

Councilor Burkholder is continually updating his contact list, so you may be receiving this newsletter for the first time. If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter or wish to be taken off this list, please contact Kathryn Sofich at kathryn.sofich@oregonmetro.gov. [Requires that your e-mail be set to HTML view.]



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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.

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1. A message from Rex Burkholder

Garbage! Every year we here in the Portland region bury about 1.2 million tons (that's right, tons!) of garbage in landfills. That's about 1 ton for every man, woman and child. We also, to our credit, recycle about a ton of paper, glass and metal apiece every year as well. Any way you look at it, that's a LOT of trash. Not very sustainable, is it?

It's our job at Metro, as directed by you, the citizens of the region, to do something about this problem. And like efforts to reduce smoking and increase recycling, we are always looking for new ways to get better information to you and to help people understand the problem. One of the best ways to do this is to educate our children. Good habits are best started early, my mother always said (as she made me do my chores!).

As the story below reports, this spring Metro will be expanding our waste reduction education to outdoor immersion programs, otherwise known as Outdoor School. I'm thrilled to see this program in action as I have been working hard over the last several years with school districts, the Education Service Districts and Outdoor School advocates to form this important partnership.

I have been hooked on Outdoor School ever since my two boys returned from their week-long stay at Outdoor School years ago, sharing their newly awakened concern for the Earth and a surprisingly sophisticated, scientific understanding of the key environmental issues. I constantly am meeting both kids and parents who talk about what an impact Outdoor School has made on their lives. It's not only a life changing experience for the 6th graders, but also for the high school-age counselors who work there throughout the session. In addition, I've met a number of parents who report how they have been ordered by their kids to beef up their recycling at home, or to conserve water, because of the stringent standards put into place at Outdoor School – if they were able recycle that much in the woods, why not at home?

Our partnership with the Outdoor School providers and school districts is an exciting one. With the challenges of climate change, peak oil and dwindling resources facing us, our young people, more than ever, need to be scientifically and environmentally literate. Outdoor School is invaluable and irreplaceable in reaching our “hopes for the future” with the broad message of environmental stewardship.

Currently, only two-thirds of 6th graders get this wonderful opportunity. There are a number of schools have not able to send students given their current financial realities. **One of the most important goals of our program is to ensure that every 6th grader in the region is able to attend Outdoor School.** Our hope is that Metro's contribution will serve as an incentive to those schools to send their kids, even if it's just for 4 days – it is a start! Our work is not done yet. I will be reaching out to school districts, PTAs and others so that more schools will send their students to Outdoor School. Will you help? If you know of a school not sending their students, please share this information with the teachers, administrators and school board members. If you have kids in school, talk to your fellow parents. Let's get all kids the opportunity to experience nature and learn real science out in the field.

Thanks.

-Rex Burkholder

2. Metro Council expands waste reduction education to outdoor immersion programs

Starting spring 2009, Metro will assist outdoor school immersion programs to help sixth grade students throughout the region learn to be better environmental citizens. With Metro's newly approved funding, students will learn how their family's choices affect the environment, experience how to reduce their “garbage footprint” and learn about better use of the Earth's scarce resources. Metro believes that through the formative experience of outdoor school, the decision-makers of tomorrow will learn how they can protect the environment, laying the foundation for a sustainable future for our region.

The Metro Council voted a small increase in solid waste disposal fees to pay for a day of waste reduction education at outdoor school to help achieve the waste reduction and recycling goals adopted by the region in the Regional Solid Waste Master Plan. Metro waste reduction educators worked with a team of sixth grade teachers and outdoor school immersion program providers to develop curriculum that aligns with and supports state science and social studies benchmarks and standards. The content will include 6.5 hours of waste reduction education that will be integrated into the outdoor school learning experience.

Why outdoor school? Studies have found that immersion experiences, such as outdoor school, increase the amount of information retained by the students. When students leave outdoor school they are then able to relate their hands on experiences to everyday life, creating a greater impact on them and the environment. Lack of funding is one of the primary reasons that schools either currently don't participate in outdoor immersion programs or participate in a shortened program. One of the goals of this program is to enable every sixth grader in the region to attend outdoor school, where they will be able to learn about waste reduction and the environmental impacts of everyday choices.

