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Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek Watershed Analysis

JT Hawksworth, Principal Author

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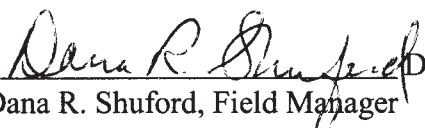
Attached is a copy of the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek Watershed Analysis prepared through a partnership between Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, Tualatin River Watershed Council, and the Bureau of Land Management. A grant from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board contributed funding that made this watershed analysis possible. The acknowledgments page demonstrates the breadth of cooperation and valuable assistance received during this effort.

This watershed analysis is a combination of current inventory data provided by a BLM interdisciplinary team and information compiled by the principal author John Hawksworth, of Washington County SWCD. The purpose of this watershed analysis is to provide reference information used in project selection, priority, and planning. The information in this document is considered the most current data available.

Watershed analysis is a continuing process. This document represents the first iteration of the analysis; updates in the future are expected as additional information is obtained. Additional information and comments are encouraged and will be welcomed at any time on this watershed analysis. The information will be retained with the analysis, used accordingly and eventually evaluated and incorporated into future iterations.

If you have any questions, please contact Katrina Symons at the above address or phone 503-815-1100.

Sincerely,

 Date: 3-23-01
Dana R. Shuford, Field Manager
Tillamook Resource Area



Rediscover Your Public Lands

Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek Watershed Analysis

Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District

J.T. Hawksworth, Principal Author



February 2001

Introduction

The concept of watershed analysis is built on the premise that management and planning efforts are best addressed from the watershed perspective. Better decisions are made, and better actions taken, when watershed processes and other management activities within a watershed are taken into consideration. Issues related to erosion, hydrologic change, water quality, and species are not limited to a specific site. Changes to watershed processes at one site often have effects that extend downstream and elsewhere in the watershed. By addressing these issues at the watershed level, we take the interconnected nature of watershed processes into account. We are thereby enabled to synthesize approaches to planning and management that preserve ecosystem functions. Where these functions have been diminished from reference conditions, we are able to plan activities to restore these functions.

In keeping with the principle of ecosystem analysis at the watershed scale, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has formed a partnership agreement with the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to prepare the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek Watershed Analysis. The BLM manages lands that are mostly in mountainous, forested portions of the watershed. The BLM is charged with several management duties by the people of the United States. As part of its stewardship role, the BLM is mandated to maintain ecosystem functions and processes. This includes maintenance of wildlife habitat. As part of its mission, the SWCD works with farmers to conserve the soil resources of the valley, and to protect water quality within the watershed. The Washington County SWCD is mostly active within lower portions of the watershed. Together these agencies cover many of the interests within the watershed. This watershed analysis report is designed to address questions of interest to these agencies. However, in recognition that diverse interests exist in the watershed that are not covered by these agencies, this watershed analysis is also designed to be consistent with the interests of the Tualatin River Watershed Council, as expressed by the Tualatin River Basin Action Plan. Within the time and financial limitations of this report, it has done so.

The framework of this watershed analysis is built according to the requirements of *Ecosystem analysis at the watershed scale: a federal guide for watershed analysis* (REO 1995). This watershed analysis methodology is built up of six complementary parts. The first chapter is a watershed **characterization**, defining the characteristics that distinguish the watershed. The background laid out in this chapter leads to a set of **core topics and key questions** that have to do with watershed processes and their specific interactions with management activities. In response to these questions, the third and fourth chapter are constructed. The third chapter describes the **current conditions** within the watershed, while the fourth chapter reconstructs watershed processes and conditions under **reference conditions** (usually prior to European settlement). Based on the information provided in these chapters, we are able to synthesize the changes in watershed process that have been caused by various management activities. The results of this **synthesis** are included in the fifth chapter. Based on this synthesis, **recommendations** for current management and restoration are formulated.

Within the general framework of the federal methodology, there were opportunities to incorporate many techniques of the 1999 Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) methodology. We believe that combination of the federal approach with techniques endorsed by the State of Oregon has expanded the usefulness of this analysis. Thus, this report is able to address BLM directives (as summarized by the Northwest Forest Plan) while assisting with the watershed preservation and restoration efforts of the SWCD, TRWC and other interested parties.

As a level one analysis using the federal methodology, this watershed analysis report relies heavily upon data collected by other agencies and private sources. This watershed analysis report has relied extensively upon GIS analysis of publicly available data contained in the Tualatin River Watershed Information System (Ecotrust 1998). These data have facilitated the analysis from these reports. However, they are not intended to replace field-based data for site-specific decisions. Although the data were analyzed for obvious flaws, no intensive review was performed on any data used in this report. There may be flaws in the source data and/or analysis performed in this report. This report should be used for general guidelines to point the direction to more site-specific studies.

