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METRO

Building a green ethic

The Greenspaces Master Plan was the first major legislation on the agenda when Susan McLain joined the Metro Council in 1991. Biologists had inventoried the significant undeveloped natural areas in the region and the plan reflected a hope of what habitat might be protected and restored to give people the kind of outdoor experience that they enjoy and care about. Metro conducted a livability survey that year and among the top three items was “being close to nature.” People clearly expressed that nature was important to them, and played a special role in their lives. “I felt proud to vote on that,” Susan recalls. “It was a lot of fun to get started with something I care so much about.”

Susan says, “It was hard to decide how to follow through on the Greenspaces Master Plan – what were the best tools to restore, acquire and preserve the area’s most critical habitats? We decided to support a bond measure.” In 1992, the Metro Council put a natural areas bond measure on the ballot, and it failed.

“We’re not giving up,” Susan insisted. Instead, she and the other councilors tried to figure out how best to give people the natural areas and parks close to home that they said they wanted. In 1995, another bond measure was put on the ballot and Metro came up with a new strategy. “We gave the public more specific information about the areas we would go after – we identified key properties and projects and promised we would purchase 6,000 acres.”

She joined the campaign’s speaker’s bureau and made nearly 70 presentations – sometimes two or three in one evening – to neighborhood and community groups, parks providers, even groups like water conservation agencies. She went door-to-door to convince voters to support the plan. When the \$135.6 million bond measure passed, Susan says, “We took a dream and made it into a reality. We promised 6,000 acres and ultimately gave more than 8,000 acres. The bond measure was a turning point for the region.”

Mike Houck, director of the Urban Greenspaces Institute and urban naturalist for the Audubon Society of Portland comments, “Councilor McLain has been one of the most consistent voices on the Metro Council for the protection and res-



Metro Councilor Susan McLain

Jeffrey Simon photo

toration of urban greenspaces. Her support for the acquisition program has been critical to maintaining the political will to go to the voters for their support.”

The Regional Trails Plan was another aspect of the Greenspaces Master Plan implementation and Susan, along with the other councilors, was involved in development of the Springwater Corridor, Rock Creek Greenway Trail, Fanno Creek Greenway Trail, Peninsula Crossing Trail and more. The combination of citizen support, agency commitment and success securing some federal transportation dollars moved many projects on their way.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provided funding for the region-wide inventory, also collaborated with Metro to create a Greenspaces grant program, and Susan was appointed to the panel that would choose the grant recipients. “That was another area I loved. I sat on the panel for close to five years, from 1996 to 2000, and it was an exciting time.” With \$2.2 million in grants, more than 300 project recipients leveraged that money into \$9 million to carry out their work on the ground.

“These were projects that were important for restoration and education in four counties – Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Clark. Families and children would go out on Saturdays and plant trees, or clean up a stream. It presented people with a way to build a green ethic. It was fun, it was educational. The grant recipients were always groups that had a lot of partners. One project might have a middle school partnering with a county, a scout troop and a watershed organization. It was very proactive.”



Red-flowering currant

C. Bruce Forster photo

Former Metro Councilor explains the willing seller approach

Thousands of people volunteered over the course of the Greenspaces grant program, which inspired the Metro Council to fund a staff position for a volunteer coordinator to tap into that resource. The program matured quickly. In 2004, 1,500 volunteers donated 32,000 hours of service to Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces. "I'm proud of that," Susan adds. "We have been able to engage the community and the result is having these great natural areas that are good for habitat, good for recreation, good for clean air and clean water."

In addition to using acquisition, education and restoration to protect the region's great natural areas, the Metro Council has worked with local governments in the region to develop key regulatory programs that help improve water quality, prevent flooding and protect important fish and wildlife habitat. This fall, the Metro Council plans to adopt a fish and wildlife habitat protection plan called Nature in Neighborhoods. "It's been contentious, complicated, exciting, and a long time in coming," says Susan. "In September when the plan is complete, we'll have another success story. It will show our commitment to fish and wildlife, the forest canopy, and maintaining the beauty of the region and our connection to nature."

