

2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



CONTACT THE WWRP COORDINATOR
wwrpcoordinator@gmail.com

LEARN MORE AT
WestWillamette.org
IG: [@WestWillamette](https://www.instagram.com/WestWillamette)

WEST WILLAMETTE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP 2023 - 2024

In 2023 and 2024, the West Willamette Restoration Partnership (WWRP) continued its vital work supporting the natural landscapes and parks that sustain the Southwest Portland community. The WWRP convenes partners who conduct essential work across the Westside Wildlife Corridor (WWC), a forested spine of the west hills of Portland between Forest Park and Tryon Creek State Natural Area. The figure below shows the WWC and the WWRP’s 2023-2024 focal project area.

Despite a decrease in diverse funding sources this year, the WWRP successfully maintained a collaborative and supportive work ethic. Steering committee and quarterly meetings were held, governance documents were updated, and outreach efforts were actively supported.



Image from an ArcGIS Story Map by Andrew Addessi, Portland State University: <http://arcg.is/2fHFcL0>



WEST WILLAMETTE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP MISSION

"To conserve and enhance the forests and natural areas of SW Portland by forming an active coalition of engaged volunteers & organizations. The WWRP aims to improve conditions that are supportive of diverse plants, animals, and people through land stewardship, volunteerism, and education."

PARTNERSHIP HISTORY

In 2004, the Three Rivers Land Conservancy led an influential study identifying the urgent need for invasive plant control in Southwest Portland's natural areas. By collaborating with organizations such as Portland Parks and Recreation, Oregon Health Sciences University, The Nature Conservancy, and various "Friends of" groups including Marquam Nature Park, Forest Park (No Ivy League), Terwilliger, and Tryon Creek State Park, the study underscored the importance of a unified approach to managing invasives. A key recommendation was establishing a dedicated project coordinator to champion an "All Hands on Deck" restoration strategy—a collaborative initiative to curb invasive species, encourage diverse treatment methods, and support healthy ecosystems for wildlife and residents alike. In response, the West Willamette Restoration Partnership (WWRP) was founded in 2006 with a mission not only to manage invasive species but also to educate homeowners on responsible gardening through the Backyard Habitat program. Today, WWRP's mission has expanded to encompass broader conservation efforts and the enhancement of Southwest Portland's forests and natural spaces. Through community stewardship and outreach, the WWRP strives to be a cornerstone of the region's environmental resilience and community engagement.

WEST WILLAMETTE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP JOINT EFFORTS



The WWRP thrives thanks to its committed partners' hard work and dedication. This collaborative team has effectively utilized a consensus-driven model, ensuring that every decision and action reflects the diverse perspectives of its members. Despite limited coordination resources, the WWRP strives to work as a cohesive organization, drawing on the support of fiscal agents to secure grants and fulfill project commitments within the corridor. As new needs have arisen and additional partners have joined, the partnership has worked towards adapting terminology and roles to better support its shared mission of preserving and enhancing Southwest Portland's natural spaces.

Starting in late 2023- 2024, partners renewed their Declaration of Cooperation (DOC), originally created in 2009, with updates that reflect evolving partnership discussions focusing on habitat connectivity, outreach and communication, and diversity and inclusion to better meet the needs of an evolving landscape and partnership composition.

WEST WILLAMETTE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP 2023 - 2024 CORE PARTNERS

Declaration of Cooperation (DOC)
Signees:

- The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
- Portland Parks & Recreation
- Columbia Land Trust
- Forest Park Conservancy (representing Marquam Nature Park)
- Friends of Terwilliger
- Oregon Health & Sciences University
- Oregon Wildlife Foundation
- Westside Watershed Resource Center
- West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District



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& RECREATION**



**Forest Park
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Protect. | Restore. | Inspire.



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WEST WILLAMETTE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP 2023 - 2024 MEETINGS

The WWRP hosted quarterly partnership meetings that allowed partners to hear updates from their fellows and work towards joint WWRP goals. The table below provides a summary of WWRP meetings within the last year:

