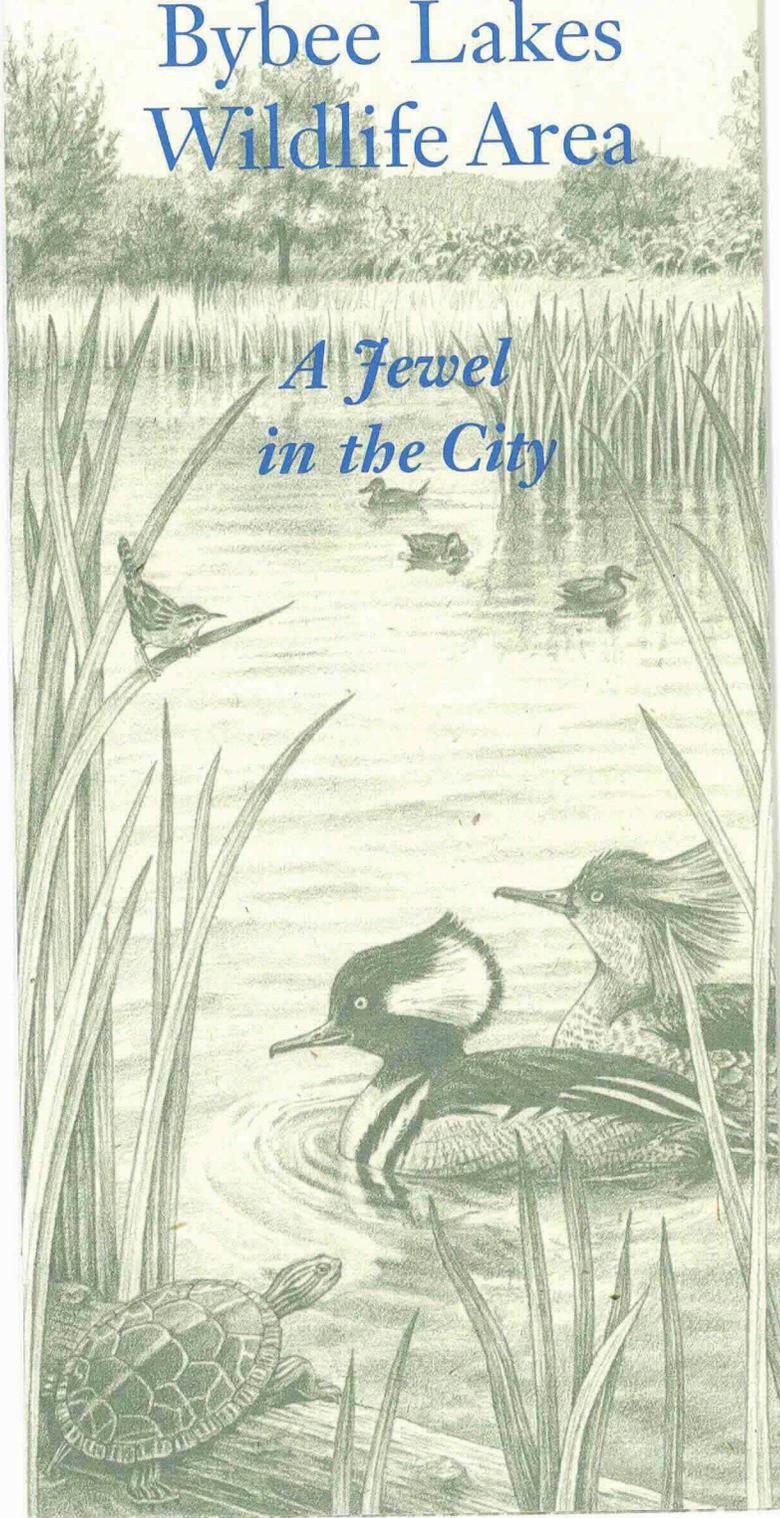


Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area

*A Jewel
in the City*



You stroll down a shady path that meanders through tall trees. Leaves rustle in the wind. Dozens of small birds chatter as they busily search for food in the upper canopy of the forest.

