Metro

“This garden is important to me because I can learn exactly the work my parents did when they were in Congo.”



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If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we've already crossed paths.

So, hello. We're Metro – nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

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To protect plants, wildlife and people, Metro does not allow pets at most regional parks and natural areas. Pets can damage sensitive habitat and threaten wildlife the region has worked to protect. In natural areas where pets are not allowed, people see more wildlife and get closer to it. Seeing-eye dogs or other service animals are allowed. Please bring cleanup materials.

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Share your nature and win!



Winner: Janet Rothermel, Raleigh Hills

My 6-year-old grandson, Mason, found a snail in his backyard in Sherwood. He wasn't sure where the snail's eyes were located, so he got out his magnifying glass for a closer look.



Finalist: Christine Noble, Gaston

At Fernhill Wetlands in Forest Grove with my daughter, several people stopped and asked us if we had seen the deer. Yes we did!



Finalist: Michael Weisman, Tigard

A flame skimmer dragonfly resting on bamboo in my Tigard backyard.

Submit your photo

Win an annual parking pass, a full-day picnic shelter reservation at Graham Oaks or Scouters Mountain nature parks, a tennis court session, or a round of golf for four people including cart at Glendoveer Golf and Tennis Center.

To enter, submit a photo taken at a park or natural area in greater Portland – your friends and family, a view of wildlife or a sunset, for example. Include a 50-word description of your experience. Where were you? What were you doing? What captured your attention?

The winner will appear in this space. By submitting a photo, you consent to Metro's future use and publication of your photo. Send your photo and description by Nov. 20 to: **ourbigbackyard@oregonmetro.gov**

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On the cover: Thierry Ndayisaba, a sophomore at Parkrose High School, stands in his family's plot in a community garden in East Portland. *Photo by Cory Eldridge*

Metro awards $700k for Nature in Neighborhoods grants

Story by Megan Zabel Holmes. Photo courtesy Tualatin Riverkeepers



Photo: Tualatin Riverkeepers was awarded a Nature in Neighborhoods grant for $80,700 to support workforce training in outdoors and nature industries.

Over the summer, the Metro Council awarded 12 community organizations $700,000 in grants for projects designed to increase racial equity and climate resilience in greater Portland by connecting people of color to nature.

This round of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods grants include a project that brings together Indigenous students and teachers at the Sandy River, another that will provide year-round, culturally specific environmental science education, and a career mentorship program that offers youth with low incomes opportunities to learn about natural resource management as they restore local habitats.

The grants are funded by the parks and natural areas levy that voters renewed in November 2016. Metro received 42 applications that requested funding for projects totaling $2.38 million. Racial equity criteria have guided the program since 2018.

The review committee included local experts in nature education, outdoor experiences, cultural programs, racial equity and related fields. The committee rewarded proposals that leveraged thoughtful, authentic partnerships and collaboration between organizations. Each awarded program has between two and 12 partners, with most bringing together five or six schools, governments, community organizations and conservation nonprofits.

"One of Metro's roles in the region is to be a convener," said Crista Gardner, program manager of Metro's Nature in Neighborhood community grants. "Our nonprofit partners are coming together through these grant dollars, each bringing their particular skills, knowledge and abilities to the program."

Tualatin Riverkeepers received $80,700 for a work-training program that partners with Centro Cultural de Washington County to promote diversity and representation in the environmental career field. Dana Schot, community engagement coordinator at Tualatin Riverkeepers, said the organization acknowledges the intersections between racial equity and environmental justice.

"We know that conservation is a hugely white-dominant industry that was essentially made by white people, for white people," Schot said. "We really do feel like it's our responsibility to make sure these voices, identities and experiences that have historically been ignored get a seat at the table and get a chance to create a world that works for every single person in it."

Camp ELSO is a community-based education nonprofit that connects Black and Brown kids to the natural world and STEAM fields, whose related industries employ disproportionately few people of color. The organization received a $100,000 grant.

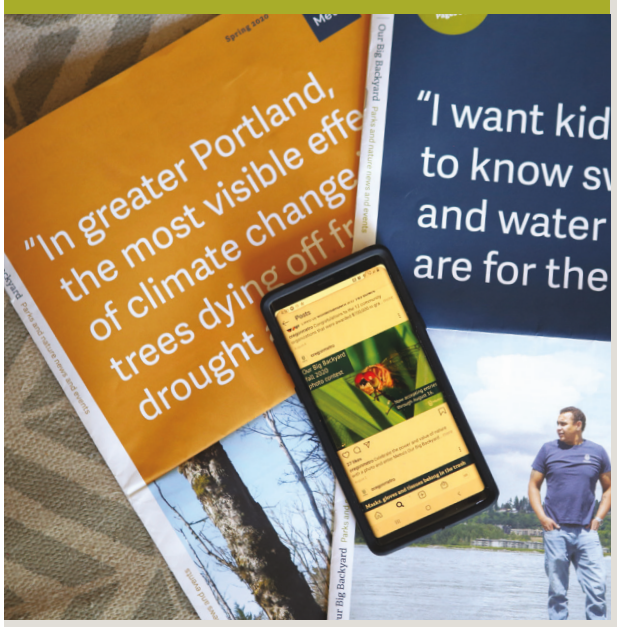
"To learn from adults and educators who look like them – it reinforces the message that these kids belong there, that nature is meant for everyone."

