

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2021	)	RESOLUTION NO. 21-5213
NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS	)	
COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP AND	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
RESTORATION COMMUNITY GRANTS	)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with Deputy
	)	Council President Shirley Craddick

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Metro Council established an initiative designed to protect and restore our region’s significant fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature as provided in Resolution No. 05-3574A, “Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods,” adopted May 12, 2005;

WHEREAS, to fulfill the goals of this regional initiative, the Metro Council approved Resolution No. 05-3580A to establish the Nature in Neighborhoods grant program for local communities;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council reaffirmed the grant program’s purpose, eligibility and funding criteria via Resolution No. 12-4398 when the council referred a 5-year local option levy for Metro’s parks and natural areas to the voters, and called for the creation of a committee to review grant applications and make award recommendations to the Metro Council;

WHEREAS, in May 2013, voters in the Metro region approved the 5-year local option levy which included new and expanded funding for this grant program, referred to in the levy as Nature in Neighborhoods community grants;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the first round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship grants in September 2014 via Resolution 14-4554;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the second round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship grants in November 2015 via Resolution 15-4644;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the third round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration community grants in September 2016 via Resolution 16-4725;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council confirmed the grant program’s purpose and funding via Resolution No. 16-4690, when the council referred the renewal of Metro’s local option levy for Metro’s parks and natural areas to the voters;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council approved Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion via Resolution No. 16-4708, which directs the agency to incorporate racial equity into all aspects of its work;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the fourth round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration community grants in June 2019 via Resolution 19-4985;

WHEREAS, Metro has solicited and received applications for 2021 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration grants, and the grant review committee has identified the proposals which best meet the grant criteria and the goals of the Nature in Neighborhoods community grant program; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby approves the award of the 2021 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration community grants to those recipients listed in Exhibit A and for the amounts listed for each individual award.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 18<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2021.

*Shirley Craddick*

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Shirley Craddick, Deputy Council President

Approved as to Form:

*Carrie MacLaren*

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Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

## **Exhibit A to Resolution 21-5213**

### **Recommended for funding**

The 2021 Nature in Neighborhood community stewardship and restoration grants review committee recommends the following ten (10) proposals for funding to the Metro Council.

The Metro Council makes all final grant decisions and is scheduled to decide final grant awards on November 18, 2021.

### **East Portland Climate Greening + Health Community Advisory Board (CAB)**

**Recipient:** Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)

**Grant amount:** \$100,000

**Project Partners:** APANO, Friends of Trees, Portland State University

**Program summary:** APANO has partnered with Friends of Trees and Portland State University to engage community members living in outer East Portland to both oversee a research study on neighborhood greening and to build connection and community power amongst neighbors.

### **Educational Invasive Species Removal and Restoration Reimagining Project**

**Recipient:** Beaverton School District Native Education Program

**Grant amount:** \$54,735

**Project Partners:** Beaverton School District's Native Education Program, Five Oaks Museum, Friends of Tryon Creek

**Program summary:** A collaborative DEI endeavor centered on increasing BIPOC educational career opportunities within environmental restoration. Additionally we will shift normative conservation narratives seeking to highlight traditional ecological knowledge as best practice.

### **Food Sovereignty for Immigrants and Refugees in East Portland**

**Recipient:** Center for Intercultural Organizing- DBA Unite Oregon

**Grant amount:** \$100,000

**Project Partners:** Unite Oregon, City Repair, Depave, Portland Parks and Recreation

**Program summary:** A cohort of over 20 immigrants and refugees will learn about building community gardens, pollinator habitats, and native planting in high urban density areas, and establish a community garden at Knott Park, created by and for immigrant and refugee community members.

### **Depave NARA TerraNova CNA 2021-3**

**Recipient:** Depave

**Grant amount:** \$49,940

**Project Partners:** Depave, City of Gresham, , East Multnomah SWCD, Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, Portland Clean Energy Fund, Terra Nova School/Beaverton School District, Tualatin SWCD, Tualatin Watershed Council

**Program summary:** Depave will complete two community re-greening projects, a healing garden at NARA Gresham and a learning rain garden at Terra Nova School in Beaverton. We will also expand past site support and a community needs assessment to communities beyond Portland.

