

Parks Champion Award

2023 Nominees



presented and celebrated by:

Portland Parks Foundation

Mission

The Portland Parks Foundation mobilizes support to improve Portland's system of parks, natural areas, and public spaces.

We believe in the power of these places to strengthen communities, address historic inequities, and create a sense of belonging for everyone in Portland.

We seek transformational change by listening to communities and rally resources and opportunities to help realize their vision.

We collaborate with individuals, community groups, organizations, and institutions to develop long-term, sustainable improvements to the livability and beauty of our city.

We work to create the broadest possible access to recreation, creativity, education, and play in our parks and open spaces.



**We help
people
help parks.**

Vision

People flourish with thriving parks. We help Portland communities create more equitable access to nature, play, health, and places of connection.

Parks Champion Award

The Portland Parks Foundation's annual Parks Champion Award honors individuals who make outstanding contributions or provide significant service to a Portland park, community center, natural area, community garden, or park-related or recreation program through direct volunteer service. The winners each receive the opportunity to direct a \$1,500 grant from PPF to a community organization that aligns with PPF's vision: to help Portland communities create more equitable access to nature, play, health, and places of connection. Add language in the description about the award: The winners each receive the opportunity to direct a \$1,500 grant from PPF to a community organization that aligns with PPF's vision: to help Portland communities create more equitable access to nature, play, health, and places of connection.

2023 Honorees



Paul Taylor
Columbia Slough, Whitaker Ponds

Paul is an adoptive caretaker of the Columbia Slough, and a meticulous one at that! He has removed over 500 bags, 674 needles, 114 quarts of oil, and over 120 tires from the natural area since becoming involved with SOLVE in 2020. Paul is known to have a particular skill of balancing oddly shaped and heavy trash objects on his kayak as he cleans the water in an area which unfortunately faces a lot of dangerous dumping. His work and enthusiasm have positioned him as a Columbia Slough ambassador, greatly improving the natural area and getting more people involved in its health and beauty.



Zora Hess
Columbia Slough, Kelley Point Park

Zora is a volunteer on multiple projects across north and northeast Portland. She has negotiated to get support from City, Metro, and State governments to get fishing line recycling stations set up around the Columbia Slough, decreasing harmful waste and improving the ecosystem. Zora is known as an advocate for the houseless community and for getting creative solutions for excess trash and advocating for better dumpster access. You can find her cleaning the Slough and surrounding areas, lugging tons of trash by kayak even with a broken wrist!



Stephanie LaMonica
Friends of Pier Park

Stephanie is a Board Member of Friends of Pier Park and an enthusiastic member of her community. She has started two programs since 2021, Next-Door Nature, which aims to empower our local underserved youth as community green-space and earth champions through education and parks engagement, and Pier Park Understory Establishment, which is restoring large, formerly mowed areas of Douglas fir understory with native plants. Through her work, over 1000 small trees, shrubs, ferns, perennials, and groundcover have been planted in the park - 100s of those carefully planted by Pier Park's youngest, newest community stewards: students from Sitton Elementary.

2023 Nominees



Allio O'Sullivan
Friends of Zenger Farm

Allio has devoted hundreds of hours as volunteer, supporter, and board chair at Zenger Farm. When the farm was facing the challenges of the pandemic and the increased need of a leadership transition, she stepped up more and more. Her skills as an arboriculturalist have provided safety and health to the farm's trees and volunteers. Allio's work has deepened Zenger Farm's community in East Portland, including a special educational partnership with David Douglas School District since 2013.



Bill Bannister
Forest Park Conservancy

Bill is a rockstar caretaker of Forest Park's 80 miles of trails, cleaning, maintaining, and repairing them on a near daily basis. He can be found on the trails wearing a sign telling you just what he's up to, and how to get involved with the Forest Park Conservancy. Bill is known for not only having the necessary tools in pocket, but also handily inventing tools to fix specific trail issues like clogged culverts. His service has specifically helped to maintain Firelane 2 and to report and make repairs after extreme weather.



2023 Nominees



Bill Bradford and Kathy Olliver **Johnson Lake Natural Area**

Bill and Kathy have been stewards of Johnson Lake for over 8 years, dedicating their weekends to cleaning up hundreds of pounds of trash from the environment, bettering the health and safety of the lake, its inhabitants and its visitors. They are also regular advocates for trash services and bathrooms in the area. Appreciated for their reliability, they collaborate with SOLVE, Columbia Slough Watershed Council and Portland Parks & Recreation to bring even more stewards into the community.



Bill Dudeiros **Clear Creek Middle School** **Eco Student Field Study Restoration Site**

Bill teaches 7th and 8th grade ecology at Clear Creek Middle School, a class that uses the on-campus restoration site to add a hands-on, experiential learning element to their studies. Bill works with SOLVE, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, PGE and the school district to maintain this site for use by his class and other students at the school. He is a champion for native flora and fauna, organizing three events in 2022 for the removal of English ivy and blackberry brambles. His work has not only improved the environment of Clear Creek, but it has also provided hands-on ecological learning.



