City of Salem Floodplain Species Assessment

January 2025

ABSTRACT

This Floodplain Species Assessment identifies listed species and their floodplain habitats within the City of Salem urban growth boundary. The Assessment helps to provide credit under the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Prepared by

Glenn - Gibson Watershed Council

Prepared for

City of Salem At Your Service
Public Works Department
APWA ACCREDITED AGENCY

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Glenn Gibson Creeks Watershed Council in cooperation with the City of Salem has developed this information on the floodplains and threatened, endangered and other species of concern that inhabit the floodplain environment within the urban growth boundary of Salem. An assessment of floodplain species and a plan of action based on that assessment are credited under the Community Rating System (CRS) of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to encourage and recognize community actions to protect species listed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. Providing protection to critical habitat and habitat in general and help those listed and sensitive species recover can be accomplished by knowing what species use what aspects of Salem's floodplains. This "floodplain species assessment" is the first step. It starts the process of learning which species are listed or proposed for listing by the National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Services) and which associated critical habitats may be present in the floodways and floodplains in Salem. While the Services have independent authority under the Endangered Species Act, providing information and advice to private and public landowners of floodplain properties can help to avoid regulatory actions or allow for consideration of alternative approaches to the use of such properties.

Figure 1 shows the Study Area with City Limits (dashed line) Urban Growth Boundary (solid black line) Floodway (dark blue) and Floodplain (light blue).

Floods and Floodplains in Salem

Floodplains are the dynamic and diverse areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are inundated during high water periods but may not be underwater during Oregon's dry summer conditions. They are often low-lying areas adjacent to a stream or river channel and can vary in width from a narrow fringe to extensive and expansive reaches, depending on the landform constraints and stream gradient. Historically, floodplains in the Salem area were complex and had a natural ability to absorb and diminish floods. Streams and rivers often had a complex of small side channels that changed and rearranged seasonally. Salmon and other fish and aquatic animals used these side channels as refugia during high water periods and native fish such as cutthroat trout were abundant in the tributary streams. Beaver ponds were abundant and created wetlands for a diversity of fish, reptiles, amphibians, and waterfowl. In addition, wetlands fed by groundwater and springs provided rich soil nutrients and cool, clean water to the streams and rivers.

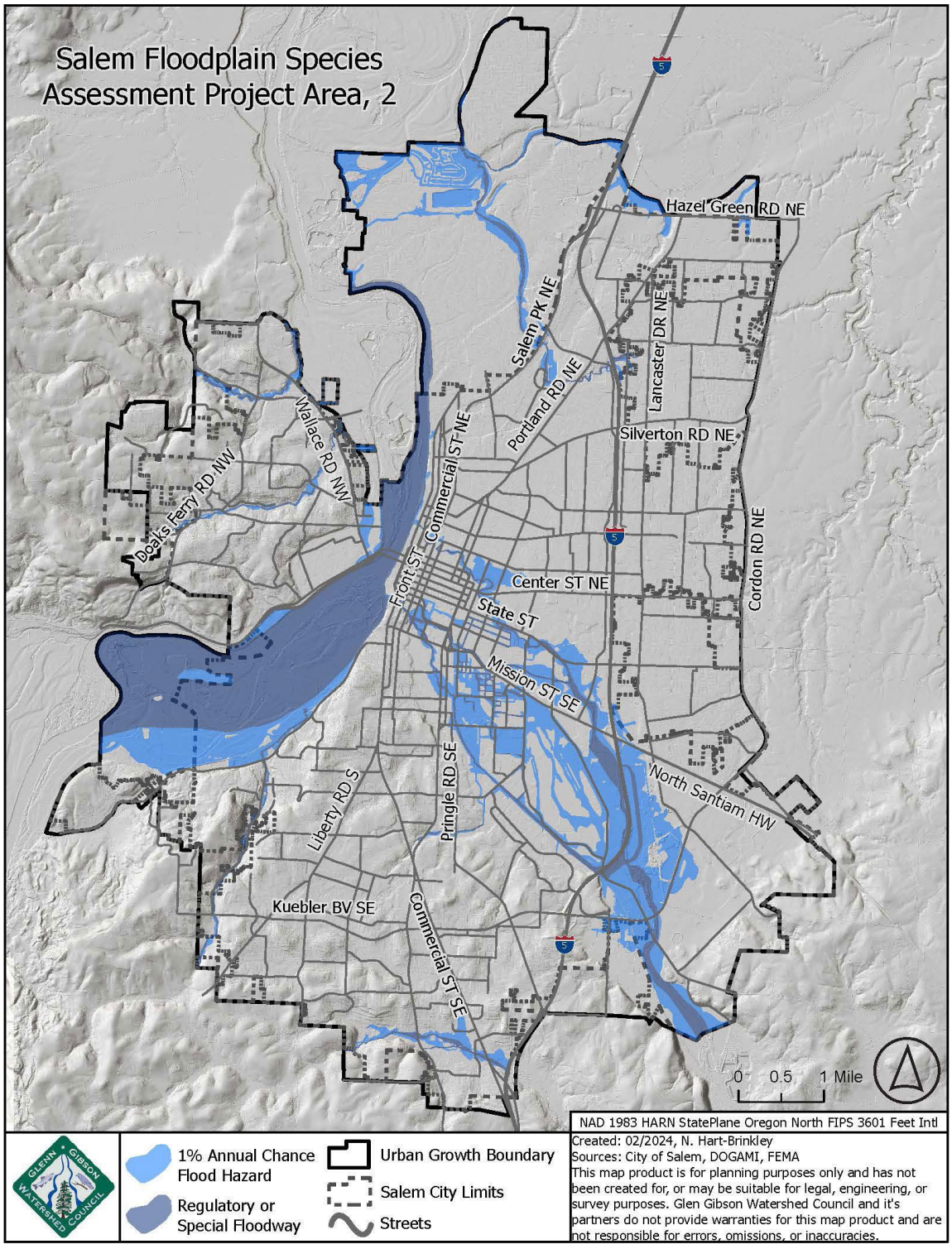

Figure 1: Salem Floodplain Species Assessment Study Area

Figure 2: Flooding in Downtown Salem 1964

Over the last nearly two centuries the floodplains of Salem's waterways have been extensively altered. Modification of the Willamette River and its floodplain has been well documented in the Willamette River Planning Atlas (Hulse et al., 2003). The modification of tributary streams and their floodplains is less well documented. Development along the edges of our rivers, streams, and sloughs has eliminated or greatly reduced floodplain area and thus the ability of our floodplains to absorb, retain, and slow floodwaters. In addition, floodplains have been stripped of their native vegetation, drained for agriculture, filled to accommodate development, and covered by pavement for transportation. Increasing stormwater runoff from impervious areas, and the loss of available storage in the floodplain cause more frequent and larger floods.

Floods and Floodplains as a River Feature

While rivers and creeks are often viewed as only the summer flowing areas of water through a channel at the bottom of a valley, the amount of stream flow and thus the area of the valley floor interacting with the stream varies in time. It is easy to recognize the area that is regularly inundated by higher flows by their low-lying topography and vegetation adapted to frequent inundation. The area of the valley floor that is less frequently inundated remains a part of the river and can be an active part of the river providing significant ecological functions (***Figure 3*** taken from Wohl, 2021). The regularly active channel reflects the low flow and high velocity area of the river. The river interacts with the floodplain during less frequent but regular higher flows. The river also interacts with the sediments of the river valley through what is called the hyporheic zone.

Floodplains are typically flat lands with relatively fertile soil and have been used for agriculture and other forms of development needing to be close to the river channel. The impact of these activities on the floodplain ecological functions and on the infrequent flooding on human activities has led to the development of regulations to reduce the economic and social impacts from flooding. As summarized by Wohl (2021): "…a floodplain is intimately connected to the river channel and the underlying hyporheic zone." She continues: "This basic scientific understanding is commonly lost in a societal context, however, in which floodplains are treated separately from channels and subsurface water." She further explains that the channel is regulated while the floodplain is often treated as private property. Wohl (2021) concludes: "Many communities around the world also do not effectively recognize the connectivity of floodplains and channels. The easy access to water, navigation, and waste disposal in the channel, and to fertile soils and flat topography on floodplains, have encouraged human settlement on floodplains for millennia. When inundation, bank erosion, or channel avulsion occur as a result of flooding, a common response is to "put the river back in its place," engineer the channel for greater conveyance and stability, and block water from the floodplain with artificial levees."

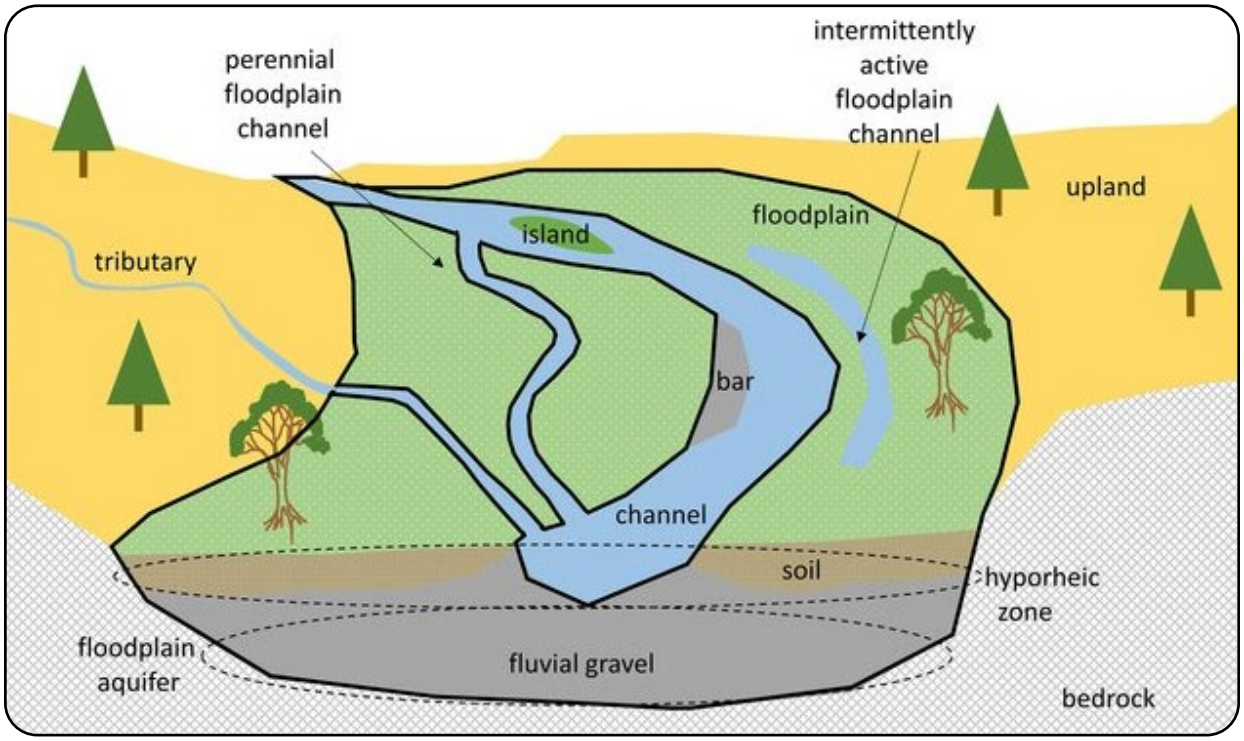

Figure 3: Floodplain characteristics and the relationships between the stream channel, floodplain, and floodplain aquifer (from Wohl, 2021)

The Ecology of Salem Area Floodplains

Flowing water and frequent disturbance by high flows causing channel changes and sedimentation create the geomorphic environment of the floodplain. Establishment of tree species adapted to recently deposited sediment and declining water availability characterizes the floodplain environment. There is a wealth of information on the floodplain dynamics and ecological relationships of the Willamette River. Much recent focus on the role of stream flow, species assemblages, water temperature relations and other factors affecting fish habitats in the Willamette River has been summarized by Flitcroft and others (2023).

Evaluation of the geomorphic and vegetation processes of the Willamette River is summarized by Wallick and others (2013). This work follows previous studies of cottonwood (Populus trichocarpa) colonization of gravel bars in the Willamette (Dykaar and Wingington, 2000; Cline and McAllister, 2011). The historic floodplain of the Willamette is described by Hulse and others (2003) as: "When the first EuroAmerican settlers arrived in the Willamette Valley, they found the valley clothed in tall grasses, so tall that cattle were hidden from view. The appearance was that of a "park" with wide swaths of grass punctuated by groves of spreading oak trees (Oregon white oak, and in Lane County some California black oak). Dense gallery forests lined the Willamette and its tributaries with associations of Douglas-fir, Oregon ash, black cottonwood, alder, bigleaf maple, western red cedar, and willows." The historical vegetation of the Willamette Valley is constructed from General Land Office records (Christy and Alverson, 2011). Mapping from the 1850's shows a continuous riparian forest along the floodplain surrounded by wet prairie and savanna. Riparian forest up to 8 km wide is documented along the Willamette River (Christie and Alverson, 2011). Johannessen and others (1971) describe the changes from settlement, fire reduction and forest harvest.

As Described in the Willamette Valley Conservation Study (USFWS, 2017): "It takes time for species to adjust to changed conditions, and from an ecological and evolutionary standpoint, 150 years is just the blink of an eye. Significant habitat loss and fragmentation coupled with the invasion of noxious, non-native plants and animals and the loss of the fires and floods that rejuvenated and maintained the habitats has had pronounced effects on the wildlife and plants they support, or once supported.

Today, species are still adjusting and for many, the adjustment isn't going particularly well. Evidence of this is found in the fact that there are now 12 species of fish, wildlife, and plants native to the valley whose population numbers are so low that they are listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (USFWS 1993a, 1997, 1998a, 2000, 2013b). Two other federally-listed species, the Oregon spotted frog and yellow billed cuckoo, historically bred in the valley, but are now extirpated. Many other species including western meadowlark, Oregon vesper sparrow, and yellow-breasted chat are considered by the State of Oregon to be threatened with extirpation from the valley (ODFW 2008). Grassland-dependent birds have suffered steep population declines and severe range contractions as they adjust to the new realities of the valley (Altman 1999, ODFW 2010). ODFW found that "In Oregon's Willamette Valley, many grassland species have exhibited steady downward trends in distribution and abundance, with some likely having been extirpated as a breeding species" (ODFW 2010)."

