

*working for clean rivers*

# CLARIFIER

JUNE  
2014

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

## Message From The Director



I was recently informed that our Tryon Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant will be honored this summer with a Platinum Peak Performance award from NACWA, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. This is a prestigious award that only a handful of agencies receive each year.

Only wastewater treatment facilities that have had zero violations of their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for at least five consecutive years can earn a Platinum Award. And this isn't the first time our Wastewater Group has achieved that distinction.

In 2004, both the Columbia Boulevard and Tryon Creek wastewater treatment plants won NACWA Platinum Awards. Both plants maintained that level of excellence the following year and again won Platinum Awards in 2005.

Total permit compliance for an entire year, let alone for five consecutive years, is an outstanding achievement. To do that, the plant has to meet thousands of parameters during the course of a year.

This is a testament to the excellent job Wastewater Group employees do every day to safely reclaim Portland's wastewater, protecting public health and the environment in the process. NACWA will recognize them with the Tryon Creek plant's Platinum Award at its summer conference in Portland next month.

Congratulations to all of you who worked so hard to make this happen.

*Dean C. Mauris*



## 2015 CWSP Grants

This week, the Portland City Council approved grants totaling \$95,000 for 13 community watershed health projects in Portland. Community groups can apply annually for grants of up to \$10,000 through Portland's Community Watershed Stewardship Program (CWSP). The program is a partnership between Environmental Services and Portland State University. For the average residential sewer ratepayer, the grants represent an investment of about 24 cents a year and every grant dollar invested leverages three dollars in volunteer time and in-kind contributions.

Grants support innovative projects that improve watershed health and protect water quality. CWSP encourages community groups and citizens to get involved in watershed improvement projects and expand watershed stewardship efforts.

Since 1995, CWSP has granted more than \$867,000 for watershed projects and has generated more than \$3.3 million dollars in volunteer time and other in-kind contributions. More than 40,000 community volunteers have worked on projects funded by stewardship grants. Projects have enhanced nearly 65 acres of natural area and restored more than 52,000 feet of stream banks.

The City Council approved grants for 13 projects in fiscal year 2014-2015:

- Friends of Malden Court Community Orchard (\$9,995)
- Green Lents Johnson Creek Cleanup (\$4,500)
- Verde Cully Residential Rain Gardens (\$9,825)
- Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) Illahee Gardens (\$4,700)
- Holy Redeemer School Stormwater Management (\$8,000)
- Trinity Full Gospel Pentecostal Church Rain Garden (\$6,000)
- Linnton Neighborhood Association Hoge Creek Project (\$4,975)
- Russian Speaking Network of Oregon Naturescaping for Better Environmental Education (\$5,580)
- Depave – Faith Community Church Parking Lot Stormwater Retrofit (\$9,875)
- Micro-Enterprise Services of Oregon MLK Rain Garden Phase II (\$6,000)
- Momentum Alliance Environmental Camp and Restoration Project (\$8,000)
- SOLVE Trillium Creek Restoration Project (\$9,550)
- Tryon Creek Watershed Council Restoration Mentors (\$8,000)



*Since 1995, more than 40,000 community volunteers have worked on projects funded by CWSP.*



## New Rates

The Portland City Council has approved new Portland sewer rates for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. On July 1, the average monthly sewer bill for single family residential sewer customers will increase by 4% making Portland's average monthly residential bill for sewer and stormwater services an estimated \$65.25.

About 60%, or \$39.11, of the average monthly bill will pay for sewage treatment, maintenance, and debt service for the sewer system; 39.4%, or \$25.73, of the average monthly bill will pay for operation, maintenance and debt service of stormwater management facilities; and 0.6%, or \$0.41, will help fund Portland's participation in the ongoing Portland Harbor Superfund investigation in the Willamette River.



## Brownfield Awards



Environmental Services staff worked on two of the four projects that received Outstanding Project Awards last month at the Oregon Brownfield Conference in Salem. The BES Coordinated Site Analysis team worked on assessment, acquisition, design, user risk analysis, underdrain system, and contaminated media management for the **Fields Park Project in the Pearl District**. The park is on part of a former rail yard. A surface cap protects park users from exposure to contaminants in the soil.

The Coordinated Site Analysis team and the Brownfield Program both worked on another award winner, the **NE 72nd Avenue Community Garden**. The garden is on a small portion of a former landfill in the Cully neighborhood. The Brownfield Program helped fund and coordinate work on the community-led project. Coordinated Site Analysis engaged community members in soil sampling, and Water Pollution Control Lab staff offered tours to students and neighbors to learn about soil testing. The long-vacant property now has garden plots, accessible raised beds, and a rain garden.



## Top Projects



Environmental Services' Columbia Building was named the top project in the public buildings category at the annual Daily Journal of Commerce TopProjects Awards ceremony last month. The East Lents Floodplain Restoration Project (now known as the Foster Floodplain Natural Area) was a finalist in the Infrastructure category.

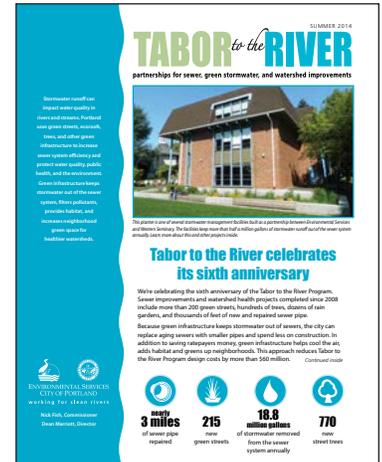


## New Publications

Recent publications from the Communications Division include:

- The summer 2014 Tabor to the River Program newsletter
- The summer 2014 bill insert previewing projects to repair aging sewers
- An update of the Mt. Tabor Park Revegetation Project self-guided tours brochure

You can see these and other Communications Division publications on the BES intranet at [www.portlandonline.com/bes/publications](http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/publications).



## Safety Evolves

The Daily Journal of Commerce published an article last month submitted by Environmental Services Risk and Safety Officer Mike Reiner. It's an interesting overview of changes in attitudes and approaches to construction safety over the years. You can read the article at [www.djcoregon.com](http://www.djcoregon.com) if you're a subscriber. If not, a PDF of it is posted at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/492639>.



## Water Quality Index

People planning recreational activities on the Willamette River in Portland can check water conditions before they get out on the water. From May to October, Environmental Services staff collects and analyzes water samples at five recreational areas on the river to track *E. coli* bacteria and water temperature. Environmental Services posts the results on the Willamette River Recreation Index at [www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/WaterQuality](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/WaterQuality).

Environmental Services has monitored water quality in the Willamette River for years and began posting monitoring results online in summer 2012. The bureau collects monthly water samples year-round at three locations on the Willamette River to track long-term water quality trends.

Since the city controlled combined sewer overflows in 2011, the Willamette River in Portland is the cleanest it's been in decades. Since 2011, *E. coli* results have been consistently low at most sites throughout summer. A count of more than 406 *E. coli* organisms per 100 milliliters of water is above the health standard set by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. *E. coli* counts in the Willamette are almost always well below that level. For example, last week the *E. coli* count in river water at the Riverplace Marina was 5.

**? 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](http://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](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes)  
Nick Fish, Commissioner    Dean Marriott, Director

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