WINTER 2013

GreenScene

Your winter guide to great places and green living

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Metro | *Making a great place*

C. Bruce Forster photo

Metro Council sends levy to voters for natural areas and water quality

Metro asked. Five thousand of you answered.

Before making a decision about a levy recommendation from an independent advisory panel, the Metro Council wanted to hear what you thought. And when they asked whether they should refer a 5-year parks and natural areas levy to voters, more than 5,000 residents from around the region took the time to respond, mostly through Opt In, Metro's online participation tool. The council also talked with local governments and 100 community groups.

Read the survey results at **www.oregonmetro.gov/nature**.

This May, voters in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties will decide whether to approve a 5-year levy for water quality improvements, habitat restoration and expanded opportunities for people to use Metro's parks and natural areas.

If passed, the local option levy would be set at 9.6 cents per $1,000 of assessed home value – which would cost the typical homeowner about $20 per year. The levy would raise approximately $10 million each year for 5 years. Funds would be used to:

- improve water quality in local rivers and streams, including the Clackamas, Sandy and Tualatin rivers and Fanno and Johnson creeks, for salmon and other native fish
- restore wildlife habitat and remove invasive weeds that choke out native plants wildlife need for food and shelter
- restore wetlands and floodplains to control flooding and provide habitat for birds and amphibians
- improve visitor services in Metro's parks, including replacing aging restrooms, picnic shelters and playgrounds
- provide nature education programs to school-aged children and visitors
- support community partnership projects that connect people with nature in their neighborhoods.

Voter-approved measures have increased the region's park and natural area lands

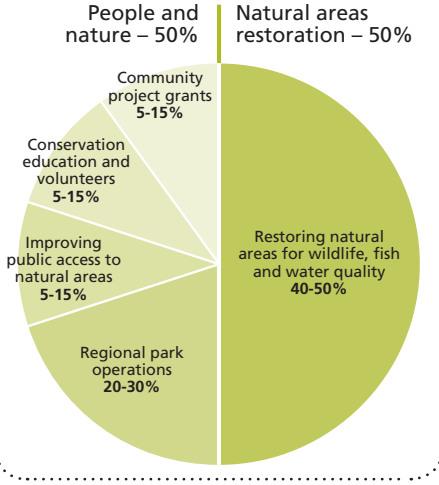
As a result of two voter-approved bond measures in 1995 and 2006, Metro owns or manages 16,000 acres of land – about a third of the region's publicly owned parks and natural areas, including destinations like Oxbow and Blue Lake regional parks, Smith and Bybee Wetlands, Cooper Mountain Nature Park and others.

While the voter-approved bond measures provide funds to purchase land, the law prohibits use of bond money for maintaining and operating these sites. Last summer, an independent advisory panel of 15 business, conservation and community leaders from around the region recommended that the Metro Council refer to voters a 5-year levy.

After receiving input about a potential levy from more than 5,000 residents and more than 100 community groups from around the region, the Metro Council took action in December to refer a local option levy to voters.

Where levy funds would go

All percentages are approximate



Learn more about the proposed levy to improve natural areas and water quality at **www.oregonmetro.gov/nature**.

Raptor Road Trip

Annual event celebrates birds of prey

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9

On this annual day devoted to birds of prey, naturalists and hawk experts host activities and answer questions at four locations on scenic Sauvie Island. On Feb. 9, explore the island, meet live raptors up close and sharpen your hawk identification skills with the help of expert birders, field guides and spotting scopes.

What will you see?

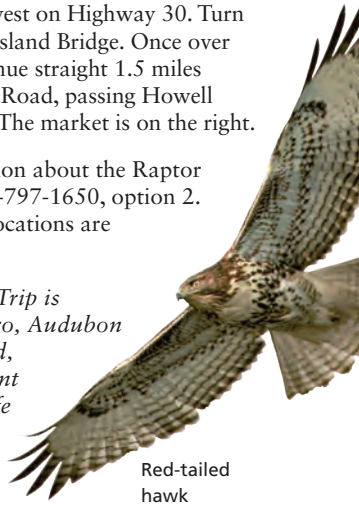
It depends on what nature has in store. Regularly sighted raptors include bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, American kestrels and Northern harriers. With luck, you might spot a rough-legged hawk, Cooper's hawk, merlin or peregrine falcon. Snow geese, sandhill cranes and great blue herons are commonly seen at this time of year, as are abundant waterfowl.