"We want to have more Black and Brown children arriving at college or ready to enter a career field with a balance of both traditional Western ecological and science knowledge, and nontraditional knowledge," said Camp ELSO cofounder and executive director Sprinavasa Brown. "We're hoping they will have a strong sense of self and identity from participating in our programs."

Brown said that affinity spaces, settings and gatherings of people with shared identities like race and culture, are key for children of color who are likely entering the outdoors for the first time.

"Having the opportunity to be surrounded by people who look like them, to learn from adults and educators who look like them – it reinforces the message that these kids belong there, that nature is meant for everyone." Brown said.

Many grant recipients have adapted their programming in the wake of COVID-19. In Camp ELSO's case, that means running summer programs as hybrids that include both virtual sessions at home and in-person sessions at local parks, as well as designing activities that youth can do at home with their families.



Serving a wider audience

Story by Cory Eldridge

A year ago, Metro asked Our Big Backyard's readers to tell us about themselves, why they read the magazine and what they think of the content. Firstly: the magazine has dedicated readers who came out in droves to provide their opinions, which were overwhelmingly positive.

So the magazine is providing readers a good experience. But who are the readers? Our Big Backyard's readers are older, whiter, more educated and richer than the region as a whole. At least 63% of readers are 55 or older (only 7% are 34 or younger), and a whopping 39% hold master's degrees or higher (nationally, about 13% of people do). Respondents were 85% white, compared to about 71% in greater Portland.

Metro also gathered four focus groups composed of Black and Latinx community members, two communities Metro knows it needs to serve better and build better relationships with. The participants in those focus groups liked the content and said it made them want to visit Metro's parks, but they were unlikely to pick up a copy of Our Big Backyard. Social media was how they wanted the info.

The focus groups appreciated stories and images that show people of color in the outdoors because it pushed against the stereotype that Black and Brown people aren't outdoorsy.

Metro had already begun shifting more storytelling to digital media, and the audience research argued for continuing that trend so our content would reach an audience that looks more like greater Portland.

Except for unforeseen budget cuts, Our Big Backyard will remain a key part of Metro's storytelling.

The stories that appear in Our Big Backyard are often the foundation of web stories and social media posts. The articles allow us to dig deeper into issues like those explored in this edition's two featured stories, which examine the very different ways two Black people connect to nature.

As COVID-19 continues to define our lives, we'll use Our Big Backyard and our digital platforms to offer ways to experience nature in a safer way, something that's more important than ever. And as part of Metro's ongoing commitment to racial equity, a commitment that has been redoubled in the months since George Floyd's murder, we'll continue to examine the ways race and the outdoors are woven together.



Reclaiming nature

Pamela Slaughter has spent her life making space for others to join her in nature.

Story by Pamela Slaughter

Photography by Cory Eldridge and Cristle Jose

I know the sweet sound of bird calls and water flowing over rocks. I know pine-scented air, the peace of deep shade and the solid presence of towering trees. I know that nature soothes. Heals. Energizes. Sparks creativity. Inspires. Awes. Nurtures. Teaches. Liberates. Humbles.

I've known since childhood that we can't live a full experience as humans if we don't spend time in nature. I loved the outdoors as a child, and when I was 10, three things happened to solidify that love. The first was my Uncle John moved to a small farm outside of Portland. I remember jumping from the hayloft into the hay, catching frogs at the pond, and sitting for hours in a big tree reading or watching wildlife. Sometimes he put me to work milking the goats, feeding the chickens and collecting eggs. Caring for the animals gave me a sense of confidence and competence. Exploring the pond enhanced my sense of adventure. Learning to identify and understand plants, frogs, crayfish, insects, the many waterfowl and other birds made me feel like my world was a big and interesting place.

The second thing to happen that year was I went to Camp Westwind, my first overnight camp. The camp is located on a peninsula. It's bordered by the Pacific Ocean on one side, the Salmon River on another side and an old-growth forest on the last. It's still one of my favorite places.

We took a ferry across the Salmon River to reach the camp. It was my first time being on a ferry, and I was enthralled by the fish and crabs I could see in the clear water. My cabin was surrounded by beautiful trees. Out its door, a path led to a bluff overlooking the ocean.

