

Wildlife Habitat and Water Quality

From the Multnomah County West Hills Rural Area Plan:

“WILDLIFE HABITAT

Wildlife Habitat has been identified as a significant Goal 5 resource in the West Hills. All of the West Hills, excepting a small area consisting of the Bonny Slope subdivision along Laidlaw Road and adjacent areas, has been determined to be significant wildlife habitat, because it is all part of an ecosystem which supports a diverse wildlife population relatively undisturbed by the rural levels of development in the West Hills.”

From the Metro Natural Landscape Features Inventory, February 2007

Rock Creek Headwaters

Rock Creek flows from the Tualatin Mountains in Forest Park to the Tualatin River. Watershed managers have identified protection of the upper watershed as a high priority for meeting water quality protection goals in the lower watershed. Opportunities to improve and protect habitat also exist through the protection of key tributaries and their associated wetlands. Because the creek and its tributaries pass through rapidly urbanizing neighborhoods within the cities of Hillsboro and Beaverton, protecting water quality is a priority. These headwaters also provide wildlife habitat and trail connectivity from the Tualatin Valley to the Tualatin Mountains that includes Forest Park.

Forest Park Connections

Forest Park lies within the city of Portland and unincorporated Multnomah County. It is considered by many to be the “crown jewel” of the region’s open spaces network. At more than 5,000 acres of mostly second-growth forest, Forest Park contains an abundance of wildlife and its massive tree canopy and substantial undergrowth serves as a natural air purifier, water collector, and erosion controller. The Forest Park connection area provides protection to key watersheds like Balch, Miller, Ennis and Agency Creeks and secures the integrity of the “big game” corridor that links the park with habitat in the northern Coast Range. Connecting Forest Park to Rock Creek and the proposed Westside Trail will keep important wildlife corridors intact and provide trail connections between the region’s largest urban park and Washington County.

From the Multnomah County West Hills Reconciliation Report Revised – May 1996:

Page V-9,10,11 (Wildlife Habitat):

“Finally, the West Hills’ relationship to Forest Park is critical to the West Hill’s significance... Forest Park, in isolation, is not large enough to support self-sustaining populations of medium and large size mammals, such as elk, bobcats, mountain lions ... and black bears [footnote: the implication is not that Forest Park should be managed exclusively for bear and elk; rather, the point is that managing Forest Park and the adjacent wildlife are for bear and elk will ensure sufficient habitat for smaller mammal and bird species that reside in the Portland region.] for which hundreds of square miles of habitat would be required..

...

Thus it is the quantity of the West Hills Wildlife Habitat Area in relation to its quality and location that are critical to this inquiry. High quality habitat elsewhere in Multnomah County cannot substitute for even medium quality habitat in the West Hills. It is because medium quality habitat is limited, and threatened by conflicting uses at a particular location, that makes the West Hills a significant Goal 5 resource.

a. WILD ABOUT THE CITY (Marcy Houle, 1990)

This report discusses the concept of contiguous areas of natural habitat for wildlife and the results of the fragmentation of habitat into "islands." In the latter instance, numerous biological studies (see bibliography for Wild About the City) have documented the diminishment and loss of native plants and animals due to a lack of connection to a larger ecosystem. Continued development in the West Hills wildlife area could result in the fragmentation, and therefore the degradation of both the West Hills' and Forest Park's natural systems, the loss of species diversity, the permanent loss of natural populations to catastrophe such as fire, and the weakening of plant and animal populations due to the lack of genetic diversity available in larger areas.

b. A STUDY OF FOREST WILDLIFE HABITAT IN THE WEST HILLS (Esther Lev, Jerry Fugate, Lynn Sharp, 1992)

This report provides a more in depth study of existing wildlife within the West hills area. Research for the study included a series of six transects throughout the region, representing different types of land use... the transect with the most species diversity and numbers were found in the "control" transect within the boundaries of Forest Park. This indicates the high wildlife habitat values to be found within the park, and the importance of integrating Forest Park into a larger contiguous wildlife habitat area in order to protect this high value. The amount and diversity of wildlife within the rural West Hills area to the northwest of Forest Park is somewhat lower due to the impact of residential development, agriculture, quarry operations, and commercial forestry. However, each of the five transects outside of Forest Park showed significant numbers and diversity of wildlife, indicating that this area remains an important area for native plants and animals."

Page V-14. "In the case of the West Hills, maintaining black bear and elk habitat ensures that the habitat needs of a wide range of other species will be met"

From Exhibit A to Metro Resolution No. 07-3833, Approving the Natural Areas Acquisition Refinement Plan for the Forest Park Connections Target Area, September 6, 2007:

"Findings

- The Forest Park Connections target area is a regionally significant natural area due to its fish, wildlife, regional recreation and water quality values.
- The Forest Park Connections target area is the largest and most ecologically intact natural area in public ownership in the metropolitan region.
- Several large and ecologically important publicly owned parcels extend northwest of Forest Park out to Burlington Bottoms and the Multnomah Channel. These parcels are currently not contiguous with other publicly owned natural areas.
- Key tributary streams for water quality, wildlife habitat and fish habitat include Balch Creek, Doane Creek, Saltzman Creek and Miller Creek.
- Established science continues to show the key importance of intact headwaters for water quality and quantity protection, habitat and maintenance of overall watershed health.
- Recent studies on the Willamette have shown the importance of tributary creek confluence areas for listed fish species using the Willamette River. Many of the tributary creeks provide valuable sources of clean and cold water, nutrients and refuge areas off the main channel for refuge and rearing."

