



**Columbia Slough Watershed**  
ACTION PLAN  
JUNE 2003

*A Call To Action*



## How You Can Help the Columbia Slough Watershed

### SHARING THE HEALTH

The Columbia Slough Watershed is rich in diverse human and natural resources. It is a thriving urban area that offers many opportunities for development and economic growth. At the same time, it provides critical habitat for dozens of wildlife species that depend on it for food, shelter, and passage.

The variety of uses within the watershed presents great challenges. Urban growth and development over the years have put continuing pressure on environmental resources. Habitat loss, diminished water quality and invasive non-native vegetation are among the problems that threaten the natural utility of this great watershed today.

Fortunately, steps can be taken to help people and natural systems thrive side-by-side. One of the watershed's greatest assets is the commitment of citizens, businesses and organizations to find solutions that integrate a healthy environment with a sound economy. *This is where you come in.*

### A CALL TO ACTION

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council brings together multiple stakeholders who share a common interest in caring for the watershed's well-being. Over the years, the Council has supported programs and projects to improve water quality, fish and aquatic life, recreational uses, aesthetic quality and citizen education. It has worked with agencies, municipalities, landowners, business owners and residents to maintain the watershed's health and vitality.

The Council has developed a *Columbia Slough Watershed Action Plan* to continue this vital work. The overall goal of the *Action Plan* is to establish a unified approach to protect, enhance and restore the natural resources in the Columbia Slough Watershed, within a holistic watershed perspective. Building on past accomplishments, the *Action Plan* identifies additional actions needed to improve watershed conditions.

The Council's role will be to facilitate implementation of the *Action Plan* by seeking funding and partnerships with others. *The participation of many different people and organizations who care about the watershed is essential to make the Action Plan a reality.*

### PROFILE OF THE COLUMBIA SLOUGH WATERSHED

- Encompasses 50 square miles (37,741 acres)
- Slough is 18.7 miles long
- Contains 30 additional miles of smaller waterways; six lakes and six ponds
- Contains the largest protected wetland within an American city (Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area)
- Largest industrial area in Oregon with more than 4,200 businesses & 88,000 jobs
- Home to 158,000 people – five percent of Oregon's population
- Sustains an abundant population of:
  - 175 bird species
  - 26 fish species
  - 28 mammal species
  - 7 amphibian and reptile species
  - 131 plant species

## EXAMPLES OF TOP-PRIORITY AND HIGH-PRIORITY PROJECTS

### Restoration & Enhancement

*Foster and assist restoration and enhancement projects to protect fish and wildlife habitat.*

- Improve fish habitat in Lower Slough.
- Inventory, assess and restore 30 miles of secondary waterways.
- Construct wildlife under-crossing at Time Oil Road.

### Water Quality & Quantity

*Foster and assist implementing measures that improve water quality and quantity.*

- Increase street tree plantings in neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue.
- Enhance land surrounding Osborn Creek.
- Replace 13 culverts with bridges to improve slough flow.

### Resource Collection

*Develop and maintain a Web-accessible bibliography.*

- Update bibliography semi-annually.
- Update GIS maps and related information.
- Maintain Internet access.

### Outreach & Education

*Develop, support and implement programs focused on the watershed's urban character and opportunities that enhance watershed health.*

- Continue Slough School and other education programs.
- Build shelter in Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area for year-round activity.
- Develop Upper Slough interpretive center.

### Monitoring

*Evaluate program and project effectiveness; broaden citizen involvement.*

- Evaluate effectiveness of Council activities.
- Promote efforts to track and record conditions at mitigation sites.
- Develop a forum to share monitoring information periodically.

### Recreation

*Promote and assist in the development of recreation facilities and experiences that foster stewardship and watershed health.*

- Construct Kelley Point canoe launch.
- Complete gaps in 40-Mile Loop trail segments in the watershed.
- Build canoe launches at Whitaker Ponds, 143rd Avenue levee and Fairview Lake dam.



# Here's What You Can Do

- Become a project partner or champion.
- Identify other funding sources and partners.
- Stay informed about the watershed and the progress being made.
- Share your knowledge and enthusiasm with others.
- Donate your time, money and “know-how.”
- Participate in Slough events.

## Something for Everyone

The *Action Plan* identifies 85 top-priority and high-priority projects and programs, within six categories, for the Council and stakeholders to conduct over the next five to 10 years. These actions will require many different skills, resources, and levels of support. The Council will use a variety of approaches to move the projects forward:

- Form partnerships with interested stakeholders and provide guidance and assistance to the partners.
- Support actions that have a champion – individuals or groups with a strong interest and commitment to make projects and programs a reality.
- Respond to concerns of private landowners and businesses regarding regulatory impediments to restoration actions.
- Seek funding sources, such as grants, government programs, organizations, businesses and individuals willing to contribute to implementation costs.
- Provide information and education about the work that needs to be done.
- Monitor projects and programs that are implemented to evaluate their success and identify needed improvements. As additional actions are identified in the future, they also will be considered for possible implementation.

The many people who visit, care for, work, and live in the watershed can make a real contribution. Help restore and protect this unique shared home for future generations of people and wildlife.

## CONTACT US TO FIND OUT MORE

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Print and CD copies of the *Watershed Action Plan* are available on request. The *Action Plan* is also available online at the Council's Web site.

Cover photographs:  
Historical photos of Slough from 1917.

Larger photo of Lower Columbia Slough with Beggars Tick in full bloom, 2001, by Elaine Stewart, Metro Regional Services.