

# DORRIS RANCH MANAGEMENT PLAN

Fall 2005



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Fall 2005



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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>PLAN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT STATEMENT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
Programs	
Rentals	
Filbert Farming	
Management	
<b>ISSUE STATEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
Building Maintenance and Preservation	
Orchard Management	
Natural Resource Management	
Financial	
Support Facilities	
Trails	
Programming	
Historic Preservation	
Public Awareness	
Park Management, General	
<b>GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
Facilities and Infrastructure	
Orchard Management	
Natural Resource Management	
Trails	
Recreation Programs and Activities	
Historic Preservation	
Public Awareness	
Park Management, General	
Funding	
<b>RESOURCE INVENTORY</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: SITE MAP</b>	
<b>APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY</b>	

## BACKGROUND

Dorris Ranch Living History Farm is located at the confluence of the Middle and Coast Forks of the Willamette River, less than one mile south of downtown Springfield. Before Willamalane acquired the first one hundred and fifty acres of the park in 1972, the site had been farmed over the course of eighty-one years by George Dorris and his nephew Ben Dorris. Willamalane acquired the last 5 acre parcel in 2000, and today the Dorris Ranch Living History Farm comprises 258 acres of fertile agricultural land, lush riparian vegetation, dense conifer and deciduous woodlands, and open meadow. Last year alone there were over 30,000 visits to Dorris Ranch.

The Dorris Ranch Living History Farm is an invaluable resource that holds tremendous potential for the enjoyment of present and future generations. However, careful planning for its management and development is imperative. The existing *Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan* and *Facility Development Plan* are 26- and 19-years old, respectively. Willamalane's 2004 *Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan* recommends that we "develop and manage Dorris Ranch as a unique, historic natural area and recreational resource." (Strategy A63) It also calls for completion of an updated master plan for the Dorris Ranch Living History Farm, and staff is planning to do so within the next 3-5 years. The master plan would take a long-term look at Dorris Ranch, and determine how it should be developed and managed over the next 20 years.

In the meantime, conflicts between managing the park for agricultural (filbert crop) income, recreation, historical preservation, wildlife habitat, and open space need to be addressed. To assist with minimizing these conflicts in the short term, and assist with developing a base of information for the master plan, the District has developed an interim Management Plan for Dorris Ranch. The purpose of the Dorris Ranch Management Plan is to assist with minimizing conflicts at Dorris Ranch over the next 3-5 years.

A Dorris Ranch Planning Team was established to develop the Management Plan, and began meeting in January 2005. The team includes Bob Keefer, Greg Hyde, Jason Genck, Pam Caples, Chris Pryor, Joel Miller, Damon Crume, Lori Warner, Johanna Henry, Laura Carter, Denise Stiltner, and Rebecca Gershow. To date, team-leader responsibilities have been held by Bob, Greg, and are currently held by Rebecca.

The following process was used to develop the Management Plan and to identify issues, strategies, and actions that will need to be addressed over the next three to five years:

- I. Develop a knowledge base about Dorris Ranch:
  - a. Review planning documents;
  - b. Develop and review historical summary;
  - c. Staff and Board Tour of Dorris Ranch;
  - d. Compile and review filbert harvest budget history and revenue;
  - e. Compile and review current management practices for the filbert orchard;
  - f. Identify and review current maintenance and management practices, including budget, for the rest of the Ranch;
  - g. Compile and review recreational programming activities;

- h. Develop and review resource inventory; and
  - i. Develop stakeholder list.
- 2. Develop Management Statement, Operating Assumptions, Issue Statements and Goals:
  - a. Facilitate meetings with the Dorris Ranch Planning Team to:
    - i. Draft a management statement; and
    - ii. Identify and agree upon basic operating assumptions.
  - b. Review draft management statement and operating assumptions with the Board and revise as necessary.
  - c. Facilitate meetings with the Dorris Ranch Planning Team to:
    - i. Brainstorm, refine, summarize and prioritize issues; and
    - ii. Develop summary issue statements and goals.
  - d. Facilitate a meeting with stakeholders to verify, revise, and/or refine issues that need to be addressed.
  - e. Revise goals and issue statements as necessary.
- 3. Develop Strategies and Actions:
  - a. Facilitate meetings with the Dorris Ranch Planning Team to develop strategies and actions to address the issues developed above.
  - b. Prioritize strategies and actions.
  - c. Review findings with stakeholders and revise as necessary.
- 4. Draft Dorris Ranch Management Plan incorporating above elements
  - a. Review Draft Plan with Board and revise as necessary.
  - b. Finalize management plan.

