

MARION COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN

DRAFT
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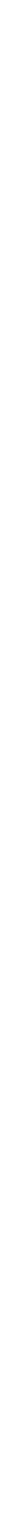
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Marion County Parks Master Plan establishes the Vision and Community Goals for Marion County's parks for the next 10 years. Based on this vision, the Plan also identifies current and future park and recreation needs and the capital and non-capital projects that meet them. Lastly, the Master Plan presents strategies for implementing the projects that will most benefit Marion County and its residents. When implemented, the Plan will help the County preserve natural resources, meet changing recreation needs, and foster economic development by attracting residents, businesses and tourists. The Parks Master Plan also provides an opportunity for the County to reconnect with its citizens and help them build a connection to the County's valued natural and cultural resources.

The last plan for Marion County Parks was developed in 1978. This new Plan will assist the County to continue its efforts in providing parks and recreation opportunities for all its residents, both rural and urban. Although the County has many elements in place that are needed to develop an excellent park system and many incredible park resources, chronic lack of funding necessarily limits investment in park facilities and maintenance. A primary focus of this Plan is to maximize the benefit to park users through a real-world approach that includes strategic decisions and investment of resources that are, and most likely will continue to be, severely limited.

This Plan differs from typical master plans in focusing primarily on the total inventory of park facilities available to the citizens of Marion County, with less weight placed on lines of jurisdiction. While this approach may appear unconventional, Marion County is not typical of other counties. The County has 20 cities, more than any other Oregon county. With 263 rural and urban residents per square mile, the population density is over three times the average of 71 residents per square mile of other mid-Willamette Valley counties. It is believed that the totality of recreational resources available to all county rural and urban residents correlates more to quality of life than do considerations of which parks are under any particular agency's jurisdiction. Parks currently in cities' urbanized areas (between city limits and urban growth boundaries) will probably be annexed and become city parks at some future time, and the emphasis on total resources available over jurisdiction means that the overall system's value to the public will not be

materially affected by eventual changes in jurisdiction over individual parks.

THE BENEFITS OF RECREATION: ENHANCING OUR COMMUNITY

There are many reasons why the County should make investing in its park system a priority. The parks and facilities proposed in the Plan will have multiple benefits, including preserving the natural and cultural resources, fostering youth development, promoting health and wellness, and enhancing sense of community. The Plan will support economic development by attracting businesses, residents, and tourists, and by increasing the value of nearby properties. The Plan ensures that Marion County maximizes these benefits for all residents – regardless of age, ability, or cultural background - by promoting the development of parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities that are accessible. It also promotes active recreation and alternatives to automobile transportation by creating a regional trail, bikeway and water trail network. This network will link some of most significant natural and cultural resources provided by the County and its partners.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: THE CORNERSTONE OF THE PLAN

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was enriched by a wealth of information provided by the residents of Marion County. Nearly 500 community residents participated in public involvement activities over the course of the planning process, including a Community Questionnaire, Community Survey, Advisory Committee meetings, and focus groups. Activities were designed to obtain input from a broad cross-section of the community.

Throughout the public involvement process, Marion County residents clearly expressed the importance of parks, recreation, and open space to the community's quality of life. Residents recognized the benefits of parks and recreation in strengthening families and communities, preserving and providing access to nature, and providing opportunities for youth.

However, Marion County residents also stressed several key needs with respect to parks and recreation in their community. Among these, residents emphasized that new facilities were needed across the County, as well as upgrades and improvements to existing facilities. Improved

park maintenance was a high priority among residents. County residents look to the County to protect natural areas; and they stressed the need to develop additional trails and pathways for pedestrians and cyclists that connect facilities into a cohesive network. Community members also recognized the importance of improved coordination and partnerships to improve park and recreation services in the region, as well as a significant need for greater public involvement and information about park resources.

OUR VISION AND GOALS: OUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE

About 81% of Marion County residents surveyed think that parks, recreation, and open space are very important to the County's quality of life. The County's outdoor recreation opportunities help create a healthier, vibrant community today, and foster continued stewardship of its natural resources into the future.



The community's vision for the future of Marion County Parks is:

Marion County Parks will provide an interconnected, safe, accessible and well-maintained parks system that provides diverse recreation opportunities to residents and visitors, and preserves our County's bountiful natural and historical resources.

The County will achieve this vision by reaching its goals, the desired outcomes of the Master Plan. These include:

- Protect and enhance our natural and historical resources
- Provide diverse recreation opportunities that are responsive to changing community needs
- Provide an interconnected park system that provides opportunities for active transportation and recreation
- Provide opportunities for river access and recreation
- Protect and preserve the public's resources and investment
- Develop and enhance community partnerships
- Enhance public involvement and awareness of Marion County Parks
- Maintain and enhance long-term financial stability

OUR ACTIONS:

IMPROVING PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS

The Parks Master Plan includes a number of recommendations that will enhance the parks and recreation facilities offered by Marion County. These recommendations are based on findings from both extensive community involvement and technical analysis.

Recommendations include the following:

- *Park and Facility Improvements:* Marion County residents believe in protecting the County's existing investments. In keeping with this value, this Plan recommends improvements to most of the County's existing community parks, natural areas, and regional parks. These improvements are designed to extend the life of existing investments, enhance recreation opportunities, and improve access for residents of all abilities. Several parks should undergo extensive renovation, and a new master plan would be developed for these sites. New master plans for Minto, Niagara, and North Fork Parks are top priorities.
- *New Parks:* This Plan also recommends that the County should consider the eventual acquisition and development of approximately 116 acres of new parkland. This would allow the County to maintain their current level of service with continued population growth (see Appendix C). These acquisitions should focus on sites suitable for regional parks and natural areas. For regional parks, priority areas include sites along the Willamette, North Santiam, and Little North Fork of the North Santiam Rivers; parks that connect to regional trails and tour route projects; sites that would be appropriate for needed recreation opportunities; and parks that preserve historical and cultural resources. Existing County properties that could be repurposed for parks should be considered in lieu of purchased acquisition, such as the Macleay property (105 acres) located in the foothills just east of Salem.
- *New Facilities:* Marion County residents are active and appreciate outdoor recreation opportunities. This Plan recommends the development of recreation facilities that support these popular activities – boating, walking, picnicking, fishing, camping, and swimming. A key recommendation is to continue collaboration on the North Santiam Canyon Trail project. These facilities will make Marion County parks a better place not only for the residents, but for visitors as well.

- *Revenue Generating Facilities:* The Plan recommends that the County develop recreation facilities that could generate revenues to supplement its current funding sources. These include group picnic areas. The County also should consider parking or day use fees. Further investigation is recommended to determine if the development of camping opportunities would generate revenue (including potential grants) in excess of operations and maintenance costs.
- *Additional Recommendations:* This Plan recommends that the County develop a clear focus on its primary purpose. In addition, improvements to park maintenance are recommended to keep up with basic and conservative maintenance standards. This would result in an increase in the park maintenance budget, but could be offset by additional revenues as mentioned above. A multifaceted public outreach effort is needed to inform resident about the opportunities available at County parks and to build a constituency for the future. Partnerships and valuable collaborations between local, state, and federal agencies in Marion County should continue to be strengthened to achieve the County’s vision.

IMPLEMENTATION: HOW WE WILL IMPROVE OUR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Master Plan recommends a number of capital and non-capital projects. Because the anticipated costs for implementing all improvements exceed the County’s available funds in the short term, projects were prioritized. The total cost for the highest priority capital and non-capital improvements will exceed \$2 million over the life of this Plan.

In this challenging financial climate, it may be difficult to imagine how the County can take steps to preserve its existing park resources and expand parks and recreation to meet future needs. Yet by embracing the vision presented in this plan, developing partnerships and increasing public support, the County can take small steps toward its goal. With this conservative “pay as you go” method, the County can make substantial progress in achieving this vision over the next ten years. Every journey begins with the first step!



Although expanding General Fund support for parks may be impossible or improbable, there are other sources of funding that the County can consider. Although not all of these options may be considered desirable at present, some may be more desirable in the future. Achieving the vision outlined in this Plan will require active pursuit of multiple funding sources. Some of the potential sources of funding could possibly include:

- Increasing System Development Charges;
- Continuing to aggressively pursue partnerships to fund key projects;
- Pursuing more grant opportunities with the assistance of other County staff and instituting a matching-fund to help the County obtain grant dollars;
- Increasing park revenues by building additional revenue-generating facilities and instituting user fees;
- Forming a park and recreation foundation to obtain donations;
- Considering voter initiatives, such as a bond measure and serial levy;
- Selling surplus properties;
- Expanding the volunteer program;
- Taking advantage of new opportunities as they arise by keeping a list of funding ready projects; and
- Considering emerging funding sources, such as selling credits for mitigation of development.
- Including designation of new parks in conditions of approval in land use cases, when appropriate.

NEXT STEPS: THE FUTURE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Over the next few years, Marion County will continue to cultivate strong, positive relationships with residents and public and private organizations in order to unite community efforts to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

This plan is not a static document. It is a dynamic tool that can be adapted to respond to changing recreation trends and needs. Marion County will continue to seek the community's advice as we move forward in implementing this Master Plan, so that we can provide an exceptional system of parks and recreation facilities for all of our residents. We will need volunteers and partners to make the vision a reality. Please join us.





INTRODUCTION

Marion County is located in the heart of the Willamette Valley, just south of Multnomah County and the Portland Metropolitan Area. The County is bordered by the Willamette River on its west, the Cascade Range on the east, and Linn County to the south. A large portion of the County's population is concentrated in the cities of Salem and Keizer and in western Marion County. The eastern portion of the county is characterized by forest, rivers, and lakes, and the Cascade Mountains.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Marion County is located in Oregon's Willamette Valley, about 45 miles south of Portland. To the north lies Clackamas County and many of Portland's outer ring suburbs. Linn County borders the North Santiam River to the south. On the east lie Wasco and Jefferson Counties, and on the west Polk and Yamhill Counties border the Willamette River. Marion County is also home to Salem, Oregon's third largest city and capital, as well as 20 small and medium-sized cities, many of which face similar challenges of growth and change. Interstate 5 is the primary north-south transportation corridor through the County, while Oregon Highways 22, 99 East and West and state highways 211, 213, 214 and 219 provide access locally.

The County's 1,200 square miles span several unique landscape features including the Willamette Valley with its rich agricultural history, and the forested western slopes of the Cascade Mountains. A network of rivers and streams flows down from the Cascades, creating deep and winding canyons. As these waterways slow and converge, the river canyons become wider and the slopes less steep, giving way to a landscape dominated by agricultural fields and orchards. As a result, Marion County is the largest agricultural producer of all Oregon's counties.

POPULATION

In 2007, the total population of Marion County was 311,070. This represents a 36.1% increase from 1990, when the population of the County numbered 228,483. Historically, a large percentage of the County's residents live in Salem and Keizer. A significant number of residents also live in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Population projections for the next 15 years show the County will experience continued growth. According to forecasts prepared for the County's Comprehensive Plan, Marion County is expected to grow by

15.6% to 359,581 by 2020. The largest growth increases are projected for Salem, Keizer, and Woodburn. In 2007, over half the County population resided in Salem and Keizer (53.1%).

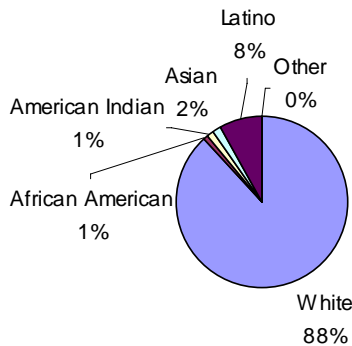
These projections have several implications for the future of parks and recreation in the planning area. First, as the population increases, there will be continued demand for park and recreation services, especially in unincorporated areas. There will also be increased pressure to serve the County's fast-growing smaller towns that may be providing limited recreation opportunities. There also will be continued opportunities to provide natural areas, trails, and regional parks for the County's urban residents. This may create opportunities for county-town partnerships. It can also be assumed that the competition for land will likely increase over the course of the planning horizon. The County will need to proactively plan for and creatively respond to all of these changes.

A G E

In 2006, the largest percentage of Marion County residents (35.7%) was between the ages of 20 and 44. An additional 29.1% were under the age of 19, reflecting the predominance of young families and children within the County. Since 1990, age demographics have not shifted substantially. The City of Salem continues to attract young adults to its colleges and to career opportunities in a variety of sectors.

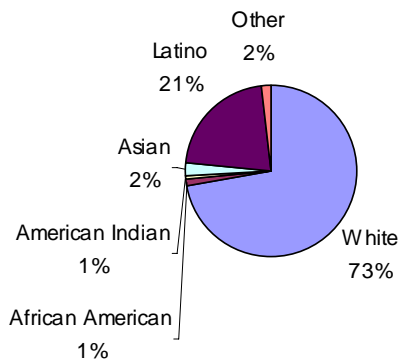
Addressing the needs of Marion County residents of all ages will be important. With a relatively large percentage of young families in the planning area, participation in family-oriented parks and recreation activities should remain high over the next 10 years. In addition, the large number of young adults ages 20 to 44 will likely create a high demand for active outdoor recreation. According to the recent SCORP trends analyses, the overall state population is aging, creating a need for more accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for older adults, including those with disabilities and health impairments.

Figure 1: Population by Race or Ethnicity, Marion County 1990



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2: Population by Race or Ethnicity, Marion County 2006



Source: U.S. Census

ETHNICITY & LANGUAGE

Like many Oregon counties, Marion County’s demographics are changing. Between 1990 and 2006, the County’s Latino population increased from 18,225 to 66,619, and became almost a quarter (21.4%) of the total population (Figures 1 and 2). In 2006, 72.3% of Marion County’s population was white and the remaining 6.3% was a combination of American Indian, African American, and Asian residents and other races.

Many Latino residents reside in Salem and Woodburn. In 2006, 12.1% of Salem’s population identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic, and in the 2000 Census, 50% of Woodburn residents identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic. The northernmost part of Marion County, where Woodburn, Hubbard, and Aurora are located, is underserved by County parks.

In 2006, Spanish was the language spoken at home by 18.4% of Marion County residents, and 22% of residents speak a language other than English at home. About 45,594 Marion County residents (14.6% of the total population) were born outside the United States.

These shifts have several implications for Marion County. As the County diversifies, parks and recreation opportunities will also need to change in order to meet the needs of a changing population. This could mean new types of facilities and amenities. Second, the County will also need to consider the demand for multilingual communications, such as signage, interpretive materials, and public information, especially as its facilities gain popularity with the region’s growing and diverse populations.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

In 2006, 68.8% of Marion County households could be described as family households. Just over 34% of these (34.3%) included children under 18, and 17.8% of households were headed by single parents. About 25% of households in 2006 contained residents living alone. The predominance of family household types suggests that interest in parks and recreation should remain strong in Marion County over the next

several decades. In addition, there may be opportunities to target services towards the significant population of residents living alone.

EMPLOYMENT

Marion County is home to Salem, the state capital, and to two colleges, Willamette University and Corban College, providing the County with substantial employment in education. The health and social service sectors also dominate the area (17.6%). In 2006, significant numbers of Marion County residents also worked in manufacturing (12%) and retail trade (13%). Statistics for Marion County employment by occupation have not changed significantly since 2000.

INCOME

The 2006 median household income in Marion County was \$45,270. This income is average compared to the state median, \$46,230, probably due to the inclusion of Salem. Marion County's median family income in 2006 was \$52,792, lower than the state median of \$55,923. In 2006, 10% of County residents and 27.3% of single parent families lived below the poverty level. The income of Salem residents raises the County median income. With their higher income levels, Salem residents may have more discretionary income for recreation.

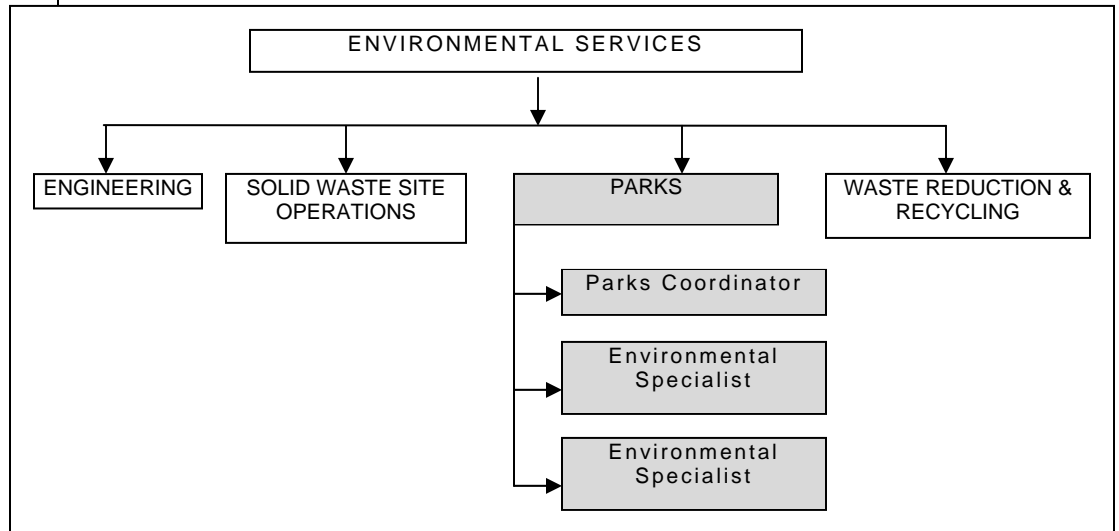
PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Marion County Parks is part of the Environmental Services Division, which is housed in the County's Public Works Department. The program's organizational structure is shown in Figure 3. The Marion County Parks program is managed by the Environmental Services Division Manager and currently has a staffing level of 1.5 FTE (full-time employees). One additional Environmental Specialist position is responsible for water quality programs.

One full-time staff member oversees management of all County parks, including maintenance and construction. This person also acts as a liaison with other regional agencies and oversees supplemental labor, such as work crews and community service workers in alternative sentencing programs.

One .5 FTE staff member oversees the County's natural parks. This staff member coordinates volunteers in maintenance and construction activities, serves as a liaison with other agencies, and works with schools that offer environmental education programs in Marion County's natural areas.

FIGURE 3: PROGRAM ORGANIZATION



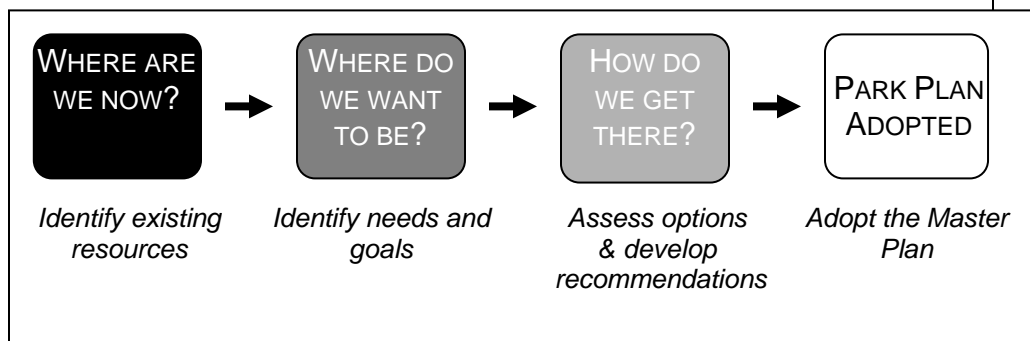
One additional full-time seasonal position is funded during the summer when parks receive the heaviest use and daily park maintenance is most needed.

PARK SYSTEM SUMMARY

Marion County currently provides its residents with 19 developed parks and three undeveloped park sites. Additionally, the County holds conservation easements at Keizer Rapids Park (119 acres) and Stayton Riverfront Park (51 acres). Altogether, these properties total 745.62 acres. A detailed parkland inventory is found in Appendix A, and Appendix B includes maps illustrating the locations of existing Marion County parks. Additionally, Table C-5 contains a listing of City, State, and Federal park lands located within the county.

The Marion County Parks provide a variety of recreation facilities for use by area residents. These include boating facilities, picnic areas, swimming areas, trails, historic sites, equestrian areas, fishing areas, and playgrounds.

FIGURE 4: PLANNING PROCESS



PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Parks Master Plan was designed to take into account the unique historical, demographic, and physical characteristics of Marion County, along with the recreation needs of the residents who live there. The planning process included four phases (Figure 4):

PHASE I: RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Phase I included an inventory and evaluation of Marion County’s existing parks and recreation facilities. This phase also included the mapping of resources and introductory workshops with staff and the Master Plan Advisory Committee to identify key planning issues. Phase I culminated in the Existing Conditions Summary Report. The existing Marion County owned parks and facility inventory can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B includes maps of Marion County’s existing system.

PHASE II: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Phase II involved significant outreach to the community through a series of public involvement efforts, including a survey, questionnaire, and focus groups. Through these forums, community members identified major park and recreation needs and priorities. Key public involvement findings, along with an analysis of parks and recreation facilities, were incorporated into the Community Needs Assessment report. The Community Needs Assessment can be found in Appendix C.

PHASE III: RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the Community Needs Assessment, a set of recommendations was developed to help Marion County realize its vision for parks and recreation. These actions were accompanied by capital

improvement and financing plans, which identified costs and funding sources for proposed park and recreation projects.

PHASE IV: PLAN ADOPTION

In Phase IV, all products from the plan development activities were compiled into the Marion County Parks Master Plan, which was presented to and reviewed by County staff and the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and the County Board of Commissioners. When adopted, the final document will guide parks and recreation service delivery in the planning area for the next 10 years.

FUTURE MASTER PLAN UPDATES

Recognizing that any plan needs periodic updating to keep pace with population growth and other changing circumstances, the intent is to make this plan a living document. It needs to remain consistent with the county's comprehensive land-use plan, but can still be treated as a flexible document that can change with the times. Periodic Plan reviews and updates fall within the Board of Commissioners' administrative authority, and are therefore not land use decisions.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized into five chapters and six appendices:

- *Chapter One: Introduction* provides a description of the planning area, details the planning process, and outlines the organization of this report.
- *Chapter Two: Benefits of Parks and Recreation* describes the many ways that parks and recreation enhance community health and wellness, economic development, and the natural environment.
- *Chapter Three: Planning Framework* introduces the vision and goals of the Marion County Parks and Natural Resources Program.
- *Chapter Four: Recommendations* presents capital and non-capital projects that will be initiated to help Marion County achieve its vision.
- *Chapter Five: Implementation* describes high-priority capital and non-capital project costs, projected maintenance and operations expenditures, and potential funding options associated with Plan implementation.

Appendices include:

- *Appendix A: Park and Recreation Inventory* contains an inventory of Marion County's parks and recreation facilities.

- *Appendix B: Park System Maps* shows the locations of Marion County parks and facilities.
- *Appendix C: Needs Assessment* includes the assessment of park and facility needs in Marion County that forms the basis for this plan, as well as a summary of parks property held by other providers within the county, including city, state and federal park lands available for county residents and others to use.
- *Appendix D: Capital & Non-Capital Projects* presents complete lists of capital and non-capital projects to be completed as a product of this plan, along with their priorities.
- *Appendix E: Design Guidelines* provides a set of design guidelines for each park type in the County's inventory.
- *Appendix F: Natural Heritage Parks Plan* presents a copy of the Natural Heritage Parks Plan report.



BENEFITS OF PARKS & RECREATION

Parks, open space and natural areas offer multiple benefits to communities, including strengthening social connections for individuals and groups, and providing places to enjoy nature and physical activity. Parks and recreation can also serve as important components of a local economy.

A majority of the Marion County residents who were surveyed (87%) indicated that opportunities to enjoy parks and recreational activities are important to the County's quality of life. Residents who responded to the Community Survey indicated the most important benefits of parks and recreation are in strengthening families and communities, providing access to nature, preserving natural areas, and providing opportunities for youth.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Parks and open spaces provide places for both active physical exercise, such as hiking and biking, as well as outdoor activities such as picnicking, fishing and wildlife watching. People of all ages, cultures and abilities benefit from access to nearby parks and open space. As little as ½ an hour of walking a day can make a substantial difference in a person's fitness and overall health.

Open spaces and natural areas offer Marion County's residents relief from stress, a connection to nature, and easily accessible places to relax and enjoy the company of friends and family. Parks provide places for community gatherings and educational pursuits as well, further strengthening community and individual health.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Parks, open space, and natural areas also serve multiple environmental functions. In Marion County, parkland and natural areas absorb and store stormwater, provide valuable wildlife habitat, and protect streams from stormwater runoff. Trees and vegetation along Marion County's rivers and streams also reduce water temperature, an essential element in protecting many aquatic species. Parks and natural areas also protect significant habitat such as riparian areas or endangered plant species.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Parks and recreation offer youth the opportunity for physical activity and outdoor experiences. Nationally, childhood trends point to a growing disconnection with nature. Nature deficit disorder is often attributed to too much screen time – TV, computers and video games. By increasing opportunities for youth to engage in outdoor activities - whether sports, environmental restoration or other activities - Marion County can offset this trend. Parks also provide opportunities for youth to volunteer in their communities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Parks and recreation provide multiple economic benefits to the Marion County area as well. Camping, fishing, boating, tourism and local events are a significant economic generator for the County. Recreational opportunities attract visitors and tourists who support local businesses that provide recreational goods and services. Nearby recreational opportunities help attract and retain businesses and residents.



PLANNING FRAMEWORK

County residents' vision and community goals are the guiding force for the Parks Master Plan. Over the course of a variety of outreach events with community members, as well as meetings with the Master Plan Advisory Committee and Marion County staff, a Vision and Community Goals framework was developed. This framework provides the foundation of the Master Plan, and its recommendations.

A VISION FOR MARION COUNTY PARKS

Through the plan's public involvement component, the following vision for parks and recreation in Marion County emerged:

The Marion County Parks Program will provide an interconnected, safe, accessible and well-maintained parks system that provides diverse recreation opportunities to residents and visitors, and preserves our County's bountiful natural and historical resources.

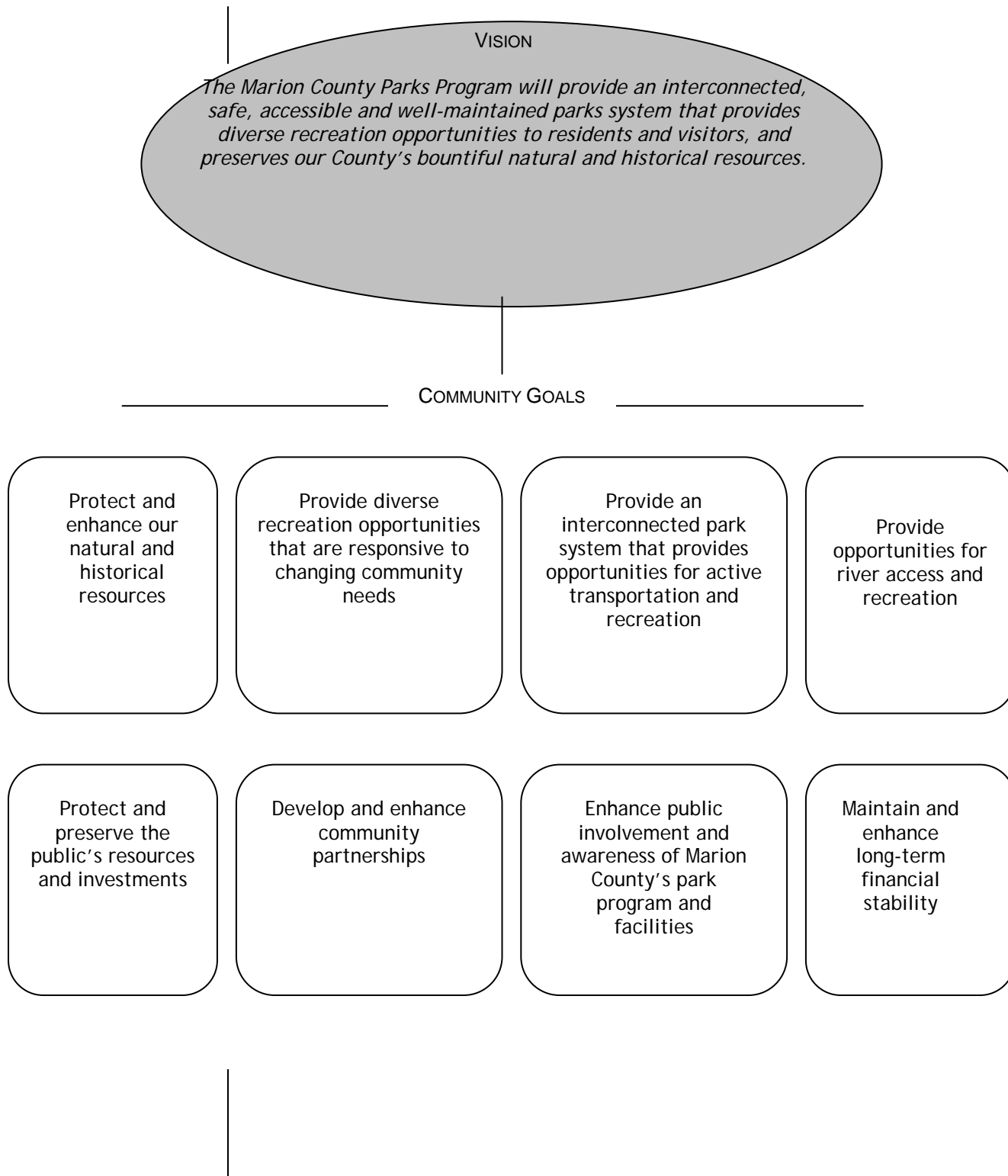
COMMUNITY GOALS

Eight goals were developed through the planning process to help the Marion County Parks Program achieve its vision and implement this Master Plan:

- *Protect and enhance our natural and historical resources.* The Marion County Parks Program will serve as a leader in the management and protection of natural and historical resources in the County. To further this goal, the County will incorporate sustainability measures in the planning, design, and maintenance of its park resources. In addition, the County will provide opportunities for visitors to develop connections with their natural and cultural heritage while preserving these resources for future generations.
- *Provide diverse recreation opportunities that are responsive to changing community needs.* The Marion County Parks Program will provide recreation opportunities that are geographically, physically, socially, and economically accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age, socio-economic background, ethnicity, or ability. The County will regularly consider and respond to emerging trends in recreation.
- *Provide an interconnected park system that provides opportunities for active transportation and recreation.* The County will partner with other agencies to connect parks and recreation opportunities with trails, bikeways and water trails that provide and encourage hiking, biking, and other active recreation opportunities.

- *Provide opportunities for river access and recreation.* Marion County's river resources, including the North Santiam and Willamette Rivers, are treasured focal points of the County park system. Access to river-related recreation, such as swimming, boating and fishing, has been emphasized in the past and continues to be important to residents. The County will build on its past efforts to acquire and provide access to park land along the river, provide river-related recreation, and protect and restore riparian habitats.
- *Protect and preserve the public's resources and investment.* The residents of Marion County have made a significant investment in parks and recreation facilities. The Marion County Parks Program will serve as a responsible steward of these resources by committing to an effective and regular maintenance program that protects existing investments and provides a safe environment for park users. The County will, to the maximum extent possible with available funding, revitalize parks and facilities to meet recreation needs, protect natural and cultural resources, and meet requirements, such as ADA accessibility. Where possible, maintenance efficiencies will be implemented.
- *Develop and enhance community partnerships.* The Marion County Parks Program will continue to cultivate strong, positive partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies and organizations to enhance efficiency and unite community efforts to acquire, develop, and maintain parks and recreation facilities, and to support the local economy and enhance tourism.
- *Enhance public involvement and awareness of Marion County Parks.* Marion County will involve the public in the planning, design, and management of its parks system. In addition, the County will inform its citizens about recreation opportunities and natural and cultural resources in Marion County parks.
- *Maintain and enhance long-term financial stability.* The Marion County Parks Program will explore a variety of long- and short-term funding strategies to ensure that funding for parks, facilities, and open space acquisition, development, and maintenance is stable and dependable for the long term. In particular, Marion County will actively explore revenue generating opportunities, entrepreneurial projects, sponsorships, and joint ventures.

FIGURE 5: PLANNING FRAMEWORK



RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter of the Master Plan outlines a series of recommendations for parks and recreation in Marion County. These recommendations are based on the findings of the Community Needs Assessment, and include new parks and facilities, improvements to existing parks and facilities, and system-wide improvements. All of the recommendations are designed to help the County achieve its goals and reach its vision:



Marion County Parks will provide an interconnected, safe, accessible and well-maintained parks system that provides diverse recreation opportunities to residents and visitors, and preserves our County's bountiful natural and historical resources.

This Plan recommends that the County focus on its strategic vision. As neighborhood parks are annexed into cities over time, these parks will be transferred to other jurisdictions, allowing the County to focus on what it does best – providing community parks, regional parks, and natural areas. Any funds resulting from these transfers could be used to acquire future regional parks or natural areas, and/or redesignate property already owned by the County to park use, to meet the needs of the County's growing population and the goals of this Plan.

The County is fortunate to have many significant parks in its inventory -- including parks along the Willamette River, North Santiam, and Little North Fork of the North Santiam Rivers; St. Louis Ponds; and natural areas, such as Aumsville Ponds, Bonesteele Park, and Eola Bend. Numerous recommendations have been made to improve these parks. These improvements would protect existing investments, preserve the natural environment, enhance recreation opportunities, and improve access for residents of all abilities. Master planning efforts are suggested for several of the County's parks, especially regional parks that serve both residents and visitors of the County. These studies will help the County re-conceptualize and modernize some of its important park assets. Significant improvements also are proposed at some of the County's most popular parks, such as Scotts Mills, North Fork, St. Louis Ponds and Spong's Landing - which will enhance their appeal and help these parks continue to meet residents' needs. In addition, new parks and other renovated sites will help redirect seasonal overuse at some popular sites.

Marion County should also continue working in partnership with other jurisdictions to expand park land for its residents. Examples of past efforts include Keizer Rapids Regional Park along the Willamette River, and Stayton Riverfront Park on the Santiam River, where the County actively participated in development and provided funding to purchase conservation easements. These regionally-significant facilities offer 119 and 51 acres, respectively, of natural and scenic areas and recreational opportunities for all Marion County residents to enjoy.

