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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

Improving the health of Portland's Greater Forest Park ecosystem benefits not only the 15,000 acres of forested landscape, but also the health of the residents in and around Portland, OR. Oregon Department of Forestry is just one of many partners who have played a key role in establishing an innovative and collaborative approach to increasing the amount of healthy, diverse and sustainable forest conditions in a priority landscape.

Near the heart of downtown Portland lies a regional ecological treasure, the Greater Forest Park Ecosystem. The Greater Forest Park Ecosystem consists of 5,200-acre Forest Park owned by the City of Portland, over 1,100 acres of adjacent natural areas owned by public and nonprofit organizations, and over 8,600 acres of private land. These 15,000 acres provide critical ecosystem services to a growing urban population. However, the long-term ecological health of this landscape is threatened due to invasive plants, habitat loss, and fragmentation due to urban growth. This project will implement a portion of the Greater Forest Park Conservation Initiative (GFPCI), a 20-year strategy created to protect and restore this important landscape.

The short-term goals of this project are to advance the GFPCI using a landscape scale collaborative approach, where grant partners will deliver restoration activities and educational programs that will improve the health of the regional ecosystem. The long-term goals of this project are to protect and improve water quality, protect biodiversity corridors, maintain and improve forests, and build strong community support for the long-term health of the GFPCI.

While maintaining and building the health of Greater Forest Park relies on fostering collaborative and aligned partnerships between many land-owning and land-managing partners, it is also imperative to keep as many resource management decisions as possible transparent to the residents of the Portland Metro area. Their continued support and trust is key to the long-term vision of this area. One way to increase the effectiveness of collaboration is to design interactions between partners that allow for fun social opportunities, as well as work-related, short- and long-term visioning meetings. These "chunks of positively-spent social time" can make partnerships stronger, more successful, and last longer.



Landowners in Greater Forest Park area removing invasive weeds and establishing native plants. *Photo Credit: Michael Ahr.*



Portland volunteers removing ivy from trees in Portland's Forest Park. *Photo Credit: Michael Ahr.*

Raising awareness and motivating community members to take action is key. Volunteers have long been active in restoration activities, such as vine removal and tree planting. In addition, large wildfires near the City of Portland in 2017 increased the desire for fire preparedness in and around the Greater Forest Park area. Voluntary fuel reduction efforts by nearby communities will increase the area's resiliency to fire, and expand the options for meaningful community engagement with the long-term health of the Greater Forest Park Ecosystem.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Oregon Department of Forestry, Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program
<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/ForestBenefits>