

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Designating the)
West Hills Scenic Study Area a) RESOLUTION
Significant Scenic Resource Pur-)
suant to OAR 660-16 and Statewide) 93- 371
Planning Goal 5, Adopting Findings)
and Directing Staff to Complete the)
Goal 5 Process)

WHEREAS, as part of Periodic Review, Multnomah County must complete the Statewide Planning Goal 5 process for scenic views of the West Hills; and

WHEREAS, complying with Goal 5 requires consideration of the location, quality and quantity of a resource, and analysis of whether a scenic area is outstanding, pursuant to Oregon Administrative Rule 660-16; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, after holding a public hearing and accepting written and oral testimony, recommended that the West Hills Scenic Study Area not be designated a significant resource based on the Findings and Conclusions of the Staff Report; and

WHEREAS, this matter came before the Board of Commissioners for a public hearing on October 12, 1993, at which time the Board, after considering testimony, evidence and the Planning Commission recommendation, approved a motion to reject the Planning Commission recommendation and designate the scenic views of the West Hills as significant ("1C"); now therefore

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board adopts the attached Findings and Conclusions as presented at the November 9, 1993 Board of Commissioners' meeting; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the West Hills Scenic Study Area is designated a significant scenic resource pursuant to OAR 660-16 and Statewide Planning Goal 5; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board directs Planning Staff to complete the Goal 5 process by identifying conflicting uses, analyzing their ESEE consequences, and proposing a program to provide an appropriate level of protection for the scenic values of the West Hills.

ADOPTED this 9th day of November, 1993.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Beverly Stein, Chair

REVIEWED:
LAURENCE KRESSEL, COUNTY COUNSEL
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
John L. DuBay, Chief Deputy



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West Hills Study Area Scenic Resources Determination of Significance

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

I. BACKGROUND

Multnomah County's Periodic Review Order was reviewed by the Land Conservation and Development Commission on April 23, 1993. The Commission found that amendments to the county's land use regulations are required in order to comply with Statewide Planning Goals (Remand Order 93-RA-876). The county had designated "Scenic Views West Hills" as a "1-B" (delay Goal 5) resource and indicated that resource identification and a protection program would be completed by early 1991. This work was never completed. Consequently, the county must now determine the extent and significance of visual resources in the West Hills. If a resource is not significant, it is designated 1A and no further action is required. If information on location, quality and quantity indicate that the resource is significant, it must be included in the Comprehensive Plan inventory, and the Goal 5 process (ESEE analysis and protection program) completed.

II. LOCATION:

The north face of the West Hills (Tualatin Mountains), extending north of the ridgeline (roughly corresponding to Skyline Boulevard) to Highway 30 on the north, and from the Portland City Limits to the Columbia County line (see attached map).

III. QUANTITY:

Only land outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) has been considered in this analysis. While scenic views exist in urban areas, their focus is usually on the city or on distant mountains. Natural appearing scenic landscapes, such as the West Hills, are almost exclusively located in non-urban areas. Total non-urban area of the county is approximately 252 square miles.

Large areas of Multnomah County have already been designated as scenic resources. The most extensive is the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA), which takes up 52 square miles of the county, the Sandy River Gorge, which is a designated state and federal scenic waterway, and the Willamette River Greenway. The following table compares the sizes of these scenic areas with the West Hills study area.

TABLE 1.
SCENIC RESOURCES IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY
SIZE AND PERCENT OF NON-URBAN AREA

<u>SCENIC AREA</u>	<u>SIZE IN SQ. MILES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF NON-URBAN AREA</u>
Columbia Gorge NSA	52	21
Sandy River	3	1
Willamette River Greenway	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>
TOTAL	65	26
West Hills	20	8

SUMMARY:

While just over 1/4 of the non-urban area of Multnomah County has already been recognized and protected because of scenic value, the majority of these scenic resources are in the eastern portion of the county. The Willamette River Greenway, in the western portion of the county, is only 4 percent of total non-urban land. This lack of other scenic resources in western Multnomah County adds significance to the West Hills. In addition, the quantity of other scenic resources should not be a penalizing factor in considering whether the West Hills are significant.

IV. QUALITY:

A. QUALITY CRITERIA

Determining whether a site has significant scenic qualities is a subjective decision, based on individual ideas of beauty and enjoyment. A view some find beautiful may be uninteresting to others. However, certain attributes, or qualities which make a scenic view interesting, have been identified and used to classify scenic importance. Methods used by the US Dept. of Transportation, the US Forest Service, the Columbia River Gorge Commission and the City of Portland to determine scenic significance were reviewed. There was a great deal of similarity in criteria used by the different agencies. The following list is a combination of these criteria, which can be used to both describe and compare the scenic value of the West Hills with the scenic value of the other identified scenic resources.

