



Necanicum Watershed Council

ACTION PLAN

Approved 5/6/2020

Necanicum Watershed Council Action Plan

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Necanicum Watershed Council Action Plan

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is the Action Plan of the Necanicum Watershed Council (NWC). The NWC is a non-profit and volunteer organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the Necanicum watershed through leadership, cooperation, and education. The Council's role is to establish and support the implementation of projects, outreach, and other activities for the enhancement of a healthy natural environment. Council board and volunteer membership is broadly representative of those individuals and groups having an interest in the health of the watershed. The Council seeks to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

The Council's mission statement is:

The Necanicum Watershed Council is a non-profit organization of community volunteers who work to ensure that our watershed is a healthy and functioning ecosystem. Through community outreach and education, landowner partnerships, and on-the-ground habitat development projects, we work to further understanding about the Necanicum Watershed and to make sure it has a sustainable future.

The Action Plan is based on the Council's goals and mission statement. The Action Plan takes a watershed-wide approach and strives to integrate existing plans and efforts. This Plan is a working document that will be updated and reevaluated periodically.

The NWC depends on voluntary efforts. The Council is not a regulatory or enforcement agency, nor does the Council adopt plans or rules in a legal sense. The Council makes recommendations to decision-makers, landowners, and managers on ways to protect and enhance the watershed resources of the Necanicum Watershed. The Council provides a framework for communication, collaboration, and cooperation among its member organizations and others.

The NWC Action Plan is a resource guide to better understand the nature of the Necanicum watershed.

1.2 Background

Like most Pacific Northwest estuaries, the Necanicum River estuary is part of a coastal, temperate, rainforest ecosystem. The estuary is bordered by the cities of Seaside and Gearhart, but also surrounded by rich forests associated with the Oregon Coast Range. With mean annual precipitation around 80 inches (200 cm) per year in the lower elevations and over 120 inches (300 cm) per year in the higher elevations, the watershed's coniferous forests — trees such as western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), true fir (*Abies* spp.), and western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) — cover about 72 percent of the total land area. Hardwood species such as

red alder (*Alnus rubra*) and maple (*Acer* spp.) also grow throughout the region, especially as second growth in riparian areas, covering about 11 percent of the watershed.

In the lower elevations of the watershed, forest gives way to wetlands and rich alluvial plains used for agriculture, rural residential housing, and urban development. The Necanicum River watershed drains into the Pacific Ocean at Seaside (Figure 1.1).

Necanicum Watershed

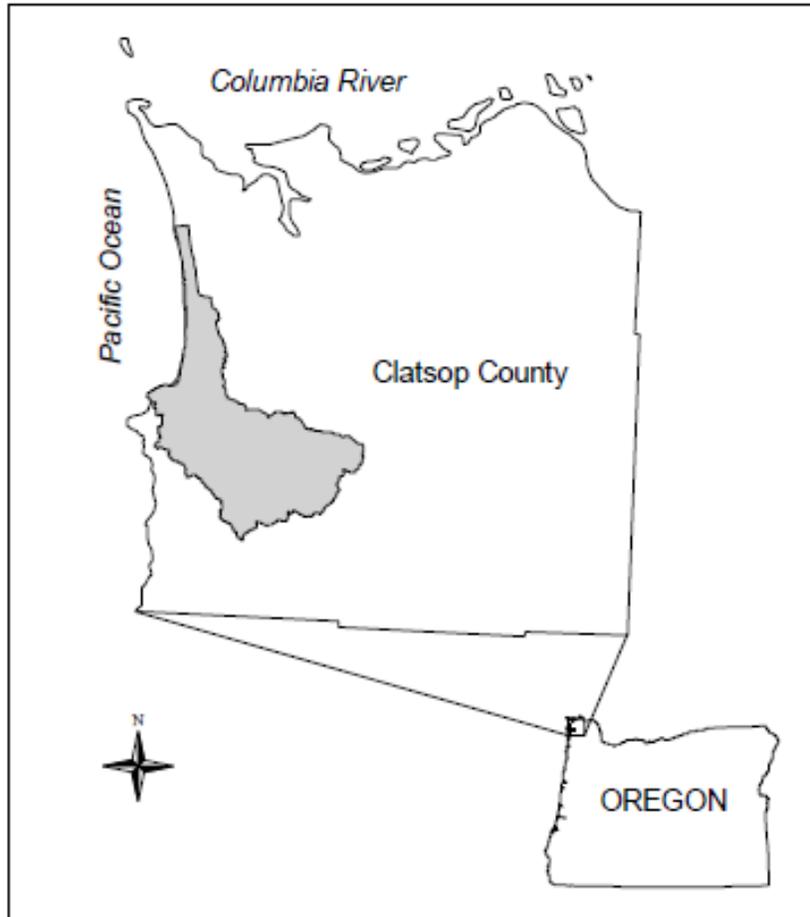


Figure.1.1

The Necanicum River mainstem runs approximately 21 miles long and drains approximately 83.7 sq. mi. of land, characterized by steep forested uplands and flat alluvial lowlands. Much of the higher elevations are used for timber production. The lower watershed contains extensive wetland areas and is dominated by urban and rural residential development.

