

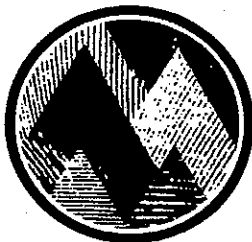
# **METRO REGIONAL PARKS AND GREENSPACES**

## ***Observations Relating to the Outreach and Educational Program's Salmon Festival***

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**September 1995**

**A Report by the Office of the Auditor**



**METRO**

**Alexis Dow, CPA  
Metro Auditor**

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METRO

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR

September 21, 1995

Mike Burton, Executive Officer  
Councilor Ruth McFarland, Presiding Officer  
Councilor Jon Kvistad  
Councilor Patricia McCaig  
Councilor Susan McLain  
Councilor Rod Monroe  
Councilor Don Morissette  
Councilor Ed Washington

COPY

Re: Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department: Observations Relating to the Outreach and Education Program's Salmon Festival

Dear Mr. Burton and Councilors:

The accompanying report covers our review of the 1994 Salmon Festival, which is co-hosted by the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department's Education and Outreach Program. We undertook this study in response to an inquiry by a Metro area citizen.

We reviewed a draft of the report with the Executive Officer, the Director of the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department and the Event Coordinator. The last section of this report is comprised of a written response from Executive Officer Burton.

We would appreciate receiving a written status report from the Executive Officer, or a designee, in six months indicating what further progress has been made to address the report's recommendations.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by staff from the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department and the Administrative Services Department.

Very truly yours,

Alexis Dow, CPA

Auditor: Leo Kenyon, CPA

REGIONAL SERVICES



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Executive Officer Mike Burton	–



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department was created in January 1994 from a merger of Metro's Metropolitan Greenspaces program with the Multnomah County Parks Services Division. The merger was intended to put Metro in a position to develop a regional system of parks, natural areas and trails.

One of the Department's programs—Outreach and Education—promotes awareness, understanding, appreciation and involvement of Metro's stewardship of regional parks and greenspaces. The program does it by providing publications, activities and events, such as the Salmon Festival, to citizens in the Metro area.

In December 1994, the Outreach and Education Program produced a financial report showing that the Festival earned a small profit. Subsequently, in May 1995, the Program revised the report and showed the Festival incurring a loss. A Metro area citizen asked us to determine why the results changed and to disclose the net costs to Metro of hosting the Festival.

We found that neither report provided a realistic picture of Metro's costs of co-hosting the Salmon Festival. We recommend that the Department:

- take steps to ensure that employees preparing financial reports have the skills necessary to prepare meaningful and reliable reports, and
- make use of available project codes in the accounting system to record all revenues and expenses of events such as the Salmon Festival.

During the course of our work, we reviewed certain aspects of the Department's funding of the Outreach and Education Program. We observed that:

- there are unmet funding needs of the Parks Department,

- a Metro evaluation team recommended that programs be evaluated with respect to the Department's mission,
- Metro provides significant funding to the Salmon Festival, and
- the Outreach and Education Program needs support from the General Fund.

We suggest that the Executive Officer and the Council may wish to reconsider the costs and benefits of the Salmon Festival and other similar Outreach and Education events. Such information will be useful during deliberations in Phase II of the intergovernmental agreement with Multnomah County as well as in allocating limited General Fund monies.

## **Purpose**

We undertook this study in response to an inquiry by a Metro area citizen. We did it to:

- analyze why the original December 1994 Salmon Festival Financial Report was revised in May 1995,
- determine why the two reports differed so significantly from each other, and
- determine the net cost to Metro of co-hosting this Festival.

The inquiry did not suggest that Festival funds and revenues may have been mishandled, misappropriated or used for unauthorized purposes; only that the reported information did not fairly disclose the costs of the Festival.

During the course of this work, we reviewed certain aspects of the Parks Department's funding of its Outreach and Education Program. We also learned that Metro will be deciding which Parks Department facilities and programs should be transferred from Multnomah County to Metro effective January 1, 1996.

