

## PROTECT AND RESTORE LAND

**\$155 million** allocated for acquisition and restoration of priority habitat across 24 target areas

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land>

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**Program description:** The protect and restore land program builds on the successes of the 1995 and 2006 natural areas bond measures in protecting greater Portland’s special places, by purchasing land from willing sellers and restoring it to help preserve regional watersheds, protect some of the region’s rarest habitats, protect culturally important plants and provide opportunities to create potential future access to nature. With funding from the 1995 and 2006 natural areas bond measures, Metro has completed over 500 individual transactions resulting in over 15,000 acres of protected habitat funded. Since 2020, Metro has invested \$32 million in the protect and restore land program to manage eligible community engagement, planning, landowner outreach, land acquisition, stabilization and select capital restoration activities and other support services. These program activities have resulted in the completion of 25 transactions to add over 800 acres to the portfolio of protected habitat (22 land acquisitions, 3 trail acquisitions).

Land acquisition priorities, captured in [Council approved land acquisition road maps](#) have been shaped [by engagement](#) with communities across the region including the urban Indigenous community, BIPOC individuals, the region’s conservation and community organizations. Protect and restore land investments must meet [bond criteria and program criteria](#).

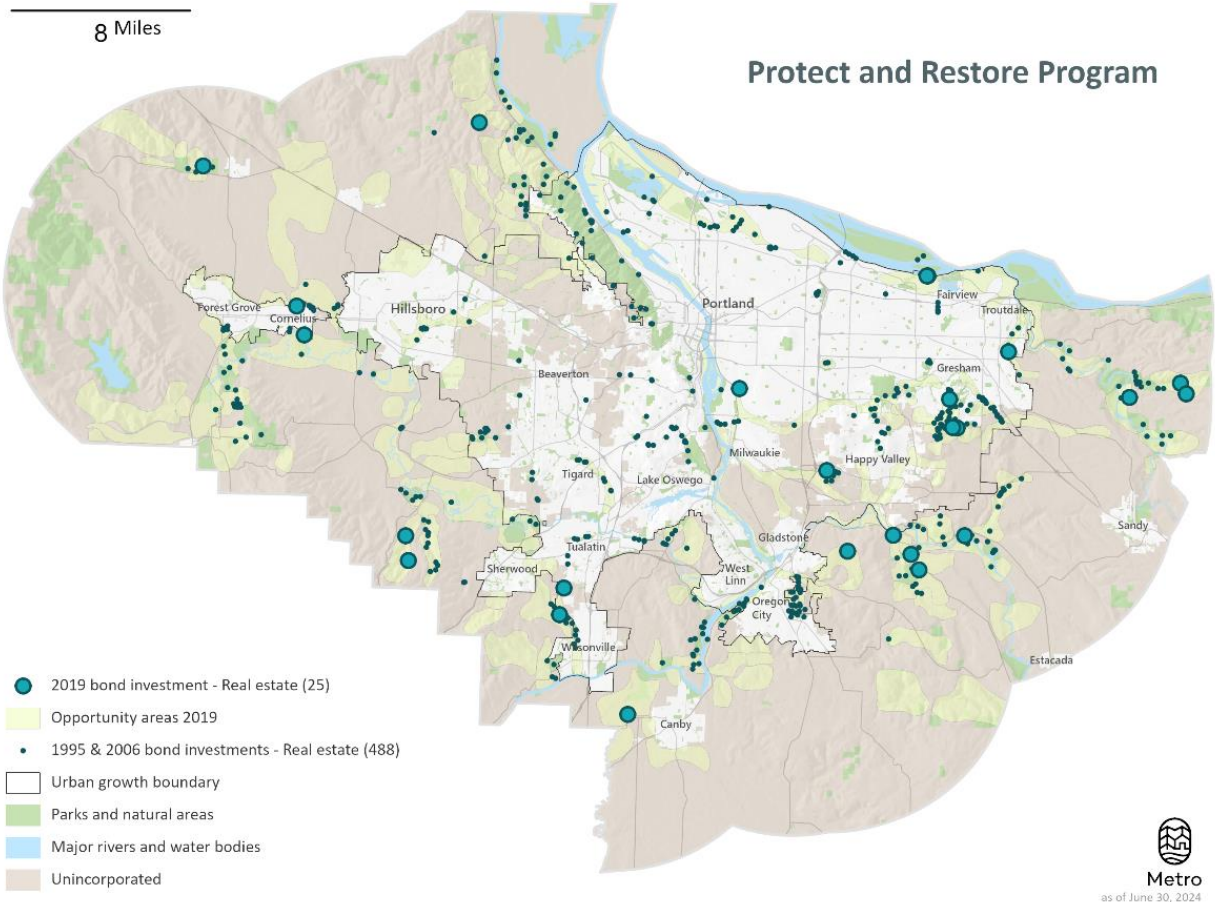
This protect and restore land program is also investing up to \$10 million of the create trails for walking and biking program to buy rights for park providers to one day build regional trail connections. Finally, bond funded pass through and competitive grant programs including local share, trail grants, large scale community visions and nature in neighborhoods capital grants fund local priorities for land acquisition and major restoration projects.

