



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND
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Michael Jordan, Director



PORTLAND
PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

Mike Abbaté, Director

River View Natural Area Management Plan

Project Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Notes

Monday, June 22, 2015

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Stamm West Dining Room, Templeton Campus Center, Lewis & Clark College

Committee Attendees

Sarah Bice, *Sellwood resident*

Sylvia Bogard, *SW Neighborhoods*
(Alternate for Jennifer Seamans)

John “Dabby” Campbell, *Northwest Trail Alliance*
(Alternative for Brian Baumann)

Michel George, *Lewis & Clark College*

Marci Krass, *Willamette Riverkeeper*

Fran Laird, *Collins View Neighborhood Association*

Torrey Limbo, *Tyron Creek Watershed Council*

Steve Manton, *Park neighbor*

Jay Withgott, *Portland Audubon Board Member*

Chris Sautter, *South Burlingame resident*

Members Absent

Brian Baumann, *Northwest Trail Alliance*

Adam Clinton Baylor, *Mazamas*

Michael Karnosh, *Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde*

Jennifer Seamans, *SW Watershed Resource Center*

Chad Sorber, *Natural Area experience*

Charlie Sponsel, *Professional mountain biker*

Mauricio Villarreal, *Portland Parks & Recreation Parks Board member*

Project Staff and Technical Advisory Committee Members

Shannah Anderson, *Bureau of Environmental Services*

Mary Bushman, *Bureau of Environmental Services*

Rachel Felice, *Portland Parks & Recreation*

Kate Holleran, *Metro*

Jeff Hough, *Portland Parks & Recreation*

Kristen Kibler, *JLA Public Involvement*

Kendra Peterson Morgan, *Portland Parks & Recreation*

Jessica Pickul, *JLA Public Involvement*

Steve Roelof, *ESA VA*

Emily Roth, *Portland Parks & Recreation*

Maija Spencer, *Portland Parks & Recreation*

Welcome and Introductions

Kristen Kibler, JLA Public Involvement, welcomed Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members to meeting #5 for the River View Natural Area Management Plan. Kristen will be facilitating the next two PAC meetings. She noted that the committee would be encouraged to provide feedback on site management issues, as well as discuss any other issues that members think should be considered in the plan.

Planning Schedule and Work Plan Update

Emily Roth, Portland Parks & Recreation, provided an update on the project schedule. Throughout the summer, staff will be preparing a draft management plan, including the feedback received from the Technical Advisory Committee and Project Advisory Committee. A draft plan will be presented to the PAC in September, during which they will be asked for their final feedback on whether to carry it forward. The committee will receive the draft plan at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, in order to have enough time for review. The final steps will be to draft the final plan, have it reviewed and approved by Directors at BES and PP&R, and present the plan to City Council.

Emily added that if any members of the PAC do not support the final recommendations in the plan, they are welcome to submit a minority report. In addition, members may also write a letter of support or recommendation from your organization. The documents will be included in the Public Involvement Appendix of the final Management Plan and included with the staff report to the bureau directors.

Steve Roelof, ESA VA, explained what elements will be included in the final management plan by walking the PAC through the table of contents. The main document is intended to be approachable for people of all backgrounds; therefore detailed plan information will be provided in the appendices.

PAC member questions and discussions about the contents of the draft Management Plan included:

- Do you have a database with the technical information that is considered in the plan (i.e. stream inventory)? Steve responded that this information will be included in the Existing Conditions section, with more detailed information in the Appendix. Much of this information has already been published.
- Does a baseline technical survey for the site exist? Yes, staff compiled all of the existing information and summarized it into one report, which will be included in the Appendix as background and technical information. New information for the site has not been collected during this process.
- If there were gaps in ecological information, was new information collected? No. Work that was done for the Ecological Prescriptions for this site was summarized based on information that already existed. The summary includes recommendations on the actions that should take place, as well as where ecological information gaps exist and timelines for filling those gaps. This summary was organized around the three project goals. The

PAC is not being asked to provide feedback on the Ecological Prescriptions. It was developed by the ecologists on the TAC. It is being finalized and will be sent out this summer to PAC members.

