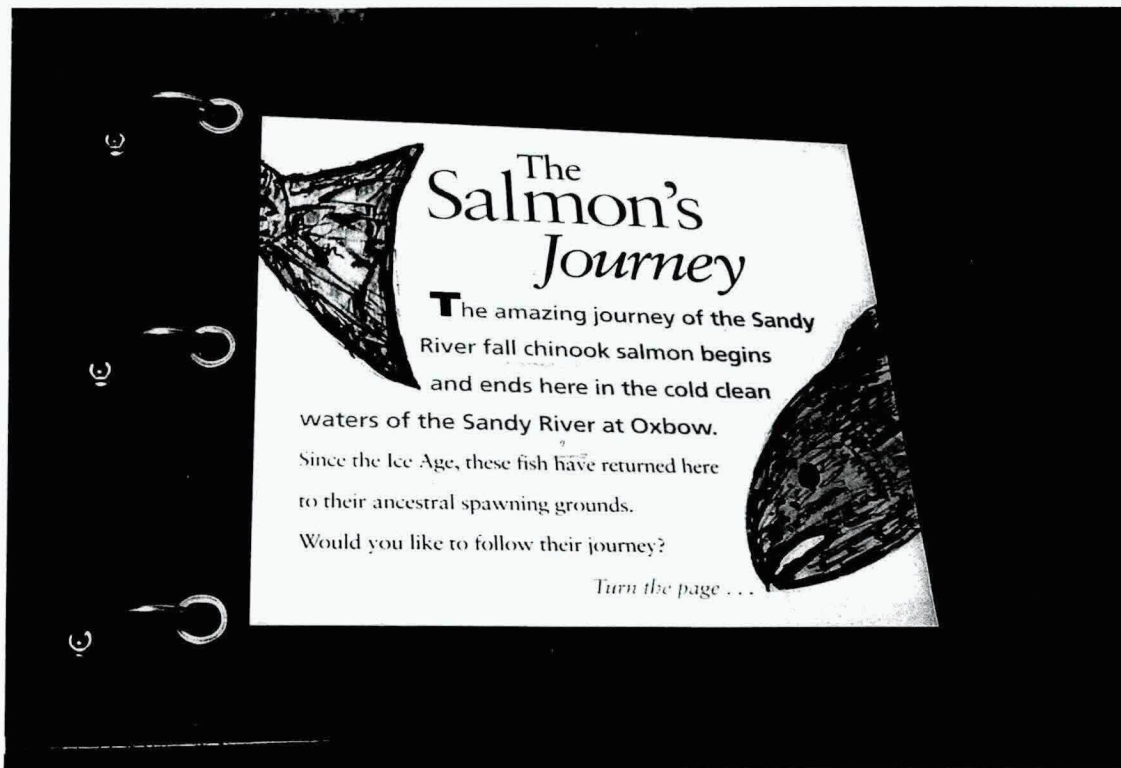


Oxbow Regional Park and
Sunnyside Family Co-op School

Salmon Interpretive Sign Project



Final Report, December 11, 2001

This project was funded with a grant from the Greenspaces Grant Program, a partnership of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Metro.

Recipient: Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces education program

Report written by Elisabeth Neely, project manager

Project Description

The Salmon Interpretive Sign project was completed by the 2001 class of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students from Sunnyside School, with their teacher Elizabeth Draper, and Elisabeth Neely, naturalist for Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces. The students were involved in classroom study of salmon, several field trips, and work sessions with professional naturalists and interpreters. We then assisted them as they developed topics and illustrations for an outdoor interpretive display about the salmon of the Sandy River at Oxbow Regional Park. Metro staff completed the final versions of the text and the layout, and sent it to a sign fabricator. The finished sign is in the form of a large weatherproof "flip-book," with each "page" a hard, waterproof sign of its own, placed on a ring binder attached to a steel baseplate. The flip-book has been installed at a viewing area on the banks of the Sandy River, a place where thousands of park visitors come annually to observe fall chinook salmon on their spawning grounds.

