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*A Survey of Potential Users*

Smith & Bybee Lakes Interpretive Center  
Concept Design

**DRAFT**

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Prepared for: Metro  
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Advisory Committee

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**USER SURVEY**  
**Smith and Bybee Lakes Interpretive Center**

This report summarizes the responses of eight people representing either neighborhood groups or organizations that would most likely use Smith and Bybee Lakes for education. The survey was meant to provide general answers to some of the basic questions that were being addressed in the preparation of the interpretive center's concept design.

The responses from the survey respondents are listed in the same order for each question and correspond to the numbers shown below.

No.	Organization	Respondent
1	Hoyt Arboretum	Sue Thomas
2	OMSI	Jeff Gottfried
3	Tryon Creek State Park	Patricia Iron
4	World Forestry Center	Rick Zenn
5	St. John's Neighborhood Assn.	Leora Mahoney
6	Washington Park Zoo	Roger Yerke
7	Portland Audubon Society	Jennifer Devlin
8	Portsmouth Neighborhood Assn.*	Lee Poe

\* response is now being prepared and will be included in the final version

#### **PART 1 - QUESTIONS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS**

**How Important do you think the Interpretive center will be in the region, the city, and for north Portland?**

1. It will be important in providing environmental ed to the neighborhood and emphasizing close-by resources. City-wide use and regional use will basically be on a curiosity once every few years unless special events, seasonal attractions, etc.
2. Smith and Bybee Lakes have tremendous potential as environmental education sits. A well-planned environmental education center could bring attention to this under-utilized resource and add an important educational-recreational component to the region, the city, and N. Portland.
3. It will be a valuable resource for all of the above. It can have extensive educational benefits if it stood alone or integrated with existing/planned environmental/interpretive efforts. Wonderful place for research activities as well.
4. NOT important. Print maps:flyers. Add a few signs. Good trails vital.
5. A learning facility for schools, an area where city people can see some of the natural wonders and not leave the city, a plus for the St. Johns community image.
6. Increasingly important as the infill of the urban area progresses.
7. Very. It should be the first of many in the City. Outdoor experience need to be accessible to all neighborhoods. . .this one is an excellent start.

**What facilities do you think should be provided at the Interpretive center? Rank In order of Importance with "1" the most Important. Use the extra space to express any comments or ideas.**

Because of the relatively small number of "votes", it is difficult to determine whether there is a clear consensus on preferences. Nonetheless, a few of the facilities received a higher ranking than others. The list below was compiled by counting the number of times that a facility was ranked either 1, 2 or 3.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>No. Times Ranked 1, 2, or 3</i>
Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits	5
Interpretive Trail	5
Permanent Exhibits Area	5
Multi-purpose Room	4
Temporary Exhibits Area	4
Classrooms	3
Covered shelters along trail	3
Office space for staff	2
Sales	1

Other facilities that were written into the "other" space were:

vending machines or other way to get drinks and food	indoor visitor information area
canoe or rowboat rental	wildlife viewing blinds
viewing tower	boardwalk
dock	secure parking
guided walk	hands-on stations
information on other natural areas	

**What "theme(s)" or messages do you think are appropriate for the center to address and Interpret? (e.g., loss of wetlands along the Columbia River, connection to neighborhood, history of site)**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| First Choice  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is important about the site; what is there by way of wildlife; what to do there.</li> <li>2. History of the Columbia River.</li> <li>3. Wildlife habitats/native plants.</li> <li>4. Urban wetlands</li> <li>5. Loss and reclamation of the wetlands</li> <li>6. Interpretation of the habitats represented in the area.</li> <li>7. Importance of functioning ecosystems to humans and other animals.</li> </ol> |
| Second Choice | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How site fits in Portland natural resource system - historically, functionally, and recreationally. Its connections to City.</li> <li>2. Vanport flood/history of site.</li> <li>3. Human or natural impacts.</li> </ol>   |

4. Water quality
5. History of the site (before and after)
6. History of the site in terms of loss of wildlife habitat (area is a surviving remnant).
7. The joy of wildlife watching/nature adventures.

Third Choice

1. Ecology of wetlands along Columbia.
2. Bird migration/habitat/wetlands - Great area for viewing waterfowl.
3. Why wetlands are important/significant
4. Wildlife habitat - needs/protection"enhancement"
5. Water usages of the area
6. History of area in terms of restoration from formerly degraded condition.
7. Info on opportunities for city folks to interact with nature (i.e.,: clubs, other activities, careers, etc.)

