

 Metro | Memo

Date: February 12, 2010
 To: David Bragdon, Council President
 From: Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Natural Areas Program Director
 Re: Natural Areas Program new land acquisition

Target area: Johnson Creek and Watershed	Date of Closing: Feb. 12, 2010
File number: 29.013	Purchase Price: \$378,000
Seller: Parson	City: Gresham
Ownership Type: Fee simple	Partner: N/A
Acreage: 5.59 acres Tier: 1	Stream Frontage: 2,100 feet
Target Area Acreage Total: 165 acres	Target Area Acreage Goal: 200 acres

The acquisition meets the refinement goals for this target area in the following way:

Refinement Plan goal: This property meets the refinement plan goal by acquiring upland habitat adjacent to the main stem of Johnson Creek, protecting water quality and connecting existing publicly owned land in the area.

Tier I objectives: This acquisition meets the Tier I objective of protecting land along Johnson Creek for water quality benefits.

Partnership objectives: This acquisition creates additional opportunities to work with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council, the City of Gresham and other partners in protecting the creek's habitat and water quality. Metro's acquisitions along the Springwater Corridor have generated high-quality volunteer projects, engaging students and nonprofit groups.

This acquisition is important to the region because it meets the criteria established in the bond measure voters approved in November 2006:

Water quality: The property includes about 400 feet on both banks of Johnson Creek and 500 feet on both banks of Sunshine Creek, including the associated riparian forests. Riparian areas provide numerous ecological functions that protect and improve water quality, including stream shade, removal of sediment and significant organic matter such as large wood.

Habitat value: Two acres of the property are dominated by a grassy lawn with large, scattered Douglas-fir trees. The remaining four acres are covered by an intact riparian forest of alder, cottonwood and scattered Douglas-fir trees, with abundant salmonberry in the understory. Riparian habitats in Western Oregon support a wide diversity of wildlife, including more than 200 breeding birds.

Rarity (habitat of concern): Johnson Creek provides habitat for Chinook, coho, steelhead and cutthroat trout. The Oregon Conservation Strategy puts a special emphasis on riparian habitat, which has decreased significantly statewide, due to its importance for protecting water quality and wildlife.

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Parcel size: At nearly six acres, the property is small. But in combination with an adjacent two-acre parcel purchased in 2008 by Metro's Natural Areas Program, it increases the area of contiguous stream and riparian area protected.

Restoration potential: This property offers an excellent opportunity to restore riparian forest along portions of Johnson and Sunshine creeks. By removing structures, reforesting the property and possibly placing large wood along the banks, Metro's science team hope to improve the health of the creeks. Re-establishing vegetation should be relatively easy, given the simple, grass-dominated riparian area near the structures and the easy access for maintenance.

Wildlife habitat connectivity: As stated above, the property is adjacent to a two-acre parcel that was also funded by the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure. As Metro acquires more land along the Springwater Corridor and Johnson Creek, there is greater potential to improve the health of wildlife corridors throughout the watershed.

Scenic resources: The property is bordered by the Springwater Corridor, a regional trail that follows Johnson Creek on its path from Gresham to the Willamette River. Walkers, joggers and cyclists pass the property as they use the trail.

Public access potential: Easy accessibility from the Springwater Corridor creates opportunities for future public access.