"Goals

- Acquire key properties to connect Forest Park to other public lands.
- Connect Forest Park to Rock Creek and the Westside Trail to keep important wildlife corridors intact and provide trail connections between the region's largest urban park and Washington County.
- Protect important headwater areas on the eastside of the ridgeline."

From Attachment 1 to Resolution No. 07-3833

Summary of Comments from Stakeholder Interviews For Forest Park Connections Target Area

"Key Themes Discussed

Water Quality/Wildlife Habitat

- The opportunities for connections to the northwest of existing Forest Park were mentioned in every stakeholder interview. Everyone interviewed indicated the importance of extending the park and providing maximum habitat and water quality protection for the scattered parcels previously purchased in this area.
- A major emphasis was placed on maintaining the key habitats and preserving water quality in the Balch Creek watershed and other key watersheds in the park. Particularly, the headwaters outside and uphill from the park. Ecological changes within the Balch Creek watershed are apparent in the last few years even at the low density development level. Forest fragmentation is affecting species diversity, becoming more suitable for open/fragmented canopy species and losing interior habitat characteristics. Negative impacts to headwaters affect the entire watershed.
- Multiple stakeholders have mentioned the important bottomland forest and wetland confluence habitat on the Willamette River where tributary streams enter the Willamette River. Habitat for pond turtles, bottomland forest, and Willamette wetlands are a diminishing resource. Restoration potential and mitigation bank potential. Very important habitat for Willamette River listed fish species
- The connections with the Rock Creek watershed and its tributaries are important linkages for wildlife and humans. Possible connections in this area for the Westside Trail and the Pacific Greenway trail were mentioned. Abbey Creek headwaters, Rock Creek headwaters
- Balch Creek and Forest Park in-holdings and edge properties are important targets for maintaining forest and habitat health and for protecting water quality in key watersheds. However, they are likely to be very expensive and difficult to acquire.
- Northwest corridor and Rock Creek connection properties are also important for maintaining habitat connections to adjacent natural areas and ecosystems, headwaters, and for buffering unique habitats. Important local elk habitat shared with Rock Creek. Elk use creek corridors for movement, feed in open fields, and use forested areas for cover/rest."

Excerpts from Exhibit A to Metro Resolution No. 07-3834, Approving the Natural Areas Acquisition Refinement Plan for the Rock Creek Headwaters and Greenway Target Area, September 6, 2007:

"Background

...

The 2006 Natural Areas bond measure stated:

A major tributary of the Tualatin River, upper Rock Creek and its tributaries are under intense development pressure as urban growth expands throughout the watershed. Watershed managers have identified protection of the upper watershed as a high priority for meeting water quality protection goals in the lower watershed. Opportunities to improve and protect habitat also exist through the protection of key tributaries and their associated wetlands. In addition, the protection of key undeveloped sites in the lower reaches of Rock Creek, particularly in Hillsboro, will buffer growth, protect water quality and provide nature in neighborhoods for local residents.

A biological assessment for this target area indicates that oak woodlands and oak savanna habitat support varied wildlife, and expanding the protected natural areas would increase habitat opportunities for vulnerable species such as red-legged frogs, Western bluebirds and northwestern pond turtles. In addition, threatened species such as steelhead, cutthroat trout and coho salmon are present in Rock, Abbey, Holcomb, Bannister and Bronson creeks, as well as in an Abbey Creek tributary."

...

"Target Area Description

Rock Creek flows from the Tualatin Mountains to the Tualatin River. The headwaters hold key areas of undeveloped land which provides linkages for wildlife. These areas also contribute to water quality. Because the creek and its tributaries pass through rapidly urbanizing neighborhoods within the city of Hillsboro, protecting water quality is a priority."...

"Findings

- Rock Creek is a major tributary of the Tualatin River. The headwaters of Rock Creek and its tributaries have been targeted for acquisition due to intense development pressure as urban growth expands throughout the watershed. Watershed managers have identified protection of the headwater areas as a high priority for meeting water quality protection goals in the lower watershed and also to improve and protect wildlife habitat.
- The headwaters of Rock Creek originate on the west side of the Tualatin Mountains southwest of NW Skyline Boulevard and Forest Park. Numerous tributary streams flow through woodlands and agricultural lands before crossing into the urbanized area near West Union and Springville Roads.
- The watershed for Rock Creek includes in excess of 18,000 acres and numerous tributary streams. Major tributary streams include Abbey, Bronson, Holcomb and Beaverton Creeks.
- Established science continues to show the key importance of intact headwaters for water quality and quantity protection, habitat and maintenance of overall watershed health.
- The science report notes that the area's oak woodlands and oak savanna habitat support varied wildlife, and expanding the protected natural areas would increase habitat opportunities for vulnerable species such as red-legged frogs, Western bluebirds and northwestern pond turtles. In addition, threatened species such as steelhead, cutthroat trout and coho salmon are present in Rock, Abbey, Holcomb and Bannister and Bronson creeks.

...

- Stakeholders identified protection of east/west wildlife corridors as just as important as north/south corridors.
- Some stakeholders would like to see Metro focus on purchase of open spaces closer to the Urban Growth Boundary to help provide a natural edge between urban and rural areas.

Goals

- Protect the upper watershed to meet water quality protection goals in the lower watershed.

- Protect key undeveloped sites in the lower reaches of Rock Creek to buffer growth, protect water quality and provide nature in neighborhoods.
- Protect habitat along key tributaries and associated wetlands.”

