



Natural Resources Inventories & Protections for Springfield's Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Areas



We hope this finds you well — It has been a while since our last update! In the meantime, we have been busy refining reports, analyzing results, and coordinating with our agency partners on next steps. Read on to catch up on various aspects of the project and to learn more about what's ahead.

Project Progress

Major elements of our work continue to move along, but there is more to do before we move forward with City Council's preferred strategy for protecting the natural resources in Springfield's urban growth boundary expansion areas.



Inventories

- **Wetlands:** In fall 2022 the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) received an updated draft of the Local Wetlands Inventory (LWI) report from our environmental consultants based on DSL's review

comments on the first draft. The project team anticipates DSL's review of the revised LWI report early this summer.

- **Riparian Resources:** Earlier this year, our environmental consultants completed the final piece of the "standard" (as compared to "safe harbor") method inventory. This final piece addressed the Tier 2 Significance Criteria of the [Springfield Natural Resources Study](#), which requires use of a Wildlife Habitat Assessment score to determine which of the inventoried resources are significant and may warrant local protection under the [Springfield Development Code](#). The consultants also prepared a memorandum comparing the safe harbor and standard inventories to inform our approach to protecting riparian resources.
- **Water Quality Limited Watercourses:** Of the riparian corridors in the urban growth boundary expansion area, the project team identified the remaining segments of the already-adopted Water Quality Limited Watercourses that meet the requirements of the [Springfield Development Code](#). These correspond to a subset of the inventoried riparian corridors.
- **Wildlife Habitat Sites:** Our environmental consultants developed a preliminary list of significant sites, which the City will continue to refine through collaboration with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

Protection Options Based on the Inventories

The Lane Council of Governments and City are focusing on key information in the inventory reports to create a memorandum that clearly outlines available policy options for natural resource protection.

A Look Back: Results Then & Now

Wetlands

Our [September 2022](#) e-update featured key findings from the first draft of the LWI report submitted to DSL in 2021. The revised draft responding to DSL's spring 2022 review comments addressed a range of edits that varied from details (spelling, references), to how information was presented (tables, mapping aesthetics), to clarifying discussion about the wetlands.



The key difference relates to how the report groups/names wetland resources. The previous version of the report gave each unique part of one larger wetland its own unit of analysis. Per DSL's recent direction, the current draft of the report combines

smaller pieces of whole wetlands into a larger assessment unit (where appropriate) for the purpose of a simplified format and analysis. However, this revision did not erase important information about each wetland's characteristics and did not change the bottom line, which is: how much wetland area was found to be locally significant and considered for local protection and how much remains that is potentially suitable for development.

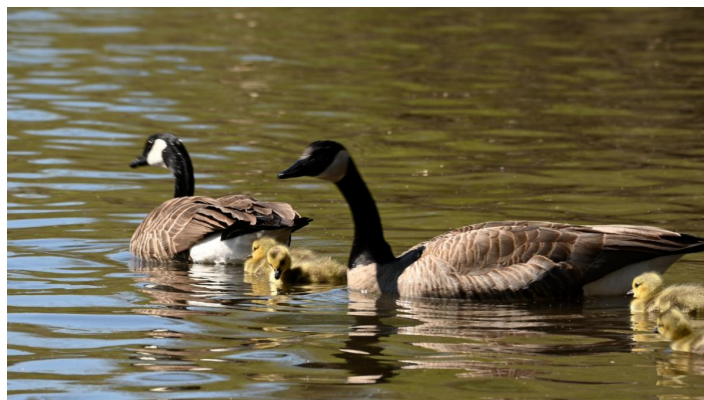
Our current numbers:

- Wetlands found: 30 (this decrease has to do with the “lumping”/combining)
- Portion that are significant: 29 (only one in the Mill Race study area did not meet the criteria)
- Compared to the existing list of locally significant wetlands we will update: Our newly inventoried ones more than double the list
- Acreage of significant wetlands: 77 (almost 10% of the urban growth boundary expansion area)
- [Click here](#) for a visual of where these wetlands generally occur

Riparian Corridors

At the time of our last e-update, we left off not having yet determined which riparian corridors were significant and warranted local protection under the “standard” inventory method. The results are in, and we found that our initial findings in our [previous e-update](#) continues to hold true:

- Riparian resources found: 24
- Portion that are significant: 23 (only one in the Mill Race area did not meet the criteria and is the same as the wetland that did not meet separate wetland criteria)
- Compared to the existing list of riparian resources we will update: Our newly inventoried ones nearly double the list
- Mileage of significant riparian resources: 10
- [Click here](#) for a visual of the extent of these riparian resources



A Look Ahead: Discussions & Decisions

May Meetings

We will update Planning Commission and City Council on the project and will begin discussing whether Springfield's current approach to protecting locally significant

wetlands and riparian resources according to the [Springfield Development Code](#) continues to be appropriate. Outcomes of our work to finalize the list of significant wildlife habitat sites with our State agency partners will determine if we hold additional work sessions to discuss new ways to protect significant wildlife habitat.

May 2, 2023 work session with Planning Commission: Click [here](#) to view the agenda, materials for discussion, and for details on how to join.

May 22, 2023 work session with City Council: Click [here](#) to view the agenda, materials for discussion, and for details on how to join (materials will be available the week before the meeting)

From here, we will be able to ramp up work to update the Springfield Natural Resources Study for sites in the urban growth boundary expansion areas. Following the updates, we will prepare for adoption of the inventories and documents/policies that reflect the selected protection options. Additional work sessions with appointed and elected officials will inform adoption.

PROJECT ELEMENT	2020				2021				2022				2023			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Community Engagement Plan																
2. Natural Resources Inventory/Assessment																
3. Research & Continue Developing Protection Measures																
4. Update Springfield Natural Resources Study																
5. Prepare Adoption-Ready Inventory & Policies															TBD	
6. Adopt Plan Amendments															TBD	

Also in May

Did you know that May is American Wetlands Month?! You can learn more about (or get a refresher on) what these assets are, how they work, and the benefits of protecting them [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Let’s celebrate: We’d love to see photos of some of your favorite wetland scenes around Springfield!

Questions?

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