

# ROSS ISLAND DONATION

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What portions of Ross Island has Dr. Pamplin proposed to give to the City of Portland?**

Dr. Pamplin and his Ross Island Sand and Gravel Company have generously offered to give the City a 45-acre initial donation (see attached map). He has also offered to consider giving to the city an additional 15 acres abutting the lagoon after the company finishes its restoration work in and around the lagoon to be completed no later than 2013.

### **How much of the four-island complex will Ross Island Sand and Gravel retain?**

Ross Island Sand and Gravel will retain ownership of approximately 269 acres of Ross Island (including the lagoon and East Island) and all of Hardtack Island which is about 84 acres. The area of the lagoon is about 197 acres. The Port of Portland owns an additional 6.4 acres on the north end of Ross Island. The city of Portland Parks and Recreation owns Toe Island. Combined, the total acreage of Ross, Hardtack, East and Toe Islands, and the lagoon is approximately 404 acres. (Source for area data: portlandmaps.com)

### **Will access be allowed on either Ross Island's property or the city-owned and Port owned portions of Ross Island?**

One condition that Ross Island Sand and Gravel placed on transfer of the 45 acres (which includes an active Bald Eagle nesting site) is that there be no public access, including docks or other facilities. That condition was made to ensure the island would be managed for its long-term ecological values.

Access to the rest of the islands that Ross Island Sand and Gravel owns is under the control of the company, although the Department of State Lands permit requires Ross Island to write a management plan for its lands. The company must also address the issue of public access on the company's portion of the islands.

### **How can the public view the wildlife on Ross Island?**

At present there are many ways the public can enjoy the islands. There is ample access via canoe, kayak and boat around the islands and in the lagoon. (The company discourages entry into to the lagoon during work days to prevent interference with restoration work and the on-going business of the company on Hardtack Island.) There is visual access from the Springwater on the Willamette trail on the east bank or the Willamette Greenway on the west bank. The Bald Eagle and Great Blue Heron nests can be viewed from the water and from the Springwater on the Willamette Trail as well.

In addition, there are tremendous wildlife viewing opportunities all around Hardtack, East, Ross and East Islands, and direct access to nearby Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge via the Springwater Trail and loop trail that circumnavigates the Bottoms. Direct access to the river is offered at Sellwood Riverfront Park and Oaks Amusement Park. On the west side there is direct river access at Powers Marine Park and Willamette Park. There will be numerous access points, including docks at South Waterfront as the new greenway trails are built.

A provision in the Ross Island donation agreement allows volunteers, under the auspices of the city, to be allowed on city-owned property to assist in control of invasive species such as ivy, Himalayan blackberry and Climatis.

### **Who in the city will manage Ross Island?**

Once the City Council officially votes to accept the donation of a portion of Ross Island, management of the City's property will be the responsibility of the Portland Parks Bureau. Parks will assume responsibility for developing a management plan, a habitat restoration plan, and day to day management.

### **Why does the city want to own Ross Island?**

Ross Island has been considered to be a valuable resource in the center of the City for almost a century. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Olmsted Brothers cited recreational possibilities on the island in their 1903 report. Later, the Island was acquired by the Ross Island Sand and Gravel Company which mined the island for gravel until 2000. More recently, Ross Island has become recognized as an important wildlife refuge for nesting bald eagles, great blue herons and as a fish refuge, among others. The City recognizes the importance Ross Island can play in its network of urban wildlife habitat and desires to enhance that habitat over time. Ross Island will become one of the jewels of the City's already exemplary parks system.

### **How does the new restoration plan for Ross Island differ from the 1979 restoration plan?**

The 1979 Ross Island restoration plan required placement of 20 million cubic yards of fill in the lagoon to bring the depth up to an average level of 20 feet below water level over a thirty year period. The 2002 restoration plan, agreed upon by DSL, the company, the City and other stakeholders, calls for a shorter 10 year restoration period and placement of 4.6 million cubic yards of fill to create an additional 22 acres of riparian and wetland habitat in the south end of the lagoon and 14 acres of shallow water habitat at the north, west and south portions of the lagoon. Restoration is required to be completed by 2013.

### **What will happen to the Ross Island Sand and Gravel processing plant on Hardtack Island?**

The company will continue to operate its processing plant indefinitely on Hardtack Island, importing material from elsewhere by barge.

### **Jet Skis, Jetboats and Water Skiers are seen frequently in the Ross Island lagoon. Isn't there some protection of nesting eagles and herons from this kind of disturbance?**

The Ross Island lagoon is considered "waters of the State" and therefore is open to all legal boating activities. The Company discourages entry into the lagoon during working days for the sake of public safety. All craft are required to abide by applicable speed limit regulations. And, most importantly, the bald eagle nests are protected by a 330 foot buffer during nesting season (Jan.-July), inside of which it is unlawful for boats to enter. In addition, under the pending agreement with RISG, access to the City's portion of the island (on which the nests are located) is not permitted except under limited circumstances.

### **I see camping on Ross Island during the summer months. Is camping legal?**

Camping and the building of camp fires on the island are considered trespassing and are illegal.