



15.5-14: Ross Island
 (Privately owned with the exception of the north tip, which is owned by the Port of Portland)
 GPS at northern downstream tip of island: 45° 29.955 N, 122° 39.864 W

Long a fixture in Portland, Ross Island originally consisted of two islands that were joined on the southwest end in 1926 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Named after Sherry Ross, who owned the island, for decades the island has been mined for its gravel aggregate. This activity has turned the cut-off shallow channel between the two islands into a massive lagoon that leaves the shell of the islands on the outside. The lagoon is more than 100 feet deep in places.

In recent years, the current owner—Ross Island Sand and Gravel Company—has ceased mining and begun restoration activity; this is a requirement of the company's permit to mine gravel from a public waterway. The restoration work to provide more land on the interior of the lagoon, shallow-water habitat, and wetland habitat will provide lasting benefits for local wildlife. The company also must decrease the depth of the lagoon in places, although deep troughs will remain. The owner of Ross Island made a commitment to donate a portion of the island to the City of Portland.

The idea of providing another area where citizens can experience wildlife in a protected area, so close to the city center, has resonated with people for years. It is hoped that eventually the lagoon will be free of most motorized traffic. For up-to-date information on this potential urban wildlife refuge, see: www.friendsofrossisland.org.