I was 10 years old and obsessed with Harriet Tubman. I thought about her often, especially at night. On the first night of camp, I decided to see if I could find the Salmon River, which was north of my cabin, by using the North Star and feeling the moss on the trees the way Harriet Tubman did. I slipped out of the cabin when the other girls went to sleep. There were no lights, so I was navigating by the moon and stars, just like Harriet.

I quickly realized there was moss on all sides of every tree. I also realized I didn't know which star was the North Star. There seemed to be thousands more stars at camp, and they were all incredibly bright. I ended up wandering up to the bluff where I admired the velvety sparkling sky, watched the rhythm of the white-tipped, crashing waves, breathed the salt air, listened to the owls, and created stories about the sounds I was hearing all around me. It was magical and fed my imagination and curiosity and filled me with a sense of freedom.

The third thing was visiting my mother's family in her hometown, Chicago. I spent much of my time in Chicago feeling stunned and disturbed. There were buildings so tall I couldn't see their tops, even with my head thrown back. I missed the woods. My favorite time in Chicago was spent in my Aunt Dorothy's backyard, watching the squirrels.

I was only 10, but I realized I needed the woods to feel good and be happy.

When we returned, I biked to a nearby wooded area. A weight rolled off me when I heard the alarm calls made by birds that spotted me. By the time I reached my favorite tree and climbed it to read, I felt light enough to float away. I was only 10, but I realized I needed the woods to feel good and be happy. I remember sitting in my tree feeling sorry for people who didn't know they were missing the best part of life.

My mother and grandparents moved to Portland from Chicago during World War II and lived in Vanport, the town made overnight to house new arrivals who were building Liberty ships. During the war and then for a few years after, it was one of the only areas in the region Black people were allowed to live. In 1948, the levy holding out Smith Lake broke, destroying the town in an instant. My family lost everything in the flood and couldn't afford to return to Chicago.

They made their home in Portland and fell in love with Oregon's beauty. I have memories of grandparents, great grandparents, my seven aunts and uncles and any of our frequent visitors from Chicago caravanning it to the country or ocean. We would enjoy the river, hike trails, go fishing and have picnics.

I did come to understand that some white people didn't like us because we were Black. Once, we were at the State Fair and a young girl pointed at us and told her mother to look

Community voices

Metro occasionally contracts with community members to write about newsworthy topics from their perspective as a member of a historically marginalized community, such as people of color, immigrants and refugees, low-income residents and people of varying abilities. These pieces are intended to provide important points of view and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Metro or the Metro Council.

In this article, Pamela Slaughter details her love of the outdoors and the anti-Black racism she has experienced in Oregon. It includes a racial slur that was used against her and her family. The word is published with an alteration made by the author.

Pamela is the founder of People of Color Outdoors. She recently published her first children's book, "Hi! My Name is Robin!"

Find People of Color Outdoors events at **meetup.com/people-of-color-outdoors**







at the n*ggers. Her mortified mother slapped her in the face, hard, and told her to never use that word. My grandmother told the woman that the one who needed a hard slap in the face was the adult who taught the child that word. The woman grabbed her crying daughter and rushed away.

I became aware of racists at the fair, but I as far as my childself knew, we never had another negative encounter. Still, as an adult, after I began to see what a child is often protected from, I realized that we may have traveled in those large caravans for safety.

I found that the older I got the less my Black friends wanted to join me outdoors. As an adult, only my white friends loved being outdoors. Many of my Black friends shared stories of verbal or even physical attacks or threats. Sometimes they just didn't want to be stared at.

I don't judge Black people for avoiding the outdoors. I have.

When I became a mother, I wanted my children to have the same relationship with nature I did. I had had occasional encounters with racists and skinheads on the trail. But after one hateful altercation on a hike with my young children, I was left shaken and felt irresponsible for bringing them. That ended our family hikes.

We had thought of ourselves as explorers, free to pick a trail, pack food, water and our journals before setting out to discover something beautiful and exciting. We did, every time. It might be the first patch of trillium on an early spring day. A bald eagle with a wiggling fish in its talons. A log almost completely covered with small garter snakes enjoying the sun on a warm day.

Our legacy as explorers was done, preserved through our journals. We began our new legacy as family-camp members, environmental students and volunteer land stewards. We were usually the only Black people present, but I felt safe in those structured environments.

Years later, I walked into a school with my 10-year-old grandson to drop him off for camp. The room was full of rambunctious children excited for their adventures. We heard a big crash followed by utter silence. Then, a child said, "Don't worry! We'll just say that the Brown boy did it." They all agreed, as we stood there in the hallway, listening.

I immediately saw that my idea of structured environments being safe was incorrect. My grandson saw it, too. Racists were in the structured environment, conspiring to cause my grandson harm because of his color. It showed my grandson that his white peers held his skin color against him in camp the same way they did in the classroom. That was the last time he was willing to go to camp.

But I refused to allow the outdoors to be taken from us.