### 2019 parks and nature bond land acquisition, stabilization and restoration milestones completed from 2023 through June 2024

Category	Milestones completed from 2023 through summer 2024
Number of Metro-led land acquisitions	8 acquisitions
Protect and restore land dollars spent on land only	\$8.46 million
Number of Metro-led trail gap acquisitions	1
Capital restoration projects prioritized for protect and restore land funds	5 projects
Metro real estate team capacity	Hired third team member to create a complete team of three real estate negotiators and a manager
Metro outreach to landowners	Outreach to 77 landowners, 42 new
Conversations by Metro with the region’s park providers about potential acquisitions	45
New reporting tools developed to measure progress	Finalized measures of success for land acquisitions, especially related to the bond

	measure's climate resilience criteria summarizing how individual property purchases meet bond goals and criteria
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**Figure 1: Parks and nature bond protect and restore program investments through June 2024**



**Looking ahead**

The protect and restore land team continues to see the fruits of its work to reach out to landowners across the region to create a pipeline of opportunities for acquisition in alignment with the targets and goals approved by the Metro Council. With the team at full capacity, the pace of acquisition is expected to maintain or increase the level from summer 2023 to summer 2024 from summer 2024 to summer 2025, anticipating the completion of up to 10 acquisitions for at least \$7 million in purchase prices. In addition, the team anticipates continued progress on the priority capital restoration projects identified for bond funding.

Finally, the protect and restore land team has finalized framework that measures success by connecting the features of individual properties acquired to the bond’s climate resilience and protect and restore land program criteria.

### **Markers on progress for protect and restore land**

- Number of acquisitions made in each of the 24 target areas
- Number of trail gap acquisitions completed across the region
- Dollars spent investing in stabilization to address threats to conservation values.
- Status and balance of acquisitions focusing on key habitat types
- Status and balance of acquisitions focusing on primary climate resilience strategies
- Bond and program criteria addressed by acquisitions

### **Bond and program criteria relevant to protect and restore land**

The protect and restore land program includes four primary eligible activities

- Land acquisition
- Stabilization of Metro natural areas or the work needed for stabilization
- Capital restoration projects
- Pilot program, community-led acquisition

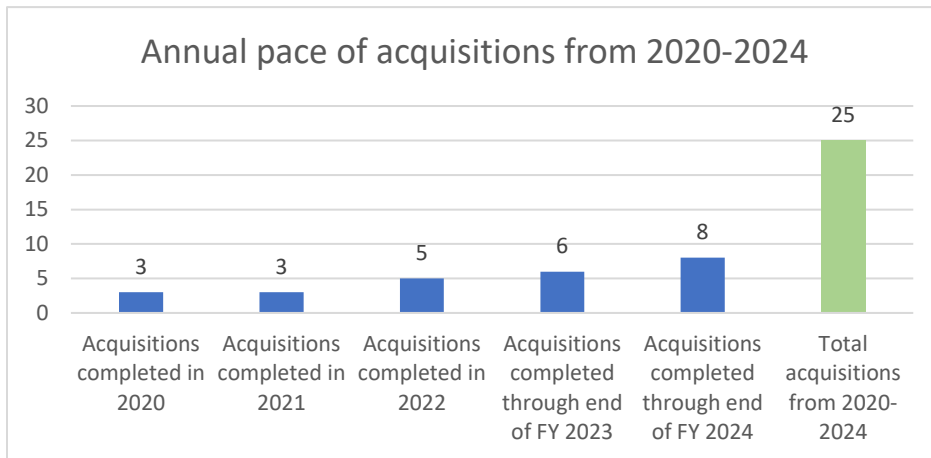
The land acquisition program activity of the protect and restore land program focuses on meeting criteria that are feasible to be met through land acquisition alone – focusing on actions like “protect” or “acquire,” and throughout this report these are the criteria referenced. The other criteria are important but will be met over time through other program activities.

The charts and tables below include additional details about protect and restore land investments that are largely complete and the climate resilience themes and impacts of those projects. This means that it’s focused on completed land acquisition and the stabilization investments made to date. Impacts that would come from capital restoration projects such as increased tree canopy or improved habitat will be displayed upon completion of capital restoration projects.

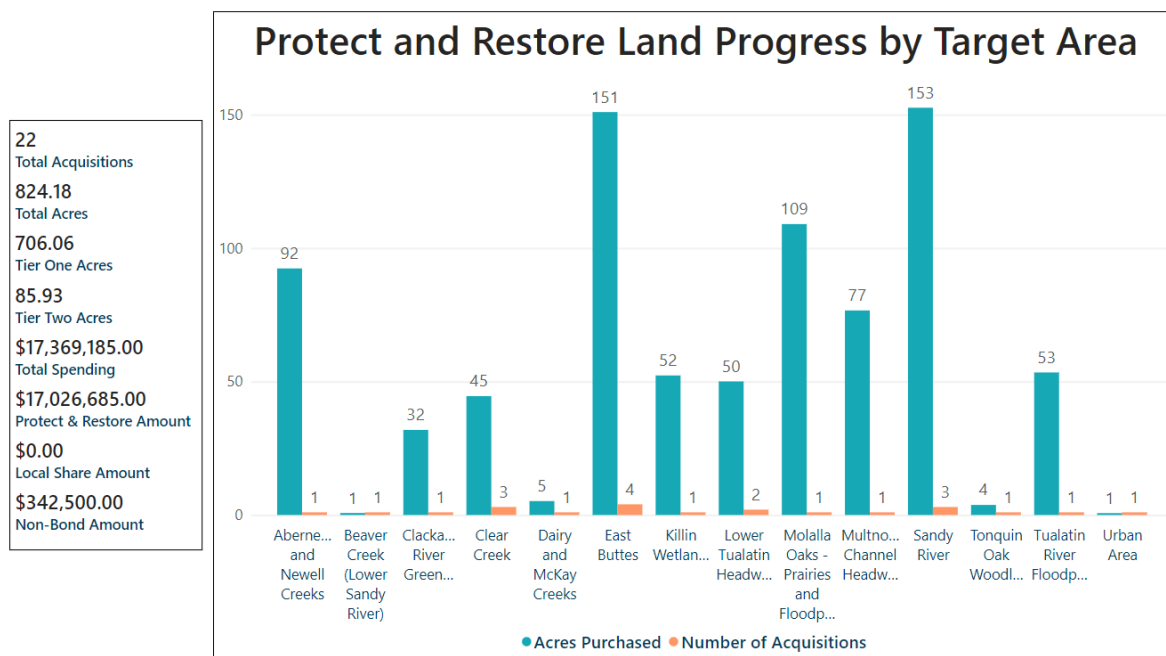
### **More resources on protect and restore land**