An important focus of this plan is to assist the County in enhancing park revenues as well as attracting tourists. Camping and group picnic areas are important sources of revenue for many county park systems. This Plan recommends further evaluating camping opportunities at existing parks to determine costs, benefits, and priorities for developing the required amenities. Reservable group picnic facilities can be developed at many parks and become a source of new revenue. This Plan also recommends evaluating the revenue-generating potential of future park sites prior to acquisition. To attract tourists, the County will continue to work with organizations that promote tourism and develop improvements that enhance the Willamette River bicycle route and water trail, North Mill Creek Trail, and North Santiam Canyon Trail. Improved trails, boating, fishing, camping, swimming, and other recreation opportunities will continue to position the County as a desirable vacation destination. In addition, the County will work to improve bicycle access to parks. Serving the needs of visitors that come from nearby areas will become increasingly important as higher gas prices encourage more people to vacation close to home.

In addition to these physical improvements, this Plan suggests other improvements that will enhance the County's service delivery. The most significant of these will be park maintenance that is adequate to preserve existing park resources, and which increases with additional park development. Park maintenance is discussed further in the next chapter. Another significant need is a public information effort to inform County residents about their park resources. This effort is key to building park stewardship now and in the future. Increasing volunteerism and partnerships with area recreation providers will be important to implementing this plan. In addition, a wide variety of funding methods should be considered. Park maintenance and funding methods are further discussed in the next chapter.

EXISTING PARKS

The following recommendations for Marion County's existing neighborhood, community and regional parks and natural areas are aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of parks through enhancing facilities and providing additional services where possible within staffing and budgetary constraints:

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Marion County has a number of neighborhood parks located in areas that lie outside the city of Salem but within Salem's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). These parks serve nearby neighborhoods and typically have play equipment, picnic tables, and open turf areas for unstructured play. It is recommended that the County transfer ownership of neighborhood parks to other appropriate jurisdictions as those areas are annexed into cities.

Transferring parks to cities will come about as development results in annexations within the urbanized areas between city limits and urban growth boundaries. Discussions with City of Salem officials indicates that, once a park is "enclaved," or surrounded by annexed properties, the city would expect to annex the park as well. Since land development is a function of demand for new housing and many other economic factors that are difficult or impossible to predict, there is no realistic way to forecast when parks in urbanizing areas may become city parks. This Plan assumes that the presence of a given park resource has more relevance to quality of life than whose jurisdiction it happens to fall under. Therefore, while the timing of future jurisdictional transfers would be nice to know, it is not seen as critical to the overall benefit that all parks provide to all residents.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Joryville Park

Joryville Park was donated to Marion County by a local family and is a much-loved resource for area equestrians. The 26.08-acre park has a gravel parking lot, gravel and paved pathways, multi-use trails (mountain biking, equestrian and hiking), a picnic area and an extensive mixed species forest that is predominantly Douglas fir. The park also has a number of footbridges that allow access over small streams that wind through the lower reaches of the park. A concrete historical marker reflects the origins and history of the park.



Recommendations for possible improvements to Joryville Park include:

- Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables and barbecues.
- Provide an accessible path of travel to the restrooms and picnic tables.
- Remove barriers that prevent access to the site, particularly at the entrance where speed bumps have been built up with asphalt.
- Provide rest stops along pathways to accommodate all users of the trails, hikers, bikers and equestrians.
- Develop a reserveable group picnic area with a shelter.
- Develop interpretive elements along the lower pathway.
- Consider developing a paved parking area with accessible parking.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Remove pit toilets.

Rogers Wayside

Rogers Wayside is a convenient stopping place for visitors to the Oregon Garden or for travelers along the Cascade Highway. More recently the 5.6-acre park has been used by area BMX riders and their families. The park has a wooden shelter near the entrance that houses several picnic tables. Restrooms were recently installed and are accessible via the parking lot and shelter.

Recommendations for improvements to Rogers Wayside include:

- Develop a new master plan for the site that includes:
 - Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities, including parking, restrooms and the group picnic area.
 - Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues.
 - Replace the group picnic area.
 - Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Remove invasive species.

Scotts Mills Park

Scotts Mills Park is a 10.64-acre park located on Butte Creek in Scotts Mills. The park is popular with local families for its warm water, shallow wading pool and natural rock waterfall, but is frequently vandalized. The park has play equipment and a picnic area that draws people to this park. A fish ladder enables salmon to migrate upstream.

Recommendations for possible improvements to Scotts Mills Park include:

- Consider developing a new master plan for the site that increases potential revenue generation, including:
 - Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities.
 - Consider providing a multi-use trail.
 - Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues.
 - Provide one or more group picnic areas with shelters.
 - Redevelop the play area and include accessible equipment and safety surfacing.

- Evaluate the potential of providing RV camping.
- Eliminate the pull-out lot near the park that enables people to access the park after-hours (a suspected source of vandalism to the park).
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Replace/provide signage indicating accessible parking areas.
- Replace parking lot surfacing.
- Consider providing a park host to deter vandalism and graffiti in the park.
- Involve residents in an active adopt-a-park program to prevent some of the damage resulting from vandalism and misuse of the park.
- Collaborate with a nearby school to program activities in the park.
- Coordinate with Scotts Mills Neighborhood Watch to deter misuse of the park.

NATURAL AREAS

Aumsville Ponds

Aumsville Ponds Park is located 1.5 miles southeast of Aumsville at the intersection of Bates and Bishop Roads. The 77.8-acre site, composed of wetlands and upland areas, is the headwaters for Porter Creek in the Mill Creek Watershed. A gravel path has been developed. Volunteer groups assist in controlling invasive vegetation and in creating and maintaining the trail that winds around the site. The park is home to numerous native species such as bald eagles, osprey, migratory waterfowl, black-tailed deer, and warm water fish. Aumsville Ponds Park is popular for picnicking, swimming, fishing, and nature watching.



Recommendations for improvements to Aumsville Ponds Park include:

- Provide an accessible surface for the all or part of the pathway by compacting existing gravel and topping it with compacted $\frac{1}{4}$ -minus gravel. Consider re-grading pathway for accessibility. This accessible portion could be considered for use as a multi-use trail.
- Complete the perimeter pathway.

- Add picnic tables, including accessible picnic tables along an accessible path of travel.
- When re-building the existing overlook/fishing pier, provide an accessible overlook with lowered railings and accessible pathway.
- Provide interpretive signage.
- Provide group picnic area.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.

Bonesteele Park

Bonesteele Park is located on Aumsville Highway just south of Oregon Highway 22. This 30.88-acre park consists of approximately 5 acres of mature Oregon Oak and Douglas Fir Forest, 6 acres of restored prairie habitat, and 19 acres of open grassland. The park has a perennial spring, a barked pathway, a stone circle and a boardwalk that allows passage through the wooded areas during wet weather. Access to the park is restricted by a gate. The park is managed as a natural area, and domestic animals such as dogs and horses are prohibited from the park.

Recommendations for improvements to Bonesteele Park include:

- Provide a small picnicking area.
- Provide interpretive signage.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Consider expanding the environmental education potential for the park by collaborating with area elementary, middle or high schools.
- Identify an Adopt-A-Park partner to manage the park in collaboration with the county.
- Redesign the parking lot to accommodate accessibility.

Eola Bend

Eola Bend is a 65.44 acre parcel along the Willamette River. The site is adjacent to Salem's Minto-Brown Island Park and is the site of an NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) project. Information about the project



is provided to visitors through a series of interpretive panels.

Suggestions for improvement to Eola Bend include:

- Top the existing 2” gravel path with ¼” minus compacted gravel to provide an accessible path surface.
- Provide an accessible path of travel to site amenities (interpretive panels, picnic tables, trash receptacles, etc.).
- Provide an accessible path throughout the site, linking all amenities.
- Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues where feasible.
- As access allows, provide one or more group picnic areas with shelters.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Add picnic tables and benches along paths through the site.
- Improve public access to the site when feasible.
- As access allows, consider providing an accessible fishing pier.

REGIONAL PARKS

Bear Creek Park

Bear Creek Park is a 16.38-acre site located on the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River. A trail system winds throughout the park and links scenic points and a deep pool that is popular for fishing, picnicking, and water activities. Several picnic areas are located throughout the park, and a new stairway leads to the flat and shady riverside beach. The park has a new fully accessible restroom and signed accessible parking.

Suggestions for improvement to Bear Creek Park include:

- Develop a new site master plan that includes:
 - Provide an accessible path throughout the site, linking all amenities as geography allows.
 - Provide a multi-use trail.
 - Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables and benches.
 - Consider one or more group picnic areas with shelters.
 - Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
 - Replace missing gravel in beach access stairway.
 - Provide a landing stone or step at bottom of stairway to reduce height of the first step.

- Identify accessible parking areas with paint and striping.
- Consider developing the park as a tent camping location with an on-site or shared park host.
- Consider a non-motorized boat ramp or carry-down path.
- Consider providing swimming opportunities.

Minto Park

This park has been developed with an extensive trail system that runs along the North Santiam River. Minto Park contains 71.72 acres of beautiful riverside forests and provides fishing, picnicking and opportunities to enjoy and appreciate nature.

Suggestions for improvements to Minto Park include:

- Develop a new master plan for the site that includes:
 - Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities as geography allows.
 - Provide a multi-use trail.
 - Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues on the upper part of the park.
 - Provide one or more group picnic areas with shelters.
 - Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
 - Provide accessible parking area with appropriate signage.
 - Remove or control poison oak in high traffic areas.
 - Re-grade entry road.
 - Consider developing RV and tent camping sites.
 - Consider adding a boat launch or carry down site.
 - If camping or group picnicking is provided in the future, consider adding a small play area.

Niagara Park

Niagara Park has a rich and interesting history. Located along the North Santiam River, it was a thriving town at the turn of the 20th century and had a hotel, saloon and mill. A dam built on the site was flooded repeatedly and finally abandoned. Remnants of the structure still remain and are visible on both sides of the river.



The 30.68 acre park site provides river access for fishing, hiking, and nature appreciation. It has picnic tables, a drinking fountain, stone overlook, and vault-style restroom.

Recommendations for improvements to Niagara Park include:

- Develop a new master plan for the site that includes:
 - Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities.
 - Provide a multi-use trail.
 - Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues.
 - Provide one or more group picnic areas with shelters, and consider designing one as a wedding site.
 - Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
 - Provide accessible parking area with appropriate signage.
 - Replace the fence.
 - Establish a formal overlook with interpretive signage at the bottom of the stairs as well as an accessible overlook with interpretive signage at the top of the stairs.
 - Provide an accessible nature-viewing path throughout the upper level of the site.
 - Add interpretive trail signage that informs about the site's natural features and vegetation.
 - If camping or group picnicking is added in the future, consider adding a small play area.
- Consider developing an Adopt-A-Park agreement with a local historical society in order to capitalize on the site's rich history.

North Fork Park

North Fork Park is 13.54 acres and is located along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River. The park attracts swimmers and picnickers during the warm summer months. Sandy beaches with picnic tables located right up to the water's edge and a half-hour drive from Salem combine to make North Fork Park one of the most popular parks in Marion County. A trail system loops throughout the park.

Recommendations for improvements to North Fork Park include:

- Develop a new master plan for the site that includes:

- Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities.
- Provide a multi-use trail.
- Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables and benches.
- Provide a group picnic area.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Provide an accessible parking area with appropriate signage.
- Add a restroom or portable toilet.
- Pave the parking lot to provide accessibility and accommodate high use. The use of permeable paving would allow drainage and reduce runoff.
- Provide an accessible trail to the river.
- Consider a non-motorized boat ramp or carry-down path.
- Consider future collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management to expand recreation opportunities.

Packsaddle Park

Packsaddle Park is a popular location for area fishing enthusiasts. Packsaddle Creek flows through the 5.6-acre site which includes a drift boat ramp, fishing, picnicking, and nature appreciation opportunities.



Suggestions for improvements to Packsaddle Park include:

- Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities.
- Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues.
- Consider a group picnic area.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Provide an accessible parking area with appropriate signage.
- Develop additional picnic areas along the river.
- Improve access to the river by widening the path and providing better surfacing.
- Consider providing an accessible fishing platform.
- Improve the boat ramp.

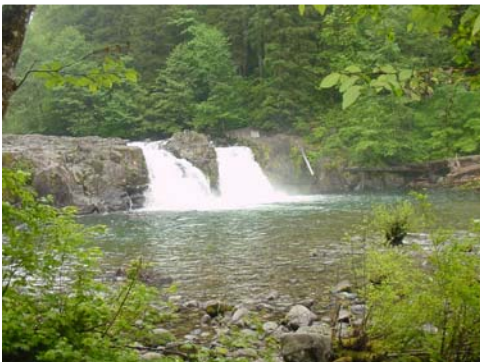
Saint Louis Ponds Park

Saint Louis Ponds Park is located near Gervais and hosts a variety of activities. The 20.03-acre park is a popular fishing area and has been designed to provide fishing access for people of varying abilities. The park is a cooperative effort of Marion County and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Construction of the accessible facilities in the park was a collaborative effort of local Boy Scout troops, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marion County and private businesses. The park has accessible restrooms and wide concrete walkways and specially designed docks and railings are accessible to wheelchair users. Small shelters provide some protection from weather. The park is also used by groups for dog training. The park has a host on-site who is an employee of ODFW. This is the only Marion County Park that has a resident park host.

Recommendations for improvements to St. Louis Ponds Park include:

- Provide additional accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Jointly plan with ODFW to provide an accessible nature trail or multi-use trail.
- Add interpretive signage.
- Provide one or more group picnic areas.
- Pave the entrance road and parking lot.
- Consider collaborating with area interest groups and ODFW to increase programming in the park for special events, such as fishing competitions, disc golf, dog agility or protection trials, etc.



Salmon Falls Park

Located in an outstanding scenic site, 22.55-acre Salmon Falls Park is heavily wooded. Here, the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River plunges spectacularly over a rock outcropping, falling 30 feet to a pool below. Steep pathways along the canyon wall lead to the pool. Picnicking, swimming, and nature appreciation are some of the favorite activities at this site.

Recommendations for improvements to Salmon Falls include:

- Develop a new master plan for the site that includes:
 - Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities.
 - Consider a multi-use trail.
 - Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables and benches.
 - Consider one or more group picnic areas with shelters.
 - Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
 - Provide accessible parking with appropriate signage.
 - Repair pathways and gate.
 - Remove barrier to restroom by adding accessible surfacing to meet restroom floor. (The lip is $>1/2''$.)
 - Develop an accessible overlook with interpretive information about the fish ladder, salmon life-cycles and history of the canyon.
 - Expand the trail system.
 - Consider developing the site as a walk-in tent camping facility.
 - Continue providing an on-site or shared host.
 - Consider paving the parking lot. The use of permeable paving would allow drainage and reduce runoff.

Spong's Landing Park

Spong's Landing is a 62.97-acre park located along the Willamette River just northwest of Keizer. The park has two reservable picnic shelters, a ball field, play equipment, horseshoe courts, and restroom facilities. Recent improvements include concrete picnic tables. The park has a small beach and is popular for swimming and fishing.

Recommendations for improvements to Spong's Landing Park include:

- Provide an accessible path of travel throughout the site, linking all amenities, including the beach, if possible.
- Provide a multi-use trail.
- Add group picnic areas with shelters.
- Provide new consistent signage to enhance image.
- Provide permanent accessible restroom facilities.
- Consider a disc golf course.
- Replace stairs to beach area.

- Consider adding RV, boat-in, and/or tent camping.

UNDEVELOPED PROPERTIES

The following are recommendations for undeveloped properties in Marion County:

- **Cain Property:** This 10.5 acre property does not have sufficient access to be suitable for park development. It is recommended that the County sell this property and utilize these funds to obtain land that is more suitable for park development.
- **Wiseman Island:** This 97.9 acre property is located along the North Santiam River. Due to flooding and high associated costs of providing public access, park development does not seem feasible at this time. Due to its significance as an environmental resource, the County should maintain this property as a nature preserve. Since the ODFW owns adjacent properties, the County could consider selling or trading this property to the ODFW, which may be better positioned to provide public access and management.

PROPOSED PARKS

The following are recommendations for proposed parks in Marion County.

- The County should evaluate existing County properties for their potential to serve park land needs rather than acquiring additional properties. An example is the old Macleay Landfill site of approximately 105 developable acres, offering expansive views and easy access.
- In order to continue to provide the same level of service into the future to account for population growth, the County should consider eventually adding approximately 134 additional acres of park land to their inventory, as appropriate opportunities present themselves.
- The County should not acquire more neighborhood parks. The County should transfer ownership of its existing neighborhood parks (via sale, trade or other means) to the appropriate local agency as those areas are annexed into their respective cities.
- The County should not add community parks to its inventory, unless the parks represent a unique opportunity.
- The County should consider acquiring new regional parks. Priorities include:
 - Southwestern and northwestern sections of the County along the Willamette River.

- Park land that strengthens the County’s already significant presence in the North Santiam River and Little North Santiam River areas.
- Parks that connect to regional trails and tour route projects such as the North Mill Creek Trail proposal, the North Santiam Canyon Trail project, and the Silver Falls Tour Route.
- Parks that preserve historical and cultural resources.
- Parks that would support needed recreation activities, such as camping, swimming, boating, and fishing.
- Parks that could generate revenue, such as opportunities for OHV parks, or tent or RV camping.
- Based on the County’s Comprehensive Plan policies and the Natural Heritage Parks Plan, the County should continue to acquire, preserve and restore natural areas.



PROPOSED RECREATION FACILITIES

New recreation facilities form a central component of the Plan as well. Facility recommendations are outlined below.

BOATING FACILITIES

The County should look for opportunities to increase boating access to serve both motorized and non-motorized boaters on its

most popular waters along the Willamette River Water Trail and the North Santiam River. The County should also explore expanding non-motorized boating opportunities along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam where feasible. Marion County should continue to partner with other agencies, such as the City of Keizer, in promoting boating opportunities whenever possible. In the future, the County should investigate opportunities to expand motorized and non-motorized boating along other waterways. Specific projects could include:

- Consider providing a non-motorized boat ramp or carry-down path at Spong’s Landing (Willamette River Water Trail).
- Consider development of a non-motorized boat launch west of Stayton (North Santiam).
- Consider developing a carry-down path at Minto Park (North Santiam).

- Consider providing a non-motorized boat ramp or carry-down path at regional parks along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam when new master plans are developed.
- Consider expanding non-motorized boat access along the Pudding River at Aurora.

CAMPING FACILITIES

Marion County should conduct a camping feasibility study to determine whether camping opportunities can be developed and operated without additional general fund subsidy. The study should analyze a variety of camping services, such as tent camping, dispersed camping, group camping, cabin camping and RV camping. Camping facilities would include ADA-accessible facilities, and consider the possibility of serving a wide variety of users, including those arriving by boat, bike, or on foot. Other amenities, such as wireless internet service, may be considered.

Marion County should determine whether future camping opportunities would break even or generate revenue. For example, neighboring Linn County provides 411 campsites which operate at about 65% of capacity in the peak summer season. These sites generated approximately \$312,000 in 2006. Additional operations costs, beyond normal park maintenance, required to operate these camping sites cannot be broken out from available figures.

Providing camping at Scotts Mills and at existing regional parks, including Bear Creek, Minto, Niagara, Salmon Falls, and Spong's Landing should be considered. The County is limited by campfire restrictions in the Santiam Canyon as well as by lack of water and electricity in some locations. Locating campgrounds along proposed regional trails, such as the North Santiam Canyon project and the North Mill Creek Trail (Woodburn to the Willamette River via Aurora), the Willamette River Water Trail, and tour routes, such as the Silver Falls Tour Route, would be a further asset. RV parks located close to I-5 could have significant revenue generating ability. Because of the potential for revenue generation, parks that could accommodate camping should be a high priority for future regional parkland acquisitions. The County could consider potential partnerships with other agencies on these ventures.

PICNIC/GROUP PICNIC

Reservable group picnic sites offer a potential source of revenue as well as an important recreation opportunity. Such sites in combination with other amenities, such as playgrounds, informal sports fields, water

recreation opportunities, hiking, camping, etc., increases their appeal. The County should provide reservable group picnicking areas at all community parks and regional parks. In addition, group picnic areas should be provided at natural area parks when appropriate.

- Provide reservable group picnicking areas at all existing and future community and regional parks.
- Provide group picnic areas at natural areas when appropriate.

SWIMMING AREAS

With several major waterways in the County, there are significant opportunities for the County to develop additional swimming areas. To provide alternatives to North Fork Park, the County should implement significant site improvements at other Santiam River parks and publicize swimming opportunities at these sites. This includes at least one site along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River, such as at Bear Creek Park. When acquiring future regional parkland, sites that could provide additional swimming opportunities should be high priority.

- Develop additional swimming opportunities along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River.

TRAILS

For future development and where feasible, the Marion County Parks program should work with County transportation staff to identify gaps in bicycle lanes along routes from population areas to existing or future County parks. Routes that connect to existing or future regional trails, water trails, scenic auto routes or tour routes should also be a priority. Some of these areas include: areas along the Willamette River, areas along the proposed North Mill Creek Trail, and areas along the North Santiam Canyon Trail.

The County should continue to collaborate with other agencies to develop the North Mill Creek Trail, a 15-mile multi-use trail that will connect Woodburn's Mill Creek Greenway with the Willamette River via Aurora. In addition, the County should continue to collaborate with other agencies to develop the North Santiam Canyon Trail along Highway 22 between Lyons and Idanha.

The County should provide multi-use trails in existing and future community parks and natural areas when appropriate. In addition, the



County should provide multi-use trails in existing and future regional parks where possible. When possible, loop trails should be provided. Of the County's existing parks, a multi-use trail could be added to Scotts Mills, Aumsville Ponds, Bear Creek, Minto, Niagara, North Fork, St. Louis Ponds, Salmon Falls, and Spong's Landing.

Pedestrian trails are generally soft-surfaced, although a permeable or impermeable hard surface may be provided for ADA accessibility. Pedestrian trails should be provided in community parks, and in existing and future natural areas and regional parks when feasible. Most of these County parks currently have a pedestrian trail system or development of a multi-use trail is recommended in this Plan. New park master plans are recommended for a number of regional parks. When these master plans are developed, opportunities to expand the trail system while preserving natural resources should be further evaluated. In addition, further opportunities for ADA accessible trails should be explored in these master plans.

Equestrian trails for horseback riding can be provided independently or along side multi-use and regional trails. The County should evaluate additional opportunities to provide equestrian trails in conjunction with future multi-use or regional trails as well as in future regional parks.

Recommended capital projects include:

- Collaborate to develop the North Mill Creek Trail.
- Continue collaborating to develop the North Santiam Canyon Trail.

FISHING AREAS

Fishing is a popular recreation activity in Marion County and a high priority to residents. To meet ADA guidelines, Marion County should provide at least one ADA accessible fishing area in its park system. Since the fishing area at St. Louis Ponds is accessible, this guideline has been met. However, to provide a high standard of service and universal access to diverse recreation experiences, the County could aspire to provide one accessible fishing area per major water body. This would include providing an accessible fishing area on the North Santiam and/or Little North Santiam Rivers, possibly at Packsaddle; and an accessible fishing area on the Willamette River, at Eola Bend, Keizer Rapids, or at a future site. In addition, improvements are needed to the fishing pier at Aumsville Ponds to make it fully accessible. Additional accessible fishing opportunities could be provided if Marion County acquires parkland along other water bodies in the future.

- Develop ADA accessible fishing area on the North Santiam or Little North Fork of the North Santiam Rivers.
- Develop ADA accessible fishing area on the Willamette River.

OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES

- **BMX Facilities:** There are no suitable locations for additional BMX facilities in existing community parks or in regional parks. However, BMX facilities provide positive activities for youth, and could be considered in future regional parks if compatible with a park's character and other proposed uses.
- **Dog Parks:** Dog walking and dog parks are extremely popular among Marion County residents. The County should consider including these in community or regional parks. In addition, an off-leash dog trail could be considered at one of the regional parks. Dog parks should be considered in future regional parks if compatible with park character and other proposed uses.
- **Disc Golf:** The County should consider including a disc golf course in community or regional parks. Of the County's existing parks, a disc golf course could be added at Spong's Landing. Disc golf courses should be considered in future regional parks if compatible with park character and other proposed uses.
- **Playgrounds:** Playgrounds should be provided in neighborhood parks, and in community and regional parks, if compatible with park character and other proposed uses. Marion County should consider providing a play area in Parkdale Park. In regional parks, play areas could be provided in parks that support active recreation or as a campground amenity. Of the existing regional parks, small play areas could be considered for Minto and Niagara as part of future park master plans if camping or major day use areas are included. Play areas could also be considered in future regional parks.
- **Informal Sports Fields:** Marion County should provide informal sports fields at neighborhood parks, and at community and regional parks, if compatible with park character and other proposed uses. If the County retains its neighborhood parks, the County should provide an informal sports field at Parkdale. In addition, an informal sports field could be considered for Scotts Mill, depending on its future master plan and ownership. Informal sports fields do not appear to be appropriate at other existing regional parks, in addition to the play fields provided at Spong's Landing. The County should provide informal sports fields in new regional parks where feasible. Providing sports fields in conjunction with other recreation amenities, such as

camping and group picnic sites, would further increase the value of regional parks.

- **Sports Courts:** Sports courts would also be suitable in future regional parks if compatible with park character and other proposed uses.
- **Skate Park:** Marion County does not have a skate park. Both downtown Salem and Keizer have skate parks. Skate parks are very popular with youth and could be considered for inclusion in future regional parks if compatible with park character and other proposed uses.
- **OHV Facility:** If a suitable site becomes available and Marion County elects to develop an OHV facility, the County should first conduct a financial feasibility analysis to determine the cost/benefits.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This Plan makes several additional recommendations designed to improve the Marion County parks and recreation system as a whole. These recommendations include planning and design, financing, partnerships, and other non-capital improvements. Finally, recommendations for public information are presented.

PLANNING AND DESIGN

In order to support the provision of parks and recreation facilities, it is recommended that the County:

- Complete the park boundary survey.
- Investigate opportunities to expand motorized and non-motorized boating along other County waterways.
- Work with County transportation to provide on-road bike lanes to parks, where feasible.
- Evaluate opportunities to expand the pedestrian trail system in existing parks when new master plans are developed.
- Evaluate opportunities to provide equestrian trails in conjunction with future multi-use or regional trails as well as in future regional parks.
- Develop an ADA strategic plan, including an updated set of park system design guidelines that comply with current ADA standards.
- Develop a Maintenance/Vegetation Management Plan.
- Develop a study of significant natural and historic resources in the County.
- Support local and regional tourism by providing attractive sites along scenic byways, river trails, etc.

FINANCING

The following recommendations pertain to the County's funding mechanisms:

- Establish an opportunity fund for land acquisition.
- Maximize donations, grants, and partnerships to increase the resources available for parks and recreation.
- Encourage donations of land, facilities, equipment, services, and gifts that are consistent with goals and objectives of this Plan and benefit the larger community.
- Consider selling or trading lands that are not appropriate for parks or are not compatible with the County's strategic focus.
- Add revenue-generating facilities to parks, where appropriate.
- Consider a wide variety of funding and financing mechanisms to increase the financial viability of Marion County's park system, such as formation of a park foundation, tax initiatives, revenue generating opportunities, etc.
- Re-evaluate annually the priority and timeline for the implementation of projects within the park system as part of the development of the annual parks and recreation capital improvement budget.

PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration among service providers is critical in meeting community needs for parks, facilities, and services. Specific recommendations for the County include:

- Facilitate collaboration among area recreation providers, including the BLM, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, county towns and cities, and other public and private agencies to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, open space, and recreation facilities and maximize efficiency.
- Continue to collaborate with organizations promoting tourism.
- Partner with high schools, Chemeketa Community College, universities, and non-profit organizations to expand programs, improve natural areas, and implement physical improvements.

OTHER NON-CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

This Plan also includes the following recommendations for programming and personnel:

- Develop new programs around special events and the environment, including programs for families and youth.
- Increase parks programming in conjunction with other agencies and groups to showcase specific aspects of parks, such as history at Niagara, restoration at Bonesteele and Aumsville Ponds, and multi-agency and volunteer collaboration at Eola Bend Park.
- Expand volunteer opportunities.
- Hire adequate park staff to maintain existing and future parks, and to increase volunteerism and grant writing.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Develop a multifaceted public outreach effort to inform residents about the opportunities available at existing County parks that:
 - Provides information in Spanish to reach diverse residents.
 - Works with regional tourism and trails projects to feature County parks on tour routes and trails.
 - Provides outreach to the aging population and youth.
 - Increases the winter use of outdoor recreation facilities.
 - Builds the parks and recreation volunteer base.
 - Publicizes the availability of facility rentals for groups, families, and businesses to support revenue goals.
 - Works with the health community to publicize the health benefits of parks and recreation as well as Marion County recreation resources.
- Utilize a variety of media, such as web-based information, newspaper articles, brochures and other media.
- Develop localized surveys specific to each park, to determine priorities for features and amenities, such as equipment, hours open, and other factors important to park users.
- Work with the Parks Commission to develop individual master plans for a number of county parks. This process could include meetings with other parks commissions, neighborhood associations, and other organizations.
- Install way-finding signage to direct users to park locations from routes of travel.

IMPLEMENTATION

The development of this Master Plan involved a detailed evaluation of Marion County's park system and an assessment of the County's park and recreation needs. The master plan process also included a thorough review of the County's approach to financing parks operations and park improvements. This review included current and historic practices. Based on current sources of capital and operating funds, meeting all of the needs identified in this plan will take a significant and long-term commitment for the County and its residents.



Despite a very limited budget for parks, the County has many elements in place needed to provide an excellent park system to all its residents. Given that significantly more resources will be very difficult to allocate in the face of many other needs, the goal is to meet as many current and future needs identified in this plan as practicable.

Following a brief summary of Marion County's financial situation, this chapter identifies priority projects, their cost, and options that the County can consider to funding these projects. Additional funding sources are identified that can help the County reach beyond its existing resources to develop and maintain an enhanced park system that serves the recreation needs of Marion County residents and visitors. Although not all of these options may be considered desirable at present, some may be more desirable in the future. A conservative approach to funding is presented in keeping with the direction provided by staff. In addition, an analysis of costs for maintaining and operating the park system, including proposed improvements, is presented.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

In order to understand how Marion County will pay for park system improvements recommended in this plan, it is important to review recent revenues and expenditures. By using the actual figures (instead of budgeted numbers which are subject to change during the year) the most accurate picture of the overall financial situation of County parks can be created. This analysis also considers operating funding and expenditures separately from one-time capital dollars. In the analysis, two large infusions of capital funding that passed through the parks budget were set aside to more accurately present the funding picture for the last five years.

CURRENT RESOURCES

Marion County utilizes a number of different resources to fund county park operations and capital (Table 1). The largest portion of the County Parks revenue on average has been intergovernmental transfers from the State of Oregon related to the recreational vehicle license fees. These fees represent about 56% of the parks budget, or about \$175,000 annually over the last five years.

Other major revenue sources include System Development Charges (SDC's) and the sale of wood and grass seed. However, wood and grass seed sales have become less significant in the most recent years. Marion County general funds have been added to the parks budget in the past for one-time projects, but in recent years a small, regular contribution has been made.

Over the most recent five years (2002-2007), parks revenue from all sources averages nearly \$313,000. Table 1 shows the average budget percentage derived from each source over the past five years.

TABLE 1: OPERATING REVENUES – 5-YEAR AVERAGE

Revenue Type	5-Year Average Percent	5-Year Average Amount
State Funding	56%	\$175,748
Wood and Grass Seed Sales	16%	\$50,561
System Development Charges	13%	\$39,871
MC General Fund	4%	\$13,922
Federal Funding	3%	\$10,796
All Other Revenues	8%	\$22,464
Total	100%	\$313,362

Table 2 lists revenues that contributed to Marion County’s parks and recreation budget in 2006-07. The Marion County budget figures for total resources also include carried over working capital that is not factored into the totals presented here.

TABLE 2: REVENUES 2006-2007

	Amount	Percent
State Funding	\$191,721	72%
General Fund	\$30,607	12%
System Development Charges	\$30,251	11%
Surplus Property Sales	\$2,532	1%
Internal Transfers	\$0	0%
Wood and Grass Seed Sales	\$38	0%
All Other Revenues	\$9,750	4%
Total	\$264,899	100.0%

CURRENT EXPENDITURES

During the five year period examined, the total requirements for the Marion County Parks program varied from a base level of less than \$300,000 up to nearly one million dollars. The fluctuation was largely due to acquisition of major conservation easements for Stayton Riverfront Park and Keizer Rapids Park.

In addition to the ongoing operations expenses of personnel, materials and contracted services, Marion County has invested periodically in capital improvements totaling \$666,710 over the most recent five years. Capital expenditures spent directly on Marion County Parks total approximately \$175,000 over the past five years, an average of \$44,000 per year. The percent of funding allocated to personnel, materials and services and capital improvements has varied, but on average these expenditures break down as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

Expenditure Category	5-Year Average
Personnel	43%
Materials and Services	35%
Capital	16%
Special Payments and Administrative Charges	6%
Total	100%

PROJECT PRIORITIES

The Master Plan includes recommendations for numerous capital and non-capital projects that will further enhance the value and quality of Marion County's parks and recreation opportunities. However, the total cost of all projects exceeds the County's anticipated revenues based on its current funding levels. In order to move forward with the recommendations outlined in this Plan, the projects were prioritized based on the following criteria:

- *Meets Master Plan needs:* Projects should be prioritized based on their ability to meet park and facility needs as identified in this Plan (i.e., their ability to fill existing geographic gaps or satisfy relevant ADA or design guidelines).
- *Expands recreation opportunities:* Priority should also be determined based on the projects' capacity to expand the County's recreation opportunities (i.e., their ability to accommodate new activities in high demand or leverage potential for grant funding).
- *Improves existing recreation resources:* Priority should be determined based on the ability of proposed projects to maintain or enhance the condition of existing County resources, or to generate additional revenue.
- *Enhances partnerships:* Projects should be prioritized on their capacity to create or strengthen existing partnerships (i.e., their ability to forge cost-sharing, joint development, or programmatic collaborations).
- *Strengthens the community:* Lastly, proposed projects should be prioritized based on their ability to serve a diverse cross-section of the population, or those that have potential for positive economic impact on Marion County residents.

