



## **Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Nature & Trails Advisory Committee Minutes**

**Date: November 19, 2025**

**Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

**Location: Fanno Creek Service Center**

### **In Attendance**

Committee Members: Tom Erwin, Alison Davis, Carl Nelson (chair), Tina Ricks, Jenny Ruthven, Matthew Shepherd (arrived later via Teams), Samantha Tipler (temporary secretary)

Absent: Erik Lehr

Board Liaison: [None]

Staff: Greg Creager, Nature & Trails Manager (committee liaison)

Guests: [None]

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from September 2025 were reviewed. Alison moved to approve the minutes. Tina seconded. The minutes were approved as written and were approved unanimously.

### **III. Guest Comments**

[None]

### **IV. Committee Check-in**

Committee members shared anecdotes about parks visited and nature notes.

Greg recently visited the Rock Creek Trail. Jenny biked the Fanno Creek Trail. Tina committed on the recent mural on the Waterhouse Trail, with Carl noting he believed funding was related to the THPRD 70th anniversary. Samantha noted she's been riding an e-bike to work. Carl later shared a photo of the mural.

Alison visited the Westside trail between Tualatin Valley Highway and Farmington to the base of Mt. Williams. She noted a lot of beaver activity around the culvert where Stoller Trail crosses Laidlaw. Craig said the culvert is the county's, and their plan is to put caging around the culvert so beavers can't fully block the culverts.

Tom has not visited new trails, but has seen herons and an egret while walking his dog

Greg recently met with partners at Clean Water Services to discuss restoration work along the Bronson Creek Greenway where the long boardwalk crosses by Hansen Ridge Park. It's very cattail dominant. Lots of beaver activity.

## **V. New Business**

### **A. Meetings this upcoming year**

Carl started the conversation asking what types of topics the committee wants to cover, where to go on field trips, and any other ideas. These would not be finalized until new members of the committee join in January or February. Greg suggested also deciding on what months, if any, the committee wants to skip for 2026.

Jenny suggested starting meetings at 6 p.m. instead of 6:30 p.m. No one had any objections, but the time change will be discussed with new members.

Samantha suggested consulting with THPRD staff on feasible projects the committee can help with or suggest funding for.

Tina noted she has been fascinated by all the maps THPRD has produced, which show demographics such as income level, distance from trails, distance from parks and playgrounds. These showed how much care the district is putting into serving its constituents on the limited funds. Tom agreed, those maps are fascinating.

Alison is interested in trail access, and also what the other advisory committees are working on.

Jenny felt the NATC has a harder time finding tangible items for funding.

Carl noted the grant money is available, but the committee doesn't have to use it. If there is something the group is passionate about, it's worth a discussion but not a have-to. He listed projects other committees have done, and noted the NATC had funded signage for trail gaps and adding gravel trail to connect the Fanno Creek trail with basketball courts and improve access.

Greg said he is connecting with staff to find projects they are working on, including education at the Tualatin Hills Nature Park or trail counter upgrades.

Alison and Tina discussed a wildlife camera, the possibility of making it public facing to increase understanding of animals in the district. Alison also worried about taking staff time, but noted volunteers may be interested, similar to those who work on amphibian surveys and turtle surveys.

Samantha suggested field trips in July and August. Greg went over how many meetings are required per year. Locations were discussed including the renovations on the Willow Creek Greenway, visiting the Tualatin Hills Nature Park, or seeing progress of areas impacted by the emerald ash borer. Jenny suggested field trips in June and August, with a regular meeting in July, so momentum isn't lost between formal meetings.

Carl noted there are joint meetings in January, April and October. He also said there will be a climate action plan updated soon, and suggested revisiting ways to get more community engagement on the trails.

Tom noted he'd like an update on learning more about how parks have been named historically.

**A. Update: trail gap project**

Carl gave the update: NATC originally wrote the grant to modify signage, then Metro funded the grant to replace signs across the whole district. So the committee shifted the funding to have Washington County add signage to property off THPRD and add ground signage to crossings. They produced the designs and the committee provided feedback.

Greg said the IGA was signed but THPRD was never billed for the work. The project is now on the county's timeline.

Tina said she had seen temporary spray paint to indicate sidewalks are for dual use near Bronson Road in Bethany, over Highway 26 to Bethany Court. Matthew said in the past, spray paint was an initial indication of bike lane work in his neighborhood.

With the Metro grant, Greg said THPRD is in the process. Design has been approved, they've chosen a vendor and expect to get signs in the next month or two. He was unsure if THPRD staff would install them or if it would be a contract job.

Carl suggested meeting with Washington County officials for an update. Greg said he would look into that.

Carl and Tina brought up a difficult crossing at Milikan. Tina attended a Beaverton Traffic Commission meeting, where she asked about that crossing. The city is aware of the crossing, but the nearby railroad crossing and overhead power lines pose problems in adding flashing lights or an expanded crossing. She said Kevn Teater, a Beaverton City Council member, is also looking into it. And she suggested partnering with the Beaverton Bicycling Advisory Committee.

Greg noted there have been talks about moving the crossing away from the railroad crossing and power lines. The crossing is technically not on THPRD property, but the trail on both ends of it is.

**A. Beaver/wildlife management practices**

Matthew summed up articles he has recently read about beavers and their benefits to the ecosystem, often beyond what was previously thought.

Greg gave an overview, saying THPRD does not have a policy but it does have a practice, which is not to remove or alter any beaver structures. The only exception is affecting an integral part of the infrastructure. In the past, if staff tried to dismantle beaver structures, the beavers just built them again.

ODFW is responsible for managing wildlife, while THPRD manages for habitat. THPRD does not directly manage wildlife, but instead stewards the habitat for wildlife to use and people to enjoy.

Beaver also come to a site, build a dam, eat the food, and move on. This is the nature of nature, he said, it's always changing. That change can be difficult for some people.

Greg believes the amount of beaver in the area has grown. Though there is no data, just anecdotes, he said there are beaver in almost every drainage in Beaverton.

Matthew noted he was once on a walk and passed a beaver dam without realizing it was a dam. Sometimes beaver are nearby and people may not realize it. Tom said his neighborhood pond has gone up and down depending on beaver activity.

When asked how often THPRD gets calls about beavers, Greg estimated maybe once a week.

Carl asked about invasive species control. Greg said there have been tactics to remove emerald ash borers. Also there is indirect management for nutria, bull frogs, snapping turtles, red-eared sliders and bird species. THPRD focuses on creating habitat for native wildlife.

#### **A. Advisory Committee Grant ideas**

Greg said grant applications need to be proposed just once a year, in April.

Matthew noted other committees keep it as a standard item on the agenda so it stays front-of-mind. Some ideas discussed include signage and native plants. Much of this was discussed earlier.

#### **A. Update on NTAC recruitment**

Carl gave an update. The NATC needs five members to fill the committee. There were initially 12 applicants, and there were seven interviews. Interviewees (Carl, Alison and Samantha) made selections, which were sent to Greg and the Board. Once approved by the board the applicants will be informed of the outcome.

In December the NATC will have elections for chair and secretary. We also want to honor Tina and Erik, who will not be continuing. Bruce will be at the December meeting as well.

As a final note, Greg said there were 1,100 people at the Newt Day Celebration.

#### **IV. Old Business**

[none]

Next meeting is Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m.

Joint advisory on 21 at 6 p.m.

**Meeting ended 8:19 p.m.**

**Next meeting is on December 17, starting at 6:30 p.m. at Fanno Creek Service Center (with remote option available).**

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Tipler, temporary secretary