## **Scope and Methodology**

We analyzed the two Salmon Festival financial reports, the accounts related to the project in Metro's accounting system and pertinent budget documents. We also interviewed the event coordinator to determine the nature of each item of revenue and expense shown on the two reports. From this information, we calculated the costs incurred by Metro for the Festival and included the results on page 10.

We reviewed the Parks Department's proposed budgets for Fiscal Years 1994-95 and 1995-96, and the findings and recommendations of Metro's "Parks/Expo Fund Management Report." We compared the two budgets and analyzed the



changes in funding amounts and sources. We then related this information to the recommendations in the report.

Our review was conducted between June and August 1995, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Because of the limited purpose of our review, we did not perform an in-depth analysis of the Festival's revenues and expenses to determine if funds may have been mishandled or misappropriated or that expenditures were not authorized.

We requested comments on this report from the Executive Officer and have included these comments in the report.

## Background

### **Creation of Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department**

The Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department was created as a result of an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) which transferred Multnomah County's Park Service Division to Metro. The consolidation of Multnomah County's role as a parks provider with Metro's role as a greenspaces planner was intended to result in a regional system of parks and natural areas. The IGA became effective on January 1, 1994.

### **Structure of Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department**

The Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department is made up of these three divisions:

- Administrative
- Planning and Capital Development
- Operations and Maintenance

The Salmon Festival is funded as part of the Outreach and Education Program which is a part of the Planning and Capital Development Division. This division's responsibilities also include activities such as Restoration and Environmental Education Grants Programs, Regional Trails coordination and local government and citizen involvement, capital development

projects; and preparation of management plans and all activities associated with outreach, education and special events.

The Outreach and Education Program conducts interpretive and environmental education, awards environmental grants, works with students conducting environmental inventories, develops a calendar of greenspaces activities and publishes Metro GreenSpaces three times a year. In addition to hosting the Salmon Festival, it also hosts special events such as Music By Blue Lake and Especially for Kids.

**The Salmon Festival**

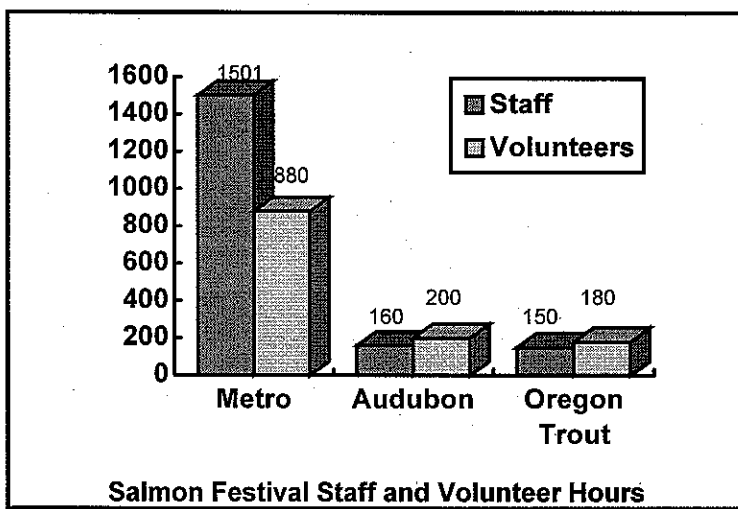
The Eleventh Annual Salmon Festival was held at Oxbow Park on October 15 and 16, 1994. The Festival featured guided salmon viewing walks explaining the life cycle of the Fall Chinook salmon. In addition to the walks, environmental education displays and seminars, entertainment, arts and crafts demonstrations and a salmon bake were offered.

**Salmon Festival Hosts**

The event was co-hosted by Metro, Oregon Trout and the Portland Audubon Society. Metro was responsible for the overall coordination of the event as well as the salmon walk, much of the logistical support, event marketing, sponsor development and solicitation and the salmon bake. The other two organizations provided food and beverages, exhibit coordination, education activities and sponsor development and solicitation.

