

## Goal 5 Open Spaces, Scenic & Historic Areas & Natural Resources

### □ Section 1, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

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#### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Statewide Planning Goal 5: Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources**

*“To conserve open space and protect natural and scenic resources.”*

Statewide Planning Goal 5 requires communities to provide programs that will 1) ensure open space; 2) protect scenic and historic areas and natural resources for future generations; and 3) promote healthy and visually attractive environments in harmony with the natural landscape character. Goal 5 also requires communities to inventory Goal 5 resources, including fish and wildlife areas and habitats. The inventory is required to include a description of the location, quality and quantity of these resources, and an identification of conflicting uses. Where no conflicting uses have been identified, resources shall be managed so as to preserve their original character. Where conflicting uses have been identified, the economic, social, environmental and energy (ESEE) consequences shall be determined and programs developed to achieve the goal.

A variety of environments exist in Lake Oswego which provide fish and wildlife habitat. These areas include remnants of native woodlands, open fields, wetlands and waterbodies such as Oswego Lake, the Willamette River and numerous year-round and intermittent streams. Mature landscapes and trees within developed areas are also valuable to several wildlife species. Furthermore, properly managed private property, including residential lots, can provide valuable nesting, food and cover.

Two natural resource inventories for the Lake Oswego planning area have been conducted over the past 18 years. The 1975 LOPRI (Lake Oswego Physical Resources Inventory) was conducted by community volunteers. It provided much of the information needed to develop the natural resource element of the 1978 Comprehensive Plan. In 1992 a new natural resources inventory was developed by an environmental consulting firm. It consisted of more location-specific data than the 1975 inventory, and specifically; rates the quality of water resources such as wetlands, streams and lakes according to their wildlife habitat values.

The following summarizes the major findings and recommendations of the 1992 Natural Resources Inventory:

- Water is critical to all wildlife species, and should be the basis of establishing a comprehensive network of open spaces to host wildlife. Water must be of good quality and be accessible.
- The habitat immediately adjacent to water resources should be protected to provide food, cover, and shelter for wildlife.

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- Linkages between various habitats to ensure safe passage to food, water, nesting, and cover is critical for wildlife survival.
- There has been a decline in certain wildlife habitat types within the Lake Oswego planning area. Areas of oak/ash wetlands, open agricultural fields which assist migratory birds, and forested slopes, have been lost due to development.
- Improper management of public and private lands, such as removal of native vegetation, planting of invasive flora, and use of herbicides and pesticides have contributed to the decline of wildlife populations.
- Urban open spaces do not maintain their quality without active management. There has been a serious invasion of nuisance plants which have degraded the quality of wildlife habitat in many open spaces within the City. Blackberries and English ivy have eliminated native ground cover over large areas of stream corridors in the planning area, and purple loosestrife is a problem in wetlands.
- Most streams have been degraded by erosion, tree cutting and removal of undergrowth vegetation and course changes resulting from construction, especially sanitary sewers. Illegal dumping in wetlands and along streams has also degraded these resources. Stormwater-borne chemicals used in landscape maintenance and agriculture, and petroleum residues from streets and parking lots also have negative impacts on Lake Oswego's stream corridors.

The following four major recommendations were made by the 1992 Lake Oswego Natural Resources Inventory.

1. Wetlands and water resources should be protected and enhanced by using buffers, removing invasive plants, planting native vegetation and providing stream corridor setbacks that leave steep, forested banks intact.
2. Trees and tree groves should be preserved. The remaining large forested stands should be protected from fragmentation, and forested areas on steep slopes should remain undeveloped as they are one of the last refuges for wildlife.
3. Linkages between uplands and wetland/water resources should be created and protected where already existing to provide wildlife travel corridors. Urban deer populations and other wildlife species, require safe passages to access food, water, and cover.
4. New City policies, ordinances and zoning and development standards are required to protect natural resources.

