

Metro news release:

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Metro announces natural area sale and donation by Gresham area business

A butte with a view comes into public ownership

Persimmon Development Group, a Gresham area business, has agreed to the sale of 92 acres on a butte east of Gresham to support Metro's Natural Areas program. The transaction, which was made at several million dollars below fair market value, contains the headwaters of Hogan Creek and includes the top of the forested butte. The butte is located within the East Buttes, one of the target areas voters directed the Metro Council to preserve and protect through the 2006 Natural Areas, Parks and Streams bond measure.

"The acquisition at this butte would not have happened without the commitment of the Persimmon Development Group," said Metro Council President David Bragdon. "While the company could have developed the property for a profit, they instead made a gift to the community and to future generations by selling this valuable area to Metro for much less than its fair market value. This allows us to make an important purchase in a key natural area and stretch the public's dollars."

According to Hiroshi Morihara, a partner in the development group, the donation fits well with the company's shift to environmentally friendly construction and expanding their building throughout the Portland Metro area

"We believe this is a perfect addition to Metro's Natural Areas program, and will provide an opportunity for the public to enjoy some of the best views in the Portland area," he said. "Persimmon Development Group has made a 100% commitment to green building, using environmentally friendly best practices including Earth Advantage, Energy Star or LEEDS standards. The land donation and sale complements our standard of building sustainably. "

The golf course at Persimmon Country Club was also developed by Persimmon Development Group and was one of the first 100 golf courses in the country to be certified by the national Audubon Society as a cooperative sanctuary.

"This land could have become large view homesites for a few people. Instead it will provide a natural area and views for many" said Metro Councilor Rod Park, whose district includes the buttes. "The views from the top are stellar and so is the view of the buttes from below. This is a great purchase for Metro's Natural Areas program, and builds on prior lands acquired by Metro and the city of Gresham."

The city of Gresham parks department will manage the property, which could provide the public with scenic trails and overlooks. The butte's forested hillsides will continue to protect water quality in Hogan Creek, a tributary to Johnson Creek. Protecting water quality in Johnson Creek is a key goal of Metro's Natural Areas bond measure. Although the Metro Council has authorized the purchase, the property is not expected to close until the end of the calendar year when all standard due diligence (title review, environmental testing, etc.) will be completed.

The Metro Council's 2006 Natural Areas, Parks and Streams bond measure funds land acquisition and capital improvements that protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors, and provide greater connections to nature in urban areas throughout the greater Portland region. For more information: www.metro-region.org/naturalareas.

Metro, the regional government that serves 1.3 million people who live in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area, provides planning and other services that protect the nature and livability of our region.

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More about the East Buttes Target Area

The East Buttes is one of 27 areas targeted by Metro for protection via its Natural Areas program. East of Portland, south of Gresham and north of Damascus, the East Buttes rise above the valley floors, extinct lava domes that testify to a volcanic past. These forested hills one of the region's signature scenic views, a green contrast to the white triangle of Mt. Hood. The vistas from the buttes provide a panorama of the Willamette Valley, and the cities below them. The butte's tree covered sides catch the winter rains and feed the valley's water tables, releasing moisture slowly to the creeks and aquifers below. The buttes are also a haven for native plants and animals.

Upcoming Natural Area open houses

Metro is hosting a series of open houses for residents to learn more about the 27 areas under consideration by the Metro Council for purchase and protection with funds from the bond measure. Gresham area residents are invited to attend two open houses focusing on the buttes around Gresham as well as other lands located in the eastern portion of the region. A full list of open houses can be found at www.metro-region.org/naturalareas.

Thursday, June 21, 6 to 8 p.m.
Gresham City Hall, Oregon Trail Room
1333 NW Eastman Parkway
Gresham

Hosted by Metro Councilor Rod Park

Featured areas: East Buttes (includes Damascus Buttes, Scouter Mountain and Mt. Talbert as well as the buttes around the Gresham area), Sandy River Gorge, Johnson Creek and Watershed, Gresham-Fairview Trail and Columbia Slough.

Monday, June 25, 6 to 8 p.m.

Boring Middle School

27801 SE Dee St.

Boring

Hosted by Metro Councilors Rod Park and Brian Newman

Featured areas: East Buttes (includes Damascus Buttes, Scouter Mountain and Mt. Talbert as well as the buttes around the Gresham area), Clackamas River Bluffs and Greenway, Deep Creek and Tributaries, Clear Creek, Cazadero Trail.

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