A fifth-generation Oregonian, Susan grew up in Clackamas County and has lived for 30 years in Forest Grove. In the mornings, she teaches English, speech and debate at Glencoe High School. Her four children and three grandchildren strengthen her commitment to protecting the region's natural resources. "Being a mother and a grandmother is a good reality test of how you're spending the public money, and what the benefits will be." She is pleased with what's coming next. "The council is looking at 2006 for another possible natural areas bond measure, to take a needed next step and continue the important and good work that we have only just begun."



The 1995 open spaces bond measure was unanimously referred to voters by the Metro Council with the provision that it would be a willing seller program. This meant that landowners must voluntarily choose to sell their land to Metro and that the government's power of condemnation would be used, if ever, only in the most extreme circumstances. The program has remained 100 percent faithful to the willing seller policy and philosophy in all 261 transactions completed with landowners. The willing seller policy was championed by Metro Councilor, Don Morissette. In an interview with Metro staff, Don talked about why.

Q: Was the willing seller policy controversial?

A: The willing seller approach was really breaking new ground in 1994, but there was some resistance to this policy both internally and externally. There was a fear that it might not work. We proved to a lot of skeptics that it would work. Not to mention that litigation and argument cost a lot of money and a lot of money could have been wasted that wasn't. Ultimately this provided more benefit to the public.

Q: Why was the willing seller policy so important to you personally?

A: I wouldn't support the bond measure until the willing seller policy was included as a provision. I thought it was important to show that people would be far more receptive to selling their land than maybe people thought. I wanted buy-in from the community to have open space but also for us as government to learn to deal with citizens on equal footing. The message was, we're not big brother, we're just like you, trying to make the Portland area a better place for our children and our grandchildren.



C. Bruce Forster photo

I believe that government doesn't have to rely on a heavy hand to be successful. I thought that many private landowners would be shocked that we were there to work with them, not to force them.

Q: Were there other benefits to the willing seller policy?

A: I think there was a lot more support for the measure from unusual areas because we were working with people, not forcing people.

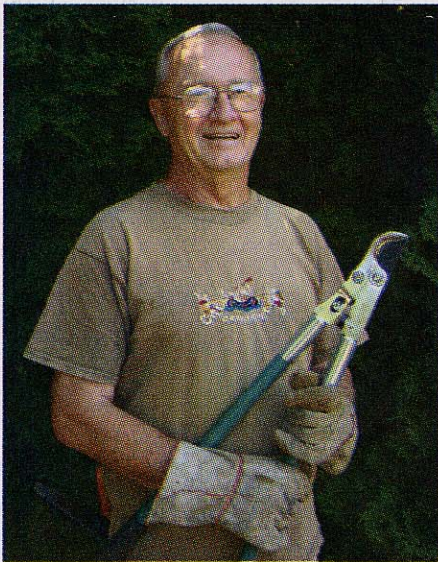
Q: Why did you think willing seller was the right approach?

A: By limiting our program to willing sellers we allowed them to see the benefits to the community rather than being deterred by their fear that we would be taking something from them against their will. The legacy of this program is so powerful. I knew it could be used effectively to motivate landowners to become willing sellers.

Don Morissette has been a home builder in the Portland metropolitan area for more than 30 years. He was president of the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland in 1992 and served as a Metro Councilor from 1994 to 1998.

“Get a shovel and come over here”

“I’m just a guy who doesn’t want to pay health club dues,” protests Don McCarty, who shies away from praise for the six years he volunteered as a natural area steward for Metro’s Canemah Bluff property. “It’s just the way I get my exercise. Rather than jogging up and down the street, I prefer to do something that helps me out and is productive for the environment.” While he’s recently adopted other sites closer to his home, twice a week Don got a healthy workout, trekking around the bluff with clippers, pruners, a hand saw and a bottle of water and tackling the invasive scotch broom and ivy that had enveloped the landscape.