- [Council adopted road maps for land acquisition](#)
- [Protect and restore land snapshot from last annual report](#)
- [Summary from engagement activities in 2021 and 2022 to prioritize land for acquisition](#)

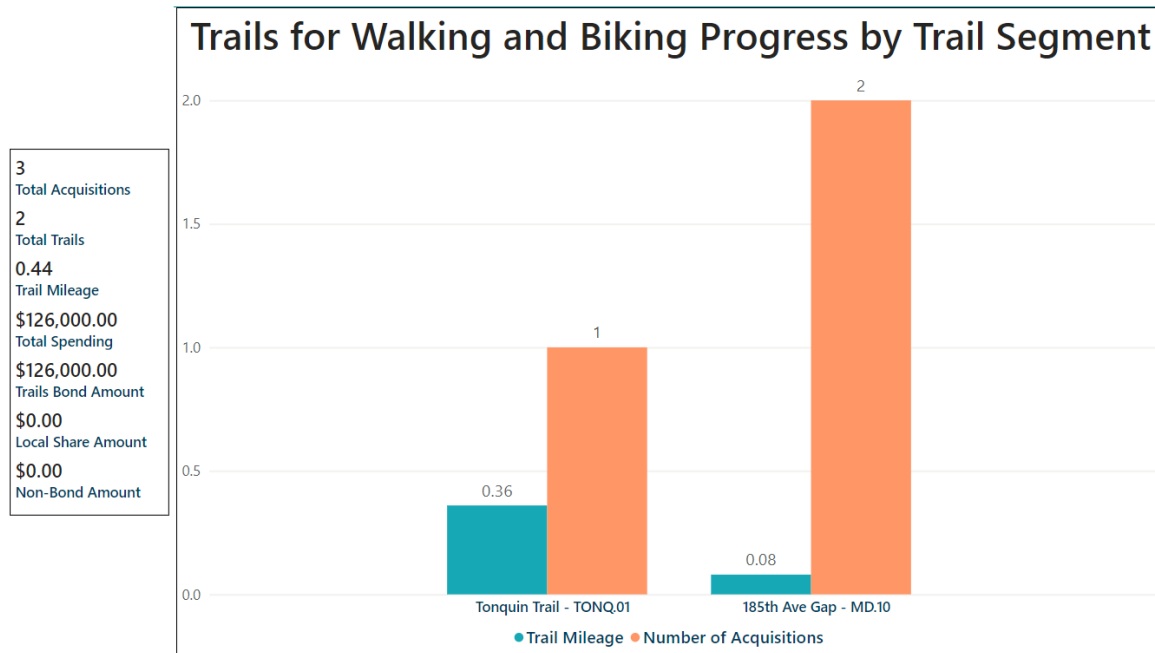
**Figure 2** \*The reporting calendar for the oversight committee changed from annual to fiscal year as of the 2023-2024 cycle.



**Figure 3 description:** This chart displays the number and acreage of acquisitions completed through the protect and restore land program by each of the 24 target areas identified in the Council approved road maps. To date, Metro has completed acquisitions in 14 of these 24 target areas. Metro real estate negotiators pursue potential acquisitions in all 24 target areas and are both strategic and opportunistic when considering property acquisition, evaluating the qualities and conservation values of each parcel in alignment with multiple climate resilience factors, the priorities established in the Council approved road maps and the real estate strategy developed for each of the target areas, and public benefit. In addition, this is a willing seller program only purchasing properties from people who are willing to sell to Metro for an agreed upon price.



**Figure 4 description:** This chart displays the number and mileage of gaps in the regional trail system acquired in each of the 39 regional trail target areas identified in the Council approved road maps. Currently, Metro is focused on the 21 top gaps and has completed 3 purchases. As with the protect and restore land target areas, Metro real estate negotiators pursue potential acquisitions in all target areas and are both strategic and opportunistic when considering property acquisition to close trail gaps.



