

Rex Burkholder

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 5 NEWS



METRO

PEOPLE PLACES
OPEN SPACES

Rex Burkholder
represents District
5, which includes
Northwest Portland,
North Portland,
Northeast Portland,
downtown Portland,
a portion of
Southwest Portland
and a portion of
Southeast Portland.



A message from Rex Burkholder

March 21st brings the first day of spring. With nicer weather (hopefully!) coming, I'd like to encourage you to get out and volunteer outside. There are all sorts of organizations you can help out, including Metro. For example, this past weekend I participated in Johnson Creek Watershed's annual clean up at their Gresham Woods site.

Metro offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. You can volunteer at our native plant center. Volunteers are integrated into all aspects of Metro's native plant materials center. From constructing propagation beds to collecting seeds and maintaining plant stock, lend a hand at this important part of Metro's restoration work at natural areas across the region.

You can also volunteer for our wildlife monitoring program. This program provides important information about amphibians and birds at Metro natural areas while offering a unique and in-depth service opportunity. By focusing on indicator species, such as amphibians and birds, volunteer monitors provide data that help Metro's science and stewardship team gauge the progress of its restoration efforts and track the effects of public use on wildlife.

If you want to just get outside and experience nature, I encourage you to pick up or look at our GreenScene online. The GreenScene provides a comprehensive calendar of nature activities offered by Metro and more than 60 other organizations. GreenScene also features nature notes about local plants and animals, stories about outstanding people and places, and news from the front lines of the region wide effort to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and access to nature for future generations. From hiking one regional trails to kayaking through the areas watersheds, there is an abundance of fun things to do in the metro region.

— Rex Burkholder

Businesses Partner with Metro to Recycle at Work—Thank You!

More than 175 businesses joined Metro and local governments this fall to increase recycling in the workplace during the Recycle at Work campaign. An additional 300+ businesses also signed up to receive regular email tips about how to increase recycling in the workplace.

Participating businesses agreed to a few simple steps to make it easier for employees to recycle and to inform employees of what can and cannot be recycled (staples and paperclips are ok!).

They took steps such as ensuring that every employee has a desk-side recycling box, posting informational posters in work areas and talking about recycling at a staff meeting.

It's never too late to join us, just e-mail our recycling specialists at info@recycleatwork.com, call (503) 234-3000 or visit www.recycleatwork.com. Metro Council and local governments continue its commitment to providing recycling services year-round.

Oregon Zoo plans March release of rare pygmy rabbits into wild

After six years of trial and error, the [Oregon Zoo](#) will release 12 of Washington state's pygmy rabbits into the wild. This will be the first introduction of the endangered rabbits, the smallest rabbit native to North America, into their natural habitat since their removal for emergency captive breeding.

During this year's breeding season, the zoo had a record number of births, with 32 kits.

Today the Oregon Zoo is home to 54 pygmy rabbits, including two full-blooded Washington pygmy rabbits.

Washington's Columbia Basin is geographically isolated from other pygmy rabbit populations, making inbreeding a problem. A lack of genetic diversity affects the number of successful litters when pygmy rabbits breed each spring and summer. Their diet consists primarily of sagebrush, which is becoming scarce in eastern Washington. Additionally, wildfire is a constant threat to their habitat.

The Oregon Zoo's involvement with pygmy breeding began when Idaho pygmy rabbits arrived at the zoo in December 2000. Zoo staff constructed nest boxes fitted with infrared video cameras to monitor the rabbits' behavior. Using video recorders, scientists studied their activity patterns exhaustively, learning subtle behavioral nuances. In 2001, the research paid off, as the Oregon Zoo became the first zoo in the world to successfully breed Idaho pygmy rabbits. Thereafter, the zoo bred the endangered Washington pygmy rabbit.

In 1993, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife listed the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit as an endangered species. Following a steady population decline, in 2002, the WDFW enacted an emergency recovery program, finding fewer than 20 rabbits in the entire state.

Metro Launches Brownfields Recycling Program

With recent funding from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA), Metro has developed the Brownfields Recycling Program to benefit local communities and property owners. The funding and technical assistance program will enhance the efficient use of land, redevelop sites with environmental contamination, and provide economic stimulus and other benefits to regional communities.

Under the program, Metro will inventory and assess underutilized properties with actual or perceived contamination, provide technical assistance to local

governments and help to identify sources of funding for the cleanup and redevelopment of these sites.

By reinvesting in urban brownfields, the Metro Council aims to foster economic, social and environmental benefits that will reinvigorate communities.

The Brownfields Task Force, an advisory committee consisting of citizens, local government and experts in the field, will assist Metro in developing a region-wide inventory of brownfields.