## **PLAN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The Dorris Ranch Management Plan is an administratively adopted, internal operations plan that will assist the District in planning for the future. The Willamalane Board of Directors has provided direction and oversight in its development. It is not subject to review or adoption by any other agency or elective body.

Implementation of specific strategies or actions in the plan (e.g., construction of a major facility such as the Middle Fork Trail) would require submittal of development applications to the City of Springfield in accordance with the Springfield Development Code. Permits from additional public agencies may be required for some development, as well.

Generally, however, the Dorris Ranch Management Plan will require only implementation through Willamalane's ongoing operations as stewards of the park, providing preservation and enhancement of Dorris Ranch for its various functions and uses.

## **MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

*Dorris Ranch Living History Farm will be managed to provide exceptional outdoor recreation and education opportunities while protecting its natural, historical, and agricultural resources.*

## **OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS**

This section identifies the District's short-term (1-5 years) operating assumptions about Dorris Ranch, and defines the parameters for developing the Dorris Ranch Management Plan.

### **Programs**

- Willamalane will continue to offer children's programs, which will continue to grow as demand increases.
- Willamalane will continue to look for opportunities to grow programs and events.
- Willamalane will continue adult programming, trail talks, tours, etc..
- Willamalane will continue to offer Living History Programs, which will continue to grow as demand increases.
- Willamalane will continue to charge and collect recreation fees.
- Willamalane will continue to apply for operating grants to finance program operations.

### **Rentals**

- Willamalane will continue to rent the Dorris House as a caretaker residence until we have the money to renovate it for program use.
- Willamalane will continue to rent the upstairs of the Tomseth House as a caretaker residence.
- Willamalane will continue to rent the Briggs House until we have money to renovate it for program use.
- Willamalane will continue to have revenue-generating event rentals (at the Tomseth House, Barn, and on the grounds).
- Willamalane will continue to see some growth in revenue from event rentals.

### **Filbert Farming**

- Filbert farming will continue to be self-supporting.
- Willamalane will continue to operate the filbert orchards as "working" filbert orchards with accommodations to recreation uses.
- Willamalane will continue to protect the orchards from the Eastern Filbert Blight.
- Willamalane will not spray the orchards near the Briggs House and the Barn for Eastern Filbert Blight.

### **Management**

- The General Fund will continue to subsidize Dorris Ranch recreation programs and park maintenance at least at the current level, with some additional revenue for inflation, and for protecting the orchards from the Eastern Filbert Blight (per District's Five-Year Budget Projections).

- Due to efforts to combat Eastern Filbert Blight, less revenue will be available from the filbert harvest for other purposes.
- Willamalane will continue to utilize existing resources to leverage other resources and enhance Ranch facilities and operations.
- Willamalane will complete the Master Plan update within 3-5 years.
- Willamalane will address ADA accessibility issues, as funding allows.
- Willamalane will continue to provide essential maintenance on buildings and facilities.
- Willamalane will continue to preserve historical and natural resources.

## **ISSUE STATEMENTS**

This section identifies the current issues at Dorris Ranch, organized by category. The identification of issues helped to develop the Goals, Strategies and Actions in the next section.

### **Building Maintenance and Preservation**

- The buildings at Dorris Ranch are in need of repair, renovation and/or rehabilitation.
- There is no current, comprehensive assessment (including cost estimates and schedule) of short- and long-term building rehabilitation and maintenance needs.
- There is no regular schedule for facility maintenance and inspections.
- In some cases, lack of a clear and consistent consensus regarding future programmatic uses and/or historic preservation and interpretation goals make it hard to decide what building improvements should be implemented.

