

# ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

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## PARKS COMMISSIONER STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners  
**FROM:** Leslie Eldridge, Interim Director  
**DATE:** January 10, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** The Fresh Water Trust

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### SITUATION:

The Freshwater Trust (TFT) requests an extension to the current waiver allowing for targeted application of herbicide to Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) listed noxious weed species within active riparian restoration projects located on Ashland Parks properties. The waiver extension would be valid for 3 years ending December 31, 2026.

### BACKGROUND:

In 2019 the City of Ashland Public Works Department began a riparian restoration project to be in compliance with the Clean Water Act. Public Works partners with TFT to manage the restoration project on City land and on APRC managed property adjacent to Bear Creek. TFT and Public Works have proposed a protocol for using glyphosate herbicides sparingly to control invasive weeds in these areas.

At the August 26, 2019 APRC Business Meeting the Commission approved the request from Public Works to grant an exemption to the APRC Integrated Pest Management Policy with the following conditions:

- Limit the herbicide application of herbicide to no closer than six feet to the waters' edge of Bear Creek and no further than 60 feet from the waters' edge of Bear Creek
- Limit the period of application to three years from the date of the commencement of the work
- The exception is limited to the following properties: Ashland Pond, Mace Property, Riverwalk and North Mountain Park
- Follow all APRC IPM policy including signage
- Exceptions beyond the above parameters would require approval by APRC
- Public works will submit an annual report to APRC on the work being done

### ASSESSMENT:

APRC staff has reviewed the proposal put forward by Public Works and TFT and feels this project and the related IPM exception are in the best interests of APRC and our local watershed.

### Ecological Impacts of Restoration

- If approved, this project will help APRC reach its goal of riparian restoration along Bear Creek, increasing terrestrial and aquatic diversity and helping to make our watershed more resilient to climate change.
- Riparian restoration will reduce the existing monoculture of invasive species and replace it with canopy cover and a shrub-layer of native riparian plants.
- The new vegetative community, once established, will reduce erosion, decrease water temperature, and increase dissolved oxygen in Bear Creek.

- These changes will consequently improve the habitat for many in-stream species, including salmon. A more diverse vegetative community will also increase the availability of resources for nesting birds and improve the habitat corridor for wildlife moving through the urban interface.

#### Weed Control Methodology

- Mechanical weed control methods alone are not practical, feasible, or sustainable under the long term (20 year) performance standards required for credits under this program.
- If approved, the application area will be limited to the 50-foot riparian buffer where the restoration work will take place, as this is typically where invasive species control has the greatest ecological impact.
- The proposed herbicide application methods are judicious and conservative. TFT employs current research and best-practices ensuring the safest and most effective and strategies for each target invasive species.
  - First steps always include mechanical weed-control methods, timed to reduce impact to nesting birds.
  - Mechanical blackberry removal reduces the quantity of chemicals required. Re-sprouts are then treated with a spot-spray method, reducing the exposure in non-target species.
  - To control Japanese Knotweed, a stem-injection method ensures that the glyphosate is only absorbed by the target species.
  - Herbicide application is done in the fall, when there are fewer flowers and pollinators are less active.
  - Only glyphosate products will be used; no neonicotinoids will be applied.
  - All herbicides will be handled by licensed applicators.

#### APRC Oversight

- APRC's IPM team includes licensed public pesticide applicators that will provide oversight of all chemical applications.
- APRC staff will ensure that the guidelines for public notification are adhered to. As per the current APRC IPM policy, signage will be posted on site, 48 hours in advance and 48 hours after each application.
- Project reports will be submitted to the Parks Commission every year, and all reports will be retained as part of the public record.

#### Ongoing Maintenance

- The long-term restoration strategy is designed to be sustainable with very limited application of chemicals beyond the establishment period.
- A collaboration with Public Works and TFT will produce a savings in maintenance costs for APRC. Furthermore, the ecosystem-services provided by a healthy stream channel will be of immeasurable value to our community.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commissioners grant an extension to the current waiver of the APRC IPM policy allowing for targeted application of herbicide to ODA listed noxious weed species within active riparian restoration projects located on Ashland Parks properties.

#### **POSSIBLE MOTION**

*I move to approve the request to extend the IPM policy waiver to The Fresh Water Trust until December 31, 2026.*

#### **Attachment**

August 26, 2019 APRC Business Meeting Minutes:

[08 26 19Approved Regular Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)