

## **2015 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Friends of Mt. Tabor Park (FMTP)**

The 2015 *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](mailto:taborfriends@gmail.com). Our web site is: [www.taborfriends.org](http://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(c)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 19<sup>th</sup> at the Western Seminary, Co-Chair Mary Kinnick received FMTP’s highest award, **Friend of the Year**.
- There were no new Board members elected this year, but Beau Russell and Gayle Marechal were re-elected for new 3-year terms.
- The Weed Warriors were honored on July 10<sup>th</sup> to receive the Citizenship Award for a Community Organization from the statewide organization SOLVE.

### ***FMTP Advocacy Role***

- Publicly endorsed a set of conditions and measures advocated by the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association to preserve the historic reservoirs in Mt. Tabor Park as an addition to the Portland Water Bureau’s proposed plan to disconnect them. The result being, the Portland City Council publicly endorsed those said conditions and measures.

- Joined the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) that is providing community review of the Portland Water Bureau on the reservoirs and project funding priorities once the reservoirs are disconnected from our water supply.

## ***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-1048, Weed Warriors-2056, and Visitor Center-983, **for a total of 4087 volunteer hours. It's worth noting that 2 full-time personnel working a 40 hr. week for 52 weeks totals 4160 hrs.**

### **Foot Patrol – Dennis Puetz, Coordinator**

This year the Foot Patrol changed leaders from Beau Russell, to Dennis Puetz, August 25 2015. Beau has been a very dedicated and generous leader of the Foot Patrol; serving as Coordinator for 5 years. I thank Beau for his leadership and effort during these years.

It has been another good year for Foot Patrol volunteers, keeping the park clean and safe. As park ambassadors, we are the eyes and ears of the park, and our motto being, "Observe, record, and report." As the new leader I have kept the proven practices in tact, and have started using the Gmail account as a single source for communication, record keeping, scheduling, and storage of all Foot Patrol and FMTP records. We are using Google Apps: Gmail, Calendar, and Drive to accomplish this.

I want to thank all members who showed up for patrols, assisted at events, and supported the effort to keep Mt. Tabor Park the gem it is. The park has never been cleaner!

### **Foot Patrol Stats for 2015:**

- Total number of members - 42 (email list)
- Total number of foot patrols -289 (3729 since year 2000)
- Total hours for foot patrol members -1048
  - On patrol -532 hrs.
  - Meetings and Administration -300 hrs.
  - Summer concerts in park -216 hrs.

### **Looking Ahead to 2016:**

We will continue to attract new members, be ambassadors to the park, be active and involved with the park. We will work with PP&R, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and Portland Police Bureau. The presence of the Foot Patrol on Mt. Tabor will always be a positive sign for all who enjoy the park.

## **Challengers for 2016:**

The Foot Patrol will be ready to respond to the needs of the park, as reduction in park services continue from City of Portland. Dogs off leash are always a problem, and we will continue our efforts to inform owners of the leash rule and available off-leash dog park area.

## **Visitor Center - Dave Hillman, Coordinator**

We did it once again, exceeding all of the numbers in our previous reports! Having been open for four years, our Visitor Center has now hosted over 24,000 visitors from all over the world. It is actually very hard to believe all of the pins placed on the maps on the large bulletin board hanging outside the Visitor Center entrance. When watching visitors place their pins in their home country, state or city it serves as a fantastic launching point to engage them in discussion as to what brings them to Mt Tabor, and that is often just the beginning of some great stories. This is also one of the primary reasons why the now 12 different volunteers love to be a Visitor Center volunteer, just having the opportunity to meet and talk with these visitors. We have also become one of the regular stops for Portland based tour buses that bring visitors from all over the country and world to see our park and its volcano. Some visitors leave with a newly purchased souvenir such as a shirt, hat, magnet, photograph or perhaps just taking some brochures. Our stock of materials now include well over 60 different maps, pamphlets and/or brochures from many city, county and regional resources as well as a dozen different FMTP products.

