



Zach McKay Portland OIC Trainee

March 2010

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

When he first started at Rosemary Anderson High School three years ago, 19-year-old Zach McKay took it day by day. Now a senior, he participates in as much as he can, including student council, mentoring, and a work training opportunity guiding volunteers at community tree plantings along the I-205 Multi-Use Path.

"I messed up my freshman year. When I came to Rosemary Anderson I got my act together," explained McKay, referring to the alternative school run by Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center. Portland OIC is a non-profit organization that serves youth who are affected by poverty, family instability or homelessness with support necessary to engage in school and training.

McKay said that he likes Rosemary Anderson because it is smaller, but there are still a lot of opportunities to join in activities. He also likes the fact that teachers take the time to get to know their students.

"They actually know you – you're not just a name," he explained.

Since August 2009 McKay has been working as a clerk at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a job he acquired through Portland OIC's Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).

"I'm the youngest one there (at BLM)," McKay said. "I'm like a kid in a grown-up world."

But McKay's newest job as a planting crew leader is the result of a unique partnership with Friends of Trees, ODOT and Metro to green the I-205 Multi-Use Path with thousands of trees and shrubs over a three-year period.



Portland OIC Trainee Zach McKay spent the morning of March 6 making a long-term investment in the Lents neighborhood by participating in a tree planting along the I-205 Multi-Use Path.

Zach McKay Portland OIC Trainee

As part of the project, ten Urban Renewal Area-funded jobs for Portland OIC trainees (like McKay) have been created through a partnership between the Portland Development Commission and Worksystems, Inc.

"It's been really good," said McKay of participating in the community tree plantings along the I-205 Multi-Use Path. "It's nice because the people out here don't even have to be, but they choose to."

With his job experience building, McKay is also thinking of his future education and career goals. After graduation, he plans to attend Portland Community College for his first two years and then transfer to Portland State University to study business. He eventually wants to get his MBA from the University of California at Berkeley.

"Even when I was in middle school I knew I wanted to go into business," McKay recalled. "It's a field that can open a lot of doors for you."

For now, McKay is applying for a summer job with the forest service fighting fires. In his free time he keeps busy by playing basketball and hanging out with friends. He will take part in several more plantings along the I-205 Multi-Use Path this season.

"I'm putting myself out there to get to meet other people," he said of his experience with the plantings. "And getting to be a crew leader is icing on the cake."



www.facebook.com/I205MultiUsePath
www.facebook.com/friendoftrees

To learn more about the people contributing to this project, visit:
www.oregon.gov/odot/hwy/region1/i205_mup/profiles.shtml

