
**Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area
Management Committee**

Dave Helzer, Chair



METRO

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee Meeting

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 22, 2011
Metro Regional Center, 600 N E Grand Ave., Room 370
Portland, Oregon 97232

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions	(Dave Helzer)	5:30 – 5:35 pm
Approve January's meeting notes	(Dave Helzer)	5:35 – 5:40 pm
Bridge & trail study update	(Jane Hart)	5:40 – 5:55 pm
Continue draft policies discussion for the new Comprehensive Natural Resources Plan	(Dave Helzer, Janet Bebb)	5:55 – 6:50 pm
Merit Oil update	(Dave Helzer)	6:50– 6:55 pm
General updates		6:55– 7:00 pm
Adjourn		7:00 pm

MEETING SUMMARY
Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee
February 22, 2011

In Attendance:

Dave Helzer (Chair)*Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Larry Devroy *Port of Portland
Patt Opdyke*N. Portland Neighborhoods
Dan Kromer*Metro Parks & Environmental Services
Dale Svart*Friends of Smith & Bybee Lakes
Pam Arden*40 Mile Loop Trust
Lynn Barlow*Portland Parks & Recreation
Susan Barnes*Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Sara Henderson*St. Johns Neighborhood Association
Dan MoellerMetro Sustainability Center
Paul VandenbergMetro Parks & Environmental Services
Phyllis ColeMetro Parks & Environmental Services
Janet BebbMetro Sustainability Center
Jane HartMetro Sustainability Center
Jonathan SollMetro Sustainability Center
Kathleen Brennan-HunterMetro Natural Areas
Francie RoyceNorth Portland Greenway Trail

* Denotes voting SBWMC member

The meeting was called to order at 5:36 p.m., and introductions were made. Janet Bebb shared that she had testified at the February 2nd public hearing on the NMRP Document Type at Portland City Hall.

Approve January Meeting Notes

There was a motion to accept the meeting summary notes by Dan Kromer, and Sara Henderson seconded the motion. The motion passed without amendment.

Bridge and trail study update

Jane Hart presented two boards showing St Johns Landfill, the built and proposed trail system, and bridge/trail design concepts at Smith Bybee Management Area. The Metro Council directed the Sustainability Center to conduct two feasibility studies, and Jane attended the meeting as a courtesy to let the Committee know the findings of the studies. The trail alignment at St. Johns landfill was approved by Council. They asked if the south Slough trail was feasible on properties Metro does not own, with private land owners and public agencies. They also asked if a bridge would be feasible across the north Slough. Jane will present the findings at Council Work Session on March 17th, around 2:30. She will send additional information to the Committee as the time draws closer.

The bike pedestrian bridge has been judged feasible, and so is a trail, although costs are higher than in 2005. Council asked that cost not be considered as a deciding factor in the feasibility of the project. The bridge design currently proposed employs steel truss technology as in contrast to a cable stay bridge, and as such it does not dominate the landscape and also is lower in cost.

Dale asked about the ODOT North Portland Road Bridge. Jane didn't know when it would be replaced. The current thought is to put the regional trail bike/pedestrian bridge next to the ODOT North Portland Road Bridge, but completely separate structurally.

Patt Opdyke asked if interest had been shown in the South Slough Trail by land owners. Kathleen Brennan-Hunter answered that work on the acquisition level had not yet begun; that federal guidelines have a specific protocol that must be followed for land acquisition, and Metro is still in the stage of fine tuning on-the-ground alignment. The trail and bridge plans are still fairly conceptual, with a philosophical focus on protecting the vulnerable man-made accoutrements as well as wildlife in the area. Fencing on the landfill trail will be developed with a subtle approach that will protect sensitive structures and also highlight view aspects. Wildlife will be able to pass under security fences, thus improving their freedom of movement.

Francie Royce from the North Portland Greenway said this group would move ahead with a landfill trail if Council says the south slough is too expensive. Jane said that Council would be informed of this willingness.

Francie was told that the bald eagle nest would not be disturbed by the trail; the closest point to the nest would be the bridge over the North Slough. This separation will be assisted by the visual barrier of the landfill mound. In further discussion about the eagle nests, Susan Barnes of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shared that although they have been delisted by the federal government; eagles are still special listed by the State.

One issue is whether the trail would go through the ash grove, which has been decided against. Dave said the public process indicated the trail should go by the North Slough bridge/landfill north road route.

Patt said the type of bridge has been discussed over the years, and said that both onshore and central footings are a point of concern. Jane said the current design has a steel pier in middle of the slough, with small cement pads on either shore. The Oregon State Fishery Service told Jane this would be better than large landings on riparian areas.

Continue draft policies discussion for the new Comprehensive Natural Resources Plan

Dave began the discussion on New Policy L. This policy is a compilation and rewrite of Old Policy 15, which dictates Smith Lake be viewed more as a recreational water body, and Old Policy 16, which designates Bybee Lake remaining as more of an environmental preserve, with limited recreation opportunities.