During calendar year 2015, the Visitor Center was open on 278 days while volunteers donated 983 hours of their time. Guess you might just call it a "labor of love" and if you would like to volunteer, we'll find just the right schedule to meet your needs! Come join the fun, meet visitors, and you can also give treats to the dogs. They know that if the door is open, just where to come for that biscuit or bone. .

## **Weed Warriors - Mary Kinnick, Coordinator**

The Weed Warriors (WW) continued to remove invasive vegetation manually primarily 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. The WWs decided to sponsor fewer non-last Saturday of the month events and to focus more on the March-October last Saturday morning service projects. This decision better matched our capacity and ensured well organized and supported service projects.

A notable event this year was saying "goodbye" to WW Stewardship Coordinator Alexa Todd who has served six years in this position and contributed in countless ways to improving WW efforts. A large group of admirers celebrated with her at a pizza party in December held at Flying Pie Pizza.

On January 1, 2016 we'll welcome the new WW Stewardship Coordinator Stasia Honnold. Stasia is an environmental educator who primarily works with young adults to carry out restoration work in the Portland Metro area. She loves birds, native plants, and outdoor adventure of all types, and has been playing at Mt Tabor since she moved from SW Portland 8 years ago.

The WWs were honored on July 10<sup>th</sup> to receive the Citizenship Award for a Community Organization from the statewide organization SOLVE!

Here are some other highlights:

- Completed (at last!) the *FMTP Weed Warrior Handbook* authored by Alexa Todd with assistance from Mary Kinnick and others
- Trained and involved more crew leaders—20 (7 new and 13 continuing) than ever before and expanded the twice offered training program from two to four hours (classroom and in the field); they gave generously of their time with an average of 9 to 10 participating at each event; new crew leaders were paired with continuing ones for their first several service projects
- Continued to attract volunteers from a number of organizations including Hands On Portland, SOLVE, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Warner Pacific College, Sunnyside Environmental School, and many school, college and business organizations
- Continued to see more volunteers returning—“regulars”
- Enriched the service project “educational breaks” designed to increase volunteer knowledge of both invasive and native plants, the relationship of plants, insects and birds, and how volunteer efforts are helping the park
- In September co-sponsored with TNC and Portland Parks & Recreation the largest ever volunteer service project—136
- *Total volunteer hours*—2056 (2345 in 2014, 2001 in 2013, 1869.75 in 2012)
- *Total for last Saturday* of the month service projects *only*—
  - a new high of 1340 volunteer hours (1157 in 2014 and 381 when first began regular WW reporting in 2009)
  - An average of 54 volunteers per event, with 36 in 2014, 32 in 2013, 42 in 2012, 37 in 2011, and 27 in 2010
  - total number of volunteers for last Saturday projects—a new high of 428 with 347 in 2014, 259 in 2013, 336 in 2012, 294 in 2011, and 191 in 2010

- Received funding from FMTP, the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), and Portland Parks & Recreation enabling continuation of the part-time Stewardship Coordinator for 5 hrs. a week and the purchase of many needed tools and supplies; funding levels expected to continue through June 2017
- Adopted an updated Memorandum of Understanding with Portland Parks & Recreation-City Nature, that continues to guide the work of PP&R and the Weed Warriors along with the previously adopted Declaration of Cooperation with BES; this year, representatives from the Portland Water Bureau participated in a review of BES and WW sites for 2016
- Continuing donations by KIND healthy snacks, Flying Pie Pizza (SE Stark), Bipartisan Café, and Rain or Shine and the addition of New Seasons Market on SE Hawthorne (contributed lunches for the crew leader trainings)

Thanks to crew leaders Mikey Bishop, Rachel Brooks, Brad Copenhaver, Ada Garcia, Brady Hall, Deb Hanson, Mary Kinnick, Monique Leslie, Darvel Lloyd, Zosia Lynch, Gayle Marechal, Alexie McNerthney, Chris Olinger, Jovenn Pacheco, Ellen Simmons, Jess Williams, and Bing Wong. 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 2016**

- Providing a smooth transition to a new group of individuals (the new WW Stewardship Coordinator, a new PP&R Stewardship Coordinator, and the beginning of a transition to a new FMTP WW Coordinator) who will each have major roles in park habitat restoration efforts
- Identifying source(s) of funding for the WW Stewardship Coordinator  
after June 2017; about \$5000 a year is needed; FMTP currently contributes \$1500 each year
- 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 more), and to remove ground cover invasive species (e.g. herb Robert, yellow avens) which frees ground for native plants to fill in and enables dormant seeds to grow.