The production of this watershed analysis required many analytic steps that are not contained within the pages of the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed analysis report. Supplementary information is available on the Washington County SWCD web site (www.swcd.net). This includes the results of individual OWEB modules, as well as other technical appendices. Requests for further information can also be submitted to this site. In the interest of maintaining an accurate and current information base, those who access this site are encouraged to

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Acknowledgements

Successful completion of the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed analysis report required the contribution of experts in many disciplines. The following primary team members contributed technical assistance, provided editorial review, and in many cases authored paragraphs specific to their fields of expertise.

Mike Allen, BLM, Project coordinator
Steve Bahe, BLM, Wildlife
Jim Grimes, ODFW, Fisheries
Bob McDonald, BLM, GIS
Dean Moberg, NRCS, Soils and agriculture
Tom Nygren, TRWC, Forestry (small woodlands)
Mark Pierce, BLM, Forestry
James P. Rounds, BLM, Oregon State Office Mapping Sciences Section
Cindy Weston, BLM, Fisheries
Greg White, TRWC, Fisheries

People outside the primary team also made substantial contributions to the watershed analysis. Through his efforts, John McDonald, SWCD, facilitated the partnership between BLM and the SWCD that made this cooperative watershed analysis possible. Finally, experts from many agencies provided information useful to the preparation of this report. Many thanks to all of these people for their assistance with the preparation of this watershed analysis report.

Finally, we express our appreciation to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the U.S.D.I Bureau of Land Management, which provided funding to produce this watershed analysis.

John Hawksworth

December 19, 2000

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Characterization	1
1.1 Physical	1
1.1.1 Size and setting	1
1.1.1.1 Topography	1
1.1.1.2 Ecoregions	5
1.1.1.3 Geomorphology	5
1.1.1.4 Erosion	8
1.1.1.5 Climate and Precipitation	8
1.1.1.6 Hydrology	8
1.1.1.7 Stream Channel	10
1.1.1.8 Water Quality	10
1.1.1.9 Soils	10
1.2 Biological	10
1.2.1 Vegetation characteristics	10
1.2.2 Species and Habitat	11
1.2.2.1 Wildlife species	11
1.2.2.1.1 Aquatic species	11
1.2.2.1.2 Economically important and ecologically sensitive species	11
1.2.2.1.3 Introduced species	12
1.2.2.2 Habitat	12
1.2.2.2.1 Aquatic Habitat	12
1.2.2.2.2 Wildlife Habitat (terrestrial)	12
1.2.2.2.3 Special Habitats	13
1.3 Social	13
1.3.1 Population	13
1.3.2 Ownership	13
1.3.3 Land Use Allocations	16
1.3.3.1 BLM Allocations	16
1.3.3.1.1 Adaptive Management Area	16
1.3.3.1.2 General Forest Management Allocations	16
1.3.3.1.3 Riparian Reserve	16
1.3.3.1.4 The 15 percent rule	16
1.3.3.2 Private Zoning	16
1.3.4 Human Uses	17
1.3.4.1 Forestry	17
1.3.4.2 Agriculture	17

1.3.4.3 Urban and rural residential	17
1.3.4.4 Recreation	17
Chapter 2: Core Topics and Key Questions	19
2.1 Aquatic	19
2.1.1 Erosion issues	19
2.1.2 Hydrology and water quantity issues	19
2.1.3 Stream channel issues	20
2.1.4 Water quality issues	20
2.1.5 Aquatic species and habitat issues	20
2.2 Terrestrial	21
2.2.1 Vegetation issues	21
2.2.2 Wildlife species and habitat issues	22
2.2.3 Forest resources issues [BLM only]	22
2.3 Social	23
2.3.1 Issues related to human uses	23
2.3.2 Road-related issues	23
Chapter 3: Current Conditions	25
3.1 Aquatic	25
3.1.1 Erosion processes	25
3.1.1.1 Overview of erosion and sedimentation processes	25
3.1.1.2 Mass wasting	25
3.1.1.3 Surface and streambank erosion	27
3.1.1.4 Prohibited conditions	28
3.1.2 Hydrology and water quantity	28
3.1.2.1 Hydrologic characteristics	28
3.1.2.2 Water quantity and water rights	29
3.1.2.3 Flooding	37
3.1.2.4 Groundwater	37
3.1.2.5 Human impacts on hydrology	37
3.1.2.6 Relative importance of human management factors to hydrologic change. . .	39
3.1.3 Stream channel	39
3.1.3.1 Stream morphology and sediment transport processes	39
3.1.3.2 Effects of human influences upon stream morphology	43
3.1.4 Water quality	44
3.1.4.1 Beneficial uses	44
3.1.4.2 General indicators of water quality	44
3.1.4.3 Macroinvertebrate sampling in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed . .	45
3.1.4.4 Streams on the 303(d) list	46

