

2017 Natural Resource Committee's Report to the Oregon City Commission**Wetland Overlays**

Last year in our report to the City Commission, the Natural Resource Committee (NRC), along with the Planning Commission, pointed out that our wetland natural resource overlays haven't been updated since 1999, when the Local Wetland Inventory was made part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The NRC noted that the State of Oregon Department of State Lands had recently approved a new wetland delineation in Canemah. City Code Chapter 17.49 provides that such newly discovered wetlands are not regulated by the City if they are wholly outside of the established Natural Resources Overlay District. To date, no action has been taken in making code changes that would permit the establishment of a temporary wetland-area overlay when a new delineation is made. A permanent overlay could be established later when resources are available to determine its appropriate boundaries.

Clackamas Community College's Environment Learning Center (ELC)

Last year members of the NRC were involved in salvaging plants before the College's restoration of the wetlands at the headwaters of Newell Creek at the ELC. This year salvaging was directed at juvenile amphibians with NRC-member participation. The reconstruction of the waterway has been completed, and replanting has begun, again with NRC-member participation.

Heritage Tree designation

A member of the NRC has made presentations to the Citizen Involvement Council and neighborhood associations about the Heritage Tree Program.

The NRC wishes to determine if funds can be identified to off-set the expensive arborist costs a land owner must incur for an arborist to determine whether a tree qualifies for the designation, not only in terms of the age of the tree, but also whether the tree is disease free and is not a potential safety threat to property, infrastructure, or people. The NRC requests in the coming budget cycle that the City Commission consider funding an arborist position to assist in this effort as well as to deal with other tree issues on City property and public right-of-ways. The NRC is exploring the possibility of having the Clackamas Community College's Horticulture Department have their students assist in heritage-tree designation as part of their study program.

The Parks and Recreation Department has committed up to \$50,000 annually for tree planting within the City park system.

Stream Signage

The NRC is working with the City to provide stream signage within the City and to include the funding of such signage in the next budget cycle. In the interim, the Greater Oregon City Watershed Council has funded signage for 12 crossings with its own logo. The Public Works Department is installing these signs.

Geological Designation of Water Board Park as a Geologically Significant Area

A draft letter was sent to Scott Burns as to the desire to have such a designation made and to request his suggestions as to whom a request for such designation should be made. Scott Burns is a Portland State University Professor Emeritus, a former PSU Geology Department Head, and a past National President and International Vice President of the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists.

Professor Burns has recommended contacting the state geologist responsible for the states geological survey (DOGAMI) and to the Ice Age Flood Institute's Portland section where Rick Thompson is president (rick@gigaflood.com).

Invasive Species on City-Owned Land

This was a topic of concern expressed in a joint session between the NRC and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC). Members of both committees and the Oregon City Parks Foundation have been involved in ivy-pulls (e.g., at Water Board Park and Old Canemah Park).

The NRC also wrote a letter of support for an Oregon City Parks Foundation grant application for Water Board Park invasive species removal.

Updates

The NRC has had a joint meeting with the Oregon City's Planning Commission and a joint meeting with PRAC.

Public Works has given the NRC updates on tree removal and discussed, with the participation from a representative from Portland General Electric, street lighting and a dark-sky ordinance

NRC also had updates from:

Kelly Reed of the Planning Department on the Willamette Falls Legacy River Walk,
The Oregon City Parks Foundation,
The Columbia Land Trust and Audubon Society on their Backyard Habitat Certification Program,
Metro on its Newell Creek Canyon trail status,
Friends of Gladstone Nature Park,
Friends of Trees on plantings in several of the City's neighborhoods, and
Jerry Herrmann, NRC member, on Oregon City natural history tours that he has been giving.