The path leaves the woods to skirt a grassy marsh. A marsh wren pops to the top of the tall grass to scold you and warn others of your presence. In the distance, you can see rafts of waterfowl floating on the lake.

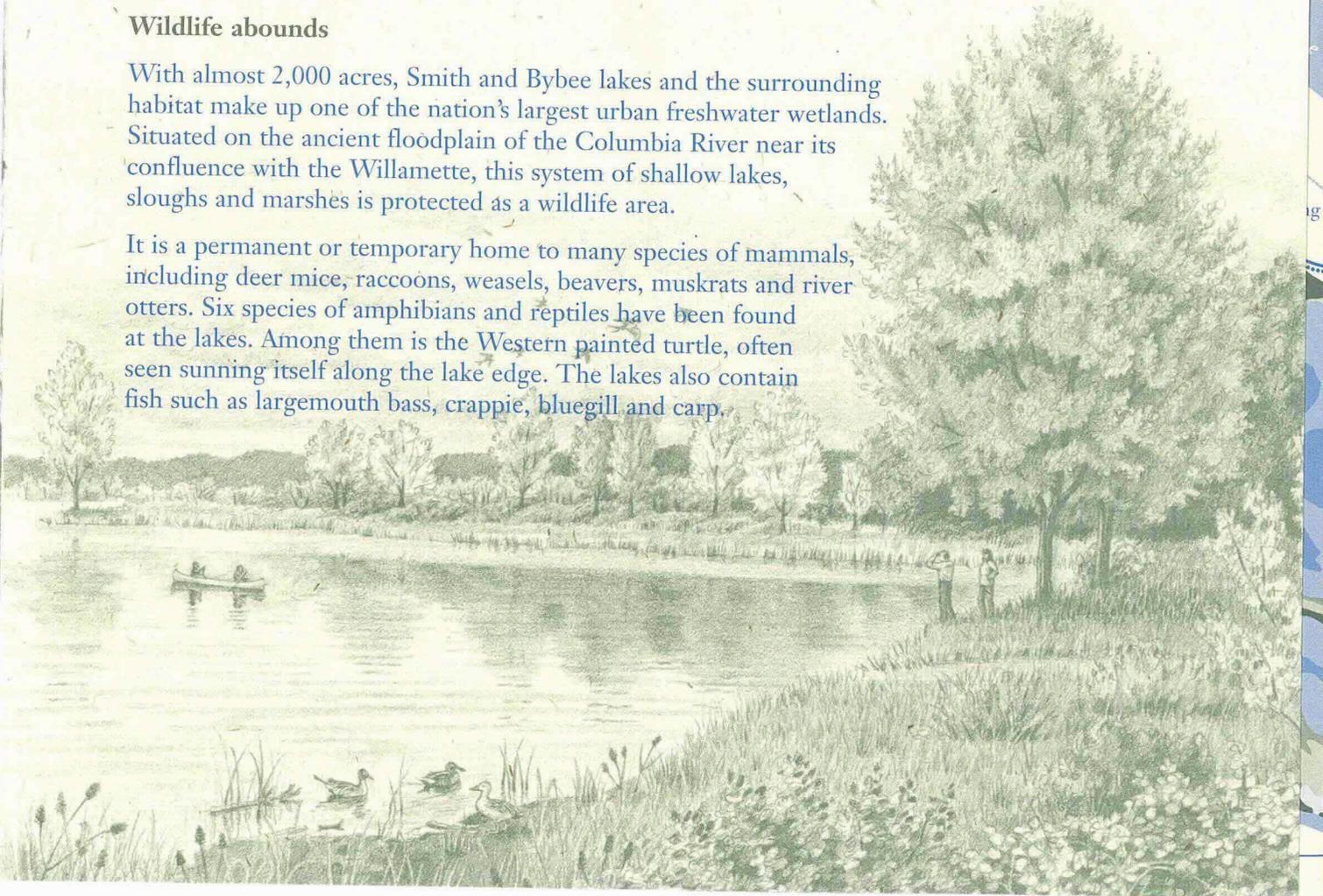
At the end of the path, you come to a wildlife-viewing platform perched at the edge of the lake. Peering through one of the viewing holes, you spot a cinnamon teal paddling through gentle waves. Its rich reddish-brown color is hard to miss against the green water reflecting the blue and white sky. You hear a splash – perhaps a fish or maybe even the slap of a beaver tail.

