Keizer RIVERR
(Regional Intergovernmental Visions Enhancing River Resources)
Task Force Meeting
Minutes
Wednesday, October 15, 2003 at 5:30 p.m.
Keizer City Hall ~ Conference Room B

1. **Call to Order:**
   Chair Richard Walsh called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

2. **Roll Call:**
   Roll call was taken as follows:

Present:	**Absent:**
Richard Walsh, Chair	Mike Kirby
Ron Campbell	Kasia Quillinan
Hershe Sangster	Barbara Young
Matt Thorburn	
Mark Brown	**Also attending**
Clark Williams	Rinee Merritt, Trust for Public Land
Rob Kissler	Mr. Lowden, Surveyor
Darrell Monk (arrived 5:55)	Debbie Lockhart, Recording Secretary

3. **Approval of Minutes ~ September 17, 2003**
   Clark Williams noted corrections to the minutes: On page 2 the SDC amount should not be $700,000 but $400,000; and in the preceding paragraph, Mr. Walsh stated that the combination of the two parks might be beneficial, not Mr. Williams.

   Mark Brown moved to approve the Minutes as corrected. Matt Thorburn seconded.

   The motion passed unanimously as follows:

   AYES: Walsh, Campbell, Sangster, Thorburn, Brown, Williams, Kissler and Monk (8)
   NAYES: None (0)
   ABSENT: Kirby, Quillinan and Young (3)
   ABSTENTIONS: None (0)

4. **Appearance of Interested Citizens**
   None

5. Old Business/New Business

Chair Richard Walsh updated members on the landowners who had expressed an interest in selling their property to the City. He stated that consideration is being given to rescheduling the October 24 meeting with the landowners so that Marion County representatives can attend.

Mr. Walsh then introduced Rinee Merrit, with Trust for Public Land who briefed members about the Trust for Public Land, a national non profit organization whose mission is "land for people". It assists others at acquiring lands that would be held open for public access. One of the most recent nearby projects is the Stayton Riverfront Park which should close at the start of next year.

Matt Thorburn reported that the above mentioned park was a property that Stayton and the County had identified in the Parks Planning process. The Trust for Public Land coordinated the deal, negotiating with the different entities, establishing a price, working through the logistics, etc. They put together several sources of funding: the landowner, City of Stayton, Oregon Parks and Recreation, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, County and Trust for Public Land (providing some funding by way of project coordination/management and title research). Mr. Thorburn concluded that Marion County Board of Commissioners has indicated that they having funding, are looking for an area to use it and that the Willamette River project is one of the top candidates.

Ms. Merritt stated that with all the work the task force has already done, the park appears to be an extremely intriguing possibility. She briefed members on the process that TPL uses to reach the desired goals. The possibility of a Life Estate was addressed as well as the granting of a Conservation Easement. In response to questions regarding the possibility of a long-term ground lease, Ms. Merritt stated that TPL does not do leases so the City would need to negotiate that themselves. It was also noted that the total project may involve a blend of all these different scenarios. Rob Kissler suggested a partition which would keep the ground around the houses and the county would take over the rest for a park.

There was some discussion about the possibility of increasing the urban renewal boundary and the effects that would have on the possible land acquisitions. It was noted that, if it was to expand, there would be no guarantee that it would expand toward the river and not toward I-5.

Ms. Merritt questioned the ownership of mineral and water rights, which would affect the cost of the properties. She noted that anything that can be done to raise the value of a property will increase the chance that the owners will sell. Ms. Merritt stated that if TPL was involved in the project, one of the first things that would be done is obtain a current title report to ensure that the property owners can actually sell the property. She concluded that she would need to take the information she had received at the meeting and submit it to the Portland office. They would consider the value and address the issue of whether the City really needs their assistance in

pulling the funding together or if the value of the property is low enough that the City would already have enough money to finalize the transaction without the help of TPL.

Clark Williams stated that he was a member of the Task Force because he served on the Parks Advisory Board, that the City of Keizer had limited funds and that the total funds in the Park Department is about $400,000 to $450,.000. He continued that the park system is about 35% complete according to the Master Plan and that there is no consensus from the Parks Advisory Board to support this project.