Meeting Date	Number of Meeting Attendees	Meeting Topics
April 18th, 2023	14	Backyard Habitat Project with CELs, City of Portland EAB Update, WWRP Funding Priorities Discussion, Outreach Planning, Partner Updates
August 24th, 2023	12	Community Engagement Presentation, Coordinator Monitoring Project, Funding Discussion (Grant Applications and Fiscal Sponsorship), Partner Updates
December 19th, 2023	12	Introduction to Oregon Wildlife Foundation, Metro NIN Grant Proposal Requirements, Discussion of Updates to the Declaration of Cooperation, Partner Updates
May 6th, 2024	13	Transfer of Fiscal Sponsorship: Coordinator SOW, WWRP Declaration of Cooperation and Governance & Operations Updates, and Committee, Coordinator, and Partner Updates
September 30th, 2024	12	WMSWCD Demographic Survey and Mapping Analysis, Subcommittee Reminders and Sign-up, WWRP Strategic Planning Update, and Partner Priorities Brainstorm Activity

MORE JOINT EFFORTS

The WWRP steering committee continued to guide partnership activities and strategic planning. Current 2024 steering committee members include:

- Maha Guliani, Portland Parks & Recreation
- Tim Greseth, Oregon Wildlife Foundation
- Colleen Mitchell, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Ariana Scipioni, West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (previously Mary Logalbo and Lynn Barlow)

This year, the WWRP continued to fund a part-time coordinator (Samara Group LLC, lead contact Fiona Smeaton) to support its ongoing collaboration. The coordinator's role is to provide organizational capacity through communications and planning with partners, facilitation support through meeting coordination and organization, and fundraising support by sourcing grant opportunities and drafting funding applications.

The coordinator manages an ongoing [Grant Opportunities Document](#) that has been updated on a rolling basis to log and track potential funding opportunities.

Additionally, the coordinator manages the WWRP Website with suggestions and feedback from the WWRP core partners. Statistics for Fiscal Year July 1st, 2023 - June 30th, 2024:

- Page views: 541
- Site sessions: 321
- Unique visitors: 205





FUNDRAISING

WWRP's fundraising efforts are vital in sustaining and expanding our work within the Westside Wildlife Corridor. Through grants, partner contributions, and community support, the WWRP strives to fund essential projects that protect and restore the natural landscapes of Southwest Portland. These efforts enable on-the-ground restoration work and support educational outreach, partnerships, and the resources needed to keep invasive species under control. Unfortunately, the WWRP received no grant funding from 2023-2024. However, partner contributions kept the group meeting and working towards combined goals.

Fundraising highlights:

- Cash contributions for the 2023-2024 WWRP Coordinator totaled \$12,600 with support from Portland Parks & Recreation, Bureau of Environmental Services, West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, Friends of Marquam Nature Park (now Forest Park Conservancy), Oregon Health & Science University, Friends of Terwilliger, and Friends of Riverview.
- The WWRP renewed the coordinator contract for the 2024-2025 fiscal year and successfully transferred fiscal agent responsibilities from West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District to Oregon Wildlife Foundation, with Tim Greseth-Executive Director joining the WWRP steering committee and becoming the fiscal agent point of contact.

PROPOSED PROJECT APPLICATION

The WWRP funding sub-committee applied for the Metro Nature in Neighborhoods Grant in 2024. Many partner meetings were held and this collaboration resulted in the development of the Marquam Nature Park Green Workforce Project. Regrettably, due to the competitive nature of the grant, WWRP did not receive this round of funds, however the project idea has helped guide future funding brainstorming. A summary of the proposed project is listed below:

- Projects proposed partners: West Willamette Restoration Partnership, Ash Creek Forest Management, Intertwine Alliance, The Blueprint Foundation: Connecting Canopies, Portland Parks and Recreation, Westside Watershed Resource Center, Friends of Marquam Nature Park (now Forest Park Conservancy).
- Summary of the proposed Marquam Nature Park Green Workforce Project Goals:
 - Goal 1: This project aims to improve water quality and restore local fish and wildlife habitat, supporting conservation and environmental justice in the WWC. Efforts will focus on removing invasive species, planting natives, and collecting baseline plant and wildlife data. Connecting Canopies members will receive training in plant identification, habitat health, scientific methods, tool use, GPS, camera skills, and open-source mapping, fostering ecosystem restoration and analysis skills.
 - Goal 2: The MNP project aims to strengthen community partnerships through educational programs, workforce development, and volunteer stewardship, directly benefiting local communities. It prioritizes opportunities for communities of color, youth, and those affected by poverty and homelessness to engage in and restore natural areas in the WWC. Partners will gain insights from restoration crews, contribute to WWRP’s 2024 communication strategy, and help shape future outreach.
 - Goal 3: This project addresses economic and environmental inequities in conservation by connecting historically marginalized communities to local natural areas through partnerships with CC, WMSWCD, and PP&R’s Youth Conservation Crew. The initiative offers economic and environmental opportunities and promotes inclusive access to the WWC. WWRP is focused on understanding how residents, especially communities of color, view natural areas using a culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach. Insights from community liaisons will guide a concept plan with PP&R to improve trail access for Metro residents while protecting wildlife habitat.