- Emily added that earlier in the process, the group discussed best practices for trail design, construction, and management. Draft recommendations are being finalized for this topic area and will be sent out at the same time as the Ecological Prescriptions Summary.

Access and Management Concept

Kristen reminded the group that a draft Access Concept was presented at the last PAC meeting and at a public open house. The project team has considered and incorporated feedback from these meetings and is now prepared to carry the Access Concept forward.

Emily provided an overview of the Access Concept. It includes two loops - a larger loop at the top and a smaller loop at the bottom. Lewis and Clark College has agreed to allow a portion of a loop to be on their property. The concept includes an ADA accessible trail.

There are several areas that the project team received feedback on. Parking is recommended along SW Palatine, but the number of parking spaces has not been solidified and will be influenced by what is required by Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) during the permitting process. The project team received feedback about including two viewing sites, to allow for site users to view nature and get off the trail. The location of the porta potty was also discussed.

Emily explained that there is a designated area for wildlife preservation, which will be renamed as a habitat preserve. This area will eventually become trail-less and only accessed for stewardship activities and research. There has been considerable work to reduce invasive plants in this area. She reminded the group that the whole site, including where the trails are, will work towards ecological restoration.

Emily emphasized that it takes a lot of time between when a plan is approved to when recommendations are implemented or constructed. The plan provides an understanding of how much recommendations will cost and then funding must be secured. The plan recommendations are added to the Capital Improvement List. Once funding is secured, a design and construction plan will be created. It could take up to 10 years before this plan gets implemented.

Maija provided an open house summary. A total of 84 comments were submitted at the event and online. There was support for the resources that the plan sets out to protect. There were also concerns around the lack of mountain bike access, location of the porta potty (view of it and possibility of it attracting transients), parking locations, and traffic impacts in the neighborhoods.

Prior to the meeting, Kristen had spoken with many of the PAC members by phone and the majority of members she spoke with were supportive of the proposed Access Concept. PAC member Charlie Sponsel was not supportive of the plan without consideration of mountain bike access. Steve Manton was also disappointed that more trail access was not available.

Member questions/comments about Access Concept included:

- It would make sense to have the porta potty by the ADA entrance. Staff responded that they are not sure exactly where the porta potty will be located but it will be ADA friendly.
- Thank you Lewis and Clark for allowing the loop to route through the college's property. This solves a huge access issue.

Natural Area Management

City Nature Overview

Rachel Felice, Portland Parks & Recreation, highlighted how City Nature, a division of Portland Parks & Recreation, manages natural areas and summarized the available resources. City Nature West manages natural areas and soft surface trails on approximately 6,600 acres at nearly 40 properties. They also manage several other programs including integrated pest management, Youth Conservation Corp, and a stewardship program. They prioritize projects for their division via a matrix for natural areas. Rachel highlighted the roles of each of the ten staff members available to support the River View Natural Area and all the other natural area properties on the west side of the Willamette River.

In addition, enforcement in Portland Parks and natural areas is managed by Parks rangers. The ranger line (503-823-1637) is where calls should be directed when people are not following rules, conducting illegal activity, vandalism, etc.

Several members had questions:

- Steve asked if there is dedicated budget for the River View Natural Area. The total budget for City Nature West is \$1.2 million, excluding Washington Park. There are no budget line items for specific properties. Operations and maintenance funding is managed from a lump sum. Emily added that the estimated site cost estimate will be added to the capital improvement plan.
- How is the \$250,000 from the Sellwood Bridge project being used? This money was spent on restoration work, including the installation of 70,000 native plants and this management planning process.
- With so much effort that has gone into ecological restoration in this area, it is important that enforcement can occur since it doesn't take much to set back progress.
- Is there a policy on fireworks? Yes, the policy states that no fireworks are permitted in any park and natural area. As of July, no smoking will be allowed either. Rangers should be contacted if fireworks are used.