Ms. Merrit responded that in a situation like this TPL would be an attractive option since they would work to put together several funding sources rather than depleting the City funds. She noted that she was willing to commit TPL in the beginning stages of the project, but, before they could do anything, they would have to have a commitment. TPL would probably need a Resolution from the City stating that they are committed to the completion of this project.

❖ ***Inventory from Natural Heritage Information Center***

Ron Campbell reviewed the report from the Natural Heritage Information Center, the state agency for mapping of plant communities and conditions, habitat types, and protected species on properties. He noted that the forested area, wetland areas, gravel bar and waterfront area all need to be protected. The areas for any development other than non-motorized trails are fairly large. Additionally it was noted that the entire area is in the 10-year floodplain. Mr. Campbell noted that he wanted to investigate that further. He continued that there were some noxious weeds that need to be controlled, including blackberries, scotch broom and a multi-stemmed Japanese Knotweed. Specifically the knotweed should be eliminated as soon as possible because it spreads rapidly.

Additionally, the Natural Heritage Information Center looked for any presence of plant or animal species that have some sort of protected status under federal and state programs and found none. It was noted however, that there are some small areas that provide potential habitat for protected species - mainly the wetlands and the gravel bar - not areas that would conflict with development. Habitat for protected species, such as the red-legged frog and western pond turtle, would be leverage for improved environment and potential funding sources. Mr. Campbell noted, however, that the bull frog was already in the area and would discourage other species from becoming established. He concluded that, when the final report came out, he would have maps for the Task Force.

Mr. Kissler pointed out that according to the FEMA map, the entire park area is not in the flood***plain***, but the Willamette River Flood***way***. He indicated that he felt this should be confirmed with Marion County's maps.

❖ ***Access Easement from the State of Oregon***

Mr. Lowdon, surveyor for Marion County displayed a map showing the Access Easement from the State of Oregon. He pointed out that, because there are some discrepancies, there may be a problem with usage. In order to find out if the public could have legal access to the park, it would take some in-depth deed research and legal counsel. If the County was involved with the project, they would be available to research this. It was noted that other options were using the "Public Access Way of Necessity" or a "prescriptive easement" across the property.

❖ ***Public Involvement***

Mark Brown addressed the Task Force stating that there appears to be too much work to do before a Public Involvement Package can be finalized. He noted that he could put together something simple like a readable map of the area with detail on the parcels which are being considered for purchase with approval of the Task Force, but continued that contact needed to be made with the landowners most directly involved in the project first.

In response to a request from Chair Walsh, members agreed that the next step should be to approach the property owners. Mr. Walsh noted that his meeting was scheduled for October 24. Ms. Merritt noted that TPL should be present at that meeting but that she would not be available on the 24th. The general consensus of the members was that TPL should participate in the project from the beginning and should be included in the first meeting with the landowners.

6. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Next meeting Wednesday, November 19, 2003, 5:30 pm.

Natural Resources Inventory for Natural Vegetation, At-Risk Species, and other Fish and Wildlife Resources at **Beardsley Bar**

Prepared by
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Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center
Oregon State University

September 2003

Introduction

A plant association inventory of the Beardsley Bar Site was completed as part of an assessment for threatened and endangered species, fish and wildlife, wetlands and significant plant communities in the summer of 2003. The site was inventoried to assist the city in developing a management plan, and to determine the overall significance of the site in relationship to other Willamette Greenway properties.

The inventory and mapping effort involved detailed surveys for vegetation, at-risk species, noxious weeds, and wildlife habitat. Polygons mapped on aerial photographs provided by OPRD were classified according to the Oregon Natural Heritage Program's vegetation classification, which is now part of the National Vegetation Classification System (NVCS). Field surveys for the Beardsley Bar Site were conducted on the following dates: (9/12/03, 9/26/03)

All of the mapped polygons in the historic site were visited. If the polygons had potential for rare, threatened or endangered species habitat, they were completely surveyed. If not, they were visited to assure that the polygon could be correctly labeled, and that the vegetation within the polygon was indeed one plant community. A species list has been put together for the site, although as all surveys were conducted late in the season, plants (particularly annuals) only visible early in the season were not included. This list is included as Appendix A. In addition, a list of wildlife species which could potentially occur in these areas was developed from the field visits and from the GAP Analysis Project (Kagan *et al.* 1999) data. This wildlife species list is included as Appendix B.

