
METRO

**Parks and Greenspaces Department
600 N.E. Grand Avenue
Portland, OR 97232**

Memorandum

DATE: August 16, 1994

TO: Charlie Cieko
Bob Martin
Sam Chandler
Janell Davis
Jim Watkins
Dennis O'Neil

FROM: Jim Morgan

SUB: Justification and Job Description for St. Johns Landfill Cover Establishment and Maintenance

On April 13, in a meeting between Solid Waste and Parks and Greenspaces staff listed above, the present and future management of St. Johns Landfill cover vegetation was discussed. The primary end use designated for the landfill, which dictates how the landfill cover will be established and maintained, was highlighted. As described in the *Natural Resources Management Plan for Smith and Bybee Lakes* (Policy 14), it will be "open meadow, which is complimentary to the wetland habitat in the balance of the Smith-Bybee area". The *St. Johns Landfill Cover Vegetation Plan* was developed as guidance for cost-effective establishment of suitable cover vegetation that minimizes erosion of landfill cover soils while providing appropriate wildlife habitat as envisioned in the Management Plan.

As expressed in the meeting, the establishment of native grass and shrub communities on the landfill was not envisioned when human resources were allocated for landfill closure and long-term cover maintenance. With the merger of Multnomah County Parks and Greenspaces, Metro now has enhanced in-house capabilities to establish and manage cover vegetation effectively. Since the landfill will eventually become part of our Greenspaces system, it is sensible that we participate in developing and maintaining the cover vegetation for when that occurs.

I propose that a Senior Gardener position, who will be dedicated to the establishment and maintenance of St. Johns Landfill cover vegetation, be created in FY94-95. This position would be funded from Solid Waste funds and would be supervised by Parks and Greenspaces staff. The immediate and near-future needs that justify this position are listed below.

ACTIVITIES

Demonstration Plot Establishment and Maintenance

Demonstration plots of about 1-acre in size are being established now on Sub-area 1. The purpose of these demonstration plots is to determine the most cost effective method for removing pest plants on the landfill and establishing the native grasslands. Removal or suppression of pest plants is essential for establishment of the more beneficial native plant communities. Beginning in spring, 1995, the Senior Gardener would be responsible for the timely maintenance of existing demonstration plots and the establishment of new ones. Activities will include mowing (flail mowing and side-bar cutting), harrowing, plastic placement and removal (solarization plots), addition of elements for pH manipulation (lime, sulfur), seed bank and soil nutrient testing, seeding with seed drill, and irrigation. Equipment that is needed to pursue these tasks may be purchased, leased, or rented through Solid Waste, thereby providing oversight of major expenditures.

Mowing

Both flail and side-bar mowing must be conducted in Sub-areas 1, 2, and all others to be closed in the future. Currently, each sub-area is closed by the contractor with a temporary cover crop, Regreen. Mowing of the cover crop the first spring following seeding is necessary to prepare the site for seeding with permanent native bunchgrasses. Mowing is necessary along all gas lines to maintain access. Due to the increasing immensity of mowing at the landfill, additional seasonal labor will be required to mow in a timely fashion. Metro Parks normally hires seasonal labor to help with mowing at all of its facilities.

Erosion Prevention

Despite all our requirements of the contractor, weather and unforeseen delays may mean that vegetation cover on the newly-closed Sub-area 3 will not be adequate to fully prevent erosion the first winter following planting. Whereas the single best erosion prevention practice is good vegetation cover establishment, we must be prepared for erosion abatement. The Senior Gardener should have the experience and knowledge to respond in a timely and effective manner to all erosion problems.

Plant Material Acquisition/Maintenance

Considerable cost savings can be made if we have staff dedicated to obtaining plant material for the landfill from sources other than purchasing. Native grass seeds may be obtained from remnants of native grass communities in the Columbia Gorge and western Oregon/Washington. Eventually, the native grass communities established on the landfill will also provide an important source for further colonization of the landfill. Woody plant material (shrub, tree) that will succeed on the landfill will be planted in the form of both cuttings and potted plants. The Senior Gardener may obtain cuttings from nearby sources, using volunteer and/or paid labor, for either direct planting or for culturing in containers. Culturing our own plants using temporary hoop nursery houses on the landfill will ultimately be the most cost-effective means by which we can establish the

desired vegetation on the landfill. Irrigation must be provided for these nursery hoop houses. Columbia Slough water quality would be adequate.

Establishment of Riparian Vegetation

The City of Portland and Metro agreed, as stated in Policy 19 of the Lakes Management Plan, to develop a mitigation plan for resource restoration after cessation of landfill closure activity in the environmentally protected zones (i.e. the riparian zone around the landfill). Due to past landfill management and closure activities, the native riparian vegetation (deciduous forest community) has been replaced with invasive pest plant species (i.e. Himalayan blackberry, morning glory, reed canarygrass). The Cover Vegetation Plan outlines re-establishment of a native forested riparian community around the landfill. The Senior Gardener would assume responsibility for establishment and maintenance of this community. This is a long-term activity requiring removal or suppression of invasive pest plants, procurement of native plant material, planting and maintenance of appropriate plants in the riparian zone, controlling erosion during all activities.