Goals and Benefits of the Project

The first goal of the project was to provide a meaningful opportunity for Sunnyside students to learn about salmon and watershed health, to work with professionals in these fields, and to learn about the importance of effective communication about this topic in our region. The second goal was to provide much-needed trailside interpretative information about salmon for the more than 20,000 visitors who come to Oxbow Regional Park each fall.

Work Tasks and Timeline

October 2000: Preparation for the project began in October, when Sunnyside 6th-8th graders took a field trip to Oxbow Regional Park to experience the return of the fall chinook salmon to their spawning grounds. They learned about the life cycle of the fall chinook salmon on the Sandy, took a guided salmon viewing walk along the river, caught and examined aquatic macroinvertebrates, took photos and made journal entries.

January 2001: After hearing my plea for their help in creating a much-needed salmon sign for Oxbow Park, the students voted as a class to accept the "mission." Deb Scrivens (Metro RPG education coordinator) visited the classroom to introduce the students to Oxbow interpretive themes and to the steps required in the process of developing interpretive signage. Afterward we all took a field trip to the Oregon Zoo to check out the Zoo's animal exhibits and signs. The students enthusiastically evaluated the effectiveness of a broad array of signs and discussed their conclusions with Zoo Education Program Manager Rex Ettlin. We were impressed with their perceptiveness about how visitors might interact with signs and what makes a sign "work" or not.

February-April 2001: Students continued their classroom study of salmon in the Pacific Northwest throughout the winter and spring. Together we created an inventory of possible stories and themes for the book, and the students broke into teams to work on developing text and illustrations for each theme (e.g. salmon life cycle, salmon spawning behavior, etc). As part of a linked project, they traveled with their teacher on an overnight trip to the Oregon coast to literally follow the journey of the salmon to the sea.

May 2001: After several work sessions, students completed the illustrations and a draft of the text. We had hoped to finish this stage of the process in April, but it took longer than expected as the students had less time to work on the project than we had originally planned. Their work was then passed on to Metro's Creative Services staff, who scanned it and worked on the

Project Staff/ Workers/ Volunteers

- Elisabeth Neely, Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces, Oxbow Park naturalist and project manager.
- Elizabeth Draper, Sunnyside Family Co-op School, teacher, also on review committee.
- Kathy Fors, Metro Creative Services team, graphic designer.
- Kathy Deal, Metro Creative Services team, graphic designer.
- Deb Scrivens, Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces Education Coordinator, provided classroom lesson in interpretive design process, was on review committee for sign.
- Rex Ettlin, Oregon Zoo Education Program Manager, developed Zoo field trip and interpretive sign "survey" for students to complete.
- Heather Kent, Ron Klein and Charles Ciecko were also on the review committee.
- Rachel Mortenson, Oxbow Park ranger, installed the sign.

Tips/Advice for Project Managers

About doing interpretive projects with kids:

This project required us to balance (1) our needs for a sign that would convey certain information clearly with (2) our desire to have students doing "real work" and being meaningfully involved in the creative process. We were committed to doing both. Others who are interested in this kind of project should know that this requires a larger investment of time and planning than it would to do a similar project without student involvement. Elizabeth Draper did an excellent job as the students' teacher and main liaison with the project, and she had a great vision of how to work with the students. Rex Ettlin and Deb Scrivens also contributed a lot in preparing the students with the technical background they would need. The students did very well with our guidance, and I think if we had had the time we originally thought we would have with them, they would have been able to work through some of the later drafts as well. As it was I spent quite a bit of time revising and working on the text, but I had expected to be doing some of that. In the end we were successful in our balancing act and the product is a unique interpretive sign that serves the park's needs and also truly represents the students' work.

