

working for clean rivers

CLARIFIER

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Message from Jim Hagerman

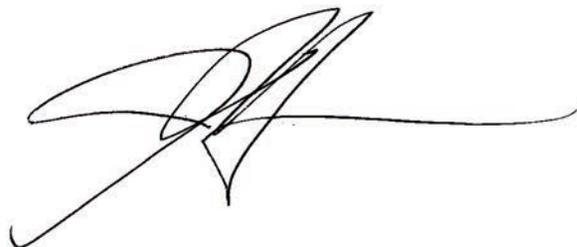
Thanks to those of you who responded to the Workplace Environment Survey this year. We had 242 survey responses which is a great participation rate. The bureau has used this survey for the past 13 years to trend your opinions about the working environment at BES. You can review survey results on the BES intranet at www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/510598.

For questions 1-12, the summary shows results from the last five years. In 2010, we made minor changes to some of these questions. These are noted at the top of each of the bar graphs shown. The summary also shows the last five years' results for questions 13-16. Those questions were substantially altered in 2010.

When we started this process in 2001, the intent was, and still is, to find those areas in the work place that need improvement. We do not intend the survey to track individual or group performance. We promised to protect the privacy of all responders and will continue to insure the privacy and confidentiality of your comments.

The Bureau Leadership Team has had an initial discussion of the results with more discussions and research planned in the months ahead. Also, the Committee for Workplace Excellence (CWE) is currently negotiating with a consultant to evaluate the effectiveness of the survey.

We have work to do in order to make this the best possible workplace. I know I can count on your support to get us there. Thanks again for participating. Please feel free to contact me with any comments you might have about how we can improve the process.



Jim Hagerman



Salmon return to Crystal Springs Creek

Coho salmon are spawning in Crystal Springs Creek this fall for the first time in decades. Salmon can find their way farther upstream because of recent projects to remove culverts that prohibited fish passage. Since 2008, Environmental Services has worked with several partners to remove seven Crystal Springs Creek culverts.



In October, Environmental Services fish biologist Melissa Brown used an underwater camera to capture video of a pair of wild coho salmon spawning just upstream from one of the culvert removal projects. The video, including a captioned version, and more information about salmon in Crystal Springs Creek are posted at www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/66158.

Crystal Springs Creek, a Johnson Creek tributary, has a naturally cool and steady year-round flow that provides ideal salmon and steelhead habitat. Steelhead trout, coho and Chinook salmon spend part of their life cycle in Crystal Springs Creek. They migrate to the Pacific Ocean then return to their original spawning grounds where they lay and fertilize eggs, then die.

Environmental Services worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on four Crystal Springs Creek culvert removal projects. Partners on the other projects were Metro, the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Portland Parks & Recreation, NOAA-Fisheries, the East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, Reed College and TriMet. Projects to remove the last two culverts on the creek are scheduled next year.



Ebola Information Resources for Employees

The Ebola virus has not reached the City of Portland, but several local agencies are working together to prepare for that possibility. For Environmental Services employees whose jobs include sewer facility maintenance, wastewater treatment, and sewer system investigations, the bureau has prepared an Ebola Contaminated Waste Policy and shared the policy with hospitals in the city. The Spill Response/Citizen Protection group has developed a guidance document if Ebola-infected waste is discharged to the city sewer system. Both documents are [posted on the BES intranet](#).

The Water Environment Federation webcast [“Addressing Concerns on Ebola in Wastewater”](#) is available online. The Oregon Health Authority has posted some [good information about statewide response](#). See your manager if you have a questions about the bureau’s Ebola policies.



We're 31!

The Portland City Council created our bureau on December 8, 1983 when they passed an ordinance that divided the city Department of Public Works into the Bureau of Environmental Services and the Office of Transportation. Frank Ivancie was Portland's Mayor and Mike Lindberg, Charles Jordan, Margaret Strachan and Mildred Schwab were City Commissioners.



Significant Environmental Services achievements since then include:

- Completing the Mid-County Sewer Project in 1998, five years ahead of schedule and on budget. The project eliminated cesspools that threatened groundwater. Environmental Services constructed nearly 400 miles of sewer pipes to provide service to 54,000 properties in a 28 square mile area.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issuing Portland its first stormwater permit in 1996. As a result Environmental Services began implementing programs to comply with federal stormwater management rules.
- Building our first green street planter on NE Siskiyou Street in 2003. Today about 1,500 green streets manage stormwater runoff around Portland.
- Launching the Tabor to the River Program in 2009 and blending green street planters, rain gardens and street trees with sewer system improvements to save sewer ratepayers millions of dollars, reduce basement backups and improve watershed health.
- Activating the Willamette River CSO Tunnel System in 2011 and reducing combined sewer overflows to the Willamette River from an average of 50 a year to no more than four or five a year. The tunnel system has overflowed only eight times since we activated it.



DEQ Grant to Help Improve Slough Habitat

The Department of Environmental Quality has granted \$200,000 for an Environmental Services project to improve habitat along the lower Columbia Slough. The grant comes from the DEQ's *Columbia Slough Natural Resource Fund*, which disperses money collected from entities likely to have contributed to contamination of slough sediment.

