

Healthy Ecosystem Comments
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The Healthy Ecosystem portion of the comp plan is one of the most important action areas of the comp plan. Respect for and protection of our natural resources are key to a healthy community. Over one hundred years ago, these resources were the basis for the formation of our community. We have used them, and in some cases abused them, but over the years we have come to realize that their health is a critical component of our health.

General comments on the Healthy Ecosystem Action Area

Key concepts:

- Our natural resources are an interconnected network.
- Protection of the natural resources is key to a healthy community.
- Development in, on and around our natural resources should maintain or replicate their functionality; we can modify but shouldn't destroy.
- We need to understand and agree on what constitutes natural resources, 'significant' and otherwise.
- We need to take a comprehensive approach to protecting and maintaining our natural resources.
- We recognize that climate change is, and will be, one of the most pressing challenges that we face and that healthy resilient natural resources are critical in addressing it.

I would advocate for a watershed-based system-wide approach to natural resource protection.

I'd like to see some kind of discussion about the values of the different kinds of open space and which are most important to protect. Note: Some may want to add agricultural lands as a natural resource. While soils are a natural resource, these lands are developed open space, not a primary natural resource.

Regarding the decision to not discuss many aspects of Healthy Ecosystems, including Fish and Wildlife Habitat, some of Vegetation, all of Wetlands, and some Open Space policies because they apply to 'sensitive lands', I disagree with this. Perhaps it makes sense to not discuss them where they occur on single family residential land since that is what is being discussed with Metro, but that is a small portion of the whole. It is essential that these resources be looked at holistically, and the direction to staff to not do that is nonsense.

Following are specific responses to the discussion questions for May 23, 2013 meeting

1. Broad open space goals:
 - The question is to add maintain to the goals, but it appears that it is already there.
2. Open space network:
 - Policy 1: Add language about using a watershed-based approach to natural resource planning and protection.
 - Policy 3: Reorder the list to start with 'preserves essential natural systems' and add using watershed-based approach to identify significant resources.
 - Policy 9: rewrite policy as follows:
Say 'Protect the following resources', then list them.
3. View corridors:
 - Significant public view points should be identified and protected. This may require addressing vegetation and tree protection as part of the scenic corridor.