Kendra Peterson Morgan, Portland Parks & Recreation, provided a brief overview on City Nature's restoration matrix, which helps to prioritize goals, strategies, and management priorities based on each ecological area's health and function. The matrix ranks each site into a category. River View was inventoried to determine the site's ecological health and was ranked as Fair Health and High Function. They also conduct vegetation inventories for each of the sites that they manage.

The data that was collected for the vegetation inventory has informed the site's adaptive management strategy and ecological goals. One goal was to protect and enhance riparian buffers at the site and actions have already taken place to do plantings to improve storm water infiltration and more. There have been over 70,000 plantings and extensive invasive species work on the site. In addition, their work also includes regular visits to track and measure site usage, maintenance needs, vandalism, etc.

City Nature supports research in the natural areas and have partnered with Lewis & Clark to allow students to do research at the River View Natural Area.

One member mentioned that the storm water outfall area needs some maintenance as a lot of ivy and garlic mustard is located there. Kendra responded that that there has been extensive work to the north and south, but this may be an instance where the land belongs to Lewis & Clark. She will check on that location.

A member asked whether the wetlands that have been mapped have been added to the state registry. Kendra responded that they have not been added. (note: The state does not maintain a registry of wetland sites. The Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) reviews wetland delineations, the process by which wetland boundaries are determined, and adds the information to their database.) The process that was done for mapping these areas is an approximation of the wetland boundaries, versus the more extensive process required for DSL review. They most likely will not be reviewed since the mapping that was done meets maintenance needs and the distinction won't mean additional funding or protection by the state.

Jeff Hough, Portland Parks & Recreation, provided a background on the trails program and what City Nature West plans to do to maintain the site's trails. They currently maintain 180 miles of soft surface trails. The primary function of the trails program is maintenance. Larger projects like trail decommissioning at River View would fall under capitalized projects. In addition to maintenance, they also manage a youth conservation crew and seasonal activities.

Jeff reminded the PAC that the trails in River View are an adopted system from old roads and demand trails. In collaboration with BES, they identified which trails cross streams or have other ecological impacts and closed them when the property was acquired. Going forward, City Nature West will continue to maintain the adopted system and keep them safe by brushing back the trails, removing downed trees, maintaining signs, and more. They will not be decommissioning any trails on a large scale any time in the near future (note: if funding becomes available and monitoring shows trail erosion is causing water quality issues, then PP&R and BES will examine the possibility of closing other trails) . Emily added that depending on conditions, this decision may change and there may be a need to close some trails. The [trail guidelines](#) are operated according to the guidelines that were passed by City Council – which addresses maintenance, design, and construction.

Member questions and discussion included:

- The existing trails that go through the property will not be decommissioned in any way? Staff responded not at this time (note: there is not a plan to decommission any trails at this time, see note above). If one of the trails is making a big impact on water quality in the future, it may need to be closed earlier, but that will depend on future conditions. Also, as new trails appear on site, staff works to close them down and they will continue this effort.
- One member commented that it shouldn't be a problem if some of the trails are not decommissioned because closed trails will gradually grow over.
- There are a lot of activities and traffic on the trails currently. There are often bike skid marks and compacted dirt. Signage may help foster trail management.

Management Options

Kristen explained that the comment form at the open house had sought feedback on several management issues for River View. The PAC's recommendations for these management options will be included in the plan and in the presentation to agency Directors and the City Council. The group discussed the following:

Dogs On-Site

One of the big issues discussed was whether dogs would be allowed on site. Emily explained that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed this topic and had a lively discussion. In the end, the TAC suggested that no dogs should be allowed on-site. Research shows that having dogs even when on a leash, and their waste can make a big impact to the ecology and wildlife of an area.

