

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Mt. Tabor Park (FMTP)

The 2013 *Annual Report for the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park* identifies significant accomplishments as well as challenges. FMTP strives to build strong relationships with many city agencies, local organizations, and other “friends” groups. Thank you for your past support, and we look forward to future discussions on ways we can help to better serve the public in Mt Tabor Park. The current FMTP Co-chairs, Mary Kinnick and Beau Russell, may be reached on the FMTP cell phone: 503-512-0816 or a message may be left via email at taborfriends@gmail.com. Our web site is: www.taborfriends.org.

FMTP Purpose

FMTP was founded by interested citizens in early 2000 with the completion of the Mt. Tabor Park Master Plan. FMTP is a 501(3) non-profit organization. The purpose of FMTP “shall be to improve and/or help maintain Mt. Tabor Park for the benefit of individuals, organizations and the Park Bureau of the City of Portland, to identify and solve problems and participate in park projects. FMTP works with the Park Bureau, Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association and other neighborhood, community, and user groups to monitor park use and operation, support effective management and maintenance of the park, and the vision and goals of the January 2000 Mt. Tabor Park Master Plan.” (FMTP Bylaws, updated March 19, 2013).

Special Awards and Memberships

- At the FMTP Annual Meeting/Winter Program held on March 19th at the Western Seminary, Beau and Nancy Russell, who had recently completed two years as coordinators of the FMTP Foot Patrol and are backbone members of the Friends, received FMTP’s highest award-**Friend of the Year**.
- Bipartisan Cafe owners, Hobie Bender and Peter Emerson, received the Honorary FMTP Membership Award for providing pies sold at the summer concerts with profits going to FMTP.
- The annual meeting also included the election of new board members, Bing Wong, long-time MTNA member, and Anne Crispino-Taylor, creator and organizer of the Tar’n’Trail Fun Run/Walk.

Volunteer Efforts and Accomplishments

FMTP Continues to provide hundreds of hours of volunteer service particularly through the Foot Patrol, the Weed Warriors, and Visitor Center. Total volunteer hours for the year were Foot Patrol-1,036, Weed Warriors-2,001, and Visitor Center-1,051, **for a total of 4,008 volunteer hours, or the equivalent of 1 full-time employee working for 100.2 weeks.**

Foot Patrol - Beau Russell, Coordinator

Our Foot Patrol volunteers have ended another outstanding year of working to keep the park clean and safe. As park ambassadors, we are also the eyes and ears for the park, our motto being, "Observe, record, and report." I want to thank all our members who showed up for patrols, assisted at events, and supported the effort to keep Mt. Tabor Park the gem it is.

Foot Patrol Stats for 2013:

Total number of members.....	55
Total number of foot patrols (3,322 over past 13 years).....	180
Total hours for foot patrol members	1,036
On patrol.....	533
Meetings and Administration.....	248
Summer Concerts in the Park.....	133
Trees of Mt. Tabor Park Project.....	122

Looking Ahead at 2014:

We will continue working with PP&R, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and the Portland Police Bureau to reduce car prowl incidents and vandalism in the park. We'd like to think our efforts over the past year have contributed to the decline in these incidents.

Challenges for 2014:

The cuts to the 2014 budget for PP&R and the elimination of on-site Water Bureau Security do pose some real challenges. The Foot Patrol will be ready to respond, as we are able, to the reduction in park services and security by continuing to work in partnership with Portland Parks to help keep Mt Tabor Park a pristine and safe destination.