Road trip facts

- $10 per vehicle (cash only) includes a map to the four sites, lots of bird information, plus a required Sauvie Island Wildlife Area parking permit. Carpool with friends!
- Suitable for all ages and skill levels, the trip is a great family outing.
- Allow three hours to visit all four birding locations.
- Two viewing sites have hot drinks and doughnuts while they last.
- Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Rain or shine, the road trip goes on.
- Start at Kruger's Farm Market. From Portland, drive west on Highway 30. Turn onto the Sauvie Island Bridge. Once over the bridge, continue straight 1.5 miles on Sauvie Island Road, passing Howell Territorial Park. The market is on the right.

For more information about the Raptor Road Trip call 503-797-1650, option 2. Three of the four locations are accessible.

The Raptor Road Trip is sponsored by Metro, Audubon Society of Portland, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and HawkWatch International.



Red-tailed hawk

Jim Cruce photo

It's Our Nature: Learn its stories

From March 2013 to March 2014, a group of adults will immerse themselves in the region's natural areas, learning about natural history topics including geology, tracking, birding and ethnobotany in the second year of Metro's It's Our Nature field trip series.

Some people never stop learning. They ask questions, they investigate new places, they seek out experts who can answer their questions or introduce them to topics they never even thought to ask about. If you're one of those people, then It's Our Nature is for you. From bedrock to tree canopy, It's Our Nature explores some of Metro's 16,000 acres of wetlands, oak savannas and woodlands, Douglas fir forests and prairies. Lessons combine theory with place: each month, participants employ all five senses at sites that may include Smith and Bybee Wetlands, Clear Creek Natural Area, Oxbow Regional Park, Canemah Bluff, Tonquin Geologic Area and Mount Talbert and Cooper Mountain nature parks.

It's Our Nature is taught by veteran Metro naturalists who together possess more than 75 years of field naturalist experience. By sharing their expertise about the region, the naturalists are creating a community of learners and nature enthusiasts who in turn can show others how to be careful stewards of the land and its inhabitants.

Registration and more information

It's Our Nature is limited to 20 adults (ages 18 and over) who can commit to attend at least 11 of the 13 classes, and who can learn outdoors – in all weather conditions and in a variety of terrain. Apart from the orientation, classes begin at varying times on weekend mornings and run into the early afternoon. Interested? See a complete program description and fill out a brief application at the website shown below. Questions? Call 503-797-1650 option 2. No deposit is required. Applications are assessed for the applicant's level of interest and ability to commit to the program, and are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Tuition of $300 is due upon acceptance into the program. Orientation is scheduled for March 21, 2013.

Hands-on learning in a botany workshop

Metro naturalist Dan Daly leads a tracking workshop.

Fred Joe photo

Find out more about It's Our Nature

www.oregonmetro.gov/natureimmersion

Ebb and flow at Smith and Bybee Wetlands

Nature and historic land uses offer challenges and opportunities in North Portland

Above, St. Johns Prairie

Left, Katy Weil, a senior analyst at Metro, holds a green-winged teal duck. She managed the day-to-day recovery efforts during last fall's avian botulism outbreak at Smith and Bybee Wetlands.

In this Columbia River bottomland, change is constant. Seasons and daily tides bring high water and leave mudflats that attract birds – some resident, and some on their migratory path. Here, humans have hunted, camped, diked, dumped, sport-fished and even water-skied. Since the 19th century, industry has filled in and built atop nearby wetlands.

Smith and Bybee remains, 2,000 acres rich in history and habitat and fragile in its isolation. "These wetlands were once part of a dynamic mosaic that had equilibrium over space and time – the great bottomlands along the Columbia," said Jonathan Soll, Metro's science and stewardship division manager. Before human settlement, floods, droughts and disease could play out across countless thousands of acres. Not so now: these wetlands are some of the last stands for wildlife on this reach of the river. When change comes, it must be absorbed by a remnant of a once immense ecosystem.

Avian botulism outbreak

In September, paddlers on Smith Lake noticed ducks, necks limp and heads under water. The cause was avian botulism. Not toxic to humans, these botulism spores live naturally in soils and multiply in warm, shallow water. Metro acted quickly, removing dead birds to avoid spreading the toxin, employing sound and movement to shoo away healthy birds, and finally using explosives to drain Smith Lake so birds would not find it attractive. Fall rains and cooler temperatures finished the job. The outbreak was not severe by historic standards; still, 3,000 to 4,000 birds died.

Even before industrialization, birds died in such outbreaks. Today, however, the impacts are much greater because wildlife have few other habitat options to buffer the temporary loss of one site. Metro's resource managers seek to balance these and other natural cycles with solutions to preserve a landscape much altered by humans.