Fourth Choice

1. Beaver - great population and lodge at lakes
2. What/who lives under the surface of the water.
4. The ecological chain for the surrounding area
6. How to explore nature. (i.e., how to be, look, smell; how to get these, etc.)

Fifth Choice

1. Recreational fishing/good place to teach kids how to fish.
2. How a person can take what they've learned on site and continue their lesson at home/work.
6. Role of wetlands in wildlife, flood control,

Additional Responses from #7 Survey.

- City wetlands - pollution and human/wildlife interaction.
- How wetlands are formed (floodplains, beavers, etc)
- A focus on a sexy animal like beaver, Gr. Heron, etc.

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**PART 2 - QUESTIONS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACTS OR GROUPS**

**How do you think people from your neighborhood would use the center?**

4. Yes, but it is just one of many worthy sites.
5. As a student hands on learning, kids go home tell parents, parents would be interested maybe learn how the earth is becoming fragile. This could be used by various types of outdoor activities. (hikers, bird watchers, etc.)

**What should be done to ensure that the center is used by area schools?**

1. Provide teachers with specific activities to use on site. Give an introduction to the use of the site for teachers. Have paid or unpaid staff available to interpret for school groups.

3. Maintenance/research projects                      Field trips/guided walks
4. Provide knowledgeable guides (volunteers) and transportation
5. Make the center usable not only for the older kids but something that the 1st. and 2nd graders could understand.
6. Access by public transportation. E-Z curriculum. Staffing.

### **PART 3 - QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL GROUPS**

**If your organization would visit the Interpretive center, describe how often and when these visits would occur (no. times/year, season, school time, after-school, etc.).**

1. We would bring our guides and volunteers to introduce the site once every few years. Guide training for all guides in metro area would happen there once in five years.
2. OMSI would take groups on field trips to the area and conduct environmental education programs.
4. Once/ year?
6. Spring: various birding trips scouts to adults and families. Current use 5 x season. Summer: Campers on field trips. Current Use 5 x season. Fall: Various kids to seniors birding trips. Current use 5 x season. MOST LIKELY MORE given interpretive features.

**How much time (on average) would a group with a teacher or leader spend at the center or its grounds? [This will be useful in determining how many groups could be accommodated in the center and the site at one time.]**

1. If you provide activities, group could spend 2½ hours; but if just walk around one hour is sufficient.
2. 3 hours
4. 2 hours max
6. 1/2 day (2 hours) or full day = 4 hours. Most groups come for 2 hour tour at Audubon facility.

**What kinds of improvements should be provided to help teachers and group leaders interpret the lakes and their environmental characteristics?**

1. Neighborhood. Metro school groups. Environmental groups (zoo, Audubon, etc.).
2. Board walks to protect sensitive areas, keep feet dry. Covered shelters to make the area useful year-round. Wildlife viewing blinds or perhaps a tower.
4. Good trail - lots to see
6. At intervals or in habitat changes, a simple covered gazebo with a ring of benches (no tales. . discourage picnics) where students can gather out of rain, get focused on next activity, go out, gather 1 fuzzy leaf for example, bring back to benches for hard lens study for example. Seating for 30. I know these attract partiers but in the Northwest, this is the structure we need most!!

**What specific population groups, if any, should we be concentrating on attracting to the center?**

2. Inner-city youth could be involved in planning and constructing the center. This would heighten awareness, instill pride of ownership. I suggest you also contact Elaine Patton-Harrison at ASK-OMSI 284-0837.
4. All
6. Inner city kids and adults. Social organizations targeted to increase positive, constructive opportunities for youth. Families seeking low-budget, good karma outings.

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**PART 4 - ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Use the space below for additional comments.

2. This sounds like a great project. I would be glad to help if I am needed.
- 3 (1) Should there be an archeological survey of the land before the center is built (for historical purposes-i.e., native usage)?  
(2) I'm concerned about how to control the hunting and trapping that occurs now in the area.
4. LONG term security/maintenance could be a problem with any facility. Too easy to build stuff then walk away, spend scarce public dollars on guided field trips/trails.

classroom  
at

(meeting)

classroom

Tues. May 17

~~400,000~~

~~30,000 - 35,000~~

~~program (1/2) (includes school kids)~~

~~300,000~~