

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

APPROVING THE NATURAL AREAS ACQUISITION  
REFINEMENT PLAN FOR THE CHEHALEM  
RIDGETOP TO REFUGE TARGET AREA

RESOLUTION NO. 07-3857

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 Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge Target Area was identified in the Measure as one of 27 regional target areas for land acquisition; 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

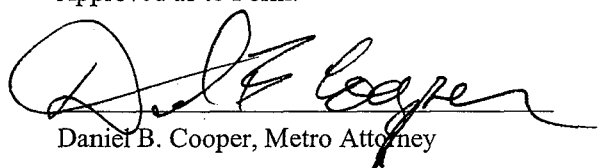
BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council adopts the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge Refinement Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A, including the confidential tax-lot specific map reviewed by the Council in Executive Session on September 4, 2007, and signed by Council President David Bragdon, and hereby authorizes the Chief Operating Officer to acquire properties in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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 20<sup>th</sup> day of September 2007.

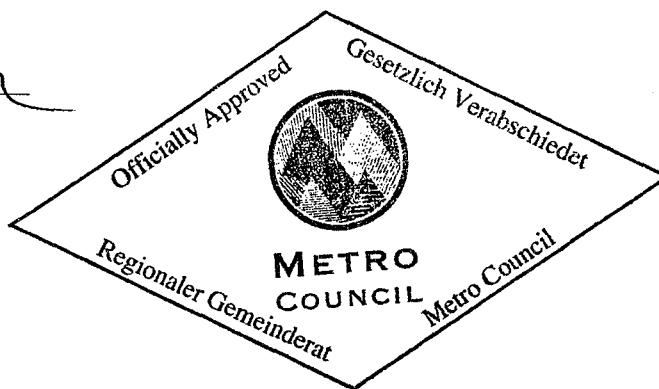


David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:



Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney



**2006 NATURAL AREAS ACQUISITION PROGRAM  
CHEHALEM RIDGETOP TO REFUGE TARGET AREA REFINEMENT PLAN**

**Background**

The 2006 Natural Areas bond measure stated:

The northern end of the Chehalem Mountains provides opportunities for the protection of large, undeveloped tracts of forestland to protect water quality and wildlife connections from this mountain range to area river bottomlands.

**Target Area Description**

The Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area is located in Washington County, due south of Forest Grove. The target area includes the northern extent of the Chehalem Mountains, which forms a large forested ridge with linkages to Wapato Lake and the Tualatin River. Metro and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have implemented habitat and floodplain restoration in this area.

A biological assessment conducted for this target area in May 2007 identified the Garry oak-populated western slopes lying between the upper fir-dominated Chehalem Ridge and Wapato Lake as lands with the most significant habitat value. Vital wildlife corridors stretch from the ridgetop's forest land and oak woodlands to Wapato Lake and the Tualatin River floodplain.

The Chehalem Mountains provide an important scenic panorama when viewed from the urbanized portion of Washington County. The forested upper elevations provide excellent potential for recreational and educational opportunities as well as sweeping landscape views.

**Refinement Process**

During the refinement process, Metro staff compiled available information about the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area, analyzed maps and conducted biological field visits. In addition, an independent biological assessment was performed for this target area by Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University in May 2007. Individuals were interviewed representing various government 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 26, 2007 at the Forest Grove Community Auditorium, 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 surveys were submitted either in person or online. Sixteen people completed the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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**

- Three adjoining stream valleys and intervening uplands between Withycomb Road and Laurelwood Road provide an excellent restoration opportunity to connect the Wapato lakebed and Tualatin floodplain to the forest on the Chehalem Ridge. At least one of the three unnamed streams has permanent year-round flows. Restoration of riparian forest, upland prairie, and oak

savanna in this corridor area would provide opportunities to reintroduce a number of Oregon's rarest habitats and species that were once present in the region.