The event coordinator reported that Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department employees from the Regional Center, Oxbow and Blue Lake Parks, and Operations and Maintenance Support furnished an estimated 1,501 hours of time to the event. Oregon Trout and Portland Audubon furnished an estimated 150 hours and 160 hours respectively. An estimated 200 unpaid volunteers provided an estimated 1,260 hours of assistance.

A bar graph illustrating Salmon Festival staff and volunteer hours is presented on the next page.



**Salmon Festival Sponsors**

The Festival was sponsored by the US Bureau of Land Management, US Mount Hood National Forest, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Portland General Electric Company. These organizations provided financial resources, in-kind donations, staff commitment, and some services and supplies.

**Salmon Festival Accomplishments**

Salmon Festival staff estimated that the event was attended by about 7,900 people, 3,300 of whom participated in the salmon viewing walks. The staff also reported, among other accomplishments, that:

- 990 people participated in the School of Fish,
- 1,315 salmon bake lunches were served, and
- 50 environmental exhibits and eight arts and crafts displays were hosted.

**Differing 1994 Salmon Festival Financial Reports**

**December 1994 Report**

The event coordinator prepared a financial report which was included in the 1994 Salmon Festival Final Report dated December 5, 1994 (Attachment 1). This report showed that the

Festival received \$37,173 in gross revenues and spent \$36,258 in total expenses earning a net profit of \$915.

**May 1995 Report**

Subsequently, in May 1995, the Salmon Festival staff decided to revise the report (Attachment 2) to include factors that they thought would more accurately reflect the financial performance of the Festival. For example, they included the Metro Fiscal Year 1994-95 approved budget amounts for expenses as Festival revenues. They included, on the expense side, estimated labor costs for Metro employees, and imputed staff costs for Portland Audubon, Oregon Trout and Festival volunteers. The event coordinator reported that inclusion of Metro staff and volunteer time of the host organizations provided "interesting statistics on the human resource investment to produce this great event." The revised financial report showed total revenues of \$69,471, total expenses of \$77,842 and a net loss of \$8,371.

**Accounting  
Records**

The Salmon Festival used discrete project codes in Metro's chart of accounts which should have captured all cash revenues and all Metro-paid expenses related to the event. We attempted to agree the reported Festival revenues and Metro-paid expenses to Metro's financial records using those codes. We found, however, that we could only identify a portion of the data. For example, we found the amounts for Gate, Salmon Bake and Memorabilia revenues, but could not find the \$1,450 for Exhibit Registration. We also found that of the more than \$52,000 in Metro-paid expenses (net of amounts paid by co-sponsors), many of the payroll costs could not be identified in the discrete project codes.

**Explanation of  
Financial  
Statement  
Amounts**

Since we could not agree the amounts using Metro's accounting records, we asked the author of the reports to explain them. The event coordinator offered these explanations:

- The \$12,600 in revenues from the Bureau of Land Management, Mount Hood National Forest, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife was money given to Festival co-host, Oregon Trout. Oregon Trout then used these funds to pay for \$9,060 of Festival expenses. The remaining

\$3,540 were retained by Oregon Trout for future Salmon Festival expenses.

- The \$4,450 in-kind revenues from Portland General Electric should have been \$5,542, the actual value of goods and services donated by the company.
- The \$32,298 revenue item was the total amount included in Metro's approved Fiscal Year 1994-1995 budget for Salmon Festival expenses other than the costs of payroll and fringe benefits.
- Metro did not receive the \$1,450 shown for Exhibit Registration revenues. Instead, Oregon Trout collected and retained those funds for future Salmon Festival expenses.
- The \$30,622 Metro Parks staff time represents the estimated staff hours of each staff member involved in the Festival multiplied by the staff member's pay rate plus fringe benefits.
- The \$16 Metro fleet item was the cost of dispatching a Metro truck to the Festival site.
- The expenses for Portland Audubon Society (\$2,400), Oregon Trout (\$2,475) and Festival volunteers (\$6,300) are imputed amounts representing the estimated value of the time spent by those people and are not amounts paid in cash by Metro.

