

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Mt. Tabor Park (FMTP)

The 2014 *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

Special Awards and Memberships

- At the FMTP Annual Meeting/Winter Program held on March 20th at the Western Seminary, Martrese White received FMTP’s highest award, **Friend of the Year** for establishing the FMTP Facebook page, various poster designs, and donation of her photographs on postcards sold at the visitor Center with proceeds to FMTP
- Election of Martrese White, Laura Mason, and Suzanne McCarthy as new 3-year term Board members and re-election of Board members Mary Kinnick and Jason Doerflein.
- Suzanne McCarthy becomes Membership Chair

FMTP Advocacy Role

- Publicly supported the PP&R Replacement Bond measure which passed at the November 2014 election and includes funding to restore the historic restrooms on

the Westside of Harvey Scott Circle and to provide for Central Yard maintenance and other work to ensure the safety of those who work there.

- Publicly endorsed a set of conditions and measures that should be added to the Portland Water Bureau’s plan to disconnect the historic reservoirs in Mt. Tabor Park when the plan is reviewed by the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission.
- Sent a letter of support to Commissioner Amanda Fritz to place as a high priority for funding access (pedestrian and bikes only) to the park at SE 64th and SE Division, an entrance that is in the original planning documents and the Master plan for the park.

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-833, Weed Warriors-2345, and Visitor Center-867, **for a total of 4045 volunteer hours. It’s worth noting that 2 full-time personnel working a 40 hr. week for 52 weeks totals 4160 hrs.**

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 2014:

Total number of members.....	57
Total number of foot patrols (3,440 over past 14 years).....	118
Total hours for foot patrol members	833
On patrol.....	330
Meetings and Administration.....	290
Summer Concerts in the Park.....	177
Parke Diem Project.....	36

Looking Ahead at 2015:

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 2015:

The elimination of on-site Water Bureau Security continues to 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. Of course, in order to do our best job we need an influx of dedicated new and dedicated existing members to help meet the challenge.

Visitor Center - Dave Hillman, Coordinator

Wow!! The turnout we've had at the Park Visitor Center is truly fantastic. Thank you Portland Parks and Recreation for allowing us to use a portion of your maintenance facility to do so. We've recently completed our third year after opening in November 2011. We've now passed the 17,000 mark. During 2014 the Visitor Center utilized 18 different volunteers, including 11 Central Catholic High School students and 1 Warner-Pacific College student who donated a total of 867 volunteer hours. Mt Tabor Park is truly a "destination park," with visitors coming from all over the United States and the rest of the world. Stop by sometime and just look at the maps we have where visitors can place a pin showing the location of their residence or home. 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 have a growing collection of free brochures and pamphlets, 60 at last count, donated by the FMTP, Portland Parks & Recreation, The Bureau of Environmental Services, the Water Bureau, the Bureau of Transportation, Audubon Society, Metro, East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, and the USGS Volcanic Observatory. We also have a "lost & found" box located at the Visitor Center, and have been able to reconnect some visitors with their lost items. Items not returned after a lengthy period of time are donated to Goodwill, or in the case of eyewear, to the Lions Club for cleaning, repair and distribution.

Additional services we'd like to provide:

We have a huge number of visitors who come to the park with children, and they know nothing about the fee for service educational/summer programs offered for children. If the Visitor Center were automatically provided with hard copies of these programs in advance we could promote them. The same would be true for the Community Center brochures such as East, the Senior Programs, and others in this area.

Challenges for 2015:

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. Mary Kinnick, Weed Warrior Coordinator and Alexa Todd, Weed Warrior Stewardship Coordinator, provided these highlights:

- Sufficient removal of invasive vegetation in an area below Harvey Scott Circle to enable the planting of 1295 native plants with extensive pre-and post-mulching efforts
- Strengthened relationships with surrounding neighborhood associations, Portland Community College-Southeast, Warner Pacific College and Southeast Uplift about ongoing habitat restoration efforts, with face to face meet-ups associated with an effort (unsuccessful) to secure a large Metro grant
- A high number of organizations contributing volunteers to the effort, including Hands On Portland (and Team Works), SOLVE, Warner Pacific College, Reed College SEEDS, PCC-Southeast (an environmental biology class and a group of exchange students from Mexico & Central America studying environmental technology), PP&R Environmental Education Nature Camp participants, Willamette Dental Group, Grant High School Key Club, and a boy scout and cub scout troop.
- High turnout for special volunteer service projects (at times other than last Saturdays of the month) most notably with sponsorship by The Nature Conservancy (~100 volunteers), and Portland Parks Foundation-Parke Diem (43)
- Total volunteer hours—2345 (2001 in 2013, 1870 in 2012), the equivalent of more than 1 full-time employee for 50 weeks
- Last Saturday of the month service projects--
 - average of 36 volunteers per project, somewhat up from 32 in 2013 (with 42 in 2012, 37 in 2011-37, and 27 in 2010) *but with a greater number of repeat volunteers and a high quality of focused work clearing regrowth, removing new invasive plants, and mulching seedlings*
 - total number of volunteers for last Saturday projects—a new high of 347 (259 in 2013; 336 in 2012; 294 in 2011; & 191 in 2010)
- 14 crew leaders (4 new, 10 continuing) trained to supervise the volunteers
- Commitment of funding from FMTP, the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), and Portland Parks & Recreation that enables continuation of part-time Stewardship Coordinator Alexa Todd and the purchase of many needed tools and supplies