Schools located within the Metro boundary that participate in outdoor immersion programs can request a credit from approved outdoor school providers. For more information, contact Freda Sherburne at 503-797-1522 or send e-mail to Freda.sherburne@oregonmetro.gov. Information is also available on Metro's website at www.oregonmetro.gov/outdoorschool.

3. Final chance to weigh in on the 2010-13 regional flexible funding recommendation

On January 30, 2009, the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC), which provides technical advice to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), released a draft final recommendation for Metro's 2010-13 regional flexible funding allocation. Release of the draft recommendation kicked off an informal public comment opportunity that ends with a formal joint JPACT/Metro Council public hearing at 4 p.m. on February 12.

The public is urged to first review the proposed programs, projects and recommendations by visiting the project web site at www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalflexiblefund and then submit comments in one of the following ways:

- online through the project web site
- email trans@oregonmetro.gov (regional flexible funding in the subject line)
- fax 503-797-1930 (regional flexible funding in the subject line)
- mail to Regional flexible funding allocation, Metro Planning and Development Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232
- in person at the public hearing on February 12, 2009. **To ensure the accuracy of the public record, please also submit a written version of your testimony. Make sure your name is on all written material.**

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. in the Metro Council Chamber, 600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland. (Take Tri-Met bus #6 or MAX to the Oregon Convention Center.) Oral

testimony is limited to three minutes. Testimony times are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Metro is ADA accessible. Listening devices for the hearing impaired are available upon request at the hearing. Interpreter services for limited English speakers or the hearing impaired may be arranged with a 48-hour notice. To request these services, call Pat Emmerson at 503-797-1551 or T.D.D. (503) 797-1804.

4. Visitors flock to zoo in record numbers despite rain, snow, recession

A yearlong recession? One of the coldest, wettest springs in recent memory? The biggest batch of snow in 50 years? It all sounds like bad news for a mostly outdoor, fee-based attraction, right? Maybe not, if you're the Oregon Zoo.

For the third year in a row, and the fourth time in the past five years, the zoo broke its all-time calendar-year attendance record, with 1,593,907 visitors in 2008. This marks the second time zoo attendance has topped 1.5 million in a calendar year. The previous record, set in 2007, was 1,503,565 visitors.

Holidays in general were huge for the zoo in 2008, with record turnouts during the long weekends around Presidents Day (more than 27,000 visitors), Labor Day (more than 30,000) and Thanksgiving (more than 40,000). Attendance on Thanksgiving Day was the second-highest of any single day in the zoo's history: More than 15,000 visitors braved the rain, taking advantage of a free "open house" held in appreciation of the public's support for a \$125 million bond measure to improve outdated exhibits and make the zoo more sustainable.

Summer, characteristically, was also a busy time for the zoo. "Dinosaurs!" -- featuring a fearsome life-size animatronic T. rex and more than 20 other prehistoric creatures -- proved the most popular temporary exhibit in the zoo's 121-year history, attracting 221,226 visitors from May 17 through Labor Day. The summer concert series was a big draw too, with capacity crowds taking in shows by the Indigo Girls, Los Lobos, Matisyahu and more. July, with 238,984 visitors, and August, with 231,195 visitors, were the zoo's two busiest months ever.

Toward summer's end, the baby elephant Samudra inspired the public, drawing big crowds after he joined his mother on exhibit Aug. 30. During September, 159,351 visitors passed through the gates, a record for the month.

After such a successful 2008, the zoo's director anticipates an even better 2009. The Oregon Zoo continues to have the highest attendance of any fee-based tourist attraction in Oregon.

The zoo is a service of Metro and is dedicated to its mission to inspire the community to create a better future for wildlife. Committed to conservation, the zoo is currently working to save endangered California condors, Washington's pygmy rabbits, Oregon silverspot butterflies, western pond turtles, and Oregon spotted frogs. Other projects include studies on black rhinos, Asian elephants, polar bears and bats.

For additional information on the Oregon Zoo, visit www.oregonzoo.org or by call 503-226-1561.