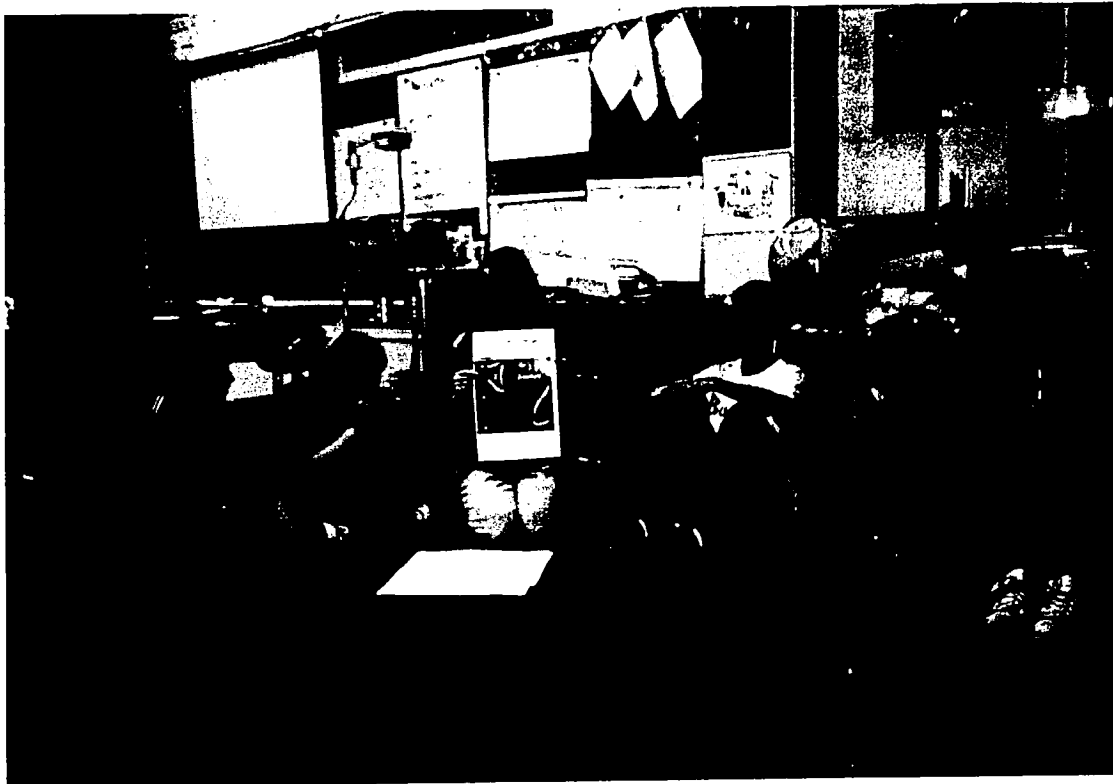
About getting signs and flipbooks made:

Sign fabrication is a world unto itself, and information on the topic is not available all in one place. It took several phone calls and field trips to research the many options for materials and to find a sign fabricator who had a track record doing outdoor flip-books. DCI (Alberta, Canada, 780-963-4238) seems to be the only company that makes them regularly and they did a nice job with ours. They also made the BLM's flipbooks for the Wildwood Wetland Trail. The options for more standard "flat" signs are much more numerous. Costs vary greatly depending on the materials. It is well worth a field trip or two to see others' interpretive signs and talking to several people before deciding what you need.

Monitoring and Maintenance Plan

I will monitor the effectiveness of the sign, noting how park visitors interact with it, how much they read, and so forth. This will help us create the most effective signs in the future.

Park rangers will maintain the sign in terms of installing it and taking it down seasonally (we plan to keep it up during the fall spawning season only, to reduce the likelihood of vandalism).

