



October 20, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership (Estuary Partnership) I would like to express my enthusiastic support for Wilderness International and their Meldrum Bar Park Project. We are excited to further our partnership with Wilderness International and contribute to the goals of restoring natural habitat and creating additional metropolitan green space.

This fall, the Estuary Partnership joined with Wilderness International and the City of Gladstone in the Meldrum Bar Park Project to restore habitat along the banks of the Willamette River. The area where this project took place has been designated a 'natural area' by the City of Gladstone. Wilderness International and the Estuary Partnership have been working with the city and providing much-needed time and resources to this project, but more funding is needed to support the youth crews who will continue the important work that has been started at the site.

Thus far, the work crews have been instrumental in establishing a "Native Habitat Demonstration Area," a highly-visible area in Meldrum Bar Park that is used to educate the public about the benefits of removing invasive plants and restoring native habitat. In addition to reestablishing native vegetation and creating a place of inspiration in the park, the members of the youth crew had the invaluable opportunity to gain job-readiness skills. The participants learned construction and leadership skills, earned college credit, met community members from a wide-range of careers and practiced writing a resume. The Wilderness International youth work crews provide an outstanding opportunity to empower youth in our community and, at the same time, accomplish important habitat restoration along the Willamette River.

With additional funding, Wilderness International will be able to bring more youth to Meldrum Bar Park to prepare the site near the banks of the Willamette River including removing English Ivy and spreading bark mulch on the bare soil, getting it ready for the planting of native trees and shrubs. The Estuary Partnership plans on continuing to work with Wilderness International and the City of Gladstone by bringing student groups out to help plant and maintain this site.

We are pleased to partner with Wilderness International in the Meldrum Bar Project to help restore natural habitat along the Willamette River. I am also delighted for the opportunity to write this letter supporting Wilderness International completion of this project. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debrah Marriott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debrah Marriott
Executive Director