- 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; this collaboration has resulted in the identification of other additional areas in the park needing Weed Warrior attention in the future
- Continued collection of data by students in an environmental biology class at PCC-Southeast as part of a research project to compare insect diversity and abundance in invasive and native plant areas and other areas of inquiry
- Special donations by KIND healthy snacks, Flying Pie Pizza (SE Stark), Bipartisan Café, and Rain or Shine.
- Thanks to crew leaders Tony Cole, Brad Copenhaver, Carolyn Dixon, Mary Kinnick, Monique Leslie, Darvel Lloyd, Gayle Marechal, Alexi McNerthney, Chris Olinger, Ellen Simmons, Jess Williams, and honorary crew leader Kim Guess (who also works as a park technician and was instrumental in hauling out truck loads of debris). 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 FMTP Weed Warrior Stewardship Coordinator Alexa Todd and PP&R-City Nature East (CNE) Stewardship Coordinator Susan Hawes, and 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, CNE Ecologist, Mart Hughes, and Park Technician, Johannes Venghaus.

Challenges for 2015

- Maintaining our close communication and collaboration established with staff at PP&R and BES as we continue to carry out multifaceted joint planning to restore ecological health to the park; current collaboration is at an all time high
- Finding more ways to inform the community about the continuing need for Weed Warrior volunteer effort between now and June 2017 and beyond when BES will no longer be involved with habitat restoration efforts in the park. Continuing effort will be needed to remove invasive species restarts, to engage in early detection and removal of new opportunistic invasive plants (found this year were evergreen blackberry, Canada thistle and bull thistle), and to remove ground cover invasive species (e.g. herb Robert, yellow avens) which frees ground for native plants to fill and enables dormant seeds to grow.

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 regarding the need for "demand trail" reconstruction to reduce run-off and soil erosion (see Challenges and Concerns section). Most recently, a group of our Foot Patrol volunteers took part in the Parke Diem event, where we were able to perform long overdue maintenance on all of the Red, Blue and Green trail markers; cleaning, painting and clearing the vegetation around them.

Other Service

- Parking, security, and informational support by Foot Patrol members for the July Concerts in the Park
- Pie sales (with pies from Bipartisan Café) at the Concert series—thanks go to Bertha Guphill 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.
- Submission of a grant proposal to Metro for 2-year funding associated with expanding community involvement in Weed Warrior volunteer habitat restoration effort; while the grant was not selected for funding, support by four surrounding neighborhood associations, Southeast Uplift, Warner Pacific College, Portland Community College-Southeast Campus, SOLVE and Hands on Portland was strong and relationships with these organizations have been strengthened.
- 3rd annual Tar n Trails Run/Walk Fundraiser for FMTP held on Sept.21st – 101 participants took part - \$1500 raised for FMTP; special thanks to Board member Anne Crispino-Taylor for her leadership in organizing the event.
- On October 11th FMTP opened the Visitor Center and conducted Foot Patrol lead trail maintenance project and a Weed Warrior service project in order to participate in the 2nd 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, Summer Concert series pie sales, donations, and purchases made at the Visitor Center, FMTP was able to fund the following projects:

- Replacement of the deteriorating plexi-glass with a new high quality lexan panels on the informational kiosk by the Visitor Center.
- Purchase of a small refrigerator for the Visitor Center
- Increased annual FMTP funding for the Weed Warrior Stewardship Coordinator so the hours increase to 27 hrs. a month (currently at 20-24); other funding comes from the Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Parks and Recreation.
- Funding by Warner Pacific College (Aug. 2014-June 2015, \$900) of a part-time student work-study position dedicated to working with the Weed Warriors and at the Visitor Center.
- Funding for installing a new drinking fountain in 2015, to be located between the two restrooms east of the Visitor Center.
- Funding for a new bench to be installed in 2015 near the Visitor Center.

Membership and Services

As of December 31, 2014, membership stood at 113, with renewals still coming in. 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); Thanks to Gayle (for copy and editing) and Martrese (for Layout) who collaborated on its production
- Annual Meeting/Winter Program Meeting held March 20, 2014, our 14th Annual Meeting/Winter Program (open to the public). Commissioner Amanda Fritz was our guest speaker. 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 5th in Picnic Area A in the park; it was very well attended with an estimated 50+ folks participating, including Commissioner Amanda Fritz. 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 and hats 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 PP&R's budget situation improved somewhat the past year, but after five years of decreases the park continues to suffer from unmet maintenance needs; 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 2010 and 2017
- We feel a new railing on the grand stairway on the eastside is sorely needed; but, a new PP&R cost estimate of \$20,000 that FMTP would need to fund is currently beyond FMTP's funding capacity and is not being pursued at this point. .
- 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.
- The need for “demand trail” reconstruction to reduce runoff and soil erosion; PP&R will be informing FMTP of ways they/we can help with funding.
- 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 increased incidence of speeding bicyclists who disregard the safety of other park users.
- The restoration of key vistas required in the 2000 Mt Tabor Park Master Plan; PP&R-Urban Forestry developed a plan for such restoration throughout City parks, including Mt Tabor Park; work has begun in other parks, but we haven’t heard yet when there will be an opportunity for the public to review plans for restoring vistas at Mt Tabor.
- Extending Visitor Center hours through recruitment of additional volunteers.
- We look forward to when work on the SE 64th Ave. pedestrian/bike path from SE Division will begin; Commissioner Fritz has indicated that with the passage of the Nov. 2014 replacement bond measure that the 64th St. project will be funded.