

A photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees and a dense carpet of green ferns in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

Milton Creek Woodland Reserve Project

St Helens City Council Presentation
December 18, 2024

Prepared by: St Helens Parks & Trails Commission

Presentation Objectives

1. Provide background on project and overview of potential reserve area
2. Discuss benefits of creating reserve on City property
3. Discuss next steps



Photo: Scott Jacobson



Photo: Lucas Green

Project Background

1. Building a trail along Milton Creek identified in 2015 Master Plan
2. Parks & Trails Commission site visit in 2022 - began discussions on expanded possibilities for the area
3. Designated the area as the “Milton Creek Woodland Reserve” in 2023
 - Initial work on project
4. Project gained momentum in 2024
 - Additional site visits on both City and Port property
 - Began project scoping
 - Initial engagement with City and Port
 - Further project development
 - Presentation to St Helens City Council (this meeting)

Overview of Potential Reserve Area

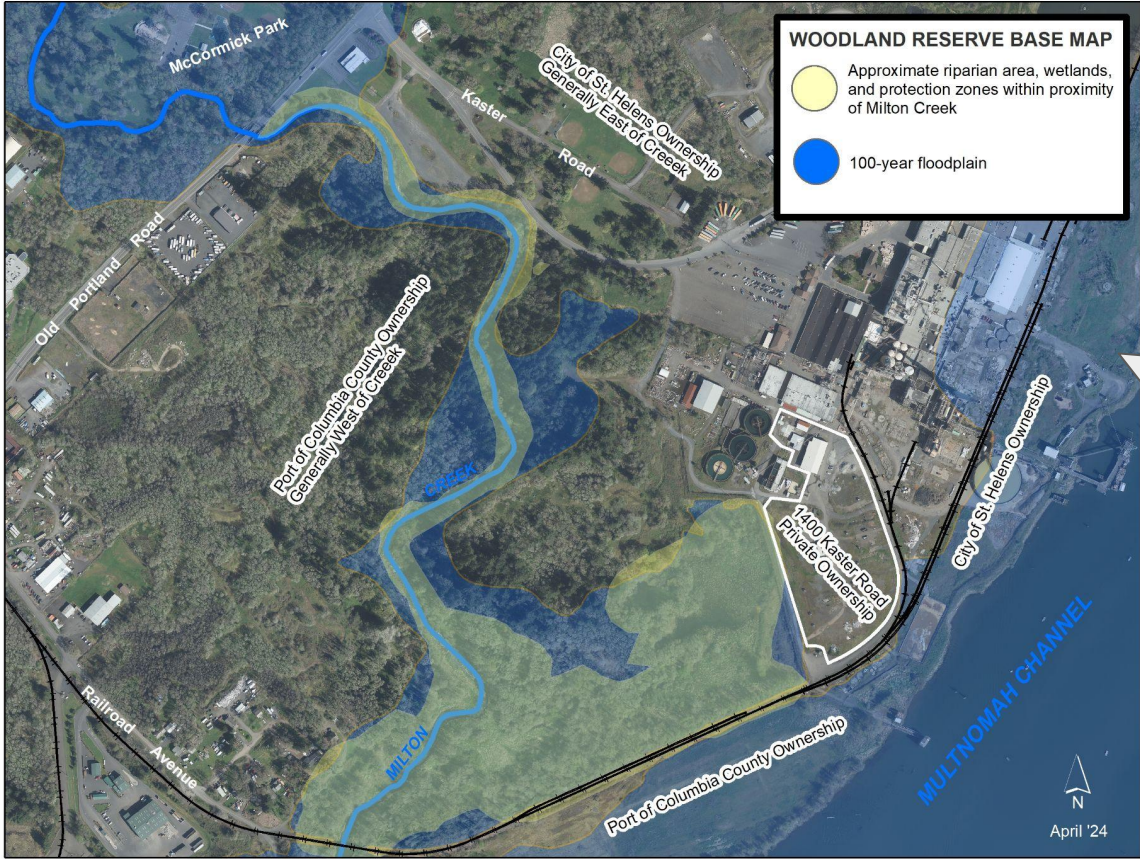
- Undeveloped forested land located on City of St Helens (approx 39 acres) and Port of Columbia County property located along Milton Creek
 - Unique geological setting
 - Prehistoric and historic components
 - Flora and fauna
- Milton Creek - upland protection zone, impacts regulated, 50' setback required, located in 100 year flood zone
- 5 acre substation planned on City property
- Site of former Boise Park - old swing set skeleton, metal picnic table, and brick barbecues currently located on site
- Existing unofficial trail runs along portion of Milton Creek on City property

Overview of Potential Reserve Area (con't)



Map showing potential reserve area - from Parks and Trails Master Plan

Overview of Potential Reserve Area (con't)



Map showing approximate riparian area, wetlands and protection zones within proximity of Milton Creek and 100-year flood plain

Project Components & Phases

(Note: elements of phases overlap)

1	Establish Reserve	2	3	
<p>Phase 1-A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify & engage with stakeholders• Recommendations for reserve (PTC and other stakeholder input)• Further discussions with Port• Prepare City Council proposal• City Council agree to set aside land <p>Phase 1-B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin work on City portion of reserve	<p>Phase 2-A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue work on City portion of reserve• Prepare Port proposal• Port agree to set aside land <p>Phase 2-B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin work on Port portion of reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect reserve to other parks / trails• Identify and implement other initiatives related to reserve• Ongoing communications and stakeholder engagement• Establish “Friends of Milton Creek Woodland Reserve” group• Other?		

