
**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. - 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 24th, 2011
Metro Regional Center, 600 N E Grand Ave., Room 270
Portland, Oregon 97232

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions	(Dave Helzer)	5:30 – 5:35 pm
Approve March meeting summary	(Dave Helzer)	5:35 – 5:40 pm
Continue Comprehensive Natural Resources Plan – Invasive Plant Management Strategy	(Jonathan Soll, Elaine Stewart)	5:40 – 6:50 pm
Communications Plan	(Dan Moeller)	6:50 – 7:20 pm
General Updates	(Troy – Purple Martin Houses)	7:20 – 7:30 pm
Adjourn		7:30 pm



**Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee
May 24, 2011**

In Attendance:

Troy Clark *.....Audubon, Vice Chair
Larry Devroy *Port of Portland
Dale Svart*Friends of Smith & Bybee Lakes
Pam Arden*40 Mile Loop Trust
Lynn Barlow*Portland Parks & Recreation
Sara Henderson*St. Johns Neighborhood Association
Eric Tonsager*Oregon Bass and Panfish Club
Dan Moeller*Metro Sustainability Center
Phyllis Cole.....Metro Parks & Environmental Services
Janet Bebb.....Metro Sustainability Center
Jonathan Soll.....Metro Sustainability Center
Elaine Stewart.....Metro Sustainability Center
Nancy Hendricks*City of Portland, BES
James DavisMetro Sustainability Center
Jeff LockeVolunteer, Smith and Bybee Wetlands

* Denotes voting SBWMC member

Troy Clark, vice-chair, chaired the meeting in Dave Helzer's absence.

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m., and introductions were made, including Nancy Hendricks from City of Portland, BES.

Approve April Summary Notes

There was a motion by Dale Svart to accept the April 26, 2011 meeting summary notes, and the motion was seconded by Eric Tonsager. The motion passed without amendment.

Continue Discussion of Comprehensive Natural Resources Plan – Invasive Plant Management Strategy

Elaine Stewart passed out copies of a draft evaluation framework on invasive plants and animals and the partnerships involved. (PowerPoint attached).

(Beginning of slide show)

This three step evaluation framework to clarify procedures is one new aspect of the CNRP. There were both general and specific discussion points made as Elaine went through the document.

There was great interest in and discussion of noxious plants, and their threat to Smith Bybee Wetlands. Elaine explained the use of the Alien Plant Ranking System (APRS), and her process of running 20 plants through the system, and the graph that was generated. The importance of early detection and rapid response was highlighted.

Metro | Meeting Summary

Pam Arden asked why the explosion of water primrose has occurred. Elaine replied that this plant has been present for at least 15 years, but had recently expanded rapidly. This aspect of plant invasions is not well understood, but Elaine believes that the plant is thriving on the stable water levels provided in Smith Lake by the beaver dam.

English Ivy and Japanese Knotweed were highlighted as plants that are being dealt with by EDRR (early detection and rapid response) at the wetlands. Quick action is taken whenever they are detected and they are held at or near zero levels.

At Smith and Bybee Wetlands, Metro uses an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to weed control. The first step is to understand the plant and its life history. Many types of control are available: cultural, manual, chemical, etc. The water control structure is one type of control, and it effectively manages reed canarygrass when adequate flooding is achieved. Herbicide trials are under way with water primrose and with Reed Canarygrass that co-occurs with Columbia Sedge. Cultural control is also implemented at Smith-Bybee; an example is planting shrubs and trees to shade out Reed Canarygrass in specific areas. The essential aspect of IPM is to use the least harmful, effective control method available.

Intensive monitoring in partnership with Portland State University is providing insights into water level management of Reed Canarygrass. Twenty-seven transects covering more than 2.5 km are used to track changes, and Reed Canarygrass has decreased from 32% to 16% coverage since the water control structure was completed in late 2003.

There was discussion of which natives are coming in, and which invasives are arriving to replace Reed Canarygrass. Native Smart Weed is making great inroads.

There is so much seed in the soil that this process must be done continually.

There are invasive animals at Smith Bybee Wetlands, although they are not as numerous as the invasive plant populations. There are also not as many techniques to control the animals, and thus there are limited options.

(End of slide show)

Pam Arden asked for an update on the beaver situation at Smith Bybee. Elaine responded that the beaver population will come to equilibrium on its own, but their influence on water level management remains a conundrum. Beaver deceivers were talked about, a system which involves building piping, fencing, and a secret drain that tricks the beavers. This was tried a few years back with limited results. Elaine is waiting for thesis results from a Portland State student to move further with beaver control. James added that the beaver problem is not so much tree destruction as water management issues at Smith Lake, coupled with the effect of invasive plants.

Troy Clark asked how this aspect of the CNRP was presented in the document.