From his birth, I had been reclaiming space in the outdoors, for him, for me, for us. When he was a baby, I put a crib outside so he could be with me as I gardened. When he was three, I started going on walks with him and his two best friends, who are his first cousins. When they were nine, we took the first of our now-annual road trips together. They are 15 now, quickly becoming Black men. From the garden to today, I've instilled in them that nature is there to help them heal and thrive.

We enjoyed our time together, but we were consistently the only Black people on the Wahkiakum ferry, hiking at Opal Creek, bird watching at Oaks Bottom, riding the jetboat in Hells Canyon. Wherever we went, white people wanted to know what we were doing there, but their questions were never that direct. What program did I work for? What school were we from? What group did we represent?

I would respond we were a family enjoying time outdoors. I would point out a large white family and ask, "Now that's a big group. What program do you suppose they're with?" Most people understood my point. I regularly had to assure the boys it was OK for us to enjoy nature, too.

I felt desperate to go outdoors with people who welcomed me. One day, I googled "Black people hiking together." I discovered Outdoor Afro, founded by Rue Mapp. I wrote her and soon began Outdoor Afro Portland. It was wonderful. My Outdoor Afro training was at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center, an absolutely beautiful campus on 533 acres in rural Virginia.

Clockwise from left: Pamela Slaughter looks at the forest canopy in Oxbow Regional Park. Slaughter leads a People of Color Outdoors scavenger hunt at Leach Botanical Gardens in East Portland.

I learned how to lead events safely while creating community. I was there along with Black leaders representing 33 other states.

I returned energized and excited to share Oregon's beauty. My monthly events were popular. It was a lot of fun, but a lot of work. After two years, I needed a break.

One of my members, Rikeem Sholes, repeatedly asked me to start another group. He finally offered to host all the events until I was ready to return.

My grandson and his cousins are 15 now, quickly becoming Black men. I've instilled in them that nature is there to help them heal and thrive.

As I imagined a new organization, I thought about the many people of color who were not Black who had joined or wanted to join Outdoor Afro. There was a clear need for an organization that brought people of color together in nature. I took Rikeem up on his offer and started People of Color Outdoors in July 2017. The group attracted people of all colors, ages, nationalities and socioeconomic backgrounds. What they all have in common is a desire to enjoy nature and feel safe, with other people of color.

People of Color Outdoors is now a nonprofit. We've hosted over 100 events, including hiking, trail running, biking, canoeing, fishing, bird watching and rock climbing. We've had poetry walks, experienced forest bathing, done a mindfulness walk, held vision board parties and hosted potlucks. Our outings are joyous. We have a caring community where we can all literally exhale, and just be. A big goal for People of Color Outdoors is to purchase land and build a retreat center that will also benefit the local community.

As we build to that, I enjoy this wonderful community that I used to only dream of.



A Congolese garden in East Portland

A small garden connects Fidel and Felicite to the lives and culture they left behind in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It teaches their children where they come from.

Story by Thierry Ndayisaba

Photography by Cory Eldridge

Community voices

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Thierry Ndayisaba is a sophomore at Parkrose High School. This is his first article.





My parents, Fidel Munyanganizi and Felicite Nyirakaratwa, were born in the village of Masisi in the province of North Kivu on the eastern border of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Each of their parents were farmers. My dad's parents had two farms that covered about 40 hectares (a hectare is about 2.5 acres). My mom's parents' farm was about four hectares.

Even when they were very small, my parents were taught how to farm by my grandparents. When my parents were eight, they would fetch water from a nearby river, carrying it in large containers to water crops. They would haul the tools to their parents in the fields. Then at age 12, they were able to plant the fields, cultivate the vegetables and harvest the crops. They helped my grandparents take crops to the market. They took care of the cows, which are the most important part of a farm. They milked the cows and helped the cows give birth.

My dad said recently, "I was born twice: first in our house and then on the farm."

When my parents were married, they worked in my father's parents' farm and then inherited the farm. They grew beans, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, corn, tomatoes and other vegetables. After harvesting, they carried bags of vegetables to sell in town. With this, they were able to buy everything they needed.

But genocide happened in Rwanda in 1994, and then a decade of war came to Congo. A lot of fighting happened in North Kivu. In 1997, a Hutu militia attacked my family's village. Everything was destroyed, even their house. The things they loved were taken and a lot of people died. My parents left their farm, left their cows and fled Congo.

My dad recently said, "I was born twice: first in our house and then on the farm."

They went to Rwanda with nothing. They ended up in a refugee camp called Gihembe. As refugees, they weren't allowed to work outside of the camp, and there were few jobs in the camp. Gihembe was small and there were a lot of people, and life in Rwanda wasn't good.