Based on these criteria, projects were assigned a priority of I through III:

- *Priority I:* highest priority
- *Priority II:* medium priority

- *Priority III: low priority*

The projects assigned a high priority should be implemented as soon as it is feasible, and as funding or other opportunities become available. Some projects will be phased over several years to make implementation more practical. This will allow important projects to move forward while recognizing the limitations of funding and staff time. A list of all capital and non-capital projects, along with their priority ranking, is included in Appendix D. If special opportunities arise, such as donations, earmarked funds, or partnership opportunities, Priority II and III projects should be considered for more immediate implementation. The remainder of this discussion will address the implementation of the Priority I projects.

COST ASSUMPTIONS

In order to develop costs for capital and non-capital projects, several assumptions regarding project costs were made. These cost assumptions were based on actual costs of recent acquisitions and park development projects, as well as costs provided by comparable agencies. Costs presented here are planning level, or budgetary costs that represent a reasonable cost to cover construction and related services if the projects were under contract today. The final products and materials used in the projects, as well as changes in the cost of construction, professional services and inflation will affect the actual cost of each project.

TABLE 4: PRIORITY I CAPITAL PROJECTS

Park	Description	Planning Cost
All Sites	Signage improvements, assuming one entry sign, two interpretive signs and two directional signs on average for each of 14 park sites	\$225,000
Joryville	Reservable picnic shelter	\$250,000
Aumsville Ponds	Complete perimeter pathway	\$54,000
Minto Park	Site master plan/Camping Study	\$60,000
Niagara Park	Site master plan/Camping Study	\$60,000
North Fork	Site master plan	\$50,000
St. Louis Ponds	Paving: entrance road and parking lot	\$230,000
Spong's Landing	One additional group picnic shelter	\$250,000
	Permanent accessible restroom facility	\$300,000
Total Capital Projects		\$1,479,000

PROJECTED CAPITAL PROJECT COSTS

Using the assumptions above, projected planning level costs for Priority I capital projects were developed (Table 4).

In addition to the above projects, acquisition of new park land to meet future needs in the community is a Priority I project. The specific quantity of land to be purchased will depend on the available resources and the purchase opportunities that arise. Following acquisition, sites should be master planned and then developed according to community needs and the opportunities provided by the site size, location or features. Table 5 identifies these projects on a per-acre cost basis.

TABLE 5: NEW PARK LAND PLANNING COSTS

New Park Land	Description	Per Unit Planning Cost
Park Land Acquisition	Budget to acquire land as opportunities arise	\$20,000/acre
Master Planning for New Park Sites	Typical Park Master Plan Cost	\$60,000/site
New Park Development	Cost to develop park sites will vary greatly based on facilities to be included	NIC

During the planning process, an eventual need for approximately 134 new acres of park land was identified to be acquired by the County in order to maintain the current level of service due to population growth by the year 2020. At \$20,000/acre, 134 new acres totals approximately \$2.68 million for acquisition. It is acknowledged that acquiring large portions of this acreage is not feasible at this time, but the County should watch for opportunities. In addition, the County should not overlook other means to acquire park land, such as transferring other underused County properties to County Parks for park development, such as the Macleay property, which is 105 acres.

NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

In addition to capital projects, there are a number of other, non-capital, Priority I recommendations. Table 6 identifies various planning and support projects that are needed to achieve the goals of this plan. No costs are shown for projects which are largely reliant on current staff resources.

TABLE 6: PRIORITY I NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

Non-Capital Project	Description	Planning Cost
North Santiam Canyon Trail	Continue collaboration on the development of North Santiam Canyon Trail alternative transportation link	NIC
Cain Property	Sell undeveloped site	NIC
ADA Strategic Plan	Conduct an Americans with Disabilities Act strategic transition plan to move toward a more universally accessible park experience	\$15,000
Public Outreach Campaign	Develop materials and messages to inform and build support with voters for the park system	\$45,000
Park Boundary Study	Verify park boundaries	\$575,000
Non-Capital Project Costs		\$635,000

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS COSTS

The amount of operating dollars allocated to park maintenance is especially important to the implementation of this Master Plan. As the use of Marion County parks increases and new facilities are developed, maintenance funding should be expanded to protect the current and future capital investment in park facilities. By removing the capital expenditures (and the special payments) from the total parks budget, the amount currently spent on maintenance and operations in the park system can be derived. Over the five year period this amount averaged \$242,500, although in the most recent year this amount was slightly lower at \$240,759. This funding supports one full time park maintenance employee, one supporting position and contract services to maintain existing park sites in a widely dispersed park system. Assuming that the natural areas and undeveloped parks are receiving very little regular maintenance, the County's current cost per acre maintenance expenditure based on the most recent year is \$927 per developed park acre.

Table 7 describes the County's current cost per acre for park maintenance and presents a proposed level for future maintenance for two categories of parkland: 1) developed park acres and 2) undeveloped parks and natural areas.

TABLE 7: CURRENT & PROPOSED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS

	Developed Parks	Undeveloped Parks/ Natural Areas
2007 Expenditure	\$927/acre	\$0/acre
Proposed Expenditure	\$1,500/acre	\$250/acre

The proposed maintenance expenditure per acre is suggested as a budget figure for both existing and any future developed properties to cover a minimal level of maintenance to protect park assets. These expenditures are a substantial increase from the County's current maintenance budget, but these levels are conservative when compared to other agency's expenditures for natural resource based parks. Similarly, in undeveloped and natural areas in Marion County's park system, a new budget figure is proposed for regular maintenance of these areas. The recommended \$250 per acre is 50% lower than a minimal level of maintenance recommended for basic hazard removal in natural areas (\$500 per acre). Again, this recommendation is higher than Marion County's existing level of maintenance. If more active management or restoration of these natural areas is pursued in the future, the per acre maintenance budget would need to be increased.

Assuming the proposed figures described above, the impact to the total maintenance budget, based solely on existing acreage, is calculated in Table 8.

TABLE 8: PROPOSED ANNUAL
MAINTENANCE COSTS

Parks and Facilities	Proposed Cost/unit	Existing System	
		Acres	Cost
Developed Parks	\$1,500/acre	303	\$454,500
Undeveloped Parks/ Natural Areas	\$250/acre	273	\$68,250
Total		615	\$522,750

The total of \$522,750 is slightly more than double the current allocation of \$240,000 to park maintenance. Much of this additional funding could be used to add maintenance staff, either parks staff or contracted labor, to adequately maintain the large and widely spread park parcels. Staff could also expand the County's volunteer program. Currently, with only one FTE position in County Parks responsible for maintenance, this lone position is responsible for just under 600 acres of park land spread across the County.

If this funding level is adopted, Marion County's maintenance budget will continue to be substantially lower than average. Therefore, it is recommended that this allocation be evaluated regularly for opportunities for additional increases. It will also be important to add to the

maintenance budget to accommodate maintenance to new park land as it is added to the system based on the formula above.

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPTIONS

The total identified cost of Priority I capital and non-capital projects is about \$2.1 million. In addition to these costs, Marion County Parks should prepare for increased operating costs. Maintaining or increasing General Fund allocations may be challenging given the current economic environment. Financing this entire package of projects is not immediately feasible, and the County has elected to pursue a conservative approach to financing.

Developing new funding sources also would allow Marion County to increase the funding level for park operations, and allow the County to invest in continued development of its parks and recreation system. Listed below are a number of opportunities which have the potential to generate additional resources. These methods are typical of those used by other jurisdictions to help fund their parks programs, and may not necessarily all be desirable for Marion County; however they are mentioned here in order to show the range of options available.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

Marion County has collected System Development Charges (SDCs) for rural parks since adopting resolution 98-40R in 1998. Analysis of the adopted resolution shows that the established level of charges does not reach the current cost of developing new rural park facilities, particularly the acquisition of land. The fee calculation has an annual adjustment for inflation, but the original fee was set too low to cover the actual cost impact of new development. The existing 2008 parks SDC is \$236 per single family unit, generating around \$40,000 annually when development activity is normal. Revisiting the SDC in light of projects and costs identified in this plan could justify an increase if and when economic conditions warrant its consideration. Parks SDCs for new development in other Oregon jurisdictions average well above \$1,000 per single family unit.

PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the Priority 1 projects would lend themselves to participation by multiple jurisdictions. Marion County should pursue partnerships to implement projects whenever these projects have multiple stakeholders. Specific partnerships identified in the planning process include:

- County programs, such as County Transportation, to develop additional bike lanes to park sites, and other programs that may have surplus property to transfer to parks;
- Other government entities to fill in gaps in boating opportunities;
- Local tourism efforts to develop regional trails and publicize recreation opportunities;
- Recreation providers to facilitate collaboration and provide programming locations; and
- Schools and non-profit organizations to provide volunteers and programs.

GRANTS

In the future, identified capital projects, especially any fishing and boating facilities, are well positioned to receive grant funding. However, grants will not support operations, and it will be important to evaluate the County's ability to maintain any new facilities that are constructed under grant-funded programs. One exception is Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's grant program for OHV facilities, which does provide funding for operations. The County could pursue new grant sources, such as federal transportation funds for trails. In addition, with limited staff time, it is uncertain how much additional grant funding can be pursued. The County may need to add staff, tap personnel from other County departments, or recruit volunteers to further expand this funding source. The County should also consider establishing a grant matching fund for small projects that could carry over from year to year. These funds could be used to match funding that often becomes available at the end of a granting cycle.

PARK REVENUES

As additional projects are considered, net revenue generation should be weighed in both the decision to implement projects and in the design programming of specific projects. Additional opportunities to generate revenue should be given high priority. This plan recommends that revenue producing facilities be added, such as additional group picnic areas. Camping also could be added if this would be a net gain to the park system financially once additional maintenance and security costs are taken into account.

USER FEES

In addition to establishing reservation fees in Marion County parks, there is potential for generating other new revenue from user fees. These could include a day-use park fee or a parking fee for sites that receive large numbers of daily visitors or for rental of facilities for events. Potential resistance to new fees might be overcome by committing the resources generated from user fees to the operation and enhancement of these very popular sites. New fees also could include fees for specific users, such as campers. The County should also periodically evaluate all user fees to ensure that they are in keeping with current market rates. The cost of collection of user fees must be considered when evaluating the potential benefit of these fees. In addition, a good public information program that explains the need for these fees should be implemented.

DONATIONS

In addition to donations from users of County facilities, Marion County should actively pursue donations from businesses and landowners who benefit from the positive values of parks and recreation in the area. Donations can be monetary or in-kind services cultivated through community partnerships. This may require the formation of a park and recreation foundation. When developing new parks and facilities, donations of services, materials and labor is a well established way to lower costs. Wills and bequests as well as memorial donations, such as a memorial bench program, are also common. In the past, Marion County as well as other agencies have benefited from land donations. Marion County should carefully track and report the percentage of revenues derived from donations, and increase annual donations received.

CAPITAL BOND

The most common way for public agencies to raise larger amounts of necessary capital funding is through the authorization of general obligation bonds. With voter approval, Marion County could sell bonds to raise the one-time capital investment needed to enhance the park system. The acquisition of land is a particularly attractive element to a bond program, with the perception that if the land is not protected it will disappear to be used for other purposes. For reference purposes, based on the 2007 taxable assessed value reported by the County the cost to the median homeowner of financing a \$10 million park acquisition program would be less than \$8 per year (4.8¢ per thousand dollars of house value).

OPERATING LEVY

While capital bonds could be considered to purchase new park sites and develop new facilities, the County will also require funding to operate and maintain them. To address this need, Marion County could consider an operating levy for park maintenance as a way to support ongoing maintenance in lieu of general fund dollars. This option would also require voter approval, and could be offered as part of a coordinated package of upgrading and maintaining facilities. To develop the most support, the levy package that citizens vote on would need to include specific information about improvements to services that could be provided by this new revenue source. With both bonds and levy options, the public information campaign becomes very important to a successful election.

SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTIES

The County also has several properties which are not suitable for park development or that do not lie within the County's new mission. If some of these properties are transferred to other government agencies for park use, the properties are not likely to generate a significant amount of income. However, some may be sold for development or to other agencies for park use at a higher rate, which may result in greater revenues. Properties acquired as foreclosures that are not suitable for park development could be sold for private development. Of particular interest is the Wiseman property, which is surrounded by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife property and could potentially be sold to that agency.

VOLUNTEERS

Creating volunteer opportunities is a Priority I non-capital project in this Plan. Using volunteers effectively can reduce the cost of renovation and other capital projects. In order to make the most of volunteer labor, the County should commit additional staff time to manage volunteers and support projects. Having a list of "volunteer ready" projects at all times helps connect potential volunteers with needed projects.

STATE OR FEDERAL ECONOMIC STIMULUS FUNDS

If available, these funds could be used to fund specific capital and other improvements. Staff should develop a list of potential projects that could be built by unskilled labor (inmates or volunteers). Projects that are "shovel ready" typically have the greatest chance of stimulus funding.

OTHER

To meet its needs, the County needs to aggressively pursue a variety of funding sources, including new and emerging opportunities. New opportunities for funding should be examined as they arise, and considered in the context of the substantial needs and desires of residents and visitors to Marion County.

A variety of new sources are being used by other agencies as funding sources for parks and recreation. One revenue generating source that many park systems are supporting is the location of communication towers, such as cell towers, that are constructed on park land. These towers can generate a regular stream of income with minimal disruption to the site and no additional operations cost to the agency. In many cases, the towers can be camouflaged to resemble trees, thereby reducing their impact even further. Future opportunities might also include environmental “banking,” the protection of valuable resources such as wetlands, stormwater retention and forested areas to offset the impacts of development in other areas. An emerging trend is to create a market for credits representing preserved resources that can be bought and sold by urban developers and resource protection agencies.

SUMMARY

The County should weigh various options for providing sufficient funding for both maintenance as well as future capital and non-capital projects, and implement a combination of these mechanisms that is realistically attainable, fiscally responsible, and merits general public acceptance. A parks funding plan should be based on conservative and realistic revenue and expense assumptions, and should look forward 5 to 10 years.

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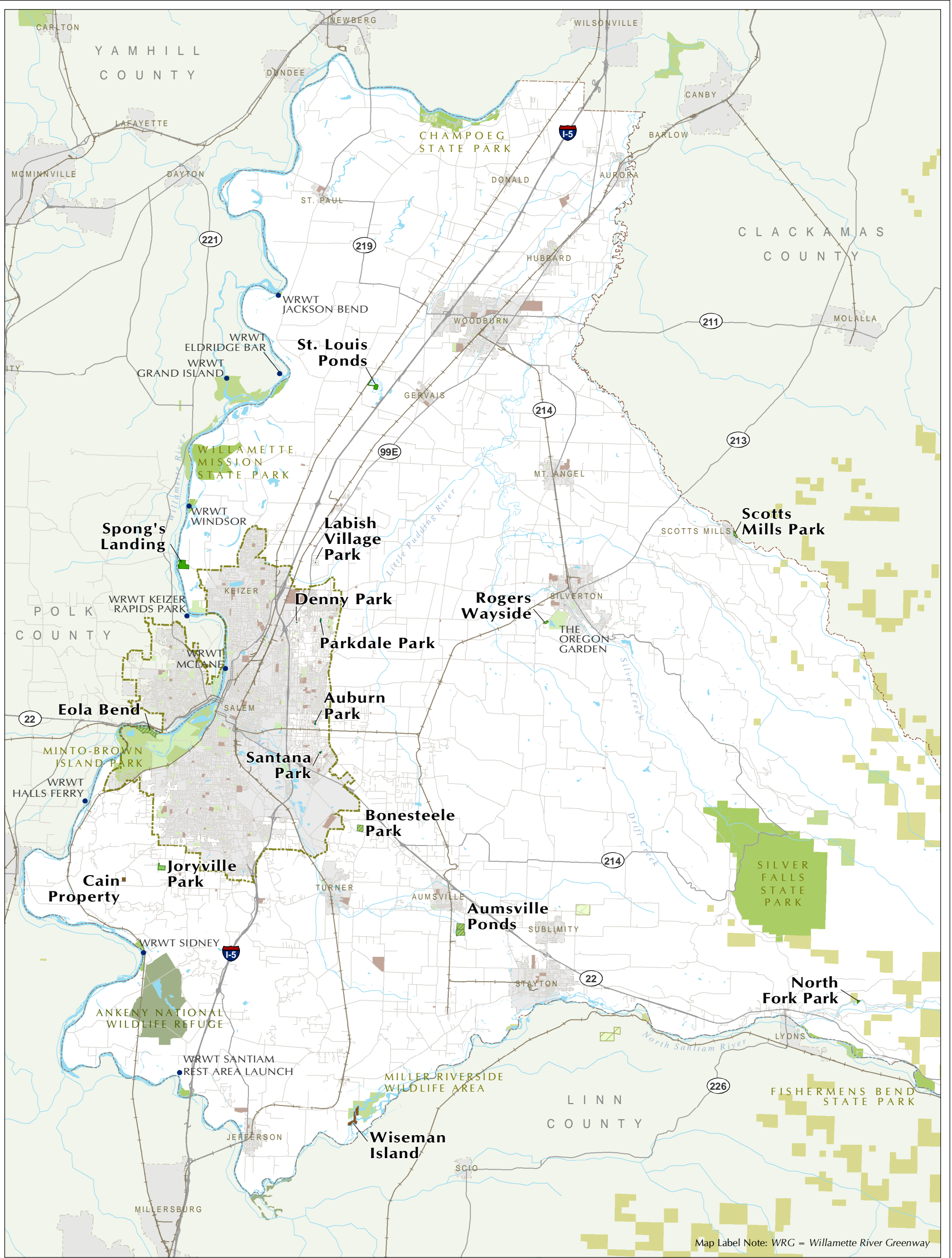
APPENDIX A: PARK AND
RECREATION INVENTORY

Marion County Parks Master Plan
Appendix A: Park and Recreation Facility Inventory

Park Classification/Name	Total Acres	Boat ramp	Camping			Picnic			Swimming area	Trails			Other							Support Facilities					
			Camping	Group camping	RV hookups	Picnic area	Group picnic area	Barbecues		Equestrian trail	Multi-use trail	Pedestrian trails	BMX	Dog off-leash area	Disc golf	Fishing	Horseshoe pits	Multi-use court	Play equipment	Sports fields	Drinking water	Parking	Pedestrian paved path	Restrooms	
Neighborhood Parks																									
Auburn	4.37					1												1	1		1				
Denny	1.60					1											1		1						
Labish Village	1.02					1												1	1	1					
Parkdale	6.20					1		1																	
Santana	4.10					1											1	1	1	1			1		
Sub-total	17.29	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	3	0	1	1	0
Community Parks																									
Joryville	26.08					1				1	1	1										1	1	1	
Rogers Wayside	5.60					1	1						1									1		1	
Scotts Mills	10.64					1			1							1	1		1			1		1	
Sub-total	42.32	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	3	
Natural Areas																									
Aumsville Ponds*	77.80					1			1			1					1					1		1	
Bonesteele*	30.88											1										1		1	
Eola Bend	65.44					1					1	1													
Sub-total	174.12	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
Regional Parks																									
Bear Creek	16.38					1			1			1					1					1		1	
Minto	71.72					1		4	1			1					1					1		1	
Niagara	30.68					1						1					1					1		1	
North Fork	13.54					1			1			1					1					1		1	
Packsaddle	5.60	1				1			1			1					1					1		1	
St. Louis Ponds	20.03					1											1					1	1	1	
Salmon Falls	22.55					1			1			1					1					1		1	
Spong's Landing	62.97					1	3	2	1			1					1		1	1	1	1		1	
Sub-total	243.47	1	0	0	0	8	3	6	6	0	0	7	0	0	0	8	0	0	1	1	2	8	1	8	
Undeveloped Properties																									
Cain Property	10.52																								
Wiseman Island	87.90																								
Sub-total	98.42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	575.62	1	0	0	0	18	4	7	8	1	2	11	1	0	0	10	3	2	6	4	2	14	3	13	

* Aumsville Ponds and Bonesteele Park are designated Natural Heritage Parks.

APPENDIX B: PARK SYSTEM MAPS



Map Label Note: WRG = Willamette River Greenway



Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Marion County, Oregon

Existing Facilities - West



Data Source: Marion County February 2008

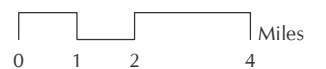
County Facilities

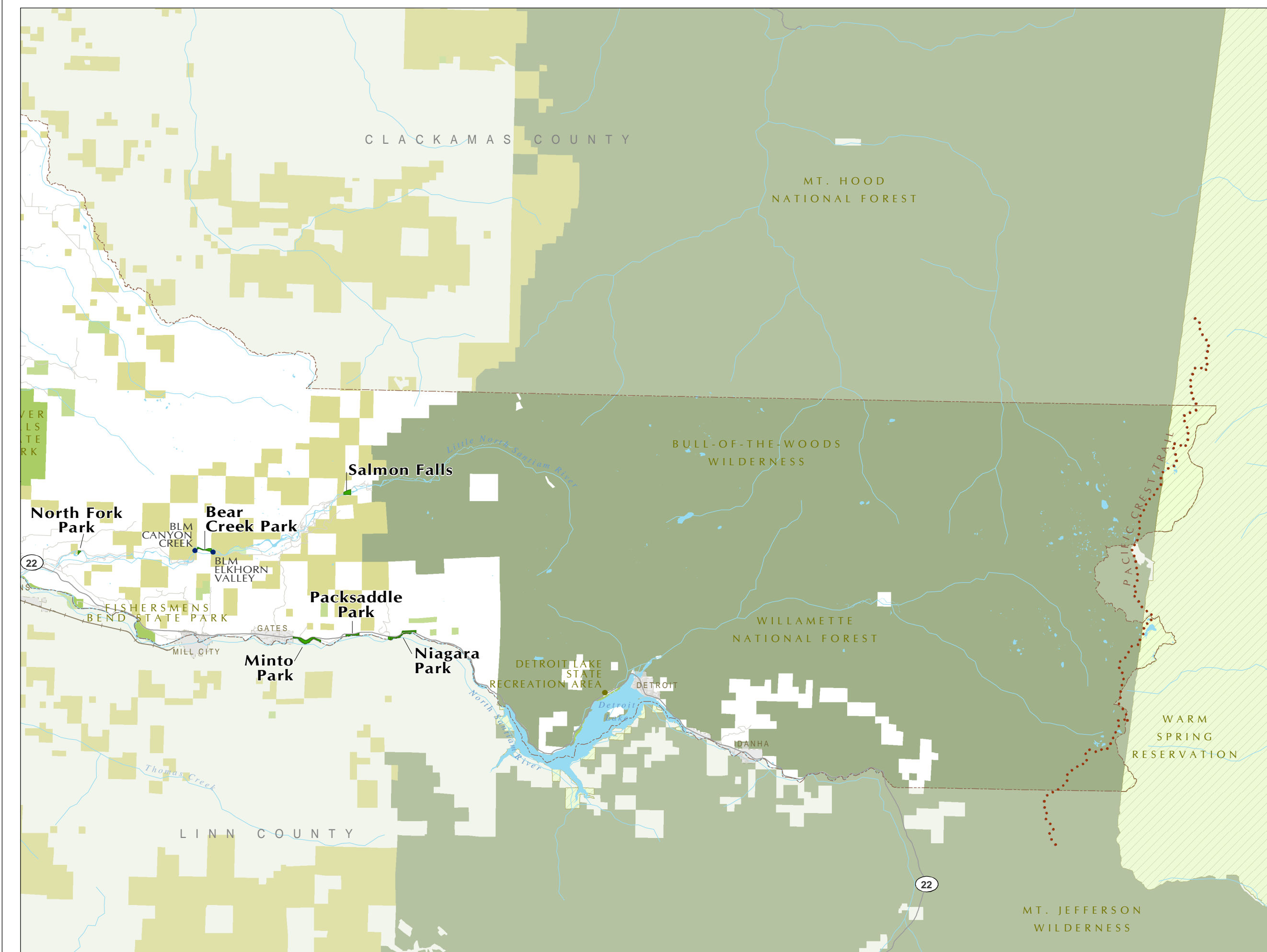
- Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Natural Area
- Undeveloped Property

Other Facilities

- Federal Jurisdiction
- Bureau of Land Management
- State Park
- Other Public Land
- City Limits

- Salem UGB
- County Boundary
- School Property
- Water Feature
- Railroad
- Highway
- Road
- River





County Facilities

- Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Natural Area
- Undeveloped Property

Other Facilities

- Federal Jurisdiction
- Bureau of Land Management
- State Park
- Other Public Land
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- School Property
- Railroad
- Highway
- Road
- River
- Water Feature

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Parks & Recreation Master Plan
Marion County, Oregon

Existing Facilities - East

Data Source: Marion County
February 2008





APPENDIX C: NEEDS ASSESSMENT



APPENDIX C: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This Appendix provides a summary of background research, public involvement and technical analysis conducted as part of the Marion County Parks Master Plan. It:

- identifies key public involvement findings as they relate to park and recreation facility needs;
- identifies existing park and recreation resources owned by both the County and other public providers; and
- assesses the need for parks and recreation facilities in the Marion County planning area.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

Public involvement was a critical part of the comprehensive planning process. To develop a solid foundation for the Marion County Parks Master Plan, feedback was solicited from County residents regarding their needs and preferences. Public involvement activities were planned to ensure the participation of a diverse cross-section of the County’s population. In total, 483 residents participated in the Master Plan public involvement process (Table C-1).

- **Community Survey:** A scientific telephone survey was conducted to assess public attitudes about the importance of parks and recreation, use of parks, and opinions on maintenance and project priorities. It included data on current participation in recreation activities. The data are based upon a survey sample of 265.
- **Community Questionnaire:** A web-based questionnaire was publicized in the County newsletter and was available to all residents. Like the Community Survey, the questionnaire asked about the importance of parks and recreation, use of parks, project priorities, recreation programs, and participation in recreation activities. A total of 190 people completed the questionnaire.

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS
Community Survey	265
Community Questionnaire	190
Focus Groups	8
Advisory Council	10
Parks Commission	9
Total	482

- **Focus Groups:** Marion County residents were invited to attend one of two 2-hour focus groups on October 18, 2007. Focus group participants were asked to provide input on Marion County's park and recreation needs. In addition, participants were asked to strategize ways to achieve their vision and to prioritize Marion County's park needs. A total of eight residents attended the two focus group meetings.
- **Advisory Council:** Ten advisory members attended a meeting on September 19, 2007 to guide the Master Plan process.
- **Parks Commission:** Nine Parks Commission members, residents, and staff attended a meeting on August 9, 2007 to determine Marion County's park and recreation needs, strengths, weaknesses, and vision for the future.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Marion County residents value nearby natural areas and open space, and put a high priority on protecting and preserving natural areas.
- Top recreation activities for County residents are attending fairs and festivals, walking for pleasure or to enjoy nature, picnicking, and wildlife watching.
- Marion County's parks offer a diversity of experiences and opportunities. Residents feel the most important benefits of parks are strengthening families and communities, providing access to nature and preserving natural areas.
- Overall, residents are satisfied with park maintenance, but would like to see better maintenance and more stable funding.
- Generally, residents feel safe in Marion County parks, although a few residents voiced concern about park safety.
- The northern and southwestern areas of Marion County are currently underserved.
- Marion County residents are unclear about where County parks are or what recreation opportunities are available. Residents and visitors would benefit from more information about the County's parks and recreation opportunities.
- Residents support development of recreation facilities, and indicated that protecting natural areas and upgrading existing parks should have the highest priority.
- Residents also support user fees for boating, group picnic facilities, and camping, but did not feel that non-residents should pay higher fees.

- Partnerships with other agencies to provide linkages between parks and to other destinations via trails projects were important to residents, and could influence economic development in the County.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

A statistically valid telephone survey was completed in January of 2008 and reached 265 households in communities across Marion County. The survey’s margin of error was +/- 6%.

Key findings included:

IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

- About 98% of respondents think parks, recreation services and open space are somewhat or very important to Marion County’s quality of life, and the majority (81%) think that parks, recreation services and open space are very important to Marion County’s quality of life.

BENEFITS

- Strengthening families and communities (23.6%) and preserving natural areas (22.8%) are the most important benefits of parks, recreation services, and open space to Marion County residents.
- Providing access to nature (17.2%), providing opportunities for youth (16.8%), and improving health and wellness (12.3%) also were viewed as important benefits.

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION
1. Fairs and festivals	81.65%
2. Walking for pleasure	81.65%
3. Picnicking	76.78%
4. Nature walks	71.16%
5. Museums/galleries	70.40%
6. Driving for pleasure	60.37%
7. Visiting a playground	57.68%
8. Wildlife watching	57.30%
9. Hiking	52.06%
10. Bird watching/feeding	48.69%
11. Swimming (beach)	48.31%
12. Photography	47.94%
13. Fishing	42.32%
14. Group camping	39.33%
15. Dog walking or visiting dog parks	37.08%
16. Camping (tent)	35.96%
17. Camping (RV)	34.46%
18. Canoe/kayak/rafting	34.34%
19. Road bicycling	32.58%
20. Jogging or running	28.09%
Source: Community Survey	

USE OF PARKS

- Most respondents (90%) could not correctly identify a Marion County park, indicating a low level of awareness and a need for more public information.

North Fork, Scotts Mills, Spong's Landing, Eola Bend, and Niagara were the parks that were correctly identified as Marion County's parks.

- Over 68% of households reported using a Marion County park in the past 12 months.
- The most frequently described reasons for not visiting a Marion County park were no time and don't know where they are.
- A number of respondents commented on their limited mobility and/or lack of accessibility for people with disabilities in open-ended comments.

MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

- Over 64% of residents feel somewhat or very satisfied with the maintenance of Marion County parks.
- Over 64% feel somewhat or very safe in Marion County parks.

PARK AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

- Of eight potential improvements to the parks and recreation system, all eight were rated as high or medium priority by at least 80% of respondents.
- Maintaining parks and facilities had the greatest number of high priority ratings (83.1%).
- Protecting natural areas (73%) and acquiring and protecting historic resources (57.3%) also were rated as high priority by a significant number of respondents.
- Developing new parks had the lowest percentage of high priority ratings, but was still ranked as high or medium priority by about 80% of respondents.

NATURAL AREAS

- A significant majority (94.7%) of respondents believe natural open space is either very important or somewhat important.

TRAILS

- Hiking trails, on-road bicycle lanes, and multi-use trails were all ranked as a high or medium priority by over 80% of respondents.

RECREATION PARTICIPATION

- Table C-2 lists the most popular recreation activities out of 38 possible choices. Residents participate in these at least a few times each year.

- Attending fairs and festivals and walking for pleasure had the highest percentage of overall participation. Over 80% of residents participated in these activities at least a few times per year.
- Walking for pleasure is the top recreation activity that residents participate in once per week or more.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

A web-based questionnaire, publicized in the October 2007 County newsletter, was available to all residents from October through December 2007. A total of 190 people completed the questionnaire.

Key findings included:

IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

- Nearly 98% of respondents think parks, recreation services and open space are somewhat or very important to Marion County's quality of life, and the majority (83.8%) think that parks, recreation services and open space are very important to Marion County's quality of life.

BENEFITS

- Providing access to nature (37%), and preserving natural areas (33.8%) are the most important benefits of parks, recreation services, and open space according to Marion County residents.
- Strengthening families and communities (14.8%) was also viewed as an important benefit.

USE OF PARKS

- Over 72% of households reported using a Marion County park in the past 12 months.
- The parks most frequently used by respondents were Aumsville Ponds, Eola Bend, Minto, Niagara, North Fork, Salmon Falls, and Spong's Landing.
- The most common reason for not visiting a Marion County park is not knowing where they are or what's available (45.1%).

MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

- Over 83% of residents feel somewhat or very satisfied with the maintenance of Marion County parks.
- Over 87% feel somewhat or very safe in Marion County parks.

PARK AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

- Of eight potential improvements to the parks and recreation system, all eight were rated as high or medium priority by at least 78% of respondents.
- Maintaining existing parks and facilities had the greatest number of high/medium combined priority ratings (97.81%).
- Protecting natural areas (94.4%), upgrading existing parks and facilities (89.9%), developing trails (88.8%) and acquiring and protecting historic resources (82.1%) also were rated as high priority projects by a significant number of respondents.
- Providing more recreation facilities had the lowest percentage of high priority ratings, but was still ranked as high or medium priority by over 78% of respondents.
- Out of a possible thirteen recreation facility improvements, picnic areas (92.1%), playgrounds (84.9%), group picnic areas (80.4%), and camping facilities (78.7%) received the greatest number of high/medium combined priority responses.
- Other recreation facility improvements receiving at least 50% combined high/medium priority ratings were: swimming areas, fishing piers, dog parks, group camping facilities, and boating facilities.
- Fewer than 20% of residents indicated that a golf course was a high/medium priority.

TRAILS

- Hiking trails (94%), multi-use trails (83.9%), and bike lanes (81.7%) were all ranked as a high or medium priority by over 80% of respondents.
- Almost half of respondents (48.3%) feel that experiencing nature is the most important reason to build trails in Marion County.

NATURAL AREAS

- A significant majority (91%) of respondents believe natural open space is either very important or somewhat important.

ACTIVITY	ANNUAL AVERAGE
1. Walking for pleasure	33.54
2. Dog walking or visiting dog parks	23.44
3. Wildlife watching	22.13
4. Hiking	18.77
5. Nature walks	18.52
6. Bird watching, feeding	14.35
7. Driving for pleasure	14.11
8. Photography	11.76
9. Road bicycling	10.28
10. Jogging	8.68
11. Visiting a playground	9.33
12. Fairs and festivals	7.59
13. Fishing	5.92
14. Picnicking	7.28
15. Hunting	3.28
16. Horseback riding	3.21
17. Golf	3.59
18. Swimming (beach)	4.25
19. RV camping	4.02
20. Off-highway vehicle riding	3.19
Source: Community Questionnaire	

RECREATION PROGRAMS

- Environmental education (44%) was the most needed recreation program type.

RECREATION PARTICIPATION

- Table C-3 lists the most popular recreation activities in Marion County according to the Questionnaire.
- Walking for pleasure, dog walking, and wildlife watching had the highest percentage of overall participation.
- Hiking and nature walks also ranked high as recreation activities.
- Results for both the Survey and Questionnaire were similar. Activities that ranked in the top 10 for the Questionnaire, but not on the Survey, included: dog walking, photography, road bicycling, and jogging.