Agricultural and urban development has reduced the wet prairies of the floodplains of the Willamette and tributary streams. The native prairies of western Oregon and southwestern Washington are among the most endangered ecosystems in the United States (Noss et al. 1995). Six native prairie species in the region – one butterfly and five plants – have been added to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants since 1988 pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq.). The dependence on regular flooding and fire has led to significant reductions in the range of these species and extirpation from significant areas of developed land.

A broader view of the geomorphological and ecological processes that create floodplains are often more extensive than regulatory floodplains (***Figure 4***).

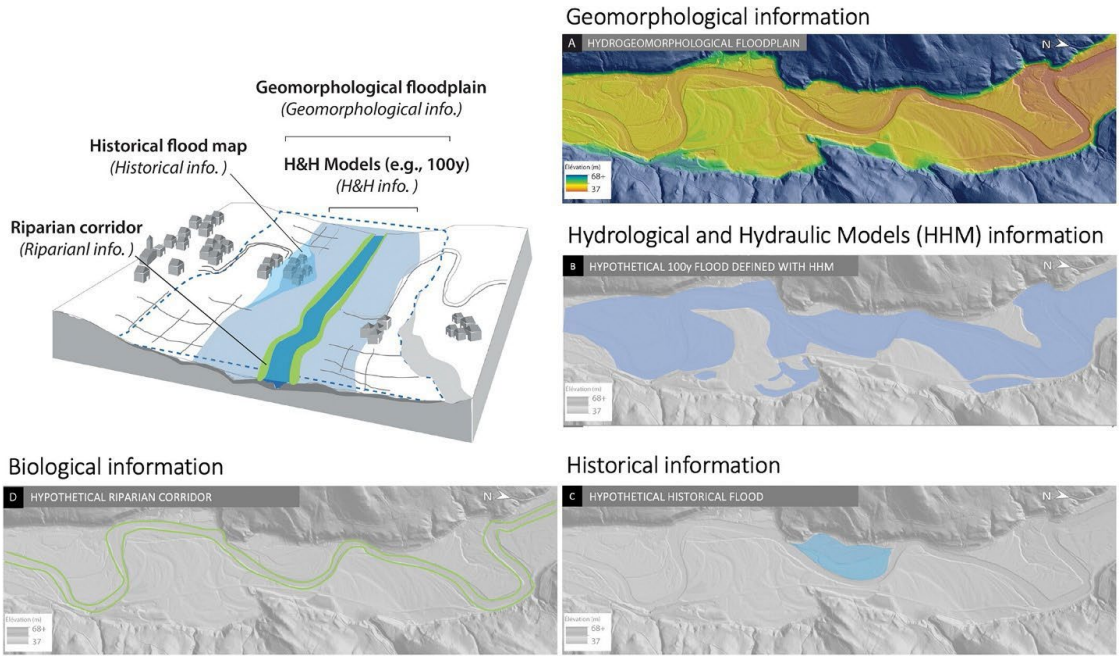

Figure 4: Comparison of Geological and Ecological Floodplain with Regulatory Floodplain (from Serra-Llobet et al., 2022a)

Floodplain Regulation and Regulatory Boundaries

The regulation of structures and development in floodplains is managed by local governments, however in Oregon, floodplain development regulations are required to comply with Oregon's land use planning goals and uniform floodplain regulations have been required. The National Flood Insurance Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency has developed minimum requirements for floodplain development that most communities have adopted. The minimum requirements for floodplain development are based on risk reduction from engineering analysis of the potential for flood rise effects. Floodplains are mapped and categorized according to the level of risk to development. The critical distinctions are between the floodway and floodplain (***Figure 5***).

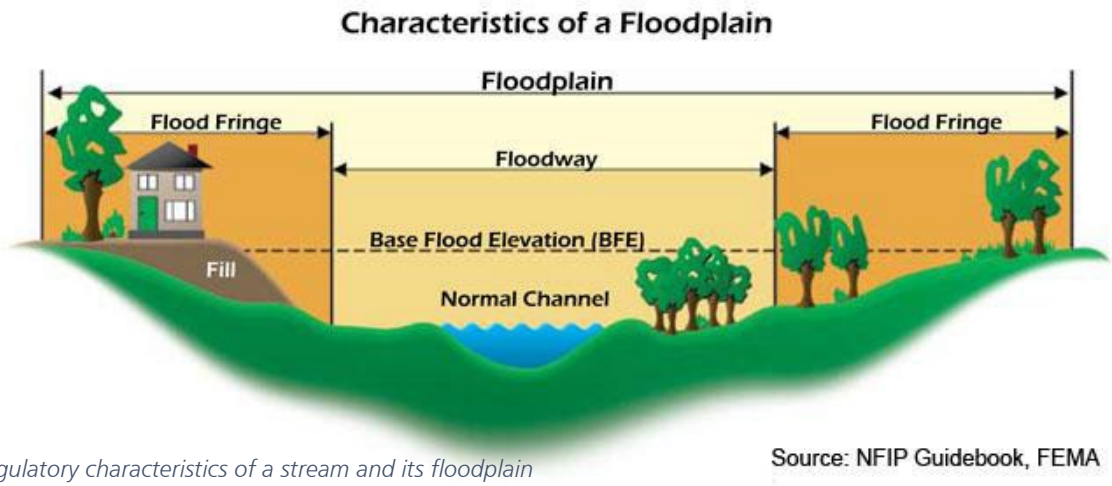

Figure 5: Regulatory characteristics of a stream and its floodplain

FEMA administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a nationwide program that reduces future flood damage by requiring minimum floodplain management standards and provides protection for property owners against potential flood losses through insurance. The NFIP was established by the United States Congress in 1968 with the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act (NFIA) (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] §4001 et seq.). This law mandated that FEMA identify the nation's flood-prone areas and make insurance available to participating communities (local, tribal, and state governments) that implement floodplain management requirements that meet or exceed the minimum standards of the program. The NFIP is the primary source of flood insurance coverage for residential properties in the United States. Recent estimates of present and future flood risk (Wing et al., 2018) conclude: "Our analysis shows that both FEMA flood maps and previous large-scale risk estimates likely significantly underestimate population exposure, while the latter simultaneously overestimates flood risk."

The Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) are developed under FEMA guidelines and standards as the official regulatory flood maps for a community (***Figure 6***). FEMA has delineated both the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), and the risk premium zones applicable to the community. Within the SFHA insurance is obligatory for structures with federally backed mortgages and outside the SFHA insurance is recommended. The 1% NFIP standard was intended to be a standard for flood insurance rating and not a national standard for flood protection or land use planning. The FIRM mapping is available on the City of Salem website at *https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/safety/flooding/salem-s-local-floodplain-map.*

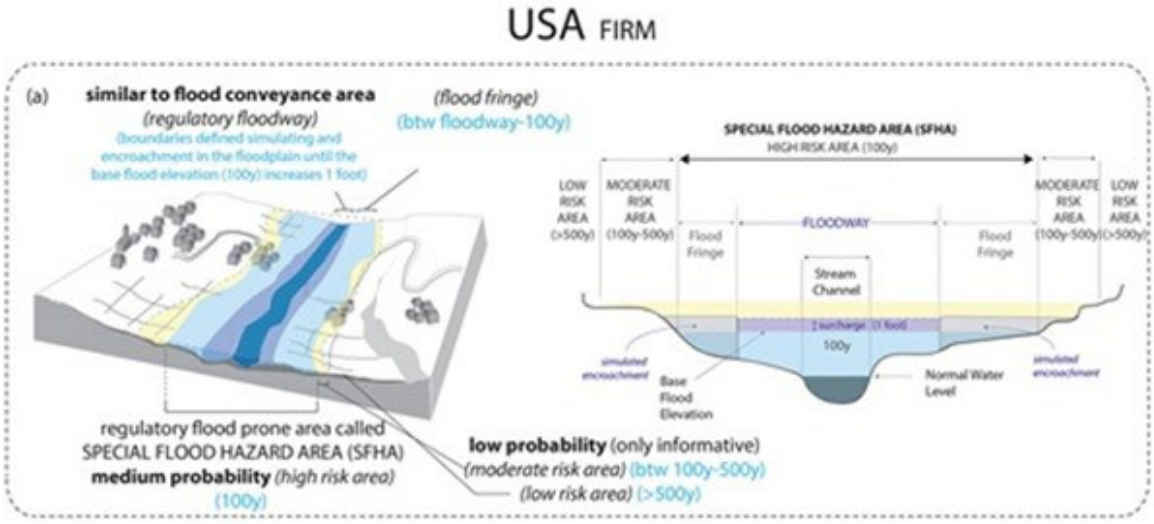

Figure 6: Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) description (from Serra-Llabet et al., 2022a)

Salem's Floodplain Management Plan

The city of Salem has a strong history of planning for flood management. The City of Salem adopted a Floodplain Management Plan in 2013 and updated it in 2018. In October of 2023, the City of Salem completed the second update of the City of Salem Floodplain Management Plan. The plan was adopted by City Council on December 4, 2023. The objective of the City of Salem Floodplain Management Plan is to create an overall strategy of programs, projects and measures that will help reduce the adverse impact of flood hazards on the community. The plan includes a review of the action activities from the 2018 plan and identifies 42 action activities as either ongoing or scheduled for some timeframe in the future (either 0-2 or 3-5 years).

The plan includes the proposed action (Action Activity NR-4) to: "Prepare a Flood Species Assessment in conformance with CRS Activity 510" scheduled for 0-2 years from the adoption of the 2023 plan. This document "Salem Floodplain Species Assessment" is intended to complete that proposed action of the Salem Floodplain Management Plan 2023.

The City of Salem has a website that provides excellent information on the City Floodplain Management Program (*https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/safety/flooding*). The site has information on the importance of floodplains, flood preparedness, flood response, flood insurance and access to real time stream stage information.

Salem Floodplains and their Watersheds

Within the urban growth boundary of the City of Salem floodplains of the Willamette River and Mill Creek provide the greatest area of risk. Flooding also occurs in Battle Creek, Cinnamon Creek, Claggett Creek, Clark Creek, Croisan Creek, Davidson Creek, Gibson Creek, Glenn Creek, Golf Creek, Jory Creek, Laurel Creek, Little Pudding, Mill Race, Pettijohn Creek, Powell Creek, Pringle Creek, Scotch Creek, Shelton Ditch, Waln Creek, and Winslow Creek. FEMA has only mapped floodplains in relatively small areas of the tributary streams to the Willamette, except for the extensive floodplain of Mill Creek. Evaluating floodplains for this assessment looks at the mapped floodplains and areas that experienced flooding in the last few major flood events (2012, 1996, and 1964).

Each creek in the Salem area is affected by the watershed conditions outside the City urban growth boundary. Each tributary system has distinct characteristics, ecology and hydrology. The following is a general description of each contributing stream and their watershed conditions affecting flooding in Salem.

THE DEFINITION OF FLOOD RISK (from Lane, 2017)

The probability that exposure to a hazard will lead to a negative consequence…'; and thus we can think of flood risk as being the probability of being exposed to flooding (the hazard) in a way that has negative consequences. The negative consequences can be broadly defined (e.g., the full range of impacts, economic, social, health and wellbeing, etc.) or narrowly defined (e.g., just the economic losses that would result from the exposure). Commonly, the term vulnerability can be used to represent this broadest sense. This definition is important because it emphasizes that flooding does not necessarily lead to a flood risk, as for that to happen there has to be a negative consequence. Floods can have positive consequences (e.g., for ecosystems) as well as negative ones.

Willamette River

The Willamette River watershed is fed by an approximately 11,478 square mile catchment. At Salem nearly all the major tributary flow has been contributed. The Willamette River is highly regulated by 13 federal flood control dams. The management of these dams results in less variable flows and reduced peak flows. Construction and operation of flood mitigation/hydropower dams have largely confined peak flows to the bankfull channel, decreasing the magnitude of large floods and the magnitude and frequency of small floods (***Figure 7***). The post dam flows are significantly below historic flows. Flow regulation in the mainstem Willamette River has been implemented through the construction and integrated management of dams in its tributaries, that also serve as sources of hydropower. The last large flood of record occurred in the Willamette River system in 1964, as completion of upstream dams to regulate flow in the late 1960s effectively reduced high-flow events in the following decades. River flow modification alters habitat for in-stream species, and for floodplain species that depend on periodic inundation.

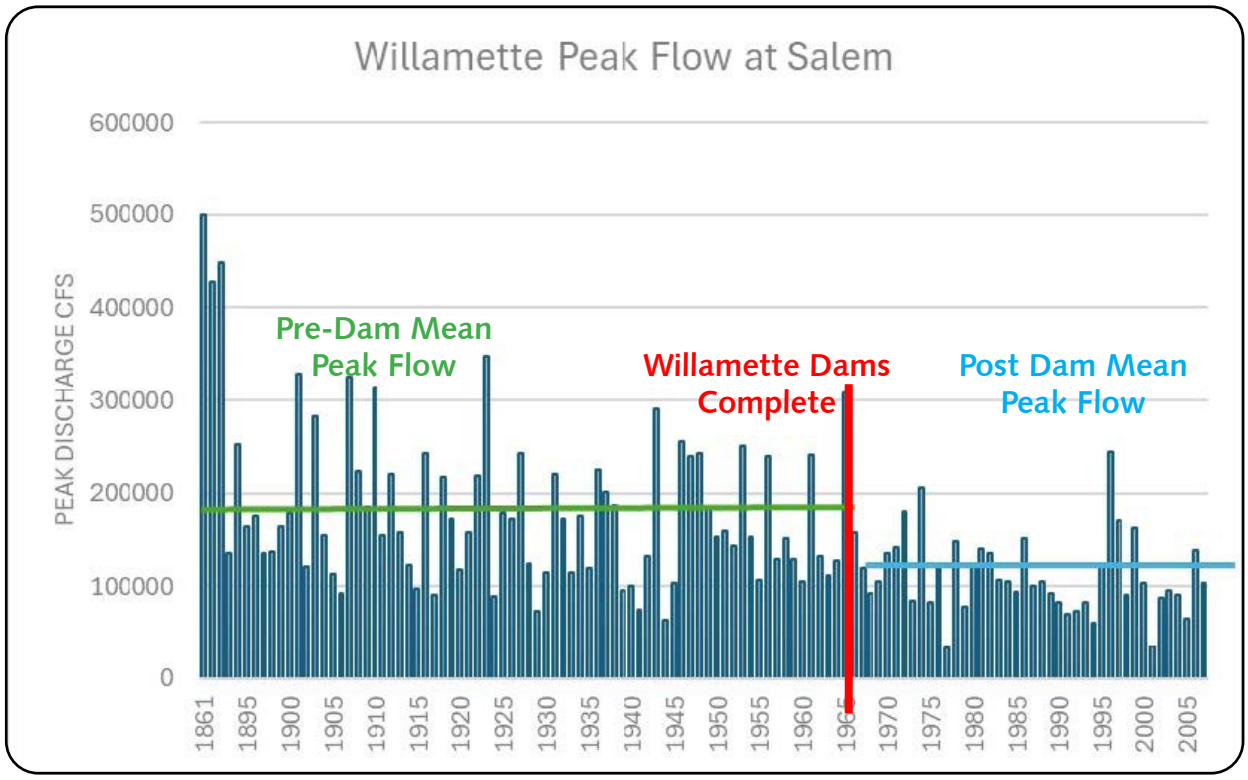

Figure 7: Peak annual discharge for the Willamette River at Salem showing the effect of dams on the upper river.

