



Slough News

Newsletter of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council

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New Bridge Installation

By Bob Eaton

The Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD) installed a new bridge at Whitaker Ponds last March. This project was spearheaded by the Council, to meet the goals of Portland Parks & Recreation, MCDD, and the Council at Whitaker Ponds.

The project was spurred on by the need to remove culverts from the connection between West Whitaker Pond and Whitaker Slough. The old culverts (two placed end to end) were beginning to collapse, and had been placed at the wrong elevations for proper drainage. The culverts resulted in a poor hydrologic connection between the Pond and the Slough which was bad for both wildlife and water flow. MCDD dug the culverts out of the ground and constructed a channel between the Pond and the Slough. Then MCDD lined the channel with coarse rocks, and placed two abutments on either side of the channel for the bridge to rest upon.

The bridge, which was manufactured in Lebanon, Oregon from a rail car frame, was painted brown (to be consistent with Portland Parks & Recreation's color scheme) and

shipped up I-5 on a 40-foot flatbed semi truck. It was unloaded and stored at Whitaker Ponds for two months before it was later set in place. The bridge was moved using two cranes, one to lift the bridge and the other to stabilize it in the air. The



Several cranes were required to move the heavy bridge to its permanent location at Whitaker Ponds.

cost of the bridge was \$32,000, and its load capacity accommodates a fully loaded pick-up truck which is necessary for park maintenance. During construction, the bridge abutments were installed slightly different than planned so no trees were removed while making the ditch wider and placing the bridge.

The bridge has already been used by many visitors to Whitaker Ponds, including over 650 school children on field trips. It seems very well suited to the site and blends in with its surroundings. Looking from the bridge into the water, one can see schools of fish and ducks with ducklings swimming through the channel into the Pond or the Slough. In the summer, crews with Portland Parks & Recreation will finalize the trail on both sides of the bridge, using gravel and sand to create an accessible surface.

Funds and services for the bridge installation were provided by the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, Oregon DEQ SEP Program, Portland Parks & Recreation, and MCDD.



The new bridge provides a better hydrologic connection between Whitaker Slough and the ponds.

The Port's Living Machine

By Rachel Wray

The Columbia Slough watershed has some new neighbors: 240 of them, to be exact. With the opening of the new Port of Portland headquarters at Portland International Airport, all Port staff except those who work directly in Port aviation and marine operating areas is now consolidated into one building. Staff from the Port's downtown and marine facilities moved to the new building in late April, with aviation staff following one week later.

Despite housing nearly 450 employees, the new Port headquarters use 36 percent less energy and 75 percent less water than a typical office building of its size. Green building features include more than 200 pipes, traveling 300 feet below the surface, that provide ground-source heating and cooling through a closed-loop system; daylighting and energy efficient fixtures to reduce electricity needs; and a 10,000-square-foot ecoroof that will help insulate the building while capturing rainwater runoff.

Perhaps the most innovative feature is the Living Machine, an ecological wastewater treatment system located in the first-floor lobby that treats wastewater for reuse in the building's toilets and cooling towers. The system incorporates a series of wetland cells, or basins, filled with special gravel and plants. As wastewater moves through the system, the cells are alternately flooded and drained to create multiple tidal cycles each day, much like what is found in nature, resulting in high quality wastewater treatment.

The Port is hosting a public open house for PDX neighbors and Port stakeholders on Saturday, June 5. Come see the building's unique design features and local artwork, and attend a tour of the Living Machine and other conservation measures. You'll have an opportunity to meet and mingle with new Slough neighbors and enjoy refreshments provided by PDX concessionaires.



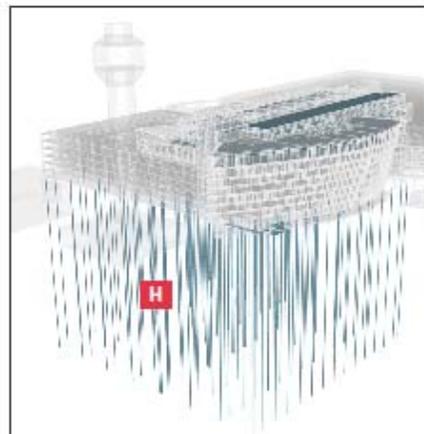
The Living Machine at the new Port of Portland office building recycles grey and black water for reuse in the building's toilets and cooling towers.