### **Orchard Management**

- Increased public access to Dorris Ranch, in conjunction with intensive orchard horticultural practices, increases the District's potential liability.
- Unpredictable orchard closures, which are an inherent part of orchard horticultural practices, limit recreational programming and public use of Dorris Ranch.
- The Eastern Filbert Blight has created the need for more chemical- and time-intensive horticultural practices, which increases farming costs and potential conflicts at the Ranch.
- As the Eastern Filbert Blight progresses, we will need to reevaluate what horticultural practices to continue undertaking in order to protect the orchards from the blight, while minimizing impacts to the Ranch (such as fiscal, operational, public, programmatic).

### **Natural Resource Management**

- There is only 1% of Oak Savanna habitat left in the Willamette Valley. Currently, we are doing little to preserve this important natural resource at Dorris Ranch.
- An assessment of Dorris Ranch's regionally significant riparian and upland natural resources, and potential threats to them, has not been completed.
- There are currently no clear management objectives or measures in place to protect the natural resources at Dorris Ranch.

## **Financial**

- There is inadequate funding for additional programming, development, and/or maintenance at Dorris Ranch; current funding consists of limited general fund dollars, grants, sponsorships, and self-funding (i.e., nut revenue and recreation activity fees).

## **Support Facilities**

- Dorris Ranch lacks support facilities to adequately meet the needs and desires of current and future visitors to the ranch.
- The District has water rights to divert water from the Willamette River through the channel that formerly supplied water to the historic swimming pool. The inlet is blocked and channel is in disrepair.
- Various support facilities and programs are not accessible to all visitors due to the Ranch not meeting current ADA guidelines.

## **Trails**

- Trails are not routinely maintained to a standard consistent with the amount of use they are receiving.
- Currently, the Oak Woodland trail is the only trail at Dorris Ranch that can be used by the public when the orchards are closed for spraying. However, it is not finished and therefore not signed or included in any of the Ranch maps or brochures, so the public has difficulty finding it. Also, it is inaccessible for persons with disabilities, it is relatively short, and it ends in the East Meadow area, rather than looping back to the park entrance.
- The specific route of the Middle Fork Trail will need to be decided and designed sensitively to not negatively impact current Ranch operations and/or natural habitats.
- New trails will likely bring new visitors to Dorris Ranch (especially the Middle Fork Trail). Therefore, as new trails are developed, additional support facilities will be needed to support these new visitors (such as parking, trailhead and signage improvements). In addition, construction and use of new trails present potential conflicts that will need to be addressed.

## **Programming**

- Current staffing and funding levels are not adequate to meet current demand for recreation programs.
- The District is limited in hiring professional staff for programming needs due to District and Union personnel policies and fiscal constraints.
- Use of the park by recreational programs and activities is limited by lack of adequate facilities and orchard management practices.

## **Historic Preservation**

- There is a lack of awareness, by staff and the public, about what it means that Dorris Ranch is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- There is a lack of process for ensuring that we are managing the 109-acres of the Ranch (including buildings) that are included in the National Register of Historic Places in a manner consistent with Springfield Development Code Article 30 -- Historic Overlay District regulations.



- If we want to grow other historic crops that were once grown at the Ranch, such as asparagus or hops, we need to take into consideration multiple issues, such as location, upkeep, suitability, pesticide requirements, recreation impacts, and site impacts.

### **Public Awareness**

- There is a lack of adequate signage within in the Ranch (park id sign, trail signage, interpretation, etc.), as well as signage directing people to the Ranch.
- There is a lack of public awareness that Dorris Ranch is a Willamalane park.
- There is a lack of emphasis on educating park visitors about the Ranch's historic significance.
- There is a lack of a meaningful arrival experience for park visitors (i.e., starting point or entrance area).
- There is a lack of personal interaction with park patrons.
- There is a lack of communicating timely, accurate information regarding orchard operations to the public.
- There is a lack of useful demographic information on park users.

### **Park Management, General**

- The private residence access road through the ranch (for the Alfred Allen residence) creates management, traffic, development, and safety issues for the ranch. To some degree, so do the rental residences, especially the Briggs House at the park entrance.
- The City of Springfield provides fire protection for structures and the East Lane Fire Protection District (Oregon Department of Forestry) provides wildland fire protection. However, due to lack of on site water supply, high fuel loads, and limited access, fire protection is limited.
- Park maintenance levels have not kept pace with the increased use of the Ranch.
- The Ranch is susceptible to trespass, vandalism and safety issues.

