



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



DK

Functional Plan for Woods Memorial Natural Area

December 2012

A Functional Plan for Woods Memorial Natural Area

December 2012

Portland Parks & Recreation

James Allison, City Nature West Natural Areas Supervisor (former)
Astrid Dragoy, City Nature Zone Manager
Rachel Felice, City Nature West Natural Areas Supervisor
Jeff Hough, Trails Technician
Mary Verrilli, City Nature West Stewardship Coordinator

Friends of Woods Park Working Group

Jennifer Devlin
Kevin Duff
Chris Houghton
Jesse Johnston
Dave Manville
Susan Caricabura
Jim Ure

Cover page photo credit Dave Manville

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose	4
Description of Woods Memorial NA	4
History	5
Opportunities	6
Planning Process	7
Retained from 2000 Functional Plan	8
Future Vision	8
Uses Not Intended	8
Project Priorities	9
Project Implementation & Stewardship agreements	10
Functional Plan 2012 Map	11
Appendix A: Summary of the Charrettes	12
Appendix B: Stewardship Agreements	14
Appendix C: Vegetation survey 2004	16
Appendix D: Riparian Assessment 2006/07	17

A Functional Plan for Woods Memorial Natural Area

REVISED from previous Functional Plan for Woods Park (July 2000)

Introduction and Background

Introduction

This plan resulted from a streamlined planning process called a Park Functional Plan that is designed to provide basic direction to neighbors, citizens and Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) staff in the appropriate use of, and protection for, parks that do not have management plans or master plans.

This type of planning process was developed by PP&R and SWNI and is described in a document called Planning for Southwest Parks – A Proposed Process for Planning Parks in Southwest Portland using Limited Resources, (July 2000) available from PP&R or SWNI offices.

A Park Functional Plan consists of a vision for the park, an outline of general policy, and park space designations for desired park uses. It specifies appropriate management and ongoing community involvement and takes into account how a park relates to, and is connected to, other parks, to trail and bicycle systems, and to natural resources.

The original functional plan (A Functional Plan for Woods Park) was completed in 2000 and addressed many projects for better managing ecosystem health and public use and access. Many, but not all, of the projects from the 2000 plan have been completed or are in process.

The genesis for a plan update stems from two opportunities:

- new land acquisition and the opportunity to connect ecosystem restoration and public access between the existing natural area and the new acquisition; and
- the need to address items not completed from the 2000 plan.

Woods Memorial Natural Area has a highly dedicated, highly skilled stewardship group that has implemented ecosystem restoration and trails projects throughout the natural area. In early 2012, a small working group from Friends of Woods Park submitted a request to PP&R to develop new plans for increasing access through the newly acquired natural area and enhancing the existing trail system. PP&R agreed that a plan update was warranted. Over the next several months, PP&R staff met with working group members on a monthly basis to generate ideas for the new plan. The plan ideas culminated in a neighborhood meeting in June 2012. Outreach for the meeting included direct mail as well as direct outreach to Ash Creek and Crestwood neighborhood associations.

General themes that emerged from the process are:

- Woods Memorial Natural Area trails receives significant use from neighbors, both for recreation and transportation through the neighborhood
- The trail system has been greatly improved since 2000, including riparian fencing and drainage improvements to allow for all season use

- Several demand trails still exist and need to be addressed in areas of riparian degradation
- There is a need to establish a sustainable trail connection across SW 45th from Ash Creek Neighborhood
- There is a need to extend the trail system to improve neighborhood access and connectivity while also protecting wildlife habitat and the watershed
- Water quality is a great concern and the plan should look at opportunities for riparian enhancement and stormwater treatment.

Purpose

The purpose of a Park Functional Plan is to provide a document that guides the development, operations and maintenance and stewardship of a park in lieu of more detailed park master or management plans. PP&R staff can utilize the plan to call out opportunities for capital and operating funded projects. The Friends of Woods Park can utilize this document to legitimize and support donations and grant applications.

All improvements, developments and stewardship activities should be consistent with this plan unless the plan is amended or replaced through a public process equivalent to, or better than, the process used to adopt this plan. In the event of changes to the park or its natural areas, those changes will be reviewed to determine if the plan is still relevant.

Description of Woods Memorial Natural Area

Woods Memorial Natural Area has long been a local treasure, serving as an outstanding natural area park. This 39.5-acre park is located in Southwest Portland north of Taylor's Ferry Road, east of 48th Avenue, west of SW Capitol Highway and south of SW Dolph Ct. Eight acres of land acquired since 2006 are north and west of SW 45th Avenue. Smaller parcels recently acquired outside of these 39.5 acres are not covered by this functional plan.