Each of the polygons is characterized as a condition class from 1-4, using the criteria developed for the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department master planning protocols. The definition of the classes are included below.

- *Condition 1*: Pristine native plant community in excellent condition and uncommon in Oregon; and/or has a special protection designation.
- *Condition 2*: Native plant community generally undisturbed by historic or current human activities, of good vigor and condition.

- *Condition 3*: Native plant community moderately disturbed by historic or current human activities or by intrusion by non-native species; or despite good condition, is so common in Oregon as to allow some loss to development. Includes dense, single species/age, young to moderately aged forest stands.
- *Condition 4*: Generally disturbed by development or other human activities; or consists mostly of non-native species.

A second set of ratings were applied to all of the forested habitat types, to describe their stand age and stand structure, as well as the successional status of the stands, in relation to the plant association in the NVCS. The rating system used was an A-C, defined as follows: A = climax or late successional (or if appropriate the model expression of the NVCS plant association); B = mid-successional; or C = early seral.

All vegetation types are characterized as plant associations in the NVCS and have been given a Natural Heritage Rank, which describes both the Global status of the vegetation type throughout its range, and the State status in Oregon. A description of how this system works is included online at: http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/ranking.htm. Briefly, vegetation types are ranked from 1-5, with 1 representing types that are endangered throughout their range, and 5 representing types that are demonstrably secure. The Global and State heritage ranks for all of the types are included following the name of the type. These ranks do not describe individual occurrences of the vegetation type, only the overall status of the type itself.

Description of the Beardsley Bar Site

Beardsley Bar is fairly large riparian bottomland on the east bank of the Willamette River, just north of Salem and west of Keizer. It is found at a bend of the river, with the river starting out flowing west, and curving to the north. The curve of the river has created annual flooding and large gravel deposits along the south half of the site. The large, exposed gravel bar must have given the site its name. In addition to the gravel bar dominated alternately by willows, low shrubs and forbs, the site has two good-sized riparian forests, some ponds created by former gravel extraction activities, and some natural vernal pools and ponds on a seasonal river channel. The center of the site was significantly altered by the gravel extraction, but the remainder of the tract is in very good, and fairly natural condition.

Figure 1 shows the approximate boundaries of the Beardsley Bar site as inventoried.

Figure 1. Boundaries of Beardsley Bar.

Plant Associations found at Beardsley Bar

There were forestlands, shrublands, grasslands and developed areas mapped at the site.

FORESTED ASSOCIATIONS (F)

F1– 2(A): Grand fir-Bigleaf maple/Vine maple-hazel Forest (*Abies grandis-Acer macrophyllum/Acer circinatum-Corylus cornuta*) G2S2

This type represents a small but significant example of a very rare and important plant community. It is a mix of grand fir (*Abies grandis*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), with some individuals of Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) and cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) present from adjacent communities. Grand fir and bigleaf maple are the dominant overstory and understory trees. Himalayan blackberry is found in small amounts in the forest, mostly along the road and in adjacent native areas. Native shrubs including hazel, tall Oregon grape, Indian plum, vine maple, poison oak, hawthorn, and snowberry (*Corylus cornuta, Mahonia aquifolium, Oemleria cerasiformis, Acer circinatum, Toxodenron diversifolium, Cratageus douglasii, Symphoricarpos albus*) are found throughout the stand, but are not dominant, making this a very unusual example of this community. The understory is rather dominated by grasses (*Carex obnupta, Melica geyeri, Elymus glaucus, Festuca subulata*) and forbs (*Polystichum munitum, Oxalis oregana, Pteridium aquilinum, Heraculatum lanatum, Urtica diocia, Marah oregana*), with slough sedge (*Carex obnupta*) and swordfern (*Polysticum munitum*) being the most significant.

In spite of the small size of the forest, its unusual understory composition and the presence of large, older (but not old-growth) Grand fir make it unusual and significant. It is probably too small to be very important to wildlife, and its significance for research is probably limited due to its size. It would be an excellent area for interpretation, and might be important for wildlife if adjacent forests across the river were preserved. Management of the stand to assure that Himalayan blackberry does not completely dominate the understory is important.

