



2012 Annual Report Friends of Mt. Tabor Park (FMTP)

The *2012 Annual Report for 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 our other “friends.” Thank you for your support, and we look forward to future discussions on ways we can work together for the betterment of Mt. Tabor Park. Board members 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. The Board chair, Mary Kinnick, may be reached at m.kinnick@comcast.net.

FMTP Purpose

FMTP was founded in 2000 by interested citizens and followed 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 June 8, 2008).

Special Awards and Memberships

- FMTP **Weed Warriors** received the **Sandy Diedrich Award for Environmental Stewardship, one of the Spirit of Portland Awards from the City of Portland**, at a special ceremony held October 29th. This award is considered the equivalent of an “Oscar” for volunteer and community service. Commissioner Fish presented the award.
- At the FMTP Annual Meeting/Winter Program held March 20th at Western Seminary **Nora Hanna**, one of the founders of the Weed Warriors, received FMTP’s highest award—**Friend of the Year**.
- Also at the Meeting **Mt. Tabor Middle School Cedar Lodge** received **Honorary Membership** for the service of its teachers and students in helping with natural habitat restoration efforts in the park.
- Members elected to 3-year terms on the Board were: **Gayle Marechal** (new), **Beau Russell** (continuing), and **Ellen Simmons** (new). Going off the Board were **Theodora Tsongas** and **Phyllis Weih** (who continues to serve as Archivist).

Volunteer Efforts and Accomplishments

FMTTP continues to provide hundreds of hours of volunteer service particularly through the Foot Patrol, the Weed Warriors and, most recently, the new Visitor Center. Total volunteer hours for the year were: Foot Patrol--940, Weed Warriors--1870, and Visitor Center--900 (est.), **for a total of 3710 volunteer hours or the equivalent of 1 full-time employee working for 92.75 weeks!**

Visitor Center

Opening in October 2011 the new Visitor Center has exceeded expectations in terms of number and origin of visitors, the wealth of information and services provided to visitors, and the sale of FMTTP products. Dave Hillman, the Program Coordinator and founder, provides these highlights—

- # of visitors in 2012—5180 (and 5970 since inception, Oct. 2011)
- Visitors came from 46 states and 72 non-USA locations
- 12 days with 75 or more visitors
- # of days with volunteer staffing—183
- 12 volunteers staffing the Center, 7 of them regularly
- \$1100+ in product sales (and demand appears to be increasing)
- Other services provided—answering questions re: “where is???” assisting with vehicle break-ins, locked doors, lost keys, locating lost property, operating the Lost and Found box, providing classes for kids, helping to find lost children...and more, even treats for dogs!

Thanks to volunteers Diana Adams, Virginia Church, Glenda Chaite, Dave Houghton, Gary Howarth, Barbara Lawson, Claudia Macpherson, Bob Rodgers, Ellen Simmons, Aron Stephens, John Wish and Coordinator Dave Hillman. Also a thanks to Martrese White who donated beautiful postcards that are on sale.

Foot Patrol

The Foot Patrol continues to help make the Park a safer and cleaner environment for all to enjoy. As eyes and ears for the park, its motto is: “Observe, record, report,” and it does, working closely with Portland Parks & Recreation, Police, and Water Bureau staff and officers. Nancy and Beau Russell, as Co-Coordiators, provided overall leadership with others taking on specific roles. Here are some highlights for 2012:

- 167 foot patrols (and 3142 over these past 12 years)
- 474 hours on patrol
- Total participants on the roster-56
- New participants—4
- Total volunteer hours—940 (with 182 for training and meetings, 158 for staffing summer concerts, and 126 administrative)(and over 12 years, 24,002 hrs.)

An uptick in car prowls this year found Beau and Nancy Russell, along with Visitor Center Coordinator Dave Hillman, in meet-ups with Park, Portland Police and Water Bureau staff to devise ways to reduce these incidents—more signage, leafleting park visitors and consideration of some further steps that might be taken in the future.

Weed Warriors

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 and the Bureau of Environmental Services-Tabor to the River. The Spirit of Portland Award from the City of Portland capped off a banner year. Mary Kinnick, Program Coordinator, provides these highlights:

- Sufficient removal of invasive vegetation in an area below Harvey Scott Circle enabling the planting of natives (in October—83 volunteers turned out to plant)
- A higher number of organizations contributed volunteers to the effort, including Hands On, SOLVE, Portland Youth Builders, Wells Fargo, UPS, Warner Pacific College, Mt. Tabor Middle School Cedar Lodge, Lewis & Clark incoming freshmen, Reed College SEEDS, REACH, Sunnyside Learning Center, American Field Service, Stoel Rives, LLC, Atkinson School summer program, Americorps alums, and more
- Total volunteer hours—1869.75 (equivalent of 1 full-time employee for 46 weeks)
- 18 crew leaders (5 new, 13 continuing) trained to supervise the volunteers
- Average # of volunteers at the March-October last Saturday of the month service projects—42 (up from 27 in 2010 and 37 in 2011)
- 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 much needed tools and supplies (supported by funds from a BES grant from the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District); and an indication by BES of continuing support for the VSC over the next four years
- Adoption of a 2012-2014 Memorandum of Understanding with Portland Parks & Recreation-City Nature, to guide the work of PP&R and the Weed Warriors
- Joint planning for habitat restoration through June 1, 2017 by partners FMTP, BES, PP&R and the Water Bureau

Thanks to crew leaders Tony Cole, Brad Copenhaver, Carolyn Dixon, Nora Hanna, Mary Kinnick, Chad Kula, Monique Leslie, Darvel Lloyd, Gayle Marechal, Tom McNamara, Eli Ritchie, Ellen Simmons and several others from organizations conducting special service projects. Thanks also to the leadership of VSC Alexa Todd and PP&R-City Nature East Steward Susan Hawes, the strong continuing support from Naomi Tsurumi and her colleagues at BES-Tabor to the River, and PP&R Maintenance Services Manager, Louie Guerrero, Park Technician, Johannes Venghaus, and PP&R-City Nature ecologist, Mart Hughes.

