

working for clean rivers

Oaks Bottom Habitat Enhancement Project

2017

Stormwater runoff can impact water quality in rivers and streams. Natural resources, like urban streams, forests, and wetlands manage stormwater naturally to protect water quality, public health, and the environment.

Green infrastructure reduces flooding and erosion, provides cool, clean water to our rivers and streams, and adds wildlife habitat and urban green space for healthier watersheds.

Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge is a 170-acre complex of wetlands, shrublands, and woodlands on the east bank of the Willamette River just north of the Sellwood Bridge. The refuge is the largest remaining natural area within the lower Willamette River floodplain and provides important habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened salmon and over 175 bird species. Oaks Bottom also supports many wildlife species that are considered “special status” because they are in decline on a regional or statewide scale. These include 44 bird species, three bat species and one amphibian species.

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) manages the site as an important habitat area and an inviting place to enjoy wildlife viewing in the heart of the city. The Springwater Corridor, a portion of the region’s trail network, runs along the western edge of the refuge. A hiking trail and one hike/bike trail connect the refuge with two visitor parking lots and the Sellwood neighborhood to the east.

PP&R created the city’s first wildlife refuge at Oaks Bottom in 1988 after a long history of environmental degradation at the site. Now Sellwood residents, schools and colleges, and groups such as Portland Audubon, the Urban Greenspaces Institute and Willamette Riverkeeper work with the city to restore habitats at the refuge.

Project Description

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, PP&R, and Environmental Services are working together on a large-scale habitat enhancement project to benefit wildlife and people.

The project will enhance 75 acres of wetland habitat by:

- Replacing an existing culvert with a larger box culvert to make it possible for fish to pass between the Willamette River and the wetland refuge as well as to improve the tidal flow of the Willamette River in and out of the refuge.
- Excavating tidal slough channels and improving wetland habitats so young fish, including species listed as threatened or endangered, can use the calmer waters of the wetland to rest and find food.
- Removing invasive vegetation, such as purple loosestrife, and revegetating with native species within the construction footprint.



▲ Project map



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
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Project Schedule

Construction is scheduled for summer 2018, depending on federal funding

Short-Term Impacts, Long-Term Benefits

- During construction, the Springwater Corridor Trail will close for up to 120 days. Bicyclists and pedestrians will detour to surface streets.
- Walking and biking access to the Oregon Yacht Club, floating home community, and Oaks Park will be maintained throughout the project.
- The closure will create heavier use on other Oaks Bottoms trails in sensitive wildlife areas. Trail users are required to stay on trails, leash dogs and respect Oaks Bottom wildlife.
- Springwater Corridor improvements will include two new wildlife viewing platforms.

Funding

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- City of Portland Environmental Services Capital Improvement Program

Resources

More Oaks Bottom Habitat Enhancement Project information:

www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/oaksbottom

To get involved with volunteer stewardship activities

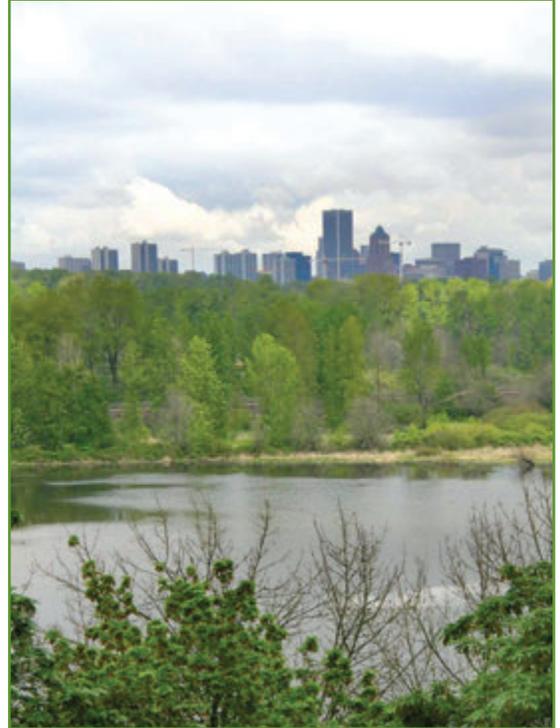
at the refuge or for information about the PP&R Environmental Stewardship Program:

www.portlandoregon.gov/parks or call 503-823-7016

For information on upcoming walks and birding events:

www.audubonportland.org/trips-classes-camps/adult/

www.urbangreenspaces.org



▲ Oaks Bottom open water habitat

▼ bald eagle in Oaks Bottom



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