



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2009

Volume 17 Number 4

Portland Trails is a nonprofit land trust that preserves green spaces for public access and connects people with places.

OUR GOALS

- Create and maintain a 50-mile network of trails in greater Portland.
- Engage the participation of neighborhoods, schools, and the business community in trail use and land stewardship.
- Make greater Portland a model for people-powered recreation and transportation.

Fore River Sanctuary: Better Than Ever

BY CATHERINE GENTILE

MANY OF US HAVE DESKS on which we stash a host of items including the half-finished crossword puzzle, a stack of last year's magazines we intend to read, cough drops, spare change and other stray items. Before we know it, there's no room to work. We clear the clutter and vow to keep our spaces in good order. Soon, the phone rings and we set our cup of coffee beside a stack of coupons, and the free key chain we received in the mail. Oops, we've started the cycle again; left unattended, our desks revert to their original state.

The Fore River Sanctuary with eighty-five acres and two miles of trails offers a large-scale example of the dynamics of this theory. "Trail systems require constant maintenance and upgrading," explains Trail Manager Jaime Parker. "Trees fall, erosion, storm damage, and heavy use take their toll." Since 2007, when Maine Audubon donated this gem to Portland Trails, volunteers and hired trail crews, including the Maine Conservation Corps, have replaced two of three bridges on the salt marsh side of the Sanctuary. At the first bridge after the towpath, they've built new steps that minimize the impact of hikers along the steep slope of the wooded hillside and make their trek safer.

Erosion is an ongoing concern, says Jaime, "especially where water washes against the steep slopes." Crews have introduced crushed rock, water barriers made of wood, and diversion trenches. The goal? To keep damage caused by melting snow or storm surges to a minimum. "The trick is to keep the water moving, to not let it form puddles or wash across the trail." Along with staff and volunteers, Jaime does just that by cutting trenches as needed along the trails' edges. In places where there are no reasonable options other than to allow water to cross the trail, crews dig diagonal trenches and line them with gravel, wood or stone.

While Mother Nature is ultimately in charge, directing the flow of water and controlling the rate at which it moves does slow her down by minimizing erosion. This gives Jaime and his crews time to make the trailheads more inviting. They've already built new kiosks at the Congress Street trailheads and will soon outfit these



▲ A tired bridge comes back to life.

Jaime Parker

[continued on next page]

Fore River Sanctuary

[continued from page 1]

kiosks with updated trail maps and information about the flora and fauna of the area and history of the canal. Later in the season, they'll install another kiosk at the Rowe Avenue trailhead.

Trail users will also see new directional signage throughout the Sanctuary. This includes the parking areas. You may recall the confusion of searching for the trailhead after parking in the Frost Street lot. Search no more; a path now links the lot directly into the Sanctuary. For visitors with handicapping conditions, crews will remove encroachments on the first quarter mile into the trail and make it tidy (think of your desk) so everyone will

be able to access the arch bridge and views of the Fore River.

If you prefer walking from the surrounding neighborhoods, PT has established a linkage from Energy East that connects to Westbrook Street and

over the turnpike via a bridge. There's more. In coordination with a recommendation made by the Congress Street Streetscape Study for the construction of a crosswalk at the RR tracks, PT plans to construct a nearby link from Frost to Congress Streets. This will give trail users the option of crossing from the Sanctuary to the Stroudwater trail without traveling on the sidewalks on Congress Street.

Due to its commitment to its stewardship ideals, Portland Trails is a recognized leader in land conservation. Two short years after assuming responsibility for the Fore River Sanctuary, PT is well on its way to revitalizing the natural beauty of the Sanctuary and making it accessible to all. This auspicious beginning required dedication, expertise and an amazing work force. One that gives trail users a host of exciting outcomes, with more to come. One that may inspire those of us with messy desks to do some spring-cleaning. Interested in helping with our trails? We'd love to hear from you. Contact Jaime at jaime@trails.org. 🐦

For more photos of the Fore River Sanctuary, go to: www.trails.org

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER!

Your membership is due on June 1st. Want to save paper? Renew now. Send your payment to our office at 305 Commercial Street; (you can use the form on the back of this newsletter) or go to www.trails.org "Get Involved"; or call us at 775-2411. Thank you!



Charlie Baldwin adds hand railings to the bridge.

Jaime Parker

Adopt-a-Trail UPDATE

Eco-Story is the latest member of Portland Trails' Adopt-a-Trail program. Founded in 2008, the company installs and sells LED lighting to improve energy efficiency; their clients include such far-flung businesses as The Orvis Store in Vermont and Chipotle Mexican Grill in the Mall of America. Located on Forest Avenue in Portland, this generous business has adopted the trails within nearby Evergreen Cemetery.