**Wayfinders and Tappin Roots Expansion**

**Recipient:** Camp E.L.S.O. Inc.

**Grant amount:** \$100,000

**Project Partners:** Camp E.L.S.O. Inc., BEAM Village, Blueprint Foundation, Friends of Tryon Creek, Greater Than, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, Metro Parks and Nature Naturalist team, Tualatin Riverkeepers, US Fish and Wildlife

**Program summary:** Expanding and improving year-round, culturally relevant STEAM education programs for BIPOC youth which are designed by and for BIPOC communities in collaboration with schools and community organizations, with a focus on expanding STEAM career pathways.

**Leach Botanical Garden Community Restoration Project**

**Recipient:** Johnson Creek Watershed Council

**Grant amount:** \$56,619

**Project Partners:** Johnson Creek Watershed Council, African Youth & Community Organization, The Blueprint Foundation, David Douglas High School, Leach Garden Friends, Wisdom of the Elders

**Program summary:** Over 3 acres of unmanaged land at Leach Botanical Garden will be restored and monitored over 5+ years. This collaborative effort by 5 partners uses restoration as an opportunity for hands-on STEM youth education and workforce development.

**Partnering to Sustainably Restore Centro Cultural's Cornelius Campus & to Foster Deeper Connections to Nature: A community project**

**Recipient:** Portland Audubon

**Grant amount:** \$88,706

**Project Partners:** Portland Audubon, Centro Cultural de Washington County, Clean Water Services, Columbia Land Trust, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District

**Program summary:** Centro Cultural, Backyard Habitat, and Tualatin SWCD are partnering on a community-led project to sustainably restore the land at Centro's campus to create habitat and connect Centro participants and the community to the nature around them.

**Student Crew Leadership Training Program (SCLTP)**

**Recipient:** Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc.

**Grant amount:** \$50,000

**Project Partners:** Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc. and Rosemary Anderson High School, Blueprint Foundation, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Friends of Columbia Children's Arboretum, Friends of Trees, Gresham Parks and Recreation, Metro, Outgrowing Hunger, Portland Parks & Recreation

**Program summary:** Through SCLTP, POIC+RAHS and Friends of Trees (FOT) provide low-income youth and youth of color with the opportunity to restore local habitats and receive career-track natural resource mentorship and education.

**Verde Rain Garden & Naturescape Project**

**Recipient:** Verde

**Grant amount:** \$100,000

**Project Partners:** Verde, Backyard Habitat (Portland Audubon & Columbia Land Trust), Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Habitat for Humanity Portland, Hacienda CDC, Portland Audubon, Reynolds Learning Academy: Multnomah Youth Cooperative Program, PGE Project Zero

**Program summary:** Expand program capacity to install 36 rain gardens/naturescapes, extend our reach to include homeowners in East Portland, deliver bilingual training to Hacienda CDC and NAYA youth and work with them to design and install 6 rain gardens.

## STAFF REPORT

### IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 21-5213, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2021 NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP AND RESTORATION COMMUNITY GRANTS

Date: November 18, 2021

Prepared by: Karissa Lowe, 360-261-4683  
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## BACKGROUND

For nearly two decades, the Metro Council has provided funding for grants to community groups, non-profits, and other organizations, designed to support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

In May 2013, voters approved Measure 26-152, providing new funding for Metro's parks and natural areas and providing increased funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants, which was referred to the voters by Metro Council (Resolution 12-4398). The Metro Council awarded Nature in Neighborhoods restoration and community stewardship grants in 2014 (Resolution 14-4554), in 2015 (Resolution 15-4644), in 2016 (Resolution 16-4725), and in 2019 (Resolution 19-4985).

In November 2016, voters renewed the Metro parks and natural areas levy with the approval of Measure 26-178, referred to the voters by Metro Council (Resolution 16-4690), which continued funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants. Furthermore, in June 2016, the Metro Council adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Resolution 16-4708), which directs the agency to incorporate racial equity into all aspects of its work.