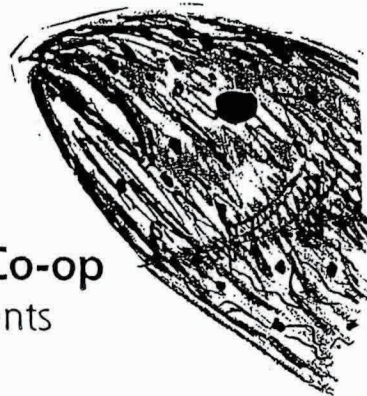


In class, the students see a first draft of the cover page, June 2001.



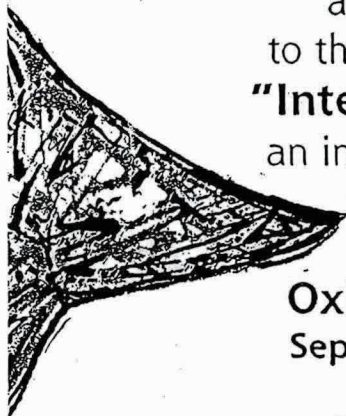
A student admires a new computer version of her artwork.

*You're
Invited!*



Sunnyside Family Co-op
middle school students
of 2001

are inviting you
to the unveiling of our
"Interpreting the Journey"
an interpretive salmon display



at
Oxbow Regional Park
September 27, 2001
10:00-12:30
Picnic Area "D"

Refreshments will be served but
Bring a sack lunch
Rain or Shine

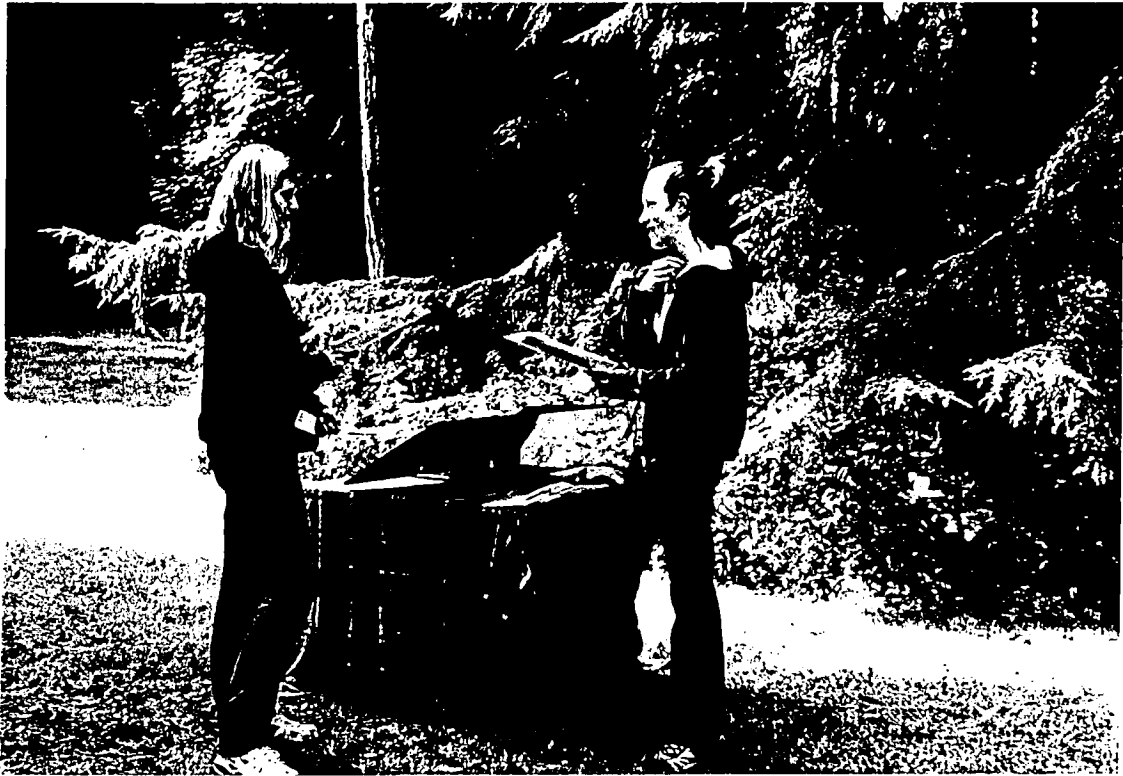
*This project was funded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
and Metro through the Greenspaces grants program.



