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East Portland Parks

Big improvements are done -- now for the next round

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

The Portland Parks & Recreation E205 Initiative to build up East Portland parks is officially a wrap after a year and a half of improvements to a dozen play areas and greenspaces.

Now the bureau is getting ready to visualize its next 10 years, including exploring the possibility of a new bond measure for the November ballot.

The Skanner News spoke with Portland Parks Commissioner Nick Fish about the E205 Initiative, the budget crunch — and Sam Sachs and Asa Arden, the Portland Parks rangers who helped catch a rapist.

The Skanner News: Why are parks in East Portland such a big deal? Talk about E205 and what you all accomplished there.

Commissioner Fish: This is what's so interesting. Let me back up a bit and lay out some context. If I said to you where has the city spent the most capital dollars in the last 20 years, what part of the city? The one place you would probably not answer is East Portland. Because there's a general perception that East Portland has not received its fair share.

But interestingly, if you just track capital spending, it has more dollars have been spent by the city in East Portland than any other geographic area of the city over the past 20 years — in the Parks Bureau. And the fruits of that are, we've acquired a lot of land through prior bond measures, using systems development charges, and other resources. But the challenge is we have not had the funds to develop the dirt. So there are neighborhoods throughout east Portland that have a park that has been acquired but it has not been developed.

E205 was born from that dilemma. Forty percent of our families with children live East of I-205, increasingly we're seeing a diverse population dealing with poverty and other challenges. We have a couple of

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50th Anniversary Win



The University of Washington Rugby team celebrated their 50th anniversary with a 22-17 victory over the Oregon Ducks in their home opener on Feb. 2 in Seattle. The team's first victory in 1963 was a 6-3 win over the Oregon Ducks.

PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Effort Builds to Change Pot Laws

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) -- An effort is building in Congress to change U.S. marijuana laws, including moves to legalize the industrial production of hemp and establish a federal pot tax.

While passage this year could be a longshot, lawmakers from both parties have been quietly working on several bills, the first of which Democratic Reps. Earl Blumenauer of Oregon and Jared Polis of Colorado introduced Tuesday.

Polis' measure would regulate marijuana the way the federal government handles alcohol: In states that legalize pot, growers would have to obtain a federal permit. Oversight of marijuana

would be removed from the Drug Enforcement Administration and given to the newly renamed Bureau of Alcohol,

of Massachusetts and Ron Paul of Texas.

Blumenauer's bill would create a federal marijuana excise tax.

Last fall's votes in Colorado and Washington state to legalize recreational marijuana should push Congress to end the 75-year

federal pot prohibition, Blumenauer said.

"You folks in Washington and my friends in Colorado really upset the apple cart," Blumenauer said. "We're still arresting two-thirds of a million people for use of a substance that a

majority feel should be legal. ... It's past time for us to step in and try to sort this stuff out."

Advocates who are working with the lawmakers acknowledge it could take years for any changes to get through Congress, but they're encouraged by recent developments. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell last week came out in support of efforts to legalize hemp in his home state of Kentucky, and U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., is expected to introduce legislation allowing states to set their own policy on marijuana.

Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., has indicated he plans to hold a hearing

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Carrie Mae Weems Retrospective

Portland-born artist's newest exhibit features three decades of work

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

As a youth, Carrie Mae Weems remembers protesting for civil rights and an end to the Vietnam War in front of the Portland Art Museum. Now, the museum houses her latest exhibit.

"We were beat up and clubbed and tear gassed," says Weems. "As a young girl,

walking up and down these streets and demonstrating in front of this museum, I never thought that I'd be in this museum showing any body of work."

Weems' exhibit "Three Decades of Photography and Video" opened on Feb. 2 and is running through Mar. 19. The collection of over 200 photos and videos seeks to engage audiences in complex discussions on the Black experience.

Weems became interested in the arts while growing up in Portland. There were a number of musicians in her family but the only one visual artist was her aunt Katie.

She was heavily influenced by artists who had moved to Portland from the east coast and began getting involved in street performance, dance and radical theater when

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