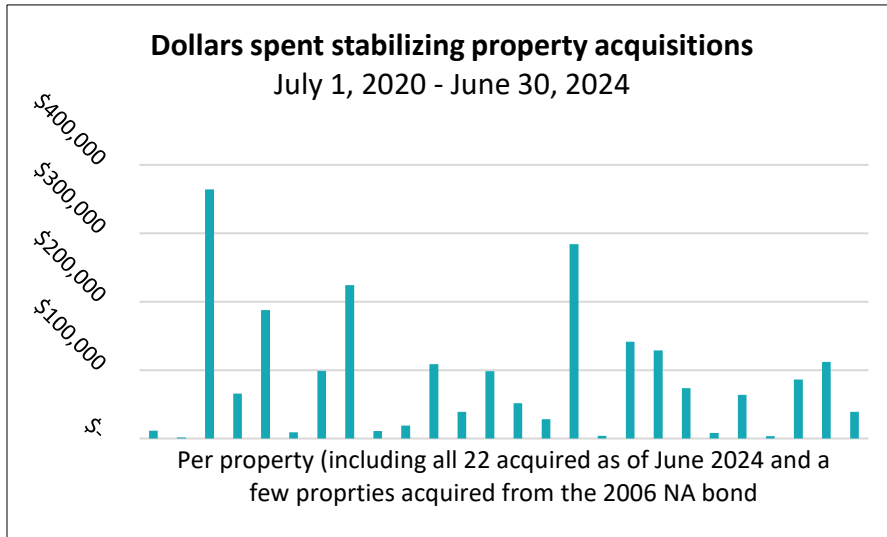
### Stabilization activities

#### Cost of stabilization to date

Stabilization is one of the four program activities eligible for protect and restore land funds. Stabilization is the phase of management that follows acquisition. 2019 bond funds are supporting stabilization for all 22 land acquisitions made to date as well as stabilization for a few acquisitions completed with the 2006 natural areas bond measure.

During stabilization Metro uses bond funds to address threats that would otherwise compromise the values for which a new natural area is acquired. As no two properties are the same, or have the same conditions present, stabilization plans and costs will vary by property and the conditions present. Metro uses a function-based approach to identify and implement stabilization activities appropriate to each site. Function-based stabilization focuses on actions that protect high ecological function and shift currently degrading conditions to a positive trend leading to Metro to meeting the conservation objectives for which the property was purchased. Common stabilization actions include natural resource enhancement and property management and security actions. Important ecological functions addressed include key features such as soil erosion control, habitat quality and trend, temperature and flow modification of streams, and public safety.

**Figure 5**



### Purchase price vs. market value

Metro hires an MAI certified appraiser to determine fair market value of the properties it purchases, to be sure that it is stewarding the public’s funds wisely. The Metro Council may direct staff to purchase property at any price, but through the policy established in the Natural Areas Work Plan, the Metro Council has delegated authority to staff to acquire properties for fair market value as supported by an independent appraisal (with the exception of properties purchased for less than \$50,000, which do not require an appraisal). The Chief Operating Officer may purchase a property for up to \$100,000 or 10% more than the value established by an appraisal provided certain conditions are met. Metro’s parks and nature bond executive steering committee has recommended that staff bring more negotiations to the COO to consider a purchase price within \$100,000 or 10% of the appraised value, so the percentage of properties purchased above FMV is expected to grow over time. Most properties purchased to date were at or under this assessment of fair market value, or an appraisal was not required (i.e., the purchase price was less than \$50,000). This includes all purchases funded through the protect and restore land and create trails for walking and biking programs.

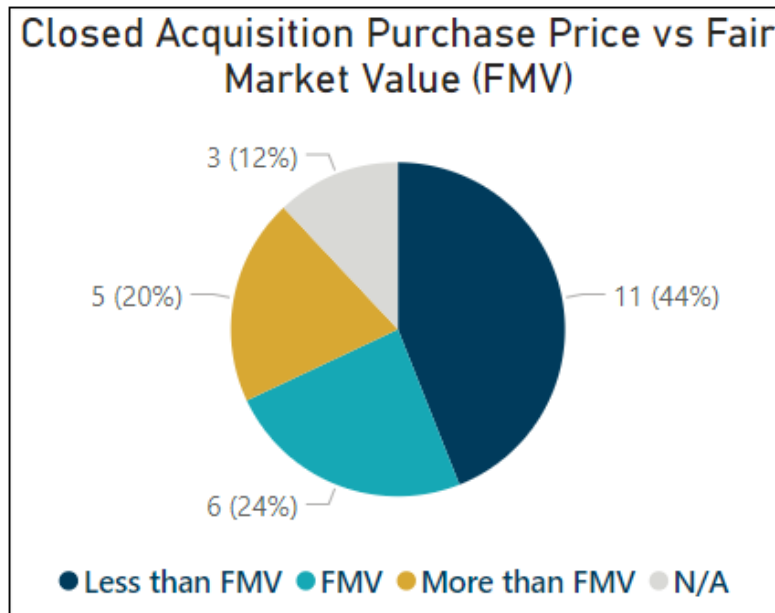
It’s important to track fair market value and remember that Metro values land acquisition far beyond just the price of the acquisition as these are opportunities to conserve land to support our region now and into future generations. We’re evaluating properties beyond the real estate value and consider the value to the public for future habitat, water quality and other values. Four properties have been purchased to date at a price above the independent appraiser’s determination of fair market value.

- East Buttes: This property, while small at 20 acres, is one of two properties that would close a gap in habitat connecting 300 acres already protected through 16 purchases spanning 3 decades.
- Clackamas River Bluffs and Greenway: This property sits at the confluence of the Clackamas River and Deep Creek and has been a priority location for Metro since the 1995 bond measure because of its conservation values and importance for native fish.
- Clear Creek: This property sits at the confluence of the Clackamas River and Clear Creek and has been a priority for Metro since the 1995 bond measure. The focus here is threat

abatement, as the seller intended to build multiple luxury homes which would have had a detrimental effect on fish and wildlife habitat and break connectivity.

