

# CURRENT

## ★ GREENBACKS FOR THE GREENWAY

**Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) is firming up plans for SWF's Central District portion of the Willamette River Greenway.**

The Greenway will connect SWF pedestrians and bicyclists to a city-wide system of trails, bring back wildlife

habitat, and offer a small, non-motorized craft dock allowing canoe, kayak, and fishing access to the river.

When the Greenway planning efforts began in 2004, an estimated cost was attached to the project. Since then, construction costs have increased. As a result, the budget for the dock portion of SWF's Greenway has come up short and could be delayed for years.

A group of your neighbors is hoping to raise enough money to bridge the budget shortfall and make the dock happen sooner. SWF 20/20's Nature and Greenspaces Committee has met with PP&R and Umpqua Bank to discuss fund raising options. They're hoping that SWF residents will "step up to the plate and show that we are willing to take the lead in giving."

Want to help SWF take that lead? You can now make tax deductible donations dedicated to the dock to PP&R ([www.portlandonline.com/parks](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks)). If you have questions, suggestions or an itch to volunteer for this effort, attend any of the monthly Nature & Greenspaces meetings, contact the committee chair – see "Get Involved on pg. 2 for info – or Roger Gertenrich at 503.841.5496. \*

### SWF OUTLOOK

## FANTASY ISLAND BECOMES REALITY

**After several decades of effort and often-bumpy negotiations, the public at last owns a portion of Ross Island.** People have been

talking about, lobbying for and sometimes arguing over making Ross Island a public possession for more than a century, ever since the Olmstead Brothers suggested transforming the island into part of the Portland park system in 1903. It was a much different island (actually four islands) back then, but 75 years of dredging for sand and gravel eventually carved out a 130-acre, 125 foot deep lagoon. The wildlife habitat that remains has been coveted for three decades by conservation groups including the Audubon Society of Portland, Willamette Riverkeeper and, more recently, the Urban Greenspaces Institute and the Friends of Ross Island. Their vision became reality on October 31<sup>st</sup>, when the City of Portland accepted 45 acres of natural area and riparian habitat donated by its owner, Dr. Robert Pamplin. An additional 15 acres of restored habitat will be transferred at a later date. Dr. Pamplin and the Port of Portland will retain the balance of the 175 acre property.

For SWF residents and visitors, the donation means that the eastern vistas of black cottonwood trees interspersed with Oregon ash, bigleaf and silver maple will remain, and the island's population of river otters, beavers, raccoons, great blue herons, bald eagles, osprey, cormorants, ducks and geese will continue to thrive.

Pamplin's generous donation, which looked to be in jeopardy just a few months ago, "provides the city with the most ecologically significant portion of the island,"

says Bob Sallinger, urban conservation director for the Audubon Society of Portland, "as well as a site which is free of any sort of contamination or long-term liability concerns. It gives the city a significant foothold on the island, which will allow us to move immediately to the substantive

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© Kent Anderson

**Breakthrough:** the City of Portland recently acquired a portion of Ross Island.

### BLAST FROM THE PAST

## LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO RIGHT

**It took a long time and several leaps of faith to bring SWF from tired post-industrial real estate to the busy mixed-use district emerging today.** Back when Portland Bureau of Planning Director Gil Kelley was growing up in Portland, this area we now call home was already well into its transition away from the shipbuilding and industrial uses that defined it up to and after World War II. The hum and thrum of river-dependent industry had largely gone away; the Zidell Marine site is the last remaining business tied to the notion of Willamette-River-as-highway.

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## YOU SAY YOU WANT A RESOLUTION?

**The Current has been working on our New Year's resolutions.** We've whittled them down to a short list that includes eating more fish and eliminating the use of the word "like" as punctuation in our conversational English. We're not even from the Valley, and yet we can't quite, like, shake that word, you know?

While making up our list of things to improve in 2008, we reminisced on resolutions from years past. There was a year when we resolved to get more massages. Not a bad thing, but not really a world changing move.

So this year, the *Current* is going to make at least a few resolutions that give a little back to the planet. We're not out to radically change our lifestyle, just a few adjustments to make us a few shades closer to green. We thought we might share a few ideas with you, in case you're of the same mind.

**Resolution #1: Can bottled water.** The *Current* was raised right here in Portland, where the tap water is pure and delicious. And we're old enough to remember an effort to bottle Portland's water to export to other U.S. cities, although it was widely viewed as a promotional stunt and a novelty item.

