

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

APPROVING THE NATURAL AREAS ACQUISITION
REFINEMENT PLAN FOR THE SANDY RIVER
GORGE TARGET AREA

RESOLUTION NO. 07-3842

Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
Michael J. Jordan, with the
concurrence of Council President
David Bragdon

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2006, the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 06-3672B “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area a General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$227.4 Million to Fund Natural Area Acquisition and Water Quality Protection,” recommending submission for voter approval a general obligation bond to preserve and protect natural areas, clean water, and fish and wildlife (the “2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure” or “Measure”); and

WHEREAS, at the election held on November 7, 2006, the voters approved Ballot Measure 26-80, the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure; and

WHEREAS, the Sandy River Gorge Target Area was identified in the Measure as one of 27 regional target areas for land acquisition, building on the success of land acquisitions in the Sandy River Gorge Target Area pursuant to Metro’s 1995 Open Spaces Bond Measure Program; and

WHEREAS, as provided in the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure, Metro has undertaken a public refinement process to establish specific acquisition strategies, goals, objectives, and a confidential tax-lot specific acquisition target area map for each of the 27 target areas; and

WHEREAS, Metro’s refinement process included the compilation of available information about each target area; biological field visits and expert analysis of maps; interviews with key stakeholders including natural resource experts, property owners, representatives from state and local government agencies, and advocates from water quality, fish, and wildlife preservation interest groups; and eight public open houses at sites throughout the region and a “virtual” open house available via the internet, at which draft refinement plans were made available for public review and participants could share their target area priorities either in-person or electronically; and

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2007, the Council approved Resolution No. 07-3766A, “Authorizing the Chief Operating Officer to Purchase Property with Accepted Acquisition Guidelines as Outlined in the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan,” authorizing the Metro Chief Operating Officer to acquire properties identified on a Council-approved target area “confidential refinement map;” and

WHEREAS, the Council has reviewed the draft refinement plans and considered information it has received from citizens, scientists, advocates, and state and local governments; now, therefore


BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council adopts the Sandy River Gorge Refinement Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A, including the confidential tax-lot specific map reviewed by the Council in Executive Session on September 4, 2007, and signed by Council President David Bragdon on that date, and hereby authorizes the Chief Operating Officer to acquire properties in the Sandy River Gorge Target Area consistent with the Council-approved Acquisition Parameters and Due Diligence Guidelines of the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 6th day of September 2007.

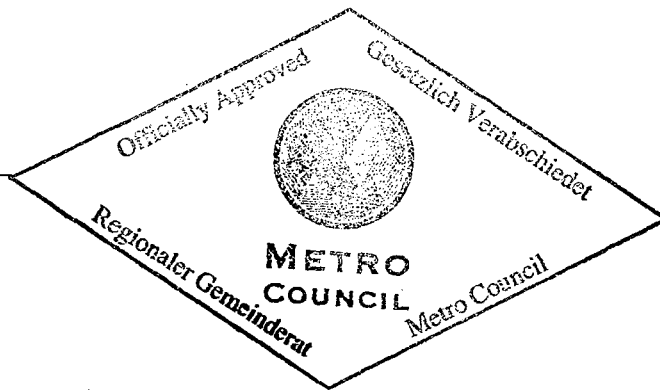


David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:



Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney



**2006 NATURAL AREAS ACQUISITION PROGRAM
SANDY RIVER GORGE TARGET AREA REFINEMENT PLAN**

Background

The 1995 refinement goals focused on complementing the federal management plan for the Wild and Scenic Sandy River to protect biological linkages along the wild and scenic section of the Sandy River and major tributaries for the protection of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, geologic, scenic and recreation values. Great progress was made, and 1,082 acres were purchased in the target area, exceeding the original 800-acre goal. Metro's Oxbow Regional Park and surrounding lands protected with the 1995 bond measure provide an important biological refuge for fish and wildlife traveling between the park, the Sandy River and federal lands to the east along streams (Gordon, Buck and Trout) and upland corridors. Since the last bond measure, a committed group of partners has undertaken planning, acquisition and management activities in this same area of the river that are in keeping with this goal.