Volunteer steward Don McCarty
Ron Klein photo

In 1998 Metro purchased Canemah Bluff, the 39 acres atop a forested ridge overlooking Oregon City, a last-minute rescue from a 139-unit housing development that was already platted and staked. Not long afterwards, Don, already a familiar volunteer, was asked to help out. He was immediately taken with the property, which encompasses a lush pristine forest, meadows and a large wetland. In the woods are tall madrone trees, huge firs and Oregon white oak. When you see something like this, undisturbed, you want to become a part of it.” He would look at an ancient tree with a broken trunk and imagine its history.

But the site was smothered in invasive species. “It was like a scotch broom forest,” Don recalls. “The plants were six to eight feet high. In some places you couldn’t even walk. The trees were draped in deadly ivy, some vines three inches in diameter.” Twice a week Don went to work, about four hours at a time.

That first spring Metro brought in a group of AmeriCorps volunteers, “eight to ten kids who were on site for at least a week.” Don worked with the kids to clear out scotch broom, digging it out and amassing huge piles, before the shrubs went to seed. Another time Metro brought in a work party of about 20 people, who cleared out a dump site with about a hundred years of trash in a single morning.

Then came the goats. “There was a large area of 5- to 6-foot high extremely healthy blackberries.” About two hundred goats were rented and, according to Don, “they did a marvelous job of wiping them out.”

Through it all, Don worked methodically, making a bigger and bigger dent in the invasive species. Ultimately Metro purchased adjoining Canemah Bluff properties for a total of 134 acres. “It was painfully obvious what to do,” he quips. “You didn’t need a plan. Just attack. It seemed you never ran out of challenges. It was a great feeling to go back the next year and see one-third as many young plants and the next year almost none. One area was completely eradicated of scotch broom. But other areas seemed inexhaustible.”

Don, other volunteers and Metro staff discovered by trial and error that if they cut the scotch broom below the first fresh green sprout, 90 percent of the plants wouldn’t mature and go to seed. It saved them from the work of digging up the huge plants, which also had the positive effect of no longer turning up soil and exposing fresh seeds. “That was kind of a fun discovery,” Don notes with a smile.

After a while areas formerly impenetrable were cleared to make noticeable trails. At one end is a spectacular view over the edge of a steep cliff looking down to the Willamette River flowing far below. The trails now wind through the meadows and woods, and Metro naturalists lead hikes around the property, which the city of Oregon City will open to the public.

While Don usually chose to work alone, enjoying the solitary work, he was frequently visited at the site by neighbor Howard Klemson, a millwright, former Oregon City mayor, and amateur historian who regaled Don with stories. Canemah Bluff sets amid the Canemah Historic District, a community of charming historic houses, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At the far end of the property is the Canemah Historic Pioneer Cemetery, founded in 1865. Howard and another neighbor acted as caretakers of the cemetery, with its graves and headstones dating back from the early 1800s.

Don hopes that more folks will step up to volunteer as stewards for Metro’s natural areas. He reflects, “When I watch people bicycling and jogging over by Oaks Park and I’m doing restoration work nearby, it makes me think that’s a lot of energy going up in smoke. I want to say, ‘Get a shovel and come over here.’ I’d like to see more

people turning in their health club dues and picking up a pruner. In an ideal world, more people would be doing something for the environment.”



The secret place of the condors



The 28 acres are mostly forest. The land was logged once, but some old growth, including huge western red cedar trees, remains. A year-round creek, a tributary of the Clackamas, still harbors steelhead and salmon runs. In the many years they lived on the place, Joe and Marie Hewitt planted trees – Spanish yews, Douglas fir, redwoods, flowering plums, cherry, blue spruce, myrtle. “We liked trees,” Joe says by way of explanation.