The Lower Slough Refugia Habitat Enhancement Project will add large wood and root wads to improve critical habitat. The project contractor will do that work from barges in the water to minimize construction impacts to slough habitats. The slough's lower nine miles provides habitat for threatened salmon but lacks the large wood structures that provide shelter for salmon and habitat for birds, turtles and insects.



Environmental Services will use the Watershed Investment Fund to complete the project. Work will begin in February and be complete by June or July 2015.



Grant Pre-Applications and Workshops

The Community Watershed Stewardship Program (CWSP) is accepting pre-applications for stewardship grants. The deadline to submit pre-applications is 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 2015.

A grant review committee will then invite selected applicants to submit full applications next spring.

Community
Watershed Stewardship Program

Funding for *your* community project



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CWSP provides stewardship grants of up to \$10,000 for projects that help Portlanders make improvements in their neighborhoods and communities, while improving watershed health. Projects funded by CWSP grants include replacing pavement with native plants, adding plants and trees to neighborhoods, and cleaning up and restoring streams.

CWSP has scheduled three grant-writing workshops this winter to answer questions about the application process and share grant-writing tips.

This long-term partnership with Portland State University began in 1995. Since then, CWSP has granted more than \$1 million for watershed projects and helped organize more than 40,000 volunteers to work on community projects. More information is available on the [CWSP website](#).



We Get Email

Water Pollution Control Laboratory employees are gaining a national reputation for the quality of their work. They also take time to share their knowledge with colleagues. Lab manager Chuck Lytle and Quality Assurance and Control coordinator Jennifer Shackelford received this note last month from the City of Boise lab manager.

Subject: Thank you!

Hello Jennifer and Chuck,

I want to thank you for letting Anna Orrison come and spend time with Jennifer and seeing how you have implemented the Promium LIMS. I realize that the QA/QC Coordinator's time is very valuable and their work is never ending. Anna came back with useful suggestions for us as we start our implementation.

Chuck, I cannot tell you how grateful I am that you and your staff have always been so helpful to us and letting us tap in to their experience and knowledge. You have an exceptional group of people working for you.

In the future, I hope that we can reciprocate in some way.

Janet Finegan-Kelly
Water Quality Laboratory Manager
Boise, ID 83714

 **Meet Your PEERs**

PEER Resource volunteers are available to all Environmental Services employees to listen and offer support about problems in the workplace. PEER volunteers take special training in listening and communication skills, legal, labor, and employee assistance issues. They are available at the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Water Pollution Control Laboratory, the Portland Building, Pioneer Tower and the Guilds Lake office. Alice Coker is the PEER Resource Program coordinator. Contact Alice for more information at 3-7914 or alice.coker@portlandoregon.gov.

The PEER Program recently recruited new volunteers and some current volunteers renewed their commitment. In the next few Clarifiers, we'll get to know your PEER volunteers.



Shannah Anderson

Shannah joined BES in 2008 to implement the Grey to Green Land Acquisition Program. She became interested in the PEER program as a way to connect BES employees with city resources. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking through Oregon's landscapes with her dog, music, and merrymaking. Shannah works on the south side of the 10th floor of the Portland Building. You can reach her at 3-2605.



Susan Barthel

Susan works on a wide variety of watershed projects at BES as part of the Columbia Slough Watershed group. Susan is also active in Columbia Slough Watershed Council activities. Outside of work, she is an avid day hiker (especially the Columbia River Gorge), an enthusiastic supporter of local theater, and a volunteer for Write Around Portland. You can reach Susan at 3-7268.



Kate Hibschan

Kate works in the Sustainable Stormwater Division as a landscape designer. Before that she worked as a designer and construction supervisor for the Central Park Conservancy in New York City. In her free time, she can be found admiring trees, making travel plans and cooking multi-course meals. Kate is hopeful that she will be able to contribute to a healthy and comfortable work environment by participating in the PEER program. You can reach her at 3-5631.

 **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.



Excellence in Landscaping

The Oregon chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects has awarded the Portland design firm 2.Ink Studio its Award of Excellence. The firm won the award for designing the landscaping around the Columbia Building at the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant. A panel of experts from around the nation made the selection and announced the award at the annual Oregon ASLA awards event last month. The Excellence Award goes to projects that demonstrate leadership and achievement in landscape architecture in Oregon.



Wellness Tip

Do you eat when you feel stress or are anxious? Do the holidays make you feel that way? Avoiding caffeine, alcohol and smoking can help because they tend to heighten or prolong anxiety and its side effects. Drinking lots of water and eating several small meals throughout the day keep blood sugar levels stable. Try eating foods with omega-3 fatty acids like walnuts, salmon and flaxseed. If you do find yourself eating to combat stress, try to limit yourself to small portions and concentrate on savoring taste or texture. Then go for a walk or meditate. Both are proven, healthier ways to address stress.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
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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

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