From Attachment 1 to Resolution No. 07-3834:

Summary of Comments from Stakeholder Interviews For Rock Creek Headwaters and Greenway Target Area

“Key Themes Discussed

Wildlife Habitat

- Importance of wildlife corridors – open areas down-slope of Forest Park into the Tualatin Valley are very important for wildlife (sunnier, open fields, more available food and water)
- East/west wildlife corridors (Forest Park to Tualatin Valley) are just as important as north/south corridors (Forest Park to Coast Range)
- Unique clusters of white oak should be mapped – disappearing habitat in the region

Land Use / Urban/Rural Form

- Important to connect Forest Park to urban areas with “ribbons of green” – important for wildlife corridors, water quality and livability
- Build on wetland/creek confluence near PCC/Rock Creek – opportunity for a “natural edge” between urban and rural areas; Hillsboro and Washington County planners support a larger “regional” scale park farther up in the watershed, but accessible to the urban population
- Focus on linkage of Rock Creek Headwaters, Forest Park and Westside Trail regional target areas
- Consider mutual benefits of protecting open space and providing buffers for small farm operations in proximity to urban areas
- Metro program is focused on natural area functions – could serve a complimentary role to low impact agricultural practices, particularly those that supply local food markets

*West Hills
Sense of Place***BEASLEY Charles**

From: Kimmelfield [Kimmelfield@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2009 6:24 PM
To: Multnomah County Chair; District2; District1
Cc: BEASLEY Charles
Subject: Urban Growth Boundary Land Development Comment

Dear Chair Wheeler, Commissioners Cogen and Kafoury,

I live in NE Portland, and I drive out to a property on Germantown Road at least four times a week, both for work and recreation. I grew up in Wales, and I have to tell you that this rural area currently under discussion in the Urban Growth Boundary decision process is a priceless treasure, not only in Oregon, but also in the US as a whole, where it is all too rare to find this kind of domesticated countryside within easy reach of urban centers and yet not contaminated by urban sprawl. To work and play in natural surroundings which still offer only trees and fields to the eye is nourishment to the soul, and without these places, and the people who wish to be stewards of them, we will all be the poorer.

I am a storyteller, and I cannot count the number of children I meet who cannot "see" in their mind's eye a deer, a coyote, a hawk, wildflowers, pine trees, even a field, let alone a farm, or an orchard. They have no frame of reference for the seasons outside of the urban setting they live in. The countryside is an alien place, and wild things are feared and disrespected. We need to preserve our pockets of rural Oregon, and they need to be large enough to maintain viable habitats for the native species that inhabit them. Only then can we be sure of a way back to our essential roots, which are and always will be rural. We still grow our food, and depend on clean sources of water, need fresh air and green space to be healthy and invigorated. It is the small, working places in the countryside that keep the ties between urban and rural – the fruit growers who welcome the public to pick their own, the barn owners who provide urbanites with the magical experience of working with an animal like a horse, the small dairies that produce award-winning artisan cheeses, the innkeepers who buy local produce and maintain gardens and grounds of their own for their patrons to enjoy. These places provide a comfortable familiarity with nature which is totally different from the experience of the great National Parks, but is perhaps even more important to our mental and physical health and wellbeing. Children, wherever they live ought to know what a coyote actually looks like, the difference between a pine tree and an oak, that insects have individual names, besides "bug". They ought to know because what you know becomes yours, and what is yours you care about. We need, more than ever, to be mindful of our place on this living planet and our obligation to preserve and respect the natural world that contributes so much of what makes us fully human.

Thank you for taking the time to consider all voices in this process. I wish you well in your decision-making!

Sincerely,

Helen Kimmelfield.



To: Metro Reserves Steering Committee and Metro, Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington County Planning Staff.

From: Portland Audubon and Urban Greenspaces Institute

Re: Suitability of Natural Features for Urban and Rural Reserves.

In designating urban and rural reserves, Metro and the Counties must apply several factors identified in State law (OAR 660-027) relating to ecological systems and natural landscape features. These include factors relating to the inclusion of important natural landscape features in rural reserves that "define and distinguish the region" and the "appropriate natural boundaries of urbanization." State law requires the use of Metro's February 2007 'Natural Landscape Features Inventory' (NLFI) and other pertinent information in making these decisions. The NLFI identifies the general location of natural features but not the relative suitability for urban or rural reserve designation based on the factors. We are submitting the following information to assist Metro and the Counties in designating urban and rural reserves that may contain important natural landscape features.

We believe strongly that all natural landscape features identified in the NLFI should be protected, restored, and managed regardless of their eventual designation as urban reserves, rural reserves, or as neither of the two. However, in order to apply the factors in OAR 660-027 and designate urban and rural reserves, Metro and the Counties must identify the relative suitability of important natural landscape features for designation as urban and rural reserves. While the NLFI does not assess relative quality, it does contain component layers identifying particularly unique wildlife habitats and corridors that are conservation priorities within the Metro region and within the Willamette Valley. Therefore the NLFI does contain the necessary technical information to identify the relative suitability of some lands for inclusion in urban and rural reserves.

Some of the NLFI's component features are more vulnerable to impacts from existing or future urbanization. Therefore the values they support (e.g. sensitive species and rare or unique habitats) are more at risk from future UGB expansions. For example, oak woodlands that rely on fire to maintain native biodiversity are more difficult to manage and conserve within an urban context. Similarly, particular reaches of stream or floodplain may be particularly sensitive to the impacts of urban stormwater run-off or especially prone to flooding or other natural hazard. These natural features are among the landscapes that define and distinguish the region and should form the ecological and geographic boundaries of urbanization.

After consulting with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and other conservation and natural resource specialists in the region, we have attempted to identify the relative suitability of natural landscape features for inclusion or exclusion in reserves based the biodiversity values (e.g. habitat type, wildlife corridors) and other ecosystem services (e.g. flood storage, water quantity and quality). From these conservations, we believe the component features or layers of the NLFI listed below are *most suitable* for inclusion in a rural reserve and, correspondingly, *least suitable* for inclusion in an urban reserve.