The 2006 bond stated:

Acquisitions along this wild and scenic waterway and its tributaries will provide important fish and wildlife habitat and water-quality benefits.

Given the significant investment of 1995 regional bond funds, the existing base of publicly owned land, and the relatively low threat when compared with other parts of the region, the primary consideration within this target area is acquisition of only the most essential lands for fish and wildlife habitat.

Target Area Description

The Sandy River cuts a 55-mile serpentine swath from Mt. Hood to the Columbia River. Sediment from a 1790s Mt. Hood eruption was still being flushed down the river by the time Lewis and Clark arrived in 1805 and found the river to be "formed entirely of quicksand." That once impassable sandy river bears little resemblance to the narrow, fairly deep lower river of today, noted for its many oxbows, lush forests sweeping down to the waterline, and populations of native salmon, steelhead and smelt.

A 12.5-mile stretch of the river – from Dodge Park downstream to the Stark Street Bridge – wends its way through 800-foot-high basalt and sandstone canyons known as the Sandy River Gorge. A rich canopy of Douglas fir, western red cedar and alder help harbor large wildlife including elk, black bear, deer and cougar. Oxbow Regional Park, within the Sandy River gorge, is one of the region's premier nature parks offering recreational opportunities, environmental education programs, as well as rare access so close to the city to an ancient forest, ridges and ravines carved by volcanic and glacial flows. This portion of the river is designated both a State Scenic Waterway and a National Wild and Scenic River.

A key protection strategy that has picked up steam in the past decade is the acquisition and donation of land in the Sandy River basin. Portland General Electric (PGE), in an agreement with Western Rivers Conservancy, plans to dismantle Marmot Dam in 2007, the Little Sandy Dam in 2008, donate its water rights to the public and contribute more than 1,500 acres of its related lands. Metro owns and manages more than 2,200 acres, including Oxbow Regional Park. Smaller, strategic acquisitions have been made by The Nature Conservancy which has protected 435 acres in the Gorge between Dodge and Oxbow parks.

Refinement Process

During the refinement process, Metro staff compiled available information about the Sandy River Gorge target area, analyzed maps and conducted biological field visits. Individuals were interviewed representing various governmental agencies, property owners, interested friends groups and natural resource experts. The key concerns expressed during the interviews are summarized in Attachment 1.

A public open house to discuss the proposed Refinement Plan was held on June 21, 2007 at Gresham City Hall, one of eight such open houses held throughout the region. Notices of the open houses were mailed to area residents and other interested citizens. Metro also conducted a “virtual” open house by making target area informational materials, including maps, available “online” via the internet and allowing participants to share their target area priorities electronically. A total of 527 people attended the regional open houses, and the online open house had 6,363 visits from 3,419 unique visitors. More than 700 target area surveys were submitted either in person or online. Ten people completed the Sandy River Gorge survey. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included as Attachment 2. The map associated with the questionnaire for this target area is included as Attachment 3, and complete survey results are included as Attachment 4.

Findings

Lower Sandy River Watershed – 12.5-mile stretch of federally and state designated Wild and Scenic River between Dodge Park (RM 18.5) and Stark St. Bridge (RM 6)

- Protecting the Sandy River’s lower reaches is a priority in preserving fall and spring Chinook salmon populations.
- Wildlife habitat would be enhanced by completing gaps in public ownership upstream and downstream of Oxbow Regional Park.
- An area adjacent to the Sandy River approximately one mile north of its confluence with Walker Creek has high water quality and valuable fish habitat, including potential side channel spawning areas.
- The area supports wildlife corridors highly used by large mammals such as deer, cougar, elk and black bear extending to Mt. Hood and the Cascades.
- New planning, acquisition and management efforts are underway along the main stem and tributaries with the following organizations: Bureau of Land Management, Portland General Electric, Sandy River Basin Partners Group, City of Portland Bureau of Water Works (Habitat Conservation Plan), Western Rivers Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy.