Coordination with Closure Activities

A number of activities are crucial during the establishment of vegetation cover after closure that a Senior Gardener can conduct:

- * irrigation of areas seeded in the fall, which may be necessary if we have an extended dry period leading up to early freezing conditions;
- * prompt response to erosion problems prior to their costly expansion;
- * establishment of woody plant material in the fall, which is outside our current contract agreement; and,
- * monitoring of plant communities.

During the first year after the Senior Gardener is hired, that person may be available for helping enhance and maintain landscape requirement at other Solid Waste facilities (i.e. transfer stations), if time is available after meeting needs at the landfill. This assistance would most likely be in an advisory form. However, it is anticipated that this position will be fully occupied at the landfill after the first year.

A example of a typical job description for a Senior Gardener according to Metro's classification system is attached. A job description for the landfill position would have different duties but the skills needed would be similar. If there is consensus on the need for this position, I will proceed immediately in writing a draft job description specifically for the landfill for your review. Please respond to this request. I will contact you within two weeks if I haven't heard from you.

METRO
Class No: 467
Title: Senior Gardener
Range:
Bargaining Unit: LIU, Local 483
FLSA:

Established:
Revised:
EEO:
AA:

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES:

Performs skilled gardening work in the planting and maintenance of a wide variety of native and Japanese ornamental plants, trees, shrubs and flowers. Applies herbicides and pesticides. Develops basic landscape plans or coordinates the implementation of plans provided by a landscape architect. Assigns and may supervise a crew on major or special gardening projects. Evaluates general landscaping and grounds maintenance needs and either implements project or makes recommendations to supervisor.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED:

Works under the general supervision of the Building and Grounds Manager. Occasionally receives specific work assignments; independence of action is stressed, with discretion for determining methods and procedures. Work is evaluated on the basis of results obtained.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

May assign work to other gardeners, maintenance crew or part-time volunteers. Provides job-site supervision of some major or special projects to ensure adherence to landscape plans or appropriate gardening practices.

EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPAL DUTIES:

An employee in this classification may perform any of the following duties. However, these examples do not include all the specific tasks which an employee in this classification may be expected to perform.

1. Designs planting beds and other areas, selects appropriate plant materials, orders and purchases materials; assures adherence to established landscape plans; evaluates general landscaping needs and recommends the type and quantity of plant material for undeveloped grounds areas; consults with animal keepers regarding the type of landscaping that can be established in animal exhibit areas, and methods of planting and maintaining plants to provide adequate protection to plants and animals.
2. Fertilizes, mixes and conditions soil for different types of flowers, shrubs, trees and other plants; inspects for pests, disease and other deteriorating agents; selects and uses appropriate herbicides and pesticides; repairs damaged trees, shrubs and flowers.

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Class No.: 467

Title: Senior Gardener

EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPAL DUTIES (con't):

3. Maintains turf areas by mowing, trimming, edging, fertilizing and spraying. Plants grass by laying sod or spreading grass seed.
4. Plants bulbs, trees, shrubs, flowers; pots plants and transplants plants; maintains trees, flowers and shrubs by pruning, thinning, spraying, staking and arranging; pulls weeds, rakes leaves, cleans plant beds and replenishes bark dust covering.
5. Operates gas-powered lawn mower, rototiller, sod cutter and edger and uses a variety of other hand tools, including sprayers, pruning saws and other garden tools; keeps all equipment clean and in proper working condition through preventative maintenance, and by making minor repairs. Operates three-wheel motorized vehicles, pickup trucks, front-end loaders and dump trucks.
6. Picks up plants and tools from nurseries, garden centers and private donors; assists with other general maintenance tasks; such as loading hay, collecting animal wastes and sweeping and collecting litter from walkways, parking lots and animal exhibit areas.
7. Assigns work and supervises less skilled gardeners in the performance of their duties, observing for adherence to prescribed work orders and procedures.

RECRUITING REQUIREMENTS:

KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, ABILITY:

- Considerable knowledge of the standard practices, materials, methods and tools used in planting, transplanting, cultivating and caring for trees, plants, flowers, shrubs and lawns, including ornamental plants.
- Considerable knowledge of the relationship between soil properties and plant propagation.
- Considerable knowledge of plant identification, both native and ornamental.
- Considerable knowledge of the symptoms and methods of control of plant diseases and insect pests.
- Considerable knowledge of the types of fertilizers and their use.
- Reasonable knowledge of landscaping and floral design.

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Class No.: 467

Title: Senior Gardener

RECRUITING REQUIREMENTS:

KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, ABILITY (con't):

- Skill in the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers.
- Skill in recognizing varieties of plants in varying stages of growth.
- Skill in the use of a variety of hand and power tools and mowers.
- Ability to interpret landscape plans.
- Ability to follow oral and written instructions.
- Ability to direct the work of other gardeners and unskilled volunteers.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees and to meet and deal courteously with the public.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING:

A minimum of two years of responsible experience in gardening or landscaping, affording some planning and supervisory responsibility. Graduation from high school, or completion of the equivalent GED certificate. Post-high school course work in basic horticulture or related field. Any satisfactory equivalent combination of experience and training which demonstrates the ability to perform the work may substitute for the above.

NECESSARY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Possession of, or the ability to obtain possession of, a valid Oregon driver's license and state herbicide and pesticide applicator's license upon appointment.