- The forest along the Chehalem ridge, though narrow and mostly composed of trees less than 40 years old, provides an important opportunity area for conservation. The ridgetop forest is of the lowest concern from a rare species standpoint. However, its value for open space, recreation, spectacular views, restoration potential, and connectivity to Metro properties to the north should not be discounted.
- Some of these connections are dependent on priorities set in both the Wapato Lake and the Chehalem Ridge target areas. For the best habitat diversification, the Chehalem Ridgetop and Wapato Lake area should be considered together it is important to coordinate refinement goals and acquisitions in these two target areas.
- The upper elevations of Chehalem Ridge forest areas provide public passive recreational and educational opportunities. Selected areas of the Ridge's upper elevations provide excellent sweeping landscape views.
- Sixteen people completed the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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 B* – Protect the rare upland prairie and oak savannah habitat along with lands along creeks and streams on the western slope of the Chehalem Ridge to provide connections between the ridge top and Wapato Lake and complement protection efforts in the Wapato Lake target area.
  2. *Map area A* – Protect forestlands on the Chehalem Ridge to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat and to provide the public with future recreation and educational opportunities.
  3. *Map arrows* – Support future recreational trail opportunities by securing potential trail corridors connecting Wapato Lake and/or Gales Creek to the Chehalem Ridge.

## **Goal**

Protect large, undeveloped tracts of forestland to protect water quality, wildlife habitat and connections, and to provide public access opportunities.

## **Objectives**

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

### *Tier I Objective*

- Protect the upper elevation forestlands and oak woodlands on the Chehalem Ridge to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat and to provide potential public access opportunities.

### *Tier II Objectives*

- Acquire and protect the rare upland prairie and oak savanna habitat, as well as lands along creeks and streams on the western slope of the Chehalem Ridge to provide connections between the ridgetop and Wapato Lake target area.
- Support future recreational trail opportunities by securing potential trail corridors connecting Wapato Lake and/or Gales Creek to the Chehalem Ridge.

*Partnership Objective*

- Pursue partnership opportunities with Oregon State Parks, Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy in order to leverage regional bond funds to acquire the upper elevation forestlands on the Chehalem Ridge.

## STAFF REPORT

### IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 07-3857, APPROVING THE NATURAL AREAS ACQUISITION REFINEMENT PLAN FOR THE CHEHALEM RIDGETOP TO REFUGE TARGET AREA

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Date: September 20, 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 Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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 7, 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 Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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. 07-3857.

## **Summary of Comments from Stakeholder Interviews for Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge Target Area**

### **Stakeholder(s) Interviewed**

Tom Gable, Parks Director, City of Forest Grove  
Residents on west slope of Chehalem Ridge east of Spring Hill Road

- Sierra Briano, Gaston, OR
- Marjorie Greenhut, Gaston, OR
- Bob Oswald, Gaston, OR
- Ray & Gretchen Keefer, Gaston, OR
- Carol Hart-Canon, Gaston, OR

### **Key Themes Discussed**

#### Water Quality

- The forested uplands of the Chehalem Ridge are headwaters for intermittent tributaries flowing east and also connecting west to Wapato Lake area. Springs and ground water are also a water supply to adjacent residences.

#### Wildlife Habitat

- The oak Savannah areas on the west face of the ridge are a valuable habitat and an important link with the Wapato Lake area.
- The small tributaries in the southwest area of Chehalem Ridge offers riparian links to Wapato Lake.

#### Land Use / Urban / Rural Form

- The forested ridge line is an important feature in the Washington County setting.
- A large forest area could, in the future, become a major park facility similar to Forest Park providing both habitat benefits and recreational / educational opportunities. The upper areas offer excellent territorial views.
- Gaston is looking to recreation / education as a future economic benefit for the community.

#### Miscellaneous Comments

- Recent master planning by Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District includes development of a Cooper Mountain Regional Trail to connect east-west between the Westside/Powerline Trail and the Burlington-Northern Trail through Cooper Mountain Nature Park.
- Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District recently acquired a 20-acre parcel just east of Cooper Mountain Nature Park, and is working with landowners to acquire right-of-way to connect the parcels by trail.