Mill Creek

Mill Creek is a 26-mile (42 km) tributary of the Willamette River that drains a 111-square-mile (290 km2) area of Marion County. Flowing generally west from its source south of Silver Falls State Park, it passes through the cities of Aumsville, Stayton, Sublimity, and Turner before emptying into the Willamette in Salem. Near river mile (RM) 18 or river kilometer (RK) 29, the creek receives Salem Ditch from the left; the ditch transports water from the North Santiam River to Mill Creek. Cutting through central Salem, the creek intersects Mill Race or Mission Ditch (another artificial channel diverting water to Pringle Creek) at RM 2.3 (RK 3.7). Most of the land in the watershed is privately owned. As of 2006, about 75 percent was used for farming, 13 percent for forestry, and 12 percent was urban. Artificial structures built in the mid-19th century altered the course of the original lower reaches of Mill Creek. Waller Dam, built around 1864 and modified in 1915, split Mill Creek into a millrace and what is sometimes referred to as North Mill Creek. The millrace, which originally powered a woolen mill, flows through the Willamette University campus.

Another diversion canal, Shelton Ditch, built in the mid-1800s, runs from Mill Creek near the municipal airport through the southern edge of downtown Salem. It empties into Pringle Creek near Pringle Park. Mill Creek has the most extensive floodplain through the City of any of the tributary streams to the Willamette.

Glenn Creek

The Glenn Gibson basin is located in Polk County and drains 10.4 square miles of west Salem. Approximately half of the basin is within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The basin terrain is steep, particularly in the upper reaches, with flatter slopes near the basin outlet. There are over 20 small tributaries in the basin. The two main drainage channels are Glenn Creek and Gibson Creek. The Glenn Gibson basin is experiencing rapid growth in the upper-western reaches inside the UGB. Some development is also occurring outside the UGB in Polk County. Glenn Creek originates outside the UGB, and flows east through agricultural areas and residential developments. It eventually flows into the West Willamette Slough. Gibson Creek is a tributary of Glenn Creek. It originates outside the UGB near Eagle Crest Road NW and flows east through primarily agricultural and rural residential areas to a confluence with Glenn Creek near Wallace Road NW.

Claggett Creek

The Upper Claggett Creek basin drains 7.4 square miles, all of which are within the Urban Growth Boundary. The Upper Claggett basin drains into Claggett Creek, which flows through the city of Keizer and is a tributary of the Willamette River. The basin slope is very flat. The Upper Claggett Creek basin is highly developed, with land use including single and multi-family residential, industrial, commercial, rural, and agricultural areas. Two existing city-owned regional detention facilities are located in the basin: (1) the 37th Place NE facility; and (2) the Eastgate Soccer Field.

Pringle Creek

Pringle Creek Basin is a drainage area located in the City of Salem between the Battle Creek Basin to the south and the Mill Creek Basin to the north. The majority of Pringle Creek Basin is developed residential, commercial, and industrial land use. The southwest portion of the basin contains undeveloped agricultural land, forest, and grassland. The outlet for Pringle Creek Basin is the Willamette Slough, a backwater area of the Willamette River next to Minto Brown Island. Prior to its confluence with the Willamette Slough, two Mill Creek diversion channels, Shelton Ditch and Mill Race, discharge into Pringle Creek. Since the primary source of these diversion channels is Mill Creek, the channels and their contributing drainage areas are part of the Mill Creek Basin.

Smaller Tributaries

Portions of the Little Pudding River, Battle Creek, Croisan Creek, Pettijohn Creek, Willamette Slough and small drainages on the Willamette floodplain are all within the urban growth boundary of Salem.

Floodplain Development

The floodplains of the Salem area have changed significantly over time. Salem in 1862 was a small outpost community with a mill on Mill Creek (***Figure 8***). Goulder (1909) visited the Salem area in 1845-1846 and noted: "On Mill Creek, not far from the "Institute," there were a grist-mill, a saw-mill, and a boarding-house." He further observed that "The greater part of the area upon which the city of Salem was afterwords built, was then a well-cultivated wheat-field..."

As the community grew, the floodplain was altered to fit the growing city. Thirty years later the city of Salem occupied the east bank of the Willamette River with mills on the tributary creeks (***Figure 9***). At that time the population of Salem was some 3,400 residents.

Early development in Salem was laid out on a rectangular grid of ownership with only limited recognition of floodplain conditions. Through time the watershed was significantly altered (***Figure 10***) by urbanization, flood control, road and railroad construction, agriculture, and channel modification (clearing and snagging, revetment, channel simplification, etc.) as illustrated by Flitcroft and others (2023). The modern floodplain reflects the geomorphological template, biological conditions and socio-economic footprint of Salem.

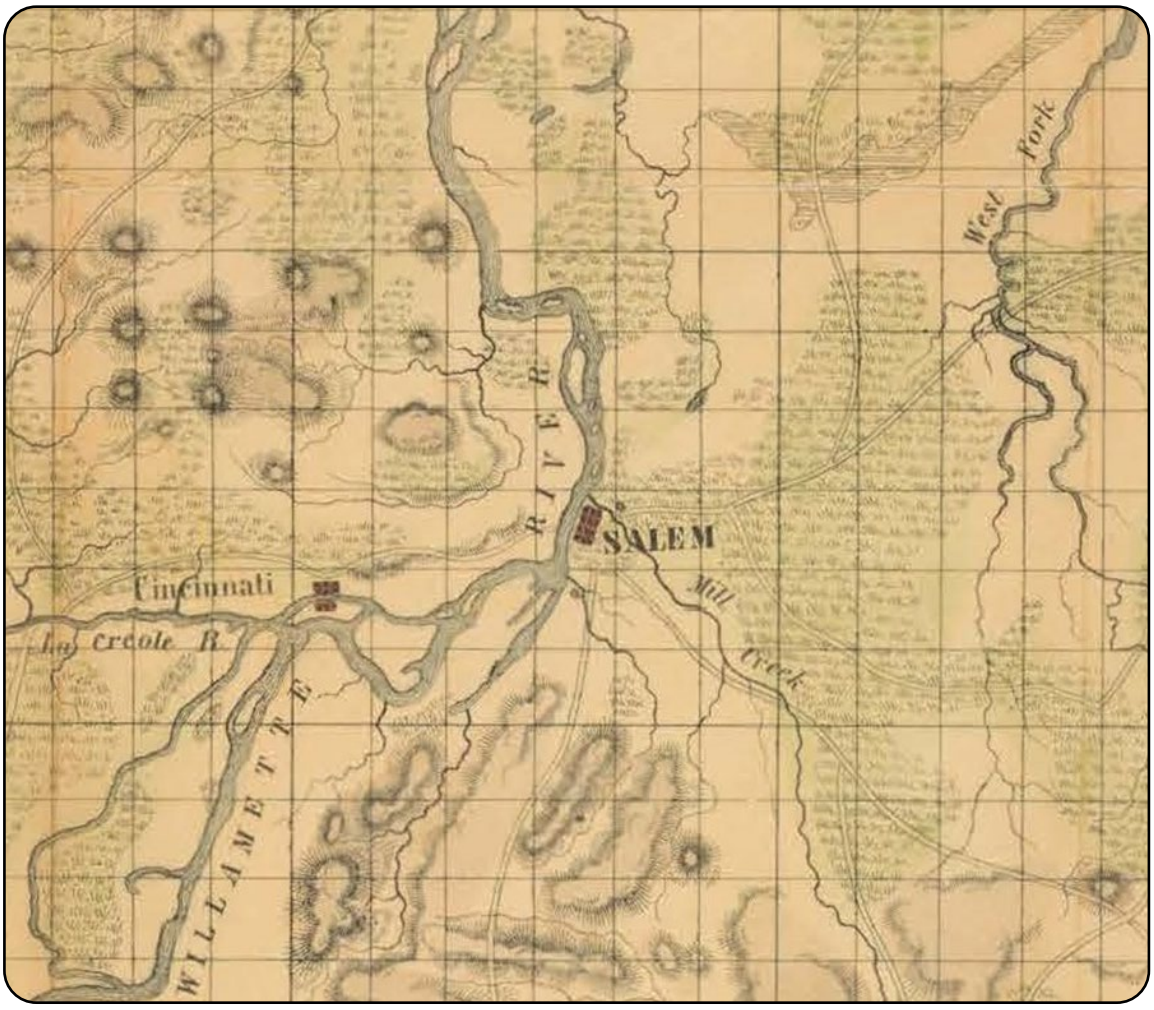

Figure 8: Salem Area 1862 from Map of the Surveyed Portions of Oregon Territory 1862

