

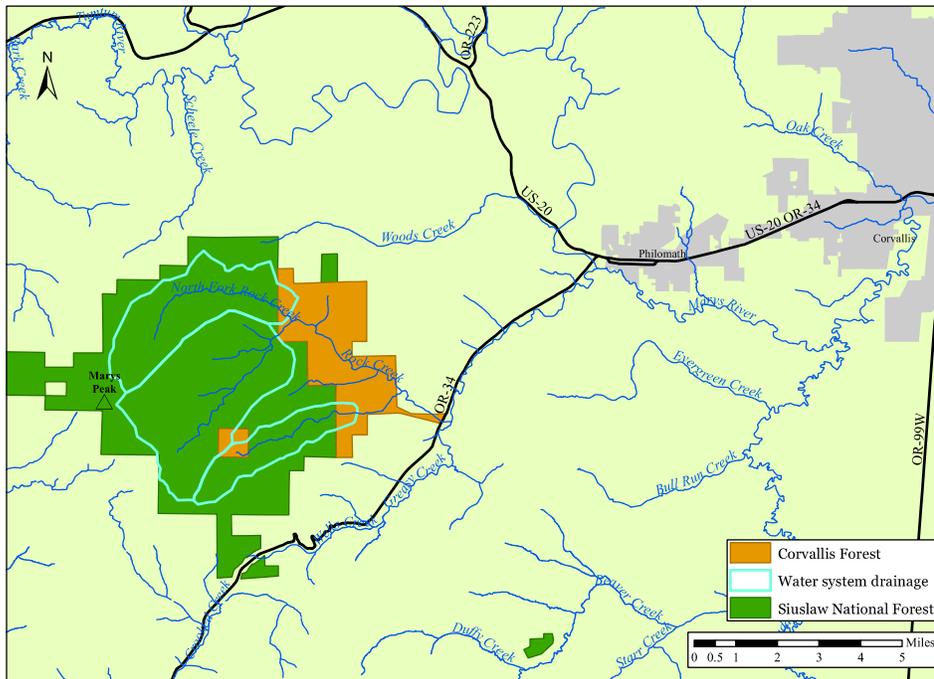
## 2. Introduction

*This chapter describes the vision for the Corvallis Forest, states the purpose of this plan, outlines the planning process, and details plan implementation and administration.*

### Background

The City of Corvallis owns 2,352 acres of forest located on the lower slopes of Marys Peak in western Benton County, Oregon (Figure 1). The major stream flowing through the City's ownership is Rock Creek. The City acquired the land in the early 1900s to protect the 10,000-acre Rock Creek Watershed, the upper slopes of which are the source for approximately 1 billion gallons of potable water delivered to Corvallis annually. Less than 20 percent of the City's land, around 400 acres, actually lies upstream of the water intake facilities. Although many are accustomed to referring to the City-owned portion of the Rock Creek Watershed as the "Corvallis Watershed," this document will refer to it as the *Corvallis Forest* in recognition of this fact.

The bulk of the Rock Creek Watershed lies in the Siuslaw National Forest, administered by the US Forest Service. The Forest Service has designated more than 99% of its lands within the watershed as reserves to be managed for wildlife habitat for riparian and old-growth related species.



**Figure 1.** Vicinity map

Within the Corvallis Forest, approximately 1,000 acres were harvested during an 80-year period ending in the late 1980s. Then, controversy over the effects of clearcutting and the need to protect older forests for the northern spotted owl and other wildlife species put a stop to the harvesting program, which had been administered by the Forest Service. Several attempts to re-initiate timber management in the subsequent decades failed due to ongoing citizen concern about environmental impacts.

The Corvallis Forest Stewardship Plan (CFSP) was developed over a 2-year period in 2005 and 2006. The first year was highlighted by a series of public workshops hosted by Public Works staff and the Watershed Management Advisory Commission (WMAC), a standing board that advises the City Council on watershed matters. With input from these meetings, the WMAC developed a vision statement and guiding principles for management. For more information on the original planning process see Appendix A, (Public Participation Legacy) at <http://www.corvallisoregon.gov/index.aspx?page=1464>.

### **Vision Statement for the Corvallis Forest**

Throughout its ownership history the City has considered the Corvallis Forest to be one of the community's most significant ecological, economic and social resources. The CFSP is guided by the following *Vision*:

***The Corvallis Forest within the Rock Creek Watershed is a professionally managed, healthy ecosystem with a diverse forest and productive habitat for all species native to the watershed.***

This Vision is further refined in a set of *Guiding Principles*:

- Conservation-based management practices demonstrate that water quality, stream health, wildlife habitat enhancement, and tree harvest can go hand in hand;
- Protecting the health and diversity of the forest and its ecosystems are top priorities;
- We are a “good neighbor” and integrated into the larger landscape, recognizing our connections to the greater watershed;
- Corvallis Forest is managed to be comprised of a variety of different ages and types of forest to provide diversity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats;
- Corvallis Forest is resilient to fire, invasive species, insects and disease;
- Access is controlled to minimize risk of fire, water contamination and invasive species introduction;
- Corvallis Forest is available for limited educational, recreational, and research opportunities;

- Corvallis Forest supports high quality water production for the City of Corvallis;
- Corvallis Forest is a generator of revenue that is primarily used to offset the cost of forest management, and secondarily helps fund the City of Corvallis water utility system.

With this vision, the Corvallis Forest provides a model for sustainable resource management that is an inspiration and legacy of stewardship for future citizens. The City’s demonstration of stewardship practices strives to encourage others to become better caretakers of our important natural resources. This plan meets Forest Stewardship Council forest certification standards (see sidebar, page 32 for more details).

### **Purpose of the plan**

The purpose of this plan is to provide City officials and staff with guidance for the integrated management of Corvallis Forest resources. This plan establishes a *framework* that will guide management of the Corvallis Forest over time. To ensure the responsible and long-term stewardship of this extraordinary City property, the Plan does the following:

- Describes property conditions, and incorporates resource inventories
- Details resource management policies, standards, and guidelines
- Describes future needs, and references monitoring and evaluation information

The plan is not intended to provide an exhaustive inventory of all relevant resources, nor is it intended to provide a highly detailed blueprint for management. Primary supporting materials include appendices and other CFSP related documents. Periodic operating plans will be used to implement the Vision and Guiding Principles, and provide substantial details of proposed activities.

Many forest planning processes result in a range of alternative approaches that can be implemented. These kinds of plans analyze the relative advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. The current planning effort is different – the City and the consulting team made a conscious decision to develop a single, broadly defined pathway that represents an approach to managing the forest that is most likely to receive broad community support and reflects the priorities and adopted vision of the community.

### **Implementation and Administration**

The City of Corvallis Public Works Department is responsible for implementing the adopted plan. City staff is responsible for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Written operational plans will guide Corvallis Forest activities. The City will engage other

resource professionals as necessary, to supplement their expertise and/or work force. Guidance from or oversight by appropriate resource professionals will be sought for significant resource improvements or modifications.

The Watershed Management Advisory Commission will advise the Public Works Department and City Council concerning matters relating to the management of the Corvallis Forest. The ultimate decision on resource policy and management direction rests with the Corvallis City Council. Any policy changes to the Corvallis Forest Stewardship Plan require the approval of the City Council.