



**PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION**

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
CITY OF PORTLAND

working for clean rivers



**Metro** | *Making a great place*

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Beth Sorensen, Public Information Officer  
503.823.5300; 503.823.6634 (cell)

**Portland Parks & Recreation partners with Bureau of  
Environmental Services and Metro  
to acquire property for future park in Argay-Wilkes  
neighborhoods**

(Portland, OR) – Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) announced today the acquisition of a 20-acre property located in the northeast Portland neighborhoods of Argay and Wilkes. The site, known as the Wilkes Headwaters Property, is an invaluable addition to natural area preservation and watershed protection, and will be managed by PP&R in the future as a hybrid park, one which features both a 4-acre developed neighborhood park and a 16-acre natural area.

The \$1.9 million purchase was funded by a partnership which combined Portland's local share of Metro's voter-approved 2006 natural areas bond measure funds with equal contributions from the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services' Grey to Green Initiative and Metro's voter-approved Natural Areas Program.

"We know that East Portland has long been underserved in terms of park facilities and amenities," noted Parks Commissioner Nick Fish. "Acquiring properties in East Portland has been a priority for the City of Portland's local share of the Metro Natural Areas Bond."

A community celebration is planned for later this summer, when clean-up efforts combined with fair weather will make the site more accessible to the public.

**E205 Initiative**

This parcel represents a further down payment on Commissioner Fish's E205 initiative, a focused effort to find funding to bring additional amenities and improved park facilities to East Portland. The Wilkes Headwaters acquisition is also a major step forward in meeting the Parks 2020 Vision goal of ensuring neighborhood parks

within a half-mile walk of all Portland residents. As part of the local share of the Metro Natural Areas Bond Measure, the City of Portland had also committed to purchasing three new park properties in park-deficient areas, including Cully, Argay-Wilkes, and Centennial neighborhoods. The new property, located east of NE 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, north of Interstate 84 and south of Sandy Blvd., is the second of those three acquisitions.

### **Grey to Green Initiative**

The property also is the location of the headwaters of Wilkes Creek in the Columbia Slough watershed. As part of the City's five-year initiative to accelerate investments in green infrastructure, the goals of the Bureau of Environmental Services Grey to Green Initiative include the acquisition and protection of high priority natural areas. Stream headwaters, like those of Wilkes Creek, are considered a high value target for the program.

"I'm delighted that this acquisition will protect Wilkes Creek, the only remaining free-flowing creek to the Columbia Slough," said City Commissioner Dan Saltzman. "The spring-fed headwaters of Wilkes Creek provide the slough with clean, cold water which enhances both water quality in the slough and habitat for fish and wildlife," Saltzman said.

### **Metro's Natural Area Program**

Metro's voter-approved Natural Areas Program protects water quality, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities for future generations. Two bond measures have allowed Metro to acquire 11,000 acres across the Portland metropolitan area, including nearly 90 miles of river and stream banks. Metro also has opened three major nature parks and supported hundreds of community projects, including Portland's newest acquisition.

"People want to connect with nature in their own neighborhoods," said Metro Council President Tom Hughes. "That's why Metro distributes nearly one-fifth of the region's natural areas bond measure to cities, counties and park providers to invest in local projects."

Collaborating with Portland on its new 20-acre park and natural area complements Metro's work to expand the Columbia Slough trail system. In the past year, Metro has negotiated agreements to close 1.4 miles' worth of gaps in pathways tracing this network of lakes, wetlands and slow-moving channels in the Columbia River's southern floodplain.

"We're not only giving people a way to explore the slough on foot and bike, but also giving them a reason to hop off the trail and enjoy a stroll or a picnic," said Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick, who represents the eastern part of the region beyond Portland International Airport.

Immediate plans for the site include stabilization of the stream and the property with the removal of such invasive species as English holly trees and Himalayan blackberries. Native plants will be added to the areas that will be managed as natural areas. In addition, unusable structures will be removed from site of the future natural area.

A site Master Plan will be developed with the community in the future, the first step towards full development of the site when funding becomes available.

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**Beth Sorensen | Public Information Officer**

Portland Parks & Recreation

503.823.5300 (office); 503.823.6634 (cell)

beth.sorensen@portlandoregon.gov

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**Nick Fish, Commissioner | Zari Santner, Director**