WWRP STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The WWRP Strategic Action Plan outlines the significant goals that guide WWRP actions. Partner organizations have worked collaboratively and independently to address the following goals:

- **Restoration & Connectivity:** Enhance and connect habitat in the westside wildlife corridor.
- **Collaboration & Partnership:** Increase the capacity of the WWRP to achieve the partners' collective mission and vision.
- **Outreach & Communications:** Increase community understanding and engagement in the corridor.

The following pages showcase highlights of our partners' remarkable accomplishments, reflecting their contributions to advancing these shared goals.



HIGHLIGHTS OF WWRP PARTNER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL 1: RESTORATION & CONNECTIVITY

WWRP Partner **Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)**, performed restoration work in the Westside Wildlife Corridor. In the summers of 2023 and 2024, PP&R's Youth Conservation Corps No Ivy League conducted ivy and Himalayan blackberry removal efforts at Marquam Nature Park and George Himes Park. Following the weed removal at George Himes, hundreds of native shrubs and ferns were planted in winter 2023 to restore the landscape. Marquam Nature Park is scheduled for similar replanting in winter 2024 to rejuvenate areas cleared during these efforts.

In fall 2023, two contractors focused on extensive tree ivy removal in Marquam Nature Park to protect mature deciduous and conifer trees from damage due to increasing storm events. This proactive measure aimed to prevent tree fall and strengthen the urban canopy. Wisdom of the Elders cleared one acre of tree ivy along Marquam Hill Road, while Ash Creek Forest Management removed five acres along Fairmount Boulevard. Additionally, PP&R completed a 10-year management plan for Marquam, outlining restoration priorities and projected costs to guide future work by contractors, volunteers, and park staff. Wildfire risk reduction work around Terwilliger Parkway was also completed, detailing vegetation management zones to minimize fire risk near structures while considering surrounding land uses.

Governors Park has been officially recognized as a "Firewise Community" under the national Firewise Communities/USA program. Governors Park is the northernmost site of the WWRP. A Firewise USA Community ® mean residents have actively worked together to reduce wildfire risks in their area by implementing measures like proper landscaping, fire-resistant building materials, and community education initiatives. Being part of a recognized Firewise USA® community is reporting the ongoing work residents complete each year to reduce their wildfire risks, while addressing the areas identified in the community wildfire risk assessment.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WWRP PARTNER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL 1: RESTORATION & CONNECTIVITY

This year, WWRP Partner **Columbia Land Trust (CLT)**, performed work at Keller Woodlands, a natural area located within the Westside Wildlife Corridor. CLT conducted annual site monitoring to identify potential legal or management issues, supported by photo documentation and an annual report. Weed control was performed twice, targeting garlic mustard and knotweed in spring and fall. Additionally, CLT monitored property use, engaging with unhoused individuals through direct communication and signage to address public safety and cleanup of abandoned items.

In Fiscal Year 23-24, WWRP Partner, **Forest Park Conservancy**, representing Marquam Nature Park, made remarkable strides in habitat restoration and community engagement. Over the year, they hosted 8 restoration work parties, where 161 dedicated volunteers contributed an incredible 483 hours of service. Together, they successfully removed 29,327 square feet of invasive ivy and blackberry, helping to preserve the park's ecological health.



HIGHLIGHTS OF WWRP PARTNER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL 2: COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP



WWRP Partner **Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)**, supported collaboration and partnership work in the Westside Wildlife Corridor.

Construction at Eagle Point along Terwilliger Parkway was completed this summer, and PP&R celebrated the milestone by hosting a welcome event for the Veterans Affairs (VA) community. This new addition enhances the recreational and natural appeal of the area along Terwilliger Parkway.

