

Species and Habitat Conservation

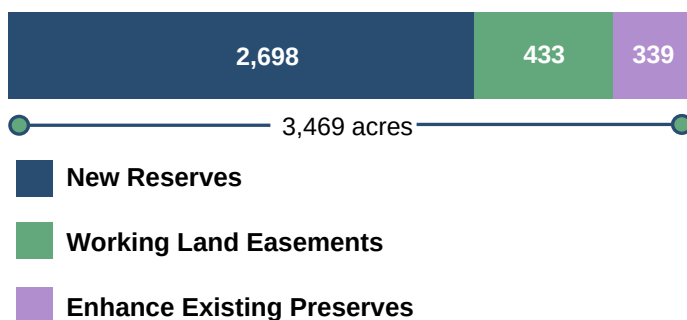
CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The proposed Thurston HCP contains goals, objectives, and conservation measures that will mitigate the impacts of covered activities and provide for the conservation of covered species. Elements include:

- Conserve, restore, and manage representative natural and semi-natural communities of species.
- Protect and maintain habitat areas large enough to support sustainable populations of covered species.
- Establish a Conservation Land System that provides for the conservation of covered species within the Thurston HCP geographic area and linkages to other conserved lands.
- Incorporate a range of gradients and high habitat diversity to provide for shifting species distributions in response to changing circumstances (e.g. climate change).
- Sustain the effective movement and genetic interchange of organisms between habitat areas in a manner that maintains the ecological integrity of the CLS.

The Thurston HCP is a countywide plan to provide Endangered Species Act permits and mitigation for capital improvement projects (e.g., roads, schools, fire stations) and development activities (e.g., commercial buildings, residential developments, accessory structures) over the next 30 years.

The HCP will coordinate mitigation to maximize benefits to the Covered Species, as well as provide benefits to multiple other species that use prairie and riparian habitat. The plan strikes a balance between natural resource conservation and economic growth in the county.

**PROPOSED LAND CONSERVATION COMMITMENTS**

In addition to strengthening local control over land use and species protection, the proposed Thurston HCP will provide a more efficient process for protecting natural resources by creating a new Conservation Land System that will be larger in scale, more ecologically valuable, and easier to manage than individual mitigation sites.





CONSERVATION MEASURES

The proposed Thurston HCP strategy streamlines compliance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other applicable environmental regulations. The conservation strategy provides for the conservation of the covered species and provides habitat needs of non-covered native species associated with each natural community. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the proposed HCP include several areas of conservation objectives:

Minimize Impacts (Sec 5.2.1) T

Ensure Best Management Practices, including impact minimization, control and management of invasive plant species, and broadening awareness of prairie and wetland/riparian habitat to facilitate voluntary restoration activities.

Manage and Enhance the Land System (Chapter 7)

Manage and enhance natural community and species habitat. (Sec 7.4) Describes the management and enhancement standards for each of the covered species and associated habitat. (Sec 7.7) Describes requirements for preparing conservation land system management plans.

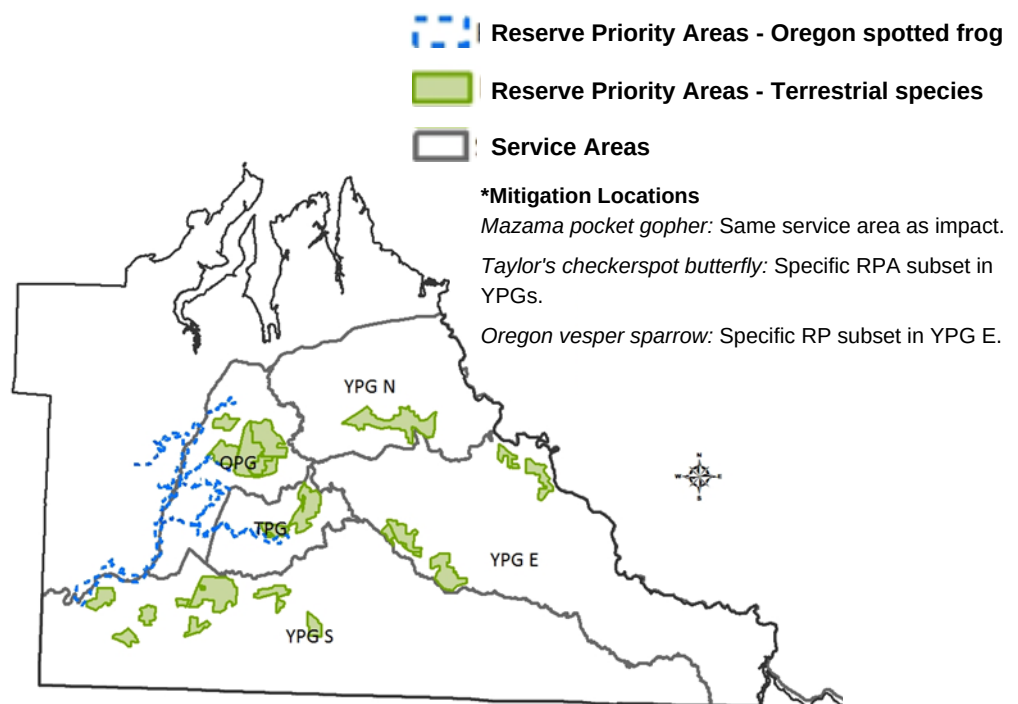
Establish Conservation Land System (Sec 5.2.2- 5.2.4)

Establish the Conservation Land System through land purchase and voluntary enrollment. Includes acreage commitments for natural communities and species habitat, describes how land will be protected, and (Sec 5.4) provides guidelines and commitments for identifying lands to acquire.

Restore Species Habitat (Sec 5.3)

Describes the commitment to natural community and species habitat restoration. It defines the specific commitments and mitigation guidelines for each of the Covered Species.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION LANDS SYSTEMS



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