The watershed is divided into seven subwatersheds (Figure 1.2), two of which (Seaside and Neacoxie) are heavily populated. The Neacoxie subwatershed includes extensive areas of rural residential and urban development. The western half of the Seaside subwatershed is largely urban.

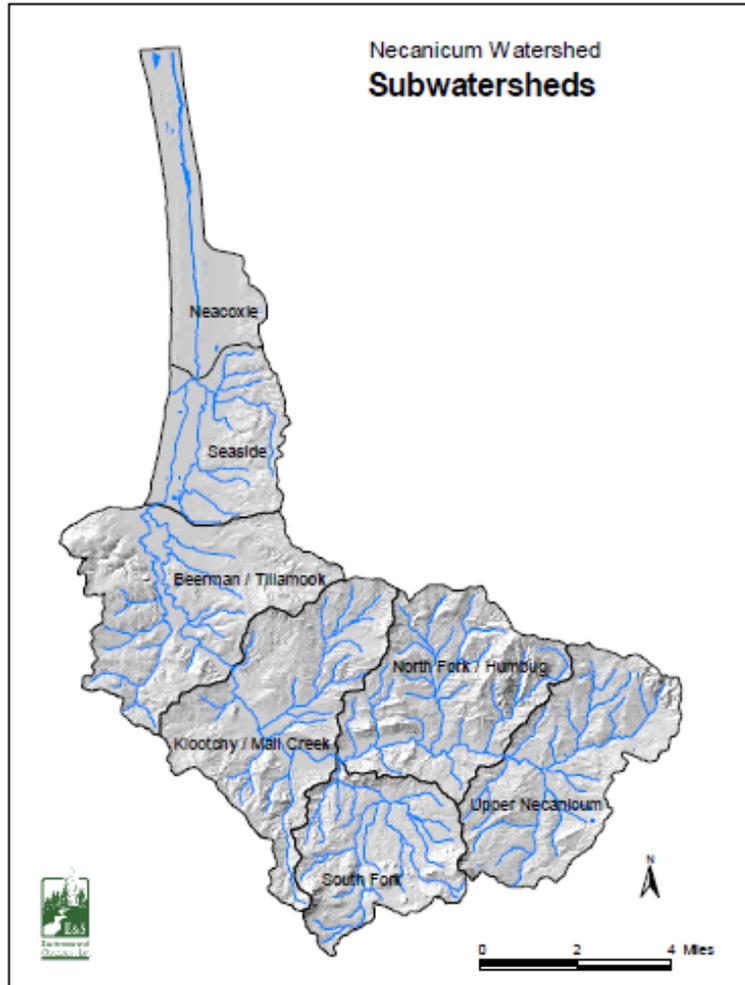


Figure 1.2

Increasing population, development, and tourism pose potential threats to the Necanicum River Estuary and its associated watershed. Point and nonpoint source pollution from the watershed, shoreline land use, and oil spills continue to threaten the quality of all of Oregon's estuarine waters. Introductions of exotic species and the risk of increasing water withdrawals also pose risks.

Peak discharge typically occurs during the winter between November and February, however, high flow events can occur as late as June. The watershed has several wild salmonid species including: winter Steelhead, Chinook, Coho, searun and resident cutthroat trout. No current hatcheries are operating in this basin, but several small private hatcheries have operated over the past century.

During the last 150 years land management practices have drastically affected the watershed. Dike building, logging, water diversions, and road construction significantly reduced the availability of habitat for coho. Road culverts are barriers that restrict use of streams by coho. The absence of large wood from streams reduces the number of pools and the amount of winter rearing habitat for coho.

1.3 Watershed Council Membership

The Necanicum Watershed Council operates as an open and inclusive organization. The following is a list of the geographic areas and community interests the council intends to include on its governing body in order to engage a balance of interested and affected persons within the watershed pursuant to ORS 541.910(2). Members of the governing body may represent more than one interest.