USER FEES

- Over 67% of respondents felt that non-residents should not be charged more in user fees than residents.
- When asked which services should be fee-based, most respondents felt that boating (64.2%), group picnic (63%), and camping (93.6%) should be fee-based, while parking and day-use facilities should be free of charge.

FOCUS GROUPS

Marion County residents were invited to attend one of two 2-hour focus groups held on October 18, 2007 to provide input on County recreation needs. A total of eight residents attended the two focus group meetings.

Key findings included:

- The participants' priorities included preserving natural areas, and making parks accessible and safe.
- A number of other issues related to the long-term financial future of parks and recreation were also identified as priorities, including acquiring sustainable funding, developing tourism, securing partnerships, and garnering public support for parks.
- Maintenance was also a top issue.
- Participants indicated the importance of building public support by providing outreach and interpretation.
- Sustainable partnerships and funding were suggested as means of achieving the vision for Marion County's parks.

- Participants indicated that Marion County provides valuable open space with opportunities for varied recreation experiences.
- Participants recognized the need for collaborative planning and partnerships with other organizations.
- A major weakness of Marion County parks was inaccessibility.
- Participants outlined their vision for Marion County parks as a connected network of recreation experiences that supports economic development and is valued by the community.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Marion County Master Plan Advisory Council was formed to guide the Parks Master Plan process. Ten advisory members attended the meeting on September 19, 2007.

Key findings included:

- A strong need for stable funding, a park ranger staff position, upgrading amenities, and a need to provide nature interpretation in parks were identified as priorities.
- Advisory council members highlighted Marion County's strengths as providing great facilities that are enjoyed by many users, and having good relationships with other agencies.
- Members noted the need for better maintenance and more staff.
- The need for camping facilities was identified as a gap in service.
- Members suggested alternative forms of funding through grants, and capitalizing on volunteers to perform maintenance.

PARKS COMMISSION

Marion County Parks Commissioners provided the following input on community needs:

- Marion County Parks Commission members want to serve the needs of their diverse and changing community.
- Members want to secure funding and partnerships to support the cost of adding new facilities.
- Members feel it is important to connect Marion County's parks both physically via trails and access, as well as to the communities and populations that surround them.
- Marion County needs to provide more information to residents about parks and recreation opportunities.



- The biggest strengths of the system are its parks and staff.
- The biggest weaknesses are typical of County park systems: lack of resources, support, and lack of resident knowledge.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The Needs Assessment identifies Marion County's existing and future need for parks and facilities. To do so, a set of terms and methods specific to park and recreation planning are used. These are defined and described below.

TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are used throughout this document:

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of service (LOS) describes the number of parks and recreation facilities currently provided within the planning area as a ratio of acres or facilities to number of residents. Usually, park level of service is expressed in acres per 1,000 persons. Facility levels of service are often written in terms of the number of people served by one facility.

STANDARDS

Adopted parkland standards are expressed in terms of acres or facilities per number of residents and serve as goals that guide the development of a park system. The purpose of these standards is to balance development between different park types, active, and passive recreation in accordance with County values.

GUIDELINES

Often guidelines are used in the place of adopted standards. As with standards, guidelines are expressed in terms of acres or facilities per number of residents. Because new recreation trends are always emerging, guidelines are meant to be flexible. They are not meant to serve as formal standards.

METHODOLOGY

A variety of tools were used to assess current and future need for parks and recreation facilities in Marion County:

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS/TRENDS

All results of Master Plan public involvement activities were used in the development of this report, including the Community Survey, the Community Questionnaire, focus groups, and meetings of the Advisory Committee and Parks Commission. These public involvement activities provided data about the community's current recreation participation, needs, and priorities, which informed the assessment of parkland and facility needs.

The following sources were consulted in order to identify local, state, and national trends in sports and recreation:

- *National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA)*: The NSGA is the national association for sporting goods retailers and conducts an

annual nationwide study in order to determine trends in recreation participation.

- *Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*: The SCORP is a five-year statewide recreation plan published by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The SCORP identifies outdoor recreation issues and opportunities and explores state and local response strategies. It includes valuable data on current trends in recreation participation and demand in Oregon.
- *Oregon Marine Board Six-Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan*: The boating facilities plan, published by the Oregon Marine Board, provides specific boating-related recommendations for all Oregon counties. The plan relied on survey data from the triennial survey on boating in Oregon, which was last conducted in 2004.
- *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan*: Oregon's statewide trails plan uses data from a statewide public involvement effort to develop recommendations for motorized, non-motorized, and water trails throughout the state.

A number of other planning documents for Marion County and other agencies were also reviewed and are listed in the bibliography.

COMPARISON TO OTHER AGENCIES

The parkland level of service (i.e. total acres/1,000 residents) of other comparable agencies (Linn, Benton, and Lane Counties) can be compared against Marion County's to assess overall level of service provision.

Geographic Analysis

Geographic distribution was also considered in determining need for some types of parkland and certain recreation facilities within the planning area. In these cases, service area gaps in Marion County's existing system were identified, along with areas underserved by given parks and recreation facilities. Needs were defined based on the number of these underserved areas.

Opportunity Analysis

In the case of certain recreation facilities, the most practical way to quantify need was to define areas where opportunities exist to develop the facilities in highest demand. These areas were then counted in order to define the existing need.

Design Guidelines

Park and facility design guidelines were also used to quantify needs in Marion County. These standard park design practices, which encourage the development of certain recreation facilities within each park type, allowed a basic evaluation of the service of each park in the County's system. Parks not meeting design guidelines were considered areas of need.

Revenue Opportunities

Marion County currently does not generate revenue from its parks and facilities. Opportunities to generate revenue from parks and facilities are identified to reduce reliance on general funds.

PARKLAND NEEDS

The parkland needs assessment discusses the current and projected need for additional parkland in Marion County. This needs assessment is based on public involvement findings, comparison to similar agencies, and geographic analysis. In addition, Marion County's role in providing parks, open space and natural areas is considered. It describes the provision of acres of parkland by Marion County and other providers. Next, it presents an assessment of Marion County's overall parkland need. Finally, it discusses the need for parkland by park classification. An evaluation of specific needs for existing County parks was conducted and results are in Chapter 4, Recommendations.



EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Marion County owns 575.62 acres in developed and undeveloped parkland, including neighborhood parks, community parks, natural areas, and regional parks (Table C-4). The County currently provides its residents with 19 developed park sites totaling 477.20 acres. In addition, the County has 98.42 acres of undeveloped property at three sites. The County's developed park properties range in size from one-acre Labish Village Park to 77-acre Aumsville Ponds Park. These include areas for active and passive recreational activities such as swimming and boating, as well as preservation of riparian areas, wetlands and upland prairies. A detailed parkland inventory is included in Appendix A. Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix B show existing park locations. Additionally, Marion County maintains conservation easements at Keizer Rapids Park (119 acres) and Stayton Riverfront Park (51 acres).

PARK TYPE	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Neighborhood Parks	17.29	2%
Community Parks	42.32	6%
Natural Areas	174.12	23%
Regional Parks	243.47	33%
Sub-total Developed Parks	477.20	64%
Undeveloped Properties	98.42	13%
Conservation Easements	170	23%
Total	745.62	100%

For this Master Plan, Marion County's developed parks have been divided into four classifications. Park classifications are designed to facilitate future planning of parks, develop guidelines for appropriate use, and help define maintenance level of service. Table C-4 provides a summary of Marion County Parks by classification.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are small parks under ten acres that serve nearby residential areas. These parks support neighborhood and family gatherings, preserve open space, and promote health and wellness by providing close-to-home opportunities for physical activity. Neighborhood parks are generally accessible without a car by walking or biking, do not have restrooms, and generally do not have on-site parking.

Designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities, neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playground equipment, picnic tables, pathways, and multi-use open grass areas. Neighborhood parks may provide opportunities for active recreation, such as drop-in tennis, basketball, soccer, disc golf or softball. Marion County's five neighborhood parks total 17.29 acres, 2% of the County's total park acreage.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks support a wide range of activities including active recreation (such as disc golf, soccer and horseback riding) and outdoor recreational opportunities, such as fishing, hiking, swimming, and bird watching. These parks also serve as community gathering spaces, offering a variety of facilities that can accommodate small or large

groups, such as playgrounds, group picnic areas and shelters. This combination of facilities supports lifelong fitness, health, and wellness, and provides social opportunities that bring diverse groups of people together, building stronger families and communities.

Community parks may also include significant natural areas and trails, which provide opportunities to enjoy nature and serve to relieve the stresses of urban living. These natural areas can form important links in wildlife corridors and serve as buffers between nearby development and natural landscapes. Like natural areas in other Marion County Parks, those in community parks provide important habitat links to other nearby natural areas and can contribute to environmental sustainability by incorporating sustainable design elements. Natural areas in community parks serve a broad group of residents and visitors by fostering an important connection to urban nature and reinforcing the environmental values held by the community.

Visitors to community parks may arrive on foot, by bicycle or via car. Since community parks generally attract a large number of people from a wide geographic area, support facilities are required, such as off-street parking and restrooms. Community parks range in size between 5 and 30 acres. Marion County's three community parks total 42.32 acres, 6% of the County's total park acreage.

NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas are permanent, undeveloped green spaces managed for both their natural value as well as for passive recreational use. Natural areas can range in size from a few to over 100 acres, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitat, or stream corridors. Natural areas provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as bird watching as well as environmental education. These parks may preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as riparian areas, ecologically important landscapes, or endangered plant species. Marion County's three natural area parks total 174.12 acres, 23% of the County's total park acreage.

REGIONAL PARKS

Regional parks provide access to unique features that appeal to residents from throughout the County and beyond. These parks can often accommodate large group activities and often have infrastructure to support community and special events, and festivals. Regional parks enhance the economic vitality and identity of the region. In some cases,

these parks provide community park facilities for residents residing in smaller towns or unincorporated areas. Marion County’s eight regional parks total 243.47 acres, 33% of the County’s total park acreage.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Marion County worked in partnership with local jurisdictions in the purchase and development of two properties for parks, Keizer Rapids Park (119 acres) and Stayton Riverfront Park (51 acres). The County holds conservation easements for these two park facilities. The acreage for these holdings totals 170 acres, 23% of the County’s total park acreage.

OTHER PROVIDERS

In addition to Marion County, a number of other providers supply parkland in the planning area. Federal lands dominate the eastern part of the County. In this area, agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFW) provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including hiking, mountain biking, equestrian trails, fishing, swimming, boating, and camping. Table C-5 shows parkland by other providers. Federal agencies manage 223,919 acres in Marion County including the following:

PROVIDER	ACREAGE
City Lands	2,324.4
State	14,214.0
Bureau of Land Management	20,455.8
Other Federal Agencies	203,463.8
Other Public Lands	4,495.2
Total	244,953.2

- Fishermen’s Bend, near Mill City along the North Santiam River, offers both day use and overnight camping, a group picnic shelter, and reservable campsites and cabins (BLM). Day use facilities at Fishermen’s Bend are open year-round. Overnight facilities for tent, trailer and RV camping are open from April 6th through October 30th. Cabins at Fishermen’s Bend are available from May 1st through September 30th.
- Elkhorn Valley and Canyon Creek Recreation sites, along the Little North Santiam River consist of several fee-based and hosted camping areas that are open from May 14th to September 20th (BLM).

- Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge provides critical habitat for the Dusky Canada Goose and other migratory waterfowl (USFW). The refuge, which is used primarily for wildlife observation, hiking, and nature education and interpretation, has a network of soft-surface trails throughout the site. Public access to portions of the refuge is limited during the winter to protect sensitive waterfowl populations.
- Willamette National Forest, including Opal Creek Wilderness and Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area, is open year-round (USFS).
- Mt. Hood National Forest, including Bull of the Woods Wilderness and the Olallie Lake Scenic Area, is open year-round (USFS).
- Finally, the popular Pacific Crest Trail traverses the eastern edge of Marion County through the Willamette and Mt. Hood National Forests (USFS). The 2,650-mile trail stretches from Mexico to Canada and ranges from desert to arctic-alpine eco-zones. In Oregon, the Pacific Crest Trail skirts along the heavily forested western slopes of the Cascade Mountain range. In Marion County, trail users may trek through a picturesque landscape of creeks and canyons, including Mt. Jefferson Wilderness and the Olallie Lake Scenic Area.

STATE

There are 14,214 acres of state lands in Marion County, including those managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. The State of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife manages just over 700 acres, including 270 acres at the St. Louis Fish Ponds, 20 acres at Woodburn Freeway Pond, and approximately 411 acres at Millers Riverside Wildlife Area adjacent to Marion County's undeveloped Wiseman Island site.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) manages a number of parks in Marion County. These include Champoeg, Willamette Mission, Detroit Lake, and Silver Falls State Parks. These state parks provide diverse recreational opportunities including hiking, biking, swimming, boating, camping, group picnicking, and wildlife observation. Several of the area's state parks also offer interpretive programs about the state's rich agricultural past and cultural history.

The Willamette River Greenway (WRG) network provides access for boating and fishing along the Willamette River as it flows north toward Portland. In Marion County, these WRG sites include Sidney, Halls

Ferry, McLane, Beardsley, Windsor, Eldridge, and Jackson access sites. These sites vary in character, size and amenities but all provide boat access, and usually provide opportunities for picnicking. Some sites also provide vehicle access and opportunities for overnight camping.

CITY

The twenty cities in Marion County provide a variety of parks and recreation opportunities to nearby residents and visitors. Salem, the largest city in the County, has just over 1,600 acres of developed parkland, while the smaller Marion County cities supply a total of 380 acres of parkland. The Oregon Garden is an 80-acre site in Silverton jointly owned by the City of Silverton and Marion County. The Oregon Garden provides opportunities for visitors to enjoy musical and cultural events, walk among formal and informal gardens, and learn about ecological approaches to landscaping.

OTHER

One notable privately-owned site is Breitenbush Hot Springs, a 154-acre resort that hosts health and wellness events and features hiking trails, a lodge and cabins, and natural hot springs. Taken together, other providers supply a total of 244,953.2 acres of parkland in Marion County.

REGIONAL RECREATION, TRAILS AND TOURISM

- Several local trails groups, and tourism and economic development organizations have developed tour routes and plans for integrating trails and tourism in the region. These existing routes and plans highlight the scenic beauty and history of the area, and attract visitors and tourists to experience local festivals and a diversity of recreation opportunities.
- The North Santiam Canyon Tourism Coalition publishes a brochure listing festivals and events, campgrounds, snow parks, boat ramps, and covered bridges located in the North Santiam Canyon area.
- The Silver Falls Tour Route is a cooperative effort of area cities, and state, local and federal agencies. It features a scenic drive through agricultural fields and orchards, small towns, and points of interest, such as Mt. Angel Abbey, Silverton, the Oregon Garden, Silver Falls State Park, covered bridges and historic sites.
- Cities and agencies in eastern Marion County including Marion County Parks, along with the North Santiam Canyon Economic Development Corporation, have proposed a North Santiam Canyon Trail along the Highway 22 corridor between Lyons and Idanha.

This system of on- and off-road trails will connect communities with each other and with local attractions, create a trail network within each Canyon community, and present opportunities to create recreational focal points or specialized facilities for non-motorized uses, such as mountain biking, hiking, boating and equestrian activities. Objectives of the trail project are to improve community quality of life, provide an alternative to Highway 22 for non-motorized travel, increase recreation and heritage opportunities, and promote economic growth and diversity.

- In northern Marion County, Hubbard Economic and Business Development is proposing a 15-mile multi-use trail that will connect Woodburn's Mill Creek Greenway with the Willamette River via Aurora. The North Mill Creek Trail project will include tourism, park development, riparian restoration, and interpretive education. The trail will link community parks, schools, historic sites, and open space. It will provide alternative transportation routes and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

ANALYSIS OF OVERALL PARKLAND NEED

This section presents an analysis of overall parkland need based on a comparison to other counties, geographic analysis, and public involvement findings and trends.

COMPARISON TO OTHER COUNTIES

Based on Marion County’s 2007 population of 311,070, the County is providing a parkland level of service of 9.87 acres of parkland/1,000 residents (Table C-6). This level of service is on the upper end of the range recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association, which recommends having between 6.25 and 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents. When comparing the acres per area of each County, Marion County fares very well when compared with other nearby counties. Notably, Marion County has a much higher population density than the other counties, represented by residents per square mile, thus indicating that the parks provided are more accessible or available to the population. This is why city park acres have been included with county park acres. Of this total acreage, county parks comprise 24.3% of the total.

TABLE C-6: COMPARISON OF PARK ACREAGE					
	MARION	LINN	BENTON	LANE	NRPA RECOMMENDED
Total Acreage	3,070*	1,180	1,419	4,528	
Total Population	311,070	109,320	85,300	343,140	
Total Area (mi ²)	1,183	2,297	676	4,620	
Acres/1,000 residents	9.87	11.45	18.04	14.02	6.25 -10.50
Acres/mi ²	2.60	0.51	2.10	0.98	
Residents/mi ²	263	45	116	70	

* Includes Marion County and city park property

GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The County has previously acquired parks through a variety of means, including donation, tax foreclosure, and dissolution of the regional Park District in the 1990s. Marion County’s parks are dispersed throughout much of the County. However, the northernmost and southwestern areas of the County are underserved by County parks.

Marion County’s five neighborhood parks are all located close to Salem, four within Salem’s Urban Growth Boundary. The County’s three community parks are dispersed across the County. Six of the County’s eight regional parks are clustered along the North Santiam River, while

the remaining two are on the western edge of the County. Marion County's natural areas are located in the southeastern and western part of the County.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS/TRENDS

Marion County residents value parks, recreation and open space. Over 97% of Survey and Questionnaire respondents thought that parks, recreation and open space was very important or important to quality of life. Residents especially value the role of parks and recreation in strengthening families and communities, preserving natural areas, providing access to nature and providing opportunities for youth. Although maintaining existing parks is the highest priority, about 80% of Survey and Questionnaire respondents thought acquiring additional parkland was a high or medium priority. Participants in the community focus groups and members of the Marion County Parks Commission indicated the northern and southernmost areas of the County are currently underserved by County parks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The County's population is expected to grow to 359,581 by 2020. To maintain the County's current level of service of 9.87 acres/1,000 residents, an additional 478.80 acres of total new parkland would be needed in the future, with Marion County's share of that being 116.35 acres (24.3%). The County would still fall within the NRPA recommended service levels even without adding any additional parklands (8.54 acres/1,000 residents), however.

Should new parklands eventually be added, these additional acres would potentially allow the County to provide parkland in targeted areas, such as the north and southwest, and to provide specific kinds of parks that best fulfill the County's mission.

The old Macleay Landfill site, located east of Cordon Road and north of Macleay Road, represents an excellent opportunity to add approximately 105 usable acres to the county's parkland inventory. This would provide 91% of the projected need for 116 additional acres by 2020. Adding a new Macleay Park would increase total parklands available to county residents to 10.21 acres per 1,000. The Macleay site has much potential, and could be added to the parks inventory at relatively low cost, since the county already owns the land. It is situated in an area currently underserved by large parks, access is easy, and the site offers panoramic views of the valley.

Marion County's mission in providing parks to its residents appears to be moving toward providing larger regional parks that offer a variety of facilities and amenities, and natural areas that provide passive recreational opportunities, environmental education, and protect and restore important landscape types. This evolving mission is consistent with many of the public involvement findings as well as the County's more recent parkland acquisition efforts. It is recommended that future acquisitions support this mission.



Future population estimates can vary for a number of reasons, if the County grows more or less than anticipated, parkland needs can be adjusted based on the final level of service or standard adopted.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT BY PARK TYPE

Marion County's parks are classified into four categories: neighborhood, community, natural areas and regional parks. A discussion of need by park classification follows. For each classification, findings from public involvement activities and an analysis of need based on a number of factors is presented.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Marion County's five neighborhood parks are situated within established residential neighborhoods and are located just east of Interstate 5. Four neighborhood parks are located within Salem's Urban Growth Boundary. Marion County's neighborhood parks include Auburn, Denny, Labish Village, Parkdale and Santana Parks. This category of Marion County parks accounts for 17.29 acres, 2% of Marion County's total park acreage.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Marion County's neighborhood parks did not figure prominently during the public involvement process for the master plan. At least 80% of residents who completed the Community Questionnaire never visited any of the five Marion County neighborhood parks. None of Marion County's neighborhood parks was listed by Community Survey respondents as those they visited, however there was a lack of awareness of which parks were county- versus city-owned.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Currently, Marion County has five neighborhood parks, four of which are within Salem’s urban growth boundary (UGB). The fifth, Labish Village Park, is located within the community of Labish Village just north of Salem. These five neighborhood parks serve nearby residential areas with playgrounds, open turf areas, and places for picnicking. Marion County acquired most of their neighborhood parks when the regional park district was dissolved in the 1990s.

While the County has been committed to maintaining its neighborhood parks and providing new amenities as needed, neighborhood parks require more frequent and more intensive maintenance than other parks in the County’s inventory of parkland. The County should consider transferring ownership of its neighborhood parks to the appropriate local agency as those areas are annexed into city jurisdiction.

In the case of Auburn, Denny, Parkdale, and Santana parks, this would likely be the City of Salem since all four of these parks are within Salem’s UGB and eventually will be within the Salem city limits. In the case of Labish Village, the County should consider either selling the park site or turning the site over to a local agency or neighborhood organization. By doing so, the park will have local caretakers, which may result in more ownership of the park and fewer problems with damage and vandalism.

If the County transfers ownership of its neighborhood parks, additional parkland should be acquired to maintain its level of service.

COMMUNITY PARKS

There are three community parks in Marion County with distinctively different characters and uses ranging from equestrian trails, a favorite swimming spot, and an increasingly popular BMX bike track. Altogether, community parks in Marion County account for 42.32 acres, about 6% of the total acreage of parkland in the County. Marion County’s community parks include Joryville Park (southwest of Salem), Rogers Wayside (south of Silverton) and Scotts Mills Park (along Butte Creek within the town of Scotts Mills).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Of the three community parks, only Scotts Mills was mentioned during the Community Survey when participants were asked which Marion County park they had visited in the past year. Questionnaire respondents indicated that the parks have a moderate level of use. During other public involvement activities, Marion County’s community parks were

identified as needing upgrading and additional amenities such as group picnic areas to better serve residents and visitors.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Community parks can play a valuable role in Marion County by providing places for both passive and active recreation, community gatherings, and opportunities to enjoy nature, all of which residents feel are important benefits of parks and recreation. However, these parks have high maintenance requirements and more limited use.

As an alternative, the County could pursue opportunities to increase revenues and use of the site, such as developing camping or group picnic areas. Both Joryville and Rogers Wayside Parks should be retained for their unique assets and locations. However, the County should not add additional community parks to its inventory, unless the parks represent a unique opportunity. If the County transfers ownership of one of its community parks, additional parkland should be acquired to maintain its level of service.

REGIONAL PARKS

Of the eight regional parks in Marion County, six are located in eastern Marion County - three on the North Santiam River and three on the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River. These include Bear Creek, Minto, Niagara, North Fork, Packsaddle, and Salmon Falls. These six parks have a similar character of river frontage, riparian vegetation and canyon landscapes. The remaining two parks, Spong's Landing and St. Louis Ponds, both offer water access, but provide distinctly different opportunities for recreation, including fishing, swimming, group picnics, and drop-in field sports. Marion County's regional parks comprise 243.47 acres, 33% of Marion County's total park acreage.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Marion County's eight regional parks currently provide residents and visitors with opportunities for a wide variety of recreational activities. Residents can hike, swim, fish, picnic and boat at regional parks. These activities are highly valued by residents. Nearly all of Marion County's regional parks are visited at least a few times a year by at least 50% of those completing the Community Questionnaire. In addition, specific parks offer other recreation opportunities that residents value highly, such as places for community or family gatherings (Spong's Landing), and historic sites (Niagara). Throughout the public involvement process, an interconnected system of parks and open space was a consistent

theme and residents indicated that more connectivity between parks and between parks and cities was needed in the County.

GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The County's regional parks are currently concentrated in the eastern section of the County, except for Spong's Landing on the Willamette River and St. Louis Ponds just north of Salem. All of Marion County's regional parks provide access to water and water-oriented recreational activities. There are no Marion County regional parks in the northern part of the County or in the southwestern part of the County, two areas identified as underserved during the public involvement process.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Acquisition of new regional park sites that would provide access to nature as well as recreational opportunities such as swimming, boating, fishing or camping should be explored. In particular, the County should look at opportunities to provide regional parks in the southwestern and northwestern sections of the County along the Willamette River. Most boaters stay close to home, so providing additional boating sites in Marion County would address important needs of the boating population. Regional parks in these areas could serve to fill important gaps in the Willamette River Water Trail and, developed in combination with other recreational facilities such as group picnic or group camping sites, would serve multiple needs and could generate revenue for the County.

Parkland also could be acquired to strengthen the County's existing presence in the North Santiam River and Little North Fork of the North Santiam River areas. Other potential areas for acquiring and developing regional parks could be explored in conjunction with regional trails projects, such as the North Mill Creek Trail proposal, the North Santiam Canyon Trail project, and the Silver Falls Tour Route. An interconnected system of regional parks would address many needs mentioned in the public involvement process and better serve residents throughout Marion County. In addition, the County should give priority to future sites that preserve historical and cultural resources. Finally, sites that would accommodate revenue generating activities, such as camping and group picnicking, should be a priority.

Regional parks serve a large number of residents, meet County recreation needs, and build on the County's current successful core mission. The

County should acquire new regional parks to meet parkland needs in the future.

NATURAL AREAS

Marion County currently has three natural areas in its inventory, Eola Bend on the Willamette River, and Bonesteele Park and Aumsville Ponds just off Highway 22. Altogether Marion County's natural areas comprise 174.12 acres, 23% of Marion County's total park acreage.

Two related planning efforts have contributed to Marion County's focus on acquiring and preserving high-quality natural areas. The County's Comprehensive Plan outlines significant natural areas for potential acquisition and describes "natural preserves" that can accommodate passive recreation activities. Selection of these natural preserves was based on the ecological and habitat value of each site. The County also has a Natural Heritage Parks program begun in 2000 and revised in 2010 (See Appendix F). This program integrates the County's Comprehensive Plan priorities for natural areas and for County parks and recreation sites. The process of selecting Natural Heritage Parks includes identifying significant landscape types that are being lost to development and prioritizing them based on their ecological importance, hydrology, land use and location, and opportunity for acquisition. The County currently protects several of the high-priority sites including two currently in the County's inventory of natural areas: Bonesteele and Aumsville Ponds.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Marion County's residents value nearby natural areas and open space for their ecological value and their value to community members and families. Marion County's natural areas provide many of the benefits of parks that are most important to its residents including providing access to nature and preserving natural areas. Residents who completed the Community Questionnaire and those who responded to the Community Survey ranked both benefits in the top three most important benefits of parks and open space. In addition, 95% of residents who participated in the Community Survey indicated that protecting natural areas was a high or medium priority for future parks projects. A significant majority (94%) of Community Questionnaire respondents also supported protecting natural areas.

Just over 65% of Survey respondents and 91% of those completing the Community Questionnaire indicated that natural open space is important or very important. Participants in focus groups and members of both the

Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and the Master Plan Advisory Council offered numerous comments about the County's natural areas. The importance of providing places for passive recreation, such as walking, hiking, and wildlife watching was acknowledged. Focus group participants also mentioned the educational and habitat value of natural areas, specifically mentioning Aumsville Ponds and Bonesteele natural areas. Marion County residents who participated in public meetings recognized the value of existing collaborative efforts in the County's provision of natural areas, and indicated their support for expanding future collaborations to protect natural areas.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Marion County has developed a comprehensive approach to identifying, preserving and restoring natural areas in the County. Previous planning efforts have outlined opportunities for acquisition, and the County has collaborated with other regional agencies to protect and manage ecologically important landscapes. The County's three existing natural areas are clustered on the west side of the County yet represent three distinct landscape types that offer a variety of opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education.

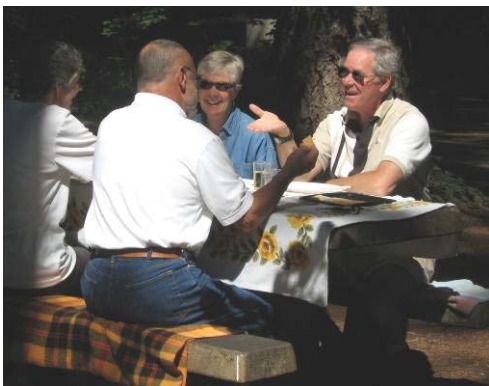
Based on the County's Comprehensive Plan policies and the Natural Heritage Parks program, the County should continue to acquire, preserve and restore natural areas. Residents clearly support these efforts and providing natural areas is an important part of the County's mission.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- The County's population is expected to grow to 359,581 by 2020. To achieve a goal of maintaining the current level of service at 9.87 acres/1,000 residents, an additional 478.80 acres of total parkland (includes both County and city parks) would be needed, with Marion County's portion of that increase being 116.35 acres (24.3% of the total parkland available to county residents). However, given the current economic climate, it is not certain whether the County will be able to add additional properties into the inventory over this period of time.
- Marion County's mission in providing parks to its residents appears to be moving toward providing larger regional parks that offer a variety of facilities and amenities, and natural areas that provide passive recreational opportunities, environmental education, and protect and restore important landscape types. This evolving mission is consistent with many of the public involvement findings as well as

the County's more recent parkland acquisition efforts. It is recommended that future acquisitions support this mission.

- The County should not acquire more neighborhood parks and should consider transferring ownership of its existing neighborhood parks to the appropriate local agency as those areas are annexed by cities.
- The County should not add additional community parks to its inventory, unless the parks represent a unique opportunity.
- The County should acquire new regional parks. Priorities include:
 - Southwestern and northwestern sections of the County along the Willamette River.
 - Parkland that strengthens the County's already strong presence in the North Santiam River and Little North Fork of the North Santiam River areas.
 - Parks that connect to regional trails and tour route projects such as the North Mill Creek Trail proposal, the North Santiam Canyon Trail project, and the Silver Falls Tour Route.
 - Parks that preserve historical and cultural resources.
 - Parks that would support needed recreation activities, such as camping, swimming, boating, and fishing.
 - Parks that could generate revenue, such as opportunities for OHV parks, camping, or RV parks.
- Based on the County's Comprehensive Plan policies and the Natural Heritage Parks program, the County should continue to attempt to acquire, preserve and restore natural areas when possible. Residents clearly support these efforts and providing natural areas is an important part of the County's mission.



RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

Marion County Parks currently owns a variety of recreation facilities. This analysis assesses the need for additional new facilities, including boating and camping facilities, picnic areas, swimming areas, and a variety of trails. In addition, the need for other recreation facilities, including BMX facilities, dog parks, disc golf courses, fishing areas, playgrounds, and informal sports fields, are discussed. Finally, the need for golf courses, sports courts, skate parks, and OHV facilities is discussed in brief. Recommendations in Chapter 4 address the need for renovations to existing facilities.

Like the parkland needs assessment, the analysis for recreation facilities relies largely on public involvement findings, geographic analysis, and opportunity analysis. Needs are also determined by analyzing facilities that may be appropriate for specific park types. Finally, opportunities were identified that may generate much needed revenue for the County parks system.

OTHER PROVIDERS

In addition to Marion County, many other providers contribute valuable recreation facilities to the County. Numerous outdoor facilities are provided by other local, state, and federal providers in Marion County. In the eastern part of the County, federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFW) provide a variety of recreational opportunities, such as hiking, mountain biking, equestrian trails, fishing, swimming, boating, and camping. Part of the 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail is located in the eastern edge of the County in the Willamette and Mt. Hood National Forests. The BLM provides camping, fishing, swimming, picnicking, hiking, and recreational mining at sites, including Fishermen's Bend on the North Santiam River, and at Elkhorn Valley and Canyon Creek Recreation sites along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River. The USFW provides hiking and nature observation at the Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge.

There are 14,214 acres of state lands in Marion County, including those managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. The State of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife provides wildlife viewing, fishing and boating opportunities at St. Louis Fish Ponds, the Woodburn Freeway Pond, and Millers Riverside Wildlife Area adjacent to Marion County's undeveloped Wiseman Island site. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) provides a wide variety of recreation opportunities at state parks in Marion County, including Champoeg, Willamette Mission, Detroit Lake, and Silver Falls State Parks. These recreational opportunities include hiking, biking, equestrian activities, swimming, boating, camping, group picnicking, and wildlife observation. Several of the area's Oregon State Parks also offer interpretive programs about the state's rich agricultural past and cultural history.

The Willamette River Greenway (WRG) network provides access for boating and fishing, as well as opportunities for picnicking and camping at some sites, along the Willamette River as it flows north toward Portland. In Marion County, these WRG sites include Sidney, Halls

Ferry, McLane, Beardsley, Windsor, Eldridge, and Jackson access sites. The Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway, a 130-mile scenic route, also passes through Marion County.

Finally, the twenty cities in Marion County provide a variety of parks and recreation opportunities to nearby residents and visitors, including active recreation and some outdoor recreation in natural area parks. The Oregon Garden provides a variety of horticultural and recreational opportunities for visitors.

BOATING

Boating facilities may include boat ramps, moorage, docks, or other launching or access points positioned along rivers, streams, or lakes. In general, these facilities are accompanied by parking and restroom facilities. Boating facilities may be located adjacent to camping or picnic areas as well. Boating facilities may serve both motorized and non-motorized boats, such as canoes and kayaks. Currently Marion County provides one formal boat launch at Packsaddle Park on the North Santiam River.



There are numerous other agencies providing boat access for both motorized and non-motorized watercraft. Polk and Yamhill Counties and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) provide a number of boat access sites along the Willamette River. In addition, a boat launch is proposed for Keizer Rapids Park. Along the North Santiam River, Linn County provides boat launches at John Neal Park near Lyons and three additional boat-launching sites. OPRD provides three boat launch sites along the North

Santiam River, and the BLM provides boating at Fisherman's Bend. Along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam, the BLM and the County have park sites, but do not provide boating due to limited navigability. In addition, Detroit Lake is used by canoes, sailboats and kayaks as well as motorized boats. Mongold Day-use Area, part of the Detroit Lakes State Recreation Area provides the only public boat launch site on the lake.

About 61% of Community Questionnaire respondents ranked improving boating facilities as a high or medium priority. More than 64% of Community Questionnaire respondents favored charging fees for boating. Therefore, boating could potentially be a source of revenue for

the County. Focus Group and Advisory Committee members supported providing additional boat access points, and maximizing the recreation opportunities along the Willamette, and North and Little North Santiam Rivers.

