

working for clean rivers

CLARIFIER

DECEMBER
2013

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Message From The Director



I've seen some local news reports recently about Portland sewer rates, some even claiming that our rates are the highest in the nation. Media scrutiny of our bureau is likely to increase in the coming months, so I'd like to set the record straight concerning our rates.

Yes, Portland sewer and stormwater bills are high but by no means are they the highest in the nation. In fact, they aren't the highest in our region.

The cost of the \$1.4-billion combined sewer overflow program Portland successfully completed two years ago is a significant factor in our sewer rates. Today the cost of paying down the debt the city accrued to finance CSO projects is a primary reason that Portland sewer bills are where they are.

While Portland completed CSO construction in 2011, many other cities around the nation are either planning or just starting work on mandated CSO programs that are driving up sewer rates in those cities. Portland sewer rates are actually lower right now than rates in Atlanta, Seattle and Cincinnati, and those three cities are among the many around the country that are in the middle of CSO control programs.

Portland has about 2,500 miles of sewer pipe and about one-third of them are over 80 years old. Every year another sewer pipe segment turns 80. Our collection system is aging fast. Environmental Services will spend over \$300-million during the next five years replacing aging sewer pipes to keep the system in good working order.

Dean C Mauris



New Culvert on Buffalo Slough



The previous culvert, shown in a 2003 photo, was a corrugated, round, metal pipe. The new concrete culvert will allow water to flow year-round, helping to improve water quality.

Environmental Services has completed a lengthy project to replace the NE 33rd Drive culvert on Buffalo Slough. NE 33rd, which was completely closed for construction in July, is again open to all traffic through the project area.

The city worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete the first phase of this project in summer 2011. Environmental Services started construction on the final phase in July 2013 at the NE 33rd Drive crossing over Buffalo Slough and NE 33rd Drive was closed to all traffic until mid-November.

Buffalo Slough is a southern arm of the Columbia Slough, and the slough is water quality-limited. The old culvert at NE 33rd Drive was a round corrugated metal pipe that was too small and too high. When water was low during the summer months, the culvert severely restricted flow, which increased water temperature and damaged fish habitat. The new culvert improves flow and water quality, and allows fish and wildlife passage.

The project also included constructing new sidewalks on NE 33rd Drive and streetside planters to manage stormwater runoff on both sides of the street.



The project also improved pedestrian connections with new sidewalks on NE 33rd Drive.



Refugia Project Support

The Environmental Services Lower Columbia Slough Refugia Project has received a boost from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. DEQ has allocated \$200,000 from its Columbia Slough Natural Resources Damage (NRD) Fund to help finance the project.

The project will place more than 500 logs along the nine miles of the lower slough to create engineered log jams. The in-stream wood provides cover and refuge for salmon, and will help the city meet DEQ temperature targets and bolster its efforts to meet Endangered Species Act goals. Environmental Services is designing the refugia project with construction planned in 2015.

ASLA Honor Award



Last month, the Oregon chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) presented its Honor Award in the Analysis and Planning category to the Portland landscape architecture firm GreenWorks for their efforts on the Zidell Yards Green Infrastructure Scenarios project. This project is the result of an EPA grant that Environmental Services received in 2012 to identify comprehensive green infrastructure solutions for a brownfields

redevelopment project. The bureau's Watershed Services group worked with GreenWorks to develop options for managing stormwater with green infrastructure on Portland's largest remediated brownfield, the 33-acre Zidell Yards in the South Waterfront.



Portland in Stormwater

The current issue of Stormwater magazine has a Portland connection. The story "Trends in Stormwater Monitoring" features the Environmental Services Field Ops team. The magazine also published a photo of Environmental Services employees in action taken by Field Ops team member Matt Sullivan. Stormwater is a national trade journal for surface water quality professionals. You can read the article online at www.stormh2o.com/SW/articles/23750.aspx.

There is also a digital edition at <http://digital.stormh2o.com/publication/?i=183134&p=&pn>.