Visitor Center - Dave Hillman, Coordinator

Wow!! The turnout we've had at the Park Visitor Center is truly fantastic. We've been open now for 26 months starting in November of 2011, and the visitors keep increasing every year. We've now passed the 12,000 mark, with over 6,000 of the visitors stopping

by just this past year. Mt Tabor Park is truly a "destination park," with visitors coming from all over the United States and the rest of the world. Stop sometime and just look at the maps we have where visitors can place a pin showing the location of their residence or home. I guess that it is proof that many families come to visit their relatives who have relocated to this great part of the country. The Visitor Center also has an increasing array of items of interest such as the DVD's donated by Oregon Public Broadcasting and the series entitled "*Oregon Experience*", and the 1858 lithograph print of Portland. We also have a growing collection of free brochures and pamphlets donated by Metro with a focus on gardening, landscaping, flowers, and lawn care. We also have several new and/or revised brochures with a focus just on Mt Tabor Park including an updated Mt Tabor Park Timeline, a Tree Walk brochure, a new Native Plant Guide, and a new colorful brochure just on Mt Tabor Park. Please stop by and check out our growing Visitor Center; we're open just about every weekend and often a few weekday mornings each month.

Challenges for 2014:

We are concerned, that due to the high volume of visitors we are currently experiencing, and given the space now available, we won't be able to adequately accommodate and serve them in the future.

Weed Warriors - Mary Kinnick, Coordinator

The Weed Warriors continued to remove invasive vegetation manually from areas on the northeast side of the park, working closely with staff from Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) and the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES)--Tabor to the River. A special highlight this year was the recognition accorded our Volunteer Service Coordinator **Alexa Todd** by The Intertwine—The Force of Nature Young Professional Award.

Highlights are:

- Sufficient removal of invasive vegetation in an area below Harvey Scott Circle enabling the planting in January of 847 native plants
- A high number of organizations contributing volunteers to the effort, including Hands On Portland, SOLVE, ADP, Chirpify, Warner Pacific College, Lewis & Clark College incoming freshmen, Reed College SEEDS, Timbers Stand Together, Grant High School Key Club, and Portland Community College-Southeast students in an environmental biology class
- Total volunteer hours—2001 (1869.75 in 2012), the equivalent of 1 full-time employee for 50 weeks
- Last Saturday of the month service projects and Parke Diem

- average of 32 volunteers per project, somewhat down from 2012 (2012-42, 2011-37, 2010-27) *but with a greater number of repeat volunteers and a high quality of focused work clearing regrowth and mulching seedlings*
- total number of volunteers for Saturday and Parke Diem service projects—259 (up from 191 in 2010; 294 in 2011 and 336 in 2012)
- 14 crew leaders (5 new, 9 continuing) trained to supervise the volunteers (and given special t-shirts with funding from FMTP)
- Funding from FMTP and Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) enabling the continuation of part-time Volunteer Service Coordinator (VSC) Alexa Todd and the purchase of many needed tools and supplies (supported by funds from a BES grant from the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District)
- BES, Portland Parks and Recreation and FMTP committed continued funding of the VSC for FY14 and most likely over the following three fiscal years
- Adoption of an updated Memorandum of Understanding with Portland Parks & Recreation-City Nature, that is guiding the work of PP&R and the Weed Warriors along with adoption of an updated Declaration of Cooperation with BES
- Joint planning for habitat restoration through June 1, 2017, by partners FMTP, BES, PP&R, and the Water Bureau
- Students, as part of an environmental biology class at PCC-Southeast taught by faculty member (and Weed Warrior crew leader) Alexie McNerthney, collected data from Mt. Tabor Park for a research project to compare insect diversity and abundance in invasive and native plant areas; results indicate areas dominated by native plants contain greater diversity of insects
- Participation in Sunday Parkways SE with an information booth and the first annual Parke Diem city wide volunteer event sponsored by Portland Parks Foundation
- Special donations by KIND healthy snacks and Flying Pie Pizza (SE Stark)