1. Willamette Valley Synthesis Project Conservation Priorities, The Nature Conservancy Conservation Priority Areas, ODFW Conservation Opportunity Areas, and Willamette Valley Ecosystem Consortium Tier 1 and 2 lands.
2. Habitats of Concern identified in Metro's Inventory of Regionally Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat.
3. Floodplains along rivers and all of their major tributary streams.
4. Title 13 lands, steep slopes, or farm or forest lands that provide buffers between the above natural landscape features and existing or future urbanization as based on factors OAR 660-027-0060(3)(f) and 0050 (8).

Again, we want to emphasize that all lands in the NLFI should be managed to conserve and restore a variety of natural resources values regardless of their final designation. Indeed, OAR 660-027-0050(7) specifically requires that Metro designate urban reserves that "can be developed in a way that preserves important natural landscape features included in urban reserves." This is consistent with the Regional Functional Plan requirements for protecting and restoring regionally significant habitat and other environmentally sensitive lands inside the urban growth boundary.

We look forward to working with the Reserve Steering Committee, Metro, and local governments in making the best possible urban and rural reserves decisions for the region.

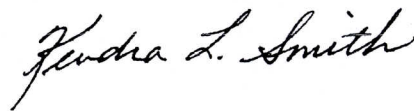
Sincerely,



Mike Houck
Executive Director
Urban Greenspaces Institute



Jim Labbe
Urban Conservationist
Audubon Society of Portland



Kendra Smith
Natural Resources Alternate for Reserves
Steering Committee





Carol Chesarek
13300 NW Germantown Road
Portland, OR 97231

May 16, 2010

To: Multnomah County Board of Commissioners

Re: Urban and Rural Reserves, Lower Springville Road (area 9B, formerly UR-1)

Dear Chair Cogen and Commissioners,

I served on the Multnomah County Reserves Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and have been following the Reserves process on behalf of Forest Park Neighborhood Association. I wanted to provide an up-to-date summary of the information about the Lower Springville Road Area, now called 9B.

Summary of Recommendations

Urban Reserve Suitability Rating: low/medium (CAC and county staff)

Rural Reserve Suitability Rating: medium/high (CAC)

Multnomah County Reserves Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) recommended **Rural Reserve** to protect natural features for this area. The county Planning Commission endorsed that recommendation, and generally recommended against leaving land undesignated. **Metro's COO** recommended "Rural Reserve consideration should be given to the identified significant natural landscape feature within the area [West Multnomah County], as well as Sauvie Island."

Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) voted to recommend a Rural Reserve as well – that vote was 13 yes, none opposed, with 2 abstentions. Both City of Portland and City of Beaverton voted in favor of this recommendation.

Others who **oppose an Urban Reserve** and who **support a Rural Reserve** in this area:

City of Portland

Forest Park Neighborhood Association (includes this area)

CPO-7 (adjacent Washington County)

Hillside Neighborhood Association (Portland)

Northwest District Association (Portland)

Agriculture and Natural Resources Coalition

Forest Park Conservancy

SaveHelvetia

Tualatin Riverkeeper

State Rep. Mitch Greenlick

29 Residents of Springville Road Area, including Malinowski Farms

Beovich Family, who farm 94 acres on Springville Road

The Great Communities Study considered this area. Their report says:

"The team concurs that preservation of this important ecological area is likely more important to the region than urbanizing it, especially given the other constraints (lack of connectivity and developable land area) and significant opportunities (water quality and view)."

Summary of Public Input

The "Phase 4 – January 2010 Public Comment Report (Core 4 Review Draft 2)" says that the public input survey offered at open houses and online yielded these results:

Number of people who answered at least one Area 9 (Western Multnomah County) question: 433 (more than any other Area)

207 responses were from Urban/inside a city, 81 Urban not in a city, 46 Rural in a city, and 76 Rural outside a city.

Option 9B (Lower Springville "L"): **74% of respondents favored Rural Reserve**, 13% no designation, 13% Urban.

Clearly there is strong community support for a Rural Reserve designation here. These results are similar to other surveys of Multnomah County Residents, as well as the results of a Forest Park Neighborhood survey.

A February 2006 survey conducted by Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall Inc. for Metro (Regional Attitudes Toward Population Growth and Land Use Issues, February 2006) showed that Multnomah County residents favor protecting natural resources and preserving farm and forestlands.

One of the conclusions of the 2006 report reads:

"Environmental values are particularly important to residents throughout the region. Once people are here, their enjoyment of the region is due primarily to environmental considerations. Two-thirds want environmental protection to be more important than economic growth in the coming decade and they want planning designed to protect the region's environmental assets".

Here are some of the survey results:

- The top three planning priorities for Multnomah County residents were
 - Protecting area rivers and streams 84%
 - Preserving farm and forestland 74%
 - Protecting air quality 80%
- 78% of Multnomah County residents preferred adding houses in existing neighborhoods vs. 12% who preferred converting farm and forestland.
- Over three quarters (77%) of Multnomah County residents said farm and forestland should be preserved because of their contribution to the economy, rather than making the land available for businesses. Only 16% preferred allowing business development on farm and forestland.

The report also concludes that "Opinions have remained remarkably consistent over the last 10 years."

Urban Reserve suitability

Urban Reserve Transportation Study: area was NOT RATED (not suited for urban road network).

More than 40% of this area is constrained for development due to steep slopes and riparian areas.