The majority of the PAC was in support of not allowing dogs on-site. The following is a summary of PAC comments on this topic:

- There are a lot of other dog-friendly options in the area.
- One member stated that they were pro-dog. Anytime dogs are not allowed, it can lead to irresponsible activity whereas when dogs are allowed, site users self-police each other.
- This plan is focused on preservation, not recreation. If mountain biking will not be allowed, then it doesn't make sense to allow dogs if they have a negative impact on the site's ecology.
- This is critical for wildlife preservation since dogs make a big impact.

Seasonal Trail Closures

Kristen mentioned that at the open house, the majority of people agreed that at times it would be reasonable to close site trails. Emily explained that staff doesn't want this management option to be prescriptive. Instead, it should be an adaptive trail management practice.

The majority of the PAC was in support of occasional and seasonal trail closures. The following is a summary of PAC comments on this topic:

- During heavy rains, trail erosion can occur and cause damage.

- If there is nesting in the park, it might make sense to close a trail, especially for sensitive species.
- There was some discussion around how members support closures if the species are truly sensitive, like bald eagles. Kristen asked if there is a list of which species this might include. There are guidelines for what can occur off-trail during nesting, but not on the trails. This list does not exist yet.
- Technical information helps us to identify where streams exist and ecologists can make recommendations on what would be best based on the data. Kendra responded that there is very limited data on specific species studies as it relates to trails. Staff has referred to Terrestrial Ecological Enhancement Strategy and are making their best professional judgement on what would be best for the area.
- Mary Bushman, Bureau of Environmental Services, shared a recent example of sensitive bird protection that occurred at Forest Park, where an eagle's nest was near a culvert that was under construction. There were specific guidelines for that work because of the nest. This is more than about trail activity; it is about all activities that occur in the park like construction. One member shared that they hope that closures would occur for truly sensitive birds, otherwise there could be many closures. He warned not to close trails every time a nest is near a trail as too many closures may encourage more public backlash. He believed many urban birds to be fairly resilient.
- Are there other animals to consider, like reptiles? Yes, there are. Other species like amphibians would be more impacted by attempting to cross highway 43 than activities in River View NA.
- One member said he was recently chain sawing in a wooded area and was surprised to see how unaffected and adaptive birds can be.
- What did the TAC recommend for this? They wanted this to be an adaptive trail management approach.
- One member supports the addition of signs that say, "Avoid trails when muddy."
- It would make sense to close trails when they are at risk for getting wider.
- Don't look for excuses to close the trails.
- One member is generally not in favor of closing trails, but realizes that at times in order to meet plan goals it might be needed. Close trails for a good reason or a good cause.
- How often does Powell Butte close? Not very often, but people tend to be pretty good about following the guidelines.

Environmental Interpretation:

Emily explained that environmental interpretation is an opportunity to convey things about the site to the community.

Most committee members provided thoughts on messaging and formats for future environmental interpretation. Those thoughts include:

- One member likes the imagery and signage that is used to point out salmon spawning and juvenile salmon areas along the Willamette. The site could have something like this by the creek.
- Include signage that makes it clear why dogs are not allowed and explains the policy.
- The interior portion of the site is important. It would be good to explain why it is critical to not veer off trail and explore it.

- Emily added that there are a lot of different interpretation opportunities, not just signage. For example, a video could be created or a particular story could be shared. This information could be shared with more audiences than just regular trail users too, like students. Several PAC members thought a video on the website would be great. It could include how the salmon come to cool off by the Sellwood Bridge and discuss the wetlands. It could also have data on temperature of water, etc. Something educational on the website that would be good for students.
- You can use QR (smart phone→web) codes or other ways to allow people to easily access the information from the site.
- Include what went into preserving this site in an educational video.
- It would be good to include information about the natural history of the area and overall logging history.