Joe’s roots to the place sink deep. Returning from World War II, his father bought the property in the fall of 1945. Long before, a Norwegian had built a traditional V-roofed log cabin that had been badly vandalized and was uninhabitable. The Hewitt family moved into a small house that had been started in the middle of the forest. It was 2 1/4 miles off the highway, with no electricity or running water and lighted by kerosene lamps. “It was pretty primitive. I wasn’t too fond of it at the start,” Joe says. “We had to carry up water from the creek a quarter mile.” The land around was all forest, too, and there were occasional bears and cougars.

Eventually running water and electricity were installed, but Joe left home and went to college. He and Marie were married in 1951. Later his folks left the prop-

erty and the house burned down. Joe’s dad died in 1967 and in 1970 Joe, Marie and his mother decided to move back to the woods. They had a well dug and built a new house.

Marie says, “I wasn’t used to having so much space. I ended up enjoying it. It was very beautiful, and fun to see the wildlife. I used to look out the window and see three or four deer.” Joe adds, “We’d see most everything. A lot of red-tailed hawks. Beaver dams on the creeks. Hummingbirds would come to the feeder in your hand. Just about everything that lives in the Willamette Valley was there.” Their two daughters and son got interested in wildlife, too.

The Hewitts raised wolves that ran wild through the woods. “They’re independent,” Joe comments. “They don’t belong to you, you belong to them.” They had four wolves, and one had pups that they sold to Native Americans in Warm Springs. “When we first got the wolves, no one was living on the property next door, but when neighbors moved onto the place, we had to curtail them, and finally decided to give them away. We advertised, “Free wolf to a good home.”

As the years passed, Joe says, the property became too much to handle. “It was getting to where we couldn’t take care of it. We’d always kept two acres mowed, and that was getting to be too much.” As neighboring areas became more de-

veloped, the Hewitts were troubled by people trying to camp, leaving trash, and coming up from the creek and trespassing. Marie recalls, “Once someone tried to break into the garage. I showed him a shotgun and said, ‘Don’t come back!’”

Metro had purchased the 46 acres next to the Hewitt’s site, and was interested in their property. Besides the many trees the Hewitts had planted, the forest includes a predominantly native understory of shrubs and groundcover, with Pacific yew, red elderberry, Oregon grape, fringecup, sword fern and wild ginger. The reach of Clear Creek that runs through the property is a still-fully-functioning stream draining the Cascade Mountains that is perfect for coho and chinook salmon. What appears as a fast flowing, whitewater river during winter runoff slows in summer to pool-riffles with gravel beds and large log jams. The location and natural integrity of the property provides connectivity to the larger wildlife habitat of the Cascades, as evidenced by tracks of black bear, cougar and elk.

After Metro bought the Hewitt’s property in 2003, the two adjacent sites were joined together and provided to the Oregon Zoo for their condor recovery program. It’s an ideal setting and has resulted in the most advanced condor facility constructed to date anywhere. The area needed to be secluded, away from human intrusion, yet within a 30-minute drive of an international airport for emergency transport of eggs or birds to other locations in the country. Two scientists are living on the site. “They incubated the eggs in our basement,” Marie comments. “The flying cages are on the adjoining property.” The condors, former residents of Oregon, have successfully produced hatchlings. They’re being raised in specially-constructed flight pens, for later release back into the wild.

Someday the Hewitt’s place may have hiking paths so people can come and explore the trees and creek. For today, the property plays an important role in bringing an endangered species back from the edge of extinction. A new generation of condors is getting its start in a special place – a protected place with a deep ravine, a creek where salmon and steelhead still run and ancient cedars tower above the forest.

Rare habitat brought back to the Tualatin River Valley

Along a sleepy bend of the Tualatin River, at the confluence of Baker and McFee creeks, the Gotter family farm is returning to nature. More than 120 acres are being transformed from agriculture to rare oak savanna and wet prairie, along with forested wetlands and riparian areas.

The Gotter family purchased the land in 1930 when Sam Gotter, the youngest of five children, was four years old. “They bought it because of me,” Sam recalls. “I was ill and my folks were told they needed to get me to the country.” The river floods every year, so the family installed six miles of tiles to drain the land for farming. “It was great farmland,” Sam says. “We had every crop imaginable – berries, beans, corn, cucumbers, all kinds of vegetables.” They also had cattle, hogs and other farm animals. The land was turned with horse-drawn plows.