Nowadays, more and more Portlanders have turned their back on our perfectly serviceable municipal drinking water in favor of the bottled stuff. And that means the water is encased in plastic, which even when recycled has a limited ability to be reused again, and it also takes oil to ship that water to us. Meanwhile, Portland's Bull Run watershed brings great water to us using very little more than gravity.

So, the *Current* has decided to drink more from the tap. We work in an old building, so we'll get a pitcher with a filter to take out the rust, and when we go to meetings, we'll bring our own nifty reusable water bottle.

**Resolution #2: Drink (coffee) more responsibly.** After a long day at the keyboard, the *Current* sometimes needs a shot of caffeine in the afternoon. Lately, though, that jaunt to the coffee bar has brought us a twinge of guilt. Every time we're handed that paper cup with the plastic lid, we cringe. Is this caffeine kick worth creating garbage?

We have a publication to finish here, so cutting the brew out completely is out of the question, but we could bring our own reusable mug to the coffee shop, no? With so many different sorts of travel mugs on the market these days, and with so many people handing out free ones at every turn, there's really no excuse not to do it.

**Resolution #3: Break down those grounds.** Speaking of coffee and garbage, the *Current* has learned that coffee grounds make fabulous compost. And, since we kept a previous year's resolution to eat more fresh fruits and veggies, we make more "green waste," such as peels, skins, seeds, tops and inedible ends of this and that. This year, instead of chucking them, we will acquire one of those nifty compost systems that lets condo and apartment dwellers compost their grounds and green waste inside and without odors. We'll give the resulting compost to one of our friends with a veggie garden, and the virtuous cycle

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It's happening. SWF is starting to gel. Shops have opened and a street scene is budding. Concerts, art happenings, open houses, and innumerable community events have brought residents and business people together over the past few years, and the neighborhood is developing its own customs and culture.

Among Portland's many unique features, its reliance on grassroots efforts to build great neighborhoods stands out. Bike lanes, parks, and community gardens are most often bottom-up efforts here. There's still plenty of work to do to shape the South Waterfront and a number of important issues to consider in the coming months and years, and residents can play a big part in the direction of this district.

In 2008, decisions will be made that will have an immediate impact on life in South Waterfront. Currently, the Portland Department of Transportation is looking at reconfiguring traffic patterns leading into and through the neighborhood. Portland Parks & Recreation has hired a designer for the South Waterfront's two block park, and the bureau and design team will be seeking citizen input on the form and function of that space. Efforts are also underway to transform the newly public portion of Ross Island into a viable public park and to raise money on behalf of the underfunded Willamette Greenway improvements (see related stories on page 1).

Your input on these issues will help public servants, officials, and developers make better decisions about the future of the neighborhood. In some cases, all that's needed from you is a response to a survey, or an effort to stay informed about what's going on.

But there is also a need for deeper involvement from new residents. Fortunately, a group of people are already putting their shoulder to these important projects, so you won't need to go it alone. Contact information and meeting times are below; find out how you can strengthen SWF in 2008 by getting in touch with a South Waterfront 20/20 Committee.

### Art, Culture & Science

Meets on the first Monday of every month at 6:30 pm in the Meriwether Lounge. This committee is in the process of selecting a new chair, for more information contact [artculturescience@gmail.com](mailto:artculturescience@gmail.com).

### Sustainable Lifestyle & Transportation

Join them on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Bella Espresso mezzanine. Contact Rick Weijo at [sustainablelifestyle@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablelifestyle@gmail.com) for more details.

### Nature & Green Spaces

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays at 7:00 pm in the Bella Espresso mezzanine; contact Joan Kwok or Nicole Peterson at [naturegreenspace@gmail.com](mailto:naturegreenspace@gmail.com) for more information.

### Health, Wellness & Social Spaces

Meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Bella Espresso mezzanine. Meeting date is subject to change; contact Peggy Pusch at [hwsscom@gmail.com](mailto:hwsscom@gmail.com) to confirm dates and for more information.

## LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO RIGHT *continued from pg. 1*

Kelley left town, went on to become a successful urban planner, spent many years as Berkeley, California's planning director, and returned to Portland with the coming of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When he took the planning director position here, one of the first things he found on his full and often controversy-heavy plate was a plan for a new district on the waterfront strip then known as North Macadam. Several proposals were on the table: a big-box REI store surrounded by a major parking lot, or a large office park, or even a low-rise gated residential community. None of these plans really addressed the river, had much connection to the rest of downtown, or suited Kelley's long-term goals.

"My vision was for a more robust, 24-hour community that would fully engage the river and provide a wider greenway," he remembers. "I hoped for a foundation piece for the new science and technology economy in Portland."

