

Collins View article for FEB 2022 SW News

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A Report on River View Natural Area

Collins View does not have a public school, a playground, or a public park, but we are blessed with, and invested and involved in, the health of “our” Tryon Creek State Natural Area and the River View Natural Area (RVNA).

River View Natural Area is a 146-acre undeveloped forested parcel on Collins View’s eastern boundary between River View Cemetery and Lewis & Clark College. The site, an important link in the Westside Wildlife Corridor, is connected to the Willamette River through culverts under Highway 43. It is contiguous with Powers Marine Park (<https://www.portland.gov/parks/powers-marine-park>) which features large woody debris providing refuge for endangered Chinook, coho salmon and steelhead trout. RVNA is in the key position in the Wildlife Corridor for discharging critical aquatic resources to the Willamette River. See <http://riverviewfriends.org/history.html> for the history of this area.

With the last couple of dry winters, and last summer’s triple degree temperatures and drought, our concern for wildfires in RVNA is an all-time high. Vernal pools — a seasonal, “ephemeral” or temporary type of wetland habitat that is formed by the accumulation of winter rains and snowfall, typically in shallow depressions in woodlands — have either disappeared or have been diminished by recent dry years. But maybe, with La Nina promising rain this year, they will be back.

Animals that depend upon vernal pools for reproduction and development of their young are called vernal pool indicator (or obligate) species. The Giant Pacific Coast Salamander is one of these and is also one of our residents. (<https://oregonwild.org/wildlife/pacific-giant-salamander>) Salamander eggs are in gelatinous blobs attached to plant stems just below the water’s surface. Because they are very sensitive to changes in water quality, vernal pool denizens are important indicators of environmental health. RVNA waters are at risk because of the surrounding urban density with its fertilizers, chemicals, and street runoff. WARNING! The Giant Sal is one of the few carriers of a parasite that causes “Salmon Poisoning” or “Salmon Disease” which can also infect and possibly kill your furry friends. This is another good reason that RVNA has a “No Dogs Allowed” Policy.

Friends of River View Natural Area (FoRVNA) is the recognized RVNA stewardship partner with Portland Parks. We don't have nonprofit status. FoRVNA is, however, listed as a partner on the West Willamette Restoration Partnership (WWRP, Westside Wildlife Corridor) website.

FoRVNA is in the process of lining up RVNA science and nature activities, such as bird walks, vegetation ID (identify the good plants and the bad guys), walks, and hopefully educational Zoom meetings with environmental experts to lighten up the dark days of winter. Please respond to FoRVNA via FriendsOfRiverViewNaturalArea@gmail.com with suggestions. Out of sight, out of the box, and out-in-left-field ideas are welcome! Submitted by Friends of River View Natural Area

Photo attached: PacificGiantSalamanderODFW.jpg

Caption: Pacific Giant Salamander as found in RVNA

