

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF)	RESOLUTION NO. 99-2787
ENCOURAGING USE OF VOLUNTEERS)	INTRODUCED BY COUNCILOR
TO CONSTRUCT CAPITAL)	BILL ATHERTON
IMPROVEMENTS ON METRO PARKS AND)	
GREENSPACES AND APPLICATION OF)	
SAVINGS TO LAND ACQUISITION)	

WHEREAS Metro Parks and Greenspaces Department has hired a volunteer coordinator; and

WHEREAS testimony by citizens indicates that they view volunteering as an opportunity to learn new skills and enrich their lives as well as to improve public facilities; and

WHEREAS Metro's Parks and Greenspaces capital improvement needs present considerable opportunities for volunteers; and

WHEREAS the need for land acquisitions throughout the region has grown more urgent in recent years as population growth has put more pressure on environmentally threatened and sensitive species; and

WHEREAS contributions of volunteers can substantially reduce costs for construction of capital improvements, thus freeing those funds for land acquisitions;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Metro Park and Greenspaces Department should first explore opportunities for use of volunteers prior to contracting for construction of capital improvements on regional parks projects and that any funds allocated for construction and development of facilities saved thereby be allocated for acquisition of new lands.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Officer shall report to the Council before contracting for construction of capital improvements on regional parks, to explain reasons a project does not present opportunities for savings by use of volunteers.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this _____ day of _____ 1999

WITHDRAWN
Rod Monroe, Presiding Officer

STAFF REPORT

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING USE OF VOLUNTEERS TO CONSTRUCT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ON METRO PARKS AND GREENSPACES AND APPLICATION OF SAVINGS TO LAND ACQUISITION

May 7, 1999

Prepared by Michael Morrissey

Proposed Action

Resolution 99-2787 directs the Regional Parks and Greenspaces department to use volunteers for construction projects, when possible, and retain resulting savings for the purpose of land acquisition. The Metro Executive Director is required to report to the Council in those instances where it is determined no savings accrue from the use of volunteers on construction projects.

Background and Analysis

For fiscal year 1999-2000 Metro's Capital Improvement Plan identifies six Parks and Greenspaces projects (not including Open Spaces purchases) totaling \$2,068,125. These projects include activities such as road realignment; water facilities and water control improvements; improvements to campgrounds, picnic shelters and restrooms; parking and boat facility construction, and trail improvements. In addition, over \$100,000 in non-CIP capital expenditures are also identified in the park budget.

Opportunities may exist in these projects to perform the tasks with volunteer or donated labor and supplies, to a greater or lesser degree. The volunteer labor could include citizen volunteers, apprentices from the building trades or donations or reduced priced situations involving, for example National Guard, Corps of Engineers or other professional organizations.

The department does realize the value of volunteers and has hired a volunteer coordinator this year who has been very successful in volunteer recruitment and assignment. Currently the primary use for volunteers is in the stabilization of open spaces land purchases so that it can be land banked. The department expects to generate over 12,000 volunteer hours from over 600 volunteers during the next fiscal year, for land banking assistance and other purposes.

Given the department's backlog of needs, current practice is generally to use volunteers to do tasks which otherwise would not get done, rather than to save existing funds, per se'. For example, in addition to the needs identified in deferred maintenance, the

department is still acquiring open spaces properties, moving towards its eventual goal of 6,000 acres. Several million dollars of unfunded masterplanned projects also remain.

An example of use of volunteers in a medium-sized construction project is the construction of the band shell at Blue Lake Park last summer. 50 apprentices from the Carpenter Training Center put in almost 300 volunteers constructing this stage. An estimated \$2,500 was saved on the project. However the shell took longer than expected to construct, and needed more supervision than was originally planned.

At Oxbow Park volunteers from the Mt. Hood Mental Health Center in Gresham have been showing up at Oxbow park. They are estimated to have contributed over 8,000 hours on trail, tree and day-to-day activities at Oxbow.

The department actively seeks volunteers and expects to increase their use on all kinds of projects.