Needs for non-motorized and motorized boating opportunities are discussed below.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS FOR NON-MOTORIZED BOATING

In 2006, the NSGA ranked non-motorized boating as the 31st most popular recreation activity in the U.S. NSGA ranks non-motorized boating participation as much lower than motorized participation, which ranked sixth. In 2005, the Oregon Marine Board noted that more non-motorized boats were being observed in Oregon, and that there was an increase in the number of organized groups and associations representing users of non-motorized boats. In the future, the Marine Board anticipates an increase in non-motorized boating. The 2003 Oregon SCORP study found that non-motorized boating increased statewide by 137% between 1987 and 2002, although there was a slight decrease in Marion County. In Oregon Trails, the statewide trails plan, the need for water trails was identified, along with the need to provide more public access to waterways and public information about opportunities. The Trails Plan noted that after white water rafting, canoeing had the greatest participation, followed by drift boating and white water kayaking.

Approximately 34% of residents who responded to the Community Survey participate in canoeing, kayaking, or rafting at least once a year. Non-motorized boating ranked 26th out of 33 outdoor recreation activities, and it was just slightly less popular than motorized boating. Focus group participants suggested that the County provide canoe camping along the Willamette River.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS FOR MOTORIZED BOATING

In 2006, the NSGA ranked motorized boating as the sixth most popular recreation activity in the U.S. According to the Oregon Marine Board, Marion County has one of the highest motorized boating use days of any Oregon County, and had a 43.5% increase in the number of boating days between 2001 to 2004. Detroit Lake accounts for most of the boating use in the County, and the Willamette and Santiam Rivers are ranked second and third. According to the 2003 Oregon SCORP, power

boating participation rose 16.8% in the period between 1987-2002 in Regions 2 and 3, which include Marion County.

Community Survey results show that 22% of Marion County residents go power boating at least once a year. Power boating ranked 24th out of 33 outdoor recreation activities, making it slightly more popular than canoe/kayaking.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Marion County could significantly increase its supply of boating facilities and capitalize on the scenic attraction of its waterways. Marion County's first priority should be addressing gaps in boating access to serve both motorized and non-motorized boaters on its most popular waterways along the Willamette River Water Trail and the North Santiam River. Marion County should continue to partner with other agencies to fill gaps where possible. The County also should expand non-motorized boating opportunities along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam where feasible. For non-motorized boating, the Oregon Marine Board suggests providing boating facilities at intervals equal to or less than every five river miles (approximately one hour of boating time).

Based on the above-mentioned five-mile guideline, there are existing gaps in access along the Willamette River Water Trail, particularly in the northwest part of the County. This is also an area that is not well served by regional parks. The County could develop a regional park in this area in combination with boating, swimming, camping and/or group picnic areas. This would not only fill gaps in boat access but would provide additional park sites in currently underserved parts of the County. One potential boat launch site has already been identified through the 2005 Oregon Marine Board Six Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan, which recommended the County develop a site near Butteville, just northeast of Champoeg State Park. The County could consider also developing a boat launch at Spong's Landing to compliment existing and proposed expanded recreation opportunities, including camping.

On the North Santiam, there appear to be gaps west of Stayton where boating facilities are needed. In addition, a boat launch or carry-down path could be considered at Minto Park in conjunction with a new park master plan.

In addition to these opportunities, the County should continue to explore opportunities to expand motorized and non-motorized boating along

other waterways. For example, the 2005 Oregon Marine Board Six Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan recommended development of non-motorized boat access along the Pudding River at Aurora. When acquiring sites for future parkland, sites that also provide opportunities for motorized or non-motorized boating should be given a high priority.

CAMPING

Campsites may be designed for either tent or RV use, but are generally grouped in a single area. Camping areas should include shade structures, trash receptacles, and picnic tables. Drinking water and restrooms should be located within easy walking distance. In the case of RV campsites, water and electricity hookups may be provided at each individual site. Marion County does not provide camping currently; however, numerous other camping facilities are provided by other agencies throughout the County.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

There is a growing use of close-to-home camping sites across the country. In 2006, the National Sporting Goods Association reported that camping was the fourth most popular recreational activity in the nation. The 2003 Oregon SCORP study showed a 49% increase in RV camping in Region 2, which includes Marion County, and a 95% increase statewide. However, car, boat and horse camping all decreased in the region over the same time period.

Camping provides a major source of revenues for many county park systems. For example, Linn County generated over \$300,000 in camping revenues from June through August 2006. This was Linn County's largest source of non-general fund revenues. Significantly, 93% of Marion County Community Questionnaire respondents believe that Marion County should charge user fees for camping.

Marion County's growing Hispanic population would also be served by additional camping opportunities. In its most recent report (2008), the Oregon SCORP looked at participation patterns for Hispanic and Asian residents in Oregon. The study found that Hispanic residents would like to camp more, and being in the outdoors was a primary motivator for their recreation participation. A recent questionnaire report for the City of Salem indicates that there is unmet demand for camping among adults, youth, and Latino residents.

Older adults, families with young children, and people with disabilities often enjoy camping cabins or yurts, including those with restrooms. These facilities have been constructed at several Oregon Parks and Recreation Department sites, and are in high demand. Some agencies across the country have capitalized on providing diverse camping experiences, such as providing facilities for campers who arrive by boats, bicycles, and horses. Some agencies have provided dispersed camping for those who prefer greater contact with nature and more privacy.

Other public involvement findings include:

- Over 78% of residents completing the Community Questionnaire indicated that building camping facilities was a medium to high-priority.
- More than 63% of Community Questionnaire respondents said that group camping facilities were either a medium or high priority.
- According to the Community Survey, 39% of residents go group camping at least once a year, 35% go tent camping, and 34% go RV camping. All three are among the top 20 recreation activities in Marion County. RV and group camping are more popular than tent camping.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Camping generates a substantial source of revenue for some agencies, but Marion County should ensure that future camping opportunities would break even or generate revenue. As new park master plans are developed, Marion County should undertake a study to determine the feasibility of developing camping in County parks, including the associated costs, benefits, market analysis, and appropriate fee structures. The study should analyze a variety of camping services, such as tent camping, dispersed camping, group camping, cabin camping and RV camping. Camping facilities should include ADA-accessible facilities, and consider the possibility of serving a wide variety of users, including those arriving by boat, bike, or on foot. Other amenities, such as wireless internet service, should be considered.

Providing camping at existing regional parks, including Bear Creek, Minto, Niagara, Salmon Falls, and Spong's Landing should be considered. The County is limited by campfire restrictions in the Santiam Canyon as well as by lack of water and electricity in some locations. Locating campgrounds along proposed regional trails, such as the North Santiam Canyon Trail project and the North Mill Creek Trail (Woodburn

to the Willamette River via Aurora), the Willamette River Water Trail, and tour routes, such as the Silver Falls Tour Route, would be a further asset. RV parks located close to I-5 could have significant revenue generating ability. Because of the potential for revenue generation, parks that could accommodate camping should be a high priority for future regional parkland acquisitions. The County could consider potential partnerships with other agencies on these ventures.

PICNIC/GROUP PICNIC

Picnic areas and group picnic areas feature tables, trash receptacles, and often include barbecues and water fountains. To accommodate group picnicking, shelters are provided. Most of Marion County's developed parks offer opportunities for picnicking. Currently, there is one group picnic area at Rogers Wayside and three at Spong's Landing. Many other providers also offer picnicking and group picnicking in the County.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Group picnic areas can be a significant source of revenue for park agencies. According to the Community Questionnaire, 63% of residents feel that Marion County should charge user fees for group picnic facilities, which indicates support for generating revenue from these facilities. Focus group participants also highlighted picnic areas as an area of revenue opportunity.

Picnic areas also help build healthy families and communities, which is recognized as one of the major benefits that parks and recreation provide to Marion County residents. The Oregon SCORP notes that although picnicking lost significant participation statewide between 1987 and 2002, it fell by less than 1% in Marion County and County participation was still over 2 million user occasions. Picnicking also has great appeal to the County's Latino population, as noted in the 2008 draft SCORP as well as recent studies conducted by the City of Salem.

Other findings include:

- Survey results show that 76% of Marion County residents picnic at least once a year, and it is the third most popular activity among residents.
- Picnicking ranked 14th out of 33 outdoor recreation activities on the Community Questionnaire.

- Questionnaire results also show that the majority (93%) of residents believe picnic areas should be a high or medium priority, and 80% believe group picnic areas should be a high or medium priority.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Reservable group picnic sites offer a potential source of revenue. Such sites in combination with other amenities, such as playgrounds, informal sports fields, water recreation opportunities, hiking, camping, etc., increases their appeal. The County should provide reservable group picnicking areas at all community parks and regional parks. In addition, group picnic areas should be provided at natural area parks when appropriate. Therefore, group picnic areas are currently needed at Joryville and Scotts Mills community park sites, if Scotts Mills is retained by the County. In addition, group picnic areas are needed at all regional park sites except Spong's Landing. Of existing natural areas, Eola Bend (should public access be available) should be provided with group picnic facilities. A minimum of ten group picnic areas are currently needed. The County should consider developing one of these group picnic areas as a potential wedding site, such as at Niagara Park. This would generate additional revenue for the County.

In addition to the minimum of 11 group picnic areas needed at existing parks, the County should provide group picnic areas at all future regional parks, and consider providing group picnic areas at all future natural area parks, if appropriate. The County should continue to provide individual picnic areas at existing neighborhood and community parks (if retained by the County), natural areas, and regional parks. Individual picnic areas should be provided at all future natural areas, and regional parks.

SWIMMING AREAS

Swimming areas are generally located on reservoirs, lakes, or at slow flow points in a river. Frequently, these areas include picnic tables, restrooms, and parking. Marion County has informal swimming areas at several of its community and regional parks. Spong's Landing is a popular swimming area due to the slower flow of the Willamette River. Scotts Mills Park attracts children and adults to the shallow waters of Butte Creek. Parks along the North Santiam River and Little North Fork of the North Santiam River also provide informal opportunities for swimming. North Fork Park is a very popular swimming hole – so much so that the high level of use it experiences can limit access for emergency vehicles. Aumsville Ponds also provides informal opportunities for swimming. Other providers also offer a wide variety of places to swim.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

The National Sporting Goods Association reported that in 2006, swimming was the second most popular recreational activity in the nation. The 2003 SCORP indicates that although beach activities increased 11% statewide, these activities decreased by 64% in the region that includes Marion County. Across Oregon, swimming in rivers and at traditional swimming holes is a popular activity.

Other public involvement findings include:

- According to the Community Survey, almost half of Marion County residents swim at the beach at least once a year, and it is the 11th most popular recreation activity among residents.
- A significant portion (70%) of Community Questionnaire respondents thought that improvements to swimming areas should be a medium or high priority for Marion County.
- Participation in swimming at the beach ranked 18th out of 33 outdoor recreation activities on the Community Questionnaire.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

With several major waterways in the County, there are significant opportunities for the County to develop additional swimming areas. To provide alternatives to North Fork Park, the County should implement significant site improvements at other Santiam River parks and publicize swimming opportunities at these sites. This includes at least one site along the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River, such as Bear Creek Park. When acquiring future regional parkland, sites that could provide additional swimming opportunities should be high priority.

TRAILS

Trails can be soft-surfaced or hard-surfaced. Examples of soft surfaces include soil, crushed rock, and wood chips. Hardened surfaces include asphalt (permeable or impermeable), concrete, crushed rock or soil stabilized with resin products or cement, open or solid masonry, and boardwalks. Most soft surfaces do not provide accessibility for people with disabilities, but are preferable for some recreation activities, such as running. Most hardened surfaces are accessible, with the exception of some masonry surfaces. Hard-surfaced, multi-use pathway designs may incorporate adjacent soft-surfaced paths for running or equestrian use.



Most of Marion County's developed parks have pedestrian trails that provide access to site amenities and opportunities for walking or hiking. These are usually unpaved trails and are often gravel. In addition, Joryville Park has a short hard-surfaced multi-use trail as well as a trail for equestrians. Eola Bend has a multi-use gravel trail that is also used by bicyclists.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Trail-related recreation opportunities are some of the most popular activities in the nation and in Oregon. According to the NSGA, exercise walking is the top ranked recreation activity in the nation, bicycle riding is 8th, hiking is 12th, and running/jogging is 14th. According to the Oregon SCORP, day hiking increase by over 20% in Marion County region between 1987 and 2002.

During the Master Plan public involvement process, community members emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for trail-related recreation, and of connecting parks, communities, and destinations through trails. The Oregon Trails Plan also noted the need for connectivity as well as providing trail opportunities close to population centers. According to a survey conducted as part of the Trails Plan, the top ranked trail activities in terms of participation are day hiking (87%), walking for pleasure (82%), bicycling (38%), and jogging or running (29%). About 7% participated in horseback riding and 2% in hiking with horses, mules, or llamas.

In the Marion County Master Plan Community Survey, over 79% of residents rated improvements to hiking trails, on-road bicycle lanes, and multi-use trails as a high or medium priority. Over 50% ranked improvements to unpaved mountain bike trails and equestrian trails as high or medium priority. These improvements also were supported by Community Questionnaire respondents.

Also on the Community Survey, walking for pleasure was the top recreation activity in Marion County. Nature walks, hiking, dog walking, road bicycling, and jogging or running are also popular and fall within the County's top 20 most popular activities.

ON-ROAD BIKE LANES NEEDS ANALYSIS

On-road bike lanes are designated lanes for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. These can provide scenic bikeways that promote

recreation and tourism. For example, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and Oregon Department of Transportation established the Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway, a 130-mile route that connects Champoeg State Park in Marion County with Armitage County Park in Eugene.

For future development, Marion County Parks should work with County transportation staff to identify gaps in bicycle lanes along routes from population areas to existing or future County parks. Routes that connect to existing or future regional trails, water trails, scenic auto routes or tour routes should also be a priority. Some of these areas include: areas along the Willamette River, areas along the proposed North Mill Creek Trail, and areas along the North Santiam Canyon Trail. Paving existing roadway shoulders, or adding new paved shoulders, even if not constructed and marked to full bikeway standards, can provide facilities that function well for bicyclists and provide enhanced safety for motorists.

REGIONAL/ MULTI-USE TRAIL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Regional and multi-use trails are usually hard-surfaced in order to allow for bicycles, pedestrians, and accessibility for people with disabilities. Regional trails link population areas and destination points. Multi-use trails provide opportunities for a variety of trail users, such as bicyclists, pedestrians, and people with disabilities, within a park site. Soft-surfaced equestrian and jogging trails are sometimes provided along side these trails.

REGIONAL TRAILS

The County should continue to collaborate with other agencies to develop the North Mill Creek Trail, a 15-mile multi-use trail that will connect Woodburn's Mill Creek Greenway with the Willamette River via Aurora. In addition, the County should continue to collaborate with other agencies to develop the North Santiam Canyon Trail along Highway 22 between Lyons and Idanha.

MULTI-USE TRAILS

The County should provide multi-use trails in existing and future community parks and natural areas when appropriate. In addition, the County should provide multi-use trails in existing and future regional parks. When possible, loop trails should be provided. Of the County's existing parks, a multi-use trail could be added to Scotts Mills, Aumsville

Ponds, Bear Creek, Minto, Niagara, North Fork, St. Louis Ponds, Salmon Falls, and Spong's Landing.

PEDESTRIAN TRAIL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Pedestrian trails are generally soft-surfaced, although a permeable or impermeable hard surface may be provided for ADA accessibility. Pedestrian trails should be provided in community parks, when feasible, and in existing and future natural areas and regional parks. Most of these County parks currently have a pedestrian trail system or development of a multi-use trail is recommended. New park master plans are recommended for a number of regional parks. When these master plans are developed, opportunities to expand the trail system while preserving natural resources should be further evaluated. In addition, further opportunities for ADA accessible trails should be explored in these master plans.

EQUESTRIAN TRAIL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Equestrian trails for horseback riding can be provided independently or along side multi-use and regional trails. The equestrian trail in Joryville Park is popular. The County should evaluate additional opportunities to provide equestrian trails in conjunction with future multi-use or regional trails as well as in future regional parks.



OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES BMX FACILITIES

Marion County's Rogers Wayside Park has become a popular destination for BMX bike riders and their families. Through the efforts of local volunteers and businesses, the park accommodates informal use of the BMX track and unsanctioned local BMX competitions. Although this site is popular, no great demand for more facilities has been noted during the Master Plan public involvement process.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

There are no suitable locations for additional BMX facilities in existing community parks or in regional parks. However, BMX facilities provide positive activities for youth, and could be considered in future regional parks if compatible with its character and other proposed uses.

DOG PARKS

Dog parks can be either free-standing facilities or dedicated portions of larger parks. In either case, these areas are designed as off-leash areas for

dogs. Dog parks should include shade, trash receptacles, and drinking fountains.

Marion County currently does not provide dog parks. Keizer Rapids Park, a regional park managed by the City of Keizer, as well as the City of Salem both have off-leash dog areas. Across the country, dog parks are in high demand. Some agencies have provided off-leash dog trails through natural areas, and these have been popular. When asked about recreation facility improvements, over 67% of Community Questionnaire respondents thought that dog parks were a high or medium priority. According to the Community Survey, 37% of residents walk dogs or visit dog parks, making these activities the 15th most popular activities among residents. Dog walking was the second most popular recreation activity among respondents to the Community Questionnaire.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Dog walking and dog parks are extremely popular among Marion County residents. The County should consider including these in community or regional parks. An off-leash dog trail could be considered at one of the regional parks along the North or Little North Santiam, such as Bear Creek or Minto Parks. Dog parks should be considered in future regional parks if compatible with park character and other proposed uses.

DISC GOLF

Disc golf courses consist of a series of numbered posts and cages set at regular intervals to serve as “holes.” Signage should accompany each hole. Courses are usually located in natural areas. Disc golf has been growing in popularity in a number of Oregon communities. Players often travel around the state to play on courses in various cities, such as Eugene and Corvallis. Although not an activity with high participation, the Community Survey indicates that about 10% of the population participates at least a few times per year. A moderate demand for disc golf facilities was noted in the Community Questionnaire. About 44% of Community Questionnaire respondents thought that disc golf courses were a medium or high priority.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The County should consider including a disc golf course in community or regional parks. Of the County’s existing parks, a disc golf course could be added at Spong’s Landing. Disc golf courses should be considered in future regional parks if compatible with park character and other proposed uses.

FISHING AREAS

Fishing areas include piers, landings, or any designated area where fishing is promoted. Marion County has numerous parks where fishing is accessible from riverbanks and/or lakeshores, including all regional parks, Scotts Mills, and Aumsville Ponds. Local volunteers have constructed an ADA-accessible fishing facility at St. Louis Ponds with wide paved pathways and piers, and lowered railings that accommodate wheelchair users.



Findings from the Community Survey found that about 42% of residents fish at least once a year, making fishing the 13th most popular recreation activity in Marion County. About 68% of Community Questionnaire respondents ranked improvements to fishing piers as a medium or high priority. Fishing also ranked as the 13th most popular recreation activity out of 33 outdoor recreation activities on the Community Questionnaire. Nationally, fishing was the sixth most popular recreational activity in 2006, according to the National Sporting Goods Association.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Fishing is a popular recreation activity in Marion County and a high priority to residents. To meet ADA guidelines, Marion County should provide at least one ADA accessible fishing area in its park system. Since the fishing area at St. Louis Ponds is accessible, this guideline has been met. However, to provide a high standard of service and universal access to diverse recreation experiences, the County could aspire to provide one accessible fishing area per major waterbody. This would include providing an accessible fishing area on the North Santiam and/or Little North Fork of the North Santiam Rivers, possibly at Packsaddle; and an accessible fishing area on the Willamette River, at Eola Bend or at a future site. In addition, improvements are needed to the fishing pier at Aumsville Ponds to make it fully accessible. Additional accessible fishing opportunities could be provided if Marion County acquires parkland along other waterbodies in the future.

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds can be constructed using a variety of materials, but must include impact-attenuating surfacing and a sufficient barrier to divide play

area from neighboring uses. Shade structures should also be provided. All of Marion County's neighborhood parks except Parkdale have playground equipment. One community park (Scotts Mills) and one regional park (Spong's Landing) also includes play equipment.

Playgrounds are very popular and a high priority for Marion County residents. Community Survey results show that about 58% of residents visit a playground at least once a year, making it Marion County's seventh most popular recreation activity. About 85% of Community Questionnaire respondents ranked playground improvements as a high or medium priority. It ranked 11th out of 33 outdoor recreation activities in terms of participation on the questionnaire. According to the 2003 Oregon SCORP, Regions 2 and 3, which include Marion County, experienced a 113% increase in playground usage in the period between 1987 and 2002.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Playgrounds should be provided in neighborhood parks, and in community and regional parks, if compatible with park character and other proposed uses. If Marion County retains its neighborhood parks, it should provide a play area in Parkdale. In regional parks, play areas could be provided in parks that support active recreation or as a campground amenity. Of the existing regional parks, small play areas could be considered for Minto and Niagara as part of future park master plans if camping or major day use areas are included. Play areas could also be considered in future regional parks.



SPORTS FIELDS (INFORMAL)

Informal fields support a variety of sports, depending on the season, such as soccer, baseball, softball, ultimate Frisbee or football. Fields must be level without holes or mounds. Open fields in parks near populated areas can be used to host the practices and games of local sports organizations. This helps to relieve pressure on town or city park and recreation departments. These fields are also important as locations for activities that are not part of an organized sports group, such as pick-up games or informal play by day users or campers.

Marion County currently provides sports fields at three of its five neighborhood parks and at Spong's Landing, a regional park. Other

recreation providers in the Marion County area currently provide formal and informal sports fields. Sports fields at city parks in Salem, Keizer, and other Marion County cities and towns are popular places for pick up games of soccer, football or softball.

The 2008 Draft SCORP identifies sports activities as among those most popular with Latino residents. A recent community questionnaire conducted as part of the City of Salem Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan also notes the popularity of sports among the Latino population. Informal fields provide opportunities for all residents to participate in active recreation that supports healthy lifestyles. This may be especially important for Latino residents who may be less likely to participate in formal sports organizations that have access to reserved fields.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Marion County should provide informal sports fields at neighborhood parks, and at community and regional parks, if compatible with park character and other proposed uses. If the County retains its neighborhood parks, the County should provide an informal sports field at Parkdale. In addition, an informal sports field could be considered for Scotts Mill, depending on its future master plan and ownership. Informal sports fields do not appear to be appropriate at other existing regional parks, in addition to the play fields provided at Spong's Landing. The County should provide informal sports fields in new regional parks where feasible. Providing sports fields in conjunction with other recreation amenities, such as camping and group picnic sites, would further increase the value of regional parks.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Golf Course:** The County does not own and operate a golf course. According to the International City/County Management Association, about half of western communities responding to their survey provide public golf courses, and most of these do not make a profit. Some courses are constructed as stormwater or sewer treatment facilities, which make them eligible for additional funding. The City of Salem recently completed a study that inventoried area golf courses. There are nine existing public and private courses within a 10-mile radius of Salem. The study concluded that most golf courses cost over \$10 million. It is therefore important that a financial feasibility study be conducted prior to developing a golf course. About 15% of residents participate in golf according to the Community Survey. However, Community Questionnaire respondents ranked developing a golf course as their lowest priority recreation facility out of 13 possible improvements.
- **Sports Courts:** Marion County currently has one sport court in Santana Park, which is a neighborhood park. Sports courts would also be suitable in future regional parks if compatible with its character and other proposed uses.
- **Skate Park:** Marion County does not have a skate park. Both downtown Salem and Keizer have skate parks. These parks are very popular with youth and could be considered for inclusion in future regional parks if compatible with its character and other proposed uses.
- **OHV Facility:** About 18% of residents use OHVs according to the Community Survey. There are no OHV facilities in Marion County. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has a grant program that funds the development and operation of OHV facilities, and notes in the SCORP that OHV use has increased 34% from 1987-2002. Some communities have considered developing these facilities as a means of generating revenues and channeling users to a designated facility. These facilities also can attract OHV tourism. If a suitable site becomes available and Marion County elects to pursue this direction, the County should first conduct a financial feasibility analysis to determine the cost/benefits.

PUBLIC INFORMATION NEEDS

Marion County currently has a modest parks information program. A brochure lists County parks and amenities, and residents can obtain additional information on the County's web site. On the web site, each park is described along with its location, a list of amenities and the park's history where appropriate. For several parks, significant natural areas where preservation or restoration activities are in place are also featured. Most parks have links to vicinity maps.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS

Increasing the amount and quality of public outreach about parks and recreation provided by the County was a consistent theme across the public involvement phase of the master plan. Many residents are unclear about which parks in the region are Marion County parks. While residents appreciate having nearby parks, open space and natural areas, more information about what is available would assist them in choosing, utilizing and appreciating County parks.

Other findings from the public involvement activities include:

- According to Parks Commissioners, Marion County needs to provide more information to residents about parks and recreation opportunities. Lack of resident knowledge was considered one of the County's biggest weaknesses.
- Community focus group participants also cited lack of awareness as a weakness. Participants also indicated the importance of building on public support by providing outreach, interpretation, and services.
- On the Questionnaire, the reason most residents had not visited a Marion County park in the last 12 months was because they didn't know where they were or what was available (45%).
- On the Survey, a total of 173 residents responded to a question asking which Marion County park they visit the most often. Only 16 mentioned a Marion County Park. Over half of respondents listed a Salem Park, 37 listed state parks, and 17 other parks were mentioned.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The County should embark on a public outreach effort to inform residents about the opportunities available at existing County parks. This public outreach should include a multifaceted approach via web-based information, newspaper articles, and other media. The County could also increase its parks programming in conjunction with other agencies and groups to showcase specific aspects of parks, such as

history at Niagara, restoration at Bonesteele and Aumsville Ponds, and multi-agency and volunteer collaboration at Eola Bend Park.

Outreach to the public should also be geared toward Marion County’s diverse residents, and include brochures and signage in Spanish and other languages as appropriate. The County should explore other means of ensuring that all of its residents have easy access to parks information and reservations.

These efforts will not only inform Marion County residents about nearby parks, but would increase park use and appreciation for the diversity of recreational opportunities in the County. Working with regional tourism and trails projects to feature County parks on tour routes and trails would further establish Marion County parks as destinations and as links in a larger network of parks and natural areas in the region.

APPENDIX D: CAPITAL AND NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

D-1: Proposed Capital Projects

Project	Priority		
	I	II	III
Park Improvements			
Improve park entry, interpretive and directional signage	■		
Community Parks			
Joryville			
Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables and barbecues			■
Provide accessible path of travel linking amenities			■
Consider developing paved parking with accessible parking			■
Develop reservable, covered group picnic area	■		
Rogers Wayside			
Develop new site master plan			■
Implement new site master plan			■
Scotts Mills			
Consider transferring the park to Scotts Mills or develop new site master plan			■
Implement new site master plan if developed			■
Natural Areas			
Aumsville Ponds			
Complete perimeter pathway	■		
Provide accessible multi-use trail			■
Add additional picnic areas, including accessible picnic tables			■
Rebuild outlook with accessible railings and pathway			■
Bonesteele			
Provide a small picnicking area near the parking lot			■
Provide accessible parking lot			■
Eola Bend			
Improve public access			■
Provide accessible path of travel linking amenities			■
Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, benches and barbecues			■
Provide one or more group picnic areas with shelters			■
Regional Parks			
Bear Creek			
Develop new site master plan		■	
Implement site master plan		■	■
Minto Park			
Develop new site master plan	■		
Implement site master plan	■	■	
Niagara			
Develop new site master plan	■		
Implement site master plan	■	■	
North Fork			
Develop new site master plan	■		
Implement site master plan	■	■	
Packsaddle			
Provide accessible path of travel linking amenities			■
Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, water fountain, benches and barbecues			■
Provide accessible parking area			■
Consider a group picnic area			■
Develop additional picnic areas along river			■
Improve path to river			■
Improve the boat ramp		■	
Provide accessible fishing platform		■	■
St. Louis Ponds			
Provide additional accessible amenities such as picnic tables, water fountain, benches and barbecues			■
Consider adding an accessible nature trail or multi-use trail in partnership w/ODFW		■	■

D-1: Proposed Capital Projects

Project	Priority		
	I	II	III
Provide one or more group picnic areas with shelters		■	
Pave the entrance road and parking lot	■		
Salmon Falls			
Develop new site master plan			■
Implement site master plan			
Spong's Landing			
Provide accessible path of travel linking amenities			■
Provide accessible amenities such as picnic tables, water fountain, benches and barbecues			
Provide one or more additional group picnic areas with shelters	■		
Provide permanent accessible restroom facilities			
Consider a disc golf course			■
Replace stairs to beach area			
Provide multi-use trail			■
Undeveloped Parks			
Sell the Cain Property	■		
New Parks			
Acquire approximately 134 acres of new parkland			■
Develop master plans for new parks			■
Implement new site master plans			■
New Recreation Facilities			
Boating Facilities			
Consider developing a boat launch in association with a new regional park in the northwest part of the county			■
Consider providing a non-motorized boat ramp or carry-down path at regional parks along the Little North Fork		■	
Develop non-motorized boat launch west of Stayton (North Santiam)		■	
Expand non-motorized boat access along Pudding River at Aurora			■
Swimming Areas			
Develop additional swimming opportunities along the Little North Fork		■	
Trails			
Collaborate to develop North Mill Creek Trail		■	
Continue to collaborate to develop North Santiam Canyon Trail	■		
Fishing Areas			
Develop ADA accessible fishing area on the North Santiam or Little North Fork			■
Develop ADA accessible fishing area on the Willamette River			■

D-2: Proposed Non-Capital Projects

Project	Priority		
	I	II	III
Planning and Design			
Negotiate the transfer or sale of identified properties			
Complete parks boundary survey			
Evaluate opportunities to expand motorized and non-motorized boating			
Partner with other agencies to fill gaps in boating opportunities			
Work with County transportation to provide on-road bike lanes to parks			
Conduct camping feasibility study			
Evaluate opportunities to expand pedestrian trail system			
Evaluate opportunities to provide equestrian trails			
Develop ADA Strategic Plan			
Develop a maintenance/vegetation management plan			
Conduct a study of natural and historic resources			
Support local and regional tourism efforts			
Financing			
Establish an opportunity fund for land acquisition			
Maximize donations, grants, and partnerships			
Consider selling or trading land			
Encourage donations of land, facilities, equipment, services and gifts			
Consider a wide variety of funding			
Reevaluate annually the project priorities and timelines			
Add revenue-generating facilities to parks			
Partnerships			
Facilitate collaboration among area recreation providers			
Continue to collaborate with tourism organizations			
Partner with schools and non-profit organizations			
Programming			
Develop new programs around special events and the environment for families and youth			
Increase parks programming			
Personnel			
Expand volunteer opportunities by adding 1 FTE			
Consider hiring a full-time program manager			
Hire adequate maintenance staff			
Increase Environmental Specialist position to 1 FTE			
Public Information			
Develop public outreach campaign			

APPENDIX E: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines have been developed for each park classification in Marion County, to provide direction regarding the types of amenities and facilities that should be provided in parks, as well as other supporting facilities to consider. This appendix presents these guidelines for each park type in Marion County, its definition, and considerations about size and access. It also includes information about resources to provide or avoid:

- The “Minimum Resources” column identifies the basic resources that should be provided in parks of that classification.
- The “May Include Additional Resources” column identifies resources that are also appropriate within parks of that classification if there is space, funding, or community interest.
- The “Does Not Include Conflicting Resources” column identifies resources that are not compatible with a classification’s function.

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DO NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Neighborhood Parks	Neighborhood-serving parks that provide easy access to basic recreation resources such as playgrounds, open turf, and picnic tables. Neighborhood parks are typically less than ten acres. Neighborhood parks are located within biking and walking distances of users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes health and wellness by providing close-to-home opportunities for physical activity Contributes to neighborhood identity Preserves open space within neighborhoods Provides a space for family and small group gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5 acre minimum Street frontage on at least two sides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground or play features At least one picnic table and one bench ADA-compliant internal pathway system Perimeter path or sidewalks Open turf area (minimum 50' x 50') Trees Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) At least one active recreation resource (see "May Include" list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal turf fields Sports courts (basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court) Other small-scale active recreation resources (skate spot, horseshoe pits, bocce court, shuffleboard lane) Interactive water feature (small scale) Community garden Shelter, shade structure or gazebo Lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination facilities or resources with community-wide draw Floral plantings (annuals, perennials, display gardens) Restrooms Off-street parking

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAJOR CLUE/ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DESIGN NOTES/INCLUDE CAPTURE RESOURCES
Community Parks	<p>Community parks support a wide range of activities including active recreation (such as disc golf, soccer and horseback riding) and outdoor recreational opportunities, such as fishing, hiking, swimming, and bird watching. These parks also serve as community gathering spaces, offering a variety of facilities that can accommodate small or large groups. Community parks may also include significant natural areas and trails. Visitors to community parks may arrive on foot, by bicycle or via car, and require off-street parking and restrooms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups that support health and wellness Provides opportunities to enjoy nature and to relieve the stresses of urban living Provide important habitat links to other nearby natural areas Contributes to environmental sustainability by incorporating sustainable design elements Serves recreation needs of families Provides opportunities for community social and cultural activities and positive community identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 acres minimum Generally larger than 20 acres Access from a major street Transit access preferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plyground or play features Picnic tables and benches Group picnic area ADA-compliant internal pathway system, including looped walking path Informal turf fields (baseball, cricket, football, rugby, soccer, softball, multi-purpose) Restrooms Off-street parking Trees Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other active recreation resources (basketball and/or tennis court, BMX course or facility, croquet court, disc golf course, fitness stations, handball court, horseshoe pit, skateboard park, shuffleboard lanes, volleyball court, etc.) Other facilities or resources with communitywide draw Community garden Off-leash dog area Stage/performance area Upgraded utility services to support special events Natural areas Lighting Shrub beds Maintenance facilities Multi-use trails Pedestrian trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional-scale facilities (arboretum, botanical garden, zoo, regional sports complex) Floral plantings, except at entry signs

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Natural Areas	<p>Natural areas are permanent, undeveloped green spaces managed for both their natural value as well as for passive recreational use. Natural areas can range in size from a few to over 100 acres, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitat, or stream corridors. Marion County's designated Natural Heritage Parks are included in this classification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides opportunities for experiencing nature close to home ▪ Contributes to the environmental health of the community including improving water and air quality ▪ Provides opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as walking and bird watching, as well as environmental education ▪ Preserves wildlife and environmentally sensitive areas, such as riparian areas, ecologically important landscapes, or endangered plant species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Size should be based on natural resource needs and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural areas ▪ Park identification sign ▪ Interpretive signage ▪ Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking ▪ Restrooms ▪ Picnic tables ▪ Trail or pathway system ▪ Trailhead or entry ▪ Viewpoints or viewing blinds ▪ Interpretive center or educational facilities or classrooms (indoor or outdoor) ▪ Shelter, shade structure or gazebo ▪ Amenities provided should be limited to the numbers and types of visitors the area can accommodate, while retaining its resource value and natural character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turf areas ▪ Ornamental plantings ▪ Active use facilities (sports fields, paved courts, etc.)