## QUESTIONNAIRE

### TARGET AREA: CHEHALEM RIDGETOP TO REFUGE

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. Initial estimates are that a minimum of 400 acres of land would be protected within 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

The northern end of the Chehalem Mountains provides opportunities for the protection of large, undeveloped tracts of forestland to protect water quality and wildlife connections from this mountain range to area river bottomlands.

### QUESTIONS

- 1. The following priorities were identified in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area based on scientific information about benefits to water quality, habitat diversity, wildlife connectivity, restoration potential and/or public access and trails and from information provided by key stakeholders in the area. Rank in order of importance to you from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Protecting forestlands on the Chehalem Ridge to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat and to provide the public with future recreation and educational opportunities. **(Map area A)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protecting the rare upland prairie and oak savannah habitat along with lands along creeks and streams on the western slope of the Chehalem Ridge to provide connections between the ridge top and Wapato Lake and complement protection efforts in the Wapato Lake target area. **(Map area B)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting future recreational trail opportunities by securing potential trail corridors connecting Wapato Lake and/or Gales Creek to the Chehalem Ridge. **(see Map arrows)**

- 2. In general, what should be emphasized in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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 the regionally-rare oak savannahs and upland prairies and lands along the streams and creeks on the western slope of the Chehalem Ridge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protecting large stands of existing forested areas on the upper Chehalem Ridge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Providing a natural buffer between urban development and farm and forest land in the area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protecting lands that will allow opportunities for future public access for recreation, including trails and wildlife watching areas.

3. Are there other priorities that the Metro Council should consider in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge 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 Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area mailing list for future information, public meetings and events.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

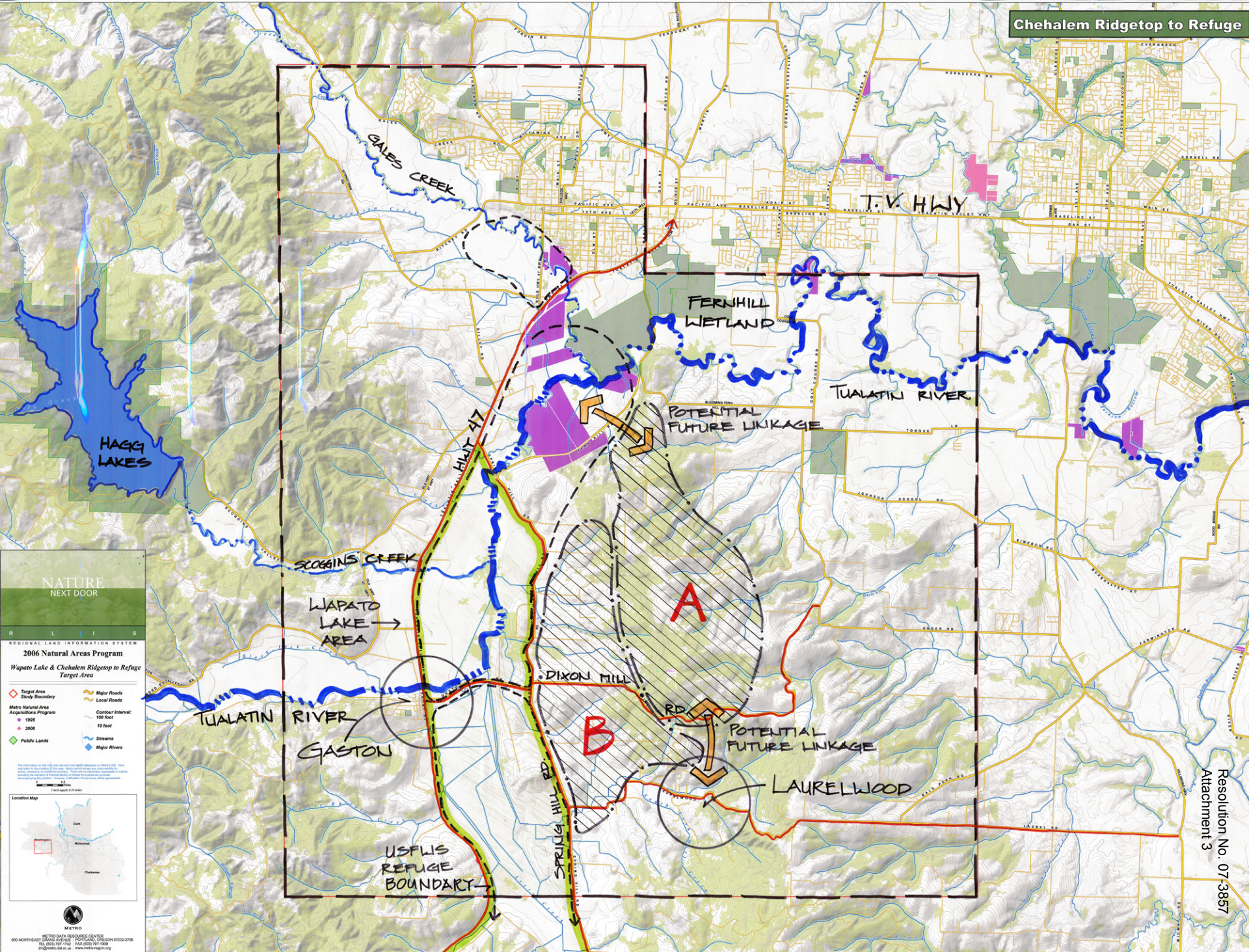
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**You may complete this questionnaire online at  
[www.metro-region.org/naturalareas](http://www.metro-region.org/naturalareas)**