Variety: A variety of visual features like landforms, waterforms, rock formations, and/or vegetation patterns are included in the kind of landscape that people find most visually appealing and interesting. May include the expectation of more information to be extracted from the view with additional time spent looking at it, or the potential for more information when the viewpoint is changed. Includes distinctive or vivid visual patterns or dominant striking landmarks.

Intactness: The visual integrity of the landscape, or the degree of human modification that has occurred within the landscape. Major modifications may still rank high as long as the modifications fit into the context of the view.

Unity/Coherence: A view that appears to be part of a larger or extended landscape, exhibiting an internal unity that extends beyond the setting to imply continuity with other settings. The visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape. If the landscape is made up of different parts or patterns, they will appear to be linked forming one cohesive view. Transitions within the view will be harmonious and/or be expressed as patterns.

Viewing area importance/Accessibility: Viewed frequently and/or viewed by many people. Areas seen from well-travelled roads or places with high public use are more important than similar landscapes seen from less visited viewing areas. Ease of access, proximity. Viewing areas must be accessible to the public, and in the case of roads must have safe places to stop and enjoy the views.

B. ANALYSIS OF WEST HILLS SCENIC QUALITIES

Variety: The West Hills landform consists of the front of the Tualatin Mountains, a series of gentle mountains ranging in height from approximately 900' to 1500'. Various canyons bisect the face of the Hills, adding variety to the landform. Vegetation on the Hills is a mixture of coniferous and deciduous forest. Logging activity has created variety in the vegetation pattern, with different ages of regrowth appearing as different textures and shades of green. The Vine Maple and other early-succession species provide color variety in recently logged areas, especially in the fall.

Intactness: When viewed from a distance, such as from Gillihan Loop Road or the Sauvie Island Wildlife Refuge, the West Hills appear to be a velvety green background. While the results of logging are visible in places, this is a temporary activity and regrowth will occur. There is little housing or other development visible on the majority of the hillsides.

Unity/Coherence: The West Hills exhibit unity and coherence, being part of a forested ridge which extends in both directions beyond the study area, from the urban area of Portland to the Coast Range and beyond.

Viewing area Importance/Accessibility: Many places on Sauvie Island receive high visitor use, and the West Hills provide valuable background scenery. Important areas where the West Hills can be viewed include the Sauvie Island Wildlife Refuge, Bybee-Howell House,

Virginia Lakes, and various roads on the Island, which are popular bicycle routes. Recreational users of the Multnomah Channel and Willamette River also benefit from views of the Hills. Travellers along Highway 30 can enjoy glimpses and views of the Hills. Proximity and easy accessibility to the large urban population of Portland add significance.

C. COMPARISON TO OTHER SCENIC AREAS

The West Hills cannot be fairly compared to the other recognized scenic areas in the county. The Columbia River Gorge is a national scenic area, of such outstanding value and importance that any other scenery pales in comparison. The Sandy River and Willamette River Greenway are recognized on a state level. The intent of Goal 5 is to recognize resources that are important to the county, but which may not be significant if considered at a state or national level. The West Hills are significant when viewed alone. The Columbia River Gorge and Sandy River are also a different landscape character type than the West Hills.

D. SUMMARY

The West Hills exhibit important unity and coherence, being part of a mountain Greenway extending from Portland to the Coast Range. They are an integral part of the scenic framework of Sauvie Island, the Multnomah Channel and the Willamette River, and provide an outstanding contrast between the developed urban areas of Portland and the natural beauty of the forested hills. Views of the Hills provide valuable scenery to travelers along Highway 30 and the roads on Sauvie Island.

V. CONCLUSIONS:

1. The location of the West Hills study area has been identified in this report and on the attached map.
2. Analysis of the quantity of identified scenic resources in the county shows that the majority are in the eastern part of the county.
3. Analysis of the quality of the West Hills scenery, based on a compilation of criteria used in other studies to determine quality of scenic views, shows that the West Hills exhibit variety, intactness, unity and coherence, easy accessibility and proximity to Portland, and are part of the scenic view from many highly visited areas on and near Sauvie Island.
4. Based on this analysis of the quantity and quality of the West Hills scenic landscape, the West Hills are a significant scenic resource.

WEST HILLS RURAL AREA PLAN

WEST HILLS
SCENIC RESOURCES
STUDY AREA

 STUDY AREA