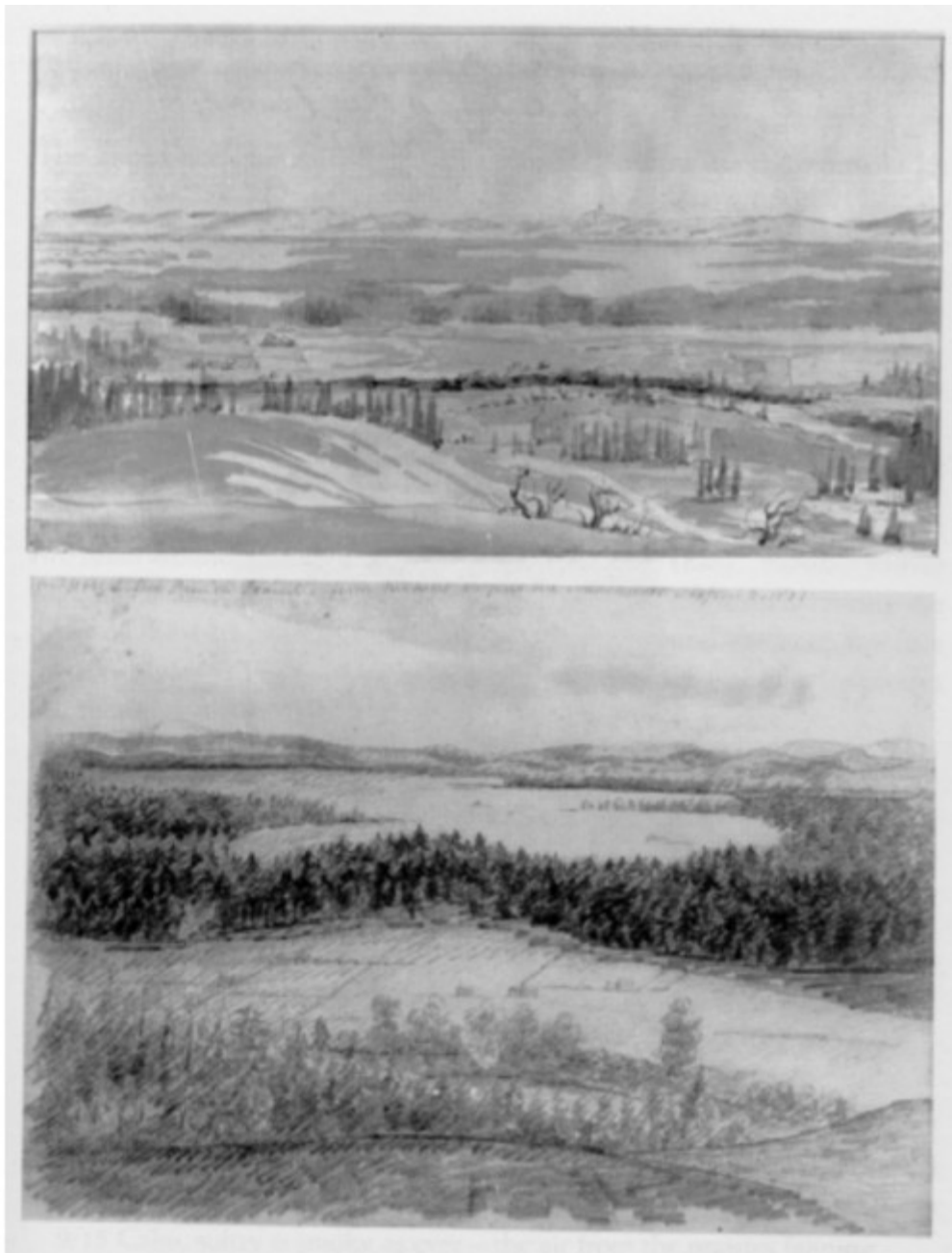
CLASSIFICATION	DESIGN GOALS	BENEFITS	SITE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAXIMIZE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT IDENTIFY CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Regional Parks	<p>Parks that provide access to unique features, including natural areas, and attract users from throughout the region. These parks can accommodate group activities and often have infrastructure to support camping or special events. Regional parks include supporting facilities, such as restrooms and parking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups Provides opportunities for experiencing nature close to home Contributes to the environmental health of the community including improving water and air quality Provides opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as walking and bird watching, as well as environmental education Serves recreation needs of families Provides regional opportunities for community social and cultural activities Provides positive community identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 acres minimum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources with regional draw Natural areas ADA-compliant internal pathway system, including looped walking path Restrooms Parking Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal turf fields Boat ramps Camping facilities Fishing area Swimming area Multi-use and pedestrian trails Playgrounds Picnic areas and group picnic areas Infrastructure and utility service to support large community events Stage/amphitheatre Sports courts (basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court) Other active recreation resources (dog park, BMX course or facility, disc golf course, fitness stations, horseshoe pit, interactive water feature, skate park, volleyball court, etc.) Commercial ventures or features Concessions Interpretive signage or facilities Other facilities or resources with communitywide draw Lighting Shrub beds, floral plantings Maintenance facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No conflicting resources identified

APPENDIX F: NATURAL HERITAGE
PARKS PROGRAM

Natural Heritage Parks Plan
Marion County Department of Public Works
April 2010



"Wallamette" by Henry Warre, 1845. Showing oak savanna, with forested areas along waterways and in the distance. (Boyd, 1999.)



"Two views of Willamette Valley prairies from Chehalem Mountain. Champoeg is in the foreground; the French Prairie is in the distance.

Top: by Paul Kane, 1847. Below: by George Gibbs, 1851".(Boyd, 1999.)

"Our route has been through what might be called a hilly prairie country, the grass mostly burned off by recent fires, and the whole country sprinkled with oaks, so regularly dispersed as to have the appearance of a continued orchard of oak trees." – Henry Eld 1841. (Boyd, 1999.)

"I rode through the entire upper settlement of the East of the willhamet

[Waldo Hills] *and was highly pleased with the beautiful variety of hill and valley so softly varied and intermingled with hill and dale as Likewise timber and Prairie all luxuriantly clothed in a rich and heavy coat of vegetation and litterly clothed in Flowers the uplands in yellow and the valleys in purple. The Quantity of small flowering vegetables is very remarkable and beyond all conception.*" James Clyman 1846 (Boyd, 1999.)

Natural Heritage Parks Plan

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IV. Methods for Site Identification and Evaluation

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Marion County Natural Heritage Parks Plan

Executive Summary

This appendix to the 2010 Parks Master Plan supersedes the original Natural Heritage Parks Program, adopted by Resolution 01-10R of the Marion County Board of Commissioners on February 21, 2001.

Recognizing the recreation needs of a growing population and a decline in the level of service that Marion County's parks are currently providing, the Parks program should ideally expand its current system of parklands. Due to current budgetary limitations, however, the parks that can be provided by Marion County in the short-term may tend toward the less developed, nature-type parks with limited facilities, such as picnic tables and soft paths. The Natural Heritage Parks Plan provides a way of locating and rating different areas for their potential as future parkland. It also describes ways to derive additional benefits from the new park sites through ecological restoration and preservation processes. By doubling as restoration sites, these new parklands will help address the loss of historical ecosystems and provide increased recreational opportunities to county residents.

With its increased development and growing population, Marion County has lost many of the ecosystems that existed prior to Euro-American settlement. Those pre-settlement ecosystems included forested uplands, prairies, oak savannas, wetlands, shrub-lands, and riparian forests. Within these ecosystems there were unique communities of plants and animals, many of which have become rare or are absent in today's Marion County. Historically, the ecosystems also provided important environmental benefits, such as flood control, groundwater recharge, and soil stabilization. In a modern context, these ecosystems also serve as important aesthetic and recreation resources. The loss of these ecosystems threatens not only the environmental quality of Marion County, but also its connection to a rich natural history.

In an effort to re-create some of this lost natural heritage and provide high-quality outdoor recreation, it is the goal of Marion County to have each of its pre-Euro-American settlement ecosystems restored and represented in at least one "Natural Heritage Park." The Natural Heritage Parks Program has three primary objectives.

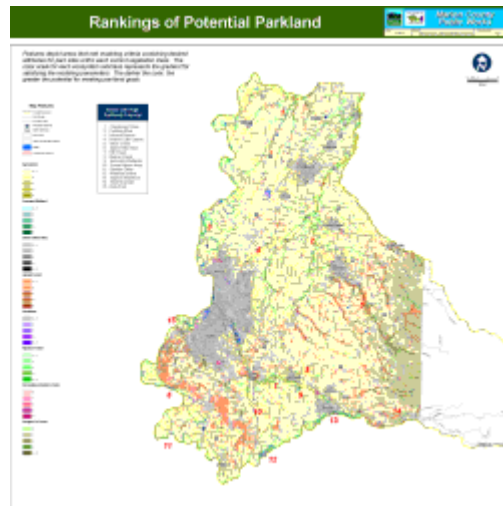
1. Provide visitors the opportunity for nature-oriented recreation, environmental education, and appreciation of Marion County's natural heritage.
2. Provide critical habitats for rare plants and animals.
3. Reestablish important environmental processes.

To select the potential Natural Heritage Park sites, the pre-Euro-American settlement ecosystems that the county wished to represent within the park system were first defined. Working with these historical ecosystems as objectives, a decision framework was developed for identifying specific areas that could be preserved or restored, while also providing secondary benefits that achieved county goals. This framework was developed through research of similar projects,

recommendations from county staff members, discussions with other public land management agencies, and a close examination of the county’s long-term goals.

The decision criteria resulting from this research fell into five primary categories: 1) preservation opportunities, 2) hydrologic features, 3) soil stability, 4) land use/location, and 5) ownership. Within these five categories specific site selection criteria were developed as mapped data. These criteria included the rarity of a given ecosystem, proximity to other public lands and schools, ease of public access, convergence of multiple ecosystems, proximity to sensitive habitats, and the sites’ current physical conditions, among many other items. Using these criteria, six primary areas with restoration potential were identified.

(See Map: "Rankings of Potential Parkland" - Numbers correspond to this map.)



Number	Name of Area	Restoration Ecosystem	Acquisition Priority
14	Stout Mountain	Savanna, prairie, woodland, wetland	High priority
7, 8, 9	Aumsville/Mill Crk. Area	Shrubland, wet prairie, riparian	High priority
6	Salem Hills West	Savanna and upland prairie	Medium priority
10	Turner to Marion Area	Wet prairie and savanna	Medium priority
11	Santiam Delta	Riparian forests and prairie	Medium priority
15	Eola Point	Riparian forests and wetland	Medium priority

By taking a systematic approach to the acquisition of sites within these and similar areas, Marion County can, over time, improve the park system’s level of service while providing relatively low-cost, high-value parkland that restores and conserves important ecosystems before they are further disturbed or lost entirely. The conservation of these ecosystems within the park system will also serve as a structure for the enhancement of their environmental processes, and consequently improve the environmental quality of the county. With thoughtful restoration and diligent maintenance, these sites have the potential to promote and preserve Marion County’s natural heritage while also serving as important refuges for threatened species and unique recreation destinations for county residents.

I. Introduction

Recognizing the recreation needs of a growing population and a decline in the level of service that Marion County’s parks are currently providing, the Natural Heritage Parks (NHP) Plan proposes to expand its current system of parklands. Due to current budgetary limitations, the parks that can be provided by Marion County may tend toward the less developed, nature-type parks with limited facilities, such as picnic tables and soft paths. The NHP Plan provides a way of locating and rating different areas for their potential as parkland. The Plan also describes ways to derive additional benefits from the new park sites through ecological restoration and preservation processes.

II. Current Park Status and County Conditions

Current Status of Marion County Parks - Level of Service and Funding

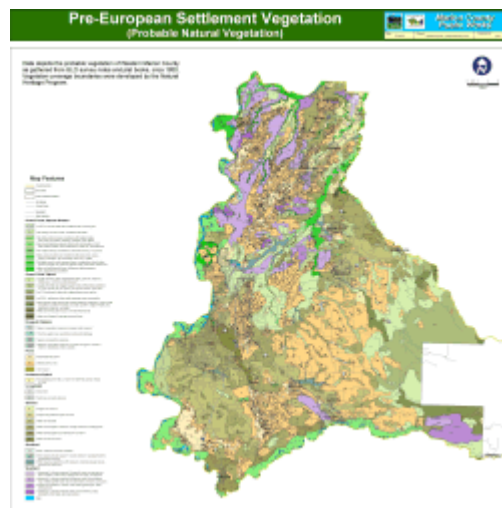
The Marion County Parks system currently contains 746 acres of developed and undeveloped parkland. Of that total, 477 acres are developed parks and 269 acres are undeveloped parks. Further discussion of the level of service provided by Marion County Parks is contained in the 2010 Parks Master Plan.

Considering the budgetary limitations of the Parks program, one way to provide an increased level of service is through low-cost, nature-oriented parks. While the costs of restoring parkland to its pre-settlement conditions can still be considerable, they are small when compared with that of developing and maintaining an intensive-use park with facilities like ball fields and shelters.

Today’s high costs for developed parks require a focus on less costly, nature-type parks for near future park expansion. In order to direct the acquisition of additional lands, while minimizing the costs and capitalizing on their potential secondary environmental benefits, it is important to understand the landscape in which these areas are situated.

Historical conditions

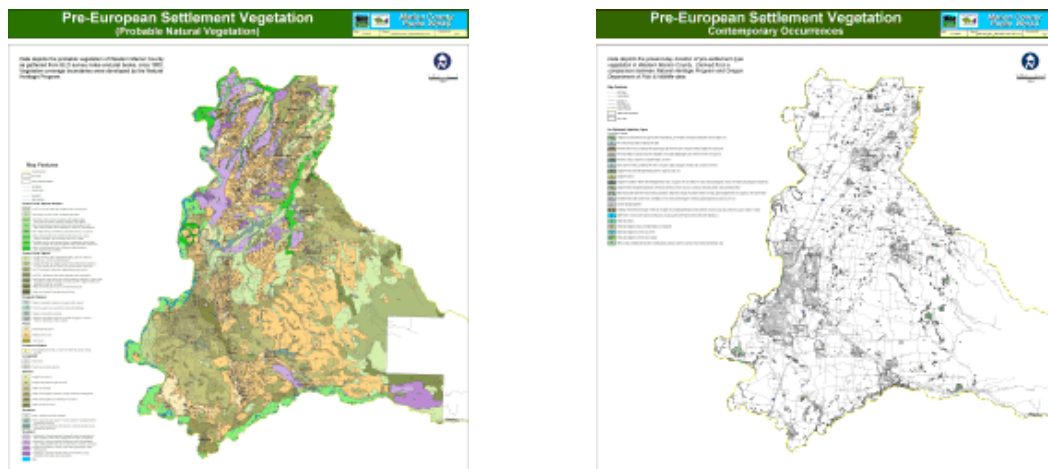
(See Map: Pre-European Settlement Vegetation - Probable Natural Vegetation)



Drawing from information found in early land surveying records and settler accounts, we can recreate a picture of the landscapes that greeted this area's first pioneers. The pre-settlement landscape that they saw was not untouched by humans. Native Americans had managed the valley by using deliberately-set fires as a way to maintain game habitats, desirable plants, and open areas. Some of the early landscapes such as the scenic oak savannas and native grass prairies that covered much of Willamette Valley were a direct result of this fire ecology (Boyd, 1999.) Along the rivers spread forests of cottonwood, alder, ash, and other hardwoods, sometimes for miles back from the banks. Extensive wetlands formed along the winding rivers and also made up shrub swamps, wet prairies, and marshes. (Oregon Biodiversity Project, 1998. Hulse, 1998.)

Current Conditions

(See Maps: Current Vegetation & Pre-European Vegetation - Existing Contemporary Occurrences)



With increasing settlement of the area came deliberate fire suppression, intensive agricultural and forestry practices, and the influx of new plants. The landscape quickly changed from its pre-settlement conditions to the ones we would more readily recognize today. Areas that once held ecosystems such as the oak savannas, wide riverside forests, expansive wetlands, and open prairies, now feature growing urban centers, highly productive agricultural and forested areas, and rural homes. (Hulse, 1998.)

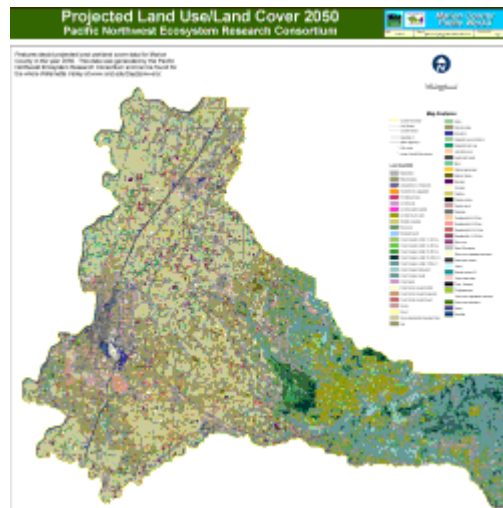
Currently agriculture, production-oriented forests, and urban development occupy the largest areas of the county. As the maps indicate, the ecosystems that once defined the Willamette Valley have been reduced to small, scattered pockets, or lost entirely. As can be seen from Table 1, nearly 90% of the Valley's pre-settlement ecosystems have been converted from their original condition. (Hulse, 1998.) While some plants and animals can adapt to this new environment, the ones that cannot are restricted to the remaining fragments of undisturbed lands.

Table 1. Comparison of pre-Euro-American settlement and contemporary ecosystems across entire Willamette Valley. (Hulse 1998.)

Willamette Valley Vegetation Type	Year 1850 (acres)	Year 1995 (acres)	Amount Lost
Riparian/Bottomland Forest	350,999	98,924	72%
Bottomland/Wet Prairie/Shrubland	877,240	4,942	99%
Emergent Wetland	4,695	1,992	58%
Douglas Fir Upland Woodland	362,132	47,564	87%
Oak savanna and prairie	1,701,536	206,269	88%
Total acres	3,296,602	359,691	89%

Anticipated future conditions

(See Map: "Year 2050 Land Use/Land Cover")



A study conducted by the University of Oregon provides some insight into future land use patterns. Operating under the assumption that current development trends are expected to continue into the near future, the "Anticipated 2050 Land Use" map indicates the population of the Willamette Valley is expected to double, with a corresponding increase in urban density and area. The growing population will place increasing demand on available land resources, reducing options for future park acquisition and inflating the costs of those acquisitions. This larger population will also require additional parkland to meet its recreational needs.

Implications of these conditions

The implications of these changes in Marion County’s landscape include the additional loss of unique ecosystems as well as the loss of the plant and animal species that depended on them.(Oregon Biodiversity Project, 1998.) In addition to this decrease in biodiversity, losing these ecosystems also reduces important environmental functions such as flood control,

groundwater recharge, soil stabilization, and water quality. (U.S.A.C.E, 1999. Cairns, 1994.) While these losses are substantial, there are also historical and recreation implications to consider. Without the presence of these recreation areas, people have few opportunities to interact with the county's natural history or understand the landscapes that greeted early pioneers and sustained Native American tribes. And without an understanding of how these landscapes formed and functioned, Marion County citizens may not be able to adequately address current natural resources issues.



Ecological Restoration Parks can provide many of the same recreational benefits as more developed parks, while providing an increased level of environmental benefit. Here, bikers and dog owners enjoy Minto Brown Island Park - a restored site in Salem, Oregon.

III. Addressing the problem

To accomplish its goal of increasing the level of service provided by the County Parks, the County developed a plan to acquire properties and restore them to pre-settlement conditions through the "Natural Heritage Parks" program. In addition to land acquisition and restoration, the Natural Heritage Parks program also provides for the development of education, recreation, and secondary environmental benefits within the park system.

Already, the Natural Heritage Parks program has guided the negotiation and planning of park properties. Aumsville Wetlands (77 acres), Wiseman Island (170 acres), and Eola Point (287 acres, transfers to county within 30 years) are all properties that either have been or may be incorporated into the Natural Heritage Parks program.

The primary objective of this program is to have each of the pre-settlement ecosystems represented within the park system. These ecosystems would include specific ecological communities that fall under the general categories of oak savannas, prairies, riparian forests, wetlands, shrublands, and upland forests. The lands acquired for use in Natural Heritage Parks must be suitable for restoration, compatible with broader county goals of education and recreation, and coordinated with similar efforts within the county.

By taking an active and immediate role in the preservation and restoration of historical ecosystems, Marion County can begin to address some of the problems that have resulted from the loss of these ecosystems - while providing high-value recreation benefits to county residents. Restoration will enhance the county's biodiversity by the propagation of rare plants and the re-creation of ecological communities. Acquisition of critical properties will help to ensure continued preservation of rare plants and animals. The restoration efforts will also aid in re-establishing lost environmental functions, thereby enhancing the area's environmental quality. Additionally, restored areas will help correct the loss of the history that was represented in pre-settlement landscapes. By understanding the historical ecosystems at these sites, area residents will have a broader base of knowledge to draw from in addressing current and future natural resource issues.

The restoration and conservation of land, when conducted within a sound management system, has proven to be an effective means of arresting, and even reversing, the loss of rare plants and animals. (Maybury, 1999) By reestablishing the vegetation of an area and removing detrimental human disturbances, the ecological processes that occurred historically on the site can also be restored. These processes can provide a foundation for sustainable populations of threatened species and can also contribute to an area's environmental quality. (Berger, 1990.)

By focusing on restoration of known physical and biological elements within ecological communities, the county provides an environment in which many other processes can occur and organisms can thrive without direct action. The restored communities provide the structure for these processes. The Nature Conservancy describes this as the "coarse filter" system. That organization uses it as a highly effective means of preserving little known processes and species through the conservation of recognizable ecosystems. (Maybury, 1999) In other words, when Marion County restores and protects an ecological community, there will be benefits far beyond the representation of a few targeted species.

In addition to their educational, recreational and ecological benefits, these restoration sites are selected to provide a number of secondary benefits. Properly planned, the secondary benefits could include flood abatement, erosion reduction, stormwater retention, increased groundwater recharge, landslide prevention, and nutrient uptake. These valuable functions are more easily accomplished through nature oriented parks rather than developed parks.

IV. Methods for Site Identification and Evaluation

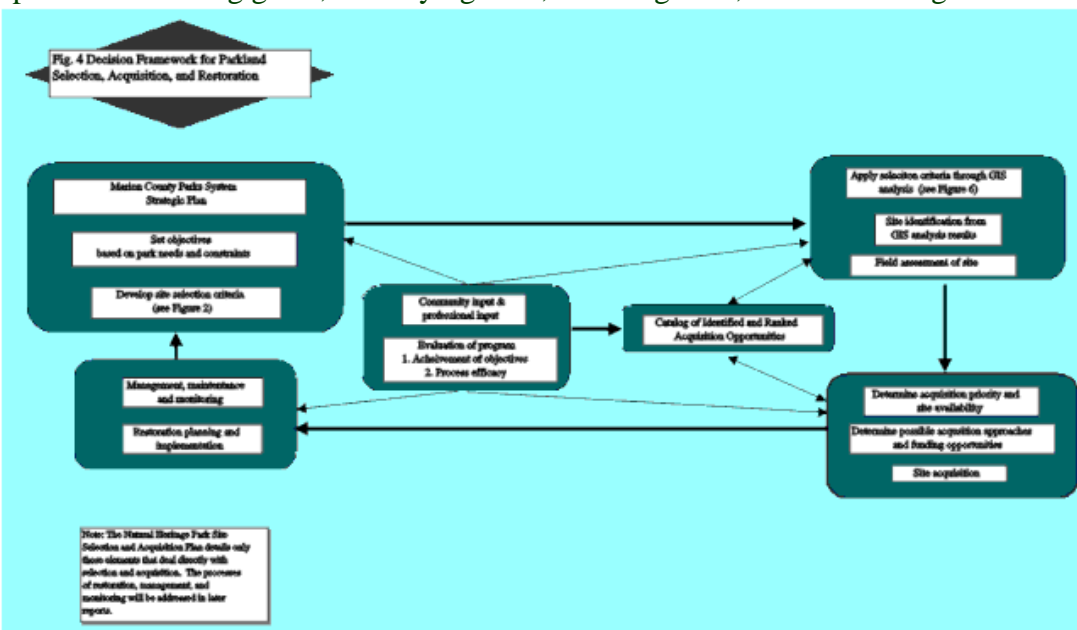
A. Development of a decision framework

Implementation of the Natural Heritage Parks program first required the development of a deliberate decision framework in which the County's goals can be considered and in which park department's objectives can be clearly identified and acted upon. Also through this process sites

can be systematically identified, assessed, acquired, restored, and monitored. This report outlines the method of site selection, discusses the incorporation of County goals, and provides a list of sites with acquisition potential¹.

The decision framework developed in this report draws from a number of sources. The County goals and policies are drawn from the Marion County Comprehensive Plan, the Marion County Parks Master Plan, and natural resource management priorities (i.e. stormwater retention, flood control). The site identification section was developed through discussions with stakeholders, natural resource management professionals, and through research of similar projects.

The overall decision framework (see Fig. below) follows the flow of information from the County goals through the definition of objective, the development of criteria, site identification & assessment, acquisition, restoration, and monitoring. Project evaluation, community input, and professional input are central to the process and will influence each step. During this process, citizens and professionals - through advisory groups, classes, and volunteer groups - provide input toward setting goals, identifying sites, restoring sites, and monitoring the restoration.



By working within the decision framework developed in this report, Marion County can systematically address key issues facing the Natural Heritage Parks program. This framework, however, also allows flexibility in the sequence of restoration and acquisition.

A. 1. Determining ecological communities to be restored

Before specific park site candidates can be determined, the County first clarified its restoration targets. This process begins with an examination of the pre-Euro-American settlement ecosystems that existed in Marion County. These ecosystems included the general categories of:

1. Upland prairies - xeric* grasslands with little or no woody vegetation, burned frequently.

2. Wet prairies - seasonally saturated grasslands with little or woody vegetation, burned frequently.
3. Oak savannas - mesic/xeric grasslands with widely scattered Oregon white oak, burned frequently.
4. Shrubland - wetlands with smaller woody vegetation (e.g. willow, spirea), includes rare peat-bogs.
5. Riparian forests - primarily hydric soils, dominated by willows, Oregon ash, and black cottonwood.
6. Upland forests - mesic woodlands dominated by Douglas fir, big leaf maple, and Oregon white oak.
7. Emergent wetlands - persistent wetlands dominated by herbaceous vegetation (e.g. sedges, rushes).

(*Hydric, mesic, and xeric represent the continuum of soil moisture from saturated to dry.)

These seven general ecological communities will be the initial conservation and restoration targets for Marion County's Natural Heritage Park program. The county desires to restore and conserve each of these seven communities in at least one of its county parks². The ecological communities that have experienced the most loss and have the least amount of total remaining land area are to be given the highest restoration priority. The losses and remnants of the different communities were determined through a comparison of pre-settlement vegetation data with current vegetation data and through interviews with natural resource management professionals.

As Table 1 indicates, emergent wetlands (low starting acreage), prairie and savanna (high starting acreage, high loss), and shrubland (low starting acreage, high loss) should be given highest priority as restoration and conservation targets. Opportunities for restoring or preserving riparian forests should also be given relative priority (high loss and fairly high risk for future loss). The nature of acquisition opportunities will dictate the order of restoration scenarios to a certain extent. When possible, however, the county should use this prioritization. As the county's system of restored ecological communities expands and as new natural resource data becomes available, this list should be revisited to insure that priority is being given to the appropriate conservation targets and increasingly specific ecological communities. By targeting the rarest ecosystems, the county can re-establish additional sites with these ecosystems and preserve them from complete loss.

Table 2. Pre-Euro-American settlement ecological communities in Marion County's valley region (Natural Heritage Program database, 2000) and their acquisition priority.

Type of eco. community	Priority	Description of Vegetation
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	Ash swamp and ash swale, sometimes with alder.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	Ash-alder-willow swamp, sometimes with bigleaf maple. Often with vine maple, ninebark, hardhack, cattails. Ground very soft miry, or muddy.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	Ash-willow swamp, sometimes w/ ninebark & briars.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	Ash-mixed deciduous riparian forest with combinations of alder, bigleaf maple, black cottonwood, white oak. Conifers may be present in small quantities.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	Red alder-mixed conifer riparian forest; combinations of cedar, grand & Douglas fir, hemlock, bigleaf maple, black cottonwood. No oaks. Large conifer component, though.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med	Red alder-mixed conifer riparian forest; combinations of cedar, grand & Douglas fir, hemlock, bigleaf maple, black cottonwood, but burned, often with scattered trees surviving.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	White oak-ash riparian forest, sometimes with cottonwood and willow.
Closed forest; Riparian	Med.	Black cottonwood forest, sometimes with willow, rose, briars, nettles, crabapple, sometimes ash. No Conifers.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	Douglas fir forest, often with bigleaf maple, dogwood, hazel, yew. No other conifers present. No oaks.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	Douglas fir forest, often with bigleaf maple, dogwood, hazel, yew. No other conifers present. No oaks. But burned, often with scattered trees surviving.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	Mesic mixed conifer forest with mostly deciduous understory. May include Douglas fir, western hemlock, red cedar, bigleaf maple, yew, dogwood, white oak, red alder.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	Mesic mixed conifer forest with mostly deciduous understory, but burned, often with scattered trees surviving. May include Douglas fir, western hemlock, red cedar, bigleaf maple.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	Douglas fir-white oak (bigleaf maple) forest, with brushy understory of hazel, young oak, oak bracken, briars, sometimes willow.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	White oak forest, oak brush, or oak and hazel.
Closed forest; Upland	Low	White oak-Douglas fir-ponderosa pine forest.
Emergent wetlands	High	Marsh, composition unknown; includes "wet meadows."
Emergent wetlands	High	Pond lily aquatic bed, sometimes with skunk cabbage.
Emergent wetlands	High	Swamp, composition unknown.
Emergent wetlands	High	Wetland, composition unknown; includes "slough forest" or shrubland; swale in prairie.
Herbaceous Upland	Med	Fern openings, fern hills, or open fern land. May contain hazel. No trees.
Prairie	High	Upland prairie, xeric. May have scattering trees.
Prairie	High	Vernal pool
Prairie	High	Seasonally wet prairie May have scattering trees.
Savanna	High	Douglas fir savanna.

Savanna	High	Douglas fir-ponderosa pine savanna.
Savanna	High	White oak savanna.
Savanna	High	White oak-ash savanna.
Savanna	High	White oak-Douglas fir savanna, mostly herbaceous understory.
Savanna	High	White oak-Douglas fir-ponderosa pine savanna
Shrubland	High	Shrub swamp ("brush swamp", "marshy thicket", thicket), composition unknown.
Shrubland	High	Brush, unknown; includes "thickets".
Unvegetated	NA	Gravel bar
Unvegetated	NA	Sand bar and sandy barrens
Water	NA	Water bodies 1 or more chains across, including ponds, beaver ponds, lakes, marshy lakes and "bayou."
Woodland	Med	"Scattering" or "thinly timbered" Douglas fir-pine woodland, with brushy undergrowth of hazel. May include small openings.
Woodland	Med	Scattering or thinly timbered Douglas fir-white oak. May contain bigleaf maple; brushy understory of oak brush, young fir, bracken. No pine.
Woodland	Med	Douglas fir woodland or "timber" often with bigleaf maple or dogwood. No oak, hemlock or cedar. Brushy understory of hazel, vine maple, young Douglas fir, bracken fern.
Woodland	Med	"Scattering" or "thinly timbered" white oak woodlands. With understory of hazel, oak, bracken. No fir or pine.

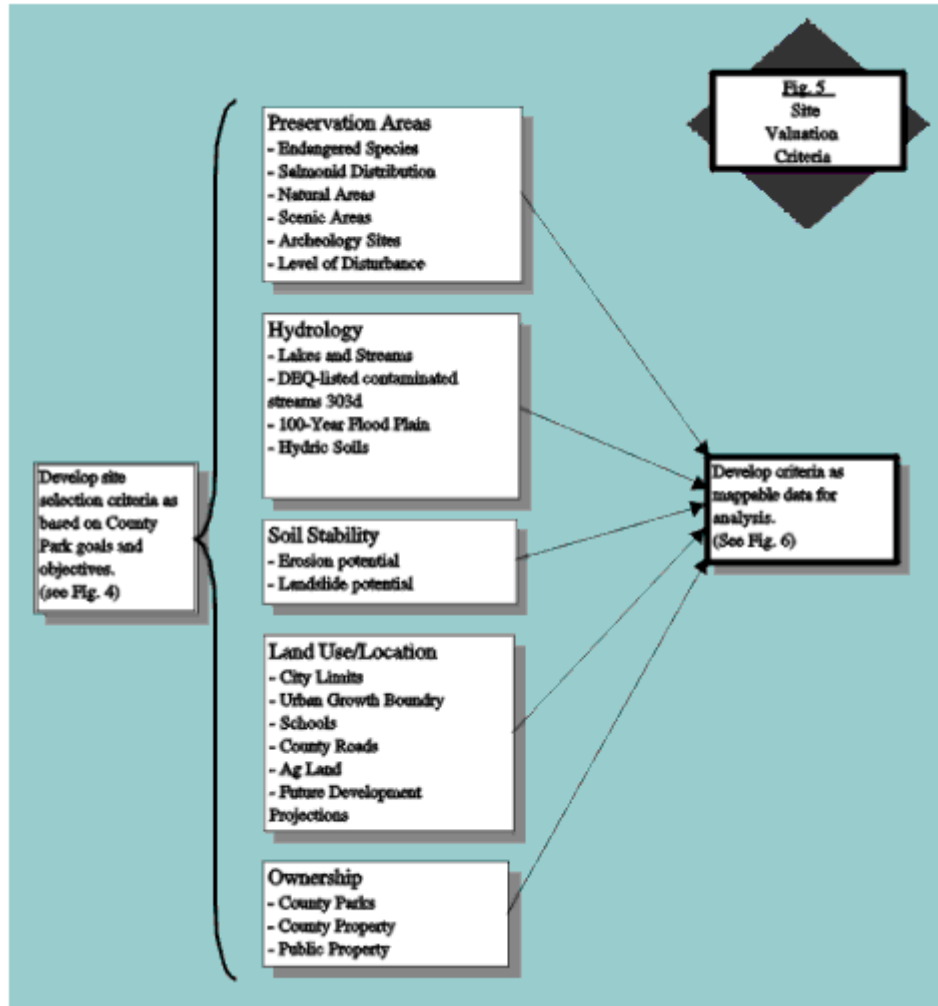
A.2. Selection Criteria

The identification of areas as potential parkland required the development of explicit decision criteria that stemmed from two basic questions, "What would be the components of an ideal park site? How can those components be expressed through a set of decision criteria?" Those criteria were developed with the assumption that future park sites should serve as more than just recreation locations. They should also address other county needs such as education, environmental quality, and land use plan implementation.