A historic grist mill started by Seth Seeley in 1875 on Baker Creek was on the property. A dam on the creek created a spillway. The mill was operated by a water wheel, and farmers from the area brought their wheat and paid a toll for it to be ground. The millstone is believed to have been shipped around Cape Horn. A log flume passed through the property, too, floating logs from higher in the mountains down to the Tualatin River.

Sam reminisces, “I liked growing up there, our old home place – fishing, catching crawdads, swimming in the river, playing in the creeks and the lake.”

After his parents died, Sam bought the farm and kept it. “I enjoyed being there. It was a nice place to live.” But by 1994, when Sam was 68 years old, the farm became too much to manage. He kept 10 acres on a part of the property where he and his wife had already built a house and sold the rest to Jim Stahlke, who kept the farmland for two years before selling it to Metro.

The Gotter property is now returning to its roots, with a little help from Metro’s natural resources team and a key partner-

ship with the Tualatin Riverkeepers that has helped bring hundreds of volunteers to the site. In all, six plant communities will be restored on the property creating a mosaic of native plant habitats based on historical conditions. These include: wet prairie (20 acres), wetland scrub (15 acres), forested wetland (13 acres), oak savanna (22 acres), riparian woodland (23 acres), and palustrine emergent (or plants that are rooted in shallow water with most of their vegetation above water – 18 acres). It is currently the largest native prairie system in the Tualatin River Valley.

The natural vegetation of the Tualatin River watershed includes more than 400 species of plants, many now rare. At Gotter Prairie, at least 34 herbaceous and 32 shrub and tree species have been established, approximating the natural distribution of the plants. Oak savanna and Willamette wet prairie species, generally rare or absent, are included. The riparian area of McFee Creek, still a salmon-bearing stream, is being revegetated. An increasing cover of large trees will provide shade, leaf litter, woody debris and insects that benefit trout and endangered salmon.

Restoring the natural hydrology of the site and converting it back to a wetland system will increase the diversity of birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. Species that are expected to return include mink, chorus and red-legged frogs, Western toad and native turtles. The greatest change is likely to come from the abundance and diversity of birds. With restoration, the wetlands system will become suitable breeding habitat or migration stopover for birds like the yellow-breasted chat, yellow-headed blackbirds, common snipe and several hawk species.

In 2002, the Gotter family donated a conservation easement for an adjacent 6-acre property. “I told Metro, I’ll help out all I can,” says Sam. “It’s a good thing for them, and a good thing for me.” What he doesn’t say – maybe because it comes so naturally to him to do right by this place that has given him so much – is that it’s good for the land, too.

Spotlight on Tualatin Riverkeepers

Tualatin Riverkeepers is helping people connect to the nature in their neighborhoods through hands-on restoration and education activities at Metro natural areas throughout the Tualatin River watershed, including Gotter Prairie.

Only three years old, their program engages more than 500 volunteers annually and has helped restore more than 180 acres of diverse wetland, floodplain and riparian habitat. A new nature awareness and service learning program enables schools and community organizations to participate in stewardship projects in their own neighborhoods.

Volunteers have played a big role – removing invasive plant species, planting trees and shrubs, collecting seed, monitoring amphibian egg masses, taking geyer willow cuttings, tracking plant survival rates, counting the return of bird species to the restoration sites, and removing litter and fencing. Education opportunities have brought adults building job skills from Centro Cultural, students from nearby Groner Elementary School and families from Adelante Mujeres (Forward Moving Women) to the site.

Maria Felix Vazquez, a member of Adelante Mujeres, got involved at Gotter so her two-year-old son Fernando would learn respect for the natural environment. “I want my little boy to see how wonderful it is to be able to plant a tree and see it grow.”