Thanks to crew leaders Tony Cole, Brad Copenhaver, Carolyn Dixon, Nora Hanna, Mary Kinnick, Jeff Lesh, Monique Leslie, Darvel Lloyd, Gayle Marechal, Alexie McNerthney, George Monacelli, Chris Olinger, Eli Ritchie, and Ellen Simmons. A special thanks to Dick Anderson for volunteering his pickup truck for our projects and to birding expert Tom McNamara for serving on our Advisory Committee. Thanks also to the outstanding leadership of VSC Alexa Todd; PP&R-City Nature East (CNE) Stewardship Coordinator Susan Hawes; the strong continuing support from Naomi Tsurumi and her colleagues at BES (Ryan Durocher and Ken Finney); PP&R East Services Zone Parks Maintenance Supervisor (PMS), Louie Guerrero; CNE Natural Areas Supervisor (NAS) Lynn Barlow; Park Technician, Johannes Venghaus; and PP&R-CNE Ecologist, Mart Hughes.

Challenges for 2014:

Maintaining the close communication and collaboration established with staff with PP&R and BES as we carry out a multifaceted joint plan to restore native habitat to the park

Planning for the end of BES involvement in 2017 when FMTP and PP&R will assume full responsibility for continuing habitat restoration efforts that are needed; more Weed Warrior resources may be needed to increase community education and volunteer capacity

Vigilance in spotting new kinds of invasive vegetation moving into areas cleared of longstanding invasive vegetation and with agency partners taking steps to eradicate them.

Trails

Trails Committee Chair Beau Russell has been trying to find ways volunteers can partner-up with Park's staff to help maintain Mt. Tabor Park's trail systems. In doing so, he has been in contact with PP&R/City Nature and Hands on Greater Portland in order to recruit groups of volunteers to help with monthly trail maintenance projects.

Other Service

- Parking, security, and informational support by Foot Patrol members for the four July Concerts in the Park
- Pie sales (with pies from Bipartisan Café) at the Concert series—thanks go to Bertha Guptill and her volunteers for selling out the pies!
- Enhanced access to FMTP-related information via a Facebook page created and maintained by Martrese White and the FMTP website maintained and enhanced by Frank Gorshe (go to www.taborfriend.org)
- Board member leadership and the many volunteer hours board members spent attending meetings and carrying out a myriad of responsibilities on behalf of FMTP members
- Creation of a new Mt. Tabor Park Native Plant Guide by Alexa Todd with help and support from many, currently available in the Visitor Center; the guide follows each of the three trails in the park and gives pictures and information about various native plants that may be found along the way
- With the completion of the Trees of Mt Tabor Park Trail project, 57 numbered trail marker posts identifying various trees were installed. Tree Guide Brochures, available in the Visitor Center, provide corresponding tree information. Volunteers from the Foot Patrol, Weed Warriors, Visitor Center, and other FMTP members working with PP&R made this possible.

- On October 12th FMTP opened the Visitor Center and conducted a Weed Warrior service project in order to participate in the 1st annual Parke Diem city-wide volunteer service event sponsored by the Portland Parks Foundation.

Funding

Due to generous membership giving, the Tar ‘n’ Trails Run/Walk event, the first ever Songbird Cafe’s benefit for Mt. Tabor Park, pie sales, donations, and purchases made at the Visitor Center, FMTP was able to fund the construction of a raised wood walkway helping dogs and their humans to traverse a wet muddy area in the Off-Leash Dog Park. Funds were also allocated to support the Weed Warrior program including the part-time Weed Warrior Volunteer Service Coordinator and needed supplies and tools. We also funded and worked with PP&R to install bike racks near the new Community Garden and Dog Park entrance at SE Lincoln.

Major funding is currently on hold for the completion of a one-sided railing on the grand stairway on the northeast side of the park. Portland Parks has issued a moratorium on new projects involving outside funding until it can make more progress on its large maintenance backlog. The stairway railing, which continues as FMTP’s top priority for funding for 2014, will enable greater park access and ensure safety among its diversity of users.

