

GreenScene

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neighborhoods

FALL 2006



Salmon
Festival at
Oxbow
Regional
Park

Fall nature
activities
for all



METRO

The Sandy River – a wild river reborn

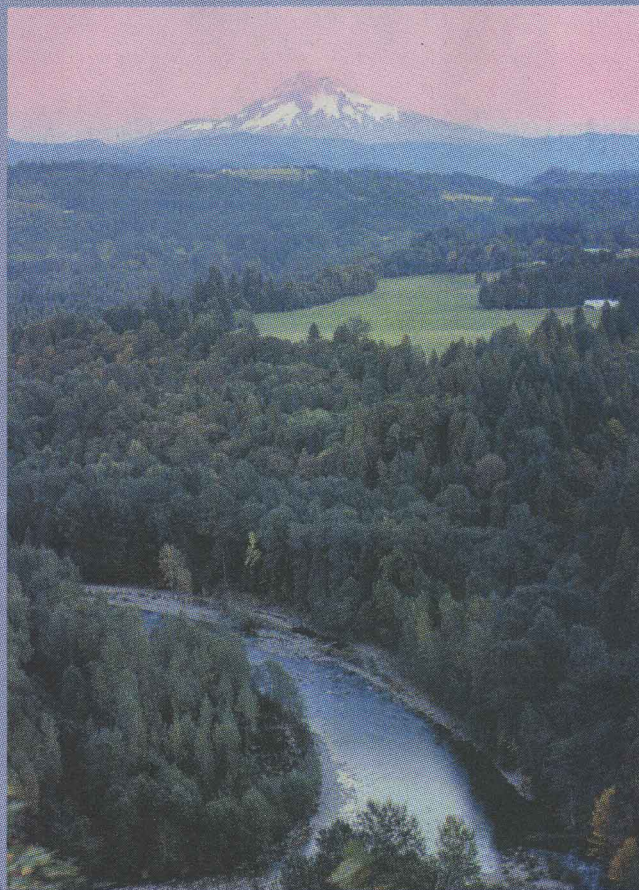
Standing on the shore of the Sandy River at Oxbow Regional Park during the Salmon Festival, watching Chinook spawn in the river's shallow riffles, you might not realize you're in a river basin of more than 500 square miles, a wild river preserve in a metropolitan area unmatched in the world.

At Oxbow Regional Park, you're at river mile 12 of the Sandy's 56-mile length, its headwaters originating at Reid Glacier high on Mount Hood, its mouth at the Columbia River. When you took the roads to the park's entrance, winding steeply downhill, you were traveling into the Sandy River Gorge, one of Oregon's most scenic river canyons. In some places the walls rise 700 feet above the river.

Two reaches of the Sandy River (totaling 24.9 miles) are designated a national Wild and Scenic River. The upper section, beginning at the headwaters, is renowned for spectacular scenery, fascinating geologic formations and wilderness experiences. The lower Sandy claims a deep, winding forested gorge, anadromous fish runs and beautiful parks.

The Sandy River got its modern name from the sediment and deep silt deposited by fast-moving mudflows of three major Mount Hood eruptions over the last

15,000 years. The latest mudflow, in the late 1700s, occurred just a few years before Lewis and Clark's journey, when Clark "attempted to wade this stream and found the bottom a quick sand, and impassable." They named it "Quicksand River." In fact, the Sandy has the highest percentage of glacial melt of any Oregon river.



When Portland General Electric (PGE) removes two dams in the Sandy River Basin, one next summer and one in 2008, the Sandy River will once again be free-flowing from its headwaters on Mt. Hood to its mouth at the Columbia River. Lake Roslyn will be drained and restored, and PGE will donate 1,500 acres of land for conservation and recreation.

A coalition of agencies and organizations are working together to improve water quality, restore wildlife habitat and recover a heritage of strong salmon runs in the Sandy River.

Josh Kling photo

The annual Salmon Festival celebrates the return of fall Chinook salmon. The Sandy used to be a great river for salmon. Today, wild runs of anadromous fish on the Sandy are only 10 to 15 percent of historical numbers. Chinook, coho and steelhead have been listed by the federal government as threatened species.