Kelley renewed a dormant conversation with Oregon Health & Sciences University, whose Marquam Hill campus was bursting at the seams and whose expansion plans were then pointed at Hillsboro. He proposed the bones of a riverfront OHSU extension paired with a residential community along the lines of the vibrant Pearl District. The idea was controversial, but Kelley thought the potential was huge.

"I found," he recalls, "what could best be described as mild interest and huge skepticism. We needed a risk-taker to pursue the idea." Kelley courted developer Homer Williams, who had the vision necessary several years before to transform 44 acres of defunct rail yards in Northwest Portland into a substantial addition to the then emerging Pearl District.

"Homer didn't see it at first," says Meriwether resident Dennis Wilde, a partner with developer Gerding Edlen and the "green guru" for South Waterfront – an area that has become one of America's most environmentally friendly neighborhoods. "But he did his research and eventually changed his mind. He did a masterful job of framing what was possible."

"Homer went directly to OHSU," echoes Kelley, "and his faith helped people get up the courage to move forward."

OHSU's involvement was key. "Without OHSU, nothing would have happened," stresses Wilde. When plans for the Tram and the Center for Health and Healing came together, the fuse was lit on the major explosion of construction that began in earnest in 2003.

One thing that Kelley, Williams, the Portland Development Commission and everyone involved in the vision did not want was a wall of tall buildings barring the city from the river, nor were they interested in building a private enclave. So trips were made to study the narrow, high-rise "point towers" being built in Vancouver, B.C. and Toronto.

"We took the best of what we learned and brought it back," says Wilde. "We wanted a strong pedestrian presence and a strong retail presence along with the residential – it all comes down to what you do with the first 30 feet of each tower."

From the start, all the players understood that each of the new buildings would be at least "green" enough to qualify for the LEED Silver designation. Wilde has been on a very successful mission to exceed that goal from day one – most of the buildings completed so far are the higher (more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable) LEED Gold standard, and the OHSU building is LEED Platinum, and may well be the most earth-friendly large building in America.



**Mine, Yours, Ours:** Agreements between SWF's developers and the City of Portland established generous public spaces and improvements.

The partnership also included over \$100 million in public investments. In exchange, public goods were worked into the development plan. Of the 2,700 housing units to be developed in SWF's Central District, at least 400 units will be affordable. The development team also donated to the city a 125-foot wide, 4-acre greenway skirting the Willamette River and a neighborhood park. (See related map above).

After SWF's long germination and subsequent breakneck rise, the constant change and the drama of tall new buildings will continue, but the pace will be a bit less frenetic in years to come.

"It's been a footrace until now," notes Wilde, "with five major buildings going up in just four years."

Even if the sprint becomes a jog, SWF will continue to grow, which is gratifying to Gil Kelley.

"It's remarkable to see the district come together so powerfully. It doesn't seem that long ago that we were barely on the drawing board. South Waterfront – we named it that in the original proposal, thinking it was a better name than 'North Macadam' to symbolize the connection to downtown – is a cornerstone of the science and technology corridor that runs through Portland and defines a major piece of our economic future."

Whatever the future might bring, South Waterfront has been established on a solid foundation of sustainable policies and progressive investment strategies that should guarantee it a seat in the center of the action as our region grows. \*

## FANTASY ISLAND BECOMES REALITY

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work of protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitat and developing a recreation strategy. Both Dr. Pamplin and the Port of Portland, which owns the northern tip of Ross Island, have reiterated their commitment to working collaboratively to improve the ecological health of the portions of the island over which they retain ownership.”

Restoring Ross Island presents challenges – like virtually all of Portland’s natural areas, the island is under attack by invasive non-native plant species including Himalayan blackberry, clematis, English ivy and English holly, Scot’s broom, bittersweet nightshade and sweet pie cherry – as does creating a viable recreation strategy which allows the public to experience and enjoy the island without harming it. The donated acreage has no public access at this point, although it can be enjoyed from the water by canoe or kayak – or from any sunrise-facing



© Bob Sallinger

**Leaving a Legacy:** Ross Island will be preserved for the enjoyment of Portland’s future generations.

window in SWF.

Invasive species control will likely be the first priority, aided by Pamplin’s additional gift of \$100,000 to begin the effort.

“Three processes have been put into motion by this donation,” Sallinger told the *Current*. “First, the City of Portland, the Port of Portland and Dr. Pamplin will work out how best to coordinate management and restoration of the island in which

they share ownership. Second, a public process to create and execute a restoration and recreation plan will be under way. And third, fund-raising to support those restoration and preservation plans will take place. Now that we’ve moved beyond the transfer of ownership effort we are entering a tremendously exciting phase in the island’s future.”