- Helping crew leaders and volunteers make the shift to restoration work that requires “Japanese gardener” rather than “linebacker” approaches; large areas covered in invasive plants have been mostly reduced; left are patches of invasive plants spread over large areas; the work must be more informed, focused, and volunteers kept motivated—no more days rolling a huge “rug” of ivy down a slope!
- With the change in the nature of our work different metrics are needed to measure native habitat restoration accomplishments
- Critical to the future of the Weed Warrior effort is the recruitment and motivation of both our crew leaders and our volunteers. As mentioned earlier, more volunteers have become “regulars”, and, as a result, along with crew leaders, can share their knowledge and experience with newcomers. And, this year saw involvement from an even more diverse group of volunteers in age, ethnicity and cultural background. Our crew leaders have expressed strong interest in new opportunities for learning. They play a critical role in sustaining a high level of motivation among the volunteers. But attention must continue to be given to their own needs and interest .

## **Trails**

Trails Committee Chair Beau Russell continues to try and 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).

## **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 Carol Baumann and her volunteers for selling out the pies!
- Enhanced access to FMTP-related information via a Facebook page created and maintained by Martrese White. Martrese also re-designed, and maintained the FMTP website.(go to [www.taborfriend.org](http://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.
- 4<sup>th</sup> annual Tar n Trails Run/Walk Fundraiser for FMTP held on Oct 11<sup>th</sup> - 180 participants took part - \$2400 raised for FMTP; special thanks to Board member Anne Crispino-Taylor for her leadership in organizing the event.
- On October 10<sup>th</sup> FMTP opened the Visitor Center and the Weed Warriors conducted a volunteer service project (118hrs.) in order to participate in the 3rd 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:

- Funding for a new drinking fountain, located between the two restrooms east of the Visitor Center.
- Funding for a new bench installed near the Visitor Center.
- The construction of a new split rail fence at the top of the slope south of the playground was funded and installed; the fence is designed to prevent soil erosion and allow native plants help stabilize the slope.
- Continued to fund the Weed Warriors Stewardship Coordinator at 5-6hrs. a week with funding from the Bureau of Environmental Services, Portland Parks and Recreation-City Nature and FMTP (also allocated funds for tools and supplies)
- Funded a 25hr.training program for the new Weed Warrior Stewardship Coordinator who begins employment January1, 2016

### **Membership and Services**

As of December 31, 2015, membership stood at138, 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 19,2015, our 15th Annual Meeting/Winter Program (open to the public). Kaitlin Lovell, who spoke on how Portland is preparing for climate change, the effects of climate on Mt. Tabor Park, and what individuals can do. 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 11<sup>th</sup> in Picnic Area B in the park; it was very well attended with an estimated 50+ folks participating. Thanks to Board member Laura Mason who did an excellent job in organizing the event.

**Phyllis Weih** continued to serve as the FMTP Archivist. **Nancy Russell** will be taking over this role in 2016

### ***Products***

**Carol Baumann** served as the products manager consulting with both Dave Hillman, Visitor Center, and Isabelle Zifcak of Mt. Tabor Realty at SE 69<sup>th</sup> & 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](http://www.taborfriends.org) --thank you Martrese
- 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.

- Although Portland Parks & Recreation’s budget situation has improved this past year, the park is slow to recover from past years of decreases and 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.

- 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 continue to look forward to when work on the SE 64<sup>th</sup> Ave. pedestrian/bike path from SE Division gets underway.