Port of Portland Open House

Saturday, June 5, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Tour the Port's new office building and the Living Machine

Take the Trimet Red Line MAX to the airport! Free all-day MAX pass to people who take Trimet to the event. If traveling by car, parking in the long-term lot will be validated for event guests.



200 wells provide ground source heating & cooling for the building.

Students on the Slough

By Megan Hansen

“Are alligators gonna come out of the Slough to get us?”

While students are unlikely to see alligators at Whitaker Ponds this spring, they will see plenty of paddles, binoculars, and PFDs. This year marks the 9th year that City of Portland Environmental Services’ Clean Rivers Education Program and Slough School have teamed up with adventure outfitter, NW Discoveries to offer paddle trips for students of the watershed during *Canoe the Slough* week. Students who have worked extensively with the Clean Rivers Education and Slough School programs and who have completed a stewardship project are rewarded with a paddle on Whitaker Slough.

Since its inception, more than 1,500 students have learned about their watershed *from the water* during the annual Canoe the Slough week. For many students, this is their first time on a boat.

Students learn how to safely get in a canoe, hold a paddle, and make strokes—hopefully in the same direction as their classmates. They play hopscotch with great blue heron, catch glimpses of turtles, listen to flocks of cedar waxwings, and see first hand how native shrubs and trees, like the ones they planted, help shade the water. Some years, students compete to see how much garbage they can collect from the slough.

But won’t they fall in? Ken Barker, owner of NW Discoveries devised an ingenious bimiran system-- a set of two



Prior stewardship projects = one great reward for Slough School students.

canoes strapped together to provide both stability and a way to get more people on the water at a time. Ken has been a long supporter of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council and brings his knowledgeable guides and bimirans to other Council events like Explorando and Aquifer Adventure.

Anticipation of alligators may have marked the beginning of their trip, but comments like *“I never knew the slough was so beautiful”* and *“I didn’t want to get out of the boat!”* or *“I got to see an osprey...I’ve never seen one of those before”* are what students tell us at the end of a Canoe the Slough paddle. Boats, students and the Slough. What a great classroom!



For many students, their Canoe the Slough experience is the first time they have been on a boat.

The Council and longtime partner NW Discoveries use canoe bimirans—two canoes strapped together with boards—to provide extra stability for new paddlers on the Slough. Bimirans allow the Council to encourage infants and grandparents to enjoy the Slough at Canoe the Slough Week and many summer events.

Burglary at Whitaker Ponds

By Melissa Sandoz

On the evening of Wednesday May 19th, the Council's storage sheds at Whitaker Ponds were burglarized. The thieves wrenched the locks off of four different storage sheds or bins, and stole over \$1000 worth of materials. They took:

- 2 Prodigy kayaks, red and tangerine (that were purchased last year to replace the kayaks that were stolen in spring 2009)
- 4 kayak paddles
- 3 weedwhackers
- 4 10x10' tents
- 2-4 life jackets
- And various smaller items

We'll need to replace all of these items within the next few weeks to stay on track with a number of projects & events. If you'd like to help us, please consider donating your gently used items, or making a contribution. You can donate online at www.columbiaslough.org or by mailing a check to our office:

Columbia Slough Watershed Council
7040 NE 47th Ave
Portland, OR 97218

Thank you for your support! We appreciate your donations and in-kind assistance. And if you happen to see our kayaks, please let us know so we can call the police!



This 10' Prodigy kayak and an identical one (except orange) were stolen from the Council on May 19th. We will need to replace these kayaks before our summer events.

Meet Our New Outreach Intern

By Melissa Sandoz



New Outreach Intern Dana Kleinhesselink

The Council will be joined this summer by a new LINKS AmeriCorps member, Dana Kleinhesselink. Dana will be helping with the Council's summer events, including volunteer recruitment and event registrations. Dana comes to the Council with a BA in Rhetoric & Media Studies from Willamette University in Salem. Dana also has spent time at El Instituto de la Naturaleza y Sociedad in Oaxaca, Mexico. In addition to her studies, Dana is also a founding member of the Willamette Dance Company at Willamette University.

If you'd like to contact Dana about volunteering this summer, or signing up for the Regatta, you can email her at events@columbiaslough.org or call her at 503-956-8558.

Moving into our New Workspace

By Jane Van Dyke

The new *Watershed Education Center* is a reality - almost. For the past year, the Columbia Slough Watershed Council has been working to renovate the former Bunn house, an unoccupied building at Whitaker Ponds, into our new *Watershed Education Center*. The center consists of 1600 square feet of space, twice the size of our current office, including a multipurpose room with a separate entrance, three offices, accessible ramp and door, kitchen/staff area, and storage space.