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





**NATURE NEXT DOOR**

REGIONAL LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM

**2006 Natural Areas Program**

Wapato Lake & Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge Target Area

- Target Area
- Study Boundary
- Major Roads
- Local Roads
- Metro Natural Area Acquisition Program
- Contour Interval: 100 foot, 10 foot
- 1995
- 2006
- Streams
- Major Rivers
- Public Lands

Location Map

METRO

METRO DATA RESOURCE CENTER  
180 NORTHEAST GRAND AVENUE PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-2776  
TEL (503) 797-1712 FAX (503) 797-1600  
WWW.METRO-OR.ORG



## Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge Survey Results

1. The following priorities were identified in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area based on scientific information about benefits to water quality, habitat diversity, wildlife connectivity, restoration potential and/or public access and trails 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 forestlands on the Chehalem Ridge to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat and to provide the public with future recreation and educational opportunities. (Map area A)	40.0% (6)	46.7% (7)	13.3% (2)	1.73	15
Protecting the rare upland prairie and oak savannah habitat along with lands along creeks and streams on the western slope of the Chehalem Ridge to provide connections between the ridge top and Wapato Lake and complement protection efforts in the Wapato Lake target area. (Map area B)	50.0% (8)	31.3% (5)	18.8% (3)	1.69	16
Supporting future recreational trail opportunities by securing potential trail corridors connecting Wapato Lake and/or Gales Creek to the Chehalem Ridge. (see Map arrows)	12.5% (2)	25.0% (4)	62.5% (10)	2.50	16
	<i>answered question</i>				16
	<i>skipped question</i>				0

**2. In general, what should be emphasized in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area? Rank in order of importance to you.**

	most important			least important	Rating Average	Response Count
Protecting the regionally-rare oak savannahs and upland prairies and lands along the streams and creeks on the western slope of the Chehalem Ridge.	56.3% (9)	25.0% (4)	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.63	16
Protecting large stands of existing forested areas on the upper Chehalem Ridge.	26.7% (4)	53.3% (8)	13.3% (2)	6.7% (1)	2.00	15
Providing a natural buffer between urban development and farm and forest land in the area.	0.0% (0)	20.0% (3)	53.3% (8)	26.7% (4)	3.07	15
Protecting lands that will allow opportunities for future public access for recreation, including trails and wildlife watching areas.	18.8% (3)	6.3% (1)	12.5% (2)	62.5% (10)	3.19	16
<i>answered question</i>						16
<i>skipped question</i>						0

**3. Are there other priorities that the Metro Council should consider in the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge target area? Please be specific.**

The connectivity of the upland area to Wapato Lake cannot be stressed enough.