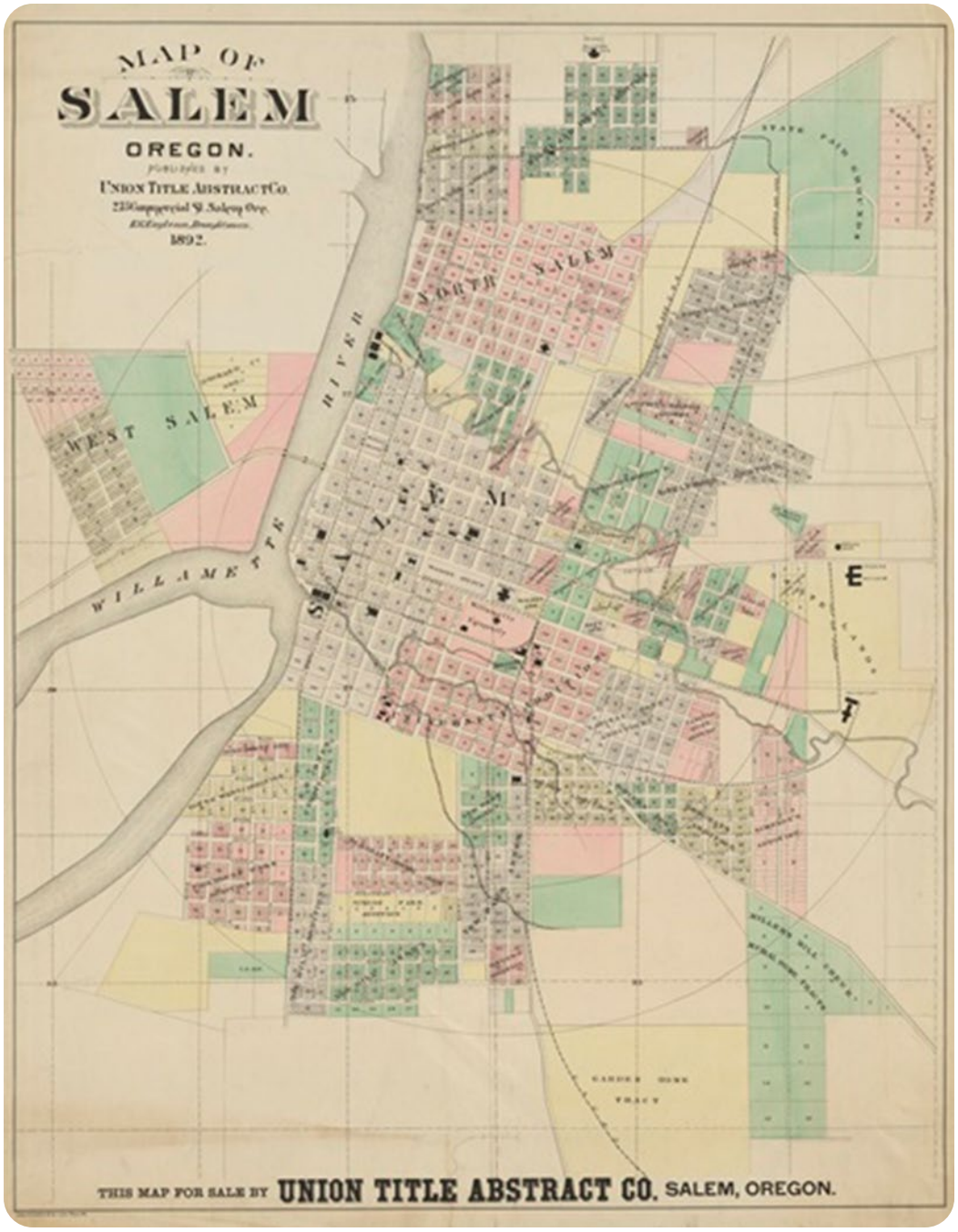

Figure 9: Salem 1892

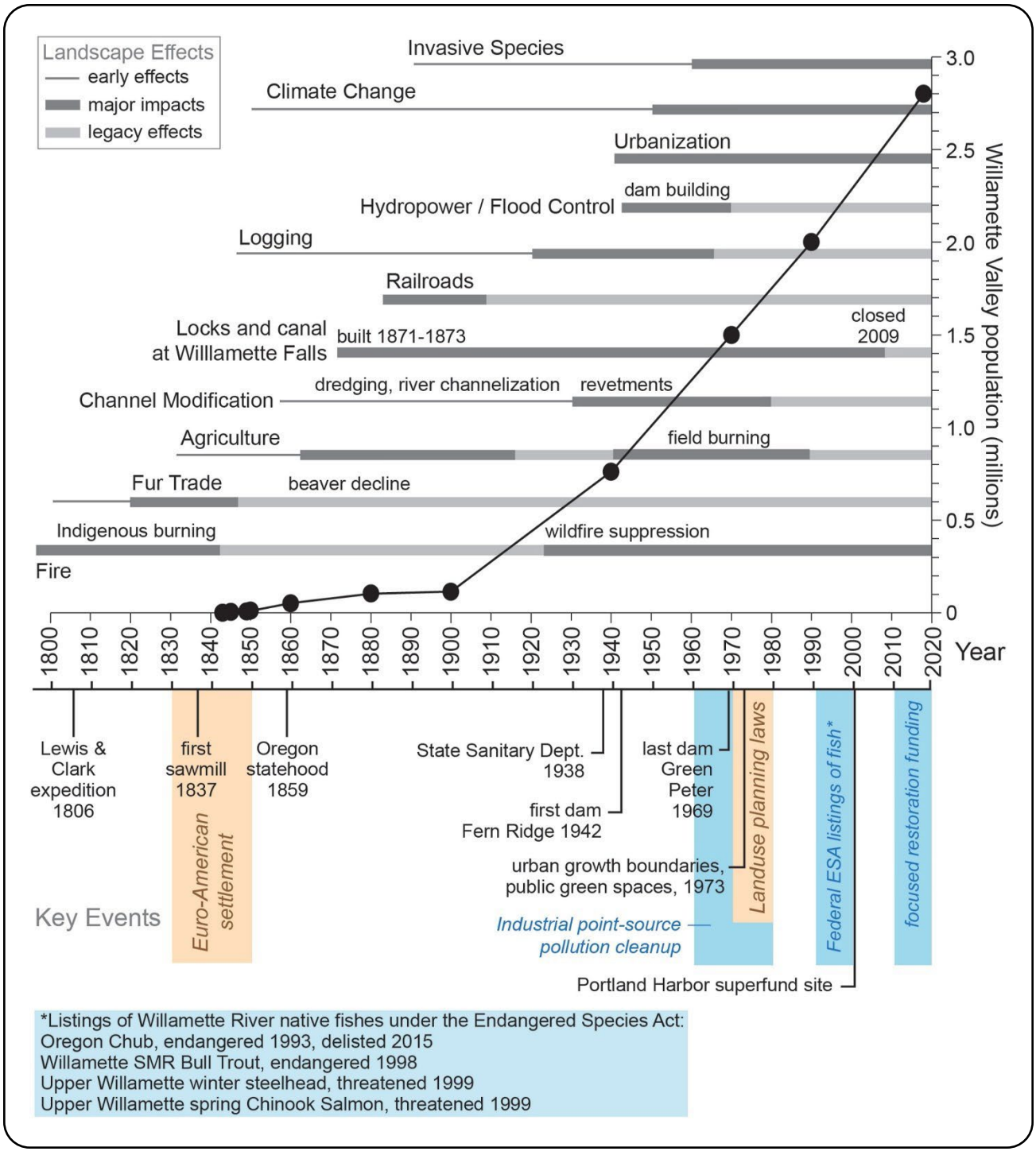

Figure 10: Watershed development chronology in the Willamette Basin (from Flitcroft et al., 2023)

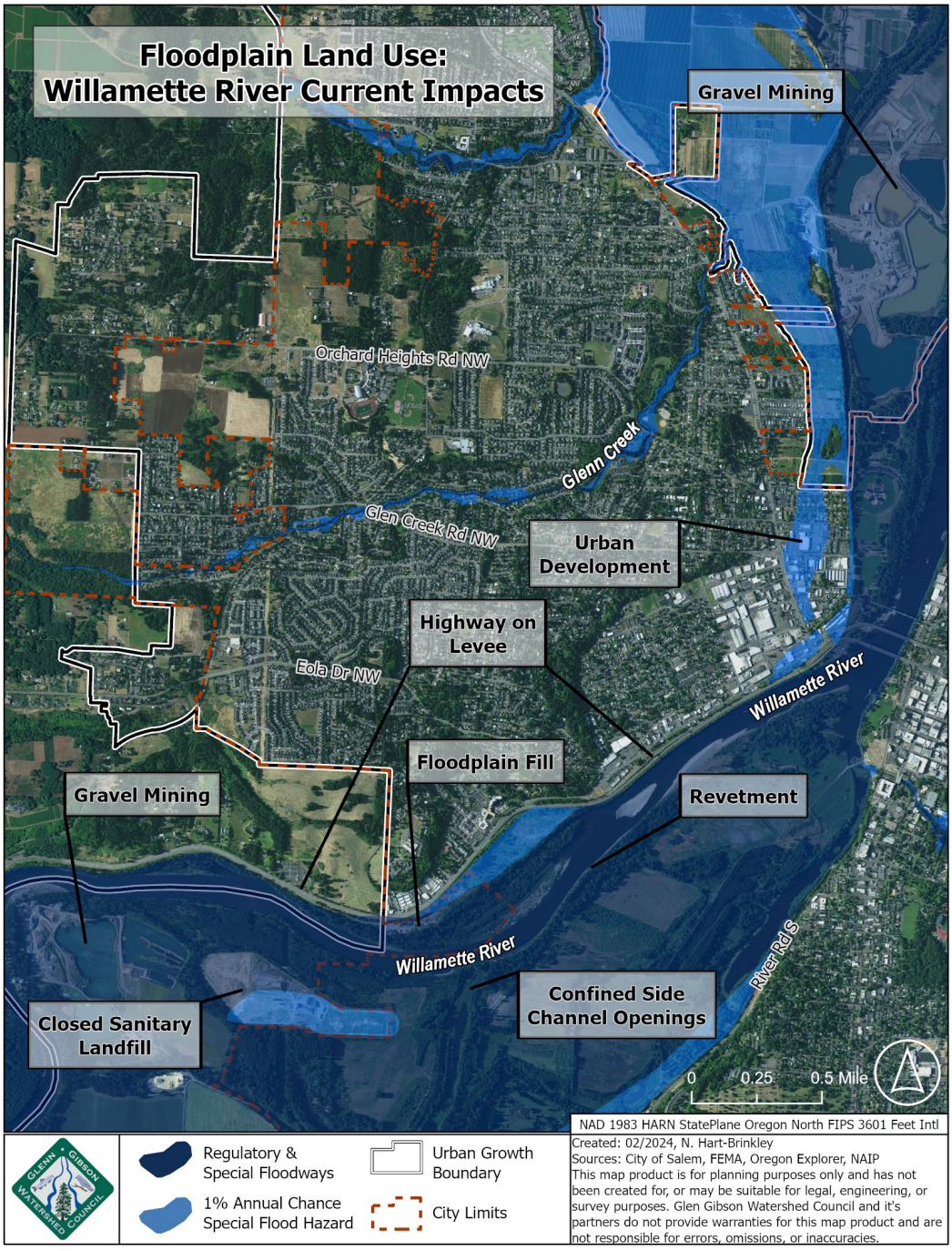

Figure 11: Willamette floodplain development and 1964 flood conditions.

Current Floodplain Conditions

Major alterations to the floodplains in the Salem area include urban development, gravel mining, fill, sanitary landfill, forest clearing, industrial development, riprap, and other conditions that define the current regulatory floodplain (***Figure 11***). These historic decisions affect the ability to prevent impacts and make flood impact management more difficult.

Similarly, the Mill Creek floodplain has been significantly developed by industrial, residential and gravel extraction over time. The result is a significant area of at-risk properties (***Figure 12***).

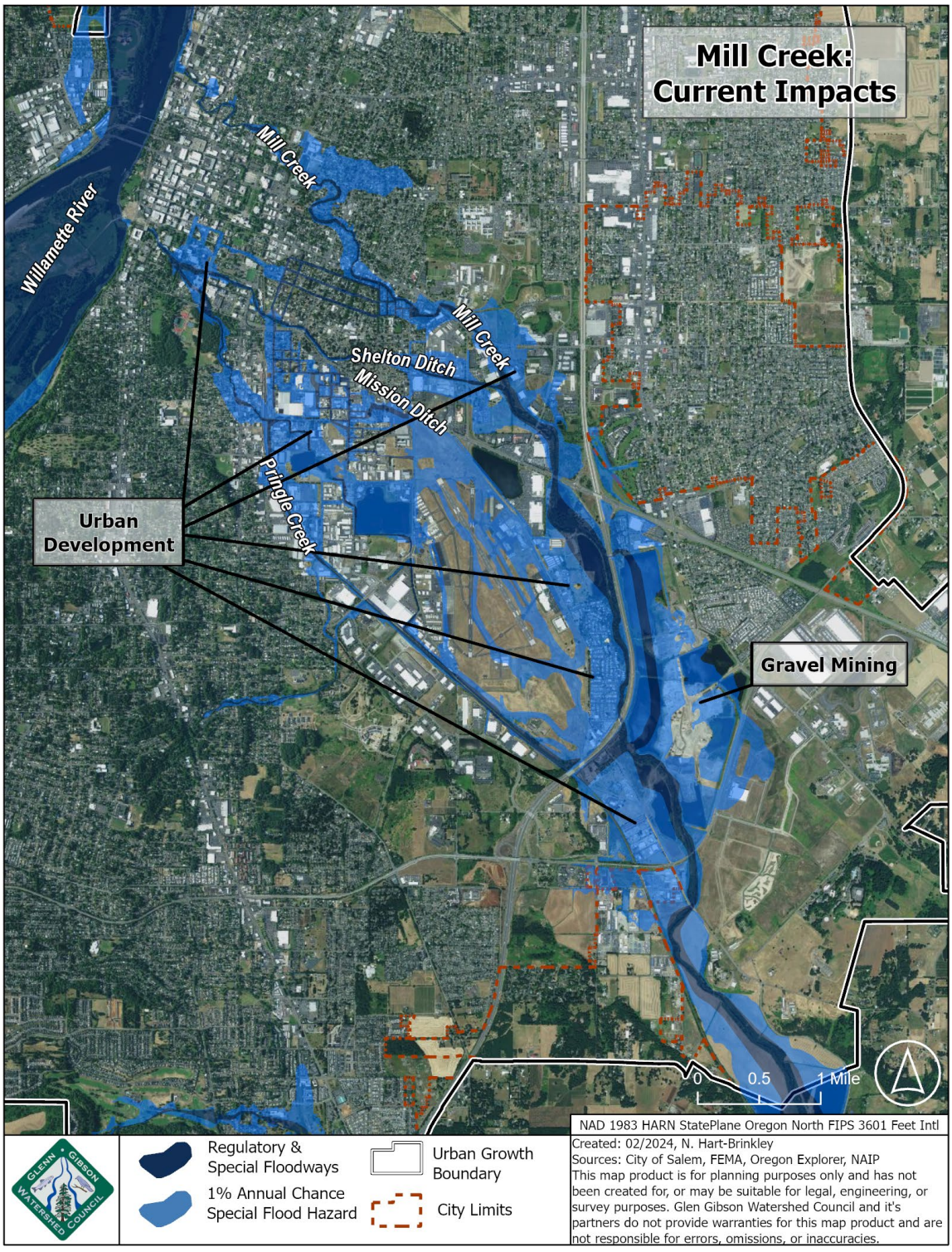

Figure 12: Mill Creek Floodplain showing current development affecting floodplain conditions.

Floodplain Species

Threatened and Endangered Species

The cumulative development of the Willamette Valley has resulted in simplification of the Willamette River and its floodplain reducing its capacity to support native fish. Conversion of the valley floor floodplain to agriculture and urban uses has led to the listing of wetland and wet prairie species under the federal Endangered Species Act. A review of FEMA's Flood Risk and Endangered Species Habitat (FRESH) website found seven species federally listed as threatened, one listed as endangered and two proposed for listing having their range in the Salem area. Marbled murrelet, a threatened species was identified as a species in proximity to Salem in the FRESH data. Suitable habitat for murrelet is not found in the Salem area so it was not further considered. These are shown in ***Table 1***. While the Upper Willamette Chinook salmon, and Upper Willamette steelhead are anadromous and spend most of their lives in salt water, this assessment focuses on their freshwater habitat in the waterways in Salem's jurisdiction. While not directly affected, Upper Columbia, Middle Columbia, Lower Columbia, and Snake River salmon and steelhead listed species could be affected by downstream effects of both floodplain development and conservation actions. There is an abundance of information on the Willamette River as habitat for salmon and steelhead.

Threatened and Endangered Species in Salem

Species	Scientific Name	Federal		State	
		Status	Agency[1]	Status	Agency[2]
Upper Willamette Chinook Salmon	*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*	Threatened	NMFS	Sensitive	ODFW
Upper Willamette Steelhead	*Oncorhynchus mykiss*	Threatened	NMFS	Sensitive	ODFW
Oregon spotted frog	*Rana pretiosa*	Threatened	USFWS	Sensitive	ODFW
Streaked Horned Lark	*Eremophila alpestris strigata*	Threatened	USFWS	Species of Concern	ODFW
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	Threatened	USFWS		ODFW
Oregon Vesper Sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus affinis*	Petitioned for Review	USFWS	Sensitive	ODFW
Northwestern Pond Turtle	*Actinemys marmorata*	Proposed Threatened	USFWS	Sensitive	ODFW
Fender's Blue Butterfly	*Icaricia icarioides fenderi*	Threatened	USFWS		
Monarch Butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	Candidate Species	USFWS		
Kincaid's Lupine	*Lupinus sulphureus ssp. kincaidii*	Threatened	USFWS	Threatened	ODA
Willamette Daisy	*Erigeron decumbens*	Endangered	USFWS	Endangered	ODA

Table 1: Salem Floodplain Threatened and Endangered Species

1 NMFS = National Marine Fisheries Service, USFWS = U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
2 ODFW = Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, ODA = Oregon Department of Agriculture

Range and Critical Habitat Salmon and Steelhead

Critical habitat for Upper Willamette River (UWR) Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tschawytscha*) Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) and Upper Willamette River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) Distinct Population Segment (DPS) was designated by Federal Regulations on September 2, 2005 (FR notice: 70 FR 52630). The National Marine Fisheries Service uses the following definition for critical habitat boundaries (from 70 FR 52630). *"Critical habitat includes the stream channels within the designated stream reaches, and includes a lateral extent as defined by the ordinary high-water line (33 CFR 319.11). In areas where ordinary high-water line has not been defined, the lateral extent will be defined by the bankfull elevation.*

Bankfull elevation is the level at which water begins to leave the channel and move into the floodplain and is reached at a discharge which generally has a recurrence interval of 1 to 2 years on the annual flood series.