New windows and security bars were installed this spring at the new Watershed Education Center at Whitaker Ponds Nature Park. New doors are also being installed.

We will be moving into the new Watershed Education Center this June. Our current office is scheduled to be demolished on July 1st, so we need to be entirely moved out by June 30th.

Share your renovation skills, demonstrate your painting abilities and show off your muscles moving boxes; contact Jane at 503.281.1132 to schedule a time to come out or plan to attend a volunteer work party. Also, you could make a financial contribution. Visit our website at www.columbiaslough.org to find out about scheduled volunteer work party days or to make a contribution.

We look forward to welcoming you to our new building!

The Council is moving! You can help us move bins and boxes anytime on Monday June 28th, or check our website for other opportunities to help out.

Thanks to a generous Grassroots Grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust, a contribution from the Oregon Community Foundation from a donor designated fund, and contributions from other organizations, businesses, and individuals, we raised the funds to begin the renovation. Local architect David Kennedy created a plan and display board. He has also managed our change of occupancy application. We are also working with Nicolle Gardiner, a recent graduate in design, for interior changes. Numerous volunteers helped with demolition, removing carpets, scraping off wallpaper, and sheetrock repairs. Projects completed include restoration of electrical service, plumbing repairs, refinishing of hardwood floors, new flooring in the multipurpose room and kitchen/staff area, installation of new windows, ceiling insulation, cleaning the roof and deck, two new exterior doors, and painting. Recently, IKEA notified us that we will receive donated services from their designers and furniture and furnishings. We are planning for the Center to serve the Council and staff for many years to come.



New Forbo marmoleum floors were installed in the multipurpose room and in the kitchen. Existing hardwood floors were refinished in the large office, and new hard surface floors will be installed in the two smaller offices.

GET INVOLVED!

Volunteer at Stewardship Saturdays!

On the second Saturday of each month, from 9am until 12pm, volunteers gather to do great things for the Slough! Here's what's happening next month:

Stewardship Saturday, June 12th

9:00am—12:00pm

Whitaker Ponds Nature Park, 7040 NE 47th Ave, Portland OR 97218

Help the Council maintain our wildflower meadow by planting additional wildflower plants. Pollinators of all shapes and sizes will thank you for providing a much-needed food source! Wildflower species include pearly everlasting, trailing blackberry, lupine, and honeysuckle.

To RSVP: Call (503) 281-1132 or email nathaniel.talbot@columbiaslough.org

Mark your calendar for more Stewardship Saturday fun!

July 10 (Great Slough Clean Up)



7040 NE 47th Avenue
Portland, OR 97218

Phone: 503-281-1132
www.columbiaslough.org

Jane Van Dyke, Executive Director
Melissa Sandoz, Outreach Director
Sheilagh Diez, Education Director
Nathaniel Talbot, Stewardship Coordinator
Sophie Perillo, Education Intern
Dana Kleinbesselink, Outreach Intern

Summer Events

For more information about Columbia Slough Watershed Council events, visit our website at www.columbiaslough.org.

Explorando El Columbia Slough

Sabado, el 19 de junio (Saturday June 19th), 1pm—5pm

Whitaker Ponds Nature Park, 7040 NE 47th Ave, Portland

¡Celebremos la naturaleza en la ciudad y el ambiente del Columbia Slough! Este festival bilingüe de la familia y el medio ambiente ofrece actividades en español y inglés para todas las edades. (Celebrate nature in the city and the environment of the Columbia Slough! This bilingual family environmental festival offers activities in Spanish and English for all ages.)

Columbia Slough Regatta

Sunday, July 25, 9am—1pm

Multnomah County Drainage Districts, 1880 NE Elrod Dr, Portland

Join the largest one-day paddle in Oregon and canoe in search of eagles, otters, and turtles! Launch into the safe slack water of the Columbia Slough and enjoy a free t-shirt and hands-on nature activities. Bring your own boat anytime, or make a reservation for a complimentary 45-minute rental at www.columbiaslough.org or 503-956-8558. \$7 suggested donation.

Council Wish List

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is on the hunt for:

- Well-functioning Binoculars
- Recreational Kayaks
- Kayak Paddles
- Weedwhackers
- Extension Cords
- Power Strips
- 10x10' Tents
- Paddling Dry Bags

If you have something in good condition to donate, please