

COLUMBIA LAND TRUST AUDUBON SOCIETY OF PORTLAND

Media contacts

Susie Peterson, Backyard Habitat Program Manager | Columbia Land Trust | 503-841-5918 | speterson@columbialandtrust.org

Nikkie West, Backyard Habitat Program Manager | Audubon Society of Portland | 503-292-6855 | nwest@audubonportland.org

Backyard Habitat Certification Program Expands into Gladstone, Happy Valley, Oregon City, Rivergrove, and Wilsonville

Residents and groups with yards under one acre can start registering for the program immediately.

PORTLAND, Ore. — The Backyard Habitat Certification Program, a partnership of Columbia Land Trust and Audubon Society of Portland, is proud to announce its expansion into Damascus, Gladstone, Happy Valley, Oregon City, Rivergrove, and Wilsonville as of Monday, April 23rd. The program celebrated this expansion by certifying the home of Lisa Brice and Steve Benson, Chair of the Wilsonville Parks Board.

The program provides technical assistance, advice, and incentives to those who want to improve wildlife habitat in their yards, control noxious weeds, manage stormwater onsite, and garden naturally. “Our region has an incredible amount of ecological diversity. As our region’s population grows we aim to support that diversity by encouraging individuals to consider what they can do in their own yards that will make a difference. It doesn’t have to be a lot. Simple acts like removing noxious weeds, using natural pest control methods instead of pesticides, and planting indigenous plants can make a huge difference. Backyard Habitat provides every participant with the tools and resources they will need to take steps like these,” said Susie Peterson, Backyard Habitat Program Manager for Columbia Land Trust.

The Backyard Habitat Certification Program is offered to private residences (under one acre), as well as to schools, community groups, public institutions, and businesses. For \$35, a Habitat Technician will visit the participant’s yard to identify noxious weeds and suggest beneficial native plants and other features that will attract and support birds and other wildlife. Recommendations are tailored to each participant’s yard and interests. Participants also receive other perks such as discounted prices on native plants, coupons to local garden centers, follow-up technical assistance, and certification signs to display in their yard.

“Just one yard may not seem like much when it comes to protecting habitat, but there are more than 4,500 urban and suburban yards in this program, and together they make a real difference for our region’s wildlife,” said Nikkie West, Backyard Habitat Program Manager for the Audubon Society of Portland. “Through this program, every yard and every gardener can play a meaningful role in revitalizing our region for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife.”

The program also aims to restore larger properties, such as schools and churches, in coordination with the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD). “Clackamas Soil Water Conservation District is very pleased to support the Backyard Habitat Certification Program,” said Tom Salzer, General Manager of the CSWCD. “This program provides consistent service to our urban constituents that benefit wildlife, homeowners, and the community. It is a tremendous addition to Clackamas County!”

“It is really exciting to see the Backyard Habitat Certification Program’s expansion into Clackamas County. Their efforts to promote native and non-invasive, wildlife-friendly landscapes in our urban areas closely match our existing goals and efforts,” said Sam Leininger, CSWCD WeedWise Program Manager. “This expansion of the Backyard Habitat Certification Program provides an additional resource for our urban landowners to take tangible steps to promote wildlife habitat on their properties.”

Several of the cities included in this expansion fall under Clackamas County Water Environment Services (WES). “We are thrilled to support the Backyard Habitat Certification Program because it furthers our efforts to improve watershed health. The program helps homeowners find ways to make a difference right where they live by reducing use of pesticides, replacing invasive plants with natives, and by managing on-site rain water to benefit their gardens and community,” said Gail Shaloum, Technical Services Coordinator at WES.

To enroll or learn more about the Backyard Habitat Certification Program please visit our website at backyardhabitats.org.

More about the Backyard Habitat Certification Program:

Columbia Land Trust and the Audubon Society of Portland have co-managed the Backyard Habitat Certification Program since 2009. The program originally began in the City of Portland, but expanded into Lake Oswego in 2011, and into Gresham and Fairview in 2015, and now serves all urban areas of Clackamas County as well. Over 4,500 yards are enrolled in the program, spanning more than 1,000 acres. It fosters environmental stewardship by empowering participants to become urban conservationists and to preserve important wildlife habitat. Thanks to generous support by the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, the program is now able to expand into this new area. For more information, visit www.backyardhabitats.org

More about Columbia Land Trust

Columbia Land Trust conserves and cares for vital lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships. Since 1990, the Land Trust has conserved more than 32,000 acres throughout Oregon and Washington stretching from The Dalles to the Pacific Ocean. To learn more, visit www.columbialandtrust.org or call 360-696-0131.

More about the Audubon Society of Portland

Founded in 1902, the Audubon Society of Portland is one of the oldest conservation organizations in the nation. It promotes the understanding, enjoyment and protection of native birds, other wildlife and their habitats through its conservation and environmental education programs, its 150-acre Nature Sanctuary and Nature Store in northwest Portland, and its Wildlife Care Center. For more information, call 503-292-6855 or visit www.audubonportland.org.

More about the Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District:

The Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a special district that provides technical assistance and support to Clackamas County residents encouraging conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources. Issues with water quality and invasive weeds adversely affect wildlife, working lands, and natural areas, which in-turn affects the livability of our communities. Solutions to these resource concerns are rarely limited to a single parcel, so we work together with neighbors, communities, and watersheds. Landowners should contact the Clackamas SWCD for assistance in implementing conservation practices such as managing invasive weeds and protecting streams and

rivers by planting vegetation to reduce soil erosion and provide wildlife and water quality benefits. For more information, visit <https://conservationdistrict.org/>.

More about Clackamas County Water Environment Services:

WES provides water resource recovery and watershed protection services to our community so we can all live, work, and play in a healthy environment. Our services include operation and maintenance of sanitary and storm sewers, biosolids management, watershed protection, surface water management, and development permitting for sanitary and storm. We serve over 165,000 customers within northern Clackamas County by working to protect public health and the environment for the region.