**Financial Records  
Confusing**

Analysis of the data included in these reports indicated that neither report provided a realistic picture of Metro's costs of co-hosting the Salmon Festival. In his initial comments to this report, the Executive Officer said that the reports were intended to provide information to the other co-hosts and co-sponsors involved in the Festival and that while the reports were not prepared in conventional formats, they met the needs of the intended audience. Because Festival staff did not properly record some of the revenues and most of the expenses by the discrete project code, much of the financial information included in the financial report could not be agreed to Metro's accounting records. The Executive Officer concurred that the tracking of

revenues and expenses could have been more thorough and stated that some changes had been made which he believed would result in improved financial tracking for 1995. He stated that accounting records were only as good as the data input and that the Parks Department had implemented more complete and accurate coding including more detailed recording of staff time.

Finally, in comments on this report, the Executive Officer advised us that the Parks Department has added higher level financial staff and will continue to provide training to existing staff. He said that the Accounting Division will provide training to department representatives on the use of the chart of accounts. He also stated that he will instruct departments to work with the Accounting Division when preparing financial reports.

## **Analysis of Metro's Net Costs of Co-Hosting the Salmon Festival**

Using the explanations provided by the event coordinator, we adjusted the May 1995 Financial Report to show only the net costs of Metro's co-hosting the event. After eliminating revenues and expenses of the other co-hosts, we calculated Metro's revenues to be \$18,673 and expenses to be \$52,066. After offsetting revenues and expenses, we found that Metro funded the Festival's costs in the amount of \$33,393.

Our analysis is presented in financial statement format on the next page.

**STATEMENT OF METRO'S NET COSTS  
OF CO-HOSTING THE SALMON FESTIVAL**

**REVENUES**

**FESTIVAL SALES**

Gate Revenues	\$7,477
Salmon Bake	9,349
Memorabilia	<u>1,847</u>

TOTAL REVENUES \$18,673

**EXPENSES PAID FROM METRO BUDGET**

Awards and Tokens	928
Education	51
Entertainment	2,200
Facility Logistics and Support	5,492
Marketing	6,837
Retail Sales Costs	549
Salmon Bake Supplies	5,371
Metro Fleet	16
Metro Parks Staff Time	<u>30,622</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES 52,066

**EXPENSES IN EXCESS OF REVENUES**

\$33,393

(Amount of net costs absorbed by Metro)

## **The Question: To What Extent Should Metro Be Funding the Outreach and Education Program?**

### **Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department Unmet Needs and Priorities**

In November 1994, a Metro evaluation team issued the "Parks/Expo Fund Management Report" which stated that the Parks Department had identified unmet needs for current operations. These included needs for staff, development and management plans, miscellaneous materials and services, deferred capital maintenance and capital improvements. The Department stated that the current level of funding support did not address those needs.

The Fund Management Report recommended that all facilities, programs and functions covered by the IGA between Metro and Multnomah County should be evaluated for organizational fit with the Parks Department mission and reviewed for "metropolitan concern". It concluded that those that did not meet those tests should not be transferred to Metro from Multnomah County. The Executive Officer stated that at the time of this study, the Pioneer Cemeteries were viewed as a problem. He acknowledged that in view of the Phase II deliberations, other Parks Department facilities, programs and functions could also be evaluated.