Darrick Stiers **Push Movement**

Darrick is a community volunteer with Push Movement, an organization that promotes holistic, peer-based pathways to recovery built from the culture of skateboarding and open to individuals in all stages of change. He is known for being the first to arrive, last to leave, rain or shine. He devotes special time to make sure community events are welcoming and makes clean-up of the facilities and parks grounds a joyful activity. He helps encourage the use of the parks by marginalized communities that he works within and helps shuttle participants to and from the parks for utilization.

2023 Nominees



Daveed Fleischer

Powell Butte, Northwest Trail Alliance

Daveed is a devoted steward of Powell Butte, and works closely with PP&R to identify and report problems with the mountain biking trails there. You can often find him visiting and tending to the trails by foot and by bike, acting as liaison and ready educator for those looking to learn more about our parks.



Ginger Edwards

North Portland Parks Friends Group, Hoyt Arboretum

Ginger is a key organizer of North Portland parks, educator, and accessibility advocate. She is known for finding new ways to get involved and give back to the North Portland community. You might also find her out in Hoyt tending to trails or monitoring the health of the Western Red Cedars, alongside student field trips. As an advocate, she recognizes what the concept of place can mean as a healing force for traumatized communities. *Past Parks Champion Awardee (2018)



Jane Roffey Berry, Sharon and Clare Mershon

Argay Park

Jane, Sharon, and Clare have created and cared for the flowerbed entrance to Argay Park for over 25 years. They annually plant, weed, design, and maintain this gateway to the park. Despite changes in the neighborhood, and facing challenges during the crisis, this crew of volunteers kept tending the beds and picking up litter around the park.

2023 Nominees



Javier Puga-Phillips
Concordia Neighborhood Association

Javier is the Chair of Concordia Neighborhood Association's Social Committee, and takes the lead on scheduling regular neighborhood clean-ups. In 2022, he helped bring the Egg Hunt back to Concordia, gathering 500-700 local kids for the event. He's helped keep Concordia vibrant by hosting concerts, a yard sale, and various holiday parties, and including the first Pride event in the Northeast. Javier centers community by writing in the social column for CNews, managing the Community Room at Kennedy school, and integrating BIPOC community members into Concordia's work.



Mackenzie Dunn
The Wetlands Conservancy

Mackenzie is a lead volunteer and educator for the Wetlands Conservancy's wildlife survey program for beavers and amphibians. She uses her experience as a scientist (herpetology) and veteran surveyor to lead their community science program, equipping other volunteers to survey miles of habitat. Mackenzie is celebrated for substituting for last minute cancellations, transporting equipment, helping to assess data, and performing independent surveys outside of the guided survey schedule.



Robin Jensen
Marquam Nature Park

Robin has been a tireless advocate for Marquam Nature Park for over 30 years, from serving as a board member for Friends of Marquam Nature Park to getting her hands dirty with trail maintenance. Her vision helped develop key partnerships with Portland Parks and West Willamette Restoration Partnership, and even brought art to the part with the Marquam Mosaic. Robin has not only maintained and improved trails through ivy removal and painting projects, but developed new trails throughout the park. And rumor has it, volunteers who show up on time will be graced with her still-warm homemade muffins!

2023 Nominees



Malden Court Community Orchard Volunteers

The Malden Court Community Orchard volunteers are neighborhood ambassadors and the welcoming committee in South Lents. Hours are spent monthly maintaining the orchard and building community with the neighbors. Among them, Rusty and Mary Lou Bonham are known to rally new volunteers to get and stay engaged by texting helpful reminders to caretakers of the community orchard.



Sarah Farahat **Black Futures Farm**

Sarah is an expert volunteer at Black Futures Farm in the Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood. Her attention to clearing invasive weeds and method of removing the whole plant has helped train new volunteers and maintain the farm's growth. Sarah is also an artist and professor at PNCA and brings her students out to the farm, make art, and help out. Known for her dependability, knowledge, and humility, she is a treasured part of the Black Futures Farm family.



Shaun Sullens **Piedmont Neighborhood Association, Peninsula Park**

Shaun is a devoted organizer and leader at Peninsula Park in the Piedmont Neighborhood. She was chair for the neighborhood association for a number of years, and has volunteered for over two decades. For the park's 100th birthday, and in honor of its history, Shaun spearheaded and organized a "horse" race with stick ponies in addition to a costumed, historical tour. When the PPB wanted to close the park early due to crime, Shaun stepped up and put together a job fair at the community center instead. She is known for her connectivity, expertise, and generosity.

2023 Nominees



Sheina Posner

The Fields Park, Tanner Springs Park, Wallace Park

Sheina is a parks and arts events organizer. Since 2020, she has organized a free summer gathering with live music, art, and handing out live flowers to over 300 people in the neighborhood. Sheina's mission is to create a better sense of belonging in her community, for new and old Portlanders.



Tim Copeman

Northwest Trail Alliance

Tim is a Lead Trail Steward at Gateway Green, and has contributed to the park since it was constructed. Situated between two major freeways, the park has unique challenges that Tim decided to venture into as the Project Manager and Volunteer Coordinator for the Skills Area Refresh with NWTA. He is known for his exceptional leadership skills and his ability to gather talent from the local community to build up Gateway Green.