Trails

Trails Committee Chair Beau Russell worked with PP&R to have installed better and more complete signage along the Green Trail. The signage indicates that due to its limited width, most of the trail cannot accommodate cyclists as well as walkers and runners. Monitoring was continued to identify areas of soil erosion in need of attention.

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 they spent attending meetings and carrying out a myriad of responsibilities on behalf of FMTP members
- Preparation of revised FMTP Bylaws for membership review and a vote at the March 19th FMTP Annual Meeting/Winter Program; thanks to Beau Russell for leading this effort
- Development of a new Mt. Tabor Park Native Plant Guide by Alexa Todd with help and support from many; due out in Feb. or March and 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
- Beginning development of a tree identification guide by Dave Hillman, Bob Rogers and others; stay-tuned for its release in 2013 with availability in the Visitor Center

Funding

Members continued to donate generously--\$1,970 from regular annual dues with \$3,503.04 in additional donations for a total of \$5,473.04! Additional revenue came from product sales (~\$1100), the 1st Annual Tabor Trail benefit held on Sept. 23rd (5K walk or run & 10K run)--\$765, pie sales (thanks to Bipartisan Café and Bertha Guptill and her helpers)--\$399. Providence Health Systems donated the printing and folding of revised Trail map/membership brochures for distribution in the Visitor Center and at the kiosk near the parking lot on the north side of the park. FMTP overall income was \$8,687.84 and expenses \$9,981.81.

A very special thanks to Annie Crispino-Taylor and her volunteers who organized and pulled off the highly successful 1st Annual Tabor Trail fundraiser for FMTP. A large group of 83 runners and walkers turned out on a beautiful morning. Prizes, snacks and cheering greeted everyone at the finish line. A 2nd Annual event is being planned for Sunday, Sept. 15th.

And another special thanks to the Bureau of Environmental Services-Tabor to the River program for providing funds to help support the part-time Weed Warrior Volunteer Service Coordinator position--\$2398. Thank you Paul Ketchum, Naomi Tsurumi, Anne Nelson, Ryan Durocher and Ken Finney!

And, finally, thank you to photographer Martrese White for donating for sale several wonderful picture postcards of the park on sale at the Visitor Center and to Andrew Haliburton for the beautiful photographs of the park also available for sale in the Visitor Center.

FMTP funds have been used for:

- Improving park access around a park gate for three-wheelers and strollers at the top of the road coming into the park on the NE side--\$3175
- Improving the safety of the drinking fountain area located on the north side of Harvey Scott Circle (with a new drinking fountain funded by PP&R)--\$2875
- Partial funding of the part-time Weed Warrior Volunteer Service Coordinator--\$1500

- Movie in the Park (held at Warner Pacific College), the Willamette Valley Birding Trail brochure, and improved storage and heating in the Visitor Center
- Administrative expenses were again kept quite low, ~3.8% of expenses

Membership & Services

- As of December 31, 2012, membership stood at 105, with renewals still coming in; the proposed new Bylaws would change membership to run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 rather than July 1 to June 31), with renewal notices going out each October.
- FMTP Newsletter (semi-annual) – sent electronically to all FMTP members in February & July (and in-mail copies to those requesting it); coordinated by Patty Turner and edited by Sue Sell
- Membership/Winter Program Meeting March 20, 2012 - our 12th Annual Meeting/Annual Winter Program (open to the public). A special thanks to Board member Patty Turner 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” held August 14th in Picnic Area A in the park; one of the most well attended picnics held in years, with an estimated ___ in attendance, including Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Representative Alisa Keny-Guyer, and PP&R Director Mike Abbaté. Thanks to Ellen Simmons and Glenda Chaite, along with Board members, for organizing the event; and thanks to Ben & Jerry’s on Hawthorne for the donated ice cream!
- **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

- 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 four 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

- Repair of the hole in the foundation of the 71st & SE Taylor tennis courts; a safety issue
- A safety and access issue due to railing alongside the 300 + step staircase on the NE side of the park extending only part way up; completion of the railing would improve access and safety for park users, particularly for those who want to exercise by walking up all or some of the stairs but do not feel secure; the cost is estimated to be about \$20,000 to complete the railing to the top (perhaps funded by a future bond measure?)
- 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 of 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
- 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 to due to past PP&R budget cuts and the possibility of future cuts
- 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
- 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
- Finding a more effective way to return items from the Lost and Found box (outside Visitor Center); and thanks to PP&R for installing the box
- Extending Visitor Center hours through recruitment of additional volunteers
- Expanding the Visitor Center space enabling set up of a DVD player, room for selling books/periodicals, and room for a small meeting area