Gordon Creek (enters Wild and Scenic Section of Sandy River in vicinity of Oxbow Park)

- The only free-flowing, unobstructed tributary in the Lower Sandy watershed, Gordon Creek is an important spawning area for threatened Sandy River fall Chinook and winter steelhead.
- Public ownership in the upper areas of Gordon Creek represents the only opportunity in the metro region to connect higher elevation federal forest lands to large protected riparian tracts at lower elevations.
- Preserving connections east to the Sandy River and west to federal lands could succeed in retaining critical corridors for large mammals such as bear and deer.

Buck Creek (enters Wild and Scenic Section of Sandy River in vicinity of Oxbow Park)

- Buck Creek is important for steelhead and salmon productivity, but a culvert affects fish passage.

Trout Creek (enters Wild and Scenic Section of Sandy River in vicinity of Oxbow Park)

- An area west of Groce Road and Trout Creek to the east bank of the Sandy River has very high value fish habitat and water quality.

Mainstem Sandy River from Stark St. Bridge downstream to Confluence with Columbia River

- Several public partners are actively pursuing opportunities for habitat restoration, greenways, trails, and public recreation in this area. Strong partnership potential exists to support efforts (primarily through staff assistance, not acquisition) by other public agencies.

Survey Results

- 10 people completed the Sandy River Gorge survey. Additional commentary was provided orally at the open house, most of which was consistent with the written responses. In rank order, the public priorities were:
 1. *Map area D* – Support efforts by other public agencies to restore habitat and create regional trails in the lower reach of the Sandy River (from Stark Street to the Sandy River's confluence with the Columbia River).
 2. *Map area C* – Protect forest habitat areas along the Sandy River and fill in gaps in public ownership.
 3. *Map area B* – Preserve a continuous wildlife corridor that supports movement by large mammals such as bear, cougar and elk by protecting additional lands in the Gordon Creek basin that connect to the Mt. Hood National Forest and other federal lands to the east.
 4. *Map area A* – Protect the highly productive fish habitat along Gordon Creek to currently protected public lands.

Goals

- Protect biological linkages by acquiring essential properties along the Sandy River and its tributaries for the protection of fish and wildlife habitat and water quality benefits.
- Pursue partnerships throughout the target area to achieve objectives and maximize the leveraging of regional bond funds.

Objectives

A target area map showing the tiered objectives described below is included as Attachment 5.

Tier I Objective

- Protect the highly productive fish habitat along Gordon Creek adjacent to currently protected public lands.

Tier II Objective

- Protect forest habitat areas along the Sandy River and fill in the gaps in public ownership between Dodge Park and Stark St. Bridge.

Partnership Objectives

- Work with existing groups (including the City of Portland Water Bureau, the Sandy River Basin Partners group, The Nature Conservancy, Western Rivers Conservancy, BLM, and PGE) to leverage regional bond funds to the maximum extent possible to achieve Tier I priorities and to preserve a continuous wildlife corridor connecting the Gordon Creek basin with federal lands to the east.
- Support efforts by other public agencies to restore habitat and create regional trails in the lower reach of the Sandy River (from Stark Street to the Sandy River's confluence with the Columbia River).

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 07-3842, APPROVING THE NATURAL AREAS ACQUISITION REFINEMENT PLAN FOR THE SANDY RIVER GORGE TARGET AREA

Date: September 6, 2007

Prepared by: Jim Desmond
Kathleen Brennan-Hunter

BACKGROUND—REFINEMENT PROCESS

The Natural Areas Bond Measure (Resolution No. 06-3672B, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area a General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$227.4 Million to Fund Natural Area Acquisition and Water Quality Protection,” adopted by the Metro Council March 9, 2006) provided that Metro would undertake a “Refinement Process” to “gather additional information about each individual target area and begin zeroing in on particular parcels that would be valuable to acquire” (Exhibit A to Resolution No. 06-3672B). In addition, the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan (Resolution No. 07-3766A, “Authorizing the Chief Operating Officer to Purchase Property with Accepted Acquisition Guidelines as Outlined in the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan,” adopted by the Metro Council on March 1, 2007) authorized the Metro Chief Operating Officer to acquire properties without further Council approval if they have been identified on a Council-approved target area “confidential refinement map.” To implement those directives, the Refinement Plans for each target area contain overall target area objectives and confidential tax-lot specific target area maps identifying priority properties for acquisition, enabling Metro staff to begin the acquisition of property and property rights as detailed in the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan.