To find out how you can get involved, visit www.tualatinriverkeepers.org or call (503) 590-5813.



Tualatin Riverkeepers photo

Idyl Wild Farm goes truly wild

The 200 acres that became Idyl Wild Farms took Nan and Paul Weber five years to find. They knew what they wanted for their dairy farm; it had to be near water, with woods, and secluded, off a main highway. From the time they were newlyweds in 1953, they scoured the ads in every Sunday's paper. Every place they'd see would turn out to be a disappointment. One realtor gave up on them.

As soon as they were shown the property along the Willamette River near the Canby Ferry, Nan says, "We knew this was what we were looking for. We knew it was the right thing."

From its greenway river frontage, the 194-acre L-shaped property on Mountain Road rises and falls into gullies and hills blanketed with farm fields, woods and meadows. Newland creek meanders through. The property's thirty acres of forest are lush with trees including western red cedar, Douglas fir and red alder, with an understory of elderberries, ferns, salmonberries and wildflowers.

The Webers dug in. Thirty-five cows and a milk tank were moved from the farm they'd been leasing in Dayton. Paul and Nan built a new barn, and planted alfalfa, grass and corn for the cows, and some sweet corn for U-pick. Eventually they built seven buildings and expanded the herd of Holsteins and Brown Swiss milking cows to 400.

Children came along, four boys and a girl. They all belonged to 4H and Future Farmers of America, helped out on the farm, and each nurtured a collection of dairy animals. One cow they raised and sold became a national grand champion and eventually was resold for \$62,000. Until last year that was the highest price ever paid for a Brown Swiss cow.

"It's a very special piece of property," Nan says. "We enjoyed the land. We really enjoyed the river. We always went swimming and put up a rope swing out over the water. Some years there was a nice sand beach. We had a canoe and



Nan Weber enjoys a glass of elderberry blossom drink on the property where she and her husband Paul raised their family. Metro is working to restore the former dairy farm, protected by the open spaces bond measure.

Ron Klein photo

a rowboat that we bought the kids for Christmas. In the summer, we'd get hot and sticky with the farm work, and in the evenings would go down and just drop in the river." The heifers made little trails through the woods. The children followed the trails, built tree houses and a fort by the creek. One year they ice skated on the creek. Nan muses, "My favorite part of the farm was up on the hill, so secluded, looking out on the farmstead." Every spring, Nan picked elderberry blossoms to make into a flowery-tasting drink.

When the Webers bought the farm in 1958, the surrounding area was all farmland. The opening of Interstate 205 made it easier for people to commute to downtown Portland and neighboring farmers sold their land into 20-acre lots. "Paul and I talked about this. Things got developed, chopped up, people built mansions," Nan bemoans. "As farmers, we thought, that's not the answer. We

had our own little pocket out here, but we could foresee that our farm would not be forever. We thought our place would make a great youth camp or retreat. We didn't want houses – that, everybody agreed on."

Paul had heart surgery and in 1993 he died. Nan and the children discussed what to do and finally, in 2000, they decided to put the property up for sale. They ran a small ad in the Sunday Oregonian and Metro contacted her the next day. "I didn't tell them," Nan says, "but once I understood that they intended to protect our property, we didn't seriously consider any other contender."

Nan and Metro agreed to a life estate, so she can live in her green-shingled family home, surrounded by her hydrangeas and roses, as long as she wishes. Each of the children was given part of the proceeds of the sale, "so each one of them has been able to do something with this trust money, and not wait until I die or I'm too old. I'm so happy. That says it all."

A park to love, a community to thank

by Gail Snyder, executive director of Friends of Forest Park

The property had much appeal for Metro. Its riparian and upland forests are home to a multitude of bird species including cedar waxwings and pileated woodpeckers. With some restoration, Newland Creek can once again have runs of cutthroat trout. The creek actually decreases in temperature as it approaches its confluence with the Willamette River due to input from colder springs. As part of the river known as Willamette Narrows, this place connects with other public lands to form a habitat corridor from Oregon City to Wilsonville. A cacophony of waterfowl can be heard from the large natural anchor of the Mollala River delta in Mollala State Park across the river.