If you have been to Sherwood you know what can and probably WILL happen if action is not taken to preserve Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge area. Some landowners have filed a Measure 37 claim to divide their acreage. This kind of development would destroy the Chehalem Ridgetop.

Prevent the development of housing in the area.

Somehow either by purchase or other means prevent the Measure 37 claims on large properties. Declare this area a wildlife habitat protected by law identify endangered plants and animals and protect them by making this area a park

Encourage eco-tourism--bed and breakfast with trial rides; for example.

Rare plants, Red Legged frog and native turtle habitat, Salmonoid habitat in Gales Creek area and expand to other potential creeks.

Balancing protection of upper Chehalem ridge from future development while allowing small rural homes on 5 acres on Western slope with green spaces and trails (planned development on Western slope) to enhance balance of public and private use.

Land protection should be priority one in that area. Owners of Christmas tree farms and animal farms should be contacted for easements.

Like all the projects which would preserve land along ridgetops, buttes, etc., this project would also enhance the quality of life for all in the visible area by providing us with views of greenery and open spaces along our hilltops, instead of McMansions. This greatly adds to the feeling of even more natural area, instead of urbanization and sprawl.

Because of the large lot size in this area, I think the area is especially ripe for naturesscaping-type education. Property owners - farm and residential - should be targeted for education on how to manage their properties in a sustainable, and environmentally friendly way. Show them how to be a part of the wildlife system rather than a disruption to it.

**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.**

Perhaps Metro partnering with the City of Forest Grove to acquire land surrounding the AT Smith house.

Approach landowners about the possibility of them donating their land. Get the communities of Forest Grove and Gaston involved somehow in fund raising events ie earth day fair, walks through the target areas, programs in conjunction with other wildlife refuge areas such as Jackson Bottom Wetlands.

"Sin" taxes

1000 friends of Oregon

Work with Nature Conservancy

Use wineries in efforts to promote tourism, work with recreational and scenics on way to wine country.

Purchase upper Chehalem Ridge and rework map on Section B to purchase/reserve Greenspace to promote planned development in the downslope that promotes 'planned development' on small rural sites.

All the usual partners you might wish to join you - at the state and local levels. Three Rivers Land Conservancy and the Tualatin Watershed Council to get you started.

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

I am a member of the Friends of Historic Forest Grove and a member of a committee to preserve the AT Smith House. You may be aware that the AT Smith house is one of the most historically significant existing houses in Oregon. I believe that the potential for that property, which we now own, is fantastic. Our ultimate goal is for it to become a Regional Park or Historic Operating Farm. It is my opinion that our property has the potential for being developed into an area similar to Champoeg State Heritage Area. The biggest issue we face is to have surrounding land in some type of public ownership so that a more significant project can be developed.

I live adjacent to the target area and in the 13 years that I've lived there I have seen a wide variety of wildlife including but not limited to; elk, deer, nutria, beaver, wild turkeys, owls, hawks, vultures, skunk, porcupine. I have heard of cougar and bear sightings. In addition, my property alone is home to over 9 varieties of trees, numerous wildflowers, native plants and birds. Also, in the time I have lived there, I have noticed a diminishing of wildlife as the forest gets logged off.

It is a beautiful area with many different species of native plants, deer, elk, raccoon, frogs, ponds, creeks etc and needs to be preserved as the logging companies, left to their own devices, are wrecking it.

I am thrilled this area is a target for preservation-soils plants and wildlife and walkway.

Viewsheds should also be protected, from above and below. Cell towers kept to a minimum. (There are already too many.) And illegal dumping on the side of the road controlled.



SEPTEMBER 2007  
NATURE  
NEXT DOOR

REGIONAL LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM  
2006 Natural Areas Program  
Wapato Lake & Chehalem Ridgtop to Refuge  
Target Area

- Target Area Study Boundary
- Major Roads
- Local Roads
- Contour Interval: 100 foot
- 1995
- 2006
- Public Lands
- Streams
- Major Rivers



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