Additional background information, target area information, a description of the specifics of the refinement process regarding this target area, and the refinement plan’s findings, goals, and objectives are described in further detail in Exhibit A to this resolution, the Sandy River Gorge Target Area Refinement Plan.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. **Known Opposition**

None.

2. **Legal Antecedents**

Resolution No. 06-3672B, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area a General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$227.4 Million to Fund Natural Area Acquisition and Water Quality Protection,” adopted on March 9, 2006.

The voters’ approval of Metro’s 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure at the general election held on November 6, 2006.

Resolution No. 07-3766A “Authorizing the Chief Operating Officer to Purchase Property With Accepted Acquisition Guidelines as Outlined in the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan,” adopted by the Metro Council on March 1, 2007, established the Acquisition Parameters and Due Diligence Guidelines for the purchase of properties as part of the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Program.

3. **Anticipated Effects**

Acquisition of natural area properties in the Sandy River Gorge target area to achieve the goals and purposes of the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure.

4. **Budget Impacts**

The FY 2007-08 budget includes budgetary authority to purchase \$35 million in natural area lands, with an additional \$15.4 million in contingency, if necessary. It is estimated, based on historical spending patterns, that this authority will be sufficient to cover the anticipated acquisition activity for this fiscal year. Additional unappropriated fund balance (\$64 million) exists for land acquisition in future years, along with the authority to issue up to an additional \$102 million in General Obligation bonds in support of this program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution No. 07-3842.

Summary of Comments from Stakeholder Interviews for Sandy River Gorge Target Area

Stakeholder(s) Interviewed

Todd Alsbury, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Angie Kimpo, Metro, Ecologist
Robb Courtney, Gresham Parks
Virginia Bowers, Three Rivers Land Conservancy
Jim Labbe, Portland Audubon
Jack Wiles, Oregon State Parks, Regional Supervisor
Jonathan Soll, The Nature Conservancy
Janet Senior, City of Portland Water Bureau
John Borge, Principal Planner, Clackamas County
Bill Doran, Metro, Oxbow Park Ranger
Chris Hagel, Metro, Ranger
Steve Kucas, City of Portland Water Bureau
Russ Plaeger, Sandy River Basin Watershed
Richard Faith, Planning Director, City of Troutdale

Key Themes Discussed

Water Quality

- Trout Creek and Gordon Creek have good water quality and are important fish production tributaries.

Wildlife Habitat

- Gordon Creek offers an opportunity to link the Sandy River Gorge with upper elevation USFS and BLM ownerships. This link would preserve a big game (bear, elk) corridor.
- Forest land is not protected from harvesting.

Land Use / Urban / Rural Form

- Metro could play an important role in the area north of Stark Street Bridge to the confluence with the Columbia River. This effort should focus on supporting other public agencies in greenway acquisition, habitat restoration and trail development, and other recreational / educational opportunities.

Miscellaneous Comments

- Metro should focus on consolidation of existing ownerships in Wild and Scenic section. There is a diverse opinion whether to focus acquisition efforts on riparian areas or forested upland headwater areas that have less land use protection measures.
- Coordination with other agencies will be a key to maximize acquisition potentials. It was suggested that an informal association for sharing information and developing partnership relationships should be organized.

QUESTIONNAIRE

TARGET AREA: SANDY RIVER GORGE

In November 2006 voters directed the Metro Council to extend a regionwide program and acquire between 3,500 and 4,500 acres of additional natural areas to protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat and to provide future generations opportunities for greater access to nature. Now it's time for the Metro Council to refine priorities in the 27 regional natural areas and trail corridors targeted for acquisition. The 1995 acreage goal for this target area was 808 and Metro has acquired 1,082 acres to date. The 2006 program will provide additional funding for protection goals in this target area.

