

1. Executive Summary

This is a stewardship plan for the Corvallis Forest, a 2,352-acre City of Corvallis ownership that encompasses the lower elevations of the 10,000-acre Rock Creek Watershed on the northeast flanks of Marys Peak. Rock Creek Watershed is one of the sub-watersheds of Marys River Watershed, which is one of the many large rural watersheds in the Willamette River basin. The primary purpose for City ownership of this land is to supply drinking water to the community. Water that is diverted into City pipes flows primarily from federal forestland located above the intakes managed by the US Forest Service. City infrastructure, which is on the City of Corvallis ownership, includes a 100 million gallon water reservoir, two stream diversion structures and a water treatment facility. This infrastructure provides approximately one out of every three gallons of water consumed by Corvallis Public Works' customers each year.

This plan, adopted by the City Council in 2006 and updated in 2013, represents the first comprehensive, multi-resource plan developed in the history of the City's ownership of Corvallis Forest. Previously, City lands were managed by the US Forest Service under cooperative agreement, with the primary purpose being timber harvest management. Controversy over the harvest impacts on the northern spotted owl and citizen concern over the negative impacts of clearcutting stopped logging in the Corvallis Forest in the late 1980s. Given this difficult environmental and political setting, for almost two decades the City limited its activity to operation of water collection and treatment facilities, thereby avoiding the issue of future management of the Corvallis Forest.

In 2005, the City began a yearlong visioning process with public meetings, sponsored by the Watershed Management Advisory Commission (WMAC), which resulted in a Vision Statement and set of Guiding Principles for stewardship of Corvallis Forest:

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

In 2006, the City hired a consultant team led by Trout Mountain Forestry to assess current resource conditions and work with the WMAC, Staff, and citizens to create a stewardship plan. The focus of this effort was to develop a management policy framework that would reflect citizen values and guide future management decisions. Stewardship recommendations focused on a "go slow" risk-averse approach that prioritized maintenance and enhancement of desired conditions of streams, wildlife habitat and native plant communities. Timber harvest was identified as useful in some forest stands to accomplish these purposes.

By 2012 preliminary plan recommendations were accomplished, and the WMAC began a 12-month process of plan review and update. Standards and Guidelines were expanded, and updated resource inventory information and management opportunities included.

Stewardship polices in this plan (Section 4, page 34) cover these topics: forest age and structure; reserves; aquatic habitat; wildlife habitat; water quality; native vegetation and invasive species; roads; forest chemicals; public access; fires; neighbors and planning; monitoring; and public outreach.

Management opportunities are presented for each policy area, including: selective thinning and gap creation in dense homogeneous stands to diversify habitats and forest structure; wildlife habitat enhancements; restoration of uncommon and rare plant habitats; surveys for sensitive species; invasive species monitoring and control; ongoing monitoring of water quality and sensitive resources; consideration of cooperative research opportunities; and expanded outreach to schools, groups, and the general public.

By identifying and addressing current resource needs through careful management activities, this plan can enhance the protection of municipal forest resources and will provide a framework to guide future stewardship projects.