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

Larry Devroy, 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, January 23, 2007
Metro Regional Center, 600 N E Grand Ave., Room 270
Portland, Oregon 97232

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions	(Devroy)	5:30 pm
Approve previous meeting's notes	(Devroy)	5:30 – 5:35 pm
Balancing public access and habitat restoration		5:35 – 7:15 pm
• Willows blocking Smith Lake blind views	(Kromer)	
• Water flooding public trails and viewing blinds	(Kromer)	
Updates		7:15 – 7:30 pm
Adjourn		7:30 pm

**Summary Meeting Notes
Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee
January 23, 2007**

In Attendance:

Larry Devroy (Chair) *	Port of Portland
Troy Clark (Vice Chair) *	Audubon Society of Portland
Pam Arden*	40-Mile Loop Land Trust
Brenda Hanke *	St. John's Neighborhood Assn.
Nancy Hendrickson *	Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Dan Kromer *	Metro Parks and Greenspaces
Jim Sjulín *	Portland Parks & Recreation
Dale Svart*	Friends of Smith & Bybee Lakes
Elaine Stewart	Metro Parks – Natural Resources Scientist

* Denotes voting SBWMC member

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

Consideration of March 28, 2006 meeting notes

Dale Svart requested that he receive notes, agendas and other mailings by regular mail as well as electronic mail.

The October 2006 meeting notes were not available for review due to staff turnover.

Balancing Public Access and Habitat Restoration

Two aspects of this issue were brought before the committee: views from the Smith Lake Blind blocked by regenerating willows, and flooding of the viewing blinds and parts of the trails when water is held at maximum capacity in the wetlands.

Willows Blocking Smith Lake Blind Views

Metro has received a number of inquiries regarding willows blocking views. When the wetlands were managed as a reservoir, the willows could not grow in front of the blind as they had historically – the water was too deep and permanent. Since the wetlands are drawn down every year, the band of regenerating willow forest around the perimeter of the wetlands includes the area between the Smith Lake viewing blind and Smith Lake.

Metro's decision is to do selective cutting and open view lines from the blind. Metro asked for feedback from the committee.

The committee's discussion identified several issues. First, the committee acknowledged and supported the need to establish goals and objectives for views at the site. These would provide guidance for evaluating these issues. Members expressed concern regarding ongoing maintenance requirements at the viewing blind, because willow will regenerate and need to be cut again. Habitat disturbance is another concern.

Recommendation: Metro should cut one swath in front of the viewing blind to provide public views, noting that the committee's reservations are maintenance and habitat disturbance; then Metro should evaluate the results. Nancy Hendrickson moved, Jim Sjulín seconded; the motion/recommendation passed.

Members brought up the issue of willow harvest for the art installation at Weiden + Kennedy: what was Metro's decision for handling these requests in the future? Dan Kromer reported that Metro would come to the management committee prior to approving such a use. Elaine Stewart added that Metro would not support such a use again unless there were a benefit to habitat, i.e., a "habitat-neutral" alteration would not meet the test.

Next steps for the Smith blind: Dan will talk with other Metro staff about the committee's recommendation. He will photo-document the work and report back to the management committee.

Water Flooding Public Trails and Viewing Blinds

The issue: when the water control structure is used to retain water to the maximum extent possible, then the grated walk to the Smith Lake blind is flooded. The situation presents a trade-off between accessibility and reed canarygrass control.

Committee members asked what it would cost to raise the path and viewing blind, or provide another solution? They suggested that Dan Kromer get an estimate. Several members stated that they felt the reed canarygrass control was a high priority.

In comparing this and the previous issue, members stated that the willow cutting in front of Smith Lake blind was a relatively small habitat impact. However, they wish to make maximum use of the water control structure because of broader habitat effects around the wetlands.

Recommendation: Because of the habitat concerns, the committee does not support removing boards from the water control structure to lower water levels to provide access to Smith Lake Blind. The committee recommends that Metro explore raising the path and platform of the blind as an alternative solution. Nancy Hendrickson moved, Larry Devroy seconded; the motion was approved.

Updates

- Nancy Hendrickson reported that a Stewardship Saturday would be held soon at Ramsey Refugia (the salmon habitat enhancement project at Ramsey wetlands).
- Nancy reported that sampling at Ramsey documented upriver Columbia River Chinook, which was quite a revelation for fish managers that thought the Columbia River stocks would not go up the Willamette or use side channels such as Ramsey that were off the main stem Columbia River.
- Dan Kromer reported on vandalism – the orientation sign and two memorial plaques were removed from the site.
- Dan also reported that interpretive and school programs will be starting up again at the site soon.
- Elaine Stewart reported that a volunteer bird bander has banded nearly 500 birds since late September.