## **GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

Listed below are strategies and actions for the management of Dorris Ranch over the next 3-5 years. They are organized by category, and within each category is an overarching goal (*in italics*). **Bold text** indicates first priority strategies and actions to be begun within 1-3 years.

### **I. Facilities and Infrastructure**

*Goal: Repair and rehabilitate structures and facilities in order to preserve them for future use and ensure ADA accessibility. Provide adequate support facilities to meet the needs of current and future visitors.*

- I.1. Develop and implement a Facility Needs Assessment of repair, renovation and/or rehabilitation needs, assuming current uses of facilities for the next 3-5 years.**

- 1.1.1. **Contract with someone with knowledge of historic preservation principles to assist with the needs assessment.**
  - 1.1.2. **Include cost estimates, phasing schedule and recommendations identified in the Willamalane ADA Transition Plan in the Facility Needs Assessment.**
- 1.2. **Develop a regular schedule of facility maintenance and inspections. To be developed by Park Services Division in coordination with the Dorris Operations Team.**
- 1.3. **Provide basic support facilities to adequately meet the needs and desires of current and future (next 3-5 years) visitors to the Ranch.**
  - 1.3.1. **When designing the Middle Fork Trail, plan support facilities to meet the needs of trail users as well as other park users, such as parking and restrooms.**
  - 1.3.2. **Evaluate the operation and capacity of the Clivus Multrum vault toilet, which is undersized and subject to ground water infiltration and over-flowing.**
    - 1.3.2.1 **Provide adequate restrooms for Dorris Ranch visitors.**
- 1.4. **Implement recommendations in the Willamalane ADA Transition Plan.**
  - 1.4.1. **Make accessibility improvements to facilities and infrastructure not currently ADA accessible; ensure future facilities meet ADA guidelines.**
- 1.5. **In conjunction with the Dorris Ranch Master Plan, develop clear and consistent goals for future programmatic uses and historic preservation of buildings and structures at Dorris Ranch in order to identify and prioritize needed improvements before making significant changes to structures (see 8.4).**

## **2. Orchard Management**

*Goal: Continue to manage the orchard as a commercial crop, and take measures to protect it from the Eastern Filbert Blight. Minimize conflicts between orchard management, recreational programming, and public use.*

- 2.1 **Implement horticultural practices necessary to protect the orchards from the Eastern Filbert Blight.**
  - 2.1.1 **Continue to consult with OSU Extension Service and other experts, as needed.**
  - 2.1.2 **Continue to contract with a professional orchardist.**
    - 2.1.2.1 **Solicit proposals for a professional orchardist and renegotiate the orchard management contract, as needed.**
  - 2.1.3 **Continue to monitor and prune the orchards near the Briggs House and Barn instead of spraying for the Eastern Filbert Blight-- due to high intensity recreational use and low nut production--until experts advise us otherwise.**

- 2.2 Minimize problems related to operating a working orchard in a public park.**
  - 2.2.1 Continue to fine-tune the system for timely and clear communication between maintenance staff, programming staff and orchardist.**
  - 2.2.2 Continue to fine tune information/notification system for keeping park users informed of pesticide applications and orchard closures.**
  - 2.2.3 Continue to fine-tune procedures to ensure that orchards are secure/closed when needed.**
  - 2.2.4 Continue to regularly review, and update as necessary, our Hazard Communication Plan to ensure optimal safety for employees and visitors.**
  - 2.2.5 Request OSHA audit the District's practices at the Ranch every two years.**
  - 2.2.6 Research alternative methods for risk reduction, such as best management practices, integrated pest management options, and development of additional facilities away from the orchards.**
- 2.3 If the Eastern Filbert Blight progresses, reevaluate what horticultural practices to continue undertaking.**
  - 2.3.1 Develop a feasibility analysis before implementing any significant changes to the commercial filbert orchard, including removing filberts and replanting with blight-resistant trees, or growing other historic crops at the Ranch, such as asparagus or hops.**

### **3. Natural Resource Management**

*Goal: Actively manage the Ranch's natural resources, including the preservation of riparian and upland resources, and the removal of invasive species.*