The determination of these site selection criteria was accomplished through interviews with county and local officials, state and federal land management agencies, and other organizations involved with restoration efforts. The specific criteria included such considerations as soil type, level of disturbance, presence of rare plants and animals, proximity to other public lands, and proximity to sensitive hydrologic features, among many other items. It is important to note that the data do not always lend themselves to strict categories, so there are some necessary overlaps in the criteria. For example, the level of disturbance to a site is also often reflected in other criteria such as the presence of rare plants and current land use. Rather than weakening the decision model, however, the overlaps ensure that complex factors are considered from a number of different angles.

The selection model (See Fig. below) in which the criteria are organized allows multiple objectives (expressed through the five categories) to be considered in site selection. By

organizing the criteria in this manner, a number of objectives can be achieved through acquisition and restoration of the same site. The deliberate consideration of these many factors will help the county avoid a "hit and miss" approach to parkland acquisition. While many sites may initially seem like good acquisition candidates, only careful consideration of the many criteria will insure a given site is appropriate to use as a restoration site³.



There are five categories of site selection criteria:

1. Preservation areas

(Sensitive features)

The criteria in this category favor sites that contain valuable ecological communities or rare species that could not accommodate development or land uses other than preservation/restoration. This category includes data such as: endangered species; salmonid distribution; natural, scenic, and archeological sites identified in the Comprehensive Plan; and areas with a history of limited human disturbance.

The amount of change in the soil, vegetation, and hydrology will have a direct effect on the cost and potential effectiveness of restoration, so lands that have had the fewest changes from their pre-settlement conditions would be better candidates for restoration and given highest priority. These levels of disturbance are derived from current land use maps and vegetation maps. Lands that have been extensively developed or used for extractive purposes may be less viable candidates than those that were relatively undisturbed or indicated only low intensity past uses.

Areas already containing threatened or endangered populations of plants and animals would be given highest priority. This would allow the preservation of the present species and would also reduce the costs of restoration, since it would not require the reintroduction of these species. The presence of rare native plants of sufficient number to provide seeds would also encourage the selection of a given site. These plants are important not only for conservation, but also as a potential seed bank for local restoration projects. Often, seeds of these plants are either unavailable commercially, or the commercial varieties come from distant areas. In order to preserve the genetic diversity of the rare plants, local seed sources are important. Acquiring lands for this purpose will also be a consideration.

Sometimes, more than one ecosystem occurs on the same site, in which case the site would be given a preference in selection. By restoring and preserving multiple ecosystems on a given site, the county can reduce its acquisition costs and capture the site's biodiversity.

The County would also place a high priority on the rarest ecosystems that are facing conversion beyond restoration potential. The data used to determine the level of threat to a particular site will be drawn from studies that project future land use trends. Ecologically valuable sites that these futures studies indicated were likely to be developed would be given higher acquisition priority.

2. Hydrology

These criteria favor sites that protect or enhance hydrologic quality and function. The category includes data such as: surface water features, contaminated streams, 100 year flood plain, and hydric soils. When possible, park sites would be located and restored in a manner that provides secondary benefits beyond the ecological preserves. For example, sites with wetlands could be used for flood control, and sites located in important groundwater recharge areas could be used to increase groundwater availability. The potential of a given site to provide these benefits would increase its likelihood of selection.

3. Soil Stability

The sites identified by this layer are valuable because they are susceptible to erosion and landslides. A park occupying these sites would provide a permanent vegetation cover, reducing erosion risk. Siting a park in these areas would also provide protection against development on areas with high erosion and landslide potential. The erosion layer was derived from a slope/soil-type model. The landslide layer was developed from recent Salem/Marion County landslide potential studies.

4. Land Use/Location

The areas identified by these data are located near preferred land uses such as schools, county roads, and Urban Growth Boundaries. Other data in this category were used to exclude highly productive agricultural land and industrial zoned areas. The proximity of a given site to population areas and user groups would increase its likelihood of selection. Where possible, the parks would be located within a reasonable distance of population centers and schools. This would increase the educational and recreational use of the parks.

5. Ownership

Areas adjacent to land currently in public ownership - particularly county ownership - are favored in the model. By grouping or strategically placing publicly owned lands and by coordinating management goals, the county could provide a larger restoration area as well as broaden opportunities for education and recreation. This proximity also allows for connectivity between ecosystems B an important ecological consideration. However, this connectivity and clustering will have to be balanced with the need to distribute the parks around the county so that most of the residents have easy access to at least one restoration park.

The size of a site influences its restoration opportunities and locating a park next to existing public land may increase those opportunities. Some ecosystem restoration efforts, such as those that restore ecosystems that formerly covered large expanses of land, might require larger parcels to better represent the historical ecosystems. Larger sites typically contain a greater diversity of plants, animals, and land features. They also are more likely to contain functioning ecosystems and have less edge per acre B lessening external influences and minimizing losses through disturbance. Larger sites can also encompass multiple ecosystems, thus reducing the need for additional acquisition (Poiani and Richter, 1999.)

County goals & projects as selection criteria

In addition to the mappable data, the site selection process must also consider factors, such as county planning guidelines, that do not directly lend themselves to mapping.

Comprehensive Plan

In keeping with Marion County's Comprehensive Plan⁴ and Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals & Guidelines, the criteria will reduce consideration of lands less suited for parkland and focus on the acquisition of lands that can meet the specific goals laid out in the ordinances. The 1995 Statewide Planning Goals state that the county will "insure open space, protect scenic and historic areas and natural resources for future generations, and promote healthy and visually attractive environments in harmony with the natural landscape character." Like the state's planning guidelines, The Parks and Recreation Goals of Marion County, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, call for preservation of unique natural areas, maintenance of a relationship with the past, and incorporation of environmental protection into park acquisitions (Comprehensive Plan, Parks and Recreation). The Natural Heritage Parks program addresses each of these goals. It provides preserved open space with historical significance and aesthetic harmony, and it restores a healthy environment. Sites identified in this study should be considered for inclusion in future revisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Environmental Quality and Natural Resources Goals of Marion County are identified as maintaining optimal ecological balances, minimizing soil erosion, and improving water quality. As previously stated, the restoration and careful location of the Natural Heritage Parks would provide not only the ecological benefits of rare plant protection and ecosystem restoration, but also provide secondary benefits that may include erosion control, improved groundwater recharge, landslide abatement, and flood control. Sites that provide these secondary environmental benefits would be given preferential selection.

Marion County Parks Master Plan

The 2010 Marion County Parks Master Plan, to which the Natural Heritage Parks Plan is an Appendix, details the County's existing conditions and needs for additional parkland.

Other county projects

The restoration efforts are to be continually examined within the context of current and future county projects. The types of projects that could be coordinated include retention basin construction, floodplain protection, wetland banking, and water quality enhancement efforts. The coordination of these projects with park restoration and acquisition will reduce incompatible development while also providing the opportunity to build on projects already underway or build on land already within county ownership. Integration of Best Management Plans (BMP) with the goals of the Natural Heritage Park program is one possible avenue to help further the aims of both efforts. The BMPs could be used, for example, to expand native plant restorations along roads and to provide connectivity between the Natural Heritage Parks and other ecological restoration areas.

Other restoration projects

The county will attempt to locate the Natural Heritage Parks near other restoration efforts around the county and also coordinate the park management with the broader goals of other restoration efforts. This coordination will help ensure the parks are not "stand alone" parks, but that they fit within a broader context of environmental preservation and enhancement. Adjacent sites could also provide enhanced recreation opportunities such as connected trails or common interpretive themes. Sites that would accomplish these goals through their proximity to long-term conservation easements and permanent restoration sites are more likely to be selected. Some programs that could provide a broader context and direction for Marion County's restoration efforts include the Willamette Restoration Initiative, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, the Willamette Greenways program, the American Heritage Rivers program, the Nature Conservancy's conservation programs, and programs within the Salmon Recovery Plan.

Restoration considerations

The process of restoration is an integral part in the site selection process. Restoration must be conducted in a systematic and thorough fashion to avoid devoting limited resources to short-term or incomplete projects. The limitations, both physical and fiscal, that are imposed by restoration at a specific site will influence the selection of that site. Sites that require extensive restoration may require excessive funding or time and may be a lower priority for acquisition.

The following are general restoration principles adapted from SER's guidelines and integrated into the site selection criteria⁵.

1. Develop a restoration plan that includes baseline ecological assessments, specific goals, measurable standards, and provisions for the resources necessary to restore and maintain a site.
2. Closely monitor and control non-native plants and animals.
3. Integrate the restoration project with broader-scale goals.
4. Use locally procured, native plants whenever possible.
5. Take into account the interaction of adjacent ecosystems, such as uplands near wetlands or forests near a river.
6. Actively seek the involvement and input of the local community.

By choosing sites that allow close adherence to the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) restoration guidelines, the county can limit the amount of time and money devoted to a given project and help insure its sustainability.

GIS analysis and evaluation

The development of specific site selection criteria allowed the integration of existing geographic data into a decision model. This process was conducted through the use of a geographic information system (GIS). As the Fig. below indicates, the selection criteria⁶ were integrated into the GIS analysis by determining which existing data layers could best express the criteria's intent. For example, the criteria "Preservation areas" was expressed by using data such as natural vegetation, scenic areas, and archeological sites. The criteria "Land Use/Location" was partially expressed by data showing the location of population centers and the network of county roads. Once the data layers that expressed these criteria had been assembled, their values were

determined.

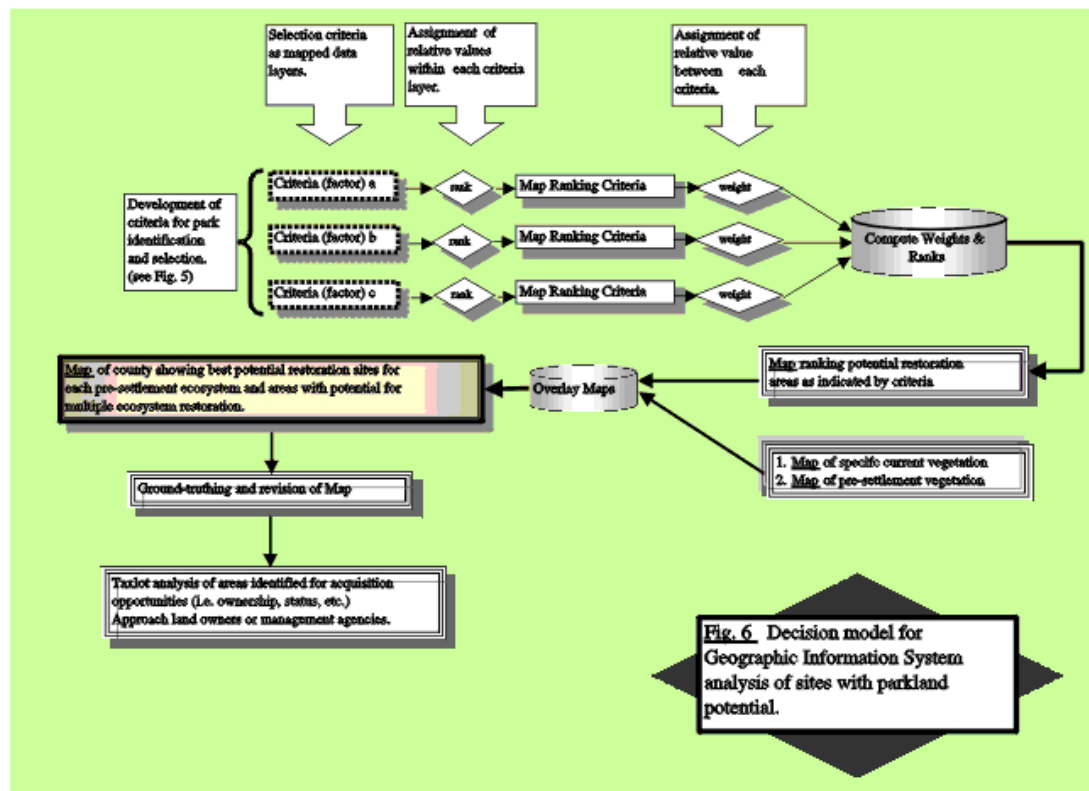
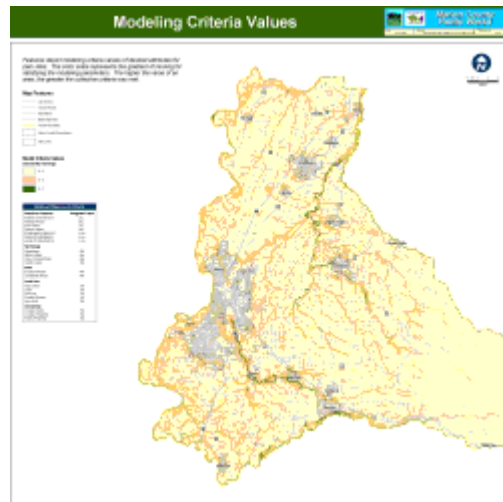


Fig. 6 Decision model for Geographic Information System analysis of sites with parkland potential.

The data values within each layer were then used to rank every location within the county as to its fulfillment of selection criteria. For example, the site selection criteria of "endangered species" indicates that areas containing endangered species are preferable to those that do not. Within the endangered species data layer, every site in the county could be ranked according to its immediate proximity to an endangered species location. Sites within 0-250' would get a ranking of 9 and sites within 250-500' would get a ranking of 5. This increases the value of those areas closest to the desired feature.

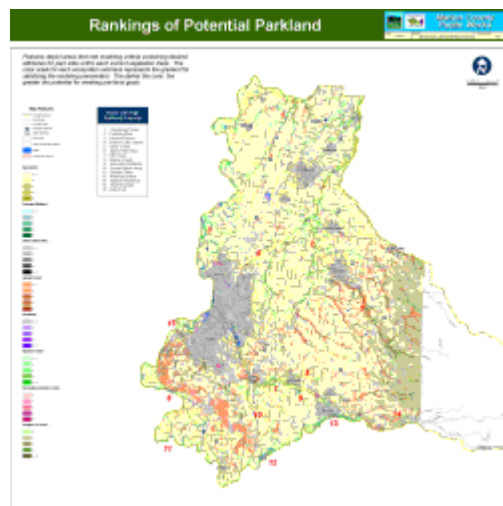
This same technique was then used for each site selection criteria. When they were combined, the values assigned to each data layer (weights) indicated the importance of that criteria relative to others. More important data layers, such as the presence of endangered species and the level of disturbance were given a higher weight. Less important data layers, such as the proximity to county roads, were given a lower weight. Data layers of the county's hydric soils, proximity of sites to existing parks, and existing vegetation, for example, could be ranked and then combined to generate a final map identifying a specific site that shows little disturbance to original vegetation, that is located near an existing park, and that has the correct soil type for the desired ecosystem. In other words, this site would be identified as one with high restoration potential because it has highly valued elements from all three maps. This process was done for each of the selection criteria and the areas that were identified as high potential restoration sites for each pre-settlement ecosystem were identified through this process. (See Map: "Modeling Criteria Values")



These sites were then verified using air photos, and the best candidates appear numbered on the "Rankings of Potential Parkland" map. In this version of the Selection/Acquisition Plan, the sites were only verified against air photos and tax lot data. As part of the next step, an on-site survey will focus on the highest value areas, providing an assessment of physical characteristics such as the presence of noxious weeds, existing plant associations, site hydrology, wildlife, evidence of disturbance, and surrounding land use⁷. This analysis will narrow the field of candidates considerably, and allow the county to focus on ones with the greatest potential as parkland. Other opportunities not identified specifically within this process, however, can still be accommodated within the broader decision process.

V. Results: Identification of sites with restoration potential

(See Map: "Rankings of Potential Parkland")



The maps resulting from the use of park selection criteria show areas that should be examined for potential acquisition and restoration. Each specific acquisition candidate, however, will require

individual consideration. Unique ecological and economic factors, such as those described previously, will influence each acquisition. Due to gaps in the data layers and the scale of the data, some sites outside of these designated areas may also be good candidates for selection. Once identified, however, these other sites should still be evaluated using the same criteria.

Site selection summary

Top acquisition candidates:

Oak savanna restoration

Salem Hills West

Salem Hills West (Bunker Hill Area) Large, contiguous oak uplands with some Douglas fir. Sites with lower density oaks would be good candidates for savanna restoration. Some larger private holdings exist, but the area is mostly medium to small private holdings. This area was also identified in previous county restoration studies. Its location near population centers enhances its value for park purposes. Previous studies also indicated *Stout Mountain* as a potential candidate for savanna restoration. *Salem Hills East* Similar to *Salem Hills West*, but smaller in area. Some larger, private land holdings may be candidates for restoration.

Upland prairie restoration

Salem Hills West

Salem Hills West Large, contiguous area; mostly wooded with oaks and fir, but unmanaged pasture lands within this area could provide good restoration sites. Possibly a site with both oak savanna and upland prairie restoration potential could be found. The Bunker Hill area (within *Salem Hills West*) was previously identified within county restoration studies. Areas in *Salem Hills East* also indicate some good candidates for prairie restoration. The southern edge of *Salem Hills East* should be examined for wet prairie restoration candidates.

Oak / Douglas fir woodland restoration

Stout Mountain

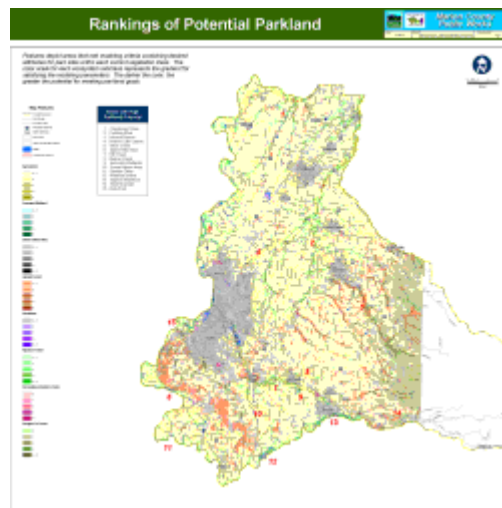
Stout Mountain - Large, private ownership with diverse ecosystems. Previously identified within the Comprehensive Plan and other county documents as an excellent restoration candidate. Studies indicated little development or disturbance on this property. Previous studies indicate that there may also be potential on the site for prairie and savanna restoration. The *Salem Hills (East and West)* also offer good oak /Douglas fir woodland restoration candidates.

Wet Prairie restoration

Perhaps the most problematic of the restoration scenarios. Little or no wet prairie remains in the county - in areas of any size. The area to the southwest of *Aumsville* and southeast of *Turner* seems to have the largest concentration of unmanaged pasture in locations where wet prairies formerly existed. This area may contain candidates for wet prairie restoration. The mitigation banks that are under development (Marion and Grenz Mitigation Banks) in that area may also be good candidates for wet prairie restoration.

Areas identified through decision model

(See Map: "Ranking of Potential Parkland")



Name: Champoeg Creek Corridor

Location: South of Champoeg Creek State Park

Model Ranking: Medium high - high emergent wetland, medium riparian, medium woodland.

Current vegetation types: Unmanaged pasture, ash/cottonwood, maple bottom, willow

Pre-settlement vegetation: Willow swamp; riparian (red-alder mixed conifer); and Douglas fir white oak woodland.

Local hydrologic features: Champoeg Creek, Willamette River, Case Creek

Local infrastructure: Champoeg Creek State Park, St. Paul (~ 5 miles), French Prairie Road, St Paul Highway

Ownership: Private and public (park)

Surrounding land use: Agriculture

Notes: Acquisition here could provide connectivity with Champoeg State Park. Riparian corridor with diverse ecosystem restoration scenarios possible - wetlands, riparian, and possible oak/fir woodlands. Numerous ownerships and linear resource may make for difficult acquisition.

Name: Pudding River Corridor

Location: Length of Little Pudding River (from State St. to Butte Creek Confluence)

Model ranking: Medium-high riparian, medium prairie, some high riparian

Current vegetation: Black hawthorn riparian, cottonwood riparian, and some pasture land

Pre-settlement vegetation: Ash willow swamp, sometimes with ninebark and briars; Douglas fir forest, often with big-leaf maple, grand fir, dogwood, hazel; Willow swamp with ninebark. Also, Red alder - mixed conifer riparian forest; including riparian stands on gravel or sand bars.

Local hydrologic features: Pudding River and tributaries

Local infrastructure: Woodburn, Mt. Angel, Silverton

Ownership: Private

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, high density rural residential & urban within a few miles

Notes: River with water quality problems and conversion, but some remnant riparian areas. Water quality issues in many of the streams and rivers would be helped by restoration. Numerous land holdings and thin, linear nature of the riparian habitats may make for difficult acquisition. However, a few larger rural land holdings may facilitate acquisition. Area near Labish Basin may be a good candidate for shrub-land restoration. Areas near confluences may also increase restoration opportunities. A park in the northern half of this corridor would provide recreation in an area with increasing population, but little public land.

Name: Silver Creek Corridor

Location: Southeast of Silverton

Model ranking: Medium high riparian, medium woodland, medium riparian

Current vegetation: Maple/alder/fir - hardwoods dominant, general forest unclassified

Pre-settlement vegetation: Red alder - mixed conifer riparian forest; sometimes with ponderosa pine, cottonwood, and willow.

Local hydrology: Silver Creek through middle, Silverton Reservoir is just north

Local infrastructure: Little nearby; Silverton and schools ~2-3 miles. Just east of Drift Creek Road, Just west of 214.

Ownership: Private

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, with ~1/3 rural residential.

Notes: Linear nature of riparian areas may make for difficult acquisition. Mostly private ownership, fairly developed; could provide connectivity with Silver Creek Falls State Park. Mentioned in previous park studies as an acquisition candidate.

Name: Salem Hills West (Bunker Hill area)

Location: Southwest of Salem

Model ranking: Medium woodland/closed forest upland, medium low prairie, medium riparian

Current vegetation: Oak-Madrone, Douglas fir / oak > 50% Douglas fir, Maple/alder/fir hardwood dominant

Pre-settlement vegetation: Douglas fir/white oak forest, with brushy understory of hazel, young oak, oak brush, oak sprout bracken, and briars

Local hydrologic features: Rose Lake; borders Willamette River

Local infrastructure: Rosedale Elementary ~3 miles, ~3 miles to edge of Salem, Orville Road, Riverside Road

Ownership: Private

Surrounding land use: Urban in Salem, some agriculture, some suburbs.

Notes: Fairly large, contiguous upland woodland area, may be potential for Oak / Douglas Fir Savanna restoration as well as prairie restoration. Some large properties in area, but privately owned. Area was mentioned as a restoration candidate in previous park studies.

Name: Mill Creek, Beaver Creek, and Aumsville Wetlands

Location: Includes areas adjacent to Aumsville, immediately south of Aumsville, and Mill Creek Corridor.

Model Ranking: Medium high various; riparian, wetland.

Current vegetation: Unmanaged pasture, wetland, some woodland, some agriculture.

Pre-settlement vegetation: Willow swamp shrubland (north); Wet prairie and upland prairie; Riparian.

Local hydrology: Beaver Creek, Porter Creek, Simpson Creek, Mill Creek

Local infrastructure: Aumsville, Turner, many area schools, Hwy 22 access, City of Salem.

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, urban (Aumsville & Salem), some woodland

Notes: Southwest of Aumsville are areas that should be examined for wet prairie restoration. Also of note, the proposed Grentz Mitigation Bank lies just north of Aumsville and may present a good opportunity to acquire a restored, shrubland ecosystem in an area that ranked fairly high in the decision model. Immediately adjacent to the Grentz Mitigation Bank is an Oregon Department of Transportation site that may provide a means to expand the restoration in this area. *Beaver Creek* runs through both sites. *Mill Creek* offers restoration opportunities along its length, particularly near areas currently in public ownership (County, city of Salem, and Aumsville).

Name: Turner to Marion area

Location: West/Southwest of Turner (upland woodland); Southeast of Turner (wet prairie)

Model ranking: Medium Riparian, Medium closed forest upland

Current vegetation type: Douglas fir/oak - urban build up (west); agriculture (south).

Pre-settlement vegetation: White oak, Douglas fir savanna (west); Prairie/Wet Prairie (south)

Local hydrologic features: Just west of Mill Creek/McKinney Creek juncture, and Franzen Reservoir; Various creeks and ditches run through the southern portion.

Local infrastructure: Due west of Turner (~1/2 mile), Turner Elementary School ~1 mile.

Just north of Delaney Road, west of Turner Road

Ownership: Private

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, rural residential, urban in Turner

Notes: Fairly small area, but there may be potential for white oak/Douglas fir restoration. Area is wooded, but contains scattered rural residences. Somewhat isolated. South of Turner, near Marion is the proposed Marion Wetland Mitigation Bank which may hold potential for wet prairie restoration and relatively easy restoration. There may also be areas closer to Turner that provide wet prairie restoration sites.

Name: Santiam Delta

Location: Confluence of Willamette and Santiam Rivers

Model ranking: Medium Riparian

Current vegetation type: Agriculture and Riparian Forests.

Pre-settlement vegetation: Ash, mixed deciduous riparian forests with cottonwood, alder, big-leaf maple

Local hydrologic features: Willamette River, Santiam River, Luckiamute River (in Polk County)

Local infrastructure: Near Buena Vista Ferry, Sidney, Talbot Road

Ownership: Private, state, federal

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, rural residential, Federal land (Ankeny NWR) to the northeast

Notes: Private land, but in large holdings. Oxbows and Riparian forests are good restoration candidates. Across the river, at the Luckiamute/Willamette confluence is a large Willamette Greenway parcel, providing potential connectivity.

Name: Stout Mountain

Location: South of Silver Creek State Falls Park, West of Mehama

Model Ranking: Medium low, general forest, woodland

Current vegetation type: General forest unclassified and Douglas fir

Probable pre-settlement ecosystem: Douglas fir / white oak forest - thinly-timbered; Douglas fir timber.

Local hydrologic features: Stout Creek, Shellburg Creek

Local infrastructure: Mehama and Mehama schools; Highway 22, Teeters Road

Ownership: Private

Surrounding area: Timber, agriculture, rural residential

Notes: Diverse ecosystems in one location, timber rattlesnake denning area, relatively undisturbed area, recommended acquisition. Noted in Comprehensive plan. Landowner has been approached by the Trust for Public Lands, though the preservation of this site has not been resolved. May provide diverse ecosystem restoration including: savanna, prairie, wetlands, and thinly timbered Douglas fir stands.

Name: Eola Point

Location: ~2-3 miles west of Salem on Willamette River. Near Minto-Brown Island Park

Model ranking: Medium gravel bar, medium riparian, some medium high riparian

Current vegetation: Maple/Alder/Fir hardwoods dominant, gravel bars and sand

Pre-settlement vegetation: Water and Ash mixed-deciduous riparian forest with combination of red alder, big-leaf maple, black cottonwood, white oak, and dogwood.

Local hydrology: Willamette River

Local infrastructure: Near Minto-Brown Park, many Salem schools within 2-4 miles, Near City of Salem. South of Edgewater Street, ~1 mile North of River Road

Ownership: Private, corporate

Surrounding land use: High-density urban, woodlands across Willamette River, some agriculture to the east, development across the river to the North

Notes: Gravel extraction and large scale disturbance, but possible acquisition and restoration (reclamation); corporate agreement will allow property transfer after extraction is finished or within 30 years. Desirable location near Willamette River.

Additional Areas of Interest

Name: Salem Hill East

Location: South of Salem, east of I-5

Model Ranking: Medium woodland / closed forest upland, medium low prairie

Current vegetation: Douglas fir/ oak > 50% Douglas fir, unmanaged pasture.

Pre-settlement vegetation: White Oak savanna, white oak / Douglas fir savanna, herbaceous undergrowth.

Local Hydrology: Little of note, near Miller Creek, Norton Creek

Local infrastructure: No nearby schools, in between Jefferson, Turner, and Salem; Enchanted Way, Winter Creek Road, I-5 and Ankeny Hill Road.

Ownership: Mostly private.

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, forested uplands, suburbs/rural residential.

Notes: Medium sized area of forested uplands, some larger land holdings, surrounded by increasing rural residential development. May have potential for savanna and prairie restoration.

Name: Candiani Island area

Location: West and Southwest of St. Paul

Model rankings: Medium high riparian

Current vegetation: Water; Ash/Cottonwood - Maple Bottom pasture, some Cottonwood riparian

Probable pre-settlement ecosystem: Open water; Ash - mixed deciduous riparian forest with combination of red alder, big-leaf maple, black cottonwood, white oak, dogwood; Red alder - mixed conifer riparian forest.

Local hydrology: Willamette River, oxbows

Local infrastructure: San Salvador park, Candiani Island in Willamette Greenway program; 3-4 miles west of St. Paul; Horseshoe lake road.

Ownership: Private, public

Surrounding land use: Agriculture, some rural residences and wooded areas.

Notes: Desirable oxbow ecosystems and riparian ecosystems. Adjacent publicly owned areas may provide connectivity. Large parcels may facilitate acquisition. The St. Paul Ponds (ODFW) located just south of this area may have acquisition/restoration potential, though the site is rather small and disturbed.

Name: Little North Fork and North Santiam River Confluence

Location: Along highway 22 between the Little North Fork and Santiam Rivers

Model rankings: Medium, riparian

Current vegetation: Likely maple/alder/fir; hardwoods dominant; Douglas fir

Pre-settlement vegetation: no data; likely maple/alder/fir; hardwoods dominant; some Douglas fir

Local hydrology: Little North Fork and Santiam Rivers

Local infrastructure: O’Henry Park, North Santiam Park, Taylor Park, Little North Fork Park; Mehema Elementary; Mehema; North Fork Road

Ownership: Corporate, public, private

Surrounding area: Timber production, rural residential, some development

Notes: Medium priority ecosystem for restoration. Large corporate and public holdings might provide large-scale restoration possibilities. Desirable location near sensitive habitat and near other public land holdings. Could benefit salmon restoration / habitat enhancement efforts.

VI. Site Acquisition

A. Short-term acquisition plan

The Parks program will work to identify specific properties in the areas that were shown as "high-value" in the GIS model.

B. Partnerships, Funding, and Processes

Partnerships

During development of the Natural Heritage Park program, a number of organizations expressed either interest or support. The organizations included citizen volunteer groups, federal agencies, state agencies, local municipalities, land use organizations, watershed councils and non-profit organizations. By drawing on the strengths of these individuals and organizations and by coordinating our efforts with theirs, Marion County can facilitate its acquisition and restoration of parklands.

Although restoration projects have been somewhat limited within Marion County, there are a growing number of restoration planning efforts underway. Marion County has already initiated

restoration projects at the Aumsville Wetlands and Bonesteele Park. The Natural Resource Conservation Service is developing conservation easements throughout the county. Various land trusts are also pursuing conservation acquisitions within the county. These programs will need to be monitored so that the county’s efforts will build from the work already being done and expand upon existing projects when possible. Wetland mitigation banks may be another source of land for acquisition. Whenever possible, the county should participate in the rule making process for these mitigation sites. This will help ensure that the mitigation is conducted in a way that will work to the mutual benefit of both the mitigation banking groups and the county.

Marion County’s restoration effort should also be integrated into broader ecological enhancement programs such as the Willamette Restoration Initiative, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and the Willamette River Basin Ecological Restoration Coordination Group. Through collaboration with these programs and organizations, the county will ensure that its efforts are also contributing to landscape scale restoration.

Following is a list of organizations that have expressed an interest in providing either technical restoration assistance or acquisition assistance to Marion County. Some of these organizations have already provided valuable assistance to the Natural Heritage Parks demonstration projects and were asked to assist in the development of site selection criteria.

Federal Agencies	Oregon State Agencies
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Division of State Lands
National Marine Fisheries Service	Dept. of Land Conservation Districts
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Bureau of Land Management	Parks & Recreation Dept.
Natural Resource Conservation Service	Oregon Emergency Management
Municipal and Local Agencies	
City of Keizer	City of Salem
City of Silverton	City of Stayton
Marion Co. Public Works	Marion Co. Parks Commission
Non-Profit Organizations	
Audubon Society	Chemeketa Community College
Claggett Creek Watershed Council	Ducks Unlimited
Friends of Marion County	Glenn & Gibson Creek Watershed Council
Greenbelt Land Trust	Pringle Creek Watershed Council
Land Trust Alliance	Marion County Farm Bureau
Marion County Historical Society	Mill Creek Watershed Council
Natural Heritage Program	The Nature Conservancy
North Santiam Watershed Council	Northwest Land Conservation Trust
Oregon Forest Industries Council	Oregon Gardens
Oregon Native Plant Society	Oregon State University
Oregon Watersheds	Willamette University

Funding

The potential cost of site acquisition will, of course, be a primary factor in the selection of restoration sites. Options, such as donations, ownership transfer of wetland mitigation banks, and ownership transfer of suitable state and federal lands should be actively pursued. When those options are unavailable, offering fair market value is another alternative for site acquisition. With the selection criteria in place, the County can effectively evaluate and compare sites as they become available.

