages Cooper Mountain, including a Nature House for environmental education programs and a demonstration garden meant to inspire your own plot.

Visiting Cooper Mountain

18892 SW Kemmer Road, Beaverton

From Highway 217: Take the Scholls Ferry Road exit and head west on Scholls Ferry, past Murray Boulevard. At Southwest 175th Avenue, turn right and go north, uphill, about 1.8 miles. Turn left onto Kemmer Road; the park entrance is on the south side.

From Southwest Farmington Road (Highway 10): Go south on 185th Avenue, which becomes Gassner Road. Turn left on 190th Avenue and left on Kemmer Road.

Parking: Spaces are extremely limited. Please carpool, walk or bike!

More information: www.oregonmetro.gov/coopermountain





(Above) Metro has used 1995 and 2006 bond measures to purchase a total of 158 acres at Oregon's City's Canemah Bluff, which features the Willamette River views and conifer forests shown here – along with ash bottomlands, Pacific madrone trees and rare Oregon white oak woodlands.



(Above) Graham Oaks Nature Park is scheduled to open in September 2010, allowing visitors from Wilsonville and across the region to explore this re-created oak woodland. The 250-acre natural area has been a long-term project, drawing from natural area bond measures approved by voters in 1995 and 2006.



(Above) This 88-acre natural area along the Clackamas River bluffs features old-growth forest, a network of small caves and cliffs and, on a clear day, views of Mount Hood. Metro staff explored the property shortly after its purchase in fall 2009.

(Left) A tour group explores an 18-acre natural area along Deep Creek in Clackamas County, which Metro purchased in October 2009. This scenic stretch of forest sits along the developing Cazadero Trail.



Local projects in your community

\$44 million in bond funds

The Natural Areas Program allows flexibility for each community to meet its own needs, and offers improved access to nature in neighborhoods across the region. Cities, counties and park providers in the metropolitan area are using their bond funds to protect natural areas or add park land, restore fish and wildlife habitat, improve public access to nature, design and construct trails and enhance environmental education.

Of more than 100 projects planned throughout the region, more than three dozen have been completed. Here's a sampling of the success stories.

The **City of Tualatin** purchased nearly 3.5 acres along the Tualatin River Greenway, immediately west of Jurgens Park. This acquisition includes 235 feet along the river, which is home to an abundance of fish and wildlife, including steelhead and salmon, Western painted turtles and Northern red-legged frogs. The new property will be integrated into Jurgens Park, a popular gathering spot in northwest Tualatin.

The **City of Portland** acquired three small properties that expand existing natural areas: Forest Park in Northwest Portland, Buttes Natural Area in outer Southeast Portland and Woods Memorial Natural Area in Southwest Portland. These additions – less than 4 acres altogether – will provide vital buffers, protecting the natural areas from surrounding development.

The **Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District** and the **City of Beaverton** pooled their bond measure funds to buy an 8.5-acre woodland in southwest Beaverton as a natural area and future park. Located between the Murray Ridge and Sterling Park subdivisions, the property will serve a residential area that needs additional park land.



Western painted turtle



The City of Tualatin used funds from Metro's natural areas bond measure to expand Jurgens Park, along the Tualatin River Greenway.

Fairview reinvents neglected natural area

These days, neighbors walk their dogs or push strollers through the winding path at Fairview Woods. They stop to gaze at Douglas fir trees, Western red cedar, vine maple and other native plants. If it weren't for the faint whir of traffic, you'd never guess this 8-acre nature park was nestled in a residential neighborhood close to Interstate 84.

Fairview Woods wasn't always so serene. A few years ago, ivy and blackberry had invaded the park. Graffiti tagged the trees, and you could barely see down the narrow trails. Although nobody was hurt, a shotgun incident heightened a growing sense of fear.

The City of Fairview teamed up with neighbors to transform Fairview Woods – and they turned to Metro's Natural Areas Program for funding.

"The city is very grateful for that money being available," said John Gessner, Fairview's community development director. "It came at the right time for this park."

With \$99,000 in bond money, the city widened trails and made them wheelchair-accessible. A goat herd helped clear non-native plants, and work crews replaced them with species that belong in a Northwest forest.

The city cooperated with the Housing Authority of Portland, which owns an apartment complex next to Fairview Woods and used to own the park before donating pieces to the city in 1995 and 2007.