F2–2(A): Bigleaf maple-Douglas fir / swordfern (*Acer macrophyllum-Pseudotsuga menziesii/Polystichum munitum*) G4S4

The other forest at Beardsley bar found at the northwest edge of the site is an almost identical forest to the one described above, except that it is lacking any grand fir in the overstory, and has a conifer understory of mostly Douglas fir (although there are a few grand fir seedlings in this stand). The community would be characterized as Bigleaf maple-Douglas fir / swordfern – slough sedge forest, if such a thing existed. However, this combination of plants has not been described before. As was the case with the previous type, it is a fairly small patch of riparians forest, although it is larger. The type it is mostly significant because it represents a very unusual combination of native plants.

All of the trees at the site represent a mix of old and young trees. The site appears to be unlogged, although forests have probably developed at the site since the construction of the large dams reduced the flooding frequency and intensity at the site, and since fire suppression stopped the fires that regularly occurred before European settlement.

F3-3(B): Oregon ash – bigleaf maple Forest (*Fraxinus latifolia – Acer macrophyllum*) GUSU

The site has two small stands of Oregon ash swales. They are small, and occurring in areas that have been modified, so do not classify well into described Oregon ash – bigleaf maple forests. The trees are all fairly young, and these habitats were probably open meadows until fairly recently. The understory is a diverse mix of shrubs and forbs.

F4-3(B): Black cottonwood / stinging nettle Riparian Forest (*Populus basamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa / Urtica doicoia*) G3S3

The site has one small example of this forest community, which is known from a number of riparian natural areas in the Willamette Valley. At the site it includes a fairly small area.

Cottonwood stands are very important for wildlife, but this stand has been significantly impacted by historic gravel activities, and other use at the site, and is not in very good condition.

SHRUB ASSOCIATIONS (S)

S1-4: Himalayan blackberry shrubland (*Rubus discolor*) G5S5

This is a weedy and common community in previously cleared, riparian and streamside habitats throughout western Oregon and Washington. The site is largely an abandoned pasture that has been taken over by Himalayan blackberry. A number of different species of trees were found throughout the pasture, but the area is mostly dominated by expanding blackberry and many different pasture grasses (*Lolium arundinaceae, Poa pratensis, P. compressa, Dactylus glomorata, Holcus lanatus, Bromus mollis, B. rigidus*).

The patches of this type are small, and should be mechanically controlled, so they do not expand into the important native grasslands and forests.

S2-4: Himalayan blackberry – Scots broom shrubland (*Rubus discolor – Cytisus scoparius*) G5S5

This is an common weedy assemblage of blackberry and Scots broom found often in abandoned pasture and in old gravel operations. It is weedy, not natural and has little potential for restoration without significant work and money. The site has a few tiny patches with significant native species components, but is mostly dominated by blackberry and Scots broom many different pasture grasses (*Lolium arundinaceae, Poa pratensis, P. compressa, Dactylus glomorata, Holcus lanatus, Bromus mollis, B. rigidus*).

S3-1: Geyers willow gravelbar (*Salix geyeriana*) GUSU

The large gravel bar that characterizes the southern half of the site is partially dominated by a fairly young, dense stand of Geyer willow.

HERBACEOUS VEGETATION (H)

H1-4: Tall fescue pasture (*Lolium arundinaceae*) G5S5

This is a non-native pasture, which likely represents a completely degraded example of a native prairie. Tall fescue is actually quite rare at the site, with annual introduced grasses, orchard grass, introduced bent grasses and other weedy grasses more common. Many pasture grasses are found (*Lolium arundinaceae, Arrehenatherum elatius, Avena, Poa pratensis, P. compressa, Dactylus glomorata, Holcus lanatus, Bromus mollis, B. rigidus*). Himalayan blackberry and Scots broom are also beginning to invade these areas, which have few native plants.

H7-2: Wetlands ( )

Tiny patches of at least 5 important native wetland communities are found at the site. These include *Sparganium emersum, Bidens cernua – Glyceria striata,* and three aquatic bed types (*Hippurus, Callitrica,* and *Menanythes*). John Christy will assist in their classification.

NONVEGETATED AREA (N)

N1-4: Disturbed

The entrance to the Cougar Mountain Access has a small road, an old pasture, and some areas where large patches of Himalayan blackberry have been removed, and which are no longer vegetated. This is a small polygon which had to be mapped as a disturbed area. It is not far from the native prairie, and from two of the native forest communities (the

Oregon ash and the grand fir-bigleaf maple forest). Restoration of the non-roadway area to either of these communities is recommended.