The full restoration of the public portion of Ross Island will require many hands and plenty of dollars. The island represents a very visible and tangible opportunity for SWF residents and business people to make an impact on the ecological health of their neighborhood. SWF residents who are interested in participating at any level from simply joining an invasive species removal party to having input on Ross Island’s future as a public amenity and ecological gem can begin by visiting [friendsofrossisland.org](http://friendsofrossisland.org) – and you can join the Friends by emailing Sallinger at [bsallinger@audubonportland.org](mailto:bsallinger@audubonportland.org). \*

## PARDON OUR DUST



Come rain or sleet or snow, your South Waterfront construction crews continue to log long hours on the job site. Curious to know what they’re up to? We’ve got the answers here.

### Atwater Place ★1

Welcome, Atwaterians, to your new neighborhood. Move-ins continue through the winter as the uppermost floors receive their finish materials. Meanwhile, the tenant improvement on the ground floor for Orupa continues. [www.atwaterplace.com](http://www.atwaterplace.com)

### John Ross ★2

Umpqua Bank is open, now the neighborhood ea-

gerly awaits pizza pie courtesy of Pizza a’ Fetta, which is slated to open in early ‘08, followed by Pampered Pooch, a dog spa. [www.thejohnross.com](http://www.thejohnross.com)

### 3720 ★3

Like the rain of an Oregon winter, the concrete keeps pouring, and will through the first quarter of ‘08. Window systems will follow, with interior walls, electrical, and mechanical work filling in afterward. The tower’s top floor is slated to pour on February 5. The concrete work on the “sidecar” should be complete in March. The building’s skin will also be installed

over the winter; windows will reach the 16<sup>th</sup> floor and sheet rock should be finished through the 6<sup>th</sup> floor by end of February. Expect occasional lane closures on Gaines for concrete pours; closures will be posted in advance. Also, be advised that the parking lot west of the park is reserved for construction crews only; some unauthorized vehicles have been towed of late, so please park elsewhere. [www.3720bond.com](http://www.3720bond.com)

### Interim Neighborhood Park ★4

A design team led by San Francisco’s Hargreaves and As-

sociates has been selected to design South Waterfront’s Park. Their contract will be before City Council on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Help shape this park; see “Get Involved” on page 2.

### The Alexan Apartments ★5

The Alexan is still working in shades of gray; concrete pouring continues for the next three months. January will bring the building’s skin, which includes a combination of glass and metal panels and brick. Small amounts of interior framing will occur in January.



© Basil Childers | Basil Photography

**Fab Lab:** Umpqua Bank has opened its new "Innovation Lab" in SWF.

## SWF WORKS

# BRANCHING OUT

**Journalistic integrity prevents us from reporting that the new SWF Umpqua Bank is, as the signage in the lobby proclaims, "The World's Greatest Bank."** But we are willing to venture that this is the coolest bank in Portland.

And we use the word "lobby" with intent, as the newest branch of this Roseburg-based chain looks much more like the lobby of a hip boutique hotel than any current notion of a bank. In fact, until you have penetrated past the sleek, comfortable chairs and tables (some with built-in laptops), the display of local products, the long espresso bar (serving in-house Umpqua blend coffee and outfitted with Internet stations), and the glowing touch-screen video walls – until you have been greeted by one of the bank's "universal associates" (who all take Ritz-Carlton training in customer service) and finally see the discrete vault, what you are most tempted to do is walk up to the counter, check in and book a spa treatment.

"We want to be the concierge for the community," says Umpqua assistant vice-president and branch manager Brian Alfano. "From our Services Bar to the Community Wall, we have lots of new ideas and technologies to enable neighborhood residents to connect, collaborate, discover, work and play." You can also, be assured, do some banking here.

But this place is about banking in the same way that SWF is about condos – it's the means, but not the story. Umpqua is, after all, the kind of bank that has its own local music web site, another portal called UmpquaLife ("A community where small moments matter") and a new virtual networking site called LocalSpace. Umpqua's vision is to make the bank a destination, a tool and a partner for the local community, and SWF is the place they've chosen to test that vision. The bank calls this branch (or "store" in their terminology), created with local expertise from companies including Intel, Planar, Lenovo and more, their "Innovations Lab."

"This is where we'll learn more about our customers' preferences and what ideas and services can help build community," says Lani Hayward, Umpqua's executive director

of creative strategies. "We'll see what works, then perhaps roll those things out to our other locations. We want this to be a destination, we want this to become SWF's living room."