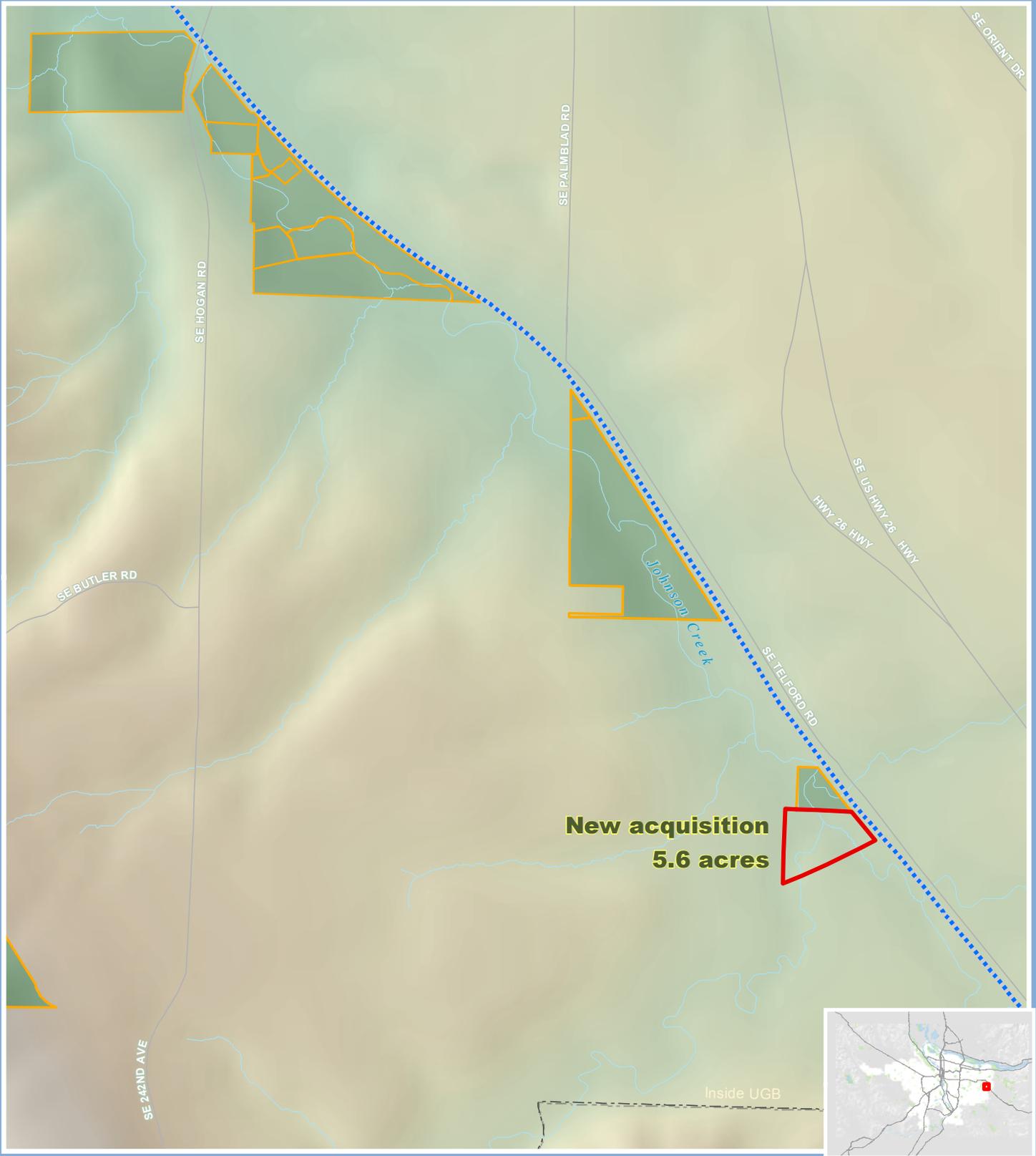
Natural Areas program staff have identified the following stabilization actions as necessary for this property:

Stabilization activities anticipated: Metro staff will begin planning for removal of an older residence, a storage shed and a two-story shop and office, which are not needed for management of the property's natural resource values. Removing the structures will allow Metro to begin restoration and improve the function of the riparian forests and creeks. Reforestation of the west lawn could begin almost immediately if sufficient plants are available, allowing more time to control invasive species during the property's two-year stabilization period.

Please call me if you have any questions regarding this purchase.

cc: Natural Areas Program Performance Oversight Committee
Metro Council
Suzanne Flynn, Metro Auditor
Michael Jordan, Chief Operating Officer
Scott Robinson, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Dan Cooper, Metro Attorney
Jim Desmond, Director, Sustainability Center
Teri Dresler, Director, Parks and Environmental Services

Johnson Creek

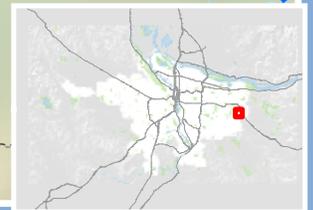


29.013

- New Metro acquisition
- Metro protected natural area
- Other public and/or protected lands

Metro's Natural Areas Program protects thousands of acres of fish and wildlife habitat, safeguards water quality and provides people with greater access to nature. For more information visit www.oregonmetro.gov/naturalareas.

- Main Roads
- Springwater Corridor
- Urban Growth Bounday



Parson

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