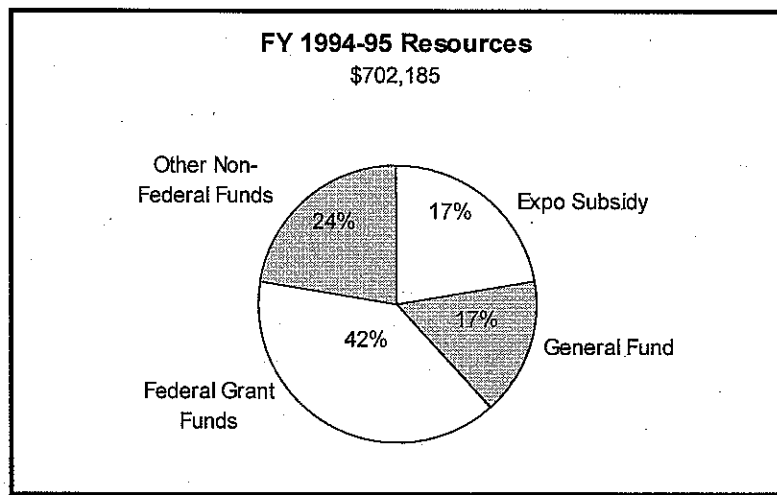
Phase II of the IGA with Multnomah County will be negotiated and the future of the parks is to be determined by January 1, 1996. A variety of issues will need resolution through the negotiation process. Discussions with Multnomah County officials have only recently commenced.

### **Funding for Outreach and Education Program**

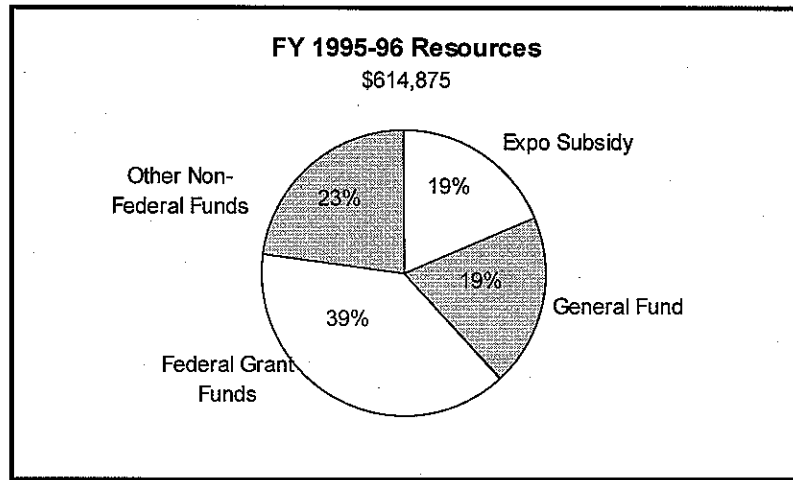
The Parks Department's Outreach and Education Program manages and substantially funds the Salmon Festival. The Program's adopted budget for Fiscal Year 1994-95, after adding carryover funds from Fiscal Year 1993-94 and Council ordinance adjustments, allocated resources of \$702,185 to cover the Program's costs. Of the total resources, \$292,660 (42 percent) were from federal grant funds and \$409,525 (58 percent) from non-federal funds.



Transfers from the General Fund and the Expo subsidy were the largest single sources of non-federal funding. Of the total resources allocated to the Program, the General Fund provided \$117,735 (17 percent) and the Expo subsidy provided \$121,178 (17 percent).



The Fiscal Year 1995-96 adopted budget resources allocated to the Program decreased by \$87,310 to \$614,875. Of the total resources, \$239,318 (39 percent) were to come from federal grant funds and \$375,557 (61 percent) were to come from non-federal funds. Again, transfers from the General Fund and the Expo subsidy were the largest single sources of non-federal funding. Of the total resources to be allocated to the Program, the General Fund was to provide \$116,245 (19 percent) and the Expo subsidy \$118,768 (19 percent).



**Reevaluation of  
Costs and  
Benefits of  
Outreach and  
Education  
Program**

In view of:

1. the identified unmet funding needs of the Parks Department,
2. the Fund Management Report recommendations that programs be evaluated with respect to the Department's mission,
3. the significant funding of the Salmon Festival and other Outreach and Education activities, and
4. the Outreach and Education Program's need for General Fund financing,

we believe that the Executive Officer and the Council may wish to reevaluate the costs and benefits of the Festival and other Outreach and Education Programs. This evaluation could provide valuable information useful to Metro in its negotiations with Multnomah County during Phase II of the IGA.

