

# River Plan/South Reach Natural Resources Protection & Restoration Meeting Summary Notes

Oct 4, 2018 – SMILE Station

Approximately 30+ members of the public attended the meeting. City staff from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), Parks and Recreation (PP&R) and Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) were present to facilitate the meeting, hear public comments and respond to questions from participants.

After a welcome and introductions, BPS staff provided a project overview, described the purpose of the meeting and the materials for discussion. Attendants then participated in one of three table discussions focused on natural resource challenges and opportunities in the northern and southern portions of the South Reach. Questions on the future vision for natural resources in the area were also raised. The following highlights the comments made by members of the public on these topics.

## **NORTH SECTION (incl. Ross Island/Oaks Bottom Complex, John's Landing, Cottonwood Bay & others)**

### Table 1

- Ross Island
  - Break through Ross Island Lagoon – solution to algal bloom problem
  - Erosion is an issue along Ross island since removal of log rafts
- John's Landing
  - Private property – access
  - Riprap so difficult to improve the river
- Other Habitat Areas
  - Shallow water habitat – look at impacts
- Riverbank Management
  - In-water planting where there is riprap. This may help with flooding.
  - Trees/shrubs/willows along west side greenway trail – do improvements; look at South Waterfront as example
- Climate Change
  - Potential flooding resulting from climate change – how does it impact development on the westside
  - Climate change and earthquakes – riverbank liquification
- Wakes
  - Limit wake damage
  - Violation of the no-wake zone in the Holgate Channel
- Portland Parks and Recreation Master Plans
  - 1<sup>st</sup> thing – update/create master plan for all the parks in the area to show improvements
  - Parcel referred to as Moreland Woods (located on eastside, along Sellwood Bluff)– bring into public access/ownership; better access to the river
  - Dogs off leash in Sellwood Riverfront Park (located on eastside) – better signage and education; make it easier for people to pick up waste
- Vision
  - Entire area a no wake zone – whole South Reach
  - Greenway trails continued on both sides – ped/bike paved trail; Race the River
  - Support Oaks Park beach area
  - Integrated master plan for parks/natural areas/public land; include Ross Island

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- Habitat improvements for fish in the river at key spots
- Maintain views on west side, in front of John's Landing
- General Ideas/Questions
  - *Question:* when will design along the river be addressed? Expected to be discussed at the Westside and Eastside discussions. Also, general comments are always accepted.
  - *Question:* How much does the City control around the river?
    - City regulates to ordinary low water; lands adjacent to the river.
    - Endangered Species Act – fish habitat enhancement/restoration
    - Part of plan is non-regulatory/advocating/promoting
  - Noise issues from boats

## Table 2

- Ross Island
  - Island is a priority; algal blooms a significant issue
  - Biggest chunk of undeveloped land
  - Concern that City keep involved regard DEQ-required reclamation
  - Hotbed of invasive plants
  - Erosion control an issue on western side of island
  - Salmon habitat (passage) around island
  - Public access to the island would be good.
- John's Landing
  - Beach and bike path in this areas is under water at times in winter
- Willamette Park
  - Can be a mud pit from June to Oct on both sides of the boat dock (near parking)
- Other Habitat Areas
  - Riverbank all along the Oregon Yacht Club moorage
  - Unique habitats for salmon and birds on west side from south of Willamette Park to Stephens Creek, parallel to SW Miles Place
  - Concern about fecal material from pirate boats and dogs at parks. High levels of fecal matter have been detected near Sellwood Riverfront Park. Fertilizer used at Waverly Country Club also a concern.
  - A lot of small areas/refuges for tropical migrant birds, places to see beaver, and lands in public ownership providing educational opportunities. Need a map of public ownership and public access.
  - We need to work hard to protect what already exists in this area.
- Restoration Opportunities
  - Floodplain areas with existing parking lots (e.g., Avalon Hotel's large parking lot) – revisit these areas for restoration.