The Metro Council wants your ideas and input. We've been talking with scientists, land-use experts, groups and individuals who have special knowledge about the natural resource values and community visions for these areas. With this information Metro has begun to identify the potential strategies and opportunities that will achieve the best results. Now we need to know: Do we have it right? What have we missed? What is most important to you?

2006 NATURAL AREAS BOND DESCRIPTION FOR THIS TARGET AREA

Acquisitions along this wild and scenic waterway and its tributaries will provide important fish and wildlife habitat and water-quality benefits.

QUESTIONS

- 1. The following priorities were identified in the Sandy River Gorge target area based on scientific information about benefits to water quality, habitat diversity, wildlife connectivity and/or restoration potential and from information provided by key stakeholders in the area. Rank in order of importance to you from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important.**

- _____ Protecting the highly productive fish habitat along Gordon Creek to currently protected public lands. **(Map area A)**
- _____ Preserving a continuous wildlife corridor that supports movement by large mammals such as bear, cougar and elk by protecting additional lands in the Gordon Creek basin that connect to the Mt. Hood National Forest and other federal lands to the east. **(Map area B)**
- _____ Protecting forest habitat areas along the Sandy River and filling in gaps in public ownership. **(Map area C)**
- _____ Supporting efforts by other public agencies to restore habitat and create trails in the lower reach of the Sandy River (from Stark Street to the Sandy River's confluence with the Columbia River). **(Map area D)**

- 2. In general, what should be emphasized in the Sandy River Gorge target area? Rank in order of importance to you from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important.**

- _____ Protecting lands along the river and its tributaries to protect fish habitat and water quality.
- _____ Protecting upland forests to protect fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.
- _____ Preserving a large wildlife corridor connecting the Sandy River Gorge to the Mount Hood National Forest.

_____ Providing additional public access, recreation and conservation education opportunities.

3. **Are there other priorities that the Metro Council should consider in the Sandy River Gorge target area? Please be specific.**

4. **Do you have suggestions about partnerships Metro should pursue or other innovative ways to leverage regional funding and enhance this natural area?**

5. **Are you interested in participating in Metro's Natural Areas program by selling or donating your property or selling or donating a conservation easement on your property?**

Yes No If yes, please be sure to provide your contact information below.

6. **Do you have any other comments about this target area?**

Please add my name to the Sandy River Gorge target area mailing list for future information, public meetings and events.