Membership and Services

As of December 31, 2013, membership stood at 159, with renewals still coming in; the proposed new Bylaws have changed membership to run from Jan. 1 to Dec.31 (rather than July 1 to June 31), with renewal notices going out each December. We also provide the following to our membership:

- FMTP Newsletter (semi-annual) – sent electronically to all FMTP members in February & July (and in-mail copies to those requesting it); coordinated by Gayle Marechal and edited by Sue Sell
- Membership/Winter Program Meeting held March 19, 2013 - our 13th Annual Meeting/Annual Winter Program (open to the public). A special thanks to Board member Gayle Marechal for serving as the main organizer of the event and to our hosts at Western Seminary
- Annual FMTP Picnic (potluck) for members and friends of “Friends” was held August 14th in Picnic Area A in the park; it was very well attended with an estimated 50 folks participating, including Senator Jackie Dinfelder, Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer and PP&R Director Mike Abbaté. Thanks to Suzanne McCarthy who did an excellent job in organizing the event.

- **Phyllis Weih** continues to serve as the FMTP Archivist

Products

Carol Baumann served as the products manager consulting with both Dave Hillman, Visitor Center, and Isabelle Zifcak of Mt. Tabor Realty at SE 69th & SE Belmont about which and how many products to purchase and sell (t-shirts & sweatshirt with FMTP logo, note cards, etc.); products are available at both locations

Publicity

FMTP is always looking for ways to keep the community informed of what we have planned and about all the good work we do.

- Articles to the Southeast Examiner—thank you editor Nancy Tannler
- Enhanced website at www.taborfriends.org --thank you Frank Gorshe
- Weed Warrior Facebook page—thank you Alexa Todd
- FMTP Facebook page—thank you Martrese White

Challenges/Concerns

This report concludes with the identification of a number of challenges that warrant our attention. We welcome members and others who care about Mt. Tabor Park to suggest ideas to help address these challenges and to identify new ones we may be neglecting. We look forward to conversations with Parks' and other City staff as we work together to address these challenges.

- The impact of five years of significant cuts by the City from Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) budgets; FMTP continues its commitment to work closely with PP&R personnel to identify how FMTP can best help with its support, through efforts by volunteers and the investment of FMTP funds in park improvement projects, and in other ways.
- The need to increase Weed Warrior program capacity in FY15 and FY16 and beyond to extend and maintain natural habitat restoration work accomplished by Bureau of Environmental Services between 2011 and 2017
- Completion of a one-sided railing on the grand stairway on the northeast side of the park which will be funded by FMTP but is on hold due to Park's moratorium.

- The poor and deteriorating (and in some cases, unstable) condition of many of the 90 historic lamps; replacement will be very expensive; (another possible priority for a future bond measure?)
- The damage by illegal off-trail biking that causes soil erosion and decreases the safety of others in the park; signage in the park helps in part to address the issue, but more public education about the problem and engagement of the cycling community is needed to reduce the problem.
- Reducing the incidence of car prowls and break-ins, with our Foot Patrol working with the Office of Neighborhood Involvement and Portland Police Bureau to establish better means of communicating with park visitors about the problem.
- Finding ways volunteers can partner with Parks' staff to help maintain the trail system, including seeking help from area runners' organizations; more help is needed due to past PP&R budget cuts and the possibility of future cuts.
- The restoration of key vistas required in the 2000 Mt Tabor Park Master Plan; PP&R-Urban Forestry is developing a plan for such restoration throughout City parks, including Mt Tabor Park; work has begun in other parks, and we hope to be notified when work is scheduled for Mt. Tabor Park.
- Putting in place a more effective way of identifying improvement projects that could be funded by FMTP; needed is a scheduled time each year for a meeting of Board members with PP&R leadership to arrive at a list of needs, priorities and costs.
- Extending Visitor Center hours through recruitment of additional volunteers.
- The FMTP Board would like to see funding by PP&R of the SE 64th Ave. pedestrian/bike path from SE Division. This would provide an equitable access to the park by South Tabor neighbors and more and greater safety for bicyclists. We endorsed this at our November meeting as a part of our recommendation to the new SEUL Parks Committee.