- Urban (Lower Johnson Creek/Crystal Springs Creek): While the overall purchase price was greater than appraised value, Metro partnered with the City of Portland to jointly protect this property, so Metro’s contribution was far less, and the City of Portland is investing its own resources in stabilize and managing the property. Crystal Springs Creek is a salmon bearing stream in the heart of southeast Portland, and restoration of this property to its natural state will greatly benefit water quality and habitat for native fish.

Figure 6



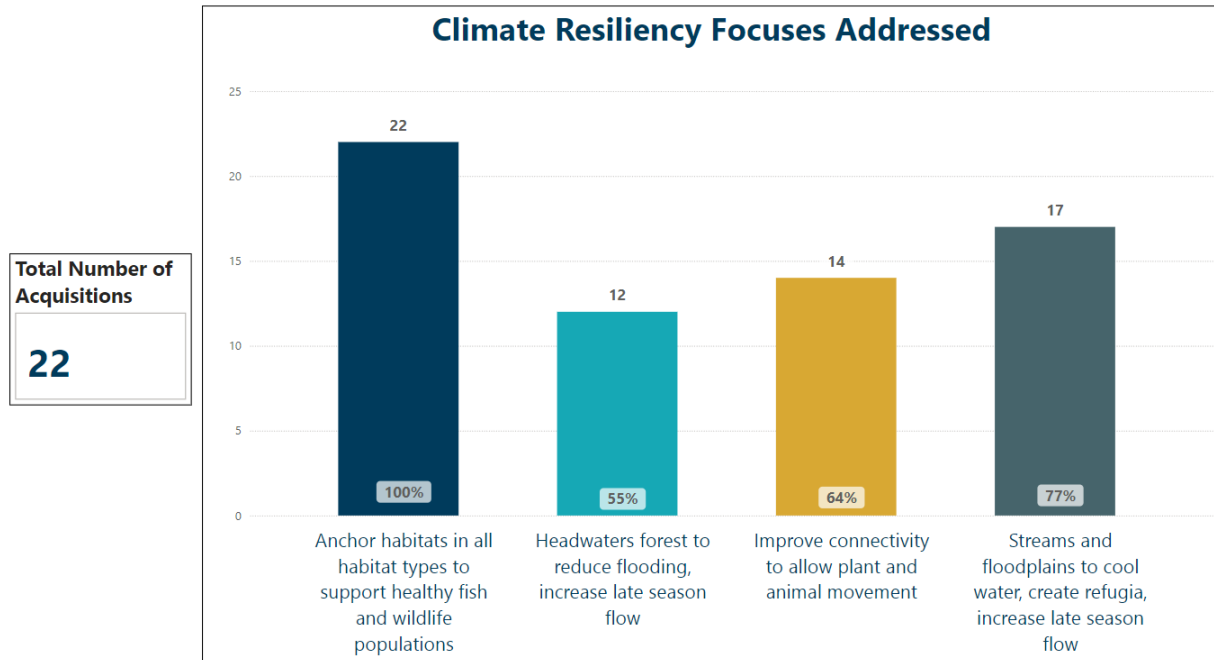
### Progress on climate resiliency

The 2019 bond measure prioritizes increasing the climate resiliency of greater Portland’s natural systems. Climate resiliency refers to the ability of a system to withstand or recover from changes induced by a changing climate. The overarching strategies for increasing the resiliency of natural areas and natural systems to climate-caused stresses are:

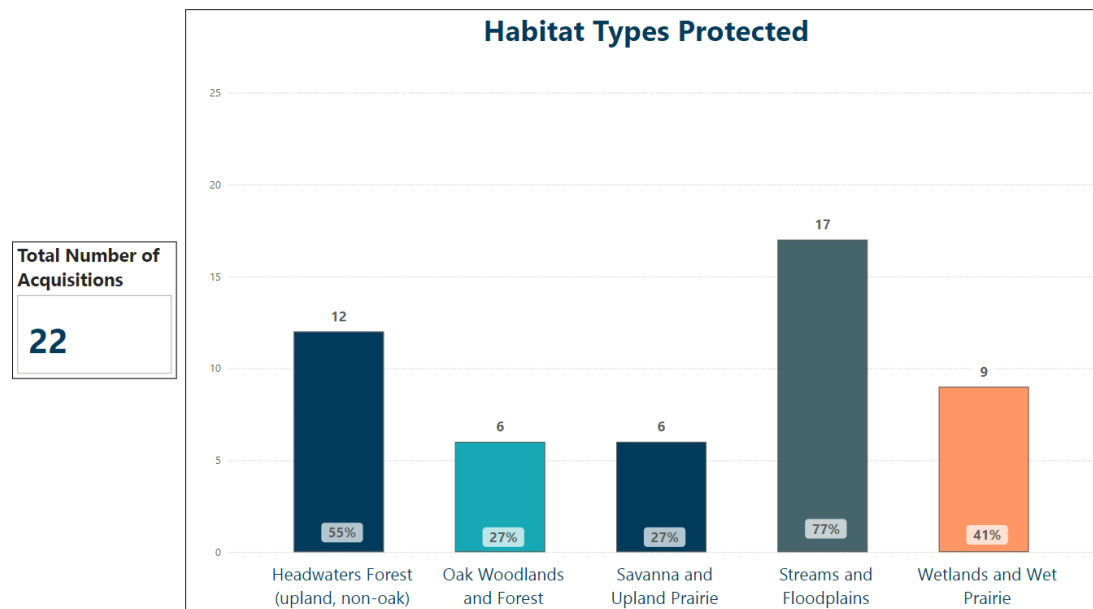
- Creating and managing large, healthy anchor habitat sites in all habitat types to support robust plant and animal populations.
- Improving overall habitat connectivity to allow plants and animals to move in response to changing conditions.
- Improving the ability of streams to absorb and store high flows.
- Provide cold-water refugia by protecting, connecting, and restoring headwaters, wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains and stream habitats.