This is one of many wildlife experiences you may have when you visit Smith and Bybee lakes. The urban wildlife area is located on the outskirts of North Portland near the Columbia River, just 10 minutes by freeway from downtown.

Wildlife abounds

With almost 2,000 acres, Smith and Bybee lakes and the surrounding habitat make up one of the nation's largest urban freshwater wetlands. Situated on the ancient floodplain of the Columbia River near its confluence with the Willamette, this system of shallow lakes, sloughs and marshes is protected as a wildlife area.

It is a permanent or temporary home to many species of mammals, including deer mice, raccoons, weasels, beavers, muskrats and river otters. Six species of amphibians and reptiles have been found at the lakes. Among them is the Western painted turtle, often seen sunning itself along the lake edge. The lakes also contain fish such as largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill and carp.



More than 100 species of resident and migrating birds inhabit the area at various times throughout the year. Herons, hawks, kingfishers, ospreys, shorebirds, woodpeckers, swallows, wrens, warblers, owls and many more species have been spotted, as well as a large variety of waterfowl.

Restoring the natural habitat

Historically, much of the bottomlands around Smith and Bybee lakes were naturally flooded during the winter and spring. In late summer and fall, the lakes became very shallow, exposing mud flats that provided feeding and resting areas for many types of migratory birds.

The seasonal fluctuation of water changed during the 1980s, when a structure was built to maintain a more constant water level in the lakes. This altered the habitat, killed some of the surrounding willow trees and caused other changes in vegetation – changes that have reduced the ecosystem's natural diversity. One of Metro's goals is to maximize the diversity of native species by again allowing water levels to fluctuate with changes in river levels.



The Smith and Bybee Lakes Management Plan calls for the area to be maintained, as much as possible, in a manner faithful to its original condition. Ongoing restoration projects provide a way for citizens to become involved in hands-on work to enhance the habitat. Call (503) 797-1850 option 8 to volunteer at the lakes.

A place for quiet recreation and learning

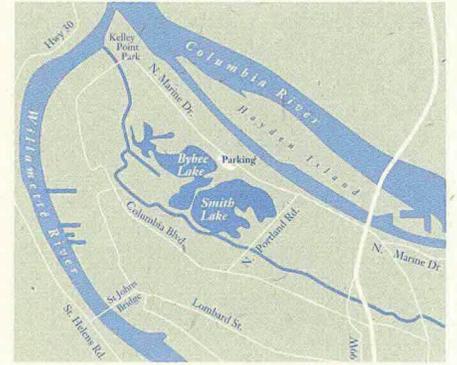
While nature reigns at the lakes, there's room for people, too. Metro encourages recreational use that harmonizes with the natural environment. Activities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, nonmotorized boating and fishing are welcomed.

Year-round interpretive programs are offered focusing on the lake's abundant wildlife, rare turtles, waterfowl, birds of prey and wetlands ecology. Field trip programs for schools and youth groups can also be arranged. For programs information calling (503) 797-1850.