Grant program staff used the framework provided by Metro Council in Resolutions No. 12-4398, No. 16-4690, and No. 16-4708 to develop an outreach plan, application materials, review committee and evaluation criteria for these community grants, referred to as Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration grants. Staff also aligned Metro's grant criteria with state, regional and local conservation plans and community initiatives in order to achieve multiple benefits.

### Grant Evaluation Criteria

The following are the purpose and three goal categories for grant funding. Fulfillment of these purpose and goals are the primary evaluation criteria for the proposals submitted to the Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration grants program:

**Purpose:** Community stewardship and restoration grants support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

**Goal 1: Improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat.** These grants will preserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat in local communities and support larger environmental justice and conservation initiatives such as the Oregon State Conservation Strategy, Regional Conservation Strategy, Watershed Action Plans or local community plans.

**Goal 2: Community partnerships, collaboration and accountability.** These grants create, support and/or deepen partnerships in local communities, by connecting people to nature and centering the needs of these communities; increase people’s awareness of the need for – and benefits of – protecting and stewarding natural areas; center racial equity and support communities (with priority given to BIPOC communities and communities most affected by white supremacy culture) in teaching and learning about, restoring, and experiencing the region’s natural areas.

**Goal 3: Economic and environmental equity.** The community stewardship and restoration grants help address inequities in the conservation movement. The grants provide outdoor, environmental, and natural resources; economic opportunities; direct access to protected natural areas; and the positive impacts of clean land, air and water to Indigenous communities, Black communities, communities of color and other historically and continually marginalized groups in greater Portland.

### **Review committee**

Parks and Nature Director Jonathan Blasher selected this year’s review committee from a pool of applicants. Participation on the grant review committee is by application, which is open to all and broadly advertised. The review committee included local experts in habitat restoration, natural area land management, conservation planning, mentorship and job skill development, diversity, equity and inclusion, community partnership development, philanthropy, and grant management.

The members of the 2021 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration Grants review committee are: Leah Altman, Native Arts and Culture Foundation; Gwen Amsbury, City of Portland – ARM Division; Shannah Anderson, City of Portland – Bureau of Environmental Services; Kevin Hughes, City of Hillsboro; Jude Perez, Seeding Justice; Mike Phillips, Meyer Memorial Trust; Nathan Reynolds, Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center; Maggie Starr, Friends of Tryon Creek; Valerie Thompson, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Charlotte Trowbridge, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District; Michelle Welton, Grow Portland; and Karen Wolfgang, CO2 Foundation.

Committee members declared any direct conflict of interest with the proposals and did not score or participate directly in the discussion or ranking of an application where they had a conflict. Perceived conflicts were also noted and recorded in meeting minutes.

### **2021 Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration grant review discussion**

Due to the large number of applications, Metro’s Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration grant program follows a two-step process including a pre-application phase and a full application phase. The review committee evaluated pre-applications and full applications based on the information submitted by applicants, the stated evaluation criteria, and the review committee’s professional and collective judgment.

In the fifth round of the renewed natural areas levy grants, the review committee valued the range of organizations, project types and project scales represented in the pre-applications submitted. Proposals recommended for funding show strong evidence of involvement from BIPOC groups in

proposal planning and development. The review committee members were happy to see proposals focused on work done by and with BIPOC communities, rather than for them, and noted that even if a project isn't led by a BIPOC organization you can really tell which proposals were influenced by BIPOC leadership.

Committee members also pointed out that many proposals meaningfully engaged youth in hands-on restoration work that gave them opportunities to build skills and explore green careers. Several committee members said they were impressed by how many applications met all three of the program goals. Proposals came from a mix of culturally specific organizations and conservation focused organizations and included both organizations familiar to this program and many first time applicants.