3.1.4.5 Parameters of concern	46
3.1.4.5.1 Bacteria	46
3.1.4.5.2 Dissolved oxygen	46
3.1.4.5.3 Phosphorus	50
3.1.4.5.4 Stream temperature	50
3.1.4.5.5 Other parameters of concern	51
3.1.4.6 Water quality trends	51
3.1.5 Aquatic species and habitat	51
3.1.5.1 Cold-water fish	51
3.1.5.1.1 Distribution and life history	51
3.1.5.1.2 Potential hazards	54
3.1.5.1.3 Planting of hatchery salmonids	54
3.1.5.1.4 Prospects for salmonid populations	54
3.1.5.1.5 Distribution of habitat	54
3.1.5.1.6 Migration barriers	55
3.1.5.2 Warm-water fisheries	55
3.1.5.3 Amphibians	55
3.1.5.4 Reptiles	56
3.1.5.5 Other riparian and wetland-dependent species	56
3.2 Terrestrial	57
3.2.1 Vegetation	57
3.2.1.1 Array and landscape pattern of vegetation	57
3.2.1.1.1 Vegetation in the Tualatin Plain and lower portions of the foothills	57
3.2.1.1.2 Vegetation in the Tualatin and Chehalem Mountains	57
3.2.1.2 Exotic/Noxious Plants	61
3.2.2 Terrestrial species and habitat	61
3.2.2.1 Abundance and habitat of terrestrial species	61
3.2.2.1.1 Economically important species	61
3.2.2.1.2 Special status and special attention species	61
3.2.2.1.3 Exotic pest species	66
3.2.2.2 Effect of ownership upon habitat management opportunities	66
3.2.2.3 Current distribution and density of snags and down wood	66
3.2.3 Forest resources	67
3.2.3.1 Forest productivity, diseases, and other pathogens	67
3.3 Social	67
3.3.1 Human uses	67
3.3.1.1 Economic Uses	67
3.3.1.1.1 Urban/Rural residential	67

3.3.1.1.2 Agriculture	67
3.3.1.1.3 Forestry	68
3.3.1.1.4 Mining	68
3.3.1.1.5 Conflicts between BLM and the public	69
3.3.1.2 Recreational opportunities	69
3.3.1.3 Cultural resources	69
3.3.2 Roads	70
3.3.2.1 Road density	70
3.3.2.2 Stream crossings	70
3.3.2.3 Legacy roads	70
3.3.2.4 Condition of roads on BLM lands	70
3.3.2.5 Access to BLM lands	70
Chapter IV: Reference Conditions	73
4.1 Introduction	73
4.2 Erosion	73
4.3 Hydrology and water quantity	74
4.3.1 Foothills	74
4.3.2 Tualatin Plain	74
4.3.2.1 Extent of wetlands in the early Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	74
4.4 Stream Channel	75
4.5 Water Quality	75
4.6 Aquatic Species and Habitat	76
4.6.1 Fish	76
4.6.2 Wetland and riparian dependent species	77
4.7 Vegetation	77
4.7.1 General regional characteristics	77
4.7.2 Vegetational characteristics of the foothills	78
4.7.3 Vegetational characteristics of the valleys	78
4.7.4 Wetland vegetation	79
4.7.5 Sensitive plant species	79
4.7.6 Terrestrial species and habitat	79
4.8 Human	80
4.8.1 Historical changes in landscape pattern	80
4.8.1.1 Human uses prior to European settlement	80
4.8.1.2 European settlement and agricultural conversion	80
4.8.1.3 Timber operations	83
4.8.1.4 Stream cleaning and wetland conversion	83
4.8.1.5 Urbanization	84