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- Docks
  - Old Staff Jennings site – Area expected to be a kayak beach. There was hope to preserve the dock but it isn't safe. Dock will go away but beach access will remain.
  - Miles Place – No update on this dock. DSL permit is renewed annually.
- Enforcement/Public Engagement
  - Zoning Code (Title 33) needs enforcement of required landscaping, vegetation, greenway regulations.
  - Permitting, dredging, etc. is often done without public knowledge. This is a concern.
  - No pirate boats.
- Other Ideas
  - The amount of use (development) is high in this area.
  - A trolley would be useful in the area.
  - No wake zone should be adopted; not allowing bladders/potable devices.

### Table 3

- John's Landing
  - Riprap banks – if adjacent property owners are required to plant, the plants will dislodge the bank. Need to preserve riprap. Core issue is preserving the bank. South Waterfront as case study for laying back of bank.
  - Concern related to removal of vegetation – there are ways to have a stable bank without riprap, such as soil bioengineering. This is expected to be a challenge. What is the cost? Get more benefits?
  - Replace blackberries with native species; ivy is bad, too.
- Ross Island
  - Restoration opportunities: address harmful algal blooms (HAB) – flow-through, improve water quality
  - Has huge potential for restoration. When Ross Island Sand and Gravel (RISG) is done processing material on the island it could be a good site. (They stopped excavating when salmon were listed due to in-water impacts.)
  - Could the City buy shore of Ross Island?
- Habitat Areas
  - What is needed for salmon? On the westside, specifically?
- River Setback
  - Now 25 ft; could we expand to 100 ft?
  - Anything within area is vested; can rebuild within same footprint in case of fire, etc.
  - If you leave one wall up you can redevelop in the same footprint
- River Access
  - Brooklyn dream is to get access to the river
    - How to get across or tunnel under SE McLoughlin Blvd? How would that effect natural resources? Tunneling may not harm the natural resources as much, but people don't want to walk through tunnels. Need to see the end of the tunnel for safety.

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- Hope that regulations would not prohibit them getting access to the river.
- Important to see the river while you are along it
- Visual access is good too. Does not always have to be physical access.
- Greenway Trail and Springwater Corridor
  - Important to be able to see ahead of you on the path. Easier when there are separated trails for bikes and peds.
- Other Ideas
  - Need increased protection of trees
  - Replace blackberries and ivy with native species
  - Replace rip rap banks with bioengineered banks
  - Important to be able see the river while you are on the trail and to see the trail ahead of you due to bike /ped conflicts.
  - What restoration is needed for salmon? Every ½ mile? Do we have enough on the west side?
  - Reduce light pollution
  - Add bird safe provisions like in the central city.

## **SOUTH SECTION (incl. Sellwood Bridgeheads, Powers Marine Park, Dunthorpe & others)**

Table 1

- Elk Rock Area
  - Elk Rock cliff (Peter Kerr property) – expand public ownership; now there is public/private restoration going on
  - Elk Rock Island – neat environmental education opportunity (City of Milwaukie)
  - Protect endangered plants – cliffs and island
- River View Natural Area/Powers Marine Park
  - Large habitat node on the westside
  - Six cool water streams into Willamette River
  - Improvements should be made to culverts under Hwy 43 (SW Macadam Ave)
  - Fund implementation of the River View Natural Area Master Plan!
- Riverbank Management
  - What is the right vegetation along the river?
  - Removal of riparian vegetation/mowing right up to the river; need to replant
  - Cottonwoods – dangerous adjacent to development and trails (but good for the river)
  - Reintroduce rare plants
  - Create wildlife corridor
  - At water's edge: Look for opportunities to re-establish natural functions of shorlines
- Vision
  - This is our best change to manage for natural resources – think bold
  - Look for parks in redevelopment areas
- Challenges
  - Flooding in Dunthorpe
  - Find access/restoration opportunities