The charts below display how many of the 22 properties purchased satisfied the program criteria aligned with these strategies in five primary habitat types. A property could have one or more features and/or habitat types present and may be represented multiple times.

**Figure 7**

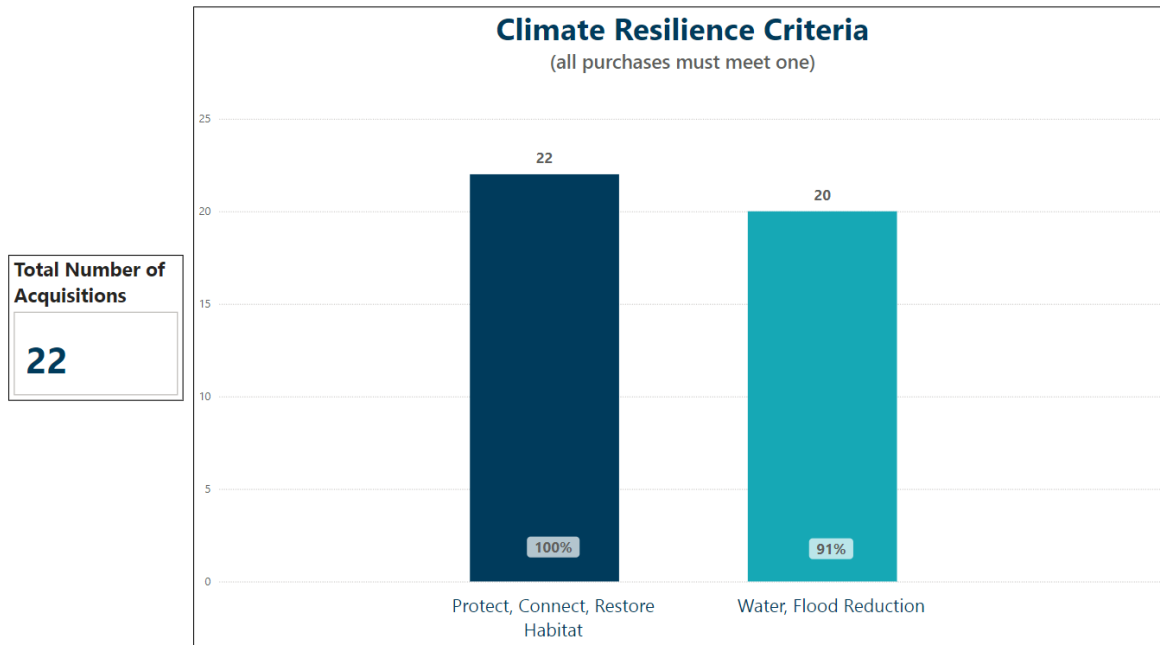


**Figure 8 description:** In addition to this more detailed analysis, the bond measure includes a specific requirement that all purchases funded by the bond must satisfy at least one climate resilience criterion listed in the bond measure. The two criterion that can be satisfied by property protection alone are shown in the chart below, along with the number of purchases that meet the criteria.