Name _____

Address _____

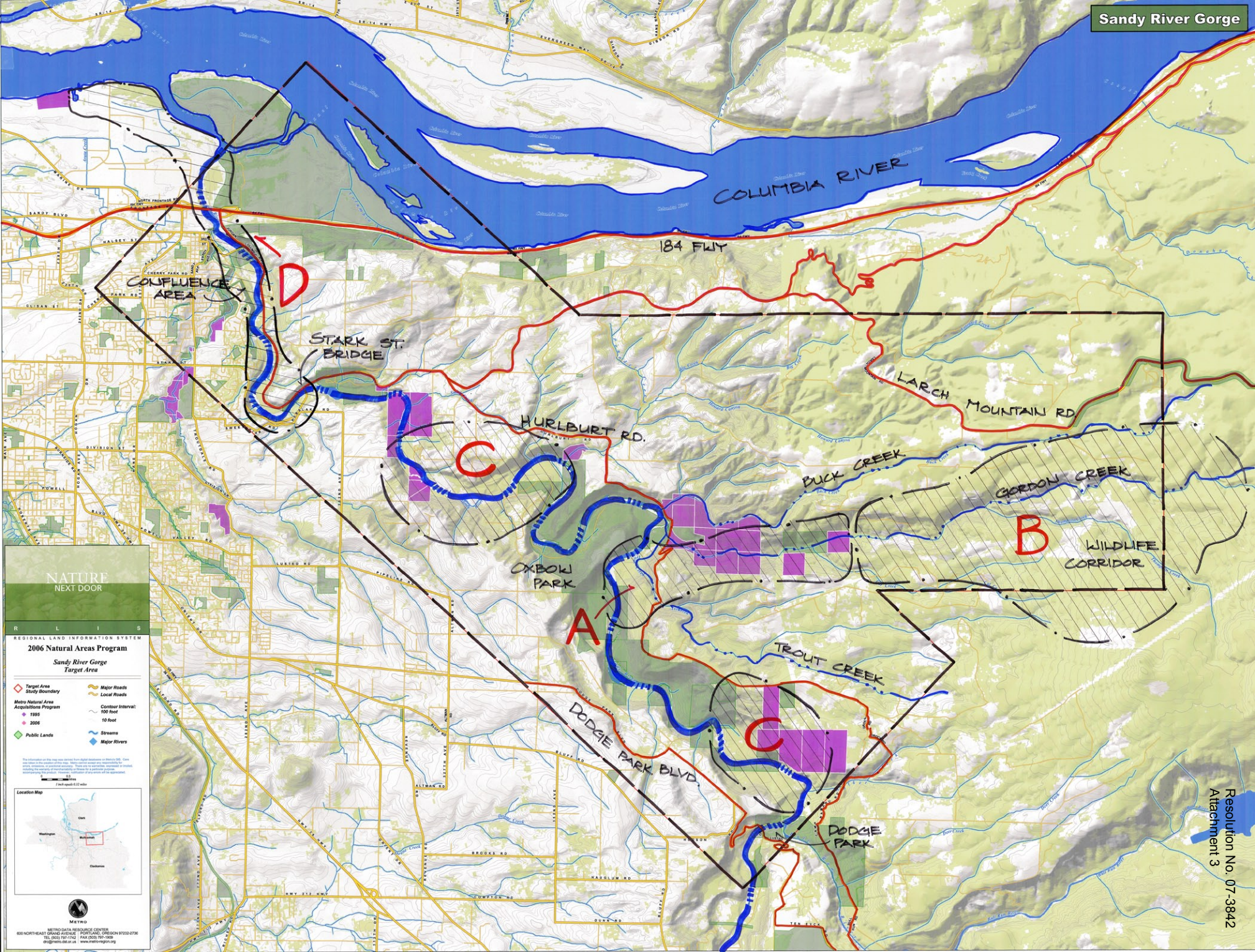
City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

**You may complete this questionnaire online at
www.metro-region.org/naturalareas**

or mail it to Metro at
600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland, OR 97232
(503) 797-1741



CONFLUENCE AREA

STARK ST. BRIDGE

184 FWY

HURLBURT RD.

LARCH MOUNTAIN RD

BUCK CREEK

GORDON CREEK

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

OXBOW PARK

TROUT CREEK

DODGE PARK BLVD

DODGE PARK

NATURE NEXT DOOR

REGIONAL LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM
2006 Natural Areas Program
Sandy River Gorge Target Area

- Target Area
- Study Boundary
- Major Roads
- Local Roads
- Metro Natural Area Acquisitions Program
- 1999
- 2006
- Public Lands
- Streams
- Major Rivers
- Contour Interval: 100 foot
- 10 foot

This information on this map was derived from digital data on file at Metro. It is not a warranty, representation, or guarantee of accuracy. There are no warranties or representations made by Metro or its employees, agents, or contractors. Metro is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map or for any consequences arising from its use.

