

*working for clean rivers*

# CLARIFIER

FEBRUARY  
2015

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

## Message from the Interim Director

Work on the FY 2015-16 BES budget is moving forward. The process started in October when the Environmental Services Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) first convened. The nine-member BAC met seven times and finished their work last month, and are supporting the bureau's budget request. This week, bureaus are submitting their requested budgets, five-year plans and CIPs to the City Budget Office



The bureau is also preparing materials for the upcoming Utility Rate Hearing, which is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, March 12. Both BES and the Water Bureau will present their requested 2015-2016 budgets and rates to the public for review. The Rate Hearing will be followed by Portland City Council budget work sessions scheduled from March 17 through April 2.

Meanwhile, the search for a new BES Director is underway. Megan Callahan and Jane Bacchieri are working with the Commissioner's office on the recruitment. The process should be complete by the end of the fiscal year, and we'll keep you updated on progress over the spring.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hagerman'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James Hagerman, Interim Director

## New Videos

Between 2002 and 2014, Environmental Services used Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant money to fund 37 public and private projects that show how different kinds of green infrastructure can effectively manage stormwater. The new video *"Green Innovations"* profiles some of the innovative projects the EPA grant funded.



[Watch the video.](#)

A new video about Crystal Springs Creek produced by Strawbale Films of Milwaukie screened last month at Milwaukie's Watershed Event. The video *"Crystal Clear"* features underwater footage of spawning coho in Crystal Springs Creek shot last fall by Melissa Brown in the Science, Fish and Wildlife Program. Science, Fish and Wildlife manager Kaitlin Lovell also makes an appearance.



[Watch the video.](#)

## Biogas Utilization

The Portland City Council is reviewing a contract amendment for final design of the Biogas Utilization Project at the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant. After studying several alternatives for using the biogas the plant now flares, Environmental Services recommended a project to turn biogas into vehicle fuel. The Wastewater Group will work with HDR Engineering on design and construction of a gas processing and storage system and a vehicle fueling station at the CBWTP.

The plant's wastewater treatment process generates about 550 million cubic feet of biogas annually. About 20% of it generates heat for digesters and buildings and about 40% fuels the cogeneration facility that produces power and heat. Malarkey Roofing purchases about 20% of the plant's biogas and the plant flares off the rest.

Construction on the gas processing facility could start early next year and be operational by 2017.



## Brownfield Program News

The Brownfield Program's winter 2015 quarterly newsletter is out.

[Read the newsletter](#) on the Brownfield Program website and sign up to receive future editions with news about the Brownfield Program and other stories about brownfield redevelopment in our region.



**Portland Brownfield Program**  
CITY OF PORTLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

[Read the newsletter.](#)



## Working with the Legislature

The 2015 Oregon Legislative Session is back in session this week. Aside from the budget, we expect many bills will be introduced that relate to our work. The bureau has a process to gather and provide information to the city's Office of Government Relations.

Alice Brawley-Chesworth (3-4913) is Environmental Services' legislative liaison. Alice reviews bills and contacts bureau experts before passing a summary along to Government Relations and answering their questions. This system helps guarantee that the bureau has a consistent, cohesive position on bills.

## 2015 OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Our bureau is so varied, with so many interests, that it's especially important that we maintain this one point of contact so that the interests of all bureau groups are adequately represented. The city also has professional lobbyists in Salem who need to weigh the interests of all city bureaus in their interactions with legislators.

Here are some guidelines for BES employees this legislative session:

- If Alice contacts you about a bill, please read the bill carefully and reply as quickly and thoroughly as you can.
- If anyone outside the bureau contacts you (including legislators or their staff) for your professional opinion as a bureau employee about a bill, contact Alice before providing any information.
- If you are asked to testify about a bill in Salem or do any lobbying as a representative of the city, contact Alice. Coordination with Government Relations is vital!



## Monthly Utility Statements

Most Environmental Services and Water Bureau customers are now eligible to pay bills monthly instead of quarterly. Monthly billing has been available since October 2013 to customers who pay electronic bills but now customers can receive either e-bills or paper bills. More than 13,000 customers have signed up for monthly billing since the paper option became available in November.

The Water Bureau will still read meters once per quarter. Customers who choose monthly statements will pay their quarterly total in three installments.

Customers can sign up for monthly statements at [www.portlandoregon.gov/UtilityBill](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/UtilityBill) and can contact the Customer Service Center at 503-823-7770 for more information.

## Sod Mats

Environmental Services is experimenting with new technology to plant wetland vegetation.

At the Stephens Creek Confluence in October, work crews installed coconut fiber mesh mats with several types of wetland plants woven in. An Idaho company developed the product.



*Sod mats—wetland plants woven into coconut fiber mesh mats—are installed at Stephens Creek Confluence.*

Plants in the wetland sod mats are relatively mature and become established fairly quickly. The sod mats could work well in areas like the confluence of Stephens Creek and the Willamette River where high stream flow and currents can easily wash young plants away.

The river is high right now, the sod mats at the Stephens Creek confluence are submerged and the plants are dormant. We'll have a good idea of how well the mats work this spring.

## Clarifier Feedback

The Communications Division published the first edition of the Clarifier 24 years ago this month. We frequently receive suggestions for articles but we'd like to hear more of your thoughts about the newsletter. If you haven't done so already, please take a minute to submit a

brief online survey and let us know what you think about newsletter content, format, or any thoughts you have. The survey will be available at [www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/ClarifierSurvey](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/ClarifierSurvey) through Friday, February 20.



## Heron is Coming

Environmental Services is working on the rollout of the new e-Builder Enterprise software to replace Piper and two other applications. We don't know exactly when it will launch. Sometime this fall probably. But we do know we won't call it e-Builder Enterprise. The new name is Heron.

That was the winning suggestion in an Engineering Services software naming contest. Dave Helzer in the Watershed Services group suggested the name and won a \$25 Powell's gift certificate. Nearly 60 BES employees submitted suggestions.

## **Wellness Tip**

A recent study found that a low carbohydrate diet reduces blood pressure more effectively than even a low fat diet. Over the course of the study, participants in both groups lost an average of 10 percent of their body weight. But 47 percent of those on the low-carb diet were able to reduce or discontinue medication they took for high blood pressure compared to only 21 percent on the low fat diet.

## **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 James Hagerman, Interim Director

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