

**Southern Willamette
Local Wetland and Riparian Inventory, Assessment, and Protection
Project Summary**

Background and Purpose

The southern Willamette River Valley is characterized by rich and diverse water resources and a swelling population. Nine rural cities in three counties (Creswell, Cottage Grove, Lowell, Harrisburg, Adair Village, Monroe, Scio, Mill City, and Brownsville) will address the potential impacts of future development on natural resources by guiding growth. Working within the State's Land Use Goal framework of compact growth, this project inventories and prioritizes natural resources on detailed, local levels while working and communicating collaboratively. Rather than nine cities working individually through essentially the same process, in this project we will work together as a team to provide benefits in a cost effective and efficient way, protecting significant natural resources while promoting economic development. The cities are motivated by the need to expand to achieve economic prosperity, and in order to expand they must identify and protect significant wetland and riparian resources. To achieve effective results, the project will be conducted in two phases over two years with six work tasks listed below.

Phase I

Task A. Project Coordination and Introduction. (Start-up and on-going) This task ensures that the project process moves smoothly, high quality products are generated, and the values of each partner are fully integrated. It includes project initiation and coordination activities, project management, and the formation of a project team composed of Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), OR Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCDD), OR Department of State Lands (DSL), City representatives, and members of five watershed councils. Activities:

- Form regional project team and prepare and agree upon guiding Project Scope document.
- Conduct initial project team meeting and quarterly meetings to refine activities as needed.

Task B. Landowner, Public Official, Community Notification and Involvement. (Fall/Winter 2009) This task creates an initial groundswell of support for the project throughout the region. It includes initiation of outreach activities to raise knowledge and provide input regarding project goals, activities and approach among local governing officials, residents, and property owners. Activities:

- Hold work sessions about project background and scope with each policy making body.
- Prepare a letter describing the project and desired outcomes and send to all property owners.
- Conduct property owner and developer forums presenting the project's goals, objectives and approach. Present and discuss the ecosystem services provided by water resources. Provide forums to review preliminary inventory and assessment results.
- Design and post an LCOG webpage describing the project's goals, objectives, and approach.
- Publish articles and news releases announcing public meetings, describing the project and water resource benefits.
- Develop landowner mailing list, provide notification, and request consent for property access.

Task C. Data Collection and Consultant Selection. (Fall/Winter 2009) This task relates to the assurance of a high quality inventory and assessment through the compilation of all background materials and the selection of a wetland consultant. Activities:

- Develop base maps (hydric soils, vacant lots, NWI, etc.), compile aerial photos and LiDAR data, and develop digital database showing potential wetland and riparian areas for use in inventory and outreach.
- Select wetland consultant

Task D. Conduct Local Wetland and Riparian Area Inventory and Functional Assessments. (Spring/Summer 2010) This task is key to providing local jurisdictions and state agencies with an accurate depiction of where significant wetland and riparian resources are in order to protect those areas from development. It includes field work to generate preliminary maps with wetland and riparian boundaries as well as steps to finalize the inventory. Activities:

- Review base maps and LiDAR data (if available), conduct fieldwork within each city, and prepare local wetland inventories under applicable Oregon Administrative Rules.
- Host public meeting and public official work sessions to review the draft products.
- Conduct final inventory and prepare assessment maps and report for each city.
- DSL review draft inventory and field review and approve final inventory.
- Notify landowners of properties with wetlands mapped.
- Local governments adopt inventory, including adopting ordinances, staff reports, and findings.

Phase II

Task E. Water Resource Land Use Action Kit Development. (Fall/Winter 2010) The kit provides a menu of mechanisms for cities to choose from so that water resources are protected and their environmental values maintained. This includes an assessment of existing ordinances and policies and development of a Water Resource Land Use Kit. The kit will focus on smaller cities and be responsive to their capacity to integrate water resource policy and regulatory provisions. This task also includes implementation training for local jurisdiction staff to respond to technical needs. Activities:

- Conduct asset and gap analysis of existing policy and code related to water resource management. Develop recommendations for changes to policies and regulations.
- Construct or compile model code language addressing a number of potential topics, including riparian buffers, wetlands and wetland buffers, conservation subdivisions, erosion and sedimentation control, and stormwater, including use of LID practices.
- Develop description and conduct analysis of regulatory options under Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 5 (natural resources) and Goal 6 (water quality).
- Develop tutorial and technical assistance on using the inventories in development reviews.
- Develop tutorial and technical assistance materials on types and applicability of LID methods.
- Compile best management practices addressing water resource protection in urban areas within the watershed context.
- Develop “Off the shelf” LID designs and specifications, specific to local soil and rainfall parameters, ready to use in a design and submit for permit review.
- Develop regional source for developers and staff (with technical information, unit price lists for LID-specific materials such as amended soils, etc.).
- Design a small projects checklist to facilitate permitting and review of projects designed to meet established standards.
- Develop guidance and methods for establishing incentive programs.
- Develop and provide staff trainings for how to use the inventories and the Action Kit.

Task E. Public Official and Community Involvement. (Spring/Summer 2011) This task energizes and finalizes the public outreach aspect of the project. It is designed to provide a series of vehicles to generate informed decision making and give public officials and staff an accurate depiction of how their constituents feel on issues related to water quality. Public officials are hesitant to develop ordinances which may be unpopular with the public. It will ensure ordinances and programs are developed which meet public need and have public support, thus nurturing in policy makers the political will needed to take necessary implementation steps. A 3-D visualization model will convey different land use scenarios in an interactive way, helping policy makers select land use mechanisms appropriate for their local area. The model will include GIS-based visualization of multi-objective water resource strategies. In addition, LiDAR data will be evaluated for its ability to facilitate visualization. Activities:

- Write and publish articles and news releases describing the Water Resource Land Use Action Kit. Prepare brochures, pamphlets, mailings illustrating the benefits provided by different management tools.
- Prepare Water Resource 3-D Visualization model, CD for distribution, and use instructions.
- Conduct at least one public event at each jurisdiction to review the spectrum of actions that can be taken with residents and policy makers.