Through the careful selection of lands, the use of cost-sharing programs, and the active pursuit of grants, restoration costs can be kept in check. If the funds for immediate restoration are unavailable, the restoration project can be phased in over a period of years. Restoration goals that minimize maintenance requirements by establishing sustainable native plant populations should also be emphasized. Even if restoration will be delayed, acquisition is a critical step because it allows the reduction of further disturbances and helps ensure the preservation of existing resources. Following are some examples of low-cost acquisition that the Parks program is currently examining.

Site	Negotiations/Status	Acquisition Costs
Mitigation Banks - 50-75 acres	Transfer after mitigation complete	Reduced or no costs
Eola Point - 287 acres	Transfer after mining complete	No direct costs

Process

Another consideration in parkland acquisition is the process that the county must use to acquire sites and designate them as ecological restoration sites. The sites identified in this report should be considered for integration into the Marion County Comprehensive Plan. This integration will help guide natural resource management issues in the context of county planning. It will encourage ecological stewardship and streamline the acquisition process. The process for soliciting and accepting land donations should also be examined and streamlined.

VII. Further Considerations

A. Community involvement

A key component to the development and future success of the Natural Heritage Parks program is the active involvement of Marion County residents. The opinions and ideas of many county residents were already incorporated into the acquisition criteria and into the broader county goals. This type of involvement at the community level is critical to the success and long-term sustainability of a restoration program, particularly when the restoration includes recreational and educational elements. (Saunier and Meank, 1995.)

To maintain and encourage a high level of citizen involvement, the program decision framework accounts for public input and participation at a number of different levels. Community input will be solicited to coordinate the county's restoration projects with other projects in the area, to help select specific sites, to evaluate the success of the restoration projects, and to actively participate in the restoration of the parklands. To facilitate this community involvement, the county has formed Citizen Advisory Councils and volunteer groups like "Friends of Bonesteele Park." The County has also worked with existing non-profit groups like the Native Plant Society of Oregon, the Audubon Society, and local watershed councils. Overseeing and guiding these efforts is the citizen-run Parks Commission. In addition to their involvement in the decision making process, area residents will be involved in developing the educational and recreational components of the Natural Heritage Parks.

** Educational opportunities*

These ecological restoration sites offer many educational opportunities for area students. The Parks program has coordinated its efforts with educators around the area to provide access to the natural park areas and to share data. Already, there have been classes from the local colleges collecting topographic information and conducting plant and animal surveys at Bonesteele Park. The educational opportunities are not limited to the physical sciences, however. Students of history can find a wealth of information and experience in these restored natural heritage areas. Areas with exceptional historical significance, as indicated by the presence of artifacts or other items would be important candidates for restoration.

Whenever practical, the information developed by these students has been used by the county to evaluate its restoration projects and incorporate new ideas into future projects. There are also opportunities for area students to participate in the actual restoration of the sites. This provides the students with an understanding of restoration ecology and history and gives them a chance to make lasting, positive changes to their county.

** Recreation opportunities*

These parks are intended for low-intensity recreation. They will feature natural attractions and limited facilities. The recreation most suited to these parks would include bird watching, picnicking, nature hikes, photography and other non-consumptive uses. These uses are compatible with the restoration efforts. Sufficient attention must be paid to safety and access, however. Whenever possible, the sites should be located in areas where visitors and students can easily access them. By siting parks with ease of access in mind, the parks will have more visitors taking advantage of their educational and recreational opportunities.

B. Program evaluation

The systematic evaluation of the Marion County Natural Heritage Parks Program is critical to its continued success. This evaluation mechanism will provide feedback for the restoration processes and the overall Parks Program. Through the information generated by this evaluation, the Parks System will be able to adjust its selection of lands, its acquisition methods, and its restoration techniques.

The evaluation will focus on the program's success in achieving its three primary objectives: 1) provide critical habitats for rare plants and animals; 2) re-establish important environmental processes; and 3) provide visitors the opportunity for recreation, environmental education, and appreciation of the county's natural heritage. Measurements and criteria for evaluation will be used to answer the following questions:

1. Was there an increase in biodiversity and in habitat for rare plants and animals?

Necessary information: Baseline botanical and zoological assessments
Check against desired ecological community portfolio
Annual monitoring of population changes on site

Collection methods: Cooperative program with Chemeketa Community College, Willamette University, Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

2. Have environmental processes been enhanced on the restoration sites?

Necessary information: Baseline survey of water quality, site hydrology & environmental concerns, including erosion, landslides, land use patterns, water temperature, microclimate conditions, etc.

Collection method: Annual monitoring of environmental process changes

Cooperative program with Chemeketa Community College, Willamette University, possibly DEQ, DSL, NRCS or other agency

3. Is the park receiving a satisfactory number of visitors? Have visitors to the site learned about the area's ecology or history & enjoyed their recreation opportunities?

Necessary information: Visitors and workers' activities and assessments

Collection method: Survey visitors, volunteer workers, students, and involved citizens
Possibly through self administered surveys sponsored by the county

These evaluations of the program's objectives should be conducted annually and compiled in the Natural Heritage Parks annual report. The Natural Heritage Park program processes should also undergo an annual evaluation. Elements for consideration in the process evaluation should include:

- 1) Analysis how effectively the program allocated resources toward its different objectives,
- 2) The presence of common issues in the various site acquisitions and restoration,
- 3) What type of feedback have the community and natural resource management professionals offered about different elements of the acquisition and restoration process, and,
- 4) Whether the decision model still accurately reflects the actual decision process used in the selection, acquisition, and restoration process.

By necessity, the program will have to follow the adaptive management approach - working within a structure of goals and objectives, but adapting to new opportunities or unforeseen issues. Just as the site identification decision model allows for the inclusion of new criteria and a changing emphasis on criteria, so should the evaluation structure allow for a changing emphasis in program elements.

C. Decision model limitations

Although the decision model provides a logical structure for the identification of sites with restoration potential, in its present form it has certain features that limit its application. One primary drawback of the current model is that it does not allow the isolation of specific criteria to determine how those criteria affect a given site. For example, the model cannot explicitly demonstrate how the "proximity to county roads" criterium affects the value of site X. It can only show the aggregate value of that site based on all of the criteria in a particular category model. Without a clear understanding of how each criterium affects each site, the decision of that site's value may not account well for unusual situations. This problem is being addressed for later versions of the Plan.

Another shortcoming of the model is the numeric values of certain criteria. Because these features sometimes lacked quantifiable values, (e.g. Is a site within 250' of an endangered species twice as valuable as a site within 500' of an endangered species?) the values were developed from the judgments of natural resource professionals using relative valuations rather than from directly quantifiable differences.

Perhaps the most significant drawback to the decision model was the limited amount of spatial data that could be integrated into criteria layers. While the existing data did allow the consideration of a number of important objectives the data were limited in how they could be used to express those desired attributes. In another example of data limitations, the ODFW current vegetation layer that served as a base map was already a 4 to 7 years old and may not accurately reflect the current conditions in all areas of the county - particularly those areas with recent development. Also, the data layers used in this analysis were often limited to the Willamette Valley region of Marion County and did not include much of the Cascade foothills and mountains.

Finally, there is still a great deal that we simply do not know about pre-EuroAmerican settlement ecosystems. Comparing current ecosystems to pre-settlement ecosystems is still speculative - even though biologists from ODFW have begun an in-depth analysis of the comparison between

them. While general conditions can be emulated, the specific ecologies of these systems require additional research.

Despite these limitations, this decision model represents a starting point for more sophisticated analysis of parkland selection and related natural resource management decisions. Using a similar decision structure, but one that accounts for this model's shortcomings, will generate increasingly accurate parkland identification maps.

VIII. Conclusions

Marion County may be able to enhance the level of service in its park system by providing additional, low-cost recreation parkland. To increase the value of a given site, the site should provide benefits beyond traditional recreation. Using these sites for ecological restoration can help provide those secondary benefits while also offering high-value, nature-oriented recreation.

Ecological restoration addresses the loss of its historical ecosystems. In the past, these systems provided important ecological and environmental functions. Today, a few remaining ecosystems continue to enhance the county's environmental quality and also serve as monuments to Marion County's natural heritage, albeit in a limited way. Without the restoration of additional sites to these conditions, the county can expect reduced biodiversity and degraded environmental quality, as well as limited educational and recreational opportunities. By taking an active approach to the restoration of these ecosystems, Marion County can recover and preserve critical sites before they are further disturbed, or lost entirely.

The sites identified in this report are the result of using a decision framework that has been developed specifically for future parkland acquisitions. Through the use of this framework, other sites can also be identified and examined for their potential inclusion in Marion County's park system. The decision framework ensures that important selection criteria are not overlooked during the decision process. With careful consideration, future park sites can provide high-quality, nature oriented recreation while also contributing to the environmental and historical quality of the county.

Through the restoration of these sites, Marion County can effectively recover some of its unique historical landscapes. These parks will provide ecological preserves for rare plant and animals while also offering important educational and recreational opportunities. The parks will fit closely with the goals of the county's long-term plans, and represent an important step toward restoring some of Marion County's natural heritage.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Listing of threatened plants and animals found in Marion County

List derived from Oregon Natural Heritage Program database 1999. The locations for these species were identified and weighted within the parkland selection process.

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
DRILOLEIRUS MACELFRESHI	OREGON GIANT EARTHWORM
TINODES SISKIYOU	SISKIYOU CADDISFLY
CERACLEA VERTREESI	VERTREES'S CERACLEAN CADDISFLY
LOMATIUM BRADSHAWII	BRADSHAW'S LOMATIUM
ASTER CURTUS	WHITE-TOPPED ASTER
ASTER GORMANII	GORMAN'S ASTER
ERIGERON DECUMBENS VAR DECUMBENS	WILLAMETTE VALLEY DAISY
HOWELLIA AQUATILIS	HOWELLIA
LUPINUS SULPHUREUS SSP KINCAIDII	KINCAID'S LUPINE
CORYDALIS AQUAE-GELIDAE	COLD-WATER CORYDALIS
ROMANZOFFIA THOMPSONII	THOMPSON MISTMAIDEN
SIDALCEA NELSONIANA	NELSON'S SIDALCEA (Checkermallow)
CIMICIFUGA ELATA	TALL BUGBANE
DELPHINIUM LEUCOPHAEMUM	WHITE ROCK LARKSPUR
DELPHINIUM OREGANUM	WILLAMETTE VALLEY LARKSPUR
HORKELIA CONGESTA SSP CONGESTA	SHAGGY HORKELIA
CASTILLEJA LEVISECTA	GOLDEN INDIAN-PAINTBRUSH
MIMULUS TRICOLOR	THREE-COLORED MONKEYFLOWER
SISYRINCHIUM SARMENTOSUM	PALE BLUE-EYED GRASS
CALAMAGROSTIS BREWERI	BREWER REEDGRASS
LYCOPODIUM COMPLANATUM	GROUND CEDAR
BOTRYCHIUM MONTANUM	MOUNTAIN GRAPEFERN
BATRACHOSEPS WRIGHTI	OREGON SLENDER SALAMANDER
RANA PRETIOSA	OREGON SPOTTED FROG
BRANTA CANADENSIS LEUCOPAREIA	ALEUTIAN CANADA GOOSE
HISTRIONICUS HISTRIONICUS	HARLEQUIN DUCK
HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS	BALD EAGLE
PROGNE SUBIS	PURPLE MARTIN

OREGONICHTHYS CRAMERI	OREGON CHUB
MYOTIS VOLANS	LONG-LEGGED BAT
CORYNORHINUS TOWNSENDII TOWNSENDII	PACIFIC WESTERN BIG-EARED BAT
GULO GULO LUTEUS	CALIFORNIA WOLVERINE
CHRYSEMYS PICTA	PAINTED TURTLE
CLEMMYS MARMORATA MARMORATA	NORTHWESTERN POND TURTLE

Appendix B: Marion County Comprehensive Plan (relevant language)

The following goals and policies are taken from the Marion County Comprehensive Plan. These are the goals and policies most relevant to the Natural Heritage Parks Plan. For a complete version of the Comprehensive Plan, contact the Marion County Public Works Planning Office, or visit their web site at: <http://www.codepublishing.com/OR/marioncounty/>

Marion County Comprehensive Plan

Goals and Policies:

Parks and Recreation

Recreation Goals

To define a desirable future condition and to outline the ideal rural park system for Marion County. A successful park's program should contribute to the fulfillment and the leisure time needs of the citizens and to the aesthetic qualities of the area through creative leadership, facilities, and public open spaces that encourage individual satisfaction and generate community pride.

Recreation Sub Goals

- a. To identify and measure the needs and desires of the area's residents for park and recreational facilities and programs.
- b. To preserve and protect areas of unique natural and scenic importance for their original and intrinsic value.
- c. To maintain a relationship with our past through retention of historical sites and structures.
- d. To provide a system of multi-purpose parks for active and passive recreation.
- e. To provide for the unique and recreational needs of the young, the aged, and the handicapped.
- f. To recognize and provide for special use areas and facilities not normally found in urban parks.
- g. To incorporate the ideal of environmental protection and stewardship of natural resources into acquisition and development of facilities.
- h. To optimize use of the public dollar through cooperative and coordinated facility acquisition and development.
- i. To provide for increased public access to rivers of the area and to encourage such uses as fishing, boating and swimming.

j. To recognize and encourage private recreational facilities that help semi-public needs and are compatible with the goals and policies of Marion County.

General Policies

1. Site selection should take into consideration topographic and physical features, water areas, wooded areas, etc.
2. There shall be a balance between day use facilities for social interactions and natural, scenic areas for serenity and solitude.
4. Parks and open space areas should retain natural vegetation as much as possible to provide habitat for wildlife.

General Outdoor Parks

5. The County shall have the responsibility of providing these parks.
6. These types of parks should be provided near urban and urbanizing areas whenever possible.
7. These parks should provide an escape from the daily routine.
10. Facilities within a park may be adjusted to meet the needs and desires of an area and character of the site.

Scenic Ways

38. Should provide:

- a. Linear areas of natural beauty connecting parks, schools, and other public places.
- b. Conservation of scenic and natural beauty.
- c. Buffers to thoroughfares and conflicts land uses.

38. (1) The County shall cooperate and work with National Park Service, other involved agencies and property owners during the inventory and designation phases of the Wild and Scenic Rivers program to provide relevant information. If any rivers are formally designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers the County shall determine if there are any conflicts related to Wild and Scenic River System designations and develop a program to resolve any identified conflicts.

Historical Sites

50. In an effort to designate and preserve buildings and sites of special historic, cultural or architectural interest, Marion County shall adopt a special review process for building permits and land use applications. The process is designed to minimize land use conflicts involving Historic Sites. Those structures and parcels subject to this review are listed in the Background Report and are identified on the Parks and Recreation map of the Plan.

51. The County shall encourage identification of all buildings, sites, and county parks with historic significance to show those areas as places of public interest and to pay tribute to that history.

52. The County will encourage the State to acquire, renovate, and maintain areas of regional or statewide interest.

53. The County will encourage historical organizations to acquire, renovate, and maintain areas of local interest.

Open Space

54. Multiple use of lands such as those adjacent to reservoirs, land reclamation sites, power line rights-of-way, flood control areas, public transportation rights-of-way, under overpasses, etc., are encouraged as open space providing public health and safety standards are met.

56. Encourage much of the land adjacent to the UGB be preserved as open space.

58. Encourage preservation of lands adjacent to major streams as open space.

59. Tree preservation and planting to separate conflicting uses and provide scenic and recreational opportunities and should be encouraged whenever feasible.

60. Scenic, natural and historic sites should be preserved and utilized as open space.

Parks and Recreation Objectives

The Regional Parks and Recreation Agency has proposed the following objectives (*summarized in the following table - author.*) for the development and location of additional recreational facilities in the County. These recommendations will be placed in priority and the implementation plan will proceed as funding becomes available. They are the result of applying the standards and policies to the conditions in Marion County.

Recommendations made in 1981 for park land acquisitions. These sites have not been acquired.

<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Location</u>
20	Pudding River, near Aurora
20	Hubbard area
120	Jackson-Lambert Bend area (river mile 64-65) possibly state agency
10	Adjacent to Spongs Landing
40	North and West of Joryville
10	Adjacent to Joryville Park
28	5-10 miles down river from Buena Vista, near Junson Rocks area
55	Stiener Hill - Miller Butte vicinity
12	South of Silverton, near reservoir
15-25	Abiqua Creek, north of Silverton
340	Total recommended acquisitions in 1981 that have not occurred
1337	Extrapolated total parkland (county-type only) needed for a county population of 272,760 (1999 est.) (Acre figures derived from Comp. Plan assessment of land holdings and recommendations for acquisition)

ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The quality of life in Marion County is directly related to the quality of the physical and natural environment. Marion County presently has relatively high quality air, water, and land resources. Man's relationship to and use of these key physical elements comprise the land use issues of environmental quality. In considering land use possibilities and alternatives, affect on the physical environment and natural resources are of significant importance. The goal of environmental quality planning in Marion County is: The property use and management of our air, land, and water resources to maintain our physical, social, and economic well-being.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

The discussion of fish and wildlife habitat issues emphasizes that continued production of fish and wildlife is directly dependent on the quality of the natural environment. With awareness of the environmental needs of fish and wildlife, care can be exercised in reviewing developments in rural areas of Marion County, which will remain in agriculture and forestry uses, thereby achieving most of the protection needs of this habitat. The Marion County goals and policies in regard to protecting fish and wildlife habitat are:

GOALS

Protect fish and wildlife habitat, maintain optimal ecological balance and protect endangered species.

POLICIES

3. To maintain stream quality and protect sensitive waterfowl areas, land uses that require drainage, excessive removal of riparian vegetation, alteration of stream banks and filling shall be discouraged in these locations.
4. Conflicts with wildlife (especially big game) shall be considered in land development. Development adjacent to streams, sensitive waterfowl areas and critical wildlife areas shall incorporate adequate setbacks and buffer zones.
8. Marion County will cooperate with local, state and federal agencies to identify, conserve and protect fish and wildlife habitat and in implementation measures for the protection of such areas.
9. Native plant species, wetlands and stream bank vegetation on County managed public lands shall be protected.

NATURAL AREAS

Ecologically and scientifically significant Natural Areas contain components that are unique to that area and location and cannot be relocated. It is the objective of the State and County to preserve and protect sections of these ecologically diverse components before they are forever lost or altered. The Oregon Nature Conservancy, under contract with the Land Conservation and Development Commission, prepared a data summary of Natural Areas in Marion County. The inventory includes all areas noted for their natural values, whether or not they have been fully verified or evaluated. A total of 31 sites were identified but Minto Island was deleted because it is covered in the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan. McKinney Bottom Heronry and Talbot Heronry were also omitted because they are located in Linn County. The identified natural areas that primarily are significant because of their value as natural habitat are discussed below. The remaining areas identified by the Nature Conservancy that predominately have a scenic or recreational character are discussed in the Parks and Recreation Section.

Candiani Island - Candiani Island is a 40 acre island in the Willamette River approximately four miles west of St. Paul. The island is essentially composed of three distinct vegetation communities. In one of these, a stand of tall cottonwoods, lies a great blue heron rookery. Another is a small slough with wapato, a species of concern. Candiani Island is a peaceful place little touched by human activity.

The older upstream portion of the island is occupied primarily by cottonwood with canary grass in small amounts of nettle and nightshade grading into ash and willow along the stream banks. This area is a nesting habitat for 50 pair of great blue heron and a few raptors. The slough on the east side of the island, which is nearly dry by late August, sustains willow and canary grass, with wapato and knotweed in wetter areas.

Independence Bend - This habitat area is northeast of Independence and consists of a wooded area along the Willamette River that is 1.5 miles long and consists of 60 to 75 acres. It is a wintering area for geese in addition to being a great blue heron rookery.

Ankeny Osprey Nest - This American Osprey habitat area is located four miles downstream from Buena Vista and is adjacent to the Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge. The trees near the river are valuable for shelter and nesting.

Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge - This 2,750 acre refuge is within the Willamette River flood plain east of Buena Vista. It also includes the Ankeny Bottom waterfowl wintering area identified by Nature Conservancy. This important habitat is owned and managed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Waterfowl and birds of prey are among the major types of wildlife protected by this refuge.

Tyson Island - This Willamette River island of approximately 50 acres is situated 2.5 miles south of the Independence Bridge. The eastern half of the island is under cultivation and the riparian vegetation on the west side of the island provides excellent habitat for a great blue heron rookery and birds of prey. The western half of the island appears to be publicly owned.

Stout Mountain Rattlesnake Dens - Stout Mountain is located two miles west of Mehama and one mile north of Highway 22. The dens are considered by the Nature Conservancy to be among the best traditional rattlesnake dens in the Willamette Valley.

Little North Fork and North Santiam Rivers Confluence - This area consists of riparian habitat that is located between the two rivers.

North Santiam River Flood Plain - This area situated between Stayton and Jefferson contains numerous old stream channels and oxbow lakes. Riparian vegetation and habitat is abundant and relatively untouched and surrounded by farmland.

Giesy Mineral Springs - These springs are located 1.5 miles west of Aurora, north of the intersection of Boones Ferry Road and Donald Road.

Breitenbush Hot Springs- These springs are situated near the Breitenbush Lodge, on private land, approximately 10 miles northeast of Detroit. Band-tailed pigeons are found in the vicinity of the springs.

Candiani Island, Independence Bend, Ankeny Osprey Nest and Tyson are currently regulated by the County with the EFU (EXCLUSIVE FARM USE) zone, the Willamette River Greenway Overlay Zone and the County Floodplain Ordinance. The EFU zone and the Floodplain Ordinance both act to limit the intensity and type of development in the area. It is unlikely that any permitted or conditional use could be allowed that would have a detrimental impact upon these natural areas. In addition, the Greenway Ordinance contains provisions for the protection of habitat areas along the river and gives the County and several State agencies review authority over stream bank and vegetation alterations. As a result, these areas are adequately protected and no additional regulation or protective mechanism needs to be established.

The Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge is adequately protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Also, the EFU zone that applies to the refuge and the surrounding areas provides an additional safeguard in terms of incompatible uses located nearby.

The Stout Mountain Rattlesnake Dens are primarily protected from incompatible uses by the EFU zone. The dens are located in an area of poor agricultural soil and rock outcroppings and therefore farming activity in and around the dens is not feasible. The dens are adequately safeguarded by the zoning, the soils and terrain and the nature of the animal.

The confluence of the Little North Fork of the North Santiam River are basically protected by the EFU and TC zones and the County Floodplain Ordinance. A small portion of the confluence of the rivers is zoned AR (ACREAGE RESIDENTIAL) but a cliff effectively separates potential and existing home sites from the habitat area. The Forest Practices Act would cover any large scale timber harvest and sale, thereby maintaining the integrity of the river bank vegetation. These three regulations should effectively protect these habitat areas.

Giesy Mineral Springs and Breitenbush Hot Springs are zoned EFU and P (PUBLIC) respectively and are both in private ownership. A resort including a lodge and cabins has been near the hot springs since the 1920's. It is not apparent from the Nature Conservancy inventory that any measures need to be taken beyond the existing zoning control and review to protect the

springs and the pigeons. Since the established uses of the springs do not appear to have affected their value as natural areas, no additional protection is necessary.

Natural Area Policies

1. When land use changes are proposed in the vicinity of identified natural areas, possible conflicts shall be identified and evaluated as to their social, economic, environmental and energy consequences. Significant conflicts shall be resolved in accordance with state land use Goal 5 requirements.
2. As new natural areas are proposed they will be reviewed and if determined to be ecologically and scientifically significant shall be protected in accordance with Goal 5 requirements prior to the next Plan update.

Appendix C: Criteria descriptions and GIS integration

Base layers

The Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of areas with parkland potential began with two base layers. The first layer, pre-EuroAmerican settlement ecosystems was developed by the Natural Heritage Program from General Land Office records, survey notes, plat books, and other early settlement sources. The second layer, current vegetation, was developed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife through ground surveys and air photo interpretation. These two data layers offered a comparison between the pre-settlement conditions and current conditions.

An intersection of these layers indicated that there are few sites in Marion County where the land remains relatively unchanged, and even fewer of significant size. These sites were favored in the GIS model due to their preservation value. There are a number of pre-settlement ecosystems that no longer even exist in current conditions - at the same location. A number of the pre-settlement ecosystems, however, do exist in different locations. Rather than limit the potential acquisition sites to only those locations that once held these ecosystems, the selection process focused on existing areas with restoration potential. The pre-settlement data was used as a reference for size, distribution, and composition of the desired restoration scenarios rather than a specific locator.

Criteria layers

The criteria used to identify sites with restoration potential were developed from a diverse array of data sets (see following table). These data sets allowed the desired parkland attributes to be expressed through the selection process. The criteria were reviewed by natural resource management professionals, stakeholders, and interested citizens. New data sets, from satellite imagery, are also under development and will provide a higher level of precision in the application of these criteria.

The criteria were built into a GIS decision model, using the current vegetation data layer as the base map. The model takes each criteria layer and assigns a value to the desired attributes within that layer. For example, within the School Layer the closer that a site occurs in relation to a school, the higher the value for that site. Since one goal in establishing these parks is to provide educational opportunities, a site close to a school better meets that goal and receives a higher value. A similar process is conducted for each data layer. Some of the criteria layers reduce the selection potential of certain areas, such as highly productive agricultural land or industrial areas. This is done either because the areas are unsuitable for restoration or because the areas currently contain other valuable uses.

Overlay process

The criteria layers were then assigned a weight, based on their relative value, and combined to produce a map of the cumulative values for every potential site in the county. By the end of the process, certain areas have accumulated higher values than others thus indicating areas with higher selection potential. This map of values was then overlain on the current vegetation layer. This overlay indicated the areas of highest value park potential and the current condition of the land. Over this map was laid the pre-settlement vegetation map, providing the target restoration scenario for the high value sites. Thus, this final map highlights the most valuable potential park

sites, shows the current land cover conditions of those sites, and indicates the possible restoration ecosystems.

Further analysis

The maps resulting from these criteria and base layers indicate the areas of desired vegetation types which also have a high value assigned through the criteria model. The sites that were identified through this process will be further refined through ground-truthing and an aerial survey. The maps were adjusted according to the findings of these surveys.

As our understanding of the Marion County's natural resource base grows, and as other restoration programs develop in the Valley, the analysis used for site identification will need to be adjusted. New imagery that provides higher resolution data, new data sets that outline important natural resource management elements, such as flood control areas and groundwater draw-down concerns will need to be added to the model. This will increase the accuracy of selection and the value of the sites to many different goals.

Criteria (data layers) and their intent attribute values and relative influence.

Criteria Categories	Data Layers	Intent	Buffer Widths & Labels	Weighted Values	Data Origin
Preservation Areas					
	Endangered Species	Protect threatened plants and animals	0-250', 250-500'	11%	NHP
Salmonid Distribution	Protect threatened salmonid pops.	0-200'	11%	ODFW	
Natural Areas	Protect significant natural areas	0-500'	5%	Comp Plan	
Scenic Areas	Protect identified scenic areas	0-500'	5%	Comp Plan	
Archeology Sites	Protect areas with historical sig.	0-500'	3%	Comp Plan	
Level of Disturbance	Protect areas with the least disturbance	High to Low levels of disturbance	11%	Derived	
Future development projections	Preserve sig. areas in the way of development	Within preservation areas	4%	U of O	
Hydrology					
	Hydrology (surface water)	Protect exposed water bodies	0-250', 250-500'	6%	County
DEQ 303d Contaminated Streams	Buffer areas with water quality issues	0-200'	6%	DEQ	
100 Year Flood Plain	Flood abatement & development limitation	Within floodplain	6%	FEMA	

Hydric Soils	Protect potential wetland areas	0-100'	6%	NRCS	
Soils					
	Erosion model	Provide permanent vegetation cover	High to Low erosion potential	4%	Derived
Landslide areas	Reduce development of inappropriate areas	High to Low landslide potential	6%	Salem	
Land Use/ Location					
	City Limits	Provide natural settings near population centers	0-500'	2%	County
Urban Growth Boundary	Provide accessible recreation & prevent sprawl	0-2500'	2%	County	
Schools	Provide easy access for educational uses	0-1 mile	1%	County	
County Roads	Provide easy access for visitors	0-250'	1%		
Ag Land	Preserve ag productivity & protect quality farm land	High to Low productivity	2%	NRCS	
Ownership					
	County Parks	Build on properties already in County ownership	0-500'	3%	County
County Property	Build on properties already in County ownership	0-500'	3%	County	

Public Property	Coordinate land management with other agencies	0-500', 500-1000'	2%	County	
TOTAL				100%	

Appendix D. Initial Field Assessment for Natural Heritage Park Candidate Sites

Date: _____ Assessor: _____

Ownership: _____ Ease of Access: _____

Site Location: (T,R,S) _____ Watershed: _____

Driving Directions: _____

Pre-EuroAmerican ecosystem: _____

Estimated Site Size: _____ Topography and aspect: _____

Soil type: _____

Flowing/Standing water on site: _____

Evidence of drainage: _____

Wetland indicators: Primary _____

Secondary _____

Anticipated hydrology: _____

Evidence of disturbance: _____

Current use of site: _____

Past use of site: _____

Surrounding land use: _____ Areas of special concern: _____

Major plant associations and % of area they occupy: _____

Threatened and Endangered Plants or Animals : _____

Noxious Weeds / Invasive Exotics : (on site) _____

(primary weeds on surrounding properties) _____

Wildlife: _____

Additional, unique characteristics of site: _____

Additional notes: _____

If possible, rough sketch the area on the back of this sheet.

Appendix E: Society for Ecological Restoration Project Policies

<http://www.ser.org>

The following recommendations from the Society for Ecological Restoration offer a good starting point for restoration efforts within Marion County. The recommendations will, of course, need to be modified to fit with the overall goals of the County and the limitations of its restoration efforts. The basic concepts presented here, however, warrant close consideration as they can affect not only the restoration process but also acquisition decisions.

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I. Restoration Plans

The Society for ecological restoration advises that plans for restoration projects should contain, at a minimum, the following items:

1. A baseline ecological description of the ecosystem designated for restoration that accounts for the regional expression of that ecosystem in terms of the biota and poignant features of the abiotic environment.
2. An evaluation of how the proposed restoration will integrate with other components of the regional landscape, especially those aspects of the landscape that may affect the long-term sustainability of the restored ecosystem.
3. Explicit plans and schedules for all on-site preparation and installation activities, including plans for contingencies.
4. Well-developed and explicitly stated performance standards, by which the project can be evaluated objectively.
5. Monitoring protocols by which the performance standards can be measured.
6. Provision for the procurement of suitable planting stocks and for supervision to guarantee their proper installation.
7. Procedures to expedite promptly any needed post-installation maintenance and remediation.

II. Exotic Species at Restoration Sites

An exotic species of plant or animal is one that was introduced, either intentionally or unintentionally, by human endeavor into a locality where it did not previously occur. The invasiveness of exotic species of plants and animals challenges a basic goal of ecological restorationists to recreate environments like those that existed prior to widespread human existence. Ideally, a restoration project should consist entirely of indigenous species. In order to meet this goal for virtually all restoration projects the control of exotic species will require ongoing management, monitoring, and evaluation. To that end, the Society for Ecological

Restoration recommends the following principles be followed during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of restoration projects and programs:

1. The control of exotic species should be an integral component of all restoration projects and programs.
2. Monitoring of exotics and periodic reassessment of their control should be integrated into all restoration plans and programs.
3. Highest priority should be given to the control of those species that pose the greatest threats, namely:
 - Exotics that replace indigenous key (keystone) species.
 - Exotics that substantially reduce indigenous species diversity, particularly with respect to the species richness and abundance of conservative species.
 - Exotics that significantly alter ecosystem or community structure or function
 - Exotics that persist indefinitely as sizable, sexually reproducing or clonally spreading populations.
 - Exotics that are very mobile and/or expanding locally.
4. Restoration plans and management programs should include contingencies for removing exotics as they first appear and for implementing new control methods as they become available.
5. Control programs should cause the least possible disturbance to indigenous species and communities and, for this reason, may be phased in over time.
6. The restoration and management program must be strategic. Protection of indigenous habitats, levels of infestation, appropriate resource allocation, and knowledge of control methods should be integrated into the monitoring and management program.
7. Exotic species should not be introduced to the site in the restoration plan.
8. Native species should also be evaluated for their potential threat to indigenous communities. Weedy native species should be avoided in restoration plans as well as native planting stocks representing non-indigenous ecotypes.

I. Integration of Ecological Restoration into a Larger Project:

Ecological restoration is sometimes only one of many elements within large enterprises, such as regional development projects and resource management programs. Managers of these larger undertakings should be aware of the complexities involved in planning and implementing ecological restoration and of the cost savings that are realized by careful coordination of larger projects to adopt the following recommendations:

1. Ecological restoration should be integrated into development projects and implemented in cooperation with all members of the development team.

2. Project managers should agree in advance that ecological restoration is a major component of an overall development project, and that the restoration team shall be given equal status with other key project personnel.

3. Project managers should ensure that key personnel avoid advocacy and work together to achieve consensus on decisions.

4. Definitions and policies of the Society for Ecological Restoration should be utilized in the consensus making process.

5. Cooperative decision making should include the following steps:

- Develop feasible and effective alternatives for remediating environmental problems
- Include stakeholders (people who are affected by the alternatives) in the process of anticipating the potential adverse social and ecological consequences of alternatives.
- Modify the alternatives as necessary to mitigate potential adverse consequences prior to implementation.
- Build consensus among key stakeholders on a preferred alternative.

IV. Regional Ecotypes

The Society for Ecological Restoration advocates the planting of regional ecotypes at restoration project sites to assure the fitness of the planting stock and to preserve genetic integrity in local species populations, especially for species verging upon local extirpation. The procurement of suitable planting stock should not jeopardize existing populations of rare taxa.

V. Landscape Interactions

The Society for Ecological Restoration recognizes that regional landscapes frequently contain two or more interacting ecosystems. For example, hydrologic transfer from upland ecosystems determines water quality, quantity, and rate of discharge into wetland ecosystems. Therefore, landscape functions and limitations should be considered in planning restoration projects.

VI. Local Stewardship

The Society for Ecological Restoration advises that restoration plans should be keenly sensitive to local concerns. Local acceptance and assistance should be solicited in the planning process, because, among other reasons, local residents will likely serve as stewards of the restored ecosystems.