Protecting Watershed Health in Southwest Portland

Environmental Services is working with its partners this fall on projects to restore degraded forests, protect water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat at the River View Natural Area, River View Cemetery, and Lewis & Clark College.



River View Natural Area

Environmental Services and Portland Parks & Recreation have worked together since 2011 in the River View Natural Area to remove invasive plants, close and reroute some trails, and remove trash. This winter, reforestation crews will plant more than 50,000 native tree and shrub seedlings in the natural area. Parks is also developing a natural area management plan that will be ready for public review in March.

The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District is working with River View Cemetery and Lewis & Clark College to restore forested and natural areas on these private properties. Environmental Services is helping get these projects started this fall with invasive plant removal to protect forest canopy and keep invasive weeds from spreading into the adjacent River View Natural Area.

Revegetation crews have removed invasives on 22 areas at River View Cemetery. At Lewis & Clark, crews will remove ivy and clematis vines on 23 acres in late December. Next year, invasive removal will focus on blackberry, laurel, holly, ivy, and other invasives on the ground. Conservation district crews will plant native trees and shrubs after invasive plants are controlled.



Balch Conduit Improvements

This month, Environmental Services is finishing work on a ventilation project for the Balch Consolidation Conduit. In the past, stormwater flowing into the 84-inch diameter pipeline pushed air through the pipe with enough pressure to move several manhole covers along the pipeline route. This project is securing and sealing manholes at three locations and installing an underground vault to vent air and relieve pressure in the pipeline.

Environmental Services completed the conduit in 2011 to help control combined sewer overflows to the Willamette River. The 8,500-foot pipeline carries stormwater runoff and sewage to the West Side Big Pipe.



Asset Management Annual Report

The BES Asset Management Core Team has released its 2013 Asset Management Improvement Program Annual Report. The report focuses on how BES implements asset management, describes key asset management concepts, and identifies the staff who are working on implementation. The new report details work accomplished in 2011/2012 and outlines proposed work for 2013/2014.



You can read the report at www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/472090. Printed copies are also available upon request. For more information about the program, call Virgil Adderley at 3-7866.



New Stars



The Environmental Services Recognition Committee circulates Shining Star Awards throughout the bureau. Employees give them to co-workers to recognize outstanding achievement and notable performance on the job. Recipients display the Shining Star on their desk for two months, then pass it on.

The Shining Star acknowledges achievements and good work that might otherwise go unnoticed in a bureau as large as BES. When it's time to pass on your Shining Star, consider employees in all groups, as well as your own work team or group.

Here is a list of new Shining Stars.

Bryan Davis	Shining Star # 1	to Pat Darby
Eldora Tran	Shining Star # 2	to Anita Strong
April Murphy	Shining Star # 3	to Lisa Howard
Dan Perde	Shining Star # 4	to Rick Sundre
Chris Prescott	Shining Star # 5	to Paul Ketcham
Sara Gardner	Shining Star # 6	to Lisa Howard
Aaron Wieting	Shining Star # 7	to Beth Hiscott
Neil Bruesch	Shining Star # 8	to Terry Tice

Read more about this awards program at www.portlandonline.com/bes/stars.

? Learn more about your coworkers on the BES intranet at TEAM BES.

Read about your teammates and review past profiles on the BES intranet at www.portlandonline.com/bes/teambes.



Contact your PEERs

PEERs are specially trained Environmental Services staff volunteers who are available to offer bureau employees support, guidance and referral. [Click here to learn more or to contact a PEER volunteer.](#)



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND
working for clean rivers



Our Mission

Environmental Services serves the Portland community by protecting public health, water quality and the environment.

We provide sewage and stormwater collection and treatment services to accommodate Portland's current and future needs.

We protect the quality of surface and ground waters and conduct activities that plan and promote healthy ecosystems in our watersheds.

Our Vision

To be recognized as a trusted service provider and innovative environmental leader through a demonstrated commitment to clean rivers, healthy watersheds and our community.

Environmental Services: www.portlandoregon.gov/bes
Nick Fish, Commissioner Dean Marriott, Director

Produced electronically OD 2013