No city has requested an Urban Reserve here. The area is not adjacent to either City of Portland or City of Beaverton, so governance is a significant problem. Beaverton's city limit is more than 2 miles away, and their City Council has a policy of not annexing any territory without 100% property owner approval. Contrary to representations by lobbyists and developers, Beaverton does not aspire to an Urban Reserve in this area, and there are significant barriers to their ability to provide urban services here in the future. Washington County strongly discourages "cherry stem" annexations.

City of Portland is concerned that urban development of the area would harm Forest Park and natural resources in and near Area 9B. The City of Portland prefers to invest in sustainable neighborhoods within their city, focusing investments in existing centers and corridors, and has requested that Area 9B be designated a Rural Reserve.

UGB expansion in Area 9B seems likely to result in another Bonny Slope West (Area 93)-type governance problem. Bonny Slope West was added to the UGB in 2002, but the County has been unable to find a way to provide all of the required urban services to the area, blocking both completion of the concept plan and urban development.

Urban Reserve factor (3) asks whether an area "can be efficiently and cost-effectively served with public schools and other urban-level public facilities and services by appropriate and financially capable service providers."

Because there is no adjacent city to provide governance and urban services, this raises the question of whether Multnomah County is an "appropriate and financially capable" urban service provider.

Multnomah County does not currently provide urban services. Many urban services (sanitary sewer, stormwater, water, etc) can be contracted to service providers, but the county currently has no way to provide services related to urban planning and regulation in areas that are not adjacent to a city. The County does not have an urban planning department or staff. According to the Multnomah County Staff Report to the Planning Commission "Preferred Urban Growth Diagram and Service Delivery Options for Bonny Slope West (Area 93) Planning Commission Work Session Sept 14, 2009, Case File# PC-08-006," urban areas need a planning regulatory program, including necessary urban services such as permit processing, construction inspections, road maintenance and code enforcement. The county may not have the resources required to prepare and negotiate urban service IGAs. The Staff Report also says "the county does not currently process urban permits and does not have common urban planning financial programs in place such as system development charges..." City of Portland cannot provide these services in areas not adjacent to City.

This same Staff Report also says that County governance would require "amendments to county policies and practices. The Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 'A' in 1983 directing the County to reduce its role in providing "municipal" services to a rural level. Resolution 'A' lists land use planning as a municipal service and therefore restricts the County's ability to provide urban planning."

Given these limitations on Multnomah County's ability to provide urban services, it is difficult to see how the County could be considered an "appropriate and capable service provider" for an urban area. Urban-level public services cannot be provided without a planning regulatory program as described above.

The regional Great Communities study included a large section of the West Hills as the "Northwest Hills test area," including the Lower Springville Road area. The summary report says:

"An example of the issue involved in the application of the governance criterion is the Northwest Hills area. Of the three test areas, the Northwest Hills faces the greatest challenge for governance. Although the area is located in Multnomah County, its strongest connection to an existing community (and the accompanying services) is in Washington County and, more specifically, the City of Beaverton. While governing and providing services to this area in the future is possible through intergovernmental agreements, annexations, and creatively-financed infrastructure, it is significantly complicated by the fact that there is not one governing body that can easily provide the core urban services needed to create a Great Community in that area."

Urban Reserve Factor (4). Can be designed to be walkable and served with a well-connected system of streets, bikeways, recreation trails and public transit by appropriate service providers.

Area 9B (and the rest of the West Hills) was "not rated" for transportation because it is not suitable for an urban road grid that supports walking, bicycling, and transit. Connections to the north and east of 9B are especially problematic. City of Portland describes NW Cornell Road at NW 25th and NW Lovejoy as one of the worst bottlenecks in the City. Urbanization of Area 9B would increase traffic on Cornell Road, which passes through valuable wildlife habitat and recreation areas, including Forest Park.

The "Multnomah County Functional Classification of Trafficways" map clearly shows the very limited road network available in the West Hills, and the long distances between roads that cross the hills. Road development in the area is limited by relatively steep slopes, numerous ravines and riparian corridors, and by Forest Park.

A new road connection to the north of 9B would require building a new road down the slope to Abbey Creek, a new bridge across the creek, a new road up the slope north of Abbey Creek to Old Germantown Road. Old Germantown Road is built to a minimal rural road standard, and would require significant and expensive upgrades to serve this new traffic.

The summary report for the Great Communities study says:

"The Northwest Hills test area is a good example of an area in which it would be difficult to create the level of connectivity required for communities with great design. The topography makes it necessary to build many costly bridges between isolated centers to create any level of connectivity. In addition, the presence of Forest Park and the West Hills may give the area stronger value for the region to remain if it remains as is."

Road connectivity to existing Bethany is also limited. The western edge of 9B is a powerline corridor easement. The southern third of this edge (the portion south of Springville Road) is bordered by existing Bethany, but there are no openings available for neighborhood road connections to cross the powerlines this area.

There is another powerline corridor running east/west just south of the southern edge of 9B. Along the western half of this edge there is a riparian corridor between the powerlines and the county line. This combination of riparian corridor and powerlines has limited development on the Washington County side of this edge.

These edges of 9B appear better suited to be long term urban/rural boundary than a well connected system of neighborhood streets. The Oregon Court of Appeals has already cited the combination of the county line and powerline easement along the western edge of Area 9B as a clear boundary that will “serve to both visibly highlight the line separating urban and rural uses, and to also serve as a buffer between urban development and rural uses. “

Some argue that extending Saltzman Road across the southern edge of 9B, through this area, and into to North Bethany will facilitate transportation connections. But residents of the area believe that this connection would mostly facilitate access for urban Bethany residents onto Multnomah County's rural roads over the hills to Portland. This would benefit Bethany residents but would put more pressure on rural roads in Multnomah County and Portland, such as Cornell and NW Cornelius Pass Roads, that are already over capacity. Bethany residents attending North Bethany planning meetings said that they already go out of their way to use rural roads instead of Hwy 26.