Elaine said that next steps are to get comment and feedback for the CNRP, although it hadn't yet been decided which format and structure would be most effective. Elaine suggested it be written up as a framework; this way if new invasives arrive they will be examined through this filter.

Jonathan Soll said that reasonable goals, targeted but with room for modification, will be developed as to how invasives are being/will be handled. Troy said there is a lot of data that has been collected on Reed Canarygrass, and the way this information is displayed could demonstrate options and choices that can be made regarding invasives.

Metro | Meeting Summary

Jonathan said monitoring the cost of different choices will be a portion of the overall picture. Janet Bebb asked whether information on manual plant removal should be more available, in case people want to increase their support. Troy suggested that 2 examples in each category of invasive would be valuable to help people see the severity of different incursions and target their volunteer activities appropriately.

There was discussion of how volunteerism could be factored into the CNRP. Dale Svart shared his firm belief that it is the future to strive for less impact and to use fewer herbicides. He imagined the empty Wapato Jail turned into an eco-tourist dormitory. Eco-tourism is spreading and promoting volunteerism is huge.

Pam suggested that the document include contact information on how to volunteer to help with invasives. Janet shared that Bonnie Shoffner, Metro's Restoration Volunteer Coordinator, is very willing to assist with volunteer projects. An increased level of organization could result in more people being involved.

Janet will have the document available electronically, and Elaine mentioned that this would present a good opportunity to include a link to volunteer opportunities.

Dan Moeller said that the "front door" to volunteering at Metro is being revamped.

Pam pointed out that volunteers access information on opportunities in different ways, and that in her experience the phrase "get involved" scares people off.

Nancy Hendricks noted that the volunteerism aspect is not prominently placed in the CNRP.

Larry pointed out that an organized response is vital.

Janet suggested that members of the committee promote Smith Bybee volunteer opportunities at their respective organizations. Jeff mentioned his success recruiting volunteers at a recent event by accessing the Metro website.

Larry brought up importance of a general framework that won't be out of date; this is what we do NOW.

Janet said the front end of the CNRP is written for a lay audience of interested citizens. The Appendix is thick and more technical.

Dale mentioned the nutria bloom of a few years back, and that they're gone now; at least they are not swarming. Elaine said the water control structure is responsible for this.

There was discussion of the Communication Plan Draft distributed by Dan. He asked for feedback and input regarding what the Committee would like in terms of basic communication, and the level of review by the advisory committee that different actions would require.

Troy requested consistency in the name of the Committee. There was discussion on this topic, and the name "Smith and Bybee Wetlands Advisory Committee" was suggested as being more representative of what the Committee actually does. The group agreed to adopt "Smith and Bybee Wetlands Advisory Committee" as their new name.

Janet Bebb brought up the difference between grant cycles and Metro's budget cycle, and how this would need to be factored in to effectively leverage grant monies to attain the goals for Smith Bybee Wetlands in the CNRP. A discussion during the fall on the coming year's

Metro | Meeting Summary

funding priorities will be necessary to fit with the budget process, since the budget is decided on in May.

Dale inquired as to whether specific meeting dates should be set. Troy said future events would need to be factored in, and Jonathan said Metro is dedicated to keeping the Committee apprised of events in a timely way. He asked whether this group of dates was essentially workable for the Committee.

Larry voiced concern with the half-day retreat set for November; he wondered whether people would be available during the holiday season. Troy said that with a quarterly schedule a half-day retreat was essential. Janet suggested a special meeting format, such as having a work session at another site, to provide a different feeling to the meeting.

Elaine suggested that other organizations share their efforts in improving coordination. Dan asked that the General Updates standing agenda item be used for Committee members to share events coming up in their organizations.

Troy felt that the first year of the CNRP will require monthly meetings, since there is so much change that will occur with the new format, and more action from the Committee has been called for. A quarterly meeting is the minimum; additional meetings can be called as needed.

Jonathan said that the first big steps to get the plan rolling will require an application for a grant to fund a 2-3 year course. Momentum will generate as this cycle proceeds.

Jonathan asked for the Committee's buy in and/or comments on the next steps. There was discussion on Metro's and the Committee's differing responsibilities and the wording regarding this. Janet was requested to put this schedule for quarterly and extra meetings as needed in the CNRP Appendix. It was agreed that stewardship of the Committee was generally met by this draft and the spirit in which it is written. Dan shared that monthly meetings could well occur through 2011.