There was discussion as to whether this rewrite could potentially result in a reduction in protection for Bybee Lake. There was concern about dogs and 40-Mile Loop Trail rules. The need for and viability of portage at the water control structure was discussed. The north slough side has rip rap, which makes it dangerous and difficult to use as a launch, whereas the south is easier. When the water control was constructed it was assumed that people would be able to pass through it. But this is possible only when the water is extremely high.

Patt suggested the wording "Bybee wetlands and surrounding wetlands will be managed primarily as environmental preserves." She felt this opened the possibility that localized management rules could be put into place if future needs arose. Most boaters launch into Smith Lake, and then paddle into

Bybee Lake. Dale had concerns about the species fragilities inherent in the nesting season, and suggested that people be discouraged from paddling over to Bybee Lake. Sara spoke to Patt's suggestion to change language.

Janet said 1st paragraph in New Policy L in the only place in the entire set of policies that addresses recreational uses. Dave Helzer said he actually sees New Policy L as more protective than the old Policies 15 and 16.

Jonathan Soll suggested including 1st sentence of Old 15 and 1st sentence of Old 16 at end of 1st paragraph in New Policy L.

Dave brought up dogs, and suggested putting it in new policy M. It needs to be very clear that dogs can only go, on leash, on the sections that are regional trails; that no dogs are allowed on any on any of the spur trails. Allowing dogs on regional trails that cross Metro land was first done at Graham Oaks. Paul Vandenberg said the special conditions and circumstances of the landfill would support a no dog policy; for example, from Marine Drive to Columbia Boulevard, since fencing would not be inclusive, but installed to protect sensitive items, such as gas well heads with flexible plastic pipes.

Patt brought up a scenario where dog owners would not be able to hike the full length of the trail. It was agreed that it is a dilemma that needs to be addressed. Pam stressed the importance of educational signs to let people understand why the leash law is important. Larry said that the Port has problems with dogs on whatever site they are allowed, and feels that a total prohibition will be more effective. Lynn Barlow agreed with Larry.

Jane brought area of influence of dogs on site; don't birds and animals smell them and leave? Susan Barnes didn't know of studies that address birds, but there are studies that show general effect on wildlife. Dave suggested a policy of no dogs from Marine Drive south across slough to the St. Johns Landfill office. Jonathan asked about the validity of putting a policy in place that won't be enforced. Larry brought up his point again that dogs on leash will bring dogs off leash. Having a law on the books gives the option of enforcement if an issue arises. Paul brought up that landfill trail segments will continue to be used by landfill staff as service roads and that dogs add another level of complexity in that context. Based on the above discussion, the no dog policy will be added to New Policy M.

On the issue of portaging by the water control structure, the north slough side of the structure is dangerous. Dan K. asked Dan M. about this; since people are using it, how to make it safer, or ignore it and know that accidents could happen. The concept of "recreational immunity" was discussed. Pam brought up inequity between paths and waterway uses. Larry asked for suggestions to address this in Policy L. Susan Barnes brought up the issue of water trails. There aren't as many water trail users as hikers, Jonathan said, and that people don't need to be able to get everywhere, for the sake of the wildlife. Dan M. talked about the danger of this significant trail crossing of a water control feature at a pinch point. A focalized crossing at a high traffic point is going to protect the resource. Dave said that it is his feeling that boat traffic in Bybee will increase if portage is improved. At this point two to three vessels a week come through when the water is high. It was decided that a placeholder will be placed to possibly address a portage near the water control structure in the future.

Regarding access to the water control structure and Bybee Wetland from the landfill trail, Janet says there are 3 options: complete barrier, viewpoint to see lake from trail, or let people go down the hill to water control feature. Trail head improvement was also discussed, including parking for eight vehicles, a restroom, and paved access down to the Columbia Slough.

For remaining policies, Dave requested that members email comments to Janet.

Two more meetings of substance on the NRMP update will be set. The first agenda will include a comprehensive list of recreation programs and features, and prioritizing thereof, and use of the Fund. These will be addressed at the next meeting, March 22nd, 5:30 to 7.

The second meeting will deal with high level invasive species strategy, and research and monitoring strategies. This meeting will be tentatively held on April 26th, **time tbd**.

Merit Oil update

Dale's email, DEQ is going to hold as public hearing, Monday, February 28th at 6:30 at the Saint John's Community Center, 8427 N Central St.

General updates

Recology is going to attend the Friends of Smith Bybee meeting on March 2nd. Recology project is being permitted through the City of Portland at this time.

Janet asked the committee to write a letter of support for the New Tree Ordinance, Patt has agreed to write the letter. She requests that the Committee form an ad hoc sub-committee to read the letter over for content, and Larry Devroy, Dave Helzer and Janet volunteered. Dan Kromer made a motion that Patt write the letter, which Dave seconded.

Dan Kromer shared that he is transitioning off the Committee and that the March 22nd meeting will be his last official meeting as a member of the Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee, a group he has been involved with for nearly fifteen years. Dan Moeller will take Dan Kromer's place on the Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m. Next meeting: March 22nd, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Room 370.

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Attachments

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