N2-2: Gravelbar

Gravelbars are a common feature of riparian habitats. The gravelbar found at the southern end of the Cougar Mountain site is fairly typical, with some *Salix geyeriana* patches described in the Shrubland section of the report, and these areas dominated mostly by exposed rock with sage (*Artemisia douglasiana*), and many native and introduced forbs.

It was ranked as a 2 because it occurs by the river, and has native forest habitats around it, and represents a native habitat.

Figure 2. Beardsley Bar vegetation

At-Risk Species

The study area is not known to have historical records for any rare and protected plant species (ORNHP 2001), nor were any located during the inventory. No rare or endangered wildlife were located at the site.

Plants

Animals

The site is known to provide habitat for the federally and state endangered, anadramous fish. It has habitat for the Western Pond Turtle, although turtles were not seen. Potential habitat for the red-legged frog is present, but local abundance of bullfrogs might be limiting the presence of other native amphibians in the river.

Wildlife

The list of wildlife habitats allow for the development of potential wildlife species suspected to occur at the site. These lists are based on the overlap of species known from the area (based on EMAP hexagon distributions, County distributions and watershed distributions), with the habitats present at the site. The list of wildlife habitats used is the one created by the Oregon Gap Analysis Program, managed by the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center. Lists of potential wildlife species found at the site based on both systems will be included as Appendix B in the final report. Keep in mind that this is a list of species known from the general area. It includes some sensitive species, such as the Spotted Owl, which occurs in the general area, and which the site has habitat for, but which are not known from the site.

Wetlands

Most of the site has riparian habitats, characterized by seasonal flooding. All of the forests except for the Oregon white oak woodlands, and the conifer-bigleaf maple forests are either intermittent or seasonally flooded forest communities, considered to be wetland types. Even the oak and conifer-maple upland types are characteristic bottomland forests, which were part of the cottonwood gallery forest that formerly dominated the Willamette Valley floodplain.

The entire area is located with a 10 year floodplain of the river. The substrates are mixed, but mostly fairly recently deposited gravels and alluvium, with clays and other impermeable soils only in old oxbows and closed stream channels.

The ponds are surrounded by wetlands. The natural pond at the northeast corner of the site has some very small patches of unusual native communities, although their small size does limit their significance. Similarly, vernal pools found in the open Oregon ash forest are also natural and high quality, but are limited in significance by their small size and location next to the disturbed area.

The wetlands around the gravel ponds are dominated by non-native plants, some of which are fairly unusual. None are known to be noxious, but the Oregon Department of Agriculture should be contacted about their occurrence.

Figure 2. Historic vegetation of the Beardsley Bar & Lynx Hollow Access. Legend – Blue-green-Riparian hardwood forest, Tan – upland (Roemer fescue) prairie, Blue swamp – Tufted hairgrass wet prairie, blue – river, Green – Oak-Conifer forest.

Exotic Plants and Animals

There are significant numbers of exotic animals found in the Willamette River, most fish. The bullfrog is the only major exotic species which is directly impacting at-risk species. Bullfrog numbers appear to be highest in the artificial ponds in the adjacent Lynx Hollow Access site, with fewer in the natural oxbows.

The gravel bar immediately adjacent to the river has a very small patch (one 5x5 foot, multi-stemmed plant) of Japanese knotweed. This VERY NOXIOUS WEED should be controlled immediately with herbicides, before it dies back in the fall. It should be quite easily controlled if done so immediately.

Other exotic species are already very well established. Most significant are the populations of Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*). This species will expand, and should be removed from the site if possible.

Management Recommendations

Much of Beardsley Bar is fairly natural, with the (unintentional) introduction of exotic plants being the only major change. Small patches of reed canarygrass and Himalayan blackberry probably can not be controlled, except along the roadways, and are probably not a significant problem. The small patch of Japanese knotweed is a large problem, but fortunately should be quite easy to control if attacked immediately.

The Beardsley Bar site has been significantly altered by the old gravel mining, and this is the most obvious disturbance. However the changes in flooding and fire patterns have caused the most dramatic change to the character of the site. The forests occur on alluvial deposits, and are going to persist and develop into rare and important habitats (even if they were not present at this site when it flooded every year.