In commenting on this report, the Executive Officer said that the department's programs and activities, including the Salmon Festival, support the mission and objectives of the department and the Greenspaces Master Plan. Furthermore, he and the Council annually evaluate and approve the department's

mission and objectives through the budgeting process and presumably evaluate the costs and benefits of the department's programs to meet these objectives. He stated, however, that he and the department are willing to respond to Council inquiries and provide information necessary for policy-related deliberations. He emphasized that while costs of outreach and education programs are quantifiable, measuring benefits is a significantly greater challenge.

## Recommendations

***To ensure that financial reports of department activities are accurate and meaningful, we recommend that the Department:***

- ***take steps to ensure that employees preparing financial reports have the skills necessary to prepare reliable and meaningful financial reports, and***
- ***make use of the project codes available in the accounting system to record all revenues and expenses of events such as the Salmon Festival.***

The financial reports published by the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department for the Salmon Festival did not provide a realistic picture of Metro's costs of co-hosting the Festival. Without a realistic picture of the financial performance and true cost to Metro of any activity, truly informed decisions cannot be made by management or the Council. The Executive Officer concurred that improvements were needed and initiated measures (see page 9) which, when fully implemented, could improve the department's financial reports.

***Consideration should be given to reevaluating the costs and benefits of the Salmon Festival and other Outreach and Education Programs, once reliable and meaningful financial reports are available to reflect the true cost of these activities.*** Because of the findings and recommendations included in Metro's "Parks/Expo Fund Management Report," the funding of the Salmon Festival, and the Outreach and Education Program's growing reliance on non-federal funding such as the General Fund, the Executive Officer and Council may wish to consider the costs and benefits of the Festival and other Outreach and Education Programs. Such information will be useful during deliberations in Phase II of the IGA as well as allocating limited General Fund monies. The Executive Officer stated that the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department is always willing to respond to Council inquiries and provide information necessary for policy-related deliberations.

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## December 1994 Report

1994 SALMON FESTIVAL FINANCIAL REPORT				
<b>REVENUE</b>				
<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>In-Kind</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>
Sponsor - BLM	4,100.00	4,100.00		4,100.00
Sponsor - MHFS	4,100.00	4,100.00		8,200.00
Sponsor - PGE	4,450.00		4,450.00	12,650.00
Sponsor - ODFW	4,400.00	4,400.00		17,050.00
Gate Revenue	7,477.00	7,477.00		24,527.00
Salmon Bake Revenue	9,349.00	9,349.00		33,876.00
Memorabilia	1,847.00	1,847.00		35,723.00
Exhibit Registrations	1,450.00	1,450.00		37,173.00
<i>Category Column Totals</i>	<i>37,173.00</i>	<i>32,723.00</i>	<i>4,450.00</i>	<i>37,173.00</i>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>In-Kind</b>	<b>Total Expense</b>
Awards	80.00	80.00		80.00
Education	4,646.36	4,646.36		4,726.36
Entertainment	3,415.00	3,415.00		8,141.36
Facility Logistics & Support	8,389.08	8,389.08		16,530.44
Marketing	12,379.62	6,837.62	5,542.00	28,910.06
Retail Supplies	1,049.20	1,049.20		29,959.26
Salmon Bake	5,371.08	5,371.08		35,330.34
Volunteers	927.65	927.65		36,257.99
<i>Category Column Totals</i>	<i>36,257.99</i>	<i>30,715.99</i>	<i>5,542.00</i>	<i>36,257.99</i>
<b>Net Profit/Loss</b>				
		<b>Cash</b>	<b>In-Kind</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Total Profit &lt;Loss&gt;</i>		<i>2,007.01</i>	<i>-1,092.00</i>	<i>915.01</i>