They were given a garden. It was behind their house and about the size of a small bedroom. They wanted to sell the plants they grew, but











Clockwise from left, opposite page: Fidel Munyanganizi waters his garden. Fidel hoes his garden along with his wife, Felicite Nyirakaratwa, in red, while his friends Charlotte Kanyange and Canisius Gafishi harvest potatoes. Esperance Kayitesi tosses a potato in the harvest pile. Fidel and Felicite's son Innocent Ndayambaje wheels soil to the garden. Fidel and Thierry, the writer, tend to cabbage.

the garden was too little. They didn't make a lot of money. It did help feed us, though.

My family spent 20 years in the refugee camp in Rwanda. It's where I was born, 16 years ago. In about 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees started to send people to the USA. In February 2018, my family was told we would live in Portland. We had never heard of Portland or Oregon.

When we came, most things surprised us. It was all new. But a lot of our friends from Gihembe were here. That made my parents feel more comfortable, and they taught us a lot about Portland.

When we arrived, my parents never thought they could have a garden in the United States. We were in a city! After we had been in Portland for one year, we learned from our church that Adventist Health Portland had a community garden near their campus. My parents were offered a plot.

When they first went to the garden, they said it was a miracle. My parents were so excited, so happy to have a garden again.

When you walk through the gate at the community garden, you see green everywhere. There are many different plants growing. It's hard to tell the individual plots apart, but when you know what to look for, it's easy to see which ones are grown by Congolese families. The Congolese gardens grow the same plants, including corn, amaranth, squash, potatoes, beans and cabbage. The plants are close together, and each row has several types of plants growing together. The rows go right to the edge of the plots, and plants like potatoes and squash grow over the narrow paths between them.

The Congolese' garden looks like a farmer's field. These are gardens that feed families, grown by people who used to feed countries.

My parents' garden is small, about the size of a soccer goal box. They wanted to see if they could plant what they did in Congo. They can, but it hasn't been easy. In Congo and Rwanda, there are two growing seasons but only one here. It gets much hotter and much colder here, so the plants grow differently. In Congo, the rain irrigated the fields. Here, we have to water, which can be hard because the garden is far from our home.

When they first got the garden, we didn't have a car. So my parents took the bus. Luckily, there were tools at the garden, but when they harvested their crop, they had to bring the bags home on the bus.

My parents' garden is next to my dad's best friend's garden. Canisius Gafishi, who we call Caniziyo, he's also from North Kivu and was also a farmer. He and my parents met in Gihembe. They also speak the same language (there are more than 300 languages in Congo). They help water each other's plants and tell each other when crops are ready to harvest.

My parents brought me to the garden for the first time when the plants were ready to harvest. I had helped with the garden in Gihembe, and I was excited to see this garden. It was beautiful.

My siblings and I helped Mom harvest ripe amaranth leaves. We have a big family, so the harvest was fast. It was great.

I always want to go to the garden. Even when it's hot. Even if it gets me dirty. It makes me grow up so I can become a better person.

This garden is important to me because I can learn exactly the work my parents did when they were in Congo. It's important to me because I can learn how to work hard on my own. It can make me a better person. It's hard work, but once you finish, it's fun.

The last time I went to the garden, my parents cultivated the field while my brother, Innocent, and I brought good, dark soil to mix in. Canisius, his wife Charlotte and her sister, Esperance, were harvesting their potatoes while we worked. I helped them gather potatoes and put them in the car.

I asked them why they like the garden, and they said it's because when they were little their parents taught them how to farm, how to grow new things. It connects them to Congo. It's the same as for my parents. And for me, even though I've never been to Congo.

Even if my parents live in Oregon, the garden reminds them that they are Africans. It reminds me that I am African.

Generations of restoration

KILLIN WETLANDS NATURE PARK

Photograph by Curt Zonick

Killin Wetlands Nature Park is a peat-soil wetlands. Peat forms when plant matter sinks to the bottom of a persistently-flooded wetland and settles into the soil without completely decomposing.

In the late 1870s, European settlers dug ditches to drain the wetlands. The peat was exposed to air and oxidized and collapsed.

It has remained re-flooded since the late 1990s. It provides valuable habitat for many rare species and remains a vital cultural resources for the region's Indigenous community.

Over the past few years, floating pondweed has covered the pond. It is helping rebuild the peat bit by bit as it and other plants, like the thousands of willows Metro has replanted, drop leaves, stems and petals to the swamp's bottom. John Christy, a local scientist and expert in peat soils, estimates it may take about the same amount of time to rebuild the peat that was lost as it did to destroy it. That process started in 1995. that's 25 years down, only 100 to go!



You don't float. Life jackets do.

Metro

Accidents happen in an instant.

Whether boating, tubing or swimming, always wear a life jacket.

oregonmetro.gov/watersafety





Field guide

FANNO CREEK REGIONAL TRAIL

Story by Cory Eldridge
Photograph by Cory Eldridge

Fanno Creek Trail offers walkers, joggers and cyclists a scenic pathway that winds through five cities, multiple neighborhoods and business districts, a series of wetlands and creek-side forests, and at least 10 parks.