Other Management Options:

- When people feel like they have ownership of a place, they tend to take better care of it. Make sure people know how they can get involved and be stewards.
- Is there a concept in the plan to have a wildlife corridor? Stream 6 (the big creek) could eventually become a wildlife corridor that is connected to Powers Marine Park. ODOT may need to replace a culvert that could be improved to allow for better wildlife connectivity. These ideas will be included in the plan.
- Salmon are of particular interest to people and yet they may not connect salmon to this area.
- Geocaching should be considered as it can be destructive to nature areas. Emily explained that she was been working on a geocaching policy that will be implemented this July. Staff collaborated with geocache.com to create this policy. Staff has not identified how many caches will be allowed in River View at this point.
- Consider a composting toilet versus a traditional porta potty.

Stewardship

Rachel highlighted Portland Parks & Recreation Stewardship program. There are a lot of ways for people to get engaged. They work with a variety of schools, organizations and community groups to do trail maintenance, plantings, etc. Many of the meeting's attendees and PAC members have already been involved. They do not have an official friends group for River View yet. This will be started in early 2016.

There are two upcoming stewardship opportunities, please contact Mary Verrilli at mary.verilli@portlandoregon.gov to register:

- Aug 29th a service event with Lewis & Clark College: 1 – 4:00 pm -- Limited to 10 community members, must sign up in advance
- Oct 24th (9 – 12) No Ivy day -- Limited space, must sign up in advance

Rachel added that because people tend to feel a sense of ownership of the site, they do things like placing logs on trails. She explained that visitors need to refrain from placing things on the trail as it creates a safety hazard. If anyone sees trash, an illegal camp, etc., the rangers are responsible for cleaning it up. This is a safety concern as these sites can have human waste

and other health or safety issues. In addition, if someone is occupying the site, they must be given 24 hours to vacate.

For upcoming stewardship events, people will be notified if they are signed up for the project stakeholder list. Information is also available on the website. She encouraged everyone to sign up in advance as these events fill up fast.

Public Comment (not verbatim comments)

- There is concern about having mountain bikes on the trails. As a hiker, they feel it is a safety concern because bikes are fast and they feel the riders can be confrontational. They also use the park as a place to walk their dogs.
- Dogs on leash have caused a lot of issues in other parks. There are five on-leash parks within the area. They also shared concerns with geocaching. If something is found that is not a part of the natural habitat, they pick it up and give it to the ranger. Lastly, in order to comply with the American Disability Act, the trails have to be maintained and unless there is a new and improved ways of maintaining these trails, it may not work at River View.
- One member of the public reminded the PAC that there is likely to be a lot of parking needed. Nearby streets are narrow and have a lot of traffic. We still don't know how many cars will come to the site. Brugger St. is not wide enough for two cars on either side. In addition, there is a lot of foot traffic that comes through the proposed parking area.
- Parking plans are not realistic. Also, there are a lot of good sized trees that need to be protected. Don't let this be like Mt. Tabor where trees are cut down. They would like cedars to be protected. The site has had cedars in the past, as there is a cedar stump near the number 3 stream. We should take measures to have a mature forest. Big fat bike tires are destroying trees by making them more prone to root rot.
- Drones are another thing to consider with site maintenance. They would like to see a policy that prevents going off trail. Also, a running group called Hashers has been active in the area. They throw down white powder at the base of trees and moss but it's not getting washed off. This shouldn't happen in the natural areas.

Next Steps and Closing

PAC members had a few final thoughts for the project team:

- A couple of members thanked the TAC and staff for all their hard work.
- One member hoped that people would look at the big picture and do things right while making sure that there is access available to everyone.
- One member shared that his concerns about River View NA are personal because the activities (biking, dog walking) he has used it for are no longer available to him. However, he is more concerned about the new Macadam Ridge private development and believes it will negatively impact quality of life in the area.

There will be some technical information available this summer (Ecological Prescriptions, best management practices/trail guidelines) as well as the meeting summary. The next meeting will be held in September 2015, with the draft plan being distributed two weeks in advance of that meeting for review. Contact Emily if anyone has anything else to share or questions.