

LAKE OSWEGO

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas System Plan

Meeting Summary	Natural Resources Focus Group Meeting
Date	11/18/10
Location	West End Building, Sandy Room

Meeting Agenda and Overview

Ryan Mottau of MIG, Inc. welcomed participants and introduced the Parks Plan 2025. The introduction included an overview of the meeting objectives and agenda. Participants introduced themselves and identified which natural area or topic they represented.

With the group being small, the meeting consisted primarily of an informal, open group discussion about the history, challenges, ideas and needs of friends groups and natural resource advocates in Lake Oswego.

At the end of the meeting, participants were thanked for their time and input and encouraged to fill out the on-line questionnaire and to reach out to others in the community to get involved with the project.

Group Discussion

Participants identified the following **key challenges** with current parks and recreation programs:

- There is a perception that much attention is lavished on the Luscher Farm area to the detriment of other sites
- There are very limited resources, both organizational and financial to apply to natural area management
- City's process limits the ability of volunteers to help (there was general agreement that some management is needed but the paperwork process for a volunteer project was considered a barrier)
- In some natural areas steep slopes and lack of access make management difficult
- Everyone is glad that the capital bonds allowed for the acquisition of so much natural land, but no accompanying maintenance funding was identified

Friends of Springbrook Park is considered one of a few **good models** that can be applied in Lake Oswego. This friends group thinks that their success is rooted in:

- Connection to the neighborhood association, which provides ongoing organizational support and access to new volunteers
- Completion of a management plan, with the assistance of Stephanie Wagner
- Partnership with the School District and the immediately adjacent school
- Sustained effort, picking off small areas year after year.
- The group is able to raise some funds and has made a connection to allow the purchase of native plant material at wholesale cost.

Another model mentioned in the discussion was the West Willamette Partnership in Portland. This group has made good progress combining the funding, volunteer efforts and technical expertise of:

- The City of Portland staff
- OHSU
- Friends groups
- Business partners

However, this type of partnership requires coordination that can really only happen at the city staff level.

The group identified several important **resources** that the City has and can take advantage of:

- Megan Bigjohn, natural area maintenance, has been a big help
- Extensive local volunteer/professional expertise
- School District service requirements and interest
- Springbrook Management Plan as a model that could be replicated

Many of the natural areas could benefit from **stewardship programs** aimed at the community at large and at neighboring property owners. Ideas included:

- Naming site stewards
- Adopting 20 feet behind your fence line
- Backyard habitat programs
- Education aimed at neighbors and neighborhood associations about how to improve sites

Finally there were a number of **other thoughts** that could be useful to future planning:

- There is a natural area in nearly every neighborhood
- City utility projects should result in enhancements not damage to City natural areas
- Many natural areas have other features that are of interest, from historic significance to recreation possibilities
- Many of the smallest “natural” sites could be disposed of, but it would be best if any resources went back to improve other natural sites in the area.
- Provide connections throughout the system to enhance access.

* The Friends of Luscher Farm Group was not able to attend, a later meeting was held with the group and any comments associated to the Parks Plan 2025 were added to this summary.