The retail and commercial areas within the Bethany Town Center are two-thirds of a mile (as the crow flies) from the nearest corner of Area 9B, and most of 9B is more than a mile away and beyond what most people consider walking distance.

Transit. Washington County and TriMet expect North Bethany transit usage to account for only 1% of trips. It seems unlikely that this area would do better – there is a lack of transit supportive density and design in the area south of North Bethany. The service on the nearest bus line (#67, on NW Kaiser Road to PCC Rock Creek) was recently reduced due to low ridership, and the area is not close to current or proposed High Capacity Transit.

North Bethany. Washington County has not committed the funding for needed off-site road improvements (approx. \$185M) to accommodate North Bethany traffic. Even if these improvements eventually occur (which doesn't appear to be assured), these off-site road improvements were not sized to accommodate additional traffic from new urban areas in Multnomah County.

The 3 schools planned for North Bethany are sized to accommodate North Bethany residents, and only one of those schools is funded. According to the Great Communities Study, the Lower Springville area would require 3 additional schools.

Urban Reserve Factors (5) Can be designed to preserve and enhance natural ecological systems; **and (7)** Can be developed in a way that preserves important natural landscape features included in urban reserves.”

The summary report for the Great Communities study says:

“In the Northwest Hills area for example, the buildable lands map revealed a major riparian system that feeds the Tualatin River as well as numerous riparian corridors within the rolling rural landscape. This ecological web modulates the landscape and defines potential development spaces. The team concurs that preservation of this important ecological area is likely more important to the region than urbanizing it, especially given the other constraints (lack of connectivity and developable land area) and significant opportunities (water quality and view).”

Area 9B includes more than 1,000 mature Oregon white oaks, in oak savanna and oak woodland habitats. While some or all of the oak trees might be preserved, development of an urban community would replace open fields around these trees with homes. Roosevelt elk have been reported on multiple occasions in at least two areas of 9B, using open fields. According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's “Elk Management Plan, February 2003,” elk need both cover and forage, and they avoid humans and traffic on roads. If the open fields in 9B are developed with homes and roads, it is highly likely that elk will stop using the area. Western Bluebirds are a grassland bird, and if the open fields in 9B are developed into homes their available habitat would be reduced as well.

Most of the developable land in 9B is open fields. If the fields were protected from development to preserve and enhance the oak savanna and areas used by elk, in addition to the mapped natural features in the area, there would not be enough developable land left to make development efficient and cost effective.

Tualatin Riverkeepers letter to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, dated December 9, 2009, recommends that area 9B (then called UR-1) be designated as a Rural Reserve. The letter goes on to say "Research by University of Washington, EPA, Center for Watershed Protection, USGS and other [sic] has established conclusively the detrimental impacts of urbanization on streams. It is most important to protect headwaters areas as all impacts flow downstream." Area 9B includes an important portion of the Abbey Creek headwaters, demonstrated by the County's significant stream zoning overlay, which protects a 600' wide riparian corridor (300' on each side of the stream).

Urban Reserve Suitability Conclusion

The Metro COO Recommendations for Urban and Rural Reserves say (page 13): "Therefore, suitability findings should be directly related to an area's ability to accommodate compact, efficient development patterns. These areas should demonstrate the potential to develop effective and efficient internal transportation grids, connections to regional roads and highways, and other public works systems. In addition, these areas should include or be closely connected to downtowns, main streets and employment areas that residents can access conveniently and safely by walking, bicycling and transit."

It is hard to see how this area could meet these urban reserve goals. While most of us would prefer to urbanize conflicted farmland, we cannot ignore the important habitat and headwater streams in Area 9B, and in the areas to the north and east of 9B, that would be harmed by developing this area. The area's poor suitability under the Urban Reserves factors related to governance and transportation are also critical considerations.

Rural Reserve suitability

Natural Resources in this area need to be considered in the broader context of the West Hills, Forest Park, and the upper Rock Creek watershed. Due to its relatively small size and inclusion of a section of the headwaters of an important Abbey Creek tributary, 9B's merits as a Rural Reserve probably must be considered in the context of the larger landscape, of which it is an important component part.

Potentially Subject to Urbanization (3)(a). Bounded on two sides by the UGB, there can be no question that this area is "potentially subject to urbanization."

Natural Hazards (3)(b). Areas along the large tributary to Abbey Creek (in the County's significant stream corridor) are shown as slope hazards on maps provided to the CAC by Multnomah County.

Wildlife Habitat (3)(c). Valuable habitat in this area is well documented by the county, Metro, and the Natural Landscape Features Inventory. All of this area has a county SEC overlay for wildlife habitat, and it also contains a significant stream with a riparian overlay. These overlays were established based on extensive research. Approximately three-quarters of 9B is included in the final 2009 version of the Natural Landscape Features Inventory. Over 50% of this area is in Metro's Rock Creek Headwaters Tier 1 target area for acquisition.

Some County and Metro documentation of wildlife habitat value is attached for reference. Other information is provided under Urban Reserve Factors (5) and (7) above.

The "Multnomah County West Hills Reconciliation Report (Revised – May 1996)" says:

"Thus it is the quantity of the West Hills Wildlife Habitat Area in relation to its quality and location that are critical to this inquiry. High quality habitat elsewhere in Multnomah County cannot substitute for even medium quality habitat in the West Hills. It is because medium quality habitat is limited, and threatened by conflicting uses at a particular location, that makes the West Hills a significant Goal 5 resource."