(c) Primary constituent elements. Within these areas, the primary constituent elements essential for the conservation of these ESUs are those sites and habitat components that support one or more life stages, including:

(1) Freshwater spawning sites with water quantity and quality conditions and substrate supporting spawning, incubation and larval development;

(2) Freshwater rearing sites with:

(i) Water quantity and floodplain connectivity to form and maintain physical habitat conditions and support juvenile growth and mobility;

(ii) Water quality and forage supporting juvenile development; and

(iii) Natural cover such as shade, submerged and overhanging large wood, log jams and beaver dams, aquatic vegetation, large rocks and boulders, side channels, and undercut banks.

(3) Freshwater migration corridors free of obstruction and excessive predation with water quantity and quality conditions and natural cover such as submerged and overhanging large wood, aquatic vegetation, large rocks and boulders, side channels, and undercut banks supporting juvenile and adult mobility and survival;"

The stream reaches listed as critical habitat for Upper Willamette River Chinook salmon winter steelhead includes the estimated two-year flood zone of the Willamette River as displayed in ***Figure 13***. Critical habitat on the Willamette is shown to the two-year flood extent and designation of critical habitat includes Mill Creek, Shelton Ditch, lower Glenn Creek, and West Fork Little Pudding River within the Salem urban growth boundary.

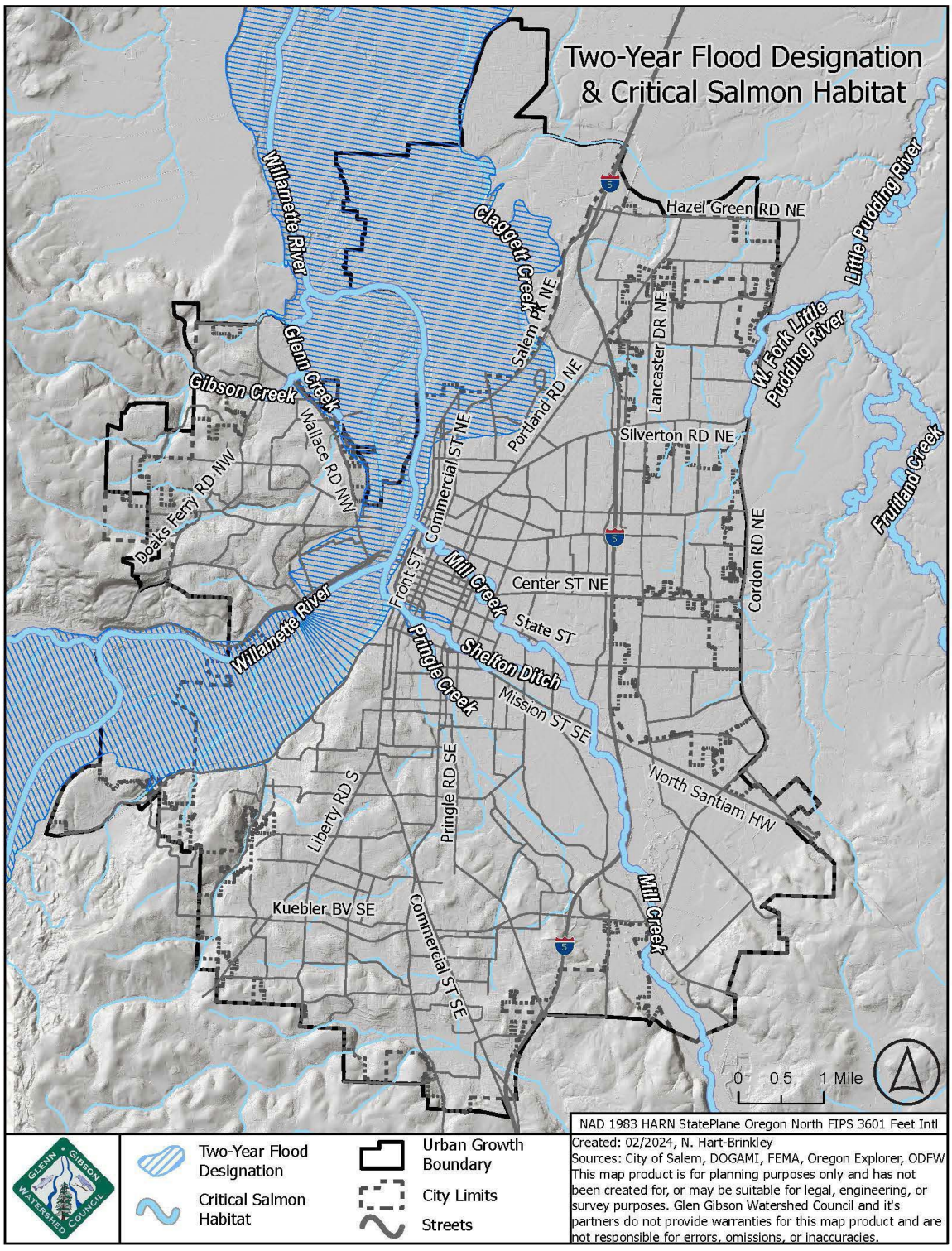

Figure 13: Salmon and Steelhead Critical Habitat and estimated Willamette River two-year flood level (critical habitat from NMFS, two-year flood mapping from River Design Group)

Essential Fish Habitat, under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the Secretary of Commerce to coordinate with, and provide information to, other Federal agencies regarding the conservation and enhancement of Essential Fish Habitat. Essential fish habitat (EFH) means those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity. For the purpose of interpreting the definition of essential fish habitat: "Waters" include aquatic areas and their associated physical, chemical, and biological properties that are used by fish and may include aquatic areas historically used by fish where appropriate; "substrate" includes sediment, hard bottom, structures underlying the waters, and associated biological communities; "necessary" means the habitat required to support a sustainable fishery and the managed species' contribution to a healthy ecosystem; and "spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity" covers a species' full life cycle. Essential fish habitat must be described and identified in Fishery Management Plans. In 2002, NMFS began to require that the plans also contain maps of EFH. The Magnuson Stevens Act requires NMFS to work with other Federal agencies to conserve and enhance EFH. As a result, whenever Federal agencies authorize, fund, or carry out actions that may adversely impact EFH, they must consult with NMFS regarding the impact of their activities on EFH. NMFS must provide the consulting Federal agency with EFH conservation recommendations for any action that would adversely affect EFH. Within 30 days of receiving these recommendations, the consulting action agencies must provide a detailed response in writing to NMFS that includes measures proposed to avoid, minimize, or offset the impact of proposed activities on EFH. There is a good deal of overlap between designated EFH and Critical Habitat in the freshwater environment (***Figure 14***). To streamline the consultation process, NMFS attempts to conduct EFH and ESA Section 7 consultations in conjunction with each other whenever possible.

Oregon Essential Indigenous Anadromous Salmonid Habitat

Under ORS 196.810(1)(g)(B) "Essential indigenous anadromous salmonid habitat" means the habitat that is necessary to prevent the depletion of indigenous anadromous salmonid species during their life history stages of spawning and rearing, and196.810(1)(g) (C) "Indigenous anadromous salmonid" means chum, sockeye, Chinook and Coho salmon, and steelhead and cutthroat trout, that are members of the family Salmonidae and are listed as sensitive, threatened or endangered by a state or federal authority. The Oregon Department of State Lands in consultation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified the extent of stream reaches that these definitions apply to. These stream reaches have additional state regulatory review for the placement of fill or removal of material under Oregon law (ORS 197.810). Essential Indigenous Anadromous Salmonid Habitat (***Figure 15***) is found in the Willamette River, Mill Creek, West Fork of the Pudding River and lower Glenn Creek.

Figure 14: Salmon and Steelhead Critical Habitat and estimated Willamette River two-year flood level (critical habitat from NMFS, two-year flood mapping from River Design Group)

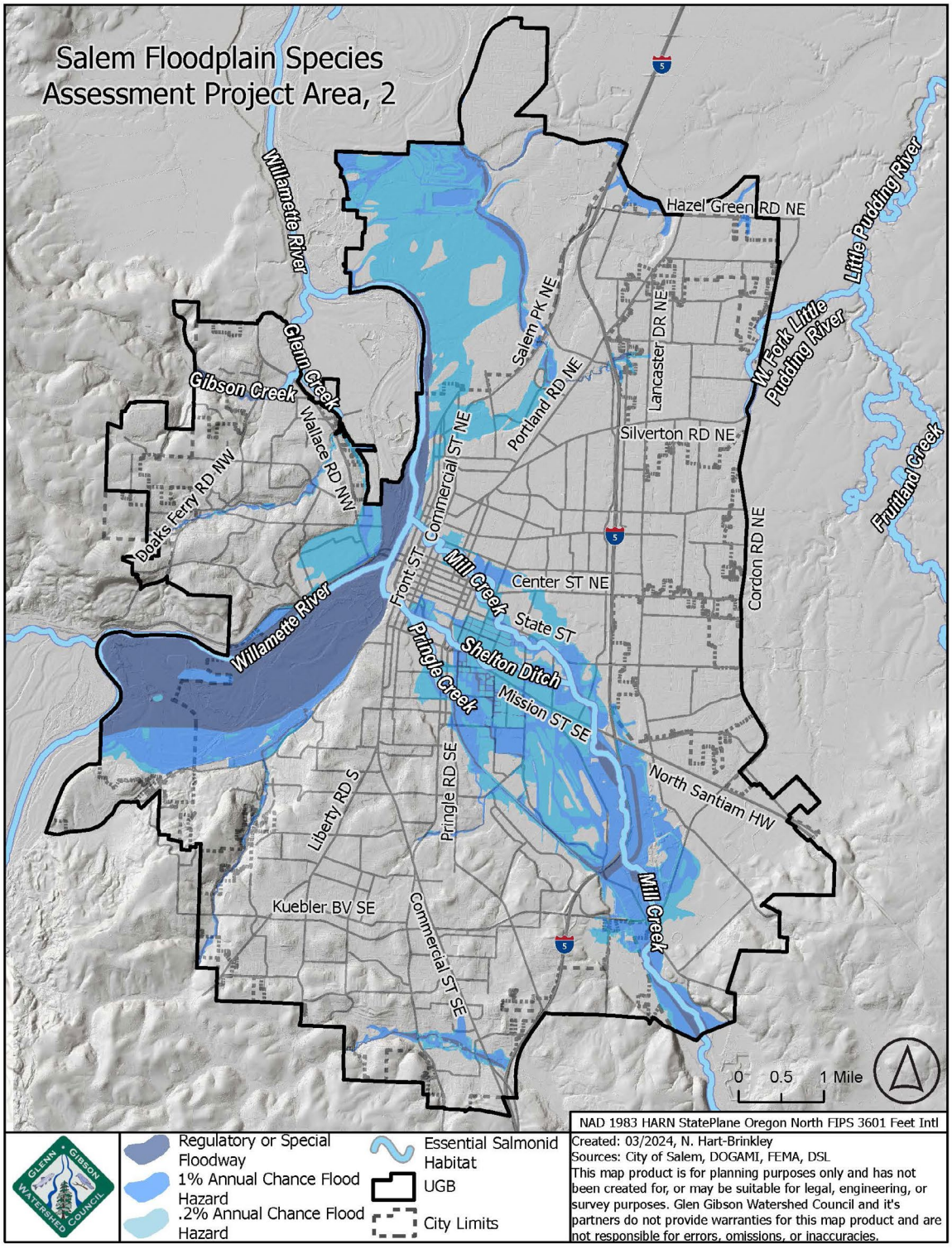

Figure 15: Essential Indigenous Anadromous Salmonid Habitat in the Salem area.

Range, Habitat and Recovery Plan for Streaked Horned Lark

In the 2021 Federal Register notice on the review of the Threatened listing of Streaked Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*) were described as: "Streaked horned larks historically selected habitat in relatively flat, open areas maintained by flooding, fire, and sediment transport dynamics. The interruption of these historical processes due to flood control dams, fire suppression, and reduction of sediment transport by dams resulted in a steep decline in the extent of historical habitat for the lark.

Currently, larks are found in open areas free from visual obstructions like grasslands, prairies, wetlands, beaches, dunes, and modified or temporarily disturbed habitats (such as agricultural or grass seed fields, airports, dredged material placement sites, and gravel roads). Streaked horned larks need relatively flat landscapes with sparse vegetation, preferring habitats with an average of 17 percent bare ground for foraging and 31 percent of bare ground for nesting (Altman 1999, p. 18). Typically, preferred habitats contain short vegetation, contain forbs and grasses that are less than 13 inches (in) (33 centimeters (cm)) in height, and have few or no trees or shrubs (Altman 1999, p. 18; Pearson and Hopey 2005, p. 27). The large, open areas used by populations of larks are regularly disturbed via burning, mowing, herbicide application, crop rotation, dredging material placement, and/or other anthropogenic regimes."

Specific to the Salem area the review noted: "One historical site for a local population in this region (Salem Municipal Airport) has no positive records since 2013 and appears to be extirpated. The Willamette Valley regional population appears to be well distributed and increasing, but the limited surveys of accessible sites may not accurately reflect the trend in the whole region."

Salem is in the North Willamette recovery zone as identified in the draft recovery plan (USFWS, 2019).

Range, Habitat and Recovery Plan for Willamette Prairie Species

The Willamette Valley Upland Prairie and Savanna is recognized as one of the most critically endangered ecosystems of the United States (Noss et al. 1995). Native species and ecosystems may be at an ecological tipping point due to the diminished and fragmented native habitats in the Valley, as evidenced by the declining populations and range contractions of many native fish, wildlife, and plant species. Eleven species native to the valley have been listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Many other species have been extirpated and many more are threatened with extirpation, including western meadowlark, the Oregon State Bird (ODFW 2021). Extirpation refers to a species of plant or animal that ceases to exist in a given geographic area (e.g., the Willamette Valley), though it still exists elsewhere. A focus on grasslands (prairies and oak savannas) and oak woodlands is justified by the fact that very little of these habitats remain, and what does remain now occurs as remnant patches scattered across the valley (ODFW 2016).

Eleven species of fish, wildlife, and plants native to the valley have been listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (USFWS 1993, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2013). Three other federally listed species, the Columbian white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus leucurus*), Oregon spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*), and yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) historically bred in the valley but are now extirpated.

