
**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. - 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 28, 2009
Metro Regional Center, 600 N E Grand Ave., Room 270
Portland, Oregon 97232

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions	(Larry Devroy)	5:30 pm
Approve April's meeting notes	(Larry Devroy)	5:30 – 5:40 pm
Natural Resource Management Plan update	(Janet Bebb)	5:40 – 6:50 pm
General updates		6:50 – 7:00 pm
Adjourn		7:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Committee July 28, 2009

In Attendance:

Larry Devroy (Chair),* Port of Portland
Troy Clark (Vice Chair),* Audubon Society of Portland
Lynn Barlow,* Portland Parks & Recreation
Dave Helzer,* Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Patt Opdyke,* N. Portland Neighborhoods
Dale Svart,* Friends of Smith & Bybee Lakes
Brenda Hanke,* St. Johns Neighborhood Association
Pam Arden,* 40-Mile Loop Trust
Dan Kromer,* Metro Parks & Environmental Services
Jeffrey Kee, Friends of Smith & Bybee Lakes
Jonathan Soll, Metro Sustainability Center
Kathleen Brennan Hunter, Metro Sustainability Center
Paul Vandenberg, Metro Parks & Environmental Services
Janet Bebb, Metro Sustainability Center
Gina Cubbon, Admin. Support

* Denotes voting member

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM. Introductions.

Consideration of April 28, 2009 meeting notes

Janet Bebb asked that on the last page, first paragraph, references to “Type II” and “Type III” reviews be stricken.

Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) Update

Jonathan Soll of Metro’s Sustainability Center, attending his first Smith and Bybee meeting, told the group of his background with The Nature Conservancy in Oregon/Washington. Jonathan has a Masters Degree in Forest Ecology and wide-ranging experience in regional conservation planning. He commented that The Nature Conservancy uses a very clean, clear method of definitions, a straightforward planning model that he thinks could be helpful to this group.

Janet presented a memo for discussion regarding topics that should be included in the NRMP. She and Troy Clark explained the history of the nature of the NRMP. Janet said that she had initially had the same idea, but discovered that depending on how the document is written, it could need Type III legislation that could take up to 18 months and cost over \$100,000.

In two weeks, Janet will be having a conversation with Roberta Joiner to identify ways to get to the simplest path of updating the Plan. If the Committee develops the content the way they want, in a parallel track to the Bureau of Planning, the work could be finished by next fall. To bring an update forward without having to involve Forest Park’s and other NRMP’s, zoning code language could change from legislative to quasi-judicial. In a quasi-judicial format, Metro could approach City

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Council directly. Even that simple change would involve a long process, so staff will continue to investigate the best way to streamline the process.

Patt Opdyke asked about funding availability. There is trust fund money available and budgeted, Kathleen Brennan Hunter explained, but Metro hopes to minimize using that for Planning Bureau work.

The St. Johns Landfill will always be a big part of the NMRP. It's the biggest dynamic because of its decomposing waste, erosion, natural changes and settlement. In spite of that, the possibility of gentle recreation such as trails is exciting. Paul Vandenberg reminded the group that because of a need for fenced trails and possibly impeding wildlife movement, Landfill issues are extremely complicated.

Dave Helzer asked if by bypassing legislation, would the chance to influence future legislation be lost? For instance, would they lose out on readjusting the boundary or buffers? (Currently, the NMRP calls for only a 10-ft. vegetative buffer, though Dan Kromer said that City code may already have a much larger buffer. Janet will get further information regarding the buffer zone.

Jonathan offered that while deciding exactly what the boundaries of the entire site are will help create a much richer final product, it would force the NMRP down a more contentious path. The streamlined road is to stick with the environmental code, Janet added, but all options will be looked at and definitely considered. Jonathan suggested moving ahead into the planning process to see if there's consensus on the main issues, and decide which items to tackle first while the relationship with the City is being honed.