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- Other Ideas
  - BES Revegetation Program – continue this program
  - Get rid of sea lions that eat salmon
  - Increase stewardship activities

## Table 2

- Powers Marine Park
  - Streams #5 and #6 are perennial – fix those culverts under Macadam Blvd (Hwy 43) to allow salmonid passage.
  - High-value riparian forest at Powers Marine (incl. Willow Ash)
  - Gravel trail from south of Sellwood Bridge to halfway to the “mitigation area” on Powers Marine
- Oaks Amusement Park
  - Partnership should be pursued; they have a nice shoreline, magnificent oaks; Potential broader access of the Community Boathouse and dock.
- Bishop’s Close (The Garden at Elk Rock)
  - Zoned R20, with environmental zoning. Characterized by steep slopes.
  - A member of the Schnitzer family is expecting to finalize purchase of the property. He expects to improve the gardens and continue public access.
  - City wants to have public viewpoints there.
- South of Sellwood Bridge
  - Eastbank (up from Portland Rowing Club and City limits) existing fragments of Greenway, pump station, etc. – Where’s the public ownership? Metro owns a few parcels.
- Peter Kerr property
  - Characterized by unique species, including remnants of grassland habitat: Peacock larkspur (*Delphinium pavonaceum*), wild onion, Monkey flower, madrones, oaks, succulents – Need a better survey
  - Peregrine falcons nest on this property January to July each year
- Other habitat areas
  - Elk Rock Island – characterized by unique species in the region
  - Johnson Creek connection to Willamette River – no public access (Kellogg Creek does)
  - Fish passage into Kellogg Creek would be of value.
- Docks
  - River View Cemetery and Elk Rock Island – want a dock? Do some mitigation.
- Dunthorpe
  - Services are very restrictive in this area.
  - Landing strips in this area and on peninsula across from Elk Rock Island.
  - Lewis and Clark University property has had a series of development interests, but nothing has moved forward.
- Other Ideas
  - Trolley line – Rails-to-Trails rather than streetcar or high speed transit

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Table 3

- Riverview Natural Area
  - Perennial stream #6 – create new bridge or culvert to create wildlife connectivity.
  - Dogs not allowed due to conflicts with wildlife.
  - Is there a value to keeping areas free of pedestrians?
  - Interior habitat conditions necessary for Swainson’s Thrush
- Restoration Sites
  - Best: Ross Island, Willamette Park, Powers Marine Park, Sellwood Park, Staff Jennings (kayak access), Riverview natural area
  - Oaks Bottom – creating salmon access
  - Incentive tools are lacking. Usually, the property owner wants to restore. In those cases, the City will require a conservation easement if they partner in the restoration to protect the City’s investment.
  - Recommendation: Partner with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and City [USACOE- 65% and City 35% (includes staff time)]
  - Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) funding reauthorization is under consideration in the Appropriations Committee.
- Houses in the Floodplain
  - How many homes w/in 100-year floodplain?
  - The setback doesn’t help much with flooding. (There are guided by two separate regulations.)
  - What to do about houses in the floodplain? – Willing seller program? Other options?
- Erosion
  - Jet boats/high speed boats
    - Need a speed limit because wakes are causing erosion
    - Increase no wake zones
- Vision
  - Climate change
    - Warmer wetter winters and hotter drier summers are forecast.
    - We need cold water refugia to protect against warmer river temperatures. One way to do that is to restore the Riverview Natural area streams.
    - How will the variable river levels effect habitat? Seems like it should affect where we allow development.
  - Ross Island
    - Need a long-term management plan for all four of the islands as an ecological unit
    - RIS&G depositing fill when it is clean enough. Department of State Lands is working with them to move this effort forward.
    - Is it possible to have a seasonally-regulated flood gate?
    - RIS&G buried toxic soils in Ross Island lagoon. If we open the channel additional remediation may be needed to contain the contamination.