Certain actions would require Committee review. The Committee discussed these, and Troy brought up some examples that were not listed as requiring Committee review which he felt should also be mentioned to the Committee, such as emergency replacement of infrastructure that poses a safety concern. He noted that these actions could change the feel of Smith Bybee, and that Metro could touch base with the Chair, so that the Committee would be aware of the replacement and have a chance to comment on the decision. Elaine brought up the issue of the bird blinds, and the concept of putting a 2nd floor on the blinds; that would certainly be brought up to the Committee, whereas fixing a kicked out board would not be. Dale mentioned the slippery slope of using a steel mill slag insert to replace the walkway at the water control structure; there was concern about the unknown quality of material, and the Committee needed to know this, and in this instance an arbitrary decision wasn't too smart. Over informing and under informing will no doubt occur in the future, even with the best and most careful of intentions. Janet would add land use actions to items that would need review by the Committee. Dan committed to erring on the side of bringing more information to the Committee rather than less.

Janet brought up the Plan Timeline for discussion that was distributed. The draft plan should be distributed to the committee in early July. She proposed that comments be made via hand writing on paper copies and then mailed back to her. She asked that comments be submitted by July 18, 2011, and that the Committee meet the last Tuesday of July, when highlights on

Metro | Meeting Summary

major point can be talked through. General public comments will be solicited on the web, and Janet asked the Committee to push this document out for comment to interested people they know. She will inform the Committee when the pre-app process date comes up. Metro attorney suggests a work session. Staff report concerns will need to be dealt with before going to Council.

Janet said this timeline is a first try at thinking our way through the process, which may well be done by fall 2011.

Troy brought up that this is extending/amending the CNRP; that Smith Bybee will no longer be a zoning code phenomena, since the NRMP will be replaced by the CNRP. Environmental code is fairly complete; buffering is the only item being brought in. Downside to keeping NRMP is that it kept us frozen to the environmental code of 1990.

Janet will make sure that Zari and Dean get review copies for their comment, since they would be in the review chain. Nancy Hendricks said the City won't be heavily involved if there isn't a lot of controversy regarding the process. And since the CNRP vehicle was just adopted by City there is essentially no reason for them to get alarmed. Janet asked that the Committee look over the document to make sure no sections have been missed. She asked that Committee members bring their written comments on hard copy to Metro by July 18, 2011.

General Updates

When Troy retired his customers gave \$1700 to Audubon in his honor, and he presented to the Committee his thoughts about creating habitat for a colony of Purple Martins in the Smith Bybee Wetlands.

Dave Fouts manages a Purple Martin colony on Sauvie at Bybee Howell, and Troy has visited the site and discussed the issue with him.

Troy suggested placing a nesting structure made of gourds on poles on the toe of the landfill. He had spoken with Paul Vandenberg about this, who said it would most likely need to go through DEQ. A slab with a pole sticking up into the air would be needed, since digging down in the landfill is not an option. Purple Martins need a long approach. The nests would need to be lowered and cleaned in the fall and put up again April 1-15. He asked if this is something the Committee would like to do. Purple Martins in the east are very dependent on humans, otherwise starlings and sparrows will take over. Purple Martins like to be near water, but not in trees. Janet Bebb asked if Purple Martins are interesting to watch, since vandalism issues increase around people. Troy and Paul Vandenberg agreed in their earlier discussion that this is something that needs to come before the Committee. Nancy asked how people felt about having very human-looking items at Smith Bybee. The site would have 16 gourds, which Troy can get at cost through Audubon. Dale asked if the poles could be painted to make them less visible. The Purple Martin is an Oregon Conservation Species. Sara asked if the Streaked Horned Lark project would clash with the proposed idea, but general consensus was that it would not.

Larry said that Multnomah County vector control doesn't really do much to reduce mosquito population, and Eric added that the Purple Martin provides excellent natural insect control. It was agreed that DEQ would be the biggest hurdle.

Metro | *Meeting Summary*

Janet suggested putting the nests in an area that already has structures. Jonathan will call Hannah Anderson, the Streaked Horn Lark authority in Washington and ask if she sees any problem with placing such a structure on the landfill. The toe is the oldest part of the landfill, and is close to being decommissioned.

Placing the structure within the wetlands was also discussed, and the question was raised whether the site would become so popular that canoe traffic would go way up. Troy said the area would be placed in a location where people wouldn't be allowed to go.

Troy basically wanted to know if the Committee was interested in this going further. Jonathan says that the Purple Martin is a strategy species, and it would be interesting to try it. Larry said Government Island had some structures, but it wasn't in the annual report. Troy added that the Sauvie Island colony is doing well, and that the fledglings will be looking for nest spots. Dan brought up the ongoing maintenance for Metro should it take off. Troy will ask Paul to contact DEQ, and Troy was happy to get the Committee's go ahead so he can continue thinking about this.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Next meeting

July 26, 2011

5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Room 370 A/B, Metro Regional Center

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Attachment: Smith Bybee Management Committee Invasives PowerPoint