The prairie species recovery plan was developed for the following five prairie species native to the Willamette Valley:

- Fender's blue butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides fenderi*) Endangered
- Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens*) Endangered
- Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*) Endangered
- Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus ssp. kincaidii*) Threatened
- Nelson's checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*) Threatened

Willamette Daisy and Nelson's checker-mallow have been documented in the Salem area and occupy floodplain areas. An additional goal of the recovery plan is to focus on the restoration of both native upland and wet prairie ecosystems in the valley. This ecosystem approach takes into consideration the needs of non- listed species that are endemic to prairie habitats. Consequently, many of the recovery actions proposed in the plan may help to stabilize and enhance populations of species such as pale larkspur (*Delphinium leucophaeum*), Willamette Valley larkspur (*Delphinium oreganum*), peacock larkspur (*Delphinium pavonaceum*), shaggy horkelia (*Horkelia congesta ssp. congesta*), white-topped aster (*Sericocarpus rigidus*), and Hitchcock's blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium hitchcockii*). Implementing management actions toward these species of conservation concern may preclude the need to extend the protections of the Endangered Species Act to other prairie species in the future (USFWS 2010).

Since the listing decision in the 1990's, Bradshaw's lomatium achieved recovery objectives in terms of protected populations of sufficient size and distribution across the valley's recovery zones to allow the species to be delisted. Golden paintbrush, once extirpated in Oregon, has met recovery objectives and also has been delisted. The same can be said for Nelson's checker-mallow – recovery objectives have been met and the species has been delisted. Fender's blue butterfly is also on the path to recovery. While the Service is proposing to reclassify the species from endangered status to threatened status, additional actions, including protecting its habitat, are still needed to fully recover this species.

The closest known populations of Fender's blue butterfly and Kinkade's lupine are at Basket Slough, west of the Salem area outside the Salem UGB.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940

This federal law prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from "taking" bald or golden eagles, including their parts (including feathers), nests, or eggs. The Act defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb." Regulations further define "disturb" as "to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior". In addition to immediate impacts, this definition also covers effects that result from human-induced alterations initiated around a previously used nest site during a time when eagles are not present, if, upon the eagle's return, such alterations agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, and causes injury, death or nest abandonment. Since Bald eagles have become more abundant along the Willamette River, the prohibitions of the act are important to be aware of.

Floodplain Habitats and Associated Species

While identifying the presence of threatened or endangered species often requires biological expertise, recognizing the habitats that they are most likely to occupy can help to determine if they could be present. The following is a general description of floodplain habitats, how to identify them and what species may be associated with them. The typical floodplain habitats in the Salem area include riparian forest and shrublands, wet prairie, marsh, pond, and stream channel.

Riparian Forest and Shrubland

Cottonwood Oregon Ash and other forest species can provide a dense gallery along streams in the Willamette Valley. There has been significant study of the changes in Willamette Valley Floodplain forests (Christy and Alverson, 2011; Benner and Sedell, 1997; Gregory et al., 2019; Hulse et al., 2003; Johansen et al., 1971; Sedell and Froggatt, 1984; Wallick et al., 2013). These forests are often multistoried (have ground covering plants, shrubs, and trees) and typically dense.

While not likely to occur in the Salem area this is the habitat that supports yellow-billed cuckoo. Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Bald Eagles and willow flycatcher among other species use riparian forests for nesting and perching.

Ponds

Floodplain depressions from flood scour or gravel removal or other activities that intercept the groundwater table and hold water year-round are considered ponds. This is a unique habitat that can be found both on the Willamette floodplain and the Mill Creek floodplain. Ponds provide habitat for Western Grebe, Oregon spotted frog and northwest pond turtles. Howellia can also be found on pond edges.

Wetlands

Wetlands that are dominated by grass like and grass plants (sedges, reeds, etc.) are often found in floodplain locations. These habitats have standing water or are saturated to the surface for prolonged periods in the dry season. Species typically found there could be lesser yellowlegs, and possibly White-topped aster.

Prairies

Slightly up slope and on sloping portions of the floodplain are grassy prairies often with scattered Oregon White Oak. The Willamette Valley prairie habitat supports streaked horned lark, Willamette daisy, Kincaid's lupine the host plant for Fender's blue butterfly. These sites also support golden paintbrush, Peacock larkspur. Thin-leaved peavine and Bradshaw's lomatium are often found in areas of ground disturbance or along ditch banks with meadow checkermallow. These sites are typically outside the floodplain.

Creeks and Streams

The tributary streams to the Willamette River and the Willamette River are important habitats for a number of species. It is well recognized that fish are dependent on streams for their life histories. The streams that constitute

and cross the floodplains of the Salem area support Chinook salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, Pacific lamprey, Western brook lamprey, and western pearlshell mussels. Western brook lamprey spawn in the small streams tributary to the Willamette. It should be noticed that the flooded forest and marshes are used by juvenile salmon and steelhead during flood stage of the rivers. It is important to understand that critical habitat for salmon and steelhead extends across the floodplain in it's regular flood range (usually 2-year flood).

Species of Concern

There are other species that occur or occupy habitats found in Salem's floodplains that, while not federally listed, are species of concern (***Table 2***).

Species of Concern in Salem				
Species	**Scientific Name**	**Status**	**Listing Agency**	**Salem Observation**
Fish				
Pacific lamprey	*Entosphenus tridentatus*	SoC, S	NMFS, ODFW	X
Western brook lamprey	*Lampetra richardsoni*	S	ODFW	X
Coastal cutthroat trout (Upper Willamette River ESU)	*Oncorhynchus clarkii*	SoC, Sentitive	NMFS, ODFW	X
Birds				
Bald Eagle	*Haliaeetus Leucocephalus*		Eagle Act	X
California Gull	*Larus Californicus*	BCC		X
Evening Grosbeak	*Coccothrauthes vespertinus*	BCC		X
Lesser Yellowlegs	*Tringa flavipes*	BCC		Nearby
Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Condopus cooperi*	BCC		X
Rufous Hummingbird	*Selasphorus rufus*	BCC		X
Western Grebe	*Aechmorphous occidentalis*	BCC		X
Oregon Vesper Sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus*	SoC	Under Review	
Great Blue Heron	*Ardea herodias*			X
Willow Flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii*			X
Yellow-breasted Chat	*Icteria virens*	BCC		X

Table 2: Sensitive Species in the Salem Floodplain Area (continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

Table 2: Sensitive Species in the Salem Floodplain Area

Invertebrates				
Western pearlshell (mussel)	*Margaritifera falcata*			
Oregon giant earthworm	*Driloleirus macelfresh*	SoC	USFWS	
Foliaceous lace bug	*Derephysia foliacea*			
Taylor's checkerspot (butterfly)	*Euphydryas editha taylori*	E	USFWS	
Sonora skipper (butterfly)	*Polites sonora siris*			
Valley silverspot (butterfly)	*Speyeria zerene bremnerii*			
Franklin's bumble bee	*Bombus franklini*	SoC	ODFW	
Plants				
Tall bugbane	*Cimicifuga elata Nutt. var. elata*	C	ODA	X
Willamette Valley larkspur	*Delphinium oreganum T.J. Howell*	SoC	USFWS, ODA	
Peacock larkspur	*Delphinium oreganum T.J. Howell*	SoC, E	USFWS, ODA	
Western wahoo	*Euonymus occidentalis Nutt. ex Torr*			
Shaggy horkelia	*Horkelia congesta Dougl. ex Hook. ssp. congesta*	SoC, C	USFWS, ODA	X
Howellia	*Howellia aquatilis Gray*	Delisted, T	USFWS, ODA	X
Thin-leaved peavine	*Lathyrus holochlorus (Piper) C.L. Hitchc.*	SoC, E	USFWS, ODA	X
Bradshaw's lomatium	*Lomatium bradshawii*	Delisted, E	USFWS, ODA	
Loose-flowered bluegrass	*Poa laxiflora Buckl*			
Weak bluegrass	*Poa marcida A.S. Hitchc.*			
Narrow-flower bluegrass	*Poa stenantha Trin*			
White-topped aster	*Sericocarpus rigidus*	SoC, T	USFWS, ODA	X
Meadow checkermallow	*Sidalcea campestri Greene*			X
Nelson's sidalcea	*Sidalcea nelsoniana Piper*	Delisted, T	USFWS, ODA	X
Golden paintbrush	*Castilleja levisecta*	Delisted, E	USFWS, ODA	X

Community Rating System Credit for Conservation and Recovery

A good number of the conservation and recovery actions that local governments can implement can be credited under the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS provides reduced flood insurance premiums in communities that undertake activities to prevent or reduce flood losses and protect natural floodplain functions. Salem is currently a CRS Class 3 as of April 1, 2024. It means that starting April 1, 2024, Salem residents in flood-prone areas can get a 35% discount on most federal flood insurance premiums. Salem is currently in the top 1% of communities in the U.S. to achieve this designation. Implementing more activities, such as threatened and endangered species recovery actions, could help the City move to a better class. The current credit score for Salem is 3,644. To obtain CRS Class 2 with a 40% discount on flood insurance, the City needs to achieve a score of 4,000 CRS credit points. This Floodplain Species Assessment will provide an additional 15 CRS credit points towards that improved class rating.

Table 3 reviews general CRS-credited recovery actions that are applicable to most threatened and endangered species. The "Doing" column identifies whether the City is implementing what is or could be a CRS credited activity. If the City is getting credit, the "Credited" column shows the current CRS credit points and the maximum credit available. The "Feasible" column identifies if it would be feasible to start an activity or increase the credit points.

CRS-Credited Conservation and Recovery Actions					
Activity/Element	**Page[1]**	**Section in Manual[2]**	**Doing?**	**Credited?**	**Feasible?**
300 Public Information Activities					
Providing information on areas that serve natural floodplain functions, such as wetlands (MI7)	11	322.g	YES	20/20	YES
Outreach projects (OP) with messages on protecting natural functions	11	332.a	YES	200/200	YES
Designing and disseminating messages on protecting natural floodplain functions in a program for public information (PPI)	12	332.c	YES	80/80	YES
Having materials in the local public library (LPD) on protecting local natural floodplain functions	13	352.b	YES	10/10	YES
Having materials on protecting local natural floodplain functions in the community's website (WEB)	13	352.c	YES	77/77	YES
420 (Open Space Preservation)					
Preserving open space in the floodplain (OSP)	15	422.a	YES	681.5/1450	YES
Preserving open space in the floodplain in its natural state (NFOS)	16	422.c	YES	180/350	YES
Preserving open space on eroding shorelines (CEOS[3])	16	422.e	N/A	N/A	N/A
Offering incentives to developers to keep the floodplain open (OSI)	16	422.f	NO	0/250	NO
Zoning floodprone areas for large lot sizes to preserve low density uses (LZ)	17	422.g	NO	0/600	NO
Preserving stream banks and shorelines in their natural state (NSP)	17	422.h	NO	0/120	YES
430 (Higher Regulatory Standards)					
Prohibiting filling in the floodplain (DL1a)	18	432.a(1)	NO	0/280	NO
Regulating development in areas subject to coastal erosion (CER[3])	20	432.n	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other regulations to protect natural floodplain functions not specifically listed in the Coordinator's Manual	20	432.o	NO	0/100	YES
450 (Stormwater Management)					
Requiring new developments in the watershed to account for the total volume of runoff released (SMR-DS)	21	452.a(2)	YES	225/225	YES
Requiring new developments to use low impact development techniques (SMR-LID)	21	452.a(3)	NO	0/25	YES
Setting stormwater management standards based on an overall plan for the watershed (WMP)	21	453.b	YES	63/315	YES
510 (Floodplain Management Planning)					
Adopting one or more plans that address protecting natural floodplain functions (NFP)	23	512.c	NO	0/100	YES
540 (Drainage System Maintenance)					
Having a habitat-friendly program to clear debris in drainageways (CDR)	27	542.a	YES	198/200	YES

Table 3: Community Rating System Credited Conservation and Recovery Actions

1. Page numbers refer to CRS Credit for Habitat Protection.
2. This column lists the section(s) of the CRS Coordinator's Manual in which more information can be found.
3. These elements are appropriate only for species dependent on beaches, such as sea turtles and shore birds.
4. Credits were derived from detailed results from previous verification visits and most recent results from the 2023 Class 3 CRS Cycle Visit, which include sum totals for each activity category. Some assumptions were made without detailed results from the ISO office (no longer provided to communities).

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Appendix A: Species Profiles

Upper Willamette River Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha)*

Description

The Chinook salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) is the largest and most valuable species of Pacific salmon. Its common name is derived from the Chinookan peoples. Other vernacular names for the species include king salmon, Quinnat salmon, Tsumen, spring salmon, chrome hog, Blackmouth, and Tyee salmon. Chinook salmon are the largest Pacific salmon species and, on average, grow to be three feet (0.9 meters) long and approximately 30 pounds (13 kilograms). However, some Chinook salmon can reach more than five feet (1.5 meters) long and 110 pounds (50 kilograms). The salmon are blue-green on the head and back and silver on the sides. The fish's tail, back, and upper fin have irregular black spots, and black markings also are present around the gums. Male Chinook salmon have a distinctive hooked nose at the top of the mouth and a ridged back. During the mating season, both male and female salmon develop a reddish tint around their back fins and tail.

Life cycle

As anadromous fish, salmon live in streams that drain to the ocean. The Willamette River drains to the Columbia in the Portland area and then connects to the Pacific Ocean at the mouth as Astoria. Chinook salmon lay their eggs and spend their first few months in fresh water. In less than a year, they migrate to saltwater where they spend most of their lives. They come back to the streams they were born in to lay their eggs and die. The Upper Willamette River (UWR) Chinook (Oncorhynchus tschawytscha) Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) includes all naturally spawned populations of spring Chinook salmon in the Clackamas River and in the Willamette Basin upstream of Willamette Falls.

