

**Summary Meeting Notes
Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee
August 23, 2005**

In attendance:

Patt Opdyke, Chair *	North Portland Neighborhoods
Troy Clark *	Portland Audubon Society
Brenda Hanke *	St. Johns Neighborhood Assn.
Pam Arden *	40-Mile Loop Land Trust
Nancy Hendrickson *	Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Jim Sjulín *	Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Dan Kromer	Metro Parks – Willamette District Manager
Patricia Sullivan	Metro Parks – Committee Recorder
Elaine Stewart	Metro Parks – Natural Resource Scientist
Paul Vandenberg	Metro Solid Waste & Recycling
Larry Devroy *	Port of Portland
Jim Morgan *	Metro

* denotes voting SBWMC member

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Selection of committee chair

Patt Opdyke reminded the committee this was her last meeting in the role of Chair. A succeeding Chair is still being sought. Troy Clark, as Vice Chair, will open the September meeting, if no one has volunteered to assume the position yet. Opdyke suggested that each September a new Chairperson be installed and that the role rotate annually among the voting members.

Consideration of June 28, 2005 meeting notes

An addition to the notes was made that Bill Egan commented on illegal dumping that is still occurring; it can affect water quality at the wetlands. The notes were approved as amended by consensus of the committee.

Review of recreational opportunities at the management area

Jim Sjulín began his review by recounting some general history of the parks systems in the region. He noted that periodic assessments done by Oregon State Parks have consistently shown a high demand for places for walking, biking, wildlife viewing and access to water. The question then becomes how does the supply side match up to the demand? Jim also referred to the Olmsted Plan and its influence on early local park systems. In the late 1970s, the 40-Mile Loop Plan was in its early stages. Parts of that plan could be looked at as an updated vision of the Olmsted Plan, that is to connect open spaces with public access routes. The vision could be considered being articulated at a regional level through the Greenspaces Master Plan.

Jim then brought the discussion closer to the Smith and Bybee Wildlife Area. The Natural Resources Management Plan of 1990 provided a vehicle for the usage of Smith & Bybee Lakes to be considered in terms of balance between natural resource protection and access. Then looked at for inclusion in the NRMP were what kinds of recreational uses, facilities, restoration projects, etc. should happen “on the ground”. Jim surmised that search for balance will be an ongoing enterprise.

Over time as more is learned about the resources and the sensitivity of those resources, some planned activities (“recreation opportunities” in NRMP pg. 33-34) may have to be curtailed. In Jim’s estimation, there are some things that this Committee should consider doing on an official basis to put some ideas to rest. Some activities were included in the plan, such as model airplane flying, that were a compromise that had to be made at the time the plan was being written. According to Jim, the list of passive recreational uses for the current Management Committee to consider going forward – walking and running, cycling, non-motorized boating, wildlife observation, fishing, educational interpretation and research. He mentioned his preference to scratch model airplane flying from the list. In terms of the major recreation facilities, there is a short list consisting of trails, trail heads and water trails. It was noted the Management Area is heading towards ultimate build-out.

Employment of an adaptive management approach vs. a cautionary tale in the wildlife area was discussed in last month’s meeting. The former might be effective if monitoring and documenting the differences between the “before” and “after,” in terms of the quality of the resource, were part of the process. It is a reasonable approach, according to Jim. Elaine Stewart observed that the difference between the adaptive management and precautionary approaches may not be so black and white; a phased approach, incrementally developing areas and observing the effects, could be effective.

Troy Clark stated he doesn’t approach Smith and Bybee Wetlands as a facility but as a resource. He sees the concept of facility vs. natural resource and natural resource protection vs. access as potentially in conflict. Somewhere along the line he feels it falls to Metro to decide where in that spectrum the wildlife area sits. One or the other, access or natural resource, will be more heavily weighted. Troy referred to bald eagles nesting where the trail may go and he categorized them as a huge community resource. He supported a cautionary approach saying once a trail is built, it is permanent.

Pam Arden observed that there always has to be concern for the balance between access and natural resources and for a connection between the two. She and the 40-Mile Loop Land Trust want to have access - to be able to walk to and around these resources. She asks how do we complete this loop; how do we fill this gap? Pam noted Smith and Bybee Wetlands are not an untouched natural resource; they have been altered and improved from their original state. Elected officials will be making the decision about the trail and the committee will have to live by that decision. Jim Sjulín referred to the City of Portland’s policy in trail NRMPs of including with the development and use of trails, the obligation for restoration, thus presenting a well-balanced plan at the outset.

Patt Opdyke closed the discussion by saying that when the Management Committee returns to the topic of the NRMP in upcoming meetings, it will be important to continue the discussion on recreation and policies and what changes should be made.

Updates

The next gathering of the Committee will be for the tour of the new facilities at Smith & Bybee Wetlands Natural Area beginning at 5:30 p.m. Everyone is asked to meet at the new trailhead/parking lot. Elaine added it could also be a time to connect one more time on the trail alignment before going to Metro Council and to consider who might wish to testify.

Dan Kromer mentioned park user complaints continue about locking the gate at Smith and Bybee at closing time. There can be conflict between users wanting to exit at later times and issues of concern for safety and maintenance.

The Trails Feasibility Study will soon be released for public review and comment. The document will be available in CD form and online. A limited number of paper copies will also be available on a first come, first served basis. The Committee asked to receive copies for their reference.