The park is a semi-developed habitat park whose primary amenity is its natural area. About 98% of the landscape is native including oaks, Douglas fir, cedar, willow, red and blue elderberry, Oregon grape, trillium, thimbleberry and others. The remainder is non-native trees, shrubs and vines.

The park is part of the Fanno Creek Watershed, containing the headwaters of the two forks of Woods Creek. Although most of the park was logged about one hundred years ago, there are still some historic trees. It offers a natural setting that attracts wildlife in the quiet woods, along the creek and in the meadow. Much of the park is steeply sloped.

The following information about the park is summarized from the *Fanno and Tryon Creeks Watershed Management Plan, 2005*, prepared by the Bureau of Environmental Services.

Problems for the Woods Creek Watershed include: Riparian habitat and connectivity impacted by development; In-stream riffle habitat lacking, silt covers substrate; Biological communities are limited in Woods Creek by habitat degradation, including impassable culverts; Salmonids have not been documented; Water quality in Woods Creek is impaired for certain water quality parameters; High silt and sediment loads are transported from upland urban sources to the stream; Channel erosion contributes to high levels of total

suspended solids (TSS); Impervious surfaces contribute to high stormwater runoff volumes and velocities that can cause stream bank instability, undercutting, erosion, sedimentation, and channel incision.

Opportunities include: Upper portions of the creek, riparian habitat is very good and tree canopy cover averages 74 percent within 10 m of the creek; Banks are stable all along the creek, indicating properly functioning conditions; In-stream habitat is good in places; Upper portions of the creek likely contribute woody debris, nutrients, and macroinvertebrates to lower portions of the creek; Remaining natural areas, including riparian habitat, provide habitat for many small and adaptive mammal species, up to 60 species of birds, and a number of amphibian and reptile species; Water quality in Woods Creek is only impaired for some water quality parameters; Seeps and springs provide critical summer flows to streams; Opportunities exist to retrofit the built environment to improve watershed health with detention ponds, roadside ditch enhancements, and ecoroofs; Groups such as SW Neighborhoods, Inc (SWNI), Crestwood Neighborhood Association, Friends of Woods Park, Portland Parks and Recreation provide collaborative restoration, education and technical assistance opportunities.

Actions Included: Land Acquisition for Woods Park west extension to protect high resource values; Woods Park stream enhancement via revegetation and restructuring trail system to reduce the in-stream impacts from erosion.

The park is zoned as open space with environmental protection ("P") or conservation ("C") zone overlays. Environmental zones and restrictions are described in the Portland City Code 33.430.

The park is used for walking, exercising dogs, picnicking, and observing nature.

History of Woods Memorial Natural Area

Woods Memorial Park was a gift to Multnomah County from the Southwest Hills Kiwanis Club on December 15, 1950. The deed stipulated that the *"site was to be...used for park and playground purposes only..."* Multnomah County, in turn, transferred ownership of the park to the city of Portland through Board Order #88-115, approved on June 30, 1988. As with the original dedication of land, Multnomah County included in its Bargain and Sale Deed to the city a stipulation to insure use of the site for park purposes. In the event it is not, title to the property automatically terminates and the park reverts to county ownership.

Since dedication of the property in 1988, a few small parcels of land at the park's periphery have been added to its boundaries. They too were given with the stipulation that if not used for park and recreation purposes, they are to revert to Multnomah County.

At the time the city acquired the property, there were remnants of an old ballfield and backstop, and the foundation of a restroom. The decision was made to remove the backstop and to manage the park as a natural area. The ball field evolved over time into a meadow and a concrete slab from the original restrooms was a convenient location for picnic tables. The road has deteriorated somewhat over time. While the old road seems inconsistent with a natural area park, the public uses it as a convenient, dry and safe walkway. It is also used for emergency and maintenance vehicle access and for special occasions such as neighborhood picnics, watershed fairs, and the annual SWNI Spring Cleanup.

Following the final 2000 Functional Plan for Woods Memorial Natural Area, neighbors established the Friends of Woods Park in 2002 sponsored by the Crestwood Neighborhood Association. The friends group has an active stewardship agreement with PP&R. The agreement outlines agreed upon park stewardship activities. Over the last decade, the Friends (with support from PP&R staff) have built and improved trails, fenced sensitive areas, removed invasive species, established native plants, installed signs and educated park users. The partnership between the Friends and PP&R has been a very successful and the park has improved greatly.