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## May 1995 Report

1994 SALMON FESTIVAL FINANCIAL REPORT					
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Source		Amount	Cash	In-Kind	Total Revenue
<b>Sponsors</b>					
	Sponsor - BLM	4,100.00	4,100.00		4,100.00
	Sponsor - MHFS	4,100.00	4,100.00		8,200.00
	Sponsor - PGE	4,450.00		4,450.00	12,650.00
	Sponsor - ODFW	4,400.00	4,400.00		17,050.00
	<b>Metro Budget</b>	32,298.00	32,298.00		49,348.00
<b>Festival Revenue</b>					
	Gate Revenue	7,477.00	7,477.00		56,825.00
	Salmon Bake Revenue	9,349.00	9,349.00		66,174.00
	Memorabilia	1,847.00	1,847.00		68,021.00
	Exhibit Registrations	1,450.00	1,450.00		69,471.00
					69,471.00
<b>Category Column Totals</b>		69,471.00	65,021.00	4,450.00	69,471.00
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Source		Amount	Cash	In-Kind	Total Expenses
<b>Awards &amp; Tokens</b>					
		1,007.65	1,007.65		1,007.65
<b>Education</b>					
		4,418.36	4,418.36		5,426.01
<b>Entertainment</b>					
		3,415.00	3,415.00		8,841.01
<b>Facility Logistics &amp; Support</b>					
		8,389.08	8,389.08		17,230.09
<b>Marketing</b>					
		12,379.62	6,837.62	5,542.00	29,609.71
<b>Retail Supplies</b>					
		1,049.20	1,049.20		30,658.91
<b>Salmon Bake</b>					
		5,371.08	5,371.08		36,029.99
<b>Metro Parks Staff time</b>					
		30,621.81		30,621.81	66,651.80
<b>Metro Fleet</b>					
		15.60		15.60	66,667.40
<b>PAS Staff time</b>					
		2,400.00		2,400.00	69,067.40
<b>OT Staff Time</b>					
		2,475.00		2,475.00	71,542.40
<b>Festival Volunteers</b>					
		6,300.00		6,300.00	77,842.40
<b>Category Column Totals</b>		77,842.40	30,487.99	47,354.41	77,842.40
<b>Net Profit/Loss</b>					
			Cash	In-Kind	Total
<b>Total Profit &lt; Loss &gt;</b>			34,533.01	-42,904.41	-8,371.40



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## **Response to the Report**

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**METRO**

Date: September 20, 1995

To: Alexis Dow, CPA, Metro Auditor

From: Mike Burton, Executive Officer

Re: Response to "A Report by the Office of the Auditor, Regional Parks & Greenspaces – Observations Relating to the Outreach and Educational Program's Salmon Festival"

I have received the audit report of September 1995 titled "Observations Relating to the Outreach and Educational Program's Salmon Festival." I appreciate the opportunity to review and discuss this report with you.

Based on staff's evaluation of the report it appears that there are two main issues:

1. The methodology used to track the festival's financial performance, and
2. Metro's funding commitment to Parks & Greenspaces outreach and education programs.

### **Financial Methodology**

I will begin by addressing the findings regarding the financial reporting for the festival:

#### **Auditor Recommendation, page 15**

"Make use of the project codes available in the accounting system to record all revenues and expenses of events such as the Salmon Festival."

There were five Metro revenue and expense budget project codes established for the Salmon Festival and these were used in 1994 to track revenue and expenses. As indicated above, project codes were not used to track all staff time. However, all Metro paid expenses for the Festival relating to materials and services were coded with Metro budget codes. All of the festival's non-payroll cash expenses paid by Metro were recorded by object and project numbers.

Prior to the Auditor's report, changes were made which will result in improved financial tracking for 1995. Beginning with FY 1995-96, we have implemented a more complete chart of accounts to include more detailed recording of staff time specific to the festival.

**Auditor Recommendation, page 15**

"Take steps to ensure that employees preparing financial reports have the skills necessary to prepare reliable and meaningful financial reports."

The Parks & Greenspaces Department has added higher level financial staff and will better train program staff. I believe in using the chart of accounts. The Accounting Division will continue to provide training through the Financial Management Team of department representatives. I will also instruct departments to work with Financial Planning and Accounting staff in preparing such reports. Standard formats and reporting conventions such as documenting assumptions are important in generating useful financial information.