Recently, Executive Director Nan Cumming visited three of our Adopt-a-Trail members to personally thank them for their donations and to present them with a trail sign for their office.



Althea Masterson

Nan Cumming with Brent Bridges, Senior Vice President of Woodard & Curran, and Doug McKeown, CEO of Woodard & Curran.



Isabel Alely

Nan thanks Marissa Perry, Store Team Leader, Whole Foods Market.



Mark Goettel

Nan and Robert Cornett, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Wright Express.

W

EACH OWN A PIECE OF OUR COMMUNITY that is more than the land on which we live. In addition to what is described on our property deed or rental agreement, we own the full worth of our spot on the map. That worth rests in what we do in our community.

As members of Portland Trails, we know that our mission is to improve the value of all that we touch. You can see some of our – your – efforts in PT’s stewardship of the Fore River Sanctuary, the ongoing schoolground greening projects, and the way in which the trail network is expanding to put everyone in close proximity to its paths. As in so much of life, these efforts are rarely perfect initially, and sometimes it’s as much about the process as the product. But experience has shown that if Portland Trails starts the work, people get excited about the possibilities and interested in their community. As we are finding with the President’s efforts to provide a ‘stimulus’ to re-energize the economy, it isn’t easy to please everyone. But if you can convert a few, others will follow.

Success is a magnet. Pick your spot and be the catalyst. Go stimulate someplace you have passion for. I’ll see you on the trails.



Brent Bridges

BRENT BRIDGES
President, Board of Trustees

BLAZING NEW TRAILS!

This year, Portland Trails is taking our popular event, the **Happy Trails Big Bash and Silent Auction**, to the Portland Club! We’ll have the same fabulous selection of auction items and great music by Big Chief, but this time you’ll experience them in the comfortable surroundings of this classic local landmark. The Club will give you a quiet place to chat with friends while enjoying a snack and a drink before you dive back in to the bidding mayhem.

There’s a great dance floor too. Black Tie is making all of the hors d’oeuvres, so they’re sure to be delicious. This year Izzy’s Cheesecake is donating all of the desserts—yum! Our thanks to L.L. Bean, who are once again sponsoring the event.

WATCHING YOUR BUDGET? Tickets remain an affordable \$20 for Portland Trails members!



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Laura Newman, *Schoolground Greening Coordinator*
Caitlyn Horose, *Development Assistant*

NEWS FROM MILE 0.0

Tale of Two Bridges

The Maine Department of Transportation is planning to replace the Veterans Memorial Bridge between Portland and South Portland. Built over the Fore River in 1954, the bridge carries more than 23,000 vehicles per day but is near the end of its useful life.

At an initial public meeting last November, audience members, including members of Portland Trails, the Portland Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, asked for bicycle and pedestrian connections on the new bridge. They also requested that the bridge accommodate future transit needs, and be well built and architecturally significant.

PACTS and MDOT have formed a stakeholders committee to study many of these issues. Both Nan Cumming and Jaime Parker are on the committee representing Portland Trails. MaineDOT will issue a request for proposals in April and expects to award the contract this fall. If you would like Portland Trails to keep you updated on future opportunities for public comment, make sure that we have your email address. You can send it to us at info@trails.org.

But that's not the only bridge being replaced. Portland Trails has been working with Dan Stewart, Bike/Ped Coordinator at the MaineDOT, the City of Portland and Town of Falmouth to ensure that the design for a new bridge across the Presumpscot River at Route 100

will provide accessibility to cyclists and pedestrians. The bridge will link to trail networks on both sides of the river, offering access to recreational trails as well as connections to downtown Portland and Falmouth shopping areas.

Trail Mix

Portland Trails and Portland Fruit & Nut Company are partnering on the ever-popular "Hikers Trail Mix", a delicious combination of raisins, cashews, peanuts, and chocolate. The snack is available all over greater Portland, with a portion of proceeds going to Portland Trails!

Beyond the Blacktop

Last spring USM Media Studies students Courtney True, Steve Turcotte, and Drew Wyman collaborated to create a 21-minute documentary on the work of PT's Schoolground Greening Coalition, including compelling interviews with teachers on how natural spaces affect children. A public screening for "Beyond the Blacktop: *Learning Through Greenspaces on Schoolgrounds*" took place in May, but thanks to the wonders of technology, you can watch the film at: <http://www.vimeo.com/2028880>. A huge thank you to these talented individuals for the time, skill, and creativity they put into this project. If you have ever wondered what this schoolground greening stuff is all about, please watch!

PT Audits Its Trails

BY JAIME PARKER

THESE LAST FEW YEARS AT Portland Trails have been very productive; we've been building new trails (30+ miles and counting!), acquiring land, greening school grounds, and generally working to expand the system and link our communities in many ways. While we will certainly continue to build the network this year and in the future, we also recognize our responsibility to steward what we've already built.