Once Metro took ownership of the farm, they reforested a 15-acre field that had been logged, and sent biologists to survey the site's natural resources. Two big concrete silos were given to a dairy farm near Salem. Hand-hewn timbers and siding boards from the oldest barn went to Bosky Dell Nursery and the Olympic Peninsula. Dozens of volunteers came out for a big SOLV event and cleaned out truckloads of farm "junk." Currently the fields are leased for crops. One year the farm was a staging area for 900 goats used to clear brush on other properties. Nan adds, "I hope that Metro will build trails in my lifetime so I can walk all through the woods."

Now that Idyl Wild Farm is moving toward becoming a more truly wild place, Nan says, "I am so happy. I look to the future, and how many people will get to enjoy it. It makes me feel good."

Elderberry Blossom Drink

10 handfuls of elderberry blossoms
5 large lemons, thinly sliced
10 teaspoons citric acid
6-8 pounds sugar
6 quarts water

To make the syrup, combine the blossoms, lemons and citric acid and leave for 24-36 hours in a non-metallic container, then strain. Add sugar and water. Heat to just before boiling and seal in jars. To make the drink, combine one part syrup with two parts water, and add ice.

Six years ago my husband and I considered leaving Colorado. We looked at communities and work opportunities from the Rocky Mountains west. We quickly eliminated all but Portland. One of the few non-negotiable criteria was having a large natural area within close proximity to work and home. And by "large," I meant many thousands of acres and miles of trails. After all, I was used to having Pikes Peak in my backyard.

Without exaggeration, Forest Park was essential to our decision to move to Portland. Once we got settled, I quickly began to explore and fall in love with this wonderful park. After being in Portland for about a year, I read an article in the paper about a 73-acre "in-holding" being acquired and added to the park. That's cool I thought. I didn't realize at the time what that acquisition really meant. It was one of the many acquisitions made by Metro and its partners through the open spaces acquisition program.

Now I know Metro and its partners, Friends of Forest Park and the city of Portland, have added more than 865 acres to Forest Park as a result of the 1995 open spaces, parks and streams bond measure. Now I know that some of those acquisitions were in-holdings or privately owned islands of land within the park that caused it to be fragmented. Some of those acquisitions were "pinch points," where the park was extremely narrow. Some were key access points. Others provide a "buffer," protecting the healthier interior habitat from the impacts of urbanization around its edges. And now I also know there is still a lot more to be done!

Last December Friends of Forest Park had an opportunity to acquire some land in the Linnton neighborhood that borders on Forest Park and will provide a much-needed new access point to the park. We worked hard to raise the

money. Once again, Metro stepped up to the plate. The Metro Council voted to apply some of the remaining open spaces bond funds towards this acquisition. That parcel of land is now part of the open spaces portfolio and as such is protected in perpetuity from development.

But still the work is not done. Forest Park is at risk of becoming a biological "island" if land surrounding it is developed. Instead, imagine a Forest Park that extends well past its existing northern boundary. Imagine a greenway from the Oregon Coast to Forest Park. Just imagine . . .

Ahhh, Forest Park. It is at the heart of what people love about living in this region. But Forest Park didn't happen by accident. It reflects a legacy of caring about nature and community that started well over 100 years ago and continues today. We are the stewards of today. The Metro open spaces acquisition program has given us the opportunity and the means to carry that legacy forward, and lights the way for the work we have left to do.

Gail has an educational background in physical geography. Her masters thesis work on Pikes Peak in Colorado led to her founding Friends of the Peak. Along the way, her career path took a turn toward nonprofit management instead of erosion control. Gail has worked with Friends of Forest Park for three years, and in the role of executive director for two years.

Lend a hand

Friends of Forest Park, No Ivy League and volunteers meet every Saturday morning for trail maintenance and habitat restoration work. For more information, call (503) 223-5449.