5. Events of Note in the District

North Portland neighborhood tree planting

Saturday, February 7

8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Join *Friends of Trees* for a neighborhood tree planting in Cathedral Park, Kenton, Portsmouth, St. Johns and University Park neighborhoods. There is no need to register unless you are bringing a group of 10 or more. For meeting location and directions, visit www.friendsoftrees.org and click on "planting calendar" or call 503-282-8846 ext. 12.

Sauvie Island Raptor Road Trip

Saturday, February 7

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Explore Sauvie Island in search of magnificent bald eagles, hawks and falcons that spend the winter on the island. On this special day devoted to raptors, experienced naturalists and hawk experts host activities and answer your questions at four locations around the island. Enjoy guided bird viewing, meet live raptors up close and sharpen your hawk identification skills. Hot drinks and donuts are available in the morning to keep you warm while you breakfast with the birds.

How does the "road trip" work?

Begin at Kruger's Farm Market (17100 NW Sauvie Island Rd., Portland) and pick up your event map and raptor identification guide. The event fee is \$5 per vehicle, cash only, and includes a Sauvie Island Wildlife Area parking permit. To reach Kruger's, take the Sauvie Island Bridge and continue straight 1.5 miles (past Howell Territorial Park) to the farm entrance on your right. Carpooling is encouraged.



Spotting scopes and a crash course in raptor identification are provided, and naturalists will be on hand to point out the birds. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them, and dress for the weather. This event takes place rain or shine. The road trip is suitable for birders of all skill levels and families are welcome. While you don't have to be an "early bird" and get up at the crack of dawn to see these birds of prey, you should allow approximately three hours to visit all four locations.

What will you see?

It all depends on what nature has in store. Frequently sighted raptors include bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, American kestrels and Northern harriers. With a little luck you might spot a rough-legged hawk, Cooper's hawk, merlin or peregrine falcon. Beautiful snow geese, sandhill cranes and great blue herons are commonly seen at this time of year. Entrance to the event is \$5 per vehicle (cash only), which includes a one-day Sauvie Island Wildlife Area parking permit, event guide, birding map and checklist, and picture handouts on how to identify birds of prey. Advance registration not required. For more information, call 503-797-1850.



Columbia Slough stewardship Saturday

Saturday, February 14

9 a.m. to noon

Work to improve habitat within the Columbia Slough watershed. Help with a variety of activities, including invasive species removal, native tree planting, trail maintenance and canoe-based trash cleanups. Refreshments, gloves and tools are provided. For more information, call Jesse at 503-281-1132

Mammals of Portland

Wednesday, February 25

7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Did you know you can see mink, beaver, and river otter at Oxbow Regional Park and Smith and Bybee Wetlands? What kind of squirrels are those running around your neighborhood? Are there really mountain lions and bears in Forest Park? Metro naturalist James Davis will show you how

to identify the mammals that live in your neighborhood and in Metro's parks and natural areas. There will be pelts, skulls, slides, stuffed specimens and even some scat to help you become familiar with our local furry critters. You'll be surprised at who some of our wilder residents are. Suitable for adults and teens. Meet in room 370 at Metro Regional Center. Registration and payment of \$10 per person required in advance; call 503-797-1850 option 4.

Metro's Healthy Homes booth at the Yard, Garden and Patio Show

Friday, February 27 - Saturday, February 28

10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Yard, Garden and Patio Show has exciting new plants, landscaping ideas and the latest in outdoor living accessories; free seminars; the Remarkable Green Market, and more! Come explore the many ways to beautify your home and garden from the outside in. Make sure you drop by the Metro Healthy Homes display and learn how to keep your family and home safe and pick up natural gardening tips. Tickets are \$11 for adults and children 12 and under are free. For more information, visit <http://ygpshow.com/index.html>.

6. Councilor Rex Burkholder's Contact Information

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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.

Your Metro representatives

Metro Council President David Bragdon

Metro Councilors

Rod Park, District 1

Carlotta Collette, District 2

Carl Hosticka, District 3

Kathryn Harrington, District 4
Rex Burkholder, District 5
Robert Liberty, District 6
Auditor Suzanne Flynn

For more information, call the Metro Council at (503) 797-1540, fax (503) 797-1793 or send e-mail to metro council@oregonmetro.org. The hearing impaired can call TDD (503) 797-1804.