- 3.1 Develop and implement a natural resources management plan for Dorris Ranch that will identify methods to control invasive species, and protect the remaining Oak Savanna, riparian and other unique and/or high value plant communities.**
  - 3.1.1 Develop an assessment of Dorris Ranch's natural resources in order to collect baseline data.**
- 3.2 Manage the grassland area for the dual benefits of improving habitat and aiding in fire prevention.**
  - 3.2.1 Investigate mowing/lessening fuel loads in identified areas annually.**
- 3.3 Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of repairing/restoring the inlet in order to divert water from the Willamette River by reestablishing the historic channel.**
  - 3.3.1 Investigate grant funds to help fund such a study and subsequent implementation.**

- 3.4 Coordinate with other local, state and federal agencies on natural resource planning and funding opportunities, as appropriate.

#### **4. Trails**

*Goal: Develop a routine maintenance schedule, and improve the trail system at Dorris Ranch.*

- 4.1 Develop a regular schedule and protocol for trail maintenance, so trails are maintained at levels consistent with the amount of use they are receiving.**
  - 4.1.1 Update park maintenance service levels for Dorris Ranch and incorporate specific practices for trail maintenance.**
- 4.2 Improve the usability and enjoyment of the trail system at Dorris Ranch**
  - 4.2.1 Remove poison oak, blackberries, and other noxious plants alongside trails.**
  - 4.2.2 Replace missing or vandalized trail identification signage.**
  - 4.2.3 Provide seating opportunities at strategic locations along trails.**
  - 4.2.4 Make accessibility improvements as recommended in the Willamalane ADA Transition Plan.**
- 4.3 Design and build the Middle Fork Willamette River Trail from Dorris Ranch to Clearwater Park.**
  - 4.3.1 Design the Middle Fork trail so that it minimizes impacts to and conflicts with current Ranch operations and/or natural habitats, and maximizes the public's positive perception of Dorris Ranch.**
  - 4.3.2 Develop the Middle Fork Trail with appropriate support facilities such as parking, trailhead, and signage improvements.**
  - 4.3.3 Leverage federal funding to obtain other grant funds, as appropriate.**
- 4.4 Complete the Oak Woodland Trail, creating a longer loop trail accessible to visitors when the orchards are closed.**
  - 4.4.1 Publicize the Oak Woodland Trail with appropriate signage and brochures.**
    - 4.4.1.1 Update the park trails maps to include the up-to-date trails inventory.**
  - 4.4.2 Include the Oak Woodland Trail in the regular trail maintenance schedule.**
- 4.5 Develop a Trails Plan for planning, designing and managing existing and future trails, in conjunction with the Dorris Ranch Master Plan process.**

## **5. Recreation Programs and Activities**

*Goal: Provide adequate facilities and staffing for recreational and educational programming.*

- 5.1 Continue to improve coordination between recreation programs and orchard operations to provide as much predictability for Ranch programming as is reasonable.**
  - 5.1.1 Continue to fine-tune the system for timely and clear communication between maintenance staff, programming staff and orchardist (see 2.2.1).**
- 5.2 Continue to look for opportunities to diversify and expand recreation programs and special events, within the limitations of existing Ranch funding and infrastructure.**
  - 5.2.1 Continue to provide programs and activities for both children and adults.**
  - 5.2.2 Continue to look for opportunities to provide recreation programs and special events that will bring recognition to Dorris Ranch and highlight its rich history.**
- 5.3 Continue to have revenue-generating rentals, and charge fees for programs and events, as appropriate.**
  - 5.3.1 Investigate opportunities for increasing fees and charges for some rentals, programs, or events.**
- 5.4 Follow recommendations in the Willamalane ADA Transition Plan.**
  - 5.4.1 Make necessary programmatic accessibility improvements; ensure future programs and activities meet ADA guidelines.**
- 5.5 Investigate the feasibility of locating some of the existing recreational programs elsewhere, as new parks or facilities are developed.**

## **6. Historic Preservation**

*Goal: Preserve Dorris Ranch's cultural resources, and interpret its rich history for the appreciation and enjoyment of Ranch visitors.*