St. Johns Prairie

One such landscape consists of the 250 acres of the natural area – the recently renamed St. Johns Prairie – that occupy a landfill closed since 1991. The prairie represents an enormous opportunity. Now capped with soil, "It has the potential to be one of the largest prairies in the metro area," said Soll. Prairies, he said, are one of our region's most threatened habitats.

The plan is to restore the site to attract native birds, insects and mammals, including the streaked horn lark, currently proposed as a threatened species. With a $25,000 state wildlife grant, Metro and partners begin in 2013 to restore 20 acres, treating invasive grasses and planting seeds and plugs of living native plants.

Elaine Stewart, natural resource scientist at Metro, said that while the site remains closed, she hopes a trail eventually will be built across it. "The view is incredible from the dome of the landfill – a panorama of the wetlands and Cascade peaks," she said, "and as we improve habitat, the blooming wildflowers will be a sight to see."

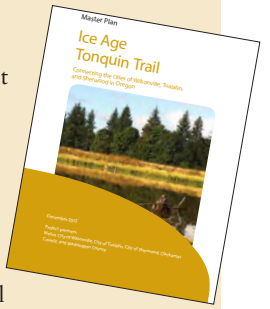
New links in the Willamette Greenway Trail

Although the prairie currently is not open to the public, a trail along its perimeter is in the planning stages. Part of the North Portland Greenway and the larger Willamette Greenway Trail, it will be a vital, now-missing link in Portland's regional trail system.

"When it opens, in five adjacent neighborhoods, 51,000 people will have a connection to Smith and Bybee – a world-class natural area," said Jane Hart, senior regional planner at Metro. They'll also be able to hop on a 140-mile regional trail system. Both recreational users and employees at the 600 businesses in the Rivergate Industrial Area will have new ways to commute and explore the region.

If you haven't been out to Smith and Bybee recently, come for a visit. Things look different with every season and with new developments. See the calendar on page 6 for two upcoming birding events in the wetlands.

Ice Age Tonquin Trail has new name, new master plan



The Ice Age Tonquin Trail is taking one important step back in time – and another big step forward. Recently renamed for floods that shaped the landscape thousands of years ago, the 22-mile trail now has an official blueprint. Partners along the route through Sherwood, Tualatin and Wilsonville worked together on the new master plan, bringing the trail closer to reality for future visitors.

Learn the latest developments
www.oregonmetro.gov/tonquintrail

Left to right, Crystal Springs Creek, Mount Scott Creek and Klein Point Overlook

Habitat restoration grants re-green local neighborhoods

Thanks in part to Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program, three recent projects have restored natural places in urban spaces.

Crystal Springs Creek restoration

On a city lot in Southeast Portland, a Metro grant helped restore the natural hydrology of a creek born in the springs of Reed Canyon. Its waters are becoming home to coho and Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

Restoration involved deconstructing a triplex and its driveway, replacing fish-blocking culverts, adding in-stream logs and planting 4,000 native plants. Metro's grant funded $311,480 of the $1.45 million project.

"It's creating a buzz," said Kaitlin Lovell, program manager for the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services. "It was a small contribution to the big picture, but it was the start. I also credit the Metro grant with getting us to think about how to engage the neighborhood more proactively." Since the project began, the Crystal Springs Partnership has formed. This group of neighbors, agencies and organizations are working together to establish healthy salmon runs in the creek.

Klein Point Overlook

Above Johnson Creek's confluence with the Willamette River and adjacent to bustling McLoughlin Boulevard is Milwaukie's new Klein Point Overlook. Visitors can peer down at 150 logs that have been placed in the water to create habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Volunteers also helped restore 6 acres of shoreline at the confluence. Metro's grant supported $225,000 of the $675,400 project.

The half-acre overlook site was donated by Gary and Sharon Klein. It is now part of Milwaukie's emerging, 8-acre Riverfront Park. JoAnn Herrigel, Milwaukie's parks and sustainability director, said the city started with 50 years of inherited plans. "This is the first successful effort at reclaiming the riverfront," she said. "The hope is that this park will become Milwaukie's 'living room.'"

Mount Scott Creek

Busy North Clackamas Park has baseball fields, off-leash dog areas and play structures. The park, at the confluence of salmon-bearing Mount Scott and Camas creeks, was getting perhaps a bit too much love. People and dogs playing near and in the creeks had trampled vegetation, resulting in eroded stream banks with no shade or resting places for fish.