In 2004, the Friends of Woods Park received a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for \$9,975 for the Woods Creek Sediment Reduction Project to build trails, bridges, boardwalks and stairs, protect riparian areas, remove invasive plant species and to replant with native plants. Using a combination of volunteer work parties, Americorps members and PP&R staff, the initial trail plan was completed and work was done on replanting crucial stream areas. Significant trail improvements including stairs, trail construction, large and small bridges, crib walls and signage were added as a part of these efforts.

Following the 2006 PP&R bond measure, lands were acquired northwest of SW 45th, increasing the habitat connectivity along the stream and creating the opportunity for recreation and transportation connectively from Ash Creek the Ash Creek neighborhood.

Opportunities

The overarching opportunities for Woods Memorial Natural Area are ones of connection, continuity and habitat enhancement. Specific opportunities include:

- **Habitat connectivity and fragmentation:**
The riparian area in the park has been much improved since 2000. Developed trails and fences replace poorly established demand trails and a trampled riparian zone. More work needs to be done to continue fencing, plant native species and remove invasive plants. In some locations tree canopy needs to be reestablished where trees are not regenerating.
- **Develop a clear connection across SW 45th Avenue:**
A demand trail currently exists on the NW side of SW 45th, but it is not comfortable or sustainable. A sustainable grade trail (<10% slope) should be established and should meet Cedar Trail (across SW 45th Avenue) in a way that minimizes risks to pedestrians and optimizes sightline distances.
- **Create a creek crossing and viewing area along the creek, connecting Cedar Trail with Stairway Trail.**
- **Connect neighbors from SW 47th to the Zig Zag Trail**
- **Create trail alignments that support a "Marigold to Marigold" trail connection**
- **Address park use issues such as off leash dogs**
- **Address illegal park activity such as yard debris dumping, unpermitted alcohol use, off-trail use and encroachment**

The Planning Process to Create a Functional Plan for Woods Memorial Natural Area

The Working Group used the following process to develop the Functional Plan that will protect the park's resources and guide its appropriate use. For a detailed description of this process, see [Planning for Southwest Parks](#).

Background Information

Prior to any public meetings, the Working Group conducted research and gathered information about the park itself. They developed a profile of the existing conditions in the park, a site analysis, an overall problem statement, descriptions of current problems, the park's constraints, degraded conditions, and problematic uses along with its opportunities.

The Charrette Process

The Working Group then planned a public workshop, called a charrette. This charrette involved the community in understanding past projects, existing conditions and opportunities for future improvement projects. At the charrette, large maps were presented long with ideas and plans for trails, riparian area protection and wildlife habitat preservation. Participants were encouraged to present their ideas and provide their input and concerns.

Post-Charrette Process

Following the charrette, the Working Group held several meetings in order to gather and compile public comments from charrette exercises, evaluations and e-mail, to draft the Functional Plan, and to summarize the planning process into project recommendations. All public input comments were reviewed and considered.

The final documents were drafted by Portland Parks & Recreation Staff with input from the Working Group.

Approval

Following the draft review process, the Functional Plan will be presented to the Friends of Woods Park and the Portland Parks & Recreation Planning department.

Retained elements from the 2000 Functional Plan for Woods Park

The following policy and vision were established during the 1999-2000 planning process. They have been included in this plan revision.

Overall Policy Statement

Woods Memorial Park [Natural Area] is a neighborhood natural area park, valuable for passive recreation and for the open space, native plant and wildlife and creek resources it provides.

Future Vision for Woods Memorial Natural Area

Despite its fairly large size, Woods Memorial Natural Area is viewed mainly as a park that serves the surrounding neighborhood, rather than the region. The community's main priorities for the park are to preserve its open spaces and natural resources in a manner that makes them safe and accessible. The community views the park as a great asset for educational and stewardship activities.

This vision of a neighborhood park influences the kind of facilities that are appropriate for the park. Key priorities for improvement include better gates, trails, signs and lighting.

