

Title: Port of Portland's Natural Resources Management Program
Category: Environmental Enhancement
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Project Summary

The Port of Portland's Natural Resources Management Program is founded on the idea that the natural world does not end or begin at Port property lines. Therefore, it's imperative that the Port integrate natural resources stewardship into our marine operations and manage those resources with an understanding of how our properties connect to and interact with the rest of the region. This award application describes three creative and meaningful environmental projects: streaked horned lark habitat creation, invasive species management, and management for the coexistence of wildlife and marine operations. These projects reflect our mission to enhance quality of life in the region and our belief that protecting the integrity of the natural environment will help the Port meet its trade mission for decades to come.

Award Criteria

1. This award describes three enhancement projects with a tangible environmental benefit. Newly developed land for streaked horned larks conforms to the larks' preferred habitat type and provides an appropriate and attractive spot for nesting in the urban environment. The Port's wildlife undercrossing is being used by native species, including western painted turtles, thereby reducing wildlife mortality. The Port's aggressive approach to invasive species management is founded on a strategy to keep Oregon beautiful and economically competitive. Invasive species are a threat to the abundant natural resources the state currently boasts, and this threat demands that the Port actively fight the introduction and spread of non-native species through our facilities.
2. The Port has been a leader on regional efforts related to natural resources management, and we have integrated both independent programs and strategic partnerships to produce meaningful results. We have independently pursued efforts like monitoring for invasive species while partnering with a larger community on public outreach and education efforts. We created streaked horned habitat because it was the right thing to do, not because we were required to do so, but made the project more successful by engaging with natural resource regulators. We independently pursued a wildlife undercrossing but are using data from the project to expand the regional knowledge base.
3. The three projects described show innovation and creativity. They also show that our mission to provide competitive cargo and passenger access while enhancing the region's quality of life is not just a phrase on our letterhead. Enhancing quality of life means respecting all the ways Oregon is a special place for people to live and work. When this respect is integrated into operating areas, and when this commitment is founded on a belief that we are a part of a regional approach to environmental stewardship, it's easier to come up with solutions to natural resources challenges.
4. Our wildlife undercrossing is being used by native species. Our invasive species monitoring efforts show that the most threatening invasives are not yet calling Oregon waterways home. And our efforts to create streaked horned lark habitat show signs of success: the newly-created landfill site is not yet hosting a breeding pair of the birds, but native plants have been established and are thriving.
5. The three projects described in this application were relatively inexpensive to implement; the application also makes the case that many environmental issues are much more expensive to ignore.
6. The Port of Portland is not unique in its experiences managing native and nonnative species at and near our marine terminals. For ports looking to improve their management of natural resources, the key is to consider the specific natural environment in which they operate: the particular challenges posed by invasive species; native species are threatened by encroaching human habitat, and opportunities for compatibility? The projects described in this application might be a perfect fit for other marine terminals; for other ports, our projects might serve as a catalyst or inspiration for projects with similar intentions, but different approaches.