With grant funds, 60 logs were installed to provide habitat for salmon and trout, a culvert was removed to enhance fish passage and thousands of native shrubs were planted to shade the creek. A new trail, with interpretive signage, meanders to overlooks of the water. Metro's grant provided $150,034 of the $450,222 cost.

This is the first in-stream project for Clackamas County Water Environment Services and its environmental policy specialist Gail Shaloum said, "We hope we'll be able to do more."

Your neighborhood could be next

Since 2008, $6.6 million have been awarded to 24 Nature in Neighborhoods projects. Funds for the $15 million capital grants program come from the $227 million, voter-approved 2006 natural areas bond measure. The grants provide a perfect way for citizens and local agencies to target urban areas where both humans and wildlife benefit from restoration.

"These projects have multiplier effects because they can be connected to a neighborhood's identity, economic development of a downtown or the ecological health of a regional park," said Mary Rose Navarro, Metro's natural areas grants coordinator.

> "Voters wanted to see natural areas coming into their own communities. These parks are a wonderful collaboration that give people in neighborhoods a sense of ownership. They become amazing assets in the communities, and a multi-generational gift."
>
> Carlotta Collette, Metro Councilor

Who can apply?

Neighborhood and community groups, nonprofits, schools, cities, counties and public parks providers can apply. Grants are made each year. Contact Metro as early as possible to discuss your ideas and get feedback on your project's readiness.

Begin to improve the regional places you love; find grant forms and more information at **www.oregonmetro.gov/capitalgrants**.

Winter calendar

Native Plant Center volunteer ventures

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 2 and 23, March 9 and 23

Volunteer at Metro's Native Plant Center in Tualatin and help care for the rare native seeds, bulbs and plant materials that support regional restoration projects. Winter activities include harvesting and planting native bulbs, planting seeds, transplanting seedlings and nursery maintenance tasks. No experience necessary. Gloves, tools, water and snack provided. Advance registration required; call 503-797-1653.

Winter birds at Smith and Bybee Wetlands

10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 16 and March 16

Winter is an active time at the wetlands with lots of water birds – ducks, geese, coots and grebes. Raptors such as red-tailed hawks and bald eagles are common; sightings of falcons and other hawks are possible. The wetlands' year-round residents as well as a few winter songbirds are easier to see because all the leaves are gone. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair on site; spotting scopes provided. Suitable for ages 9 and older. Meet Metro naturalist James Davis in the parking lot at 5300 N. Marine Drive. Registration and payment of $6 per adult or $11 per family required in advance. To register, visit Metro's online calendar at www.oregonmetro.gov/calendar, find your event and follow the instructions. Questions? Call 503-797-1650 option 2.

Winter twigs of Graham Oaks Nature Park

1 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24

Have you ever wished you could tell one evergreen from another, or identify a tree in winter by its bark or buds? Can you read the history of a piece of land by looking at its forest? Join Metro naturalist Deb Scrivens for a walk in the woods to unravel these mysteries and more. The forest at this natural area is a living laboratory of Northwest trees. Suitable for ages 12 and older. Registration and payment of $6 per adult or $11 per family required in advance. To register, visit Metro's online calendar at www.oregonmetro.gov/calendar, find your event and follow the instructions. Questions? Call 503-797-1650 option 2.

Seed scout training

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 16

Interested in tracking phenology of native wildflowers? Would you like to learn to identify flowers from their seed heads? Volunteering as a seed scout with Metro's Native Plant Center may be a good fit for you. Volunteer requirements: a field application, two training days and a commitment to 40 volunteer hours, March through September. For more information, visit www.oregonmetro.gov/nativeplantcenter. To register, call 503-701-7554.

Cancellation policy

Metro's program fees are nonrefundable. If you must cancel a registration, you may transfer credit to another class upon request.

No dogs policy

Due to a conflict with wildlife, dogs are not allowed at Metro parks or natural areas.

OMSI and Metro are "Clever Together"

Metro is proud to partner with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry on a new, permanent bilingual exhibit: "Clever Together: Our Everyday Choices" or "Juntos Somos Ingeniosos: Una Decisión a la Vez." The OMSI exhibit helps families learn how simple choices help protect the environment, improve their finances and bring neighbors closer together.

Interactive displays focus on food choices, transportation, product consumption and energy use. Beyond OMSI's walls, "Clever Together" shows people making sustainable choices via bilingual posters, signs and sustainable art pieces at 100 Portland-area locations.

The companion website, "Local Voices, Clever Choices," features videos, photos and a sustainability challenge game where you can earn badges and prizes. Learn more at choices.omsi.edu or decisiones.omsi.edu.