The Blueprint Foundation's Connecting Canopies program made strides in Marquam Nature Park, focusing on the Towhee Trail in south Marquam, removing 0.25 acres of invasive ground ivy. PP&R plans to revegetate this cleared area with native shrubs and ferns to complement the Himalayan blackberry and ground ivy removal carried out by the Youth Conservation Corps No Ivy League during the summer of 2024.

In May 2024, PP&R, ODF, the Oregon Fire Marshall, and Portland Fire & Rescue conducted a Firewise assessment for the Governors Park community in response to resident requests. This assessment evaluated the home ignition zone and provided recommendations for reducing fire risk, such as selective vegetation removal, trimming plants, and clearing tree branches around homes to create a safer buffer from potential fire hazards.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WWRP PARTNER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL 2: COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) supported collaboration and partnership work in the Westside Wildlife Corridor. WMSWCD continued active engagement in meetings by reviewing and developing the WWRP budget, guidance documents, and grants applications.

Westside Watershed supported collaboration and partnership work in the Westside Wildlife Corridor and beyond. This year there were education and outreach events at the following locations: PCC Sylvania campus, Marshall Park, Tryon Creek State Natural Area, Jackson Middle School, SW 26th and Barbur Ct, Rieke Elementary, Dickinson Park April Hill Park, Pendleton Park, Multnomah Arts Center, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Bridlemile Elementary, SW 36th and Troy, and Lucky Lab - Multnomah Village. These events fostered educational opportunities for community members, expanded outreach to new audiences, and encouraged volunteer involvement in restoration efforts.

- In Tryon Creek Watershed, Westside Watershed engaged with 543 students/youth and 64 adults in events between November 2023 and June 2024.
- In Fanno Creek Watershed, Westside Watershed engaged with 176 students/youth and 293 adults, plus reaching 384 customers at a native plant sale, in events between July 2023 and June 2024.



HIGHLIGHTS OF WWRP PARTNER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL 3: OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

Between July 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024, the **Backyard Habitat Program** conducted 136 site visits in west Portland, including the Westside Wildlife Corridor, with 36 participants achieving certification. Each visit included a one-hour in-person consultation, and a customized site report with recommendations tailored to each participant's goals and property conditions. Participants also received a discount flier for 17 local nurseries and access to over 150 resources, such as handouts, articles, and links, to support their stormwater and habitat projects. This initiative has provided valuable guidance and resources, promoting sustainable landscaping practices throughout the community.

Portland Parks & Recreation supported outreach work in many ways during 2023 and 2024. The Westside Wildlife Corridor report, spearheaded by SW Parks' ecologist Maha Guliani, is nearing completion and expected by June 2025. This comprehensive report will include a wildlife inventory, maps, regulatory guidance, and conservation information grounded in both historical data and future habitat goals to support wildlife protection in the region. In June 2024, fire danger dial signs were installed at Marquam Nature Park and Terwilliger Parkway. These signs provide the public with Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL) to communicate current and anticipated fire conditions. From Level I to Level IV, these precaution levels guide visitors on necessary fire safety measures. Additionally, the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) characterizes fire risk with classifications of Low, Moderate, High, and Extreme based on weather, topography, and fuels, helping tailor specific management actions to each level of risk.

The Protect the Best team from Portland Parks and Recreation set up traps at Marquam Nature Park in June 2024 to monitor for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), deploying purple funnel traps on mature ash trees along the Sunnyside Trail. An initial inspection in July found no EAB presence, and the second monitoring and trap removal round is scheduled for September 2024. In staffing updates, PP&R welcomed Monica Hescheles as the new stewardship coordinator. Monica brings valuable experience from her previous role as volunteer stewardship coordinator with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council, where she was instrumental in community engagement and volunteer coordination.



In 2023 and 2024, the WWRP partners made significant strides in preserving the natural landscapes and parks that enrich the Southwest Portland community. Even without additional funding, WWRP remained committed to a collaborative approach, holding quarterly meetings, updating governance documents, and expanding outreach efforts. Thanks to the dedication of our partners and the collective work within the Westside Wildlife Corridor, WWRP continues to protect this vital green space, ensuring it thrives as a haven for both wildlife and residents in the years to come.

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