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#### Summary of Major Issues

The following are some of the issues and changed circumstances and conditions which were considered in the update of this element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- A new location-specific natural resources inventory was conducted in 1992.
- A decline in wildlife habitat has occurred since the Comprehensive Plan was first adopted as a result of urban development; lack of proper management of urban open spaces; restriction of access to a variety of habitats; tree cutting and fragmentation of forested areas; and, degradation of stream corridors.

### **GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES**

#### **GOAL**

Lake Oswego shall preserve and restore environments which provide fish and wildlife habitat.

#### **POLICIES**

1. Preserve and restore natural resources and lands which are important to fish and wildlife habitat including:
  - a. Wetlands, water bodies, stream corridors and associated vegetation;
  - b. The Willamette Greenway and the Urban Service Boundary's (USB) floodplains and floodways;
  - c. Surfacewater and groundwater quality;
  - d. Tree cover and understory vegetation, including downed trees and nesting snags; and,
  - e. Upland areas, especially forested hillsides.
2. Protect rare, threatened, and endangered fish and wildlife species and their associated habitats.
3. Preserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat through:

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- a. Land and habitat management practices on public and private lands; and,
  - b. Providing linkages to various habitats for access and safe passage of wildlife to food, water, nesting and cover.
4. Require developers to preserve and restore inventoried and identified fish and wildlife habitat through:
    - a. Site design and development standards and construction methods;
    - b. Preservation of habitat associated with floodways and floodplains and their meandering channels;
    - c. Protection, restoration and buffering of wetlands, stream corridors, water bodies; and,
    - d. Protection and restoration of upland habitat, especially forested hillsides.
  5. Require the preservation or establishment and ongoing maintenance of vegetated buffer areas when development occurs on property adjacent to stream corridors and wetlands.
  6. Preserve and restore native plant communities to provide wildlife food, cover and nesting opportunities.
  7. Provide public education to promote preservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat.
  8. Utilize a systems-wide management approach to preserve, restore and manage fish and wildlife habitat.
  9. Ensure linkage among wildlife habitat areas as a key component of the Lake Oswego parks, open space and surface water management systems.
  10. The City shall emphasize protection rather than mitigation of fish and wildlife habitat functions and values.

### ***RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES***

- i. Provide for a combination of incentives and regulatory measures to influence development to preserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat.
- ii. Provide for fish and wildlife habitat through measures such as:

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- a. Preservation and reestablishment of wetlands and waterbodies and native plant communities; and,
  - b. Maintenance practices and landscaping to provide food, nesting and cover.
- iii. Participate with state and federal agencies and private groups to protect rare and endangered species identified within the Urban Services Boundary.
- iv. Develop a connected open space network within the Lake Oswego Urban Services Boundary which:
- a. Provides fish and wildlife habitat in conjunction with passive recreation opportunities, and;
  - b. Connects to open space lands in surrounding jurisdictions.
- v. Preserve sensitive and critical wildlife habitat through methods such as special development regulations, land acquisition, purchase of development rights, land trades, transfer of development rights, etc.
- vi. Implement a systems-wide management approach to protect, restore and manage fish and wildlife habitat which:
- a. Monitors the health of the area's fish and wildlife habitat through periodic surveys and inventories;
  - b. Determines those responsible for public and private open space maintenance and restoration activities;
  - c. Sustains a program to remove invasive plant species;
  - d. Coordinates with conservation groups, other agencies, and jurisdictions; and,
  - e. Provides public education and awareness of habitat issues.
- vii. Encourage fences to be designed and built so as not to restrict wildlife access to habitat and waterbodies.
- viii. Cooperate with the Oregon State Parks Division, conservation groups and other jurisdictions and agencies to enhance the unique fish and wildlife habitat values of the Willamette River Greenway.
- ix. Encourage Metro and Clackamas County to identify and protect fish and wildlife habitat in areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary and adjacent to Lake Oswego, especially in the Stafford Area.

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- x. Provide ongoing funding to implement fish and wildlife habitat and open space acquisition and management programs.
- xi. Establish environmental overlay zones to protect significant wildlife habitat areas.
- xii. Encourage schools and local organizations to provide public education opportunities regarding preservation and improvement of wildlife habitat within northwest ecosystems.