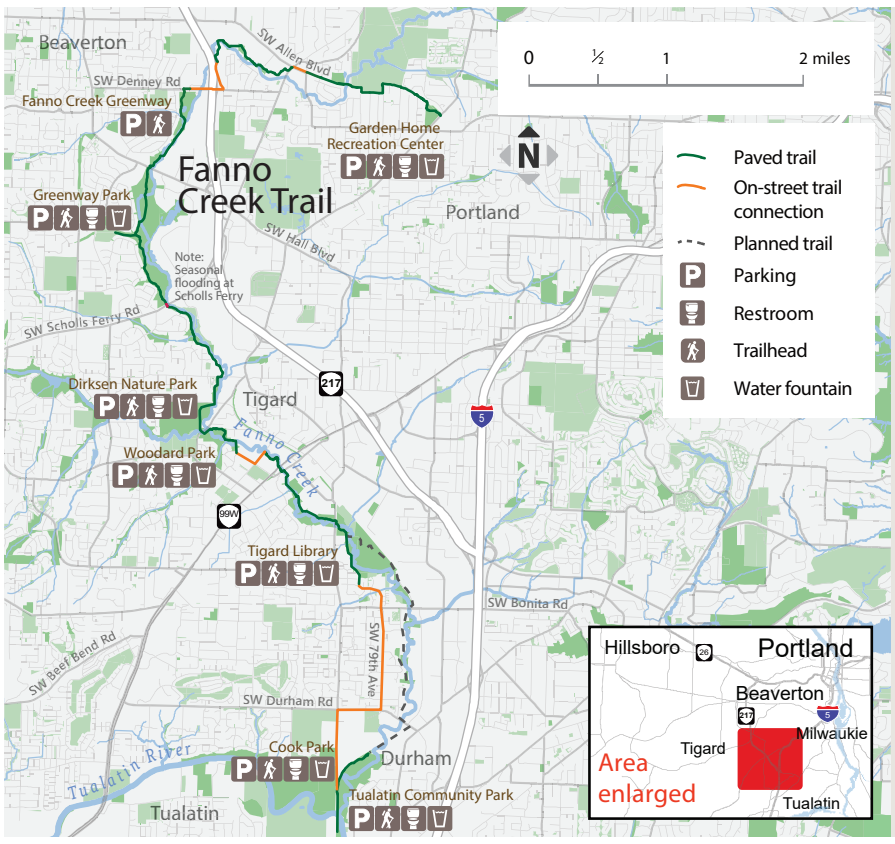
The trail starts on the extreme western edge of Southwest Portland and Beaverton, at the Garden Home Recreation Center. It then heads west toward Highway 217, crossing the arterial at SW Denny Road. From there, the trail meanders south and southwest alongside and over Fanno Creek, just half a mile from the frenzy of 217 and then Interstate 5, making it a great commuting option, too.

All along the creek, restoration projects have reestablished native plants and wildlife. Any trip on the trail will showcase numerous birds – local birders have spied more than 100 species. It's now common to see beavers and their woodworking projects. Look for freshly chewed wood along the banks and mounds of sticks in the water, those are dens.

The beavers' dams and dens sometimes cause flooding on the trail where it goes under Scholls Ferry Road. While it's a challenge for trail planners to solve, the pool of water shows comfortable beavers living their beaver lives just feet from a major street. The long corridor of habitat has even offered a route for elk to make their way from the North Tualatin Mountains down to the Tualatin River.

The bulk of the trail was built in the 1980s and early 90s, but like many trails in the region it had gaps between segments that have slowly been connected. Ten years ago, a trail-goer would have needed a good map to go on a long walk or ride. Now, with good signs, safe crossings at intersections and most of the sections connected, the trail is uninterrupted for miles.

One big gap remains. Right now, the trail basically stops at the Tigard Public Library. There's a roughly mile-long gap until Fanno Creek reaches Durham City Park, where the trail reappears and keeps heading south to the Tualatin River. Building that gap is a major goal, and Tigard is working on several sections now.