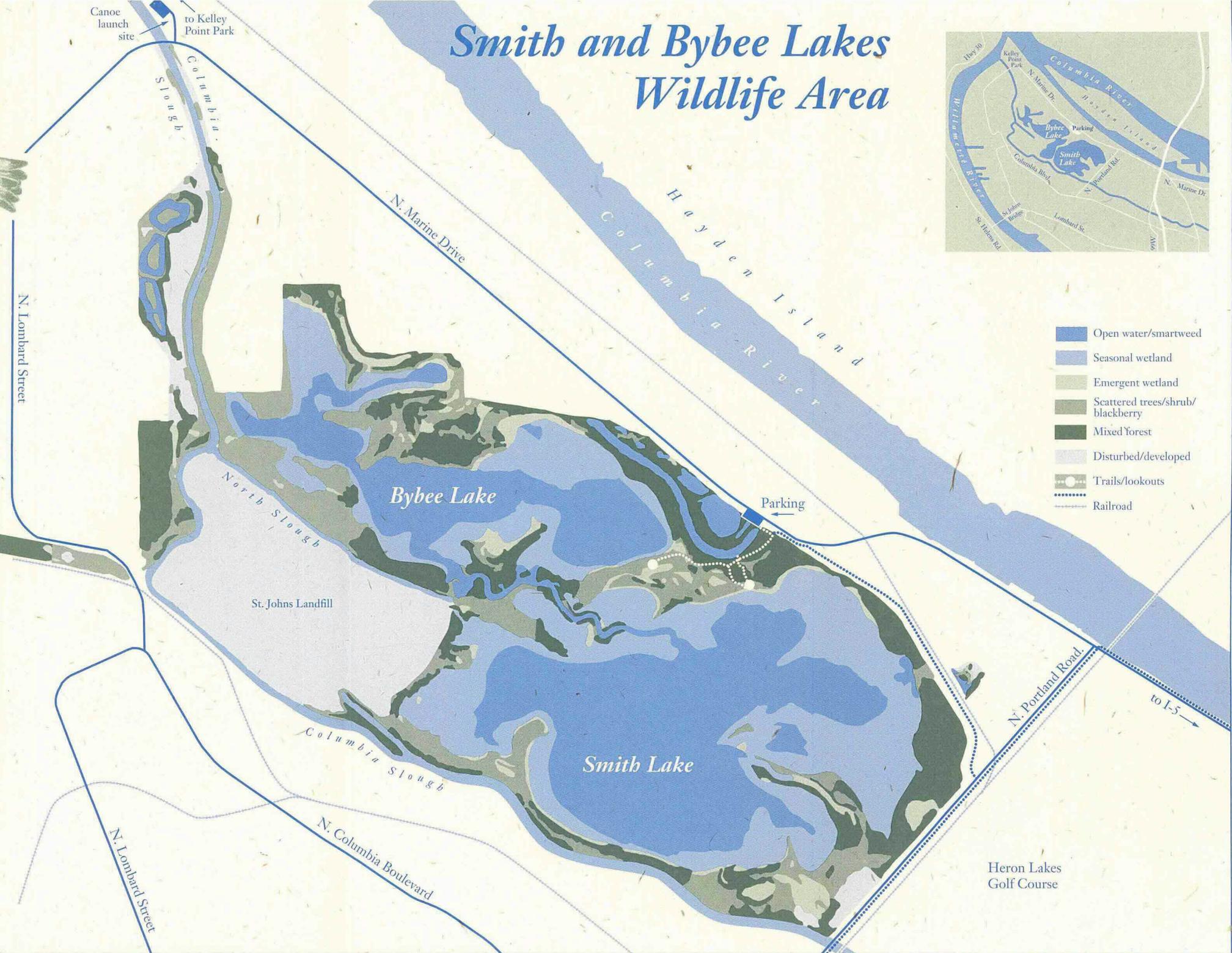
The lakes are becoming more accessible to nearby neighborhoods and the entire metropolitan region through construction of trails that connect with the Peninsula Crossing Trail in North Portland and the region's 40-Mile Loop Trail system. All of the trails in the wildlife area are barrier-free for wheelchairs, strollers, etc. Future developments include plans for an environmental learning shelter and canoe launch site.



Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area



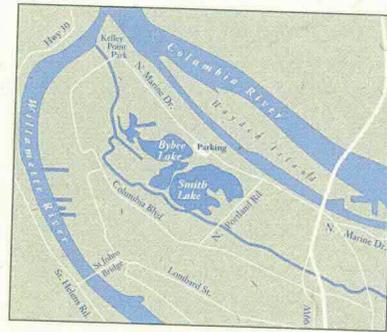
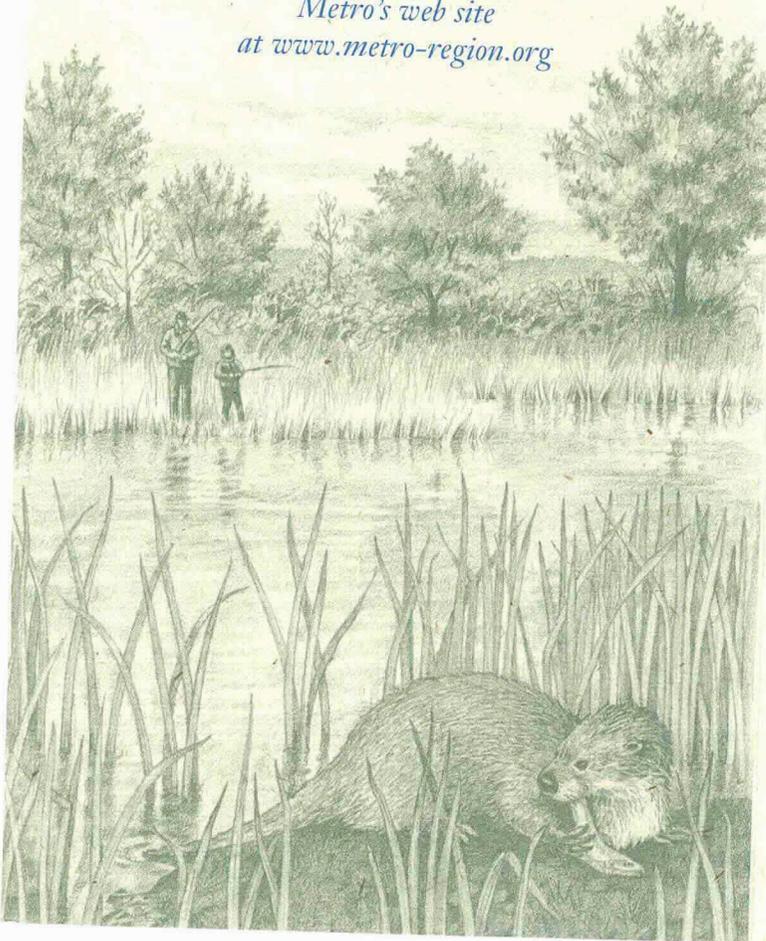
- Open water/smartweed
- Seasonal wetland
- Emergent wetland
- Scattered trees/shrub/blackberry
- Mixed forest
- Disturbed/developed
- Trails/lookouts
- Railroad



When you visit the lakes, please remember that all plants and wildlife are protected. Kindly respect their habitat by staying on trails. Here are a few more things to keep in mind:

- bicycles and pets are not allowed
- no camping
- no firearms or fireworks
- please pack out your trash.

For more information about Smith and Bybee lakes or planned activities at the area, call Metro's Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department at (503) 797-1850 or visit Metro's web site at www.metro-region.org



Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area

Location: On Marine Drive between the Expo Center and Kelley Point Park. Take I-5 to Marine Drive west exit (307). Go west 2.5 miles on Marine Drive to the parking area on the south side of the road.

Metro – planning that protects the nature of our region

It's better to plan for growth than ignore it. Metro serves 1.3 million people who live in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and the 24 cities in the Portland metropolitan area. Metro provides transportation and land-use planning services and oversees regional garbage disposal and recycling and waste reduction programs. Metro manages regional parks and greenspaces and the Oregon Zoo, and oversees the trade, spectator and arts centers managed by the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission.

Metro is governed by an executive officer, elected regionwide, and a seven-member council elected by districts. An auditor, also elected regionwide, reviews Metro's operations.

Executive Officer – Mike Burton; Auditor – Alexis Dow, CPA; Council: Presiding Officer – David Bragdon, District 7; Deputy Presiding Officer – Susan McLain, District 4; Rod Park, District 1; Bill Atherton, District 2; Carl Hosticka, District 3; Rex Burkholder, District 5; and Rod Monroe, District 6.

Metro's web site:
www.metro-region.org



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