- 6.1 Increase staff and public awareness about the value of preserving and interpreting the history of Dorris Ranch, including the significance of the Ranch being on the National Register of Historic Places.**
  - 6.1.1 Bring in State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff to inform Willamalane staff on opportunities and limitations of historic designation.**
  - 6.1.2 Work more closely with Springfield Historic Commission on publicizing and obtaining funds for Dorris Ranch.**

- 6.1.3 Work more closely with the Convention and Visitor's Association of Lane County (CVALCO) and others on publicizing Dorris Ranch as a national historic attraction.**
  - 6.1.4 Work with the University of Oregon Historic Preservation Program as opportunities arise.**
- 6.2 Manage the 109-acres of the Ranch that are included in the National Register of Historic Places in a manner consistent with Springfield Development Code Article 30 -- Historic Overlay District regulations.
  - 6.2.1 Establish a process for reviewing proposed significant alterations to historic resources.
  - 6.2.2 Work more closely with Springfield Planning Staff and Historic Commission.
  - 6.2.3 P&D act as liaison between the City and other Willamalane staff.
- 6.3 Investigate additional opportunities to preserve and interpret the Ranch's pre-settlement history.

## **7. Public Awareness**

*Goal: Improve the public's awareness of the natural and historic features of the Ranch.*

- 7.1 Improve public awareness of Dorris Ranch.**
  - 7.1.1 Work with Oregon Department of Transportation to add a directional sign to Dorris Ranch from South A Street.**
  - 7.1.2 Work more closely with Springfield Historic Commission on publicizing and obtaining funds for Dorris Ranch (see 6.1.2).**
  - 7.1.3 Work more closely with CVALCO and others on publicizing Dorris Ranch as a national historic attraction (see 6.1.3).**
- 7.2 Better inform park visitors about the Ranch's historic significance.**
  - 7.2.1 Provide additional interpretation signage throughout the ranch.**
  - 7.2.2 Work with Springfield Historic Commission and SHPO on obtaining grant funds for historic interpretation.**
- 7.3 Improve the park entrance so there is a more meaningful and informative arrival experience.
  - 7.3.1 Improve the Park Identification Sign so it is more prominent from Dorris Street.
  - 7.3.2 Improve the Kiosk area so visitors know more fully what opportunities are available at the Ranch.
- 7.4 Increase staff's personal interaction with park patrons.
  - 7.4.1 Encourage all staff to greet park visitors and inform them of the park's recreational, natural and historic opportunities, as appropriate.

- 7.5 Communicate timely, accurate information regarding orchard operations to the public.
  - 7.5.1 Post orchard closure information prominently at the park entrance, including why the orchard is closed, and other recreational opportunities available at the Ranch (e.g., Oak Woodland Trail).
  - 7.5.2 Provide information for park visitors as to what goes into the management of a commercial filbert orchard, why it needs to be closed periodically, etc.
  - 7.5.3 Continue to fine-tune system for public notification of orchard closure (see 2.2.2).
- 7.6 Maintain records of public use for rentals, events, programs, and informal park use.
  - 7.6.1 Implement intercept surveys, vehicle counts, or other means to collect usage numbers and demographic information on park users.

## **8. Park Management, General**

*Goal: Manage the park to protect historic and natural resources, encourage public use, reduce conflicts, and keep pace with growth and change.*

- 8.1 Minimize traffic, development, and safety issues caused by the private residence access road, and rental properties.
  - 8.1.1 Investigate feasibility of alternate access routes for Allen and Briggs properties.
- 8.2 Maintain adequate fire protection for the Ranch.
  - 8.2.1 Work with Springfield Fire and Life Safety, as necessary.
  - 8.2.2 Maintain firebreaks (or greater) annually after August 1 in the grassland area.
  - 8.2.3 Do additional fuel load reduction activities as necessary, and in conjunction with Natural Resource Master Plan recommendations.
  - 8.2.4 Investigate obtaining urban/rural interface fire protection grants, as available.
- 8.3 Minimize trespass, vandalism and safety problems at the Ranch.
  - 8.3.1 Maintain fences, gates, Ranch security patrols.
  - 8.3.2 Investigate alternative methods, such as a Neighborhood Watch Group.
- 8.4 Develop a Master Plan for Dorris Ranch within 3-5 years to develop a long-term vision, and corresponding goals, policies, strategies and actions for the Ranch.
- 8.5 Continue compliance with all appropriate regulations and statutes, including the Springfield Historic Overlay District, Willamette River Greenway regulations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).
- 8.6 Explore creating a “Friends of Dorris Ranch” volunteer group to assist and advise staff on overall park management.