So who on earth would want to hang out in a bank? Well, community organizations, for one, who can use the large Community Table for meetings day or evening. Or SWF artists and photographers, who can become part of the dramatic, electronic Community Wall, which displays images of the people and places of SWF on multiple, linked interactive display panels. Or kids, who will be watching holiday movies on the huge video wall. Or football fans, who will use that wall to watch the Oregon-Oregon State Civil War game. Or the people involved in planning spaces like the park or the greenway, who should soon be able to use the Community Wall to explore and enhance potential designs – SWF planning meetings are already being held at the bank. Or music fans, who can use the listening stations to check out the songs and playlists of local musicians at [umpquamusic.com](http://umpquamusic.com). Or even shoppers, who can check the changing displays of products from shops open and soon to open in the neighborhood.

There's more, but journalistic integrity (and page space) prevent us from getting too carried away – but you can visit [umpqualab.com](http://umpqualab.com) to learn more, or, even better, drop in at the northwest corner of the John Ross and see/hear/touch it all for yourself. It's SWF's community living room, and you never have to vacuum or dust. \*

## YOU SAY YOU WANT A RESOLUTION?

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is complete. If you like this idea too, an Internet search will lead you to a variety of off the shelf choices and even some tips for building your own bin.

### **Resolution #4: Put the clothes horse out to pasture.**

We admit it. We used to wear super trendy plastic Swatch watches. Oh, and then there were the green sneakers that had a fashion life of about, oh, three minutes. Then, in college, we spent a year in Europe, where clothes were much more expensive, but were built to last and last. We saw Europeans compose great looking outfits out of the same pared down wardrobe day after day.

Back in America, the hunt for well made clothes in easily cleaned and repaired fibers is a bit tougher. Our country is awash in cheap imports that travel across oceans to get to us, burning up fossil fuels along the way. But in 2008 we've resolved to do the following: to buy durable pieces in natural fibers and colors that will outlast this year's trend; to shop second hand and vintage to shorten the distance our clothes travel and to help "recycle" fashions, and to thin our own closets out and recycle what we're not wearing so someone else can enjoy them.

There are many more new green leaves we can turn in the new year; maybe you've thought of a few on your own. If you'd like to share your own efforts to build a greener life in 2008, you can share them on SWF's green lifestyles blog. Contact the editor at [greenlivingblog@southwaterfront.com](mailto:greenlivingblog@southwaterfront.com) to contribute your own green resolutions. \*

# CURRENT

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## Winter Wonderland

Meriwether resident Jessica Black shot this photograph along the Willamette Greenway during last January's snow storm. Share your SWF shots with us; e-mail our editor at [editor@southwaterfront.com](mailto:editor@southwaterfront.com).

## SWF CULTURE

### GIFTS THAT MATTER

**It can be a challenge to find meaningful gifts for friends and loved ones.** Who doesn't know at least one person who has said "I really don't need anything this year?" In the past, have you spent hours and a small fortune on a gift you're not sure was appreciated?

This year, if you'd like to honor someone who wants for nothing with a gift, the *Current* suggests giving to a local charity in their name. Giving locally means that dollars are reinvested in our community, and it can give the recipient an immediate and tangible connection to their gift from you.

If you need help with ideas, we're including a short list of organizations who have had an association with SWF:

**Neighborhood House.** There are many opportunities to give right here in your neighborhood through Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>;

find collection boxes at Bella Espresso, Umpqua Bank, and at concierge desks. More information and donations year 'round: [www.nhweb.org](http://www.nhweb.org)

**Oregon Symphony.** More info at: [www.orsymphony.org/getinvolved/](http://www.orsymphony.org/getinvolved/)

**Oregon Ballet Company.** More info at: [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org)

**OHSU Heart Research Center.** More info: [www.heartresearchcenter.org](http://www.heartresearchcenter.org)

**Portland Audubon Society.** As the financial agent for the Friends of Ross Island, they're the send-to-guys for Ross Island restoration dollars. More info: [www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org)

**Portland Parks & Recreation Willamette Greenway Fund.** See our sidebar story on page 1 for related information. Donation web site: [www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=44413](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=44413)

Finally, donations to the Oregon Symphony, the Oregon Ballet Theatre and the Parks Foundation qualify for an Oregon income tax credit through

the **Oregon Cultural Trust.** For more information on how the credit works and for a list of other organizations participating in the tax credit program, visit [www.culturaltrust.org](http://www.culturaltrust.org). \*

## CONTACT CURRENT

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We love to hear your comments! Please drop us a line about what you've read here.

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