Focus of today's meeting

Benefits of Creating Reserve on City Property

1. Recreational

- Set aside undeveloped land for public use
 - Per the Parks and Trails Master Plan, adding nature park trail mileage would help meet the community's increased recreational needs due to population growth
- Develop and expand existing trail along Milton Creek and add rest and recreation amenities so that more people can enjoy this beautiful forested area, unique geological setting, and local flora and fauna
- Be positioned for future expansion of recreational opportunities such as connection to Port property, riverwalk, McCormick Park, other trail networks etc.



Photo: Scott Jacobson



Photo: Lucas Green



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Benefits of Creating Reserve on City Property (con't)

2. Environmental

- Protect flora and fauna including
 - Camas field
 - Mature vegetation (oak and fir trees)
 - Eagles
 - Creek which is home to several native fish species
- Mitigate local climate change impacts through preservation of forest land
- Reduce wildfire risk through increased utilization and oversight of property
- FEMA regulations regarding fish migration have come into effect as of December 1, 2024



Photo: Lucas Green



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Photo: Lucas Green



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Photo: Lucas Green

Benefits of Creating Reserve on City Property (con't)

3. Prehistoric & Historic Preservation

- Quarry sites and paving stones
- Native American sites
- Former town site



Photo: Lucas Green



Photo: Scott Jacobson



Photo: Lucas Green

Benefits of Creating Reserve on City Property (con't)

4. Educational

- Educate public about environmental and prehistoric / historic aspects of site through signage, informational resources etc.
- Help to mitigate inappropriate use



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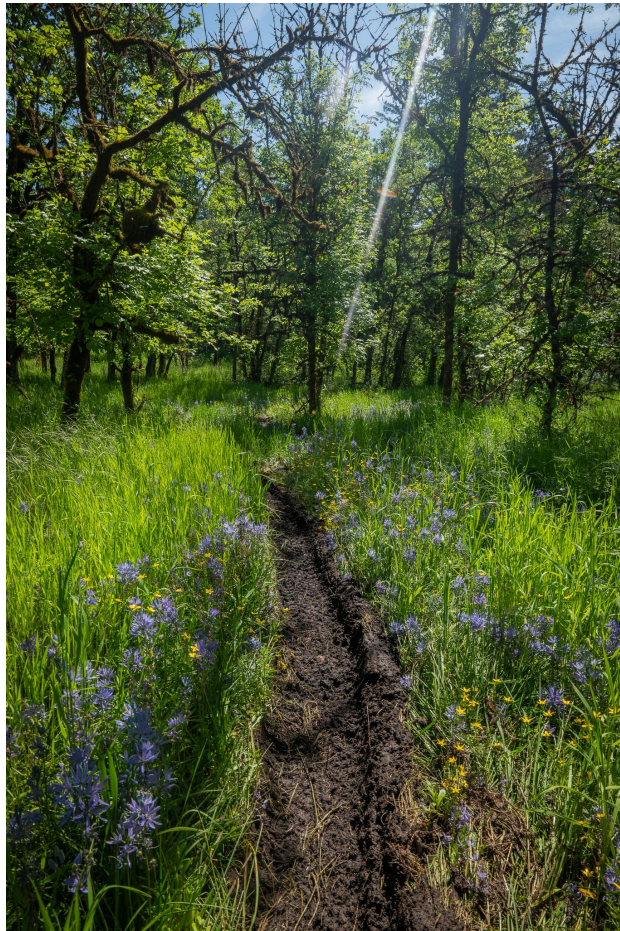


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Benefits of Creating Reserve on City Property (con't)

5. Economic Driver

- Draw visitors to area to enjoy reserve and other local amenities and businesses
- Contribute to positioning St Helens as the jewel of Columbia County
- Attract new businesses and economic investment by enhancing livability of area
- Provides a hiking trail for local population that is unique to the area

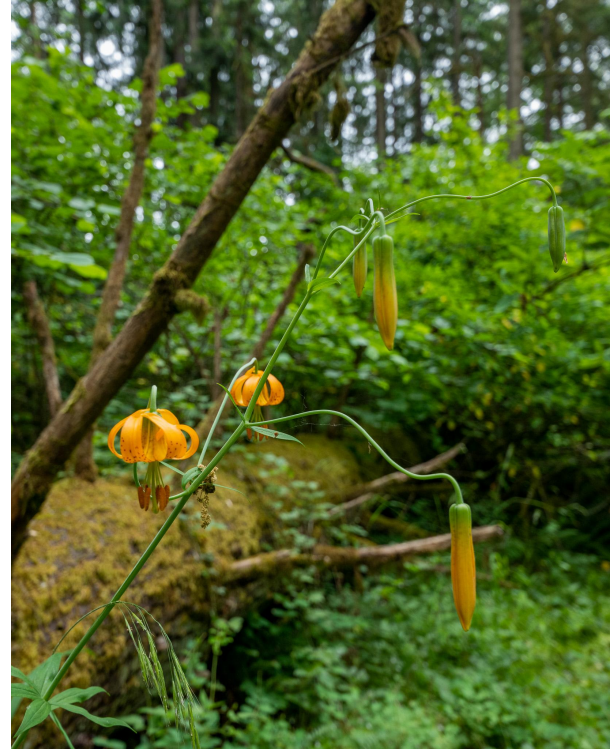


Photo: Lucas Green

Next Steps

1. City Council approval to set aside land and designate it as a reserve
2. Continue discussions with Port re: incorporating their property into reserve
3. Agree name of reserve in conjunction with Port and other stakeholders - formally designate at future point
4. Regular updates from Parks & Trails Commission to City Council on project - working through aspects such as trail design, rest & recreation areas, signage etc.

Appendix: Draft Stakeholder List

This is a preliminary list of potential stakeholders:

- Port of Columbia County
- SOLV
- Coast Conservation Association
- Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
- Osprey
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
- Columbia County Museum Association
- Tribal groups
- Educators
- Community members
- Etc.