4.8.1.6 Roads	84
Chapter 5: Synthesis	85
5.1 Aquatic	85
5.1.1 Erosion issues	85
5.1.1.1 Changes in erosion processes following settlement	85
5.1.1.2 Mass wasting	85
5.1.1.3 Surface and bank erosion	86
5.1.1.4 Trends in erosion management on rural lands	87
5.1.2 Hydrology and water quantity issues	87
5.1.2.1 Management effects on hydrology	87
5.1.2.2 Water rights allocations	89
5.1.3 Stream channel issues	89
5.1.3.1 Management effects upon stream morphology	89
5.1.4 Water quality issues	90
5.1.4.1 Management effects on water quality	90
5.1.4.2 Streams on the Oregon 303(d) water quality limited list	90
5.1.4.3 Factors leading to high aquatic phosphorus levels	90
5.1.4.4 Temperature	90
5.1.4.5 Bacteria	92
5.1.4.6 Dissolved Oxygen	92
5.1.4.7 Biological communities	93
5.1.4.8 Effects of water quality on recreation	93
5.1.4.9 Prohibited conditions	93
5.1.5 Aquatic species and habitat issues	93
5.1.5.1 Fisheries	93
5.1.5.2 Wetlands: Management impacts	94
5.1.5.3 Riparian habitat: Management impacts	95
5.1.5.4 Impacts of wetland and riparian changes upon species	95
5.2 Terrestrial	95
5.2.1 Vegetation issues	95
5.2.1.1 Post-settlement effects on landscape characteristics	95
5.2.1.2 Potential vegetation management strategies	95
5.2.1.3 Noxious and exotic plants	96
5.2.1.3.1 Potential strategies for control of noxious and exotic plants	96
5.2.1.4 [BLM only] Potential management strategies within the Riparian Reserves	96
5.2.2 Species and habitat issues	96
5.2.2.1 Factors affecting the distribution of sensitive species	96
5.2.3 Forest resources issues [BLM-specific]	97

5.2.3.1 Management of snags and down wood	97
5.2.3.2 Laminated root rot	98
5.2.3.3 Management of hardwood stands	98
5.3 Social	99
5.3.1 Issues related to human uses	99
5.3.1.1 Agriculture	99
5.3.1.2 Timber	99
5.3.1.3 Rural residential and urban uses	99
5.3.1.4 Rural interface	99
5.3.1.5 Recreation	100
5.3.2 Cultural resources	100
5.3.3 Road-related issues	100
5.4 Data Gaps	101
Chapter 6: Recommendations	103
6.1 General recommendations	105
6.1.1 Aquatic	105
6.1.1.1 Erosion issues	105
6.1.1.2 Hydrology and water quantity issues	107
6.1.1.3 Stream channel issues	108
6.1.1.4 Water quality issues	108
6.1.1.5 Aquatic species and habitat issues	111
6.1.2 Terrestrial	112
6.1.2.1 Vegetation issues	112
6.1.2.2 Terrestrial species and habitat issues	113
6.1.3 Social	114
6.1.3.1 Issues related to human uses	114
6.1.3.1.1 Recreation	114
6.1.3.1.2 Road-related issues	114
6.2 Recommendations on BLM lands	115
6.2.1 Aquatic	117
6.2.1.1 Erosion and hydrology issues	117
6.2.1.2 Stream channel issues	117
6.2.1.3 Water quality issues	118
6.2.1.4 Aquatic species and habitat issues	118

6.2.2 Terrestrial	119
6.2.2.1 Vegetation issues	119
6.2.2.2 Species and habitat issues	119
6.2.2.3 Forest resources issues	120
6.2.3 Social	121
6.2.3.1 Issues related to human uses	121
Bibliography	123
Appendix 1 AQUATIC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	129
Endnotes	131

List of Tables

Table	Description	Page
1-1	Major drainages of the Middle Tualatin-RockCreek watershed	1
1-2	Characteristics of EPA Level IV ecoregions in the Middle Tualatin-Rock 5 Creek watershed	
3-1	Subwatersheds with a high incidence of roads on steep slopes and/or rural roads near streams	27
3-2	Stream flow gages in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek Watershed . . .	29
3-3	Water availability summary for sites in or near the Middle	31
3-4	Consumptive use summary for sites in or near the Rock Creek-Middle Tualatin Watershed	32
3-5	Total surface water rights by subwatershed.	34
3-6	Total surface water rights by type of use	35
3-7	Minimum perennial streamflows (cfs) as regulated by instream water rights 36 in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	
3-8	Stream drainage characteristics of subwatersheds of the Middle	41
3-9	OWEB channel types in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed .	42
3-10	USA tributary water quality monitoring sites in the Middle	45
3-11	Streams on the 1998 ODEQ 303(d) list	48
3-12	Percent of time water quality was exceeded at monitoring stations in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed, 1998	49
3-13	Anadromous and resident fish known to inhabit the Middle Tualatin-Rock 53 Creek watershed	
3-14	Size classes of forest stands within the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	59
3-15	Age classes of forest on BLM lands	59
3-16	List of Oregon Natural Heritage Program listed species that may be found 62 within the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	
3-17	Characteristics of NWI wetlands in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	63

3-18	Current quarries in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	68
3-19	Historical quarries in the Middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	69
4-1	Timeline of events in the middle Tualatin-Rock Creek watershed	81
	since the 1830s	
6-1	Priority sites for preservation, restoration, and monitoring activities .	104
6-2	List of potential projects on BLM land	115