

# 2007 Nature in Neighborhoods Grants Program Communications Plan

## DRAFT

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#### **1. Overview**

The Nature in Neighborhoods grant program enters the second and final year of the \$1 million program to fund neighborhood restoration, education and conservation projects. In its first year, the grant program awarded \$560,000 to 28 local organizations for 32 projects throughout the region.

Recipients included private citizens, citizen groups, businesses, non-profit organizations, school groups, neighborhoods, government agencies and service groups. Projects focused on restoration, conservation education and other innovative ways to motivate communities to protect the nature of our region.

The grant program is part of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative, the Metro Council's long-term effort to conserve and restore nature throughout the urban area. The initiative aligns existing and new conservation efforts by private non-profits, governments and property owners to ensure that every citizen in the region has access to nature.

#### **2. Situation Analysis**

In the 2007 cycle, the Metro Council will award \$360,000 using methodology similar to the 2006 process. The funds originate from the Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve, which consists of excise taxes collected on solid waste disposal.

The Metro Council has aligned the grant program with the region's solid waste industry, whose commitment to improve disposal standards supports the restoration, enhancement and protection of the region's natural areas. Applicants are encouraged to make use of the grants with the assistance or cooperation of their local waste haulers.

#### **3. Communications Goals and Objectives**

The focus of the grants program is to fund community-based, neighborhood and larger-scale, multi-partner projects that link participants and citizens to their watershed through education and active restoration. This may include including removal of invasive plant species, site restoration, clean-up of existing illegal dump sites, parks and natural areas, and planting to enhance watershed health.

The main communications goals are:

1. to inform residents of the region about the ongoing need to protect and improve natural areas within and adjacent to the metropolitan area,

2. to encourage residents to take an active part in retaining, enhancing or restoring nature in their neighborhoods
3. to call attention to the grant program in order to garner support for its continuation beyond 2007.

#### **4. Key messages**

- Metro has made these grants available via funding from the solid waste rate program,
- the grants are a major component of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative,
- the grants will maintain, enhance or restore nature in neighborhoods throughout the region
- grants will be awarded to a diverse group of recipients, from small neighborhood groups to non-profit organizations,
- projects will enhance Metro's efforts to protect regionally significant natural areas and safeguard water quality.

#### **5. Spokespersons**

- all Metro Councilors
- 2006 grantees
- 2007 grantees
- appropriate scientists and other experts
- representatives of conservation groups
- neighbors to 2006 projects
- local elected officials
- appropriate local jurisdiction representatives

#### **6. Communications Tools**

- news releases (see timeline)
- Nature in Neighborhoods fact sheets and/or position papers
- calls to targeted media outlets
- talking points
- councilor presentations to city councils within Metro boundary
- power point presentations
- Metro website
- information sent to conservation group publications
- email blasts

#### **7. Target Audiences**

- current and future applicants
- citizen groups
- businesses
- non-profit organizations
- school groups
- neighborhoods

- city councils
- service groups
- media
- general public

\*\*\*\*Solid waste industry

- as represented through SWAC membership

Jurisdictions and public service partners

- as councilors report out at city hall meetings
- elected officials (and staff): neighboring cities' mayors and councils, county elected officials, state legislators from the region, federal elected officials;
- public agency officials: GPAC, local government and private planners and planning directors, local government environmental departments and resource agencies (such as Clackamas County Water Environment Services, Clean Water Services, City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, etc.),

Influential opinion leaders in the development, planning and real estate community:

- Homebuilders Association of Metropolitan Portland (Jim McCauley - Vice President for Government Affairs, Ernie Platt - Past President Director of Local Government Affairs, Kevin Curry - Director of Communications & Public Relations, others as appropriate)
- Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors (Jane Leo – Governmental Affairs Director)
- Private planning organizations (Parametrix, David Evans, etc.)

The environmental community:

- Non-profit, conservation based organizations, such as Earth Advantage, the Cascadia Region Green Building Council, the Energy Trust of Oregon
- PSU Urban Greenspaces Institute (Mike Houck – Director)

Other grant makers

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (w/Metro)
- Bureau of Environmental Services
- Oregon State Parks (for trails, local work via funds from Measure 66, and funds from RV license fees and available to counties as well as Metro)

Local print, broadcast and electronic media, including weblogs, and specific community newspapers:

- Oregonian
- Portland Tribune
- Daily Journal of Commerce
- Skanner Newspaper
- St. Johns Sentinel
- Wilsonville Spokesman
- Hillsboro Argus
- Beaverton Valley Times
- The Bee
- Clackamas Review

- East County News
- Estacada News
- Forest Grove NewsTimes
- Gresham Outlook
- Lake Oswego Review
- Oregon City News
- Sherwood Gazette
- Southwest Community Connection
- Tigard Times
- Tualatin Times
- West Linn Tidings
- KGW – Vince Patton
- KEX radio
- KXL radio
- KOPB radio

### **8. Communications Opportunities**

Opportunities to relay the grant program intent, message and status have occurred beginning with the announcement of the program in 2006, and will continue through the completion of every individual grant project. For the 2007 grant round, these activities included:

#### Announcement of program

- Two news releases and targeted media calls for the first round of grants resulted in the following media coverage:
  - Dec. 26 Hillsboro Argus “Nature in Neighborhoods initial deadline Jan. 18”
  - Jan. 4 Beaverton Valley Times “Metro grants could give Beaverton-area creeks new life”
  - Jan. 17 KEX radio Rod Park conducts interview about deadline extension
  - Jan. 18 Beaverton Valley Times “Metro extends Nature in Neighborhoods grant deadline”
- Stories in councilor newsletters in October/November 2006 and repeated in January 2007
- Email blast to 4,000 interested parties, including conservation organizations
- Updated page on Metro website

#### Post-award strategy

- general news release about grant program and awards to overall media outlets
- individual news releases tailored to council districts to include quote from councilor and perhaps a local 2006 recipient
- releases to be sent to targeted media
- calls to targeted reporters about individual grants per councilor/council district,
- interviews and photo opportunities with each councilor and awardees at one or more of the sites
- story in councilor newsletters announcing awards
- informal congratulatory gathering at Metro with all councilors and awardees
- email to original list to notify them of awards and to inform them of confirmed efforts to expand program for one or more years.

Ongoing communications strategy

- media coverage on all individual projects with appropriate councilors as they unfold; to be expected through 2009 and beyond.

**9. Recap of media coverage (2006 and 2007 round)**

**2006**

May 12	Oregonian	Metro lining up land for acquisition (NiN grants mentioned)
May 16	Hillsboro Argus	Metro Council awards \$560,000 in “Nature in Neighborhoods” grants
May 18	Oregonian	Metro’s grants advance habitat protection plans
May 18	Oregonian	Nature’s good neighbors
May 25	Beaverton Valley Times	Natural areas get their due with Metro grants
May 28	Oregonian	Allowing grey areas lets Metro push green (NiN grants mentioned)
August 1	East County News	Footbridge and pathway coming to Wilkes neighborhood
September 5	Portland Tribune	Outstanding in their field (Three Creeks)
September 21	Oregonian	Campaign takes aim at campers, trash piles (Three Creeks)
November 2	Beaverton Valley Times	Metro opens 2 <sup>nd</sup> round of Nature in Neighborhoods grants
November 7	Hillsboro Argus	Metro opens second round of Nature in Neighborhoods grants
November 15	West Linn Tidings	Volunteers work to clear trees from West Linn natural area (TNC Camassia Oak project)
December 26	Hillsboro Argus	Nature in Neighborhoods initial deadline Jan. 18

**2007**

January 4	Beaverton Valley Times	Metro grants could give Beaverton-area creeks new life
January 4	Sherwood Gazette	Volunteers take a hack at blackberry bushes
January 18	Beaverton Valley Times	Metro extends “Nature in Neighborhoods” grant deadline
January 18	Oregonian	Neighbors seek grant to tame wild park
January 24	Clackamas Review	Healing Three Creeks
February 15	Beaverton Valley Times	Neighbors invest in creek bank
March 29	Sherwood Gazette	Planting for the future

**10. Timeline**

DATE	TASK	STAFF	COUNCILOR
10/27/2006	Grant pre-application information added to Metro website	Harlan	none
10/30/2006	News release to announce grant program	Kane	Park
November 2006	First story on grant pre-applications in council newsletters	Kane	All councilors
12/20/2006	Second news release to notify of deadline	Kane	none
01/01/2007	Second story in councilor newsletters	Kane	All councilors
01/18/2007	News release send to notify of deadline extension because of adverse weather Radio interview (KEX) on same	Kane	Park
01/18/2007	Website with deadline extension updated	Kane	n/a
01/22/2007	Grant applications due by 4 p.m.		n/a
2/23/07	E-notice of final application to prospective awardees	Geddes	n/a
3/2/07	Final grant notice on website, phone notifications and e-mail	Geddes	n/a
4/5/07	Grant applications due by 4 p.m.		n/a
4/10/07	Grant copies distributed to readers and Councilor Park	Geddes, readers	Park, Hosticka
4/23/07	Grant readers meet for screening of final apps	Geddes	none

5/1/07	Staff present recommendations to Councilor Park	Geddes, Triplett	Park, Hosticka
tbd	Presentation at SWAC meeting on status of work	Geddes, Kane	Harrington
After 5/15/07	Update website final awards	Kane	
After 5/15/07	Resolution of intent to award contracts to selected applicants; public announcement of awards	Triplett	Park
One week prior to award	Deliver draft news release to each councilor (multiple versions targeted to individual media outlets)	Kane	all
After 5/15/07	Notice of award out to recipients	Geddes	Park
Day of awards	General news release about awards to media	Kane	All councilors
Day of awards (tbd)	Individual news releases to local media and calls to targeted reporters about individual grants per councilor/council district; calls to radio stations	Kane	All councilors, Park
June 2007	Story in council newsletters on final awards	Kane	All councilors
June 2007	Story in Greenscene on awards program and final awards	Kane	
Summer to fall 2007	Councilors report out to jurisdictions as appropriate in each district	Kane	All councilors
July 2007	Contracts out for signature	Geddes	
ongoing	media coverage on all individual projects with appropriate councilors as they unfold; to be expected through 2008 and beyond. (schedule interviews and photo opportunities for awardees and appropriate councilors at sites)	Kane	All councilors