The following states the community's priorities as vision statement:

Woods Memorial Park [Natural Area] is a neighborhood asset that provides a safe and quiet respite from urban pressures characterized by:

- Forests with mature trees, native vegetation and wildlife, creeks and a quiet open meadow habitat that is ideal for nature appreciation, informal recreation and picnicking.
- An accessible, well-maintained, well-mapped, well-drained and well-engineered pedestrian trail system for hiking, jogging, walking a dog on leash, enjoying flora and fauna and quiet reflection.
- Connections to other neighborhoods and green spaces in the regional PP&R trail system.
- Excellent signage at lighted entrances and throughout the park, designed to invite visitors to enjoy the park in a responsible manner, to take advantage of the trail system to explore the park and to connect to regional trails and greenspaces.
- Many educational and stewardship opportunities.

Uses Not Intended

The community vision for Woods Memorial Natural Area does not include significant active recreational facilities or attractions that would conflict with the preservation of the natural resources or its status as a neighborhood park.

Amenities such as tennis courts, and soccer or baseball facilities are not appropriate. Neither are irrigated lawns or formal landscaping. Motorized vehicles and bicycles are appropriate only in paved areas of the park. Dog off-leash areas are not appropriate here.

Project Priorities

Riparian Protection

- **Habitat connectivity and fragmentation:**
The riparian area in the park has been much improved since 2000. Developed trails and fences replace poorly established demand trails and a trampled riparian zone. More work needs to be done to continue fencing, plant native species and remove invasive plants. In some locations tree canopy needs to be reestablished where trees are not regenerating.

Trail Improvements

- Create a creek crossing and viewing area along the creek, connecting Cedar Trail with Stairway Trail; provide riparian protection and demand trail closure along both streams.
- Develop a clear connection across SW 45th Avenue:
A demand trail currently exists on the NW side of SW 45th, but it is not comfortable or sustainable. A sustainable grade trail (<10% slope) should be established and should meet Cedar Trail (across SW 45th Avenue) in a way that minimizes risks to pedestrians and optimizes sightline distances. PBOT has been contacted about installing a crossing sign. PP&R would need to conduct tree removal and pruning to improve sight distances.
- Connect neighbors from SW 47th to the Zig Zag Trail
- Create trail alignments that support a “Marigold to Marigold” trail connection
- Create a trail connection from SW 49th Street with new, west-side Marigold trail entrance. This will provide neighborhood connectivity for the northern end of Ash Creek into the park.

Encroachments

- Look into encroachments and park degradation along private property interface

Security and Gateway Entrances

The present entrances generally do not invite users to the park and do not provide adequate security. Those attending the charrettes would like to increased lighting along SW Woods Parkway near SW Plum Street. The 2000 plan also called for moving the gate up, closer to the intersection with SW Plum Street, in order to reduce the distance and space where parking can occur into the park and behind private property. Moving this gate is still a priority that should be completed.

The following improvements are listed in approximate priority order:

- Relocate the east entrance closer to SW Plum Street to provide better public surveillance. Leave some room for parking between Plum and the relocated entrance.
- Add streetlights at both entrances.
- Provide educational and interpretive materials.

Project Implementation/Stewardship Agreements

A clearly written Park Functional Plan will guide park use and development but it must be coupled with effective community involvement which will be outlined in a Stewardship Agreement. This will provide clear, well-publicized management arrangements that will:

- Ensure protection of natural resources.
- Maintain the park in a manner consistent with the policy and vision documented in the Functional Plan.
- Prevent conflicts between and among uses and various stewardship efforts.
- Provide excellent educational opportunities.
- Promote productive, rewarding stewardship activities.

Because of the community interest in helping to maintain Woods Memorial Natural Area, a Stewardship Agreement will continue to be developed every two years to coordinate community and PP&R efforts to develop and maintain the park.

Functional Plan map



Appendix A

Summary of the planning process used for the 2012 Functional Plan update

Friends of Woods Memorial Natural Area

Friends of Woods Memorial Natural Area met monthly with Portland Parks & Recreation staff (City Nature West Natural Area Supervisor) to analyze existing conditions and articulate concepts and project ideas for continuing park stewardship. Representatives from the neighborhood assisted with outreach to neighbors and interested groups.

Neighbors met with PP&R and PBOT to analyze the potential Cedar Trail crossing at SW 45th Avenue. PBOT field engineers determined that this was a safe location for a crossing, but that no other crossing locations were appropriate.