The whole class returns to Oxbow to celebrate the unveiling of the completed flip-book in September.



A young artist with the page featuring her colorful work.



At Oxbow,
Hannah and Emily
practice the speech
they will give in front
of the Metro Council
on behalf of the class.
(above)



Outside the Council
chambers, wearing
proud smiles after
their presentation.
(left)

MOBA MEDIA

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OXBOW SALMON INFORMATION

KGW-TV CHANNEL 8 PORTLAND

SEPTEMBER 27, 2001 5:30 PM

NEWSCASTER TRACY BARRY: Today a group of Portland Middle School students helped unveil a new salmon exhibit they've created. The kids teamed up with Metro for more than a year to make the exhibit for Oxbow Regional Park.

HANNA GOLDSER, 9TH GRADER: I feel proud to have my work, you know, shown to everybody, and it's -- I'm glad it can help kids learn about salmon. This is an important thing to learn about.

NEWSCASTER: You can also learn more about fish at this year's Salmon Festival in the park. It runs through the weekend of October 13th and 14th.

*Speaker interjections not contributing to context may have been excluded from this transcription.
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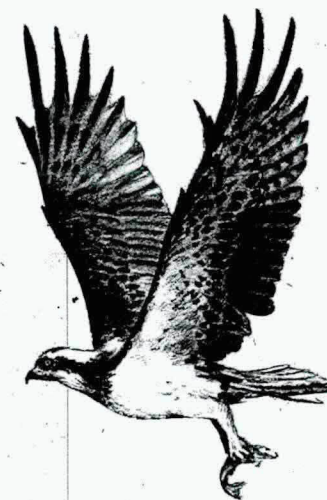
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Metro
Regional
Parks and
Greenspaces
Department

