

STATE OF THE INTERTWINE 2021



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

The Intertwine Alliance is a coalition working to preserve and nurture a healthy regional system of parks, trails and natural areas — and to increase equitable access to nature for all who live in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region. With the engagement and leadership of our partners, we have made recent significant progress through our [2019-2024 Strategic Plan](#).



The Intertwine Alliance has reached approximately half of its \$1 billion goal for new revenue for equitable investments in the region's parks, trails and natural areas through the 2019 Metro parks & nature bond and 2020 Portlanders for Parks levy.



Together, Metro and our partners are making new investments in [24 regional natural areas](#) and have completed 7 miles of new trails.



We've provided equity training and an ongoing antiracism learning community for 65 organizations and more than 200 individuals throughout the Portland-Vancouver environmental sector. This has helped shape more equitable processes and outcomes for regional investments.



Despite the challenges of Covid, we're resuming our popular annual Intertwine Summit with a partner-designed virtual event on Nov. 10.

NATURE UNDER PRESSURE

The national protests following the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many other people of color accelerated reexamination of The Intertwine Alliance's purpose and relationship to the broader movement for justice. Nature throughout our region is still inequitably distributed. Climate change has hit home in the form of wildfires and heat domes. Our personal livelihoods and support structures have been tested by shutdowns and job losses. The pandemic has created severe hardships for frontline workers and separated many of us from colleagues and community. We have been apart when we needed more than ever to come together.

Never has our connection to nature been more important. Nature supports healthy communities, providing safe places to move, be together, and restore our spirits. Nature provides protection from extreme heat and a changing climate for all living things in our region.

We have benefited greatly from our investments over previous decades. This is a credit to the collective work of community-based organizations, governments, voters, and passionate leaders throughout the region.

And yet... These times have also laid bare many gaps and weaknesses. Our system is:

INEQUITABLE: Access to nature is a privilege disproportionately enjoyed by white, affluent and non-disabled communities, perpetuated by systems of exclusion and institutional racism. In general, well-off communities have more financial and in-kind capacity to contribute to and advance their priorities, yet lack the social cohesion and non-capital resources often found in low-income communities. Looking across our region, we see that some park systems have more resources to serve their communities than others.

UNDERFUNDED: Across the board, public agencies are struggling to meet the need. Regional funding is often used to backfill budgets instead of extending local dollars. Existing parks and trails infrastructure deferred maintenance needs continue to grow, while new planned projects to increase access to nature are put on hold. As our region continues to grow, we need more creative thinking on funding sources and equitable investment.

DETERIORATING: Natural areas must be cared for, and our current system focuses on capital investments without the necessary resources for maintenance. This is a high-risk situation for natural habitat and new climate challenges, such as wildfires and invasive species.

FRAGMENTED: Our bi-state region shares an ecosystem but is divided by jurisdictional boundaries, public and private sectors, and political beliefs. This creates an urgent need for shared spaces to find common cause and to support leadership from all parts of the region.

UNDER PRESSURE: A resilient region requires an integrated approach to parks, housing, healthcare and transportation, yet we often approach each of these issues in silos. We can see the impact on natural and human health. Houseless people seek shelter in parks and along trails. The cost of living makes sustainable communities a luxury item for some, forcing long commutes to work and reduced access to parks and nature.





WHY THE INTERTWINE ALLIANCE?

The Intertwine bridges divides — urban and suburban, Washington and Oregon, neighborhoods rich in natural assets or systemically under-resourced — to generate new ideas and solutions. Together, we leverage social and financial resources to integrate human and natural habitats, to the benefit of both. For all of our previous accomplishments, we have a lot of work to do.

Intertwine Summit 2021 is an opportunity for a new call to action. Our regional priorities are:

- **To elevate the need** for targeted investments in neglected corners of the region
- **To dismantle racism** in the environmental movement and show up as a partner to other social justice movements
- **To show up for each other** in support of funding and maintaining parks, trails and natural areas
- **To create space** for new leadership and strong visions for the value of nature
- **To be innovative** in addressing our challenges, working together across sectors in pursuit of healthier communities
- **To mobilize the Alliance** and connect with leadership that prioritizes nature
- **To support partnerships** across the region in the pursuit of common goals

Intertwine Alliance partners, now is the time to make a multi-year commitment to advancing this work together. The need throughout our region is great — but so is the opportunity for an equitable, healthy, nature-filled future.