- 8.7 Explore having a volunteer “Park Host” to greet and assist visitors, and do minor park maintenance.
- 8.8 Continue to use the interdepartmental Dorris Ranch Operations Team (DOT) for general management of Dorris Ranch. As necessary, continue to use the “SuperDOT” (Dorris Ranch Management Plan staff team) for major issues that may arise.

## **9. Funding**

Goal: Provide adequate funding to implement Dorris Ranch Management Plan strategies and actions.

- 9.1 Continue to subsidize Dorris Ranch operations at least at the current level from the General Fund, with an additional allowance for inflation and for combating the Eastern Filbert Blight (per the District’s Five-Year Budget Projection).**
- 9.2 Identify and secure alternative revenue generation opportunities to support priority projects related to recreation programs and activities, natural resources, historic preservation, facilities and infrastructure, trails, and maintenance at Dorris Ranch, as matching funds are available.**
- 9.3 Fund capital projects from the District Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), as funding is available.**



## RESOURCE INVENTORY

**Address:** 201 Dorris Street  
1443 Harbor Drive (Briggs Property)

**Location:** Located approximately 1 mile south of downtown Springfield at the confluence of the Coast Fork and Middle Fork of the Willamette River.

**Directions:** Main Street south to South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Go over the hill and cross Dorris Street to enter Dorris Ranch.

**Street Classification:** Collector

**Planning Area<sup>1</sup>:** South

**Park Classification<sup>1</sup>:** Special Use Park. Special use parks have unique features or uses.

**Size:** 258.06 acres, according to Lane County Tax Assessor

**Ownership:** Willamalane Park and Recreation District

The property comprises three different tax lots, as shown below:

Map #	Tax Lot	Size (acres)	Date Acquired	Land Use Jurisdiction	Metro Plan Designation	Zoning
18-03-02	800	5.21	July, 2000	Springfield	Parks and open space	Public land and open space
18-03-02	802	177.81	1970-1973	Springfield	Parks and open space	Public land and open space
18-03-11	1800	75.07 <sup>2</sup>	1988	Springfield	Parks and open space	Public land and open space

**Jurisdiction:** Dorris Ranch is outside of the City Limits but inside the Urban Growth Boundary. Tax lots 800 and 802 are within the Willamalane District Boundary, while tax lot 1800 (along the river) is outside the District Boundary.

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<sup>1</sup> From the 2004 *Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan*

<sup>2</sup> Acreage is from the Lane County Tax Assessor. The actual acreage of this tax lot (which is along the river) according to the most recent available air photo (2000?), is 85.43 acres, making the overall total 268.45 acres.

## Willamette

River Greenway: Yes—entire site.

## Adjacent

Land Uses: Immediately west of the park is the Filbert Grove manufactured home subdivision.

North of the park are single-family rural residential lots.

East of the park most predominantly is Quarry Butte and the Springfield Quarry. Also east of the park is the Allen property and private residence. The Allen's have a long-held access easement through Dorris Ranch.

## Flooding and Hydrology:

Much of the west and south portion of the park (approximately 200 acres) is in the 100 year floodplain.<sup>3</sup>

In 1951, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed the “Dorris-Leonard Revetment” on the southeast portion of the site, in order to prevent bank erosion and minor flooding.<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1920's, George and Ben Dorris excavated a stream channel that extended from the southeast to northwest corners of the property. Ben acquired water rights in 1938 from the State of Oregon which enabled him to use the waters of the Willamette River. The primary use to which the water was to be applied was 1.5 cfs for irrigation of crops (i.e., filbert orchards, garden plots, and pastureland) and .01 cfs for livestock. A total of 99.7 acres were approved for irrigation purposes.<sup>5</sup>

Over a number of years improvements were made to the stream channel, including: low-level check dams for irrigation, bridges for pedestrian access, and in 1940 a concrete swimming pool and terrace were built behind the Dorris House.

