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A Place for People and Wildlife: Conservation in Urban Areas Summary

Urban landscapes can support diverse and valuable habitats for fish and wildlife, and there are successful examples of communities throughout Oregon weaving greenspaces and habitat into their planning and development. These habitats are home to many common species, but may also be important for species at risk, including some of the Strategy Species described in this document. Stream and river corridors, nature parks, and homes and businesses landscaped with native vegetation all provide habitat within an urban setting.

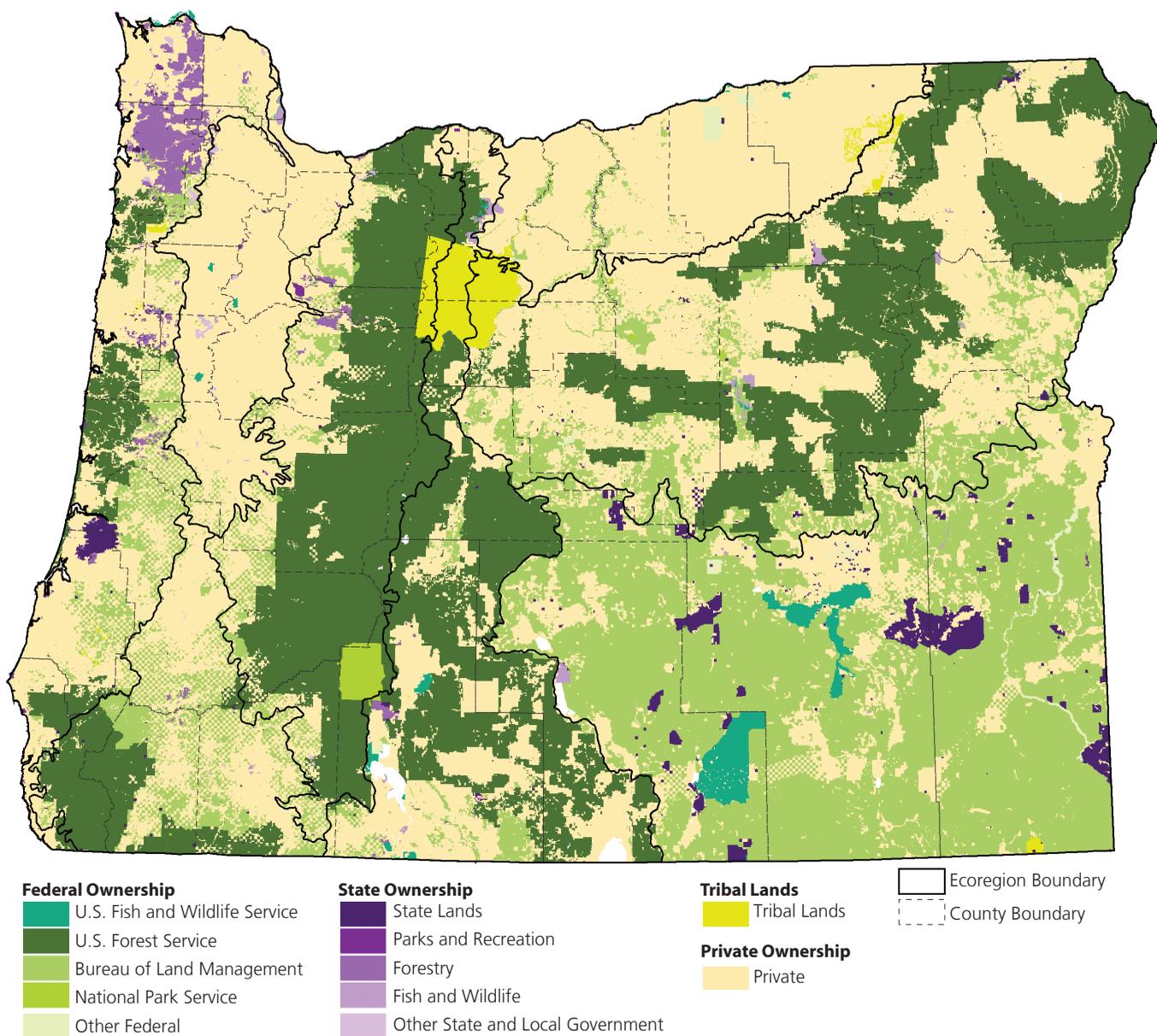
Every Oregonian can contribute to the conservation of wildlife and habitats in their own backyard or neighborhood. Creating backyard habitat, or “Naturescaping”, provides important places for wildlife to feed, nest, and find shelter from the weather. People can also help by volunteering for restoration projects in their local parks.

As cities continue to grow in Oregon, incorporating natural resources into the infrastructure of development and community open spaces will help ensure that wildlife can survive and thrive. The ability for people to interact with wildlife in their own backyard or neighborhood also contributes to their understanding of the value of the natural world, connects people to the watershed they live in, and improves the quality of life Oregonians enjoy. Urban habitats are discussed in more detail on pages 65 to 69. Important conservation actions for urban areas include:

- Plan for growth and development to incorporate the protection of large, functional and connected habitats as “green infrastructure.”
- Consider a range of program options and trade-offs for habitat and urban development, incorporating economic, social, environmental and energy criteria.
- Use multiple tools to meet conservation goals, which can include planning, restoration, acquisition, on-the-ground actions, grants, education/information, property tax reduction programs, technical assistance, volunteer programs, and recognition programs.
- Integrate fish and wildlife habitat conservation and restoration into other natural resource conservation efforts (e.g., water quality programs, open space acquisitions).
- When planning redevelopment projects, look for opportunities to restore habitats, increase connectivity and improve floodplain function.
- Incorporate habitat features and functions into the built environment (wildlife road crossings, rooftop gardens and nests, artificial habitat structures).
- Promote “Naturescaping” and landscaping with native plants.
- Prevent the introduction of those non-native species with high potential to be invasive and control priority invasives.
- Integrate information about habitats and species from state and federal natural resource agencies and conservation groups into local and regional planning efforts.
- Learn about effects of urbanization on watersheds and test management actions. Consider and use new information as it becomes available.
- Increase understanding of how urban systems can be designed to help sustain fish and wildlife populations with a high level of public support and involvement.
- Educate residents about Oregon’s natural heritage, show people real-world examples of important habitats and projects, and build an appreciation that will lead to citizen actions and support for conservation.
- Recognize the positive contributions that individuals, businesses and industry have made locally.
- Promote programs designed to manage stormwater so it closely mimics natural flow patterns and cleanses runoff before it is released to natural water bodies. Discourage dumping into storm drains.

- Work across multiple jurisdictions, recognizing the uniqueness of each local community and the needs of various landowners. Seek methods to achieve cooperation and coordination. Promote the exchange of information.
- Support habitat improvement projects geared towards the needs, opportunities and high level of public interest in carrying out environmentally beneficial projects in urban areas.
- Create cost-share funding opportunities for conservation planning and project implementation. Provide technical and financial support for projects.
- Support and expand existing programs to provide proactive, seasonally-appropriate information on preventing and resolving conflicts with wildlife.
- Consider impacts to off-channel, shallow water and in-stream habitat while providing recreation opportunities.
- Monitor change in urban ecosystems using broad-scale indicators in urban settings.

Land Ownership



Data Source: Oregon Department of Forestry, 2004