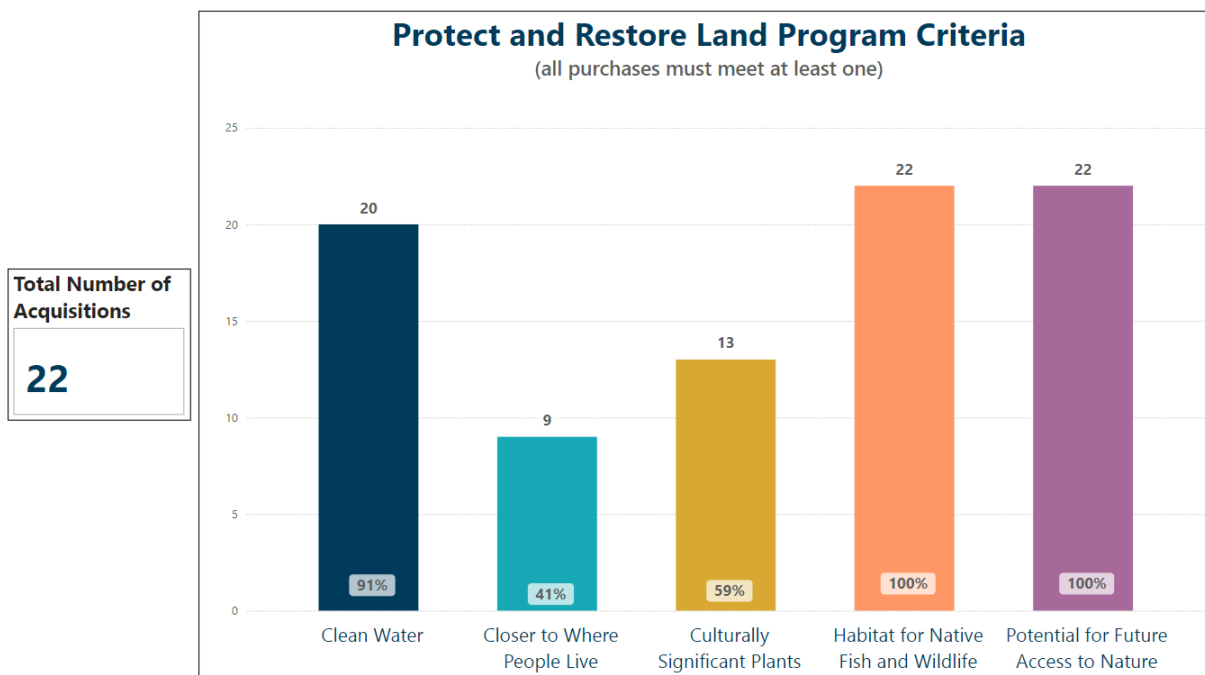




**Figure 9 description:** This chart only includes [criteria that the acquisition of land directly addresses](#) (only for land protection—i.e., purchasing a property doesn’t add tree canopy or use or restore it).

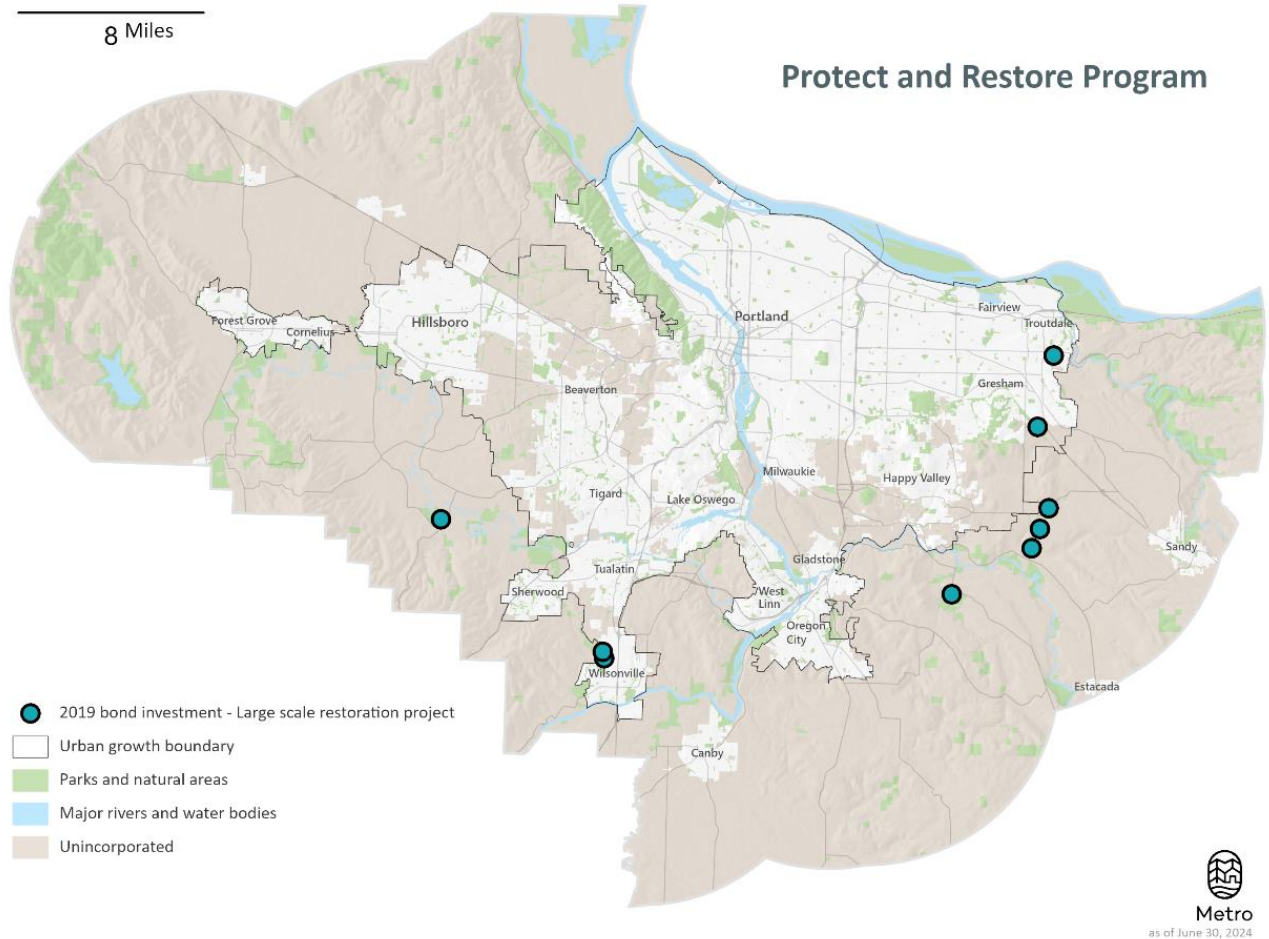


**Figure 10 Description:** This chart describes how the completed acquisitions align with one or more of the protect and restore land program criteria articulated in the bond measure. The reference to “urban areas” in the table below describes acquisitions closer to where people live (in or within ½ mile of the Metro urban growth boundary).