The Springfield Local Wetland Inventory shows five wetlands in the park—three along the river and two associated with the pond and stream channel.

A wetland delineation for Dorris Ranch was completed in September 1992, by B. Jennifer Selliken Guard, Wetland Specialties. The area adjacent to the north and east sides of the restroom building near the entrance to the Ranch is designated as a wetland.

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<sup>3</sup> Map numbers 41039C1142 F and 41039C1144 F, FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map, June 2, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan, p. 20

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 22

**Natural Resources:** Typical of landscapes along the Middle Fork, Dorris Ranch is rich and diverse, containing 3,750 lineal feet of river frontage, fertile agricultural land, lush riparian vegetation, dense conifer and deciduous woodlands, and open pasture.

A significant portion of Dorris Ranch is included as an upland Wildlife Area in the July 2001 Draft Inventory for the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Resource Study.

See Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan Biological Environment section, pgs. 28-43.

**Soils:** There are a wide variety of soil types existing at the site. See Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan pgs. 10-16

**Easements:** Easements for bank protection/channel improvement, electrical transmission line, and access easement for Allen property. A Title Report should be completed in the future for complete information.

**Utilities and Services:**

Electrical & Water service: Springfield Utility Board. Dorris Ranch was connected to SUB water in 1991. The only irrigated areas are the lawn adjacent to the Tomseth House and the Barn.

Gas service: Northwest Natural Gas Company

Phone service: Qwest

Cable service: Comcast at Briggs House; none at rest of Ranch

Sanitary sewer: None

Storm sewer: City of Springfield

Police: Lane County Sheriff

Fire protection: In the Willakenzie Fire District; serviced through Springfield Fire and Life Safety. The District has a contract with Oregon Department of Forestry to provide open range fire fighting.

**Historical Background:**

In October 1892, George and Lulu Dorris bought the land that is now Dorris Ranch from George and Marietta Thurston for \$4,000. Dorris Ranch is a classic example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural site in the Willamette Valley.<sup>6</sup> Under the guidance of George Dorris, Dorris Ranch was recognized as one of the most successful commercial filbert orchards

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<sup>6</sup> *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, 1987, p. i.

in the United States. The orchards planted by George Dorris and later by his nephew Ben Dorris have been in continuous successful operation since 1903.<sup>7</sup>

Dorris Ranch has been called “a landscape significant in the history of Springfield, the history of agriculture in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, and the history of Filbert nut culture in the United States.”<sup>8</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that the area including Dorris Ranch was used by indigenous people. A site contiguous with Dorris Ranch has been identified as an area of known archaeological value by the state; however it has not been subjected to an intensive archaeological survey.<sup>9</sup>

#### Filbert Orchard History:

The first 50 filbert trees were planted at Dorris Ranch in 1903, making Dorris Ranch one of the oldest filbert orchards in the Pacific Northwest. Originally, George Dorris planted several crop varieties on his land, including peaches, cherries, grapes, walnuts, asparagus, and hops. Due to a variety of reasons, filberts eventually replaced these other crops. In 1951, more than half of all the commercial filbert trees grown in the U.S. could be traced back to the original plot established by George Dorris.<sup>10</sup>

The Ranch’s 75 acres of filbert trees are divided into 11 distinct orchards, each containing its own name. An orchard can be defined as any contiguous block of trees planted the same year with the same tree spacing.

In 1987, the 75 acres of orchards contained approximately 9,250 trees, which produced, on average, 56 tons of nuts annually. Compared to the average Oregon filbert farm, which is on 24 acres of land and contains 3,100 trees and produces 18 tons of nuts annually, Dorris Ranch is significant in both size and production.

The Dorris Ranch nursery began operations in 1925, when Ben Dorris, George’s nephew, came to work on the Ranch. The 5 acres of filbert nursery were located directly north of the Dorris House and swimming pool. During 40 years of operation, the nursery produced an average of 70,000 trees annually, which were sold throughout the Pacific Northwest.

The Dorris Ranch nursery was well known for both its innovative propagation methods and continuously successful production.<sup>11</sup> Together,

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p.3

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, “Statement of Significance”

<sup>9</sup> *Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan*, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, 1979, pgs. 53-54.