Steve Kaufman, a longtime neighbor of Fairview Woods and chairman of the city's parks committee, didn't walk through the park very often during the makeover. He wanted to be surprised by the before-and-after.



Metro Councilor Rod Park explores Fairview Woods, which was spruced up with wider trails, more native plants and a renewed sense of safety.

Since the November 2009 reopening, Kaufman says, Fairview Woods has once again become a popular getaway for neighbors.

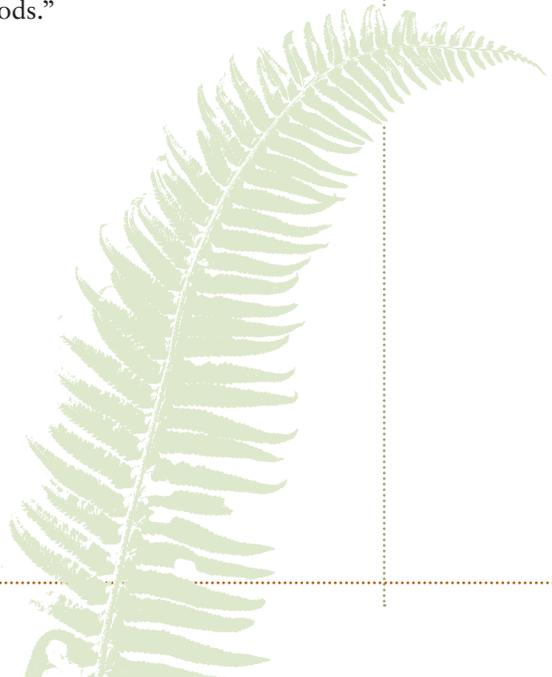
"The changes are phenomenal," Kaufman says. "It's a much nicer place to be."

Fairview Woods is a success story in its own right, said Metro Councilor Rod Park, who represents the eastern part of the Portland area in District 1. But it can inspire projects in other communities, too.

"We hope what we see here will be repeated across the region as people come out and find an area they really like," said Park. "They want to enhance it, and they really take ownership in their neighborhoods."



"The changes are phenomenal. It's a much nicer place to be." – Steve Kaufman, Fairview Woods neighbor



Metro Councilor Robert Liberty and Mary Rose Navarro of Metro's Natural Areas Program help out at the kickoff for Friends of Trees' project along Interstate 205.



Nature in Neighborhoods

\$15 million in bond funds

The bond measure set aside grant money to engage schools, community groups, nonprofits, park providers and others in projects that connect neighborhoods with nature. As these local projects are carried out, the program preserves and enhances the natural features that make each community special.

About \$1.4 million has been awarded in capital grants, with more planned for March 2010. Among the most recent batch of recipients:

- Metro helped foot the bill for a 2-acre expansion of Nadaka Nature Park in

Gresham's East Wilkes neighborhood. The new addition sits along Northeast Glisan Street, offering greater visibility and better public access for this sometimes-overlooked community asset.

- A vacant lot next to Humboldt School in North Portland is being transformed into a learning garden for students and nearby residents. Plans call for incorporating native plants and reusing the school's stormwater.
- Metro helped purchase 14 acres of significant Oregon white oak savanna in West Linn to protect, restore and manage as a natural area. Visible from Interstate 205, this property offers views over the Willamette River to Canemah Bluff in Oregon City.
- Friends of Trees is teaming up with the Oregon Department of Transportation to plant 1,300 native trees and 16,000 native shrubs on the bike and pedestrian path along Interstate 205. Another project partner, Verde, will create jobs in the nursery industry and expand environmental education and work training opportunities to underserved communities of color.

Visit www.oregonmetro.gov/naturalareas for more information about Metro's Natural Areas Program and how your tax dollars are being used to protect water quality and bring more nature into neighborhoods.

Photography by

C. Bruce Forster, Ed McVicker, NarrativeLab, Inc., Chijo Takeda, City of Tualatin, Metro staff and partners.



Metro natural areas are part of The Intertwine, our connected network of parks, trails and natural areas in the Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington region. To learn how you can help us plan, protect and promote The Intertwine, visit www.theintertwine.org

Metro | *People places. Open spaces.*

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.

Metro representatives

Metro Council President – David Bragdon

Metro Councilors – Rod Park, District 1; Carlotta Collette, District 2; Carl Hosticka, District 3; Kathryn Harrington, District 4; Rex Burkholder, District 5; Robert Liberty, District 6

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