



## I-205 Multi-Use Path Greening Project

# Conan Harmon-Walker Friends of Trees Volunteer

March 20 marked the fifth in a series of community tree plantings along the I-205 Multi-Use Path. It also marked another milestone: the 249<sup>th</sup> tree planting at which Conan Harmon-Walker has volunteered.

### Project Description

A three-year community-wide effort among ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro to green the I-205 Multi-Use Path with thousands of native trees and shrubs.

### Benefits

- Improved neighborhood livability
- Enhanced experience for path users
- Increased wildlife habitat
- Decreased stormwater runoff
- Increased environmental equity among communities

### Project Funding

- \$410,000 from the Metro Natural Areas Bond Measure's Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant Program
- \$80,000 from East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
- Generous support from:
  - J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.
  - IKEA
  - Cantel Sweeping
  - Collier Arbor Care
  - HSBC Bank USA, N.A.
  - Portland General Electric
  - Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

Born and raised in Oregon, Conan is a network administrator for Legacy Health Systems and a 14-year volunteer with Friends of Trees. He participates in an abundance of Friends of Trees' neighborhood, community and street tree plantings in the region, setting milestone goals as part of his personal commitment to contribute to the community.

"I was an earth science major in the seventies and studied global warming," he explained.

"Planting trees is something I can do that's local and meaningful."

On this particular Saturday, beneath the warm rays of the sun at SE 95<sup>th</sup> and Hawthorne in the Montavilla neighborhood,

Conan helped sign in volunteers and assisted with tree plantings throughout the morning. Conan is a trained Friends of Trees crew leader who has guided hundreds of volunteers throughout the years.

The March 20 planting was part of a three-year partnership among Friends of Trees, ODOT and Metro to plant thousands of trees and shrubs along the path, which is used extensively by bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.

"Improvements to the multi-use path are important and adding trees and shrubs is a wonderful follow-on improvement as it will help shield the community from I-205 and thousands of cars that go by," Conan said.



*At a March 20 planting along the I-205 Multi-Use Path, Friends of Trees volunteer Conan Harmon-Walker celebrated his 249<sup>th</sup> planting with the organization. As a 14-year volunteer, Conan has planted over 14,000 trees.*

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In addition to enhancing the path for bordering neighborhoods and everyone who uses it, the plantings will reduce air pollution, minimize storm-water runoff into streams and rivers, and provide habitat for wildlife and songbirds. When complete, ODOT will showcase the project as a statewide model for considering the greening of other transportation corridors.

"This project will improve air quality and livability for this area at the very least and I would like to encourage more people to get involved and let our policy makers know that this project is important to the community," said Conan.

The following weekend marked Conan's 250<sup>th</sup> planting with Friends of Trees. Throughout his 14 years as a volunteer, Conan has planted over 14,000 trees as a crew leader. In recognition of his amazing achievement, Friends of Trees planted a grove of trees in Conan's honor at their biannual gift trees planting on March 28.

"I planted trees with my father when I was a boy, and my teenage sons have planted with me since they were boys," explained Conan. "It's the best way we know to leave a legacy."



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