The many impacts on the river and its tributaries – the Zigzag, Salmon, Little Sandy and Bull Run rivers – have included over-fishing, clear-cut logging and sawmill activity. Portland's Bull Run drinking water system reduced flows and altered water temperature. The Marmot and Little Sandy dams blocked fish migration. Together these have all had a cumulative effect on the health of the Sandy River basin's waters and wildlife.

All that is changing. Progress has already been made through the partnership of a dozen government, private and nonprofit organizations working together to protect and restore thousands of acres of lands along the length of the Sandy River. In the near future more big changes are afoot.

A key protection strategy that has picked up steam in the past decade is the acquisition and donation of land. Portland General

Electric (PGE), in an agreement with Western Rivers Conservancy, plans to dismantle Marmot Dam in 2007, the Little Sandy Dam in 2008, donate its water rights to the public and contribute more than 1,500 acres of its related lands. With funds from the 1995 open spaces, parks and streams bond measure, Metro has also been protecting land

in the Sandy River Gorge, acquiring more than 1,000 acres for the public. Metro owns and manages three river islands – Gary, Flag and Chatham – along with the 1,200 acres that make up Oxbow Regional Park. Smaller, strategic acquisitions have been made by The Nature Conservancy which today has protected 435 acres in the Gorge between Dodge and Oxbow parks, along with 300 acres on the Little Sandy River.

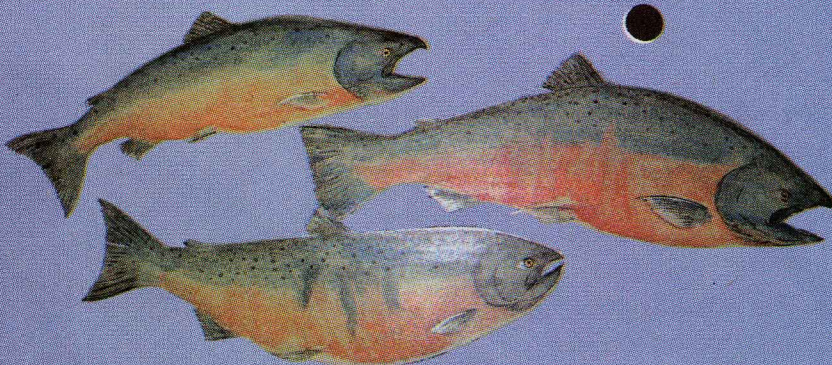
Habitat restoration is another critical piece of the overall strategy to enhance fish runs and improve the basin's health. The U.S. Forest Service is restoring 1,400 acres of the Sandy River delta at its confluence with the Columbia with long-term plans to reestablish 600 acres of Columbia River bottomland riparian forest and 200 acres of wetlands. The Nature Conservancy and Metro have been working with private landowners to eradicate invasive Japanese knotweed, which threatens the river's riparian habitat. And the Portland Water Bureau is creating a habitat conservation plan to improve water flows, water temperature and habitat in the Bull Run watershed and Sandy basin.

The Sandy River Basin Partners, a coalition of more than a dozen public agencies and private organizations, has developed a science-based restoration strategy to benefit threatened fish species and restore the Sandy basin to health. This effort will likely result in investments of more than \$100 million dollars in habitat restoration activities in the basin over the next 50 years. Neighbors, volunteers and people from all over the metropolitan area are also helping to protect and restore this remarkable resource.

Stand at Oxbow Regional Park along the Sandy River shore and peer upriver and down. The rushing waters are flowing from mountain glacier through canyon and gorge, ancient forest, home of black bear and bobcat and ancestral salmon spawning grounds. With a lot of work and renewed dedication, the Sandy remains a river wild.

23RD ANNUAL
Salmon Festival
at Metro's Oxbow Regional Park

10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Oct. 14 and 15



For thousands of years, fall Chinook salmon have struggled upstream from the Pacific Ocean to return to their birthplace in the Sandy River Gorge and give life to the next generation. This epic journey is both legend and science, tied to the past, present and future of this region by culture, biology, art and economy. The annual Salmon Festival at Oxbow Regional Park celebrates this special connection between people and wild salmon and inspires us to value clean water and healthy watersheds.



Turn the page to find out more about the festival.