Discover what else is happening at OMSI

www.omsi.edu

Find your next adventure

THE INTER TWINE

If you've ever biked a local trail, played in your neighborhood park, relaxed on a bench beside a nearby river or lake, or hiked in Graham Oaks Nature Park, then you've experienced The Intertwine. It's our region's network of parks, trails and natural areas – places where you can walk, hike, swim, bike, bird or paddle.

Discover the adventures outside your door, and check out upcoming classes, walks, tours and events on The Intertwine's searchable, interactive map and easy-to-use calendar.

Enter the portal to nature in the city

www.theintertwine.org

Get out there!

Blue Lake Regional Park
20500 NE Marine Drive, Fairview
503-665-4995 option 0

Cooper Mountain Nature Park
18892 SW Kemmer Road, Beaverton
503-629-6350

Graham Oaks Nature Park
11825 SW Wilsonville Road, Wilsonville
503-665-4995 option 0

Howell Territorial Park
13901 NW Howell Park Road, Sauvie Island
503-665-4995 option 0

Metro's Natural Techniques Garden
6800 SE 57th Ave., Portland
503-234-3000

Mount Talbert Nature Park
10695 SE Mather Road, Clackamas
503-742-4353

Oregon Zoo
4001 SW Canyon Road, Portland
www.oregonzoo.org
503-226-1561

Oxbow Regional Park
3010 SE Oxbow Parkway, east of Gresham
503-663-4708

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area
5300 N. Marine Drive, Portland
503-665-4995 option 0

Annual passes for Metro parks available now

Purchase or renew your annual parks pass for unlimited visits to Oxbow and Blue Lake regional parks, Chinook Landing Marine Park and the M. James Gleason Boat Ramp. Passes are valid Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

Regular passes are $40. Senior citizen passes are $30. They are not transferable to other vehicles.

Get your 2013 pass in one of three ways:

- Pick up a pass at Blue Lake or Oxbow regional parks or Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland.
- Call 503-665-4995 option 0.
- Visit **www.oregonmetro.gov/parkspass**.

Jerome Hart photo

Impassioned civil discourse in your pajamas.

Join Metro's online opinion panel today.

optin ONLINE PANEL

www.oregonmetro.gov/connect

About Metro

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

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to providing services, operating venues and making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

Metro Council President
Tom Hughes

Metro Council
Shirley Craddick, District 1
Carlotta Collette, District 2
Craig Dirksen, District 3
Kathryn Harrington, District 4
Sam Chase, District 5
Bob Stacey, District 6

Auditor
Suzanne Flynn

Metro | *Making a great place*

On the cover
Golden-crowned sparrows winter here before flying to Alaska in spring. Two boys spot birds on Sauvie Island during the annual Raptor Road Trip.

If you have a disability and need accommodations, call 503-972-8543, or call Metro's TDD line at 503-797-1804. If you require a sign language interpreter, call at least 48 hours in advance. Activities marked with this symbol are wheelchair accessible:

Bus and MAX information
503-238-RIDE (7433) or www.trimet.org

To be added to the GreenScene mailing list or to change your mailing information, call 503-797-1650 option 2.

Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.

www.oregonmetro.gov/connect

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Reserve your summer getaway now at Oxbow Regional Park

C. Bruce Forster photos

New online campground reservations make it easy to plan a summer adventure in the 1,000-acre natural area park nestled in the wild and scenic Sandy River Gorge.

Oxbow Regional Park is celebrating 50 years of offering nature adventures within a quick drive from home. And now there's no more need to wonder if there'll be a campsite left. Beginning in January, Oxbow Regional Park joined Oregon State Parks' online campground reservation system. Now you can schedule your wilderness break in one of the region's most scenic places. At Oxbow, 12 miles of trails wind through deep woods. Share the peaceful ancient forest with mink, beaver, fox and more. Osprey soar overhead; salmon swim in the glacier-fed Sandy River. During peak season, Oxbow sites fill fast. Make sure you're part of the scene this summer.

Quick facts

- campsite, per night: $22
- nonrefundable fee, per reservation: $8
- fee per vehicle, first day only: $5 (or free, with annual pass)
- number of cars per site: 2
- showers (formerly coin-operated): free
- check-in: 2 p.m.
- check-out: noon
- camping is year-round; reservations can be made 9 months in advance.

Reserve your campsite with Visa or MasterCard online at **www.oregonmetro.gov/oxbow** or call Reservations NW at **1-800-452-5687**.