**Auditor Observations, page 13**

3. the significant funding of the Salmon Festival and other Outreach and Education activities, and
4. the Outreach and Education Program's need for General Fund financing."

No General Fund revenues support Salmon Festival Activities. In executing Phase I of the intergovernmental agreement with Multnomah County, the Council made the policy decision that Metro General Fund revenues would not be used to support traditional County activities, and budgeting has been consistent with this policy. Staff involved in organizing and hosting the Salmon Festival were originally transferred to Metro from Multnomah County, and are supported by traditional County revenue sources. I would also note that FY 1994-95 marked the 11th annual Salmon Festival, ten of which were hosted by Multnomah County.

**Auditor Recommendation, page 5**

"Consideration should be given to reevaluating the costs and benefits of the Salmon Festival and other Outreach and Education Programs, once reliable and meaningful financial reports are available to reflect the true cost of these activities."

Metro Regional Parks & Greenspaces Department programs and activities, including the Salmon Festival, support the mission and objectives of the department and the Greenspaces Master Plan. The Executive Officer and the Metro Council annually evaluate and approve the department's mission and objectives through the budgeting process and evaluate the costs and benefits of the department's programs to meet those objectives. The Greenspaces Master Plan is the primary policy document which guides

department activities. The Plan was developed through an extensive public involvement process and adopted by the Metro Council in 1992.

The Greenspaces Master Plan includes a section on citizen involvement and education (pages 57-60). The education policies include directives for developing education programs, "to inform the public about opportunities related to protection, restoration or creation of greenspaces; about responsible use of sites and how the public impacts these and other natural resources; and about how citizens can become involved in solving these problems."

Outreach and education programs and activities are an integral part of the department's adopted mission and objectives as approved in the 1995-96 Metro budget. The department's mission statement (Department Overview, page 1) establishes that the department will "provide educational opportunities that inspire wise stewardship of natural resources." The 1995-96 objectives (Department Overview, Page 2) further state that the department will continue to be a provider of "resource-based outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities through citizen involvement,...special events, interpretive programs,...and other outreach activities."

It should be noted that Metro Parks & Greenspaces staff and Festival co-hosts Oregon Trout and Portland Audubon Society have significantly leveraged this investment with contributions from Festival sponsors. The positive news about the partnerships we have forged to put on this event is not included in this report. Rather than Metro footing the bill for the entire Festival, we have greatly reduced our cost by gaining sponsors and co-hosts.

To evaluate the Festival's benefits, one must consider the mission, benefits and brief history of the Festival as a regional event. The mission of the Salmon Festival is *to inspire people of all ages to value and protect native salmon and their habitat*. Festival attendance peaked at about 10,000 in 1992 and has averaged about 8,000 over the last 6 years. Visitors learn about the life-cycle of native salmon, the importance of healthy rivers and riparian habitat, and what they can do to help ensure that native fish recover and remain a viable component of our Northwest culture.

The Salmon Festival has benefited the region, its natural resources, and Metro in many ways during its eleven-year history:

- Prior to the Salmon Festival, Oxbow Park had a significant problem related to illegal fishing in salmon spawning areas. Efforts to control the problem were time consuming, costly and the benefits appeared to be minimal. Through the public awareness brought about by the Salmon Festival, the Oregon Fish & Wildlife

Commission closed the spawning areas in Oxbow to angling during the spawning season, the only river in Oregon to have received this consideration.

- The Festival has educated over 50,000 visitors about the value of natural resource protection. Educated citizens make better visitors and this results in reduced maintenance and law enforcement costs and less resource damage.
- The Festival increases the base of public support for the park by drawing culturally diverse people from throughout the region and the state.
- Shoulder-season attendance is increased by utilizing the park during a traditionally low visitation period, and the Festival brings new people who haven't previously visited the park, resulting in the potential to increase use at the other times.
- Because the Festival relies heavily on volunteers, it provides opportunities for the community to become personally involved in park activities and natural resource issues.

I appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the report.