The review committee identified compelling projects which address career pathways in the environmental field, remove barriers for marginalized communities to enter that field, and help BIPOC youth become lifelong environmental advocates. They emphasized the importance of projects that combined boots-on-the-ground restoration with opportunities to build community power. The committee discussed the history and contemporary presence of Indigenous people in the Portland Metro Area, and the importance of applicants partnering with both local Tribes and intertribal urban Native organizations.

The review committee valued projects which aligned with the Nature in Neighborhood grant goals, individual organizations' plans or priorities, and state, regional or local conservation strategies. They found proposals stronger when they demonstrated longstanding and holistic partnerships with communities and community-specific organizations. They also found it compelling when applicants that partnered with Tribes and/or the intertribal urban Native community talked about going beyond the land acknowledgement and deepening engagement with the community. Several returning committee members said that the proposals felt more robust, well thought out, and collaborative this year.

The review committee was mostly pleased with how applicants addressed their diversity, equity and inclusion experience, and this was especially true for organizations that submitted full applications. They noticed that the applicant organizations were all on different parts of their equity journey but most of them were very transparent and authentic about who they were and where they are headed. Returning committee members noted an overall improvement in response to the diversity, equity and inclusion question from previous grant cycles. They found compelling projects that made clear connections between conservation and restoration, where applicable, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge and food sovereignty. They appreciated projects that acknowledge that communities' relationship with and access to nature is complicated, and projects that find new ways for communities to interact with nature at a neighborhood scale.

Finally, the review committee valued authentic and holistic long-established or newer partnerships. They particularly noted partnerships that included clear plans to connect with historically marginalized communities and center BIPOC voices. The committee acknowledged the difficulty of establishing true, long-term partnerships between larger, complex organizations and historically and systemically marginalized communities. The committee appreciated applicants' efforts to



embrace the challenge and create such partnerships regardless of the difficulties faced along the way.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends the approval of the slate of grants indicated in Exhibit A of this Resolution. Metro received 32 pre-applications, totaling \$2.2 million in funding requests and 14 full applications, totaling \$1.06 million in funding requests. The review committee reviewed the pre-applications and full applications according to the grant criteria and recommends **nine (9)** grants for funding a total of **seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000)** to the Metro Council (see Exhibit A).

Pending Metro Council approval, grant-funded projects will begin December 1, 2021. Grant applicants may have up to three years to complete their projects.

## **ANALYSIS/INFORMATION**

### **1. Known Opposition**

None.

### **2. Legal Antecedents**

Resolution No. 19-4985 For the Purpose of Approving 2019 Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Community Stewardship Community Grants

Resolution No. 16-4690, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area Renewal of the Metro's Local Option Levy for Protecting Water Quality, Restoring Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Connecting People to Nature.

Resolution 16-4708, For the Purpose of Approving the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Resolution 16-4725, For the Purpose of Approving the 2016 Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Community Stewardship Community Grants.

Resolution No. 15-4644, For the Purpose of Approving 2015 Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship Grants.

Resolution No. 14-4554, For the Purpose of Approving 2014 Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship Grants.

Resolution No. 12-4398, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area a Local Option Levy for the Purpose of Preserving Water Quality, Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Maintaining Metro's Parks and Natural Areas for the Public.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods.

Resolution 05-3580A, Transferring \$1,250,000 from the Balance of the FY 2004-05 Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve to a General Fund Reserve for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 07-1160B, Transferring \$250,000 from the Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 09-1215B, Approving \$92,500 in the FY 2009-10 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

Ordinance No. 10-1235B, Approving \$150,000 in the FY 2010-11 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

Ordinance No. 12-1274A, Approving \$200,000 in the FY 2012-13 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

### **3. Anticipated Effects**

This Resolution approves the award of 2021 Nature in Neighborhood community stewardship and restoration community grants and begins the individual contract award process for the selected grant applicants with an anticipated project start date on or after December 1, 2021. Projects may be up to three years in length.

### **4. Budget Impacts**

This Resolution authorizes award of contracts in an amount previously identified by the Metro Council in the budget for this purpose. The adopted FY 2021-22 budget includes the necessary appropriation authority for reimbursement of these grants.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Chief Operating Officer recommends approval of Resolution No. 21-5213.