Fanno Creek Regional Trail

ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAILHEADS

Garden Home Recreation Center
7475 SW Oleson Road, Beaverton

Fanno Creek Park And Trail
SW Denney Road, between SW 111th Avenue and SW Denney Frontage Road, Beaverton

Greenway Park
East of Greenway Boulevard between SW Hall Boulevard and SW Scholls Ferry Road, Beaverton

Dirksen Nature Park
11130 W Tiedeman Avenue, Tigard

Woodard Park
10155 SW Johnson Street, Tigard

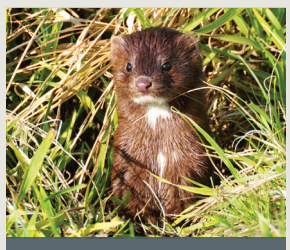
Tigard Public Library
13500 SW Hall Boulevard

Cook Park
17005 SW 92nd Avenue, Tigard

Tualatin Community Park
8515 SW Tualatin Road, Tualatin

Long, medium, short rides Whether you decided to take a long ride or a short walk, Fanno Creek Regional Trail is a flat, paved path. **The long ride:** It's roughly 7.5 miles from Garden Home Recreation Center to the Tigard Public Library. **Medium-long:** For a shorter trip that doesn't require crossing the HW 217 overpasses, start at the trailhead on SW Denney Road, near SW 117th Avenue. From there to the library it's five miles; to Dirksen Nature Park it's about three miles. **Short:** Start at any of the parks along Fanno Creek in Tigard (Greenway, Dirksen, Woodward, Fanno Creek, Cook), Durham City Park or Tualatin Community Park, and follow the creek.

Be on the lookout!



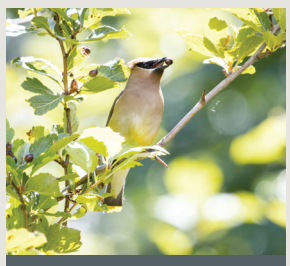
MINK



CACKLING GOOSE



BEAVER WORK



CEDAR WAXWING

Season by season

FALL: When leaves begin to fall, many animals become easier to see. Mink, black-tailed deer, Douglas squirrels and Townsend's chipmunks might be spotted on or among the trees. Signs of beavers gnawing on trees are easier to find too.

WINTER: This is waterfowl migration season. Koll Center Wetlands is a prime landing spot for buffleheads, American wigeons and cackling geese, which are the half-sized cousins of Canada geese. Tiny green Pacific chorus frogs might be seen hopping across the trail to lay bundles of eggs in wetlands and pools.

SPRING: This is when birds burst into color. Yellow-rumped and orange-crowned warblers get their rumps and crowns popping. Both American and lesser goldfinches flash brilliant yellows. And wherever berries are, there's a chance to see cedar waxwings, possibly the sleekest bird on the trail.

SUMMER: At nearly every pool, you can spot ducklings and goslings waddling or paddling behind their mothers. In the trees, you will hear, but likely not see, nestlings and fledglings calling to their parents for food. Downy woodpeckers and tiny white-breasted nuthatches skitter on the trees after insects.







Clockwise from left: Talton facilitates an environmental promoter training in 2020. "I'm so grateful for him on our team," says Laura Tokarski, director of the non-profit Trash for Peace. "He's helped shape our programs literally from day one." After experiencing Trash for Peace activities as a kid, Talton, back row right, began supporting outings for others. Last year, he went with a group of kids from Dekum Court apartments to pick berries on Sauvie Island. Talton gets a close up look at Recology Organics composting facility.

Seeds of change: Q&A with Isaiah Talton

Interview and photography by Faith Cathcart

Personal growth. Community change. Which comes first? For Northeast Portland native Isaiah Talton, they happen together.

He works with the non-profit Trash for Peace, where he is a lead environmental promoter, someone living in multifamily housing who helps improve recycling and encourages waste reduction for everyone living there.

Q. With Trash for Peace, you've gone from participant to planner. In some respects, you and the organization have grown up together. What has this transition been like?

It's definitely been a learning experience. They've helped me grow a lot and were very patient with me. They taught me about trash and recycling. But there's more to it than just that.

It's about building a sense of community and being able to love where you come from. If I'm being honest, I used to be ashamed of my background – being a Black kid and living in subsidized housing.

But meeting Laura [Tokarski, the director of Trash for Peace] and going through the program is like building family. I've made connections that are going to last, learned about the environment [and] myself as well.

Q. At 22, you were one of the youngest people to go through the master recycling program. Why did you decide to take the class?

I decided to take the class because I thought: this is information I should know as I am doing outreach and tabling [community] events. I just felt that I need to be more informed when I'm educating people about the environment. Now I can share resources and what I've learned.

Q. In your story, you write about the power of personal connections – neighbor to neighbor. You talk about being inspired by the efforts of ordinary people making differences in their immediate communities. Can you share about one of them with us?

I complain sometimes about my life and my situations. It's hard being an environmental promoter because I don't drive. I have to work events all over, and some days it's harder than others. But, then I just see Blanca.

She stands out to me because she's a mother of two kids. I see her every day get up for work, make sure they're dressed. She doesn't have a car. She's on TriMet. And she never complains. She's always willing to help out and go the extra mile – even if that means hopping on the bus, even if that means getting up super early, even if it means going someplace that takes several hours to get to.

Blanca is just a sweet, genuine person. She's made me reflect on how I can be more humble about things, complain less and see positivity in every way really. Out of all the environmental promoters, she definitely inspired me.

