

Beggars-Tick Wildlife Refuge

20-acre wildlife refuge in Southeast Portland, on Southeast 111th Avenue between Foster Road and Harold Street



AFTER

Native grasses and shrubs have been planted

Beggars-Tick Marsh, a 20-acre wetland, is a unique urban wildlife refuge. The project involved enhancement of approximately 1.75 acres of natural wetlands at Beggars-Tick Marsh. The first challenge was clearing the site of debris and exotic/invasive forbs, shrubs and trees. Blackberries and other invasive plants needed to be controlled at the site on a regular basis. Rodeo, an aquatic-safe herbicide, was used to control the exotics. Five thousand cubic yards of fill (boulders, gypsum board and small to large chunks of concrete and asphalt) and soils had to be removed to restore part of the area to its previous wetland condition.

Viewpoints were created by grading and recontouring the area and filling some upland areas. The soil left on the site after grading was rocky and extremely low in nutrients. The graded area was hydroseeded. The site was planted in

DURING

(at top) Fencing is installed to keep vehicles out

the fall with native trees, shrubs and wetland plants found within the refuge (i.e., common rush, slough sledge, serviceberry, thimbleberry, nootka rose, red alder, Oregon ash, mock orange and cedar). Survival rate of plants going into the following summer was about 80 percent. The summer, however, was extremely dry and deep-root watering only occurred once, which caused a high plant mortality rate. Much of the site was replanted using the same species that did not survive. A three-inch layer of new top soil was added prior to replanting to add nutrients and retain moisture.

The construction of a 750-foot gravel pathway with a 5-foot by 30-foot wooden foot bridge and two viewpoints were constructed for pedestrian traffic. A 780-foot cyclone fence was installed on the south perimeter adjacent to Springwater Trail and on the east perimeter to prevent vehicular access into the refuge.

Benefits

The excavation created additional wetlands by removing undesirable fill that had been illegally dumped. The trail and bridge limit pedestrian traffic in the wildlife refuge. The fence prevents vehicular access. Exotic vegetation such as Himalayan blackberry was removed. Native grasses, shrubs and trees found within the refuge were planted.

The project also helps the stormwater storage capacity of the wetland. Beggars-Tick Marsh provides habitat to many species of animals and plays a role in the path of migrating birds. Many birds would have a difficult migration without resting points, protected areas and food sources.

Budget

Proposed – \$53,899

Actual – \$89,626

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife grant award – \$25,845

Helpful hints – what worked, what didn't

- Experience from previous projects assisted in the development and planning process for this project. For example, it was determined that the best time to do excavation and grading was during the dryer summer months, followed with a fall planting to allow materials to establish themselves before the next growing season. Polymers were used to help plants retain water during the root development stage.
- Vandalism (arson) occurred to the wooden foot bridge just prior to the final inspection. The city of Portland Police Bureau Crime Stoppers program assisted in publicizing the act, but no “leads” came about. Fortunately, the contractor was able to do repairs within a short time. All that had to be done was a contract change order (for \$5,300) instead of going through the whole construction bid process again. A fire retardant was applied to the new structure.

Timeline and tasks

May - June 1992	Initial site design
August - December 1992 .	Grant application and approval
January - March 1993	Corps of Engineer and DSL excavation permit process
April - June 1993	Site clearing and preparation
May - June 1993	Excavation, grading and construction plans development; plant list developed
June - July 1993	Contractual bid process
July 1993	Contractor selected
September -	
November 1993	Excavating, grading, and trail viewpoints and bridge construction
October 1993	Plant material ordered and planted
December 1993	Bridge fire damage repair; project completed

Partners

Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department staff

David Douglas Ecology Club

Contact

Dan Kromer, Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department, 797-1844