

**METRO REGIONAL PARKS AND GREENSPACES  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RPAGAC)  
MEETING NOTICE**

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**Date:** Tuesday, November 6, 2001  
**Time:** 6:30 - 8:00 PM  
**Place:** Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, Room 270

**AGENDA**

- I. Introductory comments and announcements (10 minutes)
- II. California Condor breeding program proposal (10 minutes) (Jim Morgan)  
**Committee information**
- III. Green Ribbon Committee update  
(30 minutes) (David Bragdon, Metro Council Presiding Officer)  
**Committee discussion**
- IV. Briefing on nominated regional trails recommended by Greenspaces Technical Advisory  
Committee (GTAC) to be added to the Regional Trails and Greenways Map  
(30 minutes) (Mel Huie)  
**Committee discussion**
- V. Adjourn

Jim Morgan will highlight the elements of a proposed California Condor breeding program on Clear Creek Canyon property.

The work of the Green Ribbon Committee is complete with a draft recommendation of 15 open space sites for public access and a funding strategy for their development and management. Metro Council Presiding Officer will provide a review of the Green Ribbon Committee's recommendations and the next steps in the decision process.

Several new trail corridors in the Portland metropolitan area are being proposed for the regional trails and greenways map. Mel Huie, Senior Regional Planner, will provide an overview of the status of regional trails planning and development.

**Next RPAGAC meeting will be December 4, 2001, Metro Regional Center, 6:30PM**

## California Condors return to Oregon

On October 30, 1805, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were nearing the end of their epic journey of discovery across America's western frontier. They sighted their first California Condor near the confluence of the Wind and Columbia rivers, now in Skamania County, Washington. Many early explorers of the Pacific Northwest commented on the abundance of one of the world's largest flying birds. In 1827, harsh spring weather killed many horses at Fort Vancouver and California Condors were the most conspicuous scavengers drawn to the morbid buffet. Condors, however, were no match for the guns and poisons of newly arriving settlers. They disappeared from Oregon in less than a century. The last reliable report was a sighting near Drain in 1904. Numbering fewer than 30 birds in the early 1980s, a controversial decision was made to place entire world's population in a captive breeding program. The gamble proved successful, and the population has grown to 184 birds, including 55 birds flying free at release sites in southern and central California and northern Arizona.

Now, with the passage of another century and a close brush with extinction, California Condors are making their comeback to the Pacific Northwest. These condors aren't slated to soar over the Columbia Gorge, however. They will be part of the captive population managed by the California Condor Recovery Program, whose goal is to establish self-sustaining populations of condors in parts of California and the southwest. On October 19th, Senator Gordon Smith joined Interior Secretary Gale Norton in the Zoo's Skyline Room to announce that the Oregon Zoo is set to become the fourth California Condor breeding facility. We will supplement the efforts of existing breeding programs at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, the Los Angeles Zoo, and the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho.

Our invitation to join the Condor Recovery Program culminates 18 months of background work by zoo staff and partners in the conservation community and state and federal government agencies. Marketing Manager Jane Hartline was first inspired to suggest that we consider an active role in California Condor conservation following a close-up encounter with Andean Condors on a trip to South America. Following up on this idea, Zoological Curator Jan Steele and Conservation Program Coordinator Blair Csuti first met with the California Condor Recovery Team at their October, 2000, meeting in Ventura, California. After the meeting, they inspected condor breeding facilities at the Los Angeles Zoo and San Diego Wild Animal Park. These visits provided necessary background information on the physical layout and staffing associated with condor propagation. In February, 2001, Jan and Blair returned to the San Diego Wild Animal Park to present the Recovery Team with Oregon Zoo's proposal to join the program. They went armed with enthusiastic letters of support from many of our cooperators, including the Audubon Society of Portland, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oregon State Office, and the U.S. Forest Service. The Recovery Team appointed a sub-committee to consider our proposal.

In August, 2001, Jan and Blair again met with the Recovery Team, this time hosted by the Ventana Wilderness Society at Big Sur. They had the chance to visit existing and

potential release sites on California's central coast and meet the extraordinarily dedicated field biologists, some of whom carry 90 lb. calf carcasses up steep hillsides in the dark to keep the condors from associating food with human activity.

Breeding condors takes a lot of room. Each pair needs a minimum flight cage measuring 20 x 40 feet and we are being asked to plan for as many as 16 breeding pairs. There's no space on zoo grounds for this large a facility, so the Zoo has been investigating the suitability of off-grounds locations for our endangered species captive propagation center. During egg-laying season, keepers literally keep an around-the-clock watch on nesting condors. This means we will need a site that can shelter several dedicated keepers for weeks at a time.

In early October, the Recovery Team's sub-committee visited several potential sites for our captive rearing facilities to determine which met the Team's stringent requirements to insure the condor's privacy while providing the best possible care for newly laid eggs and recently hatched chicks. The Team recommended a Metro Parks and Greenspaces property in remote Clackamas County as the best site for our future condor breeding facility.

The California Condor Recovery Program is a cooperative effort of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the captive breeding facilities, several state and federal wildlife and land management agencies, and non-profit organizations, like the Ventana Wilderness Society. It is one of the highest-profile and most successful endangered species recovery efforts and one that would not be possible without the expertise of the zoo profession. The Oregon Zoo is honored to have been selected to participate in the program. This marks a major milestone for the zoo's *Future For Wildlife* field conservation program. We have achieved notable successes breeding or raising many Northwest species, like the Oregon silverspot butterfly, western pond turtle, and the highly endangered pygmy rabbit of Washington state. Joining the California Condor Recovery Program underscores the Oregon Zoo's national role as a major conservation organization.