ODFW sampling and tagging data are starting to indicate that most fry and fingerling rear in the lower reaches of spawning tributaries and in the Willamette River mainstem in late winter and early spring (Schroeder et al. 2005, 2007). Some fish grow quickly in this area and migrate as subyearling

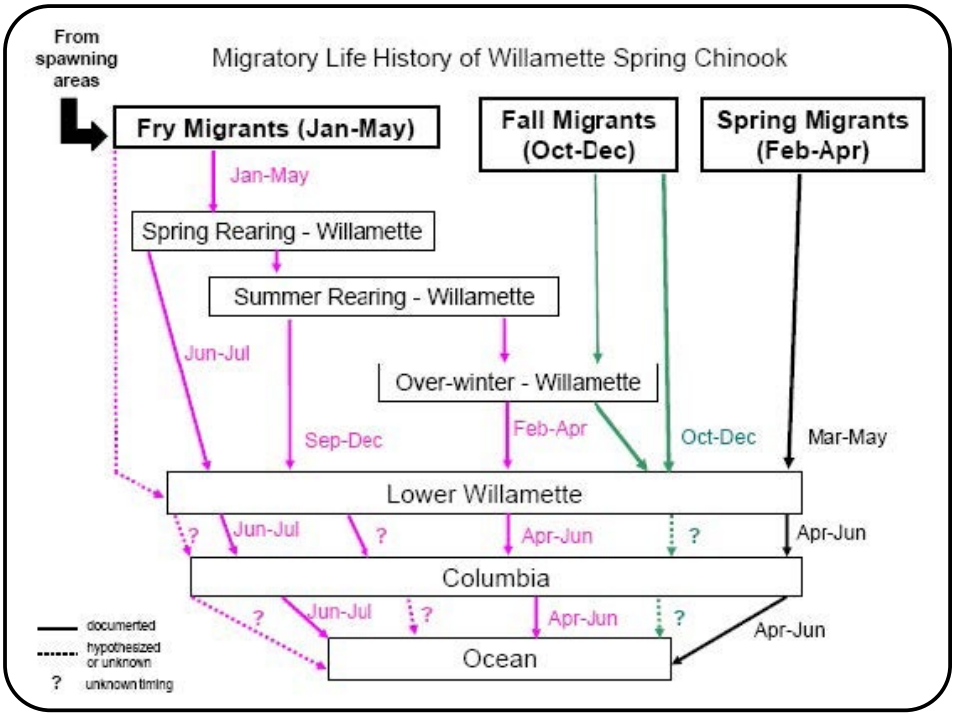


Illustration of variation in outmigration timing and use of different river regimes of Upper Willamette River Spring Chinook Salmon (modified from Schroeder et al., 2016)

Return to TOC

smolts out of the Willamette River basin, probably beginning in early to mid-May for the larger fish and continuing into mid-July in most years.

Habitat

Chinook salmon needs colder water with stable stream channels, clean spawning and rearing gravel, diverse cover, and unblocked migratory corridors. Because of their large body size, Chinook generally prefer to spawn in mainstems with higher water flows and deep holding pools and are able to spawn in larger gravel than most other salmon. The Willamette River in the Salem area is dominantly in the area for upriver migration of adult spawning fish and downriver migration of juvenile fish. Habitat use by juvenile Chinook salmon undergoes a seasonal shift that was likely driven by the increasing size of fish over time. Juvenile Chinook salmon were only observed in 7 percent of the alcove habitats sampled compared to approximately 40 percent of the main channel and side channel habitats.

Threats

The factors threatening naturally spawned Chinook salmon throughout its range are numerous and varied. The present depressed condition is the result of several long-standing, human induced factors (e.g., habitat degradation, water diversions, harvest, and artificial propagation) that serve to exacerbate the adverse effects of natural environmental variability from such factors as drought. In the Salem area floodplain development that adds to impervious surface cover can have detrimental impacts to a wide range of aquatic species including Chinook salmon. Actions taken to reduce or minimize impervious surface cover and reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants can include: preservation of areas as "open space", sustainable or "green" development practices that incorporate nature based solutions, and conversion of impervious to pervious (porous) surfaces.

Access to historical spawning and rearing areas is restricted by large dams in the four historically most productive tributaries, and in the absence of effective passage programs will continue to be confined to more lowland reaches where land development, water temperatures, and water quality may be limiting. Pre-spawning mortality levels are generally high in the lower tributary reaches where water temperatures and fish densities are generally the highest. Areas immediately downstream of high head dams may also be subject to high levels of total dissolved gas (TDG). Given current climatic conditions and the prospect of long-term climatic change, the inability of many populations to access historical headwater spawning and rearing areas may put this ESU at greater risk in the near future.

ESA Listing Status

Threatened on March 24, 1999 (64 FR 14308) and June 28, 2005 (70 FR 37159); updated April 14, 2014 (79 FR 20802)

Critical Habitat

Designated September 2, 2005 The designation of critical habitat includes stream reaches up to the two-year flood elevation. In the Willamette River that covers a significant portion of the floodplain.

Protective Regulations

Issued June 28, 2005 (70 FR 37159)

Recovery Plan

Upper Willamette River Chinook and Steelhead Conservation & Recovery Plan (2011)

Habitat use in Salem Area

With their complex life history strategies, juvenile Chinook salmon are likely to be found in the mid-Willamette area any time of the year under any flow conditions. Juvenile fish typically move downstream along the edge of the river, avoiding the main flow, thus occupying fringe habitats in the floodplain.

Upper Willamette River Steelhead
(Oncorhynchus mykiss)

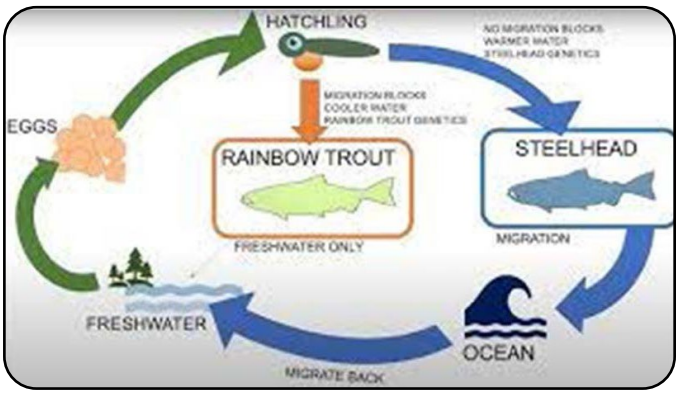
Description
Steelhead and rainbow trout are the same species, but rainbow are freshwater only, and steelhead are anadromous, or go to sea. Unlike most salmon, steelhead can survive spawning, and can spawn in multiple years. Steelhead can weigh 30 pounds or more, but average between 8 and 11 pounds. The body of the steelhead trout is silvery and streamlined with a rounder head. This silver color and round head is what gives the steelhead its name. There are black dots that are more concentrated on the back of the fish and become sparser closer to the lateral line of the fish. Steelhead also develop a pink horizontal stripe. When steelhead return to freshwater to spawn, their color begins to more closely resemble that of a normal rainbow trout.

Life Cycle
Steelhead can spend from 1 to 4 years in the ocean before traveling to their spawning grounds. There are two general types of steelhead runs, named for the season when most of the fish run return from the ocean: winter and summer.

Winter-run Steelhead return from the ocean at age 4 or 5 years, and travel to their spawning grounds from November to April. Winter-run steelhead are very mature fish and begin spawning soon after they arrive.

Summer-run Steelhead usually return from the ocean at age 3 and migrate to their spawning grounds from April to September. The summer-run steelhead are typically immature fish and need several months of maturing in the freshwater before spawning. Both steelhead stocks spawn from winter to early spring (January to April). The lifespan of steelhead varies from 5 up to 11 years.

Steelhead are different from Pacific salmon because steelhead do not all die once they spawn. Steelhead can survive after spawning and can migrate to the ocean and back to their spawning grounds again in the future, laying eggs more than once in their lifespan. The seasonal differences in steelhead migrations and multiple trips to spawning grounds are considered when predictions are made about the number of returning steelhead for the season and their fisheries management.



Habitat
The listed population includes naturally spawned anadromous winter-run steelhead originating below natural and manmade impassable barriers from the Willamette River and its tributaries upstream of Willamette Falls, to and including the Calapooia River.

Threats
Like the threats to Chinook salmon, steelhead are affected by historic land use change, dam and diversion construction, stream simplification, bank hardening, riparian forest cutting and other factors

affecting the stream environment. Like Chinook salmon, steelhead are likely affected by impervious surface development and loss of riparian habitats from urban development in the Salem area.

ESA Listing Status

Threatened on March 25, 1999 (64 FR 14517) and January 5, 2006 (71 FR 833); updated April 14, 2014 (79 FR 20802)

Critical Habitat

Designated September 2, 2005

Protective Regulations

Issued June 28, 2005 (70 FR 37159)

Recovery Plan

Upper Willamette River Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Conservation and Recovery Plan (2011) includes the recommendations to:

1. Implement the suite of Willamette basin TMDL water quality actions, rural and urban best management practices (BMPs), and other land use actions to address multiple (and somewhat related) limiting factors. Actions include:
    - Willamette basin temperature TMDL Water Quality Management Plan actions that increase the amount of riparian vegetation to improve shade function of riparian zones.
    - Strengthen and implement BMPs that reduce nonpoint sourcing of inputs and runoff of agricultural and urban chemicals (pesticides).
    - Willamette basin pesticide and nutrient TMDL Water Quality Management Plan actions that reduce point and non-point sourcing of runoff from urban, industrial, rural, and agricultural practices.
    - Promote incentives to private landowners to protect intact riparian areas, floodplains, and high-quality off-channel habitats that are not covered by actions in other plans and restore areas that are degraded.
2. Implement the suite of Willamette Project BiOp flow actions to address multiple (and somewhat related) limiting factors. Actions include:
    - Willamette Project BiOp revetment modification/reduction and habitat restoration actions that improve the amount, complexity, diversity, and connectivity of riparian, confluence, and off-channel habitats.
    - Willamette Project BiOp flow actions that increase the occurrence of peak flows that maintain and create habitat, thereby contributing to increased channel complexity and habitat diversity.
    - Willamette Project BiOp flow actions to meet salmon and steelhead rearing and migration flow targets in the mainstem Willamette River.

Habitat use in Salem Area

Steelhead juveniles use similar habitats to Chinook and use the floodplain during high water periods. Steelhead have been documented in lower Glenn Creek and Mill Creek as well as the Willamette floodplain.

Streaked Horned Lark
(*Eremophila alpestris strigata*)

Description
The streaked horned lark is a slender, long-winged passerine about 7 inches long. Adults are marked with a dark facial mask and breast band that contrasts with a pale face and throat. These features are especially clear and distinctive in adult males, which have a yellow throat. The "horns" for which the species is named are tiny, black feather tufts on the sides of the head in adult males. Adult females are similar to males, but duller, smaller, and lack horns.

Life Cycle
Streaked horned larks forage on the ground in bare fields or among short vegetation. They eat seeds and grass but feed their young insects, exclusively. Streaked horned larks nest on the ground, where a clutch of three to five eggs is placed next to a tuft of vegetation or a small object. They may rear two to three broods per season. Nest building in southern Puget Sound generally begins in mid-April to early May, and concludes by mid-August. Nomadic in the fall and winter, streaked horned lark form territories when breeding. Eggs are greenish or grayish with brown speckles. Larks typically lay four or five eggs which are incubated 11 days; young are able to fly 9 to 12 days after they hatch. Like meadowlarks and grasshopper sparrows, the species prefers large patches of contiguous grassland habitat in the landscape."

Habitat
The largest area of potential habitat for streaked horned larks is the agricultural land base in the Willamette Valley. Larks are attracted to the wide, open landscape context and low vegetation structure in agricultural fields, especially in grass seed fields, probably because those working landscapes resemble the historical habitats formerly used by the subspecies when the historical disturbances associated with floods and fires maintained a mosaic of suitable habitats. In any year, some portion of the 920,000 ac (372,311 ha) of agricultural lands in the Willamette Valley will contain patches of suitable streaked horned lark habitat, but the geographic location of those areas may not be consistent from year to year, nor can their occurrence due to variable agricultural practices (crop rotation, fallow fields, etc.), and the changing and dynamic locations of those areas be predicted.

Threats
The primary driver of the status of streaked horned lark has been the scarcity of large, open spaces with very early seral stage plant communities with low-statured vegetation and substantive amounts of bare or sparsely vegetated ground. Historically, the lark's habitat was maintained by disturbances such as flooding or fire. The loss of these natural cycles has made them depend on artificially maintained habitats, including agricultural lands, airports and dredged material placement sites. Other factors contributing to the bird's decline are its small population size, and recreational and land management activities that disturb the bird during nesting. Unfortunately, because they nest in vulnerable locations, their nests are often accidentally destroyed by farm machinery, ATVs and traffic.

ESA Listing Status

Threatened on October 3, 2013, 78 FR 61451 61503, April 13, 2022. 87 FR 21783 21812

Critical Habitat

October 3, 2013 78 FR 61505 61589

Critical habitat includes the following "primary constituent elements":

"The primary constituent elements specific to the streaked horned lark are areas having a minimum of 16 percent bare ground that have sparse, low-stature vegetation composed primarily of grasses and forbs less than 13 in (33 cm) in height found in:

(1) Large (300-ac (120-ha)), flat (0–5 percent slope) areas within a landscape context that provides visual access to open areas such as open water or fields, or

(2) Areas smaller than described in (1), but that provide visual access to open areas such as open water or fields."

Recovery Plan

October 30, 2019, 84 FR 58170 58171

Habitat use in Salem Area

Streaked horned larks have been identified in the Salem floodplain. Locations in the Mill Creek floodplain have been documented. Habitat at the Salem airport has supported larks historically, but the airport population is now considered extripated.

Northwestern Pond Turtle *(Actinemys marmorata)*

Photo Credit: Keith Kohl

Range and Distribution

The range of the northwestern pond turtle is primarily west of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains, stretching from Puget Sound, Washington to Baja California, at elevations ranging from sea level to about 5,000 ft. There are small populations that persist in watersheds east of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains.

In Oregon, they primarily are found west of the Cascades at elevations lower than 6,000 feet. The largest populations are located in the drainages of the Willamette, Umpqua, Rogue, and Klamath Rivers, but smaller populations are scattered throughout lowland aquatic habitats of western Oregon and the east Cascades.

Habitat Characteristics

Northwestern pond turtles are closely associated with aquatic habitat with muddy bottoms and available basking sites. They are most common in still or slow-moving water, particularly around dense vegetation, which provides a high density of invertebrate prey. Submergent and emergent aquatic vegetation are important habitat components that provide safe nursery habitat for young turtles with plenty of food and cover. Underwater refugia such as submerged logs and cut banks provide protection from underwater predators.

Overwintering sites are along stream banks, and nesting sites are typically within 200 yards of water in areas with little vegetation and plenty of sunlight. Nesting sites are in sparse vegetation with sandy, silt, or gravel soils, and good solar exposure.