7 mil equals 0.25 miles



Sandy River Gorge Survey Results

1. The following priorities were identified in the Sandy River Gorge target area based on scientific information about benefits to water quality, habitat diversity, wildlife connectivity and/or restoration potential and from information provided by key stakeholders in the area. Rank in order of importance to you.

	most important			least important	Rating Average	Response Count
Protecting the highly productive fish habitat along Gordon Creek to currently protected public lands. (Map area A)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	37.5% (3)	50.0% (4)	3.25	8
Preserving a continuous wildlife corridor that supports movement by large mammals such as bear, cougar and elk by protecting additional lands in the Gordon Creek basin that connect to the Mt. Hood National Forest and other federal lands to the east. (Map area B)	33.3% (3)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)	33.3% (3)	2.56	9
Protecting forest habitat areas along the Sandy River and filling in gaps in public ownership. (Map area C)	12.5% (1)	62.5% (5)	12.5% (1)	12.5% (1)	2.25	8
Supporting efforts by other public agencies to restore habitat and create trails in the lower reach of the Sandy River (from Stark Street to the Sandy River's confluence with the Columbia River). (Map area D)	50.0% (4)	25.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.75	8
	<i>answered question</i>					9
	<i>skipped question</i>					2

2. In general, what should be emphasized in the Sandy River Gorge target area? Rank in order of importance to you.

	most important			least important	Rating Average	Response Count
Protecting lands along the river and its tributaries to protect fish habitat and water quality.	50.0% (4)	37.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	1.75	8
Protecting upland forests to protect fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.	22.2% (2)	33.3% (3)	44.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.22	9
Preserving a large wildlife corridor connecting the Sandy River Gorge to the Mount Hood National Forest.	25.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (4)	25.0% (2)	2.75	8
Providing additional public access, recreation and conservation education opportunities.	22.2% (2)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	55.6% (5)	2.89	9
	<i>answered question</i>					10
	<i>skipped question</i>					1

3. Are there other priorities that the Metro Council should consider in the Sandy River Gorge target area? Please be specific.

I am hoping that the extension of area D downstream along the Columbia represents the opportunity to have 40-ML trail on top of levee. This would allow connection to Sandy and Columbia River Gorge. Also consider the potential trail between Sandy and Dodge Park, south of C.
A bike/ped bridge across the Sandy River should be a Metro priority now that funding has fallen through for a bike/ped crossing as part of the I-84 bridge replacement project. An opportunity exists to link downtown Troutdale, Depot Park, and points West with Lewis & Clark State Park, Sandy River Delta and points East.
Trail and restoration work on the East side of the Sandy from the HCRH steel bridge across the Sandy North to the confluence with the Columbia.
Public Access
Need wildlife corridor connecting Col Gorge and Sandy River - from Rooster Rock over Women's Forum to Knerium Creek-Big Creek - Sandy Canyon.

4. Do you have suggestions about partnerships Metro should pursue or other innovative ways to leverage regional funding and enhance this natural area? If so, please specify.

Metro should be a partner in the Sandy River Connections Project, collaborating with the USFS, ODOT, OPRD, City of Troutdale, Multnomah County, Port of Portland and user groups to better link the region's open space and trail facilities. Funding sources should be pooled in order to maximize funding and political support.
There is a group called the "Sandy River Connection Group" made up of 12-15 groups/agencies (several not-for-profit) included that would make excellent ready made partners. The group already has a vision plan.
Engage with Sandy River Basin Partners and help fund Sandy River Watershed Council.
Conservation easement and tax incentives to keep natural areas.

5. Do you have any other comments about this target area? If so, please specify.

Staff at Multnomah Co. Land Use Planning are generally supportive of Metro proposals in the Sandy River watershed. Better coordination is needed between Metro and local and state agencies to maximize funding and political support.

It's a great area and deserves to be the #1 focus in the Metro Area. Metro has already acquired/protected key section of the Sandy, and now is the time to follow up!!

I already commented on the areas before I notice the interest to sell or conservation easement on my property.

SEPTEMBER 2007
NATURE
NEXT DOOR

REGIONAL LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM
2006 Natural Areas Program
Sandy River Gorge
Target Area

- Target Area Study Boundary
- Metro Natural Area Acquisitions Program
- Public Lands
- Major Roads
- Local Roads
- Contour Interval: 100 foot, 10 foot
- Streams
- Major Rivers



METRO
METRO DATA RESOURCE CENTER
800 NORTHEAST GRAND AVENUE PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-2798
TEL: (503) 751-7142 FAX: (503) 751-0909
dri@metro.or.us www.metro-region.org