Janet continued to walk the group through the memo (attached). The model presented is based on one developed by the Nature Conservancy.

Comments/questions

- Strategies will have to be modified after the “analyze and communicate” portion of the process.
- Move “implement the action and monitoring plan” up so that each action can be used as an experiment, therefore developing a baseline.
- If a range of recreational activities are allowed up to a certain point of impact, it's difficult to change behaviours when it becomes necessary, therefore running the risk of political firestorms. How best to smoothly protect the resource while allowing some use?

Overall, the outline was well-received. Janet asked the members to call her with any further thoughts and concerns. Some of the topics brought up at the previous meeting would be included in the “stresses” section, she noted.

The Committee discussed adding the decision-making process of the group in a one or two page “Executive Summary.” The group will come to agreement on the scope prior to releasing the RFP, and then a smaller group will help choose the winning consultant. Perhaps add the owner of an adjacent industrial property or two, because they're impacted.

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Groups / organizations with whom to share information during the update process could include the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, the University of Portland, Multnomah ESD, private citizens, PSU (already working on the site, so that would be a good fit), the 40-Mile Loop Trust, and three or four neighborhood associations. The strategy phase might be a good time to get good buy-in from these sources. The City of Portland, Multnomah County Vector Control, NMFS, and native fish groups were also mentioned.

As a side note, Troy mentioned that Oregon Fish & Wildlife still lists Smith & Bybee as a bass fishery; how can this be corrected?

The Committee then touched upon the potential final audience, and how “glossy” to make the document, so it can be included in the RFP. Because of the technological advancements and opportunities to share the information, it should look attractive and professional, yet be easily reproducible (not muddy). A large document that can be easily broken down into separate pieces might work well, and three-ringed rather than spiral bound. (Most people will view electronically, so changes can be easily added.)

General Updates

Paul Vandenberg (for Jane Hart) provided an update on the Smith & Bybee Trail Feasibility Study. In 2005, the Metro Council approved that Study, including a preferred alignment (i.e., “South Slough Alignment”), and directed staff to evaluate more thoroughly the feasibility of a pedestrian/bike bridge over the North Slough, and of trail segments that would connect the landfill to the St. Johns neighborhood through Chimney and Pier parks, and to the Peninsula Crossing Trail via the south side of Columbia Slough. These studies are underway (Exeltech – bridge; Alta – trail segments), and it is expected that findings will be brought to the Metro Council in Fall 2009. Prior to the Council hearing, the findings will also be provided directly to the technical working group that guided the Trail Feasibility Study.

The North Slough bridge study report is expected to conclude that a bridge is feasible, and to recommend a preferred bridge location and alignment, Mr. Vandenberg said. The trail segments study is expected to conclude that the South Slough Alignment - as delineated on the trail plan map - is feasible, although certain constraints will need to be effectively addressed. Key considerations include negotiating easements with private property owners, and crossings of Columbia Blvd. and railroad tracks.

It is Metro’s understanding that ODOT will make a final decision in August / September 2009 on a \$1.5 million grant for a pedestrian/bike bridge over the railroad tracks that run between Chimney and Pier parks.

Larry Devroy said that the Ramsey Rail project will be starting in the next few days.

Pam Arden handed out some maps of the N. Portland Greenway Trail, “from the Esplanade to St. Johns.” Greenway Trail was just given a grant towards a feasibility study.

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Dave Helzer reported that the City of Portland's BES has two projects in the area: Retrofit enhancement to stormwater wetland, and installation of large log structures near Kelly Point Park for salmon habitat.

Next meeting: The Committee discussed having monthly meetings again during the NRMP update process. Janet told the group that her availability is limited, so monthly meetings aren't currently possible for her. However, she'll be in close touch with the group, and if consensus on the scope of work is close by the next meeting on October 27, they should be able to accomplish quite a bit. The group asked that they be given deadlines for feedback to help keep the project moving forward.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.