Oxbow Regional Park

3010 SE Oxbow Parkway, Gresham, OR 97080 (503) 663-4708



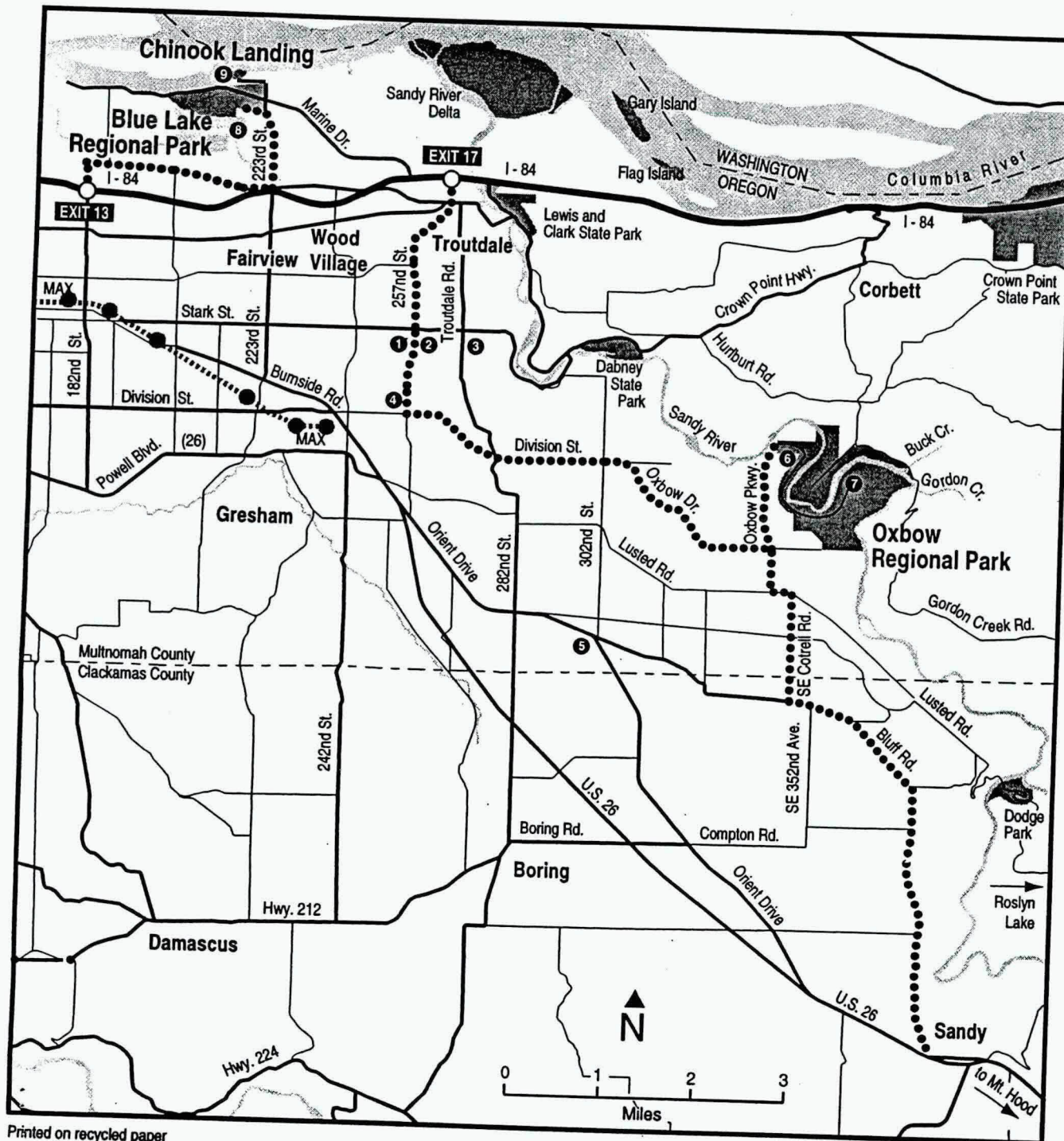
Legend

- Group picnic area
- Group camping area
- Children's play area
- Building
- Hardened river access
- Distance between points
- Trail markers
- Log jam
- River boulders
- Wetlands
- Pedestrians only
- Pedestrians and bicycles only
- Pedestrians and horses only
- Pedestrians, bicycles and horses
- Paved road
- Gravel road
- Amphitheater

Trail markers



Oxbow Park & Blue Lake Park Vicinity Map

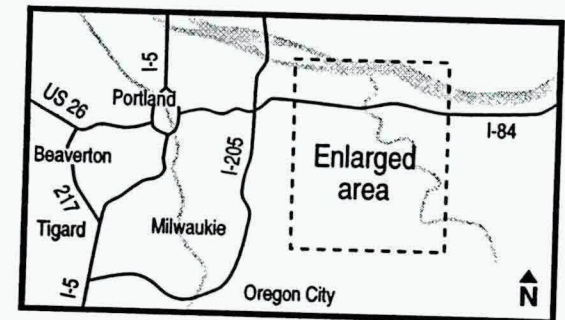


Printed on recycled paper

94129SG

Legend

- 1 Mt. Hood Medical Center
- 2 Mt. Hood Community College
- 3 Grocery
- 4 Grocery/gas/bait (open 24 hours)
- 5 Grocery
- 6 Oxbow Park office
- 7 Oxbow Park campground
- 8 Blue Lake Park
- 9 Chinook Landing
- Preferred routes
- - - - - MAX Light Rail
- Park
- Rivers, lakes, creeks



METRO

Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces

600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232

(503) 797-1850

Oxbow Park: (503) 663-4708

Blue Lake Park: (503) 665-4995