

NEWS



Contact:

Bob Wayt
503-614-1218 (direct)
503-686-5134 (cell)

February 17, 2017

THPRD VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT SHORT-TERM NATURE PROJECTS IN RECORD NUMBERS

Following a global trend, the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District's Natural Resources Department is offering more one-time, short-term volunteer opportunities.

And the strategy is working well, with volunteer counts significantly higher than year-earlier figures.

According to Bruce Barbarasch, THPRD superintendent of Natural Resources, the number of NR volunteers doing short-term projects during the 2015-16 fiscal year soared 73% over the 2014-15 number, to nearly 3,000. That followed a 23% increase in the previous fiscal year.



At Hyland Woods in south Beaverton, a volunteer for THPRD's Natural Resources Department plants one of the 12,000 native shrubs and trees that were sowed during the project.

(Those numbers are for short-term volunteers only. THPRD also has hundreds of volunteers who participate in longer-term projects each year.)

“Our short-term volunteer contributions have hit a record high,” Barbarasch said. “We’re finding people are more likely to donate their time if they can do one-time projects of 2-3 hours rather than making a longer-term commitment.”

In conjunction with the trend, NR has also streamlined its paperwork to make signing up for projects as easy as possible.

Other outreach efforts Natural Resources has initiated in recent years:

- Expanded its service learning program to include Ridgewood Elementary School and Five Oaks Middle School. Natural Resources also works with the Beaverton School District's Health & Science School and is partnering with Dig In, a local nonprofit organization, to assist middle school students at Rachel Carson School of Environmental Science.
- Became more strategic on where to schedule daylong volunteer opportunities, usually with dedicated community partners who help the district advocate and recruit for volunteers.
- Added part-time staff members to assist with project management and volunteer program support, freeing up Melissa Marcum, the coordinator, to focus on higher priorities, including greater responsiveness to the public.

A wide variety of nature-based volunteer opportunities are available at THPRD. For more information, visit <http://www.thprd.org/activities/nature/volunteer> or call Marcum at 503-619-3941.

Want to volunteer for THPRD but not interested so much in nature projects? The park district offers many other options at <http://www.thprd.org/connect/volunteer>.

About THPRD

Formed in 1955, THPRD is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning 50 square miles and serving about 240,000 residents in the greater Beaverton area. The district provides year-round recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Offerings include thousands of widely diverse classes, 95 park sites with active recreational amenities, nearly 70 miles of trails, eight swim centers, six recreation centers, and about 1,500 acres of natural areas. For more information, visit www.thprd.org or call 503-645-6433.

#