The first version of the Natural Landscape Features Inventory (NLFI) was notable for a map that showed natural features with very fuzzy, imprecise edges, and that included few landmarks. This was, perhaps, the most accurate of the Natural Features Inventories, because it recognized that wildlife habitat and riparian areas seldom have crisp edges. The second version of the NLFI was black (orange) and white, with crisp edges showing what areas as definitely "in" or "out." The final version of the NLFI, provided in mid-2009, uses overlapping shades of blue to indicate Natural Features.

Streams migrate over time. Trees sprout, grow, and eventually die. Wildlife seldom stays within tightly drawn habitat outlines on maps, and many kinds of wildlife need to be buffered from urban areas.

We are fortunate to have a detailed Goal 5 study, documented in the "Multnomah County West Hills Reconciliation Report (Revised – May 1996)". Research for this report included two studies of wildlife in the West Hills. One of these included a series of six transects and an extensive field study that included trapping. This field work provided far more detailed information about the wildlife and habitat in the West Hills study area than was available for many other parts of the region, and was an important supplement to the Natural Features Inventory. As a result of this study, Multnomah County established SEC habitat overlays across all of Area 9B.

Subsequent studies of Area 9B by neighborhood representatives reinforced the validity of the county's findings. We have demonstrated that 9B includes important habitat and forage for elk (through the Forest Park Neighborhood "elk map" and additional elk sightings within the last year), significant numbers of Oregon white oak, and Northern red-legged frogs. A survey found at least 1010 mature Oregon white oak trees in the area (and another 200 on adjacent rural lands), forming healthy oak savanna and oak woodland habitats. Adult and tadpole stage Northern red-legged frogs were found in 3 ponds – these frogs require significant terrestrial habitat during non-breeding periods. A Great Blue Heron regularly uses the large pond on Malinowski Farms, and one resident reported seeing a cougar outside his home last week.

An aerial photo with markings to show where elk and northern red-legged frogs have been reported in the last year, as well as the locations of the 3 largest groups of Oregon white oak in 9B, is attached.

I have attached a photo of elk on Malinowski Farms (in 9B) in 2002. Elk were seen in Area 9B many times during the last year, using the open farm fields that were not included in the Natural Features Inventory. Jim and Judy Emerson reported seeing elk (once a group of more than 30) several times in open fields the northern part of 9B, near the powerline easement. Several residents of 9B, including Susan and Kirk Andrews, reported seeing a group of elk on the northwestern portion of Malinowski farms during summer of 2009, near the Andrews' home at 13410 NW Springville Road.

We are very fortunate to have Roosevelt elk still using areas in the West Hills that are within 15 to 20 minutes of downtown Portland. The Forest Park Neighborhood created an "elk map" during the summer of 2006, asking area residents where they had seen elk in the previous 3 years, and recording information about each sighting. The "elk map" (see page 57 of CAC meeting packet #6, January 8, 2009) has one green dot for each elk sighting, a yellow dot for each cougar sighting, and a black dot for each Black Bear sighting. This map documented elk use of the all rural areas in

the West Hills, but most of the sightings were reported in open fields. No doubt this is partly because the elk are more visible when they are in the open, but it clearly demonstrates that elk use both open fields and vegetated cover. Unfortunately, open fields were generally not included in the Natural Landscape Features Inventory, even though they provide critical elk forage. A biologist who spent extended periods of time in Forest Park studying Northern Pygmy Owls reported that elk only seemed to use the far northern section of the park near Newberry Road. This area near Newberry Road has more open areas than the rest of the park, and correspondingly more forage. The elk were not reported to be using developed urban areas.

Long term residents report that there were no elk in the West Hills 50 years ago. The elk herd that now uses the West Hills has grown over time, and a few people have reported counting as many as 90 individuals using a single location. While hunting is allowed, it does not appear to be reducing the overall number of elk in the area. Everyone who reported seeing elk had a story to tell – it is clear that the elk are highly valued as a local “natural feature.”

I recently received a high-resolution version of the Willamette Valley Synthesis Map, compiled by The Nature Conservancy. This map is one layer used in the Natural Features Inventory. According to a memo from Mike Houck and Jim Labbe, Re: Suitability of Natural Feature for Urban and Rural Reserves (provided to the CAC at their June 18, 2009 meeting), the Willamette Valley Synthesis Conservation Priorities are one of the component features that are most suitable for inclusion in a rural reserve. About half of Area 9B is in a Conservation Priority area, shown on an attached map.

Water Quality (3)(d). The significant stream running through this area (an Abbey Creek tributary) is part of the upper Rock Creek watershed. The Natural Features Inventory for Rock Creek Headwaters notes that “Watershed managers have identified protection of the upper watershed as a high priority for meeting water quality protection goals in the lower watershed.” The area also includes portions of the headwaters for Bronson Creek and the headwaters of another Rock Creek tributary.

Sense of Place (3)(e). Overwhelming public input favors protection of 9B as a Rural Reserve because they value the local elk and other wildlife so close to downtown Portland and urban Bethany, the incredible views of the hills, and the local farms. I have attached a copy of an email from Helen Kimmelfield, describing the value of having these rural settings available near urban areas.

Boundary or Buffer (3)(f). Farms in this area provide an important buffer between urban development in Bethany and the high value riparian and upland resources around Abbey Creek and its tributaries. Open fields provide valuable food sources for elk. Two large farms on Springville Road (Malinowski and Beovich) are growing market garden crops, and they are investing in infrastructure development and new crops. They have requested a Rural Reserve.