Species Description

The northwestern pond turtle is a mid-sized, semi-aquatic freshwater turtle and is one of Oregon's two native turtle species. They have a smooth, broad carapace (upper shell) that is drab brown to olive in color and low in profile. The plastron (lower shell) is typically light yellow in color, sometimes with a variable number of darker blotches. Their head and limbs are variable in color, typically gray to black with yellow speckling. Males have a lighter colored chin and throat than females, and a longer, thicker tail than females. Adults may grow up to ten inches in length. They are usually seen basking on rocks or floating logs or vegetation in slow-moving bodies of water.

Similar species in Oregon are the western painted turtle and the red-eared slider (a non-native species). All three species can sometimes be found in the same bodies of water, or even on the same log. From a distance, all three species can look similar. Red-eared sliders and western painted turtles are more vibrantly marked than northwestern pond turtles. It may be difficult to distinguish between native northwestern pond turtles and older red-eared sliders whose red markings have faded. A key characteristic to focus on is the shape of marginal scutes (plates that make up the shell); red-eared sliders have serrated marginal scutes above their tail, while northwestern pond turtles' are smooth.

Approximate range of *Actinemys marmorata*

Diet and Foraging

Northwestern pond turtles are omnivores and dietary generalists, with a variable diet that consists mainly of aquatic invertebrates and larvae, as well as some plants, small fish, frogs, and carrion. They are opportunistic feeders, and forage exclusively in water. They have sharp ridges on their jaws that help them tear their food.

Life History and Ecology

Northwestern pond turtles are a long-lived species that mature slowly. Individuals have been recorded living over 40 years. They have a low reproductive rate and delayed sexual maturity. Male northwestern pond turtles typically reach reproductive maturity at five to nine years, while females reach reproductive maturity after seven to ten years.

In Oregon, the nesting season occurs from May through mid-July. Breeding takes place underwater and occurs from late spring to mid-summer. When female turtles are ready to lay their eggs, they fill their bladder with water and emerge from the water to find a suitable nesting spot. Suitable sites are found near their aquatic habitat in areas with sparse vegetation and good solar exposure. Once they select a site, they empty their bladder on the soil and dig with their back legs to create a shallow nesting cavity where they will deposit their eggs. Clutches have been recorded with one to thirteen eggs, with an average of six eggs per clutch. Multiple clutches can be laid in a season. After depositing their eggs, they use the moist soil to create a nest plug which they use to seal their eggs into the chamber for incubation. Eggs receive no parental care, and nests are vulnerable to predation. After the eggs hatch in fall, the young may overwinter in the safety of the nests.

Northwestern pond turtles bask on floating logs, vegetation, or on muddy stream banks to maintain body temperature. Like most reptiles, they rely on the environment to maintain their body temperature (they are ectothermic, or "cold-blooded"). During the winter when it is cool and their metabolism slows down, they become semi-dormant and will overwinter in moist terrestrial and aquatic habitats. They bury themselves in mud, under stream banks, or in leaf litter. In warm weather, they will come out to bask or move to different locations.

They are primarily aquatic, but may move overland when ephemeral waterbodies dry up, to find nesting habitat, and to seek out sites for overwintering. They are not territorial, and often are found sharing basking surfaces with turtles from the same species as well as other species. Home range size for individuals is highly variable, and depends on the size of the aquatic system. They are capable of long distance seasonal movements between aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and long distance dispersal. Overland distance between aquatic and terrestrial habitat can be more than one mile.

Predators of northwestern pond turtles include raccoons, otters, ospreys, coyotes. Hatchlings are eaten by a variety of predators, including corvids, American bullfrogs, weasels, and large fish.

Fun Facts

- If they run out of basking sites on logs or rocks, northwestern pond turtles sometimes conserve warmth by stacking on top of one another.
- Hatchlings are only about the size of a quarter, making them very vulnerable to predators for the first few years of their lives.
- Similar to a fingerprint, turtles have a unique pattern on their plastron that can be used to identify unique individuals.
- At the first sign of danger, basking turtles will dive for cover under water. When threatened, pond turtles can retract their head and legs into the protection of their hard shell

Conservation

Northwestern pond turtles are an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species (Species of Greatest Conservation Need), a state Sensitive Species, and a Federal Species of Concern. Factors influencing northwestern pond turtle populations include loss or alteration of habitat, increased predation of nests and hatchlings from historical levels, invasive species, and road mortality. Introduced species, including bullfrogs and smallmouth bass, predate young turtles. Released pet turtles are a threat to native species because they compete for limited resources and can transmit diseases.

During the breeding season, be on the lookout for turtles crossing the road. If you choose to help a turtle cross the road, be sure to bring it in the direction of travel and leave it on the side of the road; females are driven to get to nesting habitat and deposit their eggs, and they know where they want to go! Wash your hands after you handle any turtles. Otherwise, don't disturb turtles when you see them.

Many of Oregon's northwestern pond turtle populations occur on private land. If you have northwestern pond turtles or their habitat in your backyard, you can take simple steps to enhance the habitat to encourage more turtles to make their home there. You can create basking habitat in waterbodies by putting out logs or branches, remove invasive plants around ponds, and create sunny places.

For more information about the conservation status of northwestern pond turtles including special needs, limiting factors, data gaps, and conservation actions, refer to the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens*)

ENDANGERED

Flowers (left), habit (center), and habitat (right) of Willamette daisy. Photos by Melissa Carr (left and right) and ODA staff (center). If downloading images from this website, please credit the photographer.

Family
Asteraceae

Taxonomic notes
Synonyms: *Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens**

*This taxon was formerly recognized as variety *decumbens.* Recent treatment of the genus in *Flora of North America North of Mexico* elevated the other variety of *E. decumbens* (var. *robustior*) to species rank, and consequently, there is no longer need to recognize Willamette daisy at the varietal level.

Plant description
Willamette daisy is a tap-rooted perennial species growing from a crown or slightly branched caudex. Stems are decumbent, moderately strigose, 15-70 cm tall, and often purplish at the base. The leaves are numerous, sparsely to moderately strigose, linear or linear-lanceolate, the basal leaves and most of the cauline leaves triple-nerved. Basal leaves are up to 25 cm long, including the long petiole, and 1 cm wide, with cauline leaves becoming gradually reduced above. Flowering heads number from 1-20, the disk 0.8-1.5 cm wide, the involucre 0.35-0.6 cm high, and the 20-50 blue-purple to pale pink ray flowers 0.6-1.2 cm long by 0.1-0.2 cm wide. The pappus consists of 12-16 fragile bristles.

Distinguishing characteristics
Willamette daisy is the only species of *Erigeron* with pink-purple rays that occurs in Willamette Valley prairies. It is further distinguished by its gradually reduced cauline leaves, triple-nerved basal leaves, and decumbent, spreading habit. *Erigeron eatonii* is morphologically similar, but occurs east of the Cascade Mountains. *Symphyotrichum hallii* co-occurs with Willamette daisy at many sites, but its rays are usually white (although sometimes pale violet), it flowers later in the summer (July to August), and it is more branched than Willamette daisy. Small vegetative individuals of these two species are very similar, but are distinguishable based on stem color: *S. hallii* typically

has reddish stems, while Willamette daisy has green stems.

When to survey
Surveys for this species should be conducted when the plants are flowering, from June through early July.

Habitat
Willamette daisy inhabits both seasonally flooded bottomland prairies and well-drained upland prairies at elevations ranging from 70-290 m (240-950 ft).

Commonly associated species include *Achillea millefolium, Allium amplectens, Anthoxanthum odoratum, Brodiaea hyacinthina, Bromus carinatus, B. japonicus, Carex* spp.*, Camassia leichtlinii, Crataegus douglasii, Danthonia californica, Deschampsia caespitosa, Elymus glaucus, Eriophyllum lanatum, Festuca arundinacea, F. roemeri, Fragaria virginiana, Fraxinus latifolia, Grindelia integrifolia, Holcus lanatus, Juncus* spp.*, Lomatium bradshawii, Panicum occidentale, Poa nevadensis, Potentilla gracilis, Prunella vulgaris, Quercus garryana, Ranunculus occidentalis, Rosa* spp.*, Saxifraga integrifolia, Sericocarpus rigidus, Sidalcea campestris, Spiraea douglasii,* and *Symphyotrichum hallii.*

Range
Willamette daisy is known only from the Willamette Valley in northwestern Oregon. Though once found throughout the valley, the species is now restricted to scattered habitat remnants. Historic populations in Clackamas, Washington, and Yamhill Counties have not been relocated, and the species may no longer occur in these counties. The majority of extant populations are located on private lands vulnerable to development.

Oregon counties
Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Linn, Marion, Polk, Washington, Yamhill

Federal status
Endangered

Threats
Habitat loss due to urban and agricultural development is the primary threat to this species. Successional encroachment by trees and shrubs, competition from invasive weeds, and possible inbreeding depression due to small population sizes also pose serious threats to Willamette daisy. Road construction and maintenance and grazing pose additional risks.

Conservation planning
A Critical Habitat Designation (pdf document, 2.60 MB) for Willamette Daisy was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2006.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for prairie species of western Oregon and southwestern Washington (pdf document, 9.63 MB) was released in 2010 and addresses conservation needs of Willamette daisy.

Did you know?
From 1840 (when Willamette daisy was first described) to 1934, this species was collected from throughout the Willamette Valley. However, it was not observed for decades after this period and was thought to be extinct until its rediscovery in 1980 at two locations in Lane and Benton counties.

Current/Recent ODA projects
Developing population density estimates for nine rare Willamette Valley prairie species

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Peacock larkspur (*Delphinium pavonaceum*)

ENDANGERED

Flowers (left), habit (center), and habitat (right) of peacock larkspur. Photos by Melissa Carr. If downloading images from this website, please credit the photographer.

Family
Ranunculaceae

Taxonomic notes
The *Flora of North America North of Mexico* treats peacock larkspur as a hybrid between *Delphinium menziesii* ssp. *pallidum* and *D. trolliifolium*. However, based on its unique morphology and fertile, self-sustaining populations, peacock larkspur is treated here as a distinct species (*D. pavonaceum*), following the Oregon Flora Project treatment of the taxon.

Peacock larkspur has been reported to produce viable hybrid seeds when crossed with *Delphinium leucophaeum, D. menziesii*, *D. oreganum*, and *D. nuttallii*.

Plant description
Peacock larkspur is a leafy perennial 30-90 cm tall that grows from a cluster of globose tubers. The deeply cleft leaves are mostly cauline, becoming bract-like above, the lowest leaves with petioles up to 22 cm long. Flowers are arranged in a pyramidal raceme, with lower pedicels much longer than the upper ones. The sepals are white to cream, sometimes slightly greenish blue on the back and greenish at the tip, and more or less reflexed to spreading. The lower petals are white or faintly bluish tinged toward the base and glandular-pubescent with a hairy tuft at the base of the blade. The upper petals are bluish to lavender-tipped. The follicles are up to 1.6 cm long and often glandular-pubescent.

Distinguishing characteristics
Peacock larkspur is distinguished from *Delphinium leucophaeum*, the only other white-flowered larkspur west of the Cascades, by its taller habit (30-90 cm versus 20-60 cm in *D. leucophaeum*), its larger flower parts (lateral sepals 12-18 mm long versus 9-14 mm in *D. leucophaeum*, spur 14-20 mm long versus 10-14 mm), its reflexed to spreading sepals (versus cupped forward in *D. leucophaeum*), pyramidal raceme (versus narrow), and lower petals that are usually glandular with a hairy tuft at the base (versus non-glandular and long-hairy over the entire surface). Peacock larkspur is

also very similar to *D. menziesii*, but the white sepals of the former species readily distinguish it from its blue-sepaled congener.

When to survey
Surveys for peacock larkspur should be completed from late April through June when the species is flowering and is distinguishable from other delphiniums.

Habitat
Peacock larkspur inhabits low, nearly flat areas in moist, silty soils of the Willamette River floodplain at elevations ranging from 45-120 m (150-400 ft). It occurs in native wet prairies, on the edges of ash and oak woodlands, and along roadsides and fence rows.

Associated species include *Achillea millefolium*, *Alepocuris pratensis*, *Allium amplectens*, *Camassia quamash*, *Delphinium menziesii*, *Deschampsia caespitosa, Fraxinus latifolia*, *Geum macrophyllum*, *Geranium oreganum*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Lomatium bradshawii*, *L. utriculatum*, *Lupinus polyphyllus*, *Phlox gracilis*, *Plectritis congesta*, *Poa pratensis*, *Potentilla gracilis*, *Quercus garryana*, *Rosa* spp., *Sidalcea* spp., *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Toxicodendron diversilobum*, *Vicia* sp., and *Wyethia angustifolia*.

Range
Peacock larkspur is a localized endemic restricted to the middle Willamette Valley of Oregon. The species is found primarily within Benton and Polk counties, its largest occurrences located at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge in Benton County.

Oregon counties
Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, Polk

Federal status
Species of Concern

Threats
A major threat to peacock larkspur is habitat loss due to urban expansion and agricultural development. Road maintenance and herbicide application from adjacent agricultural fields pose significant threats, as well. In addition, habitat degradation due to weed invasions and successional encroachment of shrubs negatively impact this species. Herbivory of peacock larkspur by rodents, deer, and slugs has been documented, and hybridization with other *Delphinium* species (especially *D. menziesii*) poses a potential threat to the genetic integrity of peacock larkspur.

Conservation planning
A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for prairie species of western Oregon and southwestern Washington (pdf document, 9.63 MB) was released in 2010 and addresses conservation needs of peacock larkspur.

Did you know?
Scientists have hypothesized that peacock larkspur evolved in the wake of the Pleistocene epoch floods of the Columbia River (the Bretz Floods) that occurred between 12,800 and 15,000 years ago. These floods scoured the north end of the Willamette Valley and created a temporary lake that extended south to the present-day city of Eugene. The lake repeatedly filled and drained, creating massive habitat disturbance and laying new deposits of silt and gravel in the valley. New forms of *Delphinium* were likely produced through hybridization and/or mutation in these

disturbed areas and evolved into our localized Willamette Valley larkspur endemic species. Peacock larkspur appears to have derived from *D. menziesii*.

Current/Recent ODA projects
Developing population density estimates for nine rare Willamette Valley prairie species

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