Q. We are going through trying and potentially transformative times – in our individual lives and collectively. What hope do you have for our environmental future? What do you think is the relationship between environmental justice and racial justice?

Environmental rights, human rights – I think they go hand-in-hand. Being a person of color going into the [environmental education] field, I'm able to make personal connections and ties between them.

You don't see a lot of green, outdoor space in neighborhoods of color. You don't see the resources to take care of our neighborhoods. You don't see a lot of community gardens. I just feel like that's a problem, you know.

When you go into [more affluent] neighborhoods, there are beautiful parks everywhere. The bushes are trimmed and gardeners take care of the neighborhood green spaces. I feel like we need to step up, take care and reclaim our own community.

We want our parks to be clean too. We want our parks to be safe too. We don't want our kids to be playing in parks with glass or trash everywhere. We need justice for people of color – in their own neighborhoods – around environmental sustainability.

Read more

Read Talton's first-person story about becoming a master recycler and lead environmental promoter, Seeds of change: Championing the environment, community and self. Go to: **oregonmetro.gov/news/topic/home-and-garbage**

THANK YOU essential workers for keeping garbage and recycling moving in greater Portland.



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Regional roundup

PROPOSED MEASURE 26-218: "GET MOVING 2020" TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

In November, Portland-area voters will have the opportunity to vote on a proposed transportation funding measure known as Get Moving 2020. If passed, this proposed measure would fund safety, transit and other transportation projects in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties.

Proposed projects: Corridors

If the proposed measure passes, 17 primary travel routes, known as corridors, are proposed for projects. Approximately 150 total projects are proposed in these corridors. *See map at right.*

If the proposed measure passes, proposed corridor projects would include:

- A light rail line between downtown Portland and Washington County
- A rapid regional bus network
- Bridge replacement and repair
- Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings
- Off-street biking and walking facilities
- Traffic signal and intersection upgrades

Proposed projects: Programs

If passed, the proposed measure would fund several additional transportation programs across the region.

The proposed programs include:

- Youth bus and MAX passes
- Sidewalks, crossings and other walking and biking projects near schools
- Projects intended to reduce crashes on roads and streets with high crash rates
- Transition of buses from diesel to electric and low-carbon fuels
- Retention of affordable housing and addressing potential displacement along transportation corridors
- Off-street walking and biking facilities, such as trails and bridges
- Access to local main streets
- Bus reliability
- Future planning for corridors not included in the measure

If the proposed measure passes, Metro would administer these programs through grants or allocations to local jurisdictions and transportation agencies.

If the proposed measure passes: Oversight and implementation

If the proposed measure passes, an independent committee would review implementation progress and submit annual reports to the Metro Council and the public.



If the proposed measure passes, Metro would establish additional committees such as project and program committees. All meetings and materials would be publicly accessible.

Metro is required to have an annual independent audit and for results to be made publicly available.

Proposed revenue mechanism

If the proposed measure passes, the proposed projects would be funded by a tax on certain employers. These employers would pay a tax of up to 0.75% of their total payroll within the Metro District. The Metro Council may set a lower rate.

If the proposed measure passes, employers with 25 or fewer employees, and local and state governments, would be exempt from the proposed tax. Assessment of the proposed tax would begin in 2022.

Additional information

The Oregon General Election is scheduled for November 3, 2020. Ballots may be mailed to voters by county election offices as soon as Oct. 14, 2020.

If the proposed measure does not pass, the proposed tax would not be assessed, and these transportation projects would not be completed.

This information, except for the website link, was reviewed by the Oregon Secretary of State's Office for compliance with ORS 260.432.

Proposed projects

Projects in the proposed measure were identified through an 18-month community engagement process that included an advisory Task Force, community workshops and forums, public hearings and online surveys. The Metro Council and Task Force identified the following proposed measure projects:

- Projects that can reduce fatal and serious-injury crashes
- Bus, MAX, walking and biking projects to increase residents' transportation options
- Transit and other projects that can reduce greenhouse gases
- Projects and practices that align with Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Projects that link to employment areas and freight routes
- Projects that coordinate with other transportation and housing plans and projects in the region

Learn more

oregonmetro.gov/transportation

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Autumn in the Clackamas River

Every fall, Chinook salmon migrate up the Clackamas River to the spawning grounds. When they reach their birthplace, the big fish make a redd, a nest of pebbles and rocks that protects the eggs and newly hatched fish.

They aren't the only ones in the water. Fellow ocean-goers like Pacific lamprey and steelhead join them, along with residents like brook lamprey, daces and shiners, which must beware of kingfishers! On the riverbed, invertebrates like fly larvae make their homes along with freshwater mussels that can live a century.

Share your coloring creation with Metro! Snap a picture and tag **@OregonMetro** on Instagram or Facebook.



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