This list in no particular order includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Municipalities
 - i. Seaside
 - ii. Gearhart
- B. County
 - i. Clatsop County
 - ii. Sunset Empire Parks and Recreation
 - iii. Clatsop SWCD
- C. State Agencies
 - i. Transportation (ODOT)
 - ii. Fish & Wildlife (ODFW)
 - iii. State Parks (OPRD)
 - iv. Forestry (ODF)
 - v. Water Resources
 - vi. State Lands (DSL)
 - vii. OSU Extension
- D. Private Timber
 - i. Lewis & Clark Timber/Greenwood
 - ii. Weyerhaeuser
- E. North Coast Land Conservancy
- F. Seaside School District
- G. Rural Landowners
- H. Urban Landowners
- I. Sub-Watersheds
- J. Business Community
 - i. Chamber of Commerce
 - ii. Seaside Downtown Development Association
- K. Recreation
 - i. Hunting
 - ii. Fishing
 - iii. Biking
 - iv. Hiking
 - v. Birding
- L. Other Non-Profits
 - i. Trout Unlimited (Wild North Coast/Tualatin Valley)
 - ii. Rainland Flycasters
 - iii. Surfrider
 - iv. Wildlife Center of the North Coast

2.0 Development of the Action Plan

Development of the Action Plan began in April of 2004 and was updated in February of 2020. The goals of the Council include:

- ❖ Conserve, protect and restore native salmon populations while improving the overall health of the natural environment within the Necanicum River watershed.
- ❖ Promote community knowledge and awareness, interest, and participation in maintaining and enhancing the health of the Necanicum watershed.
- ❖ Maintain and develop partnerships with public agencies, businesses, timber interests, private landowners, schools, and other organizations to enhance and maintain a sustainable, healthy Necanicum River watershed.
- ❖ Sustain and improve a strategic, accountable, and transparent watershed council.
- ❖ Explore/develop new sources of funding and volunteer support.

2.1 Projects to Meet Council Goals and Objectives

1. Conserve, protect and restore native salmon populations while improving the overall health of the natural environment within the Necanicum River watershed.

- Work with landowners to identify and prioritize fish passage barriers in the watershed using watershed assessments & other available documents – High
- Improve in-stream habitat for aquatic organisms with large wood placement to accrete spawning gravels, restore habitat complexity, and re-connect the stream channel with its flood plain - High
- Improve water quality by enhancing native riparian vegetation - High
- Increase over-winter habitat by creating or enhancing off-channel wetland habitat - High
- Remove fish passage barriers for all life history stages of anadromous fish – High
- Continue progress on Policeman’s Helmet eradication – High
- Implement Coho Creek Fish Passage Restoration - High
- South Fork Necanicum Comprehensive Plan – High
- Clatsop Pollinator Partners project – High
- Neawanna Creek survey and weed removal project - High
- Explore lamprey and mussel focused projects within the watershed - High
- Explore opportunities along Neacoxie Creek and in Gearhart – High
- Find funding for and implement an updated Watershed Assessment – High

- Clatsop County Culvert Inventory/Assessment – Medium

- Necanicum Estuary Natural History Park – Low
- Neawanna Wetland Tree Release – Low

2. Promote community knowledge and awareness, interest, and participation in maintaining and enhancing the health of the Necanicum watershed.

- Provide technical assistance to the community and City of Seaside – High
- Secure funding to strengthen outreach to community - High
- Offer educational programs and outreach opportunities for the community, including lecture series, educational events, and hands-on volunteer events, including:
 - Seaside Parks Day - High
 - Listening to the Land – High
 - Storm drain medallion installation and outreach grant – High
 - Invasive Plant Control & Restoration – High
 - Dog waste/household waste outreach – High
- Give presentations about the Council to local service group meetings - Medium

3. Maintain and develop partnerships with public agencies, businesses, timber interests, private landowners, schools, and other organizations to enhance and maintain a sustainable, healthy Necanicum River watershed.

- Develop partnerships with other organizations in the community that support the mission of the Council - High
- Explore collaboration opportunities/grants with diverse organizations to meet the goals of the NWC - High
- Targeted outreach and project development w/ City of Seaside & City of Gearhart – High
- Develop relationships with local media outlets, and submit press releases when appropriate – High
- Engage with Seaside School District to enhance classroom learning and promote stewardship - Low

4. Sustain and improve a strategic, accountable, and transparent watershed council.

- Encourage opportunities for additional training for staff and board members - Medium
- Review and update guidance documents - High

5. Explore/develop new sources of funding and volunteer support.

- Develop a grants database – High
- Search for and secure diverse operational funding sources - High

3.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The NWC is committed to meaningful and successful restoration activities and to promoting sound management practices in the watershed. Monitoring is an important component in determining the success of a restoration project or management practice and whether the desired results are being achieved.

Monitoring requires a long-term commitment of time and resources. The Council will work with project sponsors to develop a monitoring plan for each action item where appropriate.

4.0 Plan Evaluation and Review

This Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually, at minimum.