

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose.

This document is the watershed assessment for the Jackson Creek watershed, a subbasin in the Bear Creek watershed, in the Rogue River Basin of Oregon. It is prepared on behalf of and under the direction of the Jackson Creek Stakeholders Advisory Committee, which is a voluntary, non-regulatory group citizen-directed group that unites diverse interests to improve watershed health in the Jackson Creek watershed. The assessment describes the *existing conditions* within the watershed, to provide information to local stakeholders and public agencies regarding watershed restoration needs and potential actions. The assessment will be followed by an Action Plan that will be based on the Committee's goals and vision, and federal and state regulatory mandates. It takes a watershed-wide approach and strives to integrate existing plans and efforts, and coordinate with other local and regional resource management entities. Both plans are working documents with an initial 5-year focus, that will be updated and reevaluated as information becomes available.

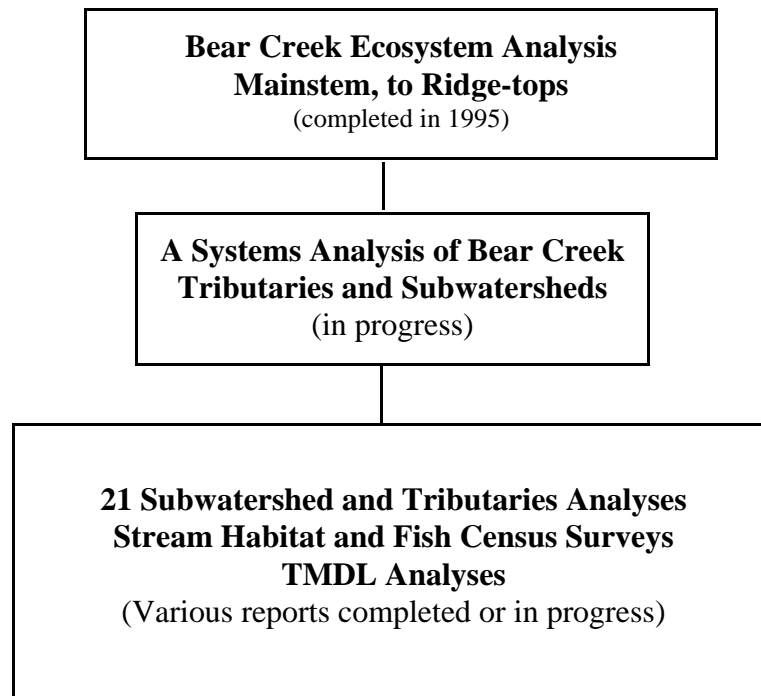
1.2. Context of this Study.

There have been multiple research and data collection efforts underway in the Bear Creek basin over the past decade, of which this watershed assessment is a key component. Multiple agencies have conducted analytic efforts that have been loosely coordinated, but still productive in results. A strategy has emerged from these efforts that unifies diverse activities that extend across agencies, citizen advisory groups, local governments, regulatory agencies, and scientific interests.

The unified strategy began to take shape in 1994 when water resources staff at the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) completed the first general Bear Creek Watershed Assessment and Action Plan. The plan employed an ecosystems approach, which essentially was a ridge-top to ridge-top presentation addressing ecosystem zones, historical trends and topographic levels of analysis. Of necessity, the first assessment focused on the Bear Creek mainstem and larger basin landscape, with only minimal attention given to the 21 subwatersheds within the basin.

Following this ecosystem presentation, several state and federal agencies have conducted additional watershed analyses and water quality data collection efforts. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and the RVCOG collected water quality data at multiple points on Bear Creek and tributaries. The United States Forest Service completed watershed analyses on Neil Creek and Wagner Creek, and initiated an analysis on Ashland Creek. The Bureau of Land Management is conducting subwatershed analyses encompassing tributaries west of Bear Creek.

The results of these activities shows a need for a study and action plan that links the multiple subwatershed plans into a systems presentation that show the relationships between the tributaries and subwatersheds combined, and to the basin level ecosystem presentation in the 1994 Bear Creek Watershed plan. Graphically, the strategy can be presented as below:



The Jackson Creek Watershed Assessment is a key component of the above strategy, and will fill a large gap in information. It also will lead to watershed restoration actions that will have effects far beyond the watershed, affecting water quality and fisheries in the larger Bear Creek basin and greater Rogue River basin coastal region.

Technical data and summaries of technical information supporting this document will be provided as the Technical Supplement to the assessment. Please contact the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Water Resources Department for further information.

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