The ODA agricultural study (Identification and Assessment of the Long-Term Commercial Viability of Metro Region Agricultural Lands, January 2007) rated this area “Conflicted,” but the study also notes (pages 54, 55) that Prime farmland is found in this “notch” and that there are no restrictions on development of groundwater in the area. Farmers can apply for a permit and develop a well if they want to irrigate crops.

The ODA study also notes that “The location within the Portland metro area provides excellent opportunities for the direct marketing and promotion of agricultural products. Farm stands, U-picks, wineries and small farms producing high-value products for sale to the urban market are not uncommon in the area. This provides greater opportunities for both larger farm operations and the smaller parcels to produce crops that cater to the ever-growing demand for locally produced food

and other agricultural products.” This is the type of farming that Malinowski and Beovich farms are successfully practicing.

The Metro ordinance adding North Bethany to the UGB cites the combination of powerlines and county line on the eastern edge of North Bethany as a good long term urban edge. The value of this urban edge is cited in the Court of Appeals decision affirming the North Bethany UGB expansion. We need to maintain and reinforce this clear edge to minimize conflicts between urban and rural uses.

We also need buffers between our highest quality habitats and urban areas. “Metro’s Technical Report for Fish and Wildlife Habitat, April 2005, Exhibit F – Ordinance No. 05-1077 Attachment 2” page 82 documents the recommended buffers on each side of a stream for various forms of wildlife. The County currently protects a 300’ wide buffer on each side of significant streams, but some wildlife and habitat values require more. Some birds may need up to 656’. Other recommended riparian widths (each side of a stream) include: Pileated woodpeckers (which several residents report seeing frequently in Area 9B) = 450’; Mule deer fawning = 600’; Rufous-sided towhee breeding populations = 656’. Edge effect of increased predation extends 2,000’. Maintaining humidity and soil temperature (such as Northern red-legged frogs might require) = 98’ to 787’. The farm fields along the Bethany edges of 9B will provide a valuable buffer for the important habitats further inside 9B.

Separation between cities (3)(g). Area 9B helps separate City of Portland from urban Washington County.

Recreation (3)(h). Metro staff’s preferred alignment for the regional West Side Trail, originally expected to follow the north/south powerlines along the east side of North Bethany (as shown on the attached map of Natural Areas Bond target areas), now turns east near the county line south of Springville Road. Two draft routes are being considered, as shown in the draft map “Master Planning the Westside Trail Segment 10” (these draft routes are not exact or final, and depend on negotiations with property owners, but they indicate an intention to create a recreational trail here). One of these routes follows Springville Road, the other is located near the county line that forms the southern edge of the “L.”

Concept plans for North Bethany still include a trail along the north/south powerlines on the western edge of 9B (the original Westside Powerline Trail alignment) to serve North Bethany residents, so it is likely that this small area will have both an east/west and a north/south trail.

NW Springville Road is also used by many recreational bicyclists, every day. Residents have reported seeing well over a hundred bicyclists using the road in a single day (weekend days with nice weather). Springville Road is a convenient bicycling connection between urban Washington County and Skyline Boulevard or Forest Park. From the lower part of Springville Road in Area 9B, you can see both Cooper Mountain to the south and the Tualatin Mountains to the north.

Conclusion

This area meets Rural Reserve for Natural Features factors (3)(a), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), and (h). Portions of the area meet factor (b).

Rural lands not designated as either Urban or Rural Reserves next to the UGB are likely to attract speculators and non-conforming farm uses. Such areas will face an uncertain future, including the possibility that Metro will add them to the UGB for what Richard Whitman (Director of DLCD) calls “special purposes.”

The physical features that make this area a poor Urban Reserve candidate (transportation issues, riparian corridors, impact on natural resources and rural roads) are unlikely to change over time.

Rural Reserves are not permanent. If conditions do change, the area could be designed as an Urban Reserve after a Rural Reserve designation has expired.

Organizations and individuals who have submitted letters opposing an Urban Reserve in this area and who have requested that the area be designated a Rural Reserve:

Neighborhoods: Forest Park Neighborhood Association (includes this area)
CPO-7 (adjacent Washington County)
Hillside (Portland)
Northwest District Association (Portland)

Other organizations: Forest Park Conservancy
SaveHelvetia

Individuals: 29 Residents of Springville Road Area, including Malinowski Farms
Beovich Family, who farm 94 acres on Springville Road

The Great Communities Study considered this area. Their report says:

"The team concurs that preservation of this important ecological area is likely more important to the region than urbanizing it, especially given the other constraints (lack of connectivity and developable land area) and significant opportunities (water quality and view)."

There is ample data to support designating this area as a Rural Reserve for wildlife habitat and water quality, especially given the overall context of the West Hills, Forest Park, the Abbey Creek watershed, and the value of a buffer with a well defined urban edge along the county line. There is not a lot of credible data supporting an Urban Reserve in this area.

Thank you for designating this area as a Rural Reserve, in accordance with the CAC's recommendations and the wishes of a broad constituency.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if I can provide additional information.

Thank you.



Carol Chesarek

Attachments:

NLFI (segment including 9B)
Willamette Valley Synthesis map (segment including 9B)
Multnomah County Functional Classification of Trafficways
Master Planning the Westside Trail Segment 10
Photo of Elk on Malinowski Farms
Oregon White Oak Survey, Reserves Area 9B, the Lower Springville "L", May 4, 2010
Northern Red-legged Frog Survey, Reserves Area 9B, the Lower Springville "L", May 4, 2010
Aerial photos
Helen Kimmelfield email