**Figure 11: Map and list of capital restoration planned to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond**

This map and table below display the location and description of capital restoration projects prioritized to be funded by the bond. Project prioritized based on alignment with bond and program criteria and feedback received from community, partners and stakeholders during bond development (pre-2019) and bond refinement (post-2020). Future fiscal years will likely identify additional capital restoration projects to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond funds



Project name	Description	Timing of project construction
<b>Roberts Bridge Stream Restoration</b>	The project is located at the Upper Johnson Creek Natural Area in Gresham, Oregon. Goals include the removal of a one-lane vehicular bridge over Johnson Creek paved asphalt driveways, including road fill and base gravel, concrete, and other debris. Restoration actions include the installation of large wood into the stream and floodplain and placement of boulders in-stream. Outcomes will include enhanced water quality, fish habitat and floodplain connectivity.	2024
<b>Beaver Creek Stream Restoration</b>	The project is at the South Beaver Creek Natural Area on Beaver Creek in Troutdale. Restoration includes actions that benefit water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife. This project is being developed to support broader native fish recovery efforts by the Beaver Creek and Sandy River Partnerships. These restoration actions were identified in 2015 during a feasibility study of potential projects on Metro lands along lower Beaver Creek. Restoration work includes removal of an instream weir (small dam), placement of large logs by helicopter, removal of debris from the stream, and stabilizing a stormwater outfall.	2024
<b>Coffee Lake Wetlands Restoration</b>	A large and highly visible wetland restoration project at the Coffee Lake Creek Wetlands Natural Area in Wilsonville. The project will improve wildlife habitat, water quality, floodplain connectivity by dewatering and re-routing two ditches, filling the ditches, grading, and lowering a large central wetland, excavating ponds of varying depths with shallow connector swales, utilizing fill to create hummocks, installation of wood features, and re-wetting the restored wetland, across 31.5 acres.	2024
<b>Quamash Prairie McFee Creek Crossing</b>	This project is located at the Quamash Prairie Natural Area in Washington County. The project will replace a failed culvert structure with a new structure that minimizes impact to riparian and aquatic natural resources. Project will ensure continued safe access for the Indigenous Community and Metro staff to the site.	2025
<b>North Fork Deep Creek Restoration</b>	The project is located at the North Fork Deep Creek Natural Area on Deep Creek and North Fork Deep Creek in Boring. Restoration work includes actions that benefit water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife. Project is being developed to support broader native fish recovery efforts by the Clackamas River Partnership. Work includes placement of large logs and brush into the stream by helicopter.	2026

**List of properties acquired with the 2019 parks and nature bond as of June 2024**

<b>Target Area</b>	<b>Close Date</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Purchase Price</b>
Ice Age Tonquin Trail 2019 (22-5250)	06/29/2020	0.88	\$113,500.00
Sandy River 2019 (22-5250)	09/08/2020	86.76	\$350,000.00
East Buttes 2019 (22-5250)	12/08/2020	8.59	\$340,000.00
Dairy and McKay Creeks 2019 (22-5250)	02/10/2021	5.21	\$9,000.00
Killin Wetlands 2019 (22-5250)	11/24/2021	52.28	\$465,000.00
East Buttes 2019 (22-5250)	12/09/2021	117.09	\$1,422,000.00
Clackamas River Greenway 2019 (22-5250)	01/26/2022	31.88	\$1,681,485.00
Sandy River 2019 (22-5250)	05/12/2022	38.95	\$75,000.00
Lower Tualatin Headwaters 2019 (22-5250)	08/08/2022	39.95	\$1,000,000.00
Beaver Creek (Lower Sandy River) 2019 (22-5250)	10/06/2022	0.75	\$475,000.00
Tonquin Oak Woodlands 2019 (22-5250)	11/30/2022	3.77	\$110,000.00
Abernethy and Newell Creeks 2019 (22-5250)	01/26/2023	92.38	\$1,722,500.00
East Buttes 2019 (22-5250)	03/22/2023	5.30	\$0.00
Clear Creek 2019 (22-5250)	04/21/2023	24.93	\$301,200.00
East Buttes 2019 (22-5250)	04/25/2023	20.00	\$275,000.00
Urban Area 2019 (22-5250)	04/27/2023	0.70	\$685,000.00
Marine Drive Trail 2019 (22-5250)	06/30/2023	0.19	\$7,500.00
Marine Drive Trail 2019 (22-5250)	08/10/2023	0.21	\$5,000.00
Tualatin River Floodplain 2019 (22-5250)	09/08/2023	53.41	\$260,000.00
Molalla Oaks - Prairies and Floodplains 2019 (22-5250)	01/30/2024	109.00	\$1,500,000.00
Clear Creek 2019 (22-5250)	01/31/2024	0.89	\$530,000.00
Clear Creek 2019 (22-5250)	04/05/2024	18.72	\$3,448,000.00
Lower Tualatin Headwaters 2019 (22-5250)	04/10/2024	10.09	\$650,000.00
Multnomah Channel Headwaters 2019 (22-5250)	05/02/2024	76.64	\$1,350,000.00
Sandy River 2019 (22-5250)	06/28/2024	26.89	\$700,000.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>825.46</b>	<b>\$17,475,185.00</b>