General Comments from the Public Charrette

Participants visited “stations” with maps for Ecosystem Health, Trails, and Plan Concept. A summary of public comments is listed below:

- Park has improved significantly in the last decade
- Keep open the area along the creek, below Cedar Trail (“Area 51”)—it is a nice gathering location
- Keep some areas free of trails for wildlife use—especially along the creek and in newly acquired areas
- Would like to see trail from SW 45th to SW Lobelia Street
- Consider a trailhead at SW 49th and SW Dolph Court
- Need better wayfinding signs in park interior
- Consider a loop connecting south end of Alice Trail other side of creek and to SW Woods Parkway
- Consider a trail that parallels SW 45th Avenue, connecting Cedar Trail to SW Woods Parkway
- Avoid too many trails, especially in the new acquisition
- Look for connections to park from SW 47th Avenue (north and south ends of park)
- Finish security projects (street lighting and gate moving) from 2000 plan
- Regravel potholes on SW Woods Parkway, especially at entrance from SW 48th Avenue. Park users create wear and tear on the road, creating potholes for residents

Draft Functional Plan Comment Period

There will be a comment period during which time the Draft Functional Plan will be reviewed by designated City bureaus and offices, Metro, citizen groups, non-profits, and other interested parties. Following the comment period, the PP&R Working Group will revise the document.

Implementation of Plan – Plan Approval Process

The following is a *draft* outline of an approval process:

1. Approval by Portland Parks & Recreation
2. Share with Friends of Woods Park and other interested parties

Appendix B

Information about Stewardship Agreements

Purpose of Stewardship Agreement

A Stewardship Agreement is used to implement the goals, priorities and projects of the Functional Plan. It spells out the agreed upon roles and responsibilities of participants and ensures that there is good ongoing communication among the parties to the agreement.

Elements of the agreement will follow the Park Functional Plan which provides the general guidelines for management and procedures to be used to develop the park.

Participants in the Stewardship Agreement

- Portland Parks & Recreation staff responsible for maintenance, volunteer coordination and security. *Note: PP&R is ultimately responsible for all activities in the park.*
- Friends Group, if there is one.
- Neighborhood association (if they want a role in stewardship).
- Watershed Council, if applicable.
- Representative of neighbors immediately adjacent to Park , if they want a role in stewardship.
- Active organized user groups who use the park regularly for educational or project purposes.
- Other bureaus, if Functional Plan implementation involves integration their work; e.g. Environmental Services for stormwater management or Transportation for connecting trails.
- Community or School Police liaison if security issues are part of Stewardship Agreement.

Elements of the Stewardship Agreement

This varies according to the specific Park Functional Plan and the skills, resources and needs of the community partners in the agreement. The agreement may be very basic or more complex depending on the amount of public involvement in ongoing park maintenance, development and programs.

The agreement will spell out:

- The specific duties of each party (e.g. activities, supply of materials, numbers of work parties to be conducted, etc.)
- General work schedule.
- Contact person.
- Procedures for coordinating with other ongoing projects and activities in the park.
- Periodic meetings to review activities if needed.
- Term of the agreement or conditions requiring annual review or renewal.

The agreement may also specify additional conditions such as:

- Required training of participants.
- Standards to be applied, such as surface composition or design for trails.
- Responsibility for supervision of minors.

- Signing of insurance information forms.
- Reporting hours worked.

Types of Activities

The types of activities that could be covered in simple or complex types of agreements are listed below:

Activities in Simple Agreements

- Litter control
- Clearing of hard surfaces in park
- Communicating with park staff and or police regarding hazards

Activities in Complex Agreements

- Community security patrols
- Stream restoration projects
- Non-native plant removal
- Graffiti removal
- Trail building/maintenance
- Care for landscaped areas
- Developing interpretative materials

Coordinating Activities

A key element of the park Stewardship Agreement is to define the responsible parties to carry out the specific activities, to develop guidelines to coordinate the multiple ongoing projects and to avoid conflicting activities.

The specifics of coordination will vary according to the complexity of the Functional Plan and the number of stakeholders involved in the agreement. A single contact in PP&R will be the primary contact for initiating new projects and scheduling ongoing activities and a community contact person will be designated for the various stewardship activities in the park.

Appendix D Riparian Assessment 2006-07

Portland Parks conducted a habitat assessment of the riparian area of Woods Park that included a condition assessment of Woods Creek providing a score using the EPA Rapid Assessment protocol and riparian vegetation. Of the seven units assessed, six are included in this Functional Plan Update. Of those six units:

- For vegetation, four units ranked "Poor" and two units ranked "Severely Degraded"
- For in-stream parameters, three units ranked "Fair" and three units ranked "Poor"
- All units were noted as management concerns for invasive plant species and stream bank erosion.
- Other management issues noted included trampling, soil compaction, informal trails, domestic animals, litter, large refuse and yard debris dumping.

