



Wetlands & Riparian Inventories for Springfield's UGB Expansion Areas

Survey Says...

A big thanks to everyone who took time to learn more about the project earlier this year and to those who provided mailed/e-mailed, verbal, or survey input on the draft Local Wetlands & Riparian Corridor Inventory & Assessment report for Springfield's urban growth boundary (UGB) expansion areas!

[Read about the survey responses the project team received.](#)



The project team reviewed the feedback on the draft report with SummitWest Environmental and Terra Science, the consultants who prepared the report. The consultants edited the report and submitted it along with the public's comments to the Oregon Department of State Lands in May.

Draft Report Submitted to Oregon Department of State Lands

The Oregon Department of State Lands will **review the draft report** and may require additional edits or corrections prior to approval. We estimate approval to come this winter. Landowners who have wetlands or areas marked as "probable wetlands" on or abutting their property will receive a paper copy of the Department's notice of approval in the mail. The outcome of the

Department’s approval will be a finalized Local Wetlands Inventory, which will become part of the Statewide Wetlands Inventory.



Report Highlights

Wondering About Wetlands?

- The analysis revealed **61 wetland assessment units within the UGB expansion areas.** A wetland may contain more than one unit. Units represent unique areas (boundaries) within a wetland. For example, a wetland might have very different vegetation or soil types within its outermost boundary.
- **All but one of these units is locally significant, which means Springfield could potentially add 60 locally significant wetland units to our adopted list of wetlands protected by the Springfield Development Code.** This amount more than doubles Springfield’s currently adopted list of 24 locally significant wetland units throughout other areas of the city.
- **Diving deeper into numbers:**

Study Area	Wetland Units Found	Wetland Units Proposed as Locally Significant	Acreage of Locally Significant Wetland Units	Acreage of Study Area	Percent of Study Area Covered by Locally Significant Wetland Units
North Gateway	2	2	1.5	212	<1%
Willamalane Properties	11	11	25	72	35%
Mill Race	48	47	44	508	9%

- **Wetland functions affecting a determination of local significance include:** the presence of fish and wildlife and the quality of their habitats, hydrologic control (flow function), water quality, presence of unique plants, and educational purpose. A wetland unit can have more than one of these functions. A wetland unit’s connection to water quality was the most common reason for local significance. Hydrologic control and fish habitat were the next most common reasons.

Raring to Read about Riparian Resources?

- Springfield’s newly inventoried riparian corridors span approximately 11 miles.

- Depending on the outcome of future analysis and direction from elected officials, Springfield’s existing list of 20 significant (locally protected) riparian resources could as much as double.
- **The project team used two inventory methods to allow for comparison** , which will inform options for protection. Initial findings of each method show similar results of where Springfield’s riparian resources are but differ slightly on how many there are. Next year, we will determine the preferred approach to defining and protecting these resources.
- **So far, both methods found a fairly healthy riparian system.**One method broke each corridor into separate units, called “reaches”. Reaches within the 13 corridors received rankings of “high,” “medium,” or “low” for functions of:
 - water quality (purity)
 - flood management (ability to store water during storms)
 - temperature (an indicator of habitat quality for aquatic species and water quality), and
 - wildlife habitat (whether species have appropriate places to live)
- **Only two reaches received a “low” ranking in one or two categories.** Temperature and wildlife were “low” along the south bank of the McKenzie River in the North Gateway study area, and temperature was found to be “low” for a reach in the Mill Race study area. For temperature, these “low” rankings indicate water is warming up, or is already too warm, to provide a good environment for aquatic species (such as fish). The “low” wildlife ranking represents the lack of trees and shrubs along the water, which often provide spaces for species to sleep, eat, and more.

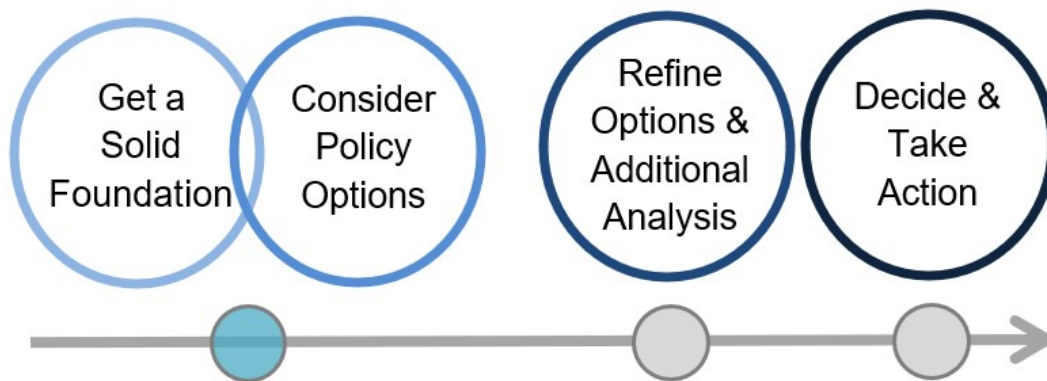
The draft report gives a glimpse into how these wetlands and riparian corridors throughout Springfield work and offers an opportunity to appreciate what they do to provide a livable, high quality environment. Beyond preserving these natural assets through protection, the results tell us there is also room to enhance resource sites that did not score highly on the assessments. For further reading about the general functions and benefits of wetlands and riparian resources, [check out this factsheet](#) .

Next Steps & Look Ahead

There will be further analysis of the proposed riparian corridors to assess wildlife. Also, staff are expanding the scope of this natural resource project to include additional analysis of other wildlife habitats in the UGB expansion areas and to identify Water Quality Limited Watercourses within the UGB expansion areas. Most likely, the City will apply the same water quality protections for the watercourses in the UGB expansion areas that are already in place elsewhere in Springfield’s UGB.

While we await Department of State Lands approval of the inventory report and consider the cost and timing of future work, we are recalculating our next steps and will send an update of the new timeline accordingly. Lane Council of Governments has started outlining policy options to protect locally significant wetlands and riparian resources according to Statewide Planning Goal 5 for Springfield’s consideration.

Moving forward, City staff will work with Lane Council of Governments to continue clarifying these options and will process this set of options with the public. The Springfield City Council and Board of Lane County Commissioners will need to co-adopt the Local Wetlands, Riparian, and Wildlife Inventories and the Water Quality Limited Watercourses before local protections for these resources go into effect.



Questions?

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