

From: [Kenneth Bierly](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Micki Varney](#); [Micki Varney](#)
Cc: [Beth Thiel](#); [Jeff Johnson](#); [Meridith Greer](#); [Dorald Stoltz](#); [Stacey Kline](#); [Linda Bierly](#); [E. Easterly](#); [David Simmons](#); [Morgan Neil](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Wallace Natural Area
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 2:49:09 PM
Attachments: [Wallace Natural Area Comments.pdf](#)

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Please consider the attached letter.



Glenn and Gibson Creeks Watershed Council 2308 Ptarmigan St. NW, Salem, OR 97304

November 6, 2025

Mayor Hoy and City Council Members

I am commenting on Agenda Item 3.3 concerning the proposed paving of a path through the Wallace Marine Park Natural Area. While the watershed council recognizes the difficulty of managing the houseless population in the park, we have serious questions about the proposal. We believe that the pathway that is being proposed as a permanent feature is premature before any Master Plan for the Natural Area is developed. A much more reasonable approach would be to prepare a Natural Area Master Plan and evaluate whether the proposed location, or any paved access, is compatible with the management intent of the Natural Area.

Additionally, we are concerned that adding impervious surface in the Special Flood Hazard Area is appropriate. The National Flood Insurance Program has proposed that such construction would require mitigation in the form of avoidance, minimization and mitigation for unavoidable impacts by removing an equal area of impervious surface or other actions. Salem has an excellent Floodplain Management Program, and the proposal seems to be at odds with the appropriate management of Salem's floodplains.

The other concern about such a path is the potential to interrupt movement by amphibian and other species that use the Willamette River and adjacent uplands. It is unclear if the path would require the removal of trees, affecting the riparian forest habitat. The path parallels the river for nearly a quarter of a mile and bisects a significant portion of the natural area.

The Glenn Gibson Watershed Council urges the Council to delay any consideration of construction until a Natural Area Management Plan has been developed for the Wallace Natural Area, and the draft plan has been reviewed by the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other interested groups.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth Bierly".

Kenneth Bierly, Chair
Glenn Gibson Creek Watershed Council

Mission: to foster better understanding and stewardship of watershed resources

Purpose: to share information, reduce duplication of activities and to help address watershed management issues in the watershed and to provide a framework for coordination and cooperation among key interests

Vision: a balanced ecosystem that supports a healthy watershed and provides for an economic base and viable communities

GlennGibsonWC.org

From: [Karen Sjogren](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Bierly](#); [Sandy Whittington](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Paved trail in Natural Area of Wallace Marine Park
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 10:28:12 AM

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I live near Wallace Marine park and increasingly appreciate the accessibility of walking trails such as the Fir trail as I grow older and don't want to drive far to take a walk. I am absolutely thrilled that the Natural Area is being cleared of homeless campers for their sake as well as park users. I do not go into this area for safety reasons, not because of the trail conditions. It is premature to put in a paved trail here. The comprehensive plan must be completed first. Reasons for not paving the trail are (1) trails should be paved only where there is already high usage or to improve accessibility for certain groups, such as the paved trail from the parking lot to the playground, or the Fir Trail (2) improved trails should be well out of the flood plain, or away from other bodies of water, and this should be determined as part of a Comprehensive plan (3) a paved trail may require a compensating bioswale as it will create an impervious surface, costing more money. (4) the optics of putting a paved trail where there is no usage are terrible. I want park levy money to be spent wisely on such basics as restroom maintenance. (5) a paved trail will facilitate campers returning to this area. That is what happened with the paved trail along the creek. What I would suggest is first getting every single camper out of this area and keeping them from returning, also posting it, as you did with the Fir trail. Next, get to work on the comprehensive plan with the opportunity for public comment. Personally I would like to see much of the area not open to the public, like the Conservation Area at Minto Brown. Finally, bark dust the trail so it is like the other trail at Wallace Marine that goes around the soccer field. Get volunteers to do the work. Don't spend much money on it. Thanks for considering my comments.

From: [Mark wigg](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]please don't approve paving Wallace Marine Park natural area
Date: Monday, November 10, 2025 8:01:02 AM

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Dear Mayor and Councilors,
Thank you for your service.

Please don't approve the paving of the trail at Wallace Marine Park. This is a natural area, and it is a goal 5 resource. Was there significant public support for this? It will make the litter from urban campers worse because shopping carts will be much easier to move on a paved surface. This paved path parallels the two-lane paved road to the ballfields and is less than 200 feet from that road, so this is redundant. Since this area is flooded annually, the pavement is likely to be damaged within a few years. The construction of this paved path will require extensive damage in this natural area.

The city has many other parks that need improvements more than this one. One of the goals of the park master plan is to provide parks within walking distance of residential development. We should spend money on soft surface trails, dog parks, and community gardens in Hazelgreen, Grice Hill, and Rees Hill. The residents near these parks do not have a park near them.

Respectfully,
Mark Wigg
Ward 2

From: [Sandy Whittington](#)
To: [Karen Sjogren](#)
Cc: [CityRecorder](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Bierly](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Re: Paved trail in Natural Area of Wallace Marine Park
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 11:12:58 AM

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I agree with Karen's comments.

On Thu, Nov 6, 2025, 10:28 AM Karen Sjogren <sjogrenkaren2@gmail.com> wrote:

I live near Wallace Marine park and increasingly appreciate the accessibility of walking trails such as the Fir trail as I grow older and don't want to drive far to take a walk. I am absolutely thrilled that the Natural Area is being cleared of homeless campers for their sake as well as park users. I do not go into this area for safety reasons, not because of the trail conditions. It is premature to put in a paved trail here. The comprehensive plan must be completed first. Reasons for not paving the trail are (1) trails should be paved only where there is already high usage or to improve accessibility for certain groups, such as the paved trail from the parking lot to the playground, or the Fir Trail (2) improved trails should be well out of the flood plain, or away from other bodies of water, and this should be determined as part of a Comprehensive plan (3) a paved trail may require a compensating bioswale as it will create an impervious surface, costing more money. (4) the optics of putting a paved trail where there is no usage are terrible. I want park levy money to be spent wisely on such basics as restroom maintenance. (5) a paved trail will facilitate campers returning to this area. That is what happened with the paved trail along the creek. What I would suggest is first getting every single camper out of this area and keeping them from returning, also posting it, as you did with the Fir trail. Next, get to work on the comprehensive plan with the opportunity for public comment. Personally I would like to see much of the area not open to the public, like the Conservation Area at Minto Brown. Finally, bark dust the trail so it is like the other trail at Wallace Marine that goes around the soccer field. Get volunteers to do the work. Don't spend much money on it. Thanks for considering my comments.