Those who know of a potentially contaminated property that is underutilized or who are interested in more information about Metro's Brownfields Recycling Program – including upcoming informational meetings, technical workshops and other resources – should contact Miranda Bateschell at (503) 797-1817 or send e-mail to brownfields@metro-region.org.

Oregon Zoo's Black Bear Ridge rounds out Great Northwest Exhibit



The last two components of the Oregon Zoo's Great Northwest Exhibit are set to open March 10, completing a decade long journey to bring the beauty and natural wonders of the Great Northwest to zoo visitors. The final stages add black bears and bobcats to the crest-to-coast adventure.

The exhibit begins at Cascade Crest's mountain goat environment, and moves deeper into the forest via a 100-foot-long suspension bridge with a bird's-eye view of Black Bear Ridge, a naturalistic habitat for three American black bears. Past the bridge, visitors can get a close-up peek at the reclusive bobcats.

The trail then winds through the forest to Eagle Canyon, a bald eagle flies free over a salmon-filled stream. Following the stream, the trail continues into a stream-and-marsh environment where beavers and river otters are found.

Just outside this area, wildlife meets the growing human population at Cougar Crossing and Trillium Creek Family Farm. Cougar Crossing, which opened last summer, provides visitors with a chance to see Oregon's largest cats, and Trillium Creek, a unique teen-run exhibit, hosts rare breeds of farm animals

continued

Black Bear Ridge

continued from page 2

while providing information on Oregon's agricultural heritage.

The final leg of the journey takes visitors to the final part of the exhibit - Steller Cove, which represents the Oregon Coast. This area is home to two magnificent Steller sea lions, the endangered southern sea otter, kelp beds and tide pools.

A number of Great Northwest activities have been planned for the Black Bear Ridge grand opening. Activities run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information visit www.oregonzoo.org/Exhibits/GreatNW/BlackBearRidge/index.htm.

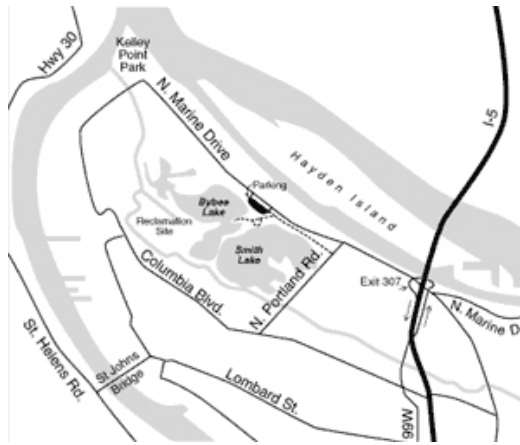
Events of note in District 5

For a complete list of events, check out our online calendar at calendar.metro-region.org.

9:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 10
Animal tracking at Smith and Bybee Wetlands
Metro volunteer naturalist and experienced tracker John Halsell is starting a new, regular tracking program at Smith and Bybee Wetlands in North Portland on the second Saturday of each month. Metro's 1,000-acre Smith and Bybee Wetlands offers tracking on sand, mud, grass, the forest floor and trees. It is an outstanding place to find evidence of a variety of urban wildlife including beaver, deer, coyote, raccoon and rabbits. Each Saturday John will focus on what is happening that week and cover different topics in the ancient art of using tracks and sign to know who has been around and what they have been doing. All skill levels are welcome; suitable for adults and teens. Meet in the parking area on North Marine Drive. Free. Advance registration required; call (503) 797-1715. Wheelchair accessible.

7 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday, March 22
Bird watching basics for beginners
Metro naturalist James Davis has been getting beginning bird watchers off to a good start for more than 20 years. Discuss the basics of bird identification, talk about the best field guides and binoculars and watch a slide show of the "top 20" birds of the Portland metropolitan area. This class is excellent

Metro map of Smith and Bybee Wetlands



preparation for the Saturday bird watching trips and other bird classes. Suitable for adults and teens. Meet in room 370 at Metro Regional Center in Portland. Registration and payment of \$10 per person are required in advance; call (503) 797-1715. Wheelchair accessible.

9 to 11:30 a.m. Saturdays
March 24 and April 7
Spring bird walks at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area
Spring brings more than 25 different songbirds to join the resident birds nesting at Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area. Lingering winter waterfowl and birds of prey add to the hot birding action at the wetlands in spring. Meet Metro naturalist and expert birder James Davis in the parking lot on North Marine Drive. Learn to identify birds by sight and songs. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair of ours. Suitable for adults and children 10 and older. Free. Advance registration is required; call (503) 797-1715. Wheelchair accessible.

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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 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.

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March 2007 dch/final

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