It's important to us that our trails and open spaces are well maintained and functional for all users; but how do we know if that's the case? Who are these trail users, and what are their needs? How can we improve the system to make it more functional and more accessible for more people? This year we

will attempt to answer these questions and more as we begin our first ever Comprehensive Trails Audit.

By asking members, trustees, and other trail users to evaluate the trails from their own unique perspectives, we hope to learn where we're doing well, and more importantly, where we're coming up short. How do the needs of joggers differ from those of bike commuters? Which trails can be made more accessible for handicapped users? Is making a trail suitable for a baby stroller still going to leave enough challenge for mountain bikers? Are our neighborhood connections being maintained, so that kids can walk to school year-round? By focusing our attention on our existing trails we hope to not only improve the network on the ground, but learn how to better plan for future projects. If you are interested in helping us evaluate the trail system, we'd love to hear from you. And don't worry; we'll build some new trails this year too! 🐾

Greater Portland's Green School Grounds Need YOU!

BY LAURA NEWMAN

PT's School Ground Greening Coalition consults with schools on project planning and design strategies, and construction support. Many schools have established active greening committees, a sustainable model for the long-term care and use of these places; however, like trails, schoolground greening projects flourish with the collaborative efforts of many community members.

The gardens, trees and other natural features that have transformed schoolyards and neighborhoods now need green-minded folks to help them thrive. If you are interested in joining neighbors and families on planting or construction days, for occasional summer weeding and watering, or wish to contribute skills or materials, please call the schools or contact Laura Newman at laura@trails.org or 650-4510. Greened schoolgrounds include: Congin, Canal, (Westbrook), Kaler, Small, Brown (South Portland), Longfellow, King, Lincoln, Nathan Clifford, Hall (Portland), Pond Cove (Cape Elizabeth), and Gorham Middle School. Kudos to the many parents, teachers, administrators, students, businesses, design professionals, and municipal staff who have contributed their time, skills, energy and materials, to these projects! 🌱



Laura Newman

A former expanse of asphalt in this Lyseth play area now features three large recycled granite curb-edged garden beds with perennials, trees, paths, and seating. This project idea came out of a community planning process initiated in 2002!



Laura Newman

East End Community School's courtyard garden includes a raised bed garden maze, a woodland garden and path, perennial beds and a small outdoor classroom seating circle.



Anne Cyr

Skillin Elementary has an expansive butterfly garden and woodland trail worth visiting.



Christel Driscoll

Lincoln Middle School's 'Living Classroom' dome is now surrounded by fruiting trees and shrubs, habitat gardens, and raised beds planted with potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce and herbs (which students harvested and ate). This year's plan includes a school composting program, and student-designed educational artwork and signage.

Partner Profile:

Alex Fisher, Founder/Designer @ Planet Dog

BY ROB WHITTEN

PLANET DOG IS A PARTNER OF PORTLAND TRAILS with a common interest: "Good trails make for good dog walking, good dog walking makes for happy dogs, and happy dogs make for happy people," explains Alex Fisher, the founder/designer of Planet Dog.

Planet Dog is a values-led Portland-based business that designs, develops and sells products for dogs. *Outside* magazine named Planet Dog one of America's Best Places to Work in April 2008. Fisher comments, "As a small company doing big things, our goal has been and always will be to improve the world around us by giving back to our workforce, the community and the environment."

Founded in 1997, the success of Planet Dog has enabled Alex to stay true to his mission of philanthropically supporting the company's areas of interest, including animal welfare, the natural environment, and education. After years of informal giving, Planet Dog Philanthropy became incorporated as a 501(c)3 and transitioned into the Planet Dog Foundation. The foundation's mission is to promote and celebrate programs in which dogs serve and support their best friends. The Planet Dog Foundation has contributed a half a million dollars

in cash and in-kind donations to canine service programs across the country. This ranges from Gabriel's Angels that provides pet therapy for abused and neglected children, to New England K-9 Search and Rescue.

Several years ago, when Fisher leased a building at the intersection of Marginal Way and Franklin Arterial, he had no idea that his Planet Dog store would be the center of a downtown

trail. Soon, though, Sam Hodder, the Maine Director of the Trust for Public Land introduced Alex to Portland Trails. Before long, Planet Dog partnered with Portland Trails, The Trust for Public Land, Diversified Communications, Bayside Neighborhood Association, and the City of Portland in the funding, land acquisition, and the creation of the Bayside Trail. Bayside will connect Portland's Bayside neighborhood to the Eastern Promenade and Deering Oaks. Beginning this Spring, abandoned rail lines, scrap yards, and under-valued commercial property will be transformed into a 1.2 mile urban greenway.

Looking ahead, Fisher sees continued benefits of Planet Dog's partnering with Portland Trails: more trails for active recreation, better parks, walking to work, and healthier lifestyles for people and their pets. 🐾



Alex Fisher



Trails.org

We won! American Trails, a national non-profit that promotes local, regional, and long-distance trails and greenways, has named Portland Trails' website as the "Best Community Trails System Site" of 2008! They loved our PT History Timeline, and you will too. Check out our awards page: www.americantrails.org/webcon08, then head over to www.trails.org/timeline to look at the timeline that gained us the kudos.

Want to get out on the trails and learn some tantalizing details about your favorite non-profit, all without leaving your desk? Check out our new Portland Trails video at www.trails.org/aboutus. A St. Joseph's College Communications class developed the video for us as part of a service learning project. We love the results!

Before you next head out to the Fore River Trail, take a minute to download our newest podcast about the trail. You'll find it at:

www.trails.org/podcasts

Come meet your PT pals and make new trail-loving friends at Portland Trails' **Facebook** Group. To find us, search the groups list.

PT Welcomes New Board Members



Nancy Grant says that the best part of moving back to Portland in 2007, after twenty years in North Yarmouth and Cumberland, was exploring and using Portland's trails. Living in the Back Cove area, she is a short walk to four different trails. Nancy is an Educational Technology Consultant at Bowdoin College and the Vice President of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. At Bowdoin, she co-founded the Commute Another Way Committee, which promotes alternative commuting by employees and students. She's also the staff advisor for the Yellow Bike Club (a bike sharing program) and serves on the college's Climate Commitment Advisory Committee. Nancy is happiest when outdoors and believes that a daily diet of trails is good for the heart, soul and mind. She is especially interested in trail access for bicyclists, for both commuting and recreational purposes. Nancy's husband Mike Boyson shares her love of the outdoors and community involvement. Their son Oscar is an aspiring filmmaker in New York City; daughter Elise works at a Washington, D.C. nonprofit that promotes public diplomacy and global engagement.

Janet Yancey-Wrona and her husband, Mark, have skied through Baxter in winter and backpacked among the Presidentials in summer. At home in the Portland area, they spend their recreational time walking, skiing, and snowshoeing local trails. Now that their daughter, Adelaide, has reached the grand old age of one, they look forward to sharing their love of the outdoors with her. They enjoy hiking, skiing and snowshoeing in Maine and New Hampshire whenever time allows. Janet is Chief Operating Officer for AIKO Biotechnology, Inc., a start-up company that develops treatments for pain and addiction management. Prior to this, she served as the founding President and Director of the Maine Technology Institute, Maine's first Director of the Office of Innovation, and the Science Advisor to the Governor, where she was responsible for the Science and Technology Action Plan for Maine.



WinteRush

BY ANDY ABRAMS

AS PT BOARD MEMBER, Rob Whitten, observed recently, what makes Portland Trails unique is that in addition to building trails and preserving green space, we actively encourage people to get outside and use the trails. This was evident from the enthusiasm that accompanied a group of us on a cold but sunny Saturday during the first ever WinteRush in Portland. PT hosted snowshoe training in Post Office Park during the event, and lots of passersby stopped to try the newly donated L.L.Bean snowshoes. PT member Leslie MacVane arrived just in time to challenge a young girl to a race. A woman considering a move from away to Portland asked PT President Emeritus Roger Berle about trails within Portland and what the city has to offer. His passionate response about our trails and community undoubtedly had her checking out real estate ads before the day was done. Suffice it to say that no one left our WinteRush snowshoe event without grinning. To top it off, we're going to make the snowshoes available to the rest of the Portland Trails membership community. **For more information, see the PT website at www.trails.org/programs**



Kids love snowshoeing.

Susan Doran

Portland Trails Explores Bayside



Rob Whitten

Board Treasurer Rob Levin makes a point at the Annual Meeting.

ALMOST 100 PORTLAND TRAILS members attended our Annual Meeting, "Walking the Walk in Bayside" at Space Gallery in January. After reports on upcoming trail projects and the election of two new board members, the program turned to Bayside.

Neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, and local businesses have all been working with the City of Portland for the past ten years to create a vision for the Bayside neighborhood as a vibrant, walkable community with businesses, homes, and shopping, all connected by a system of sidewalks, bike lanes, open spaces, and a world-class trail. Project partners Alex Jaegerman, Director of the Planning Division, City of Portland, Dave Queeley, Director of the Parks for People Program, Trust for Public Land, Colette Bouchard and Ron Spinella of the Bayside Neighborhood Association, and Robert S. Hark, East Bayside Neighborhood Organization all shared their perspectives. ☺

To read our annual committee reports, visit www.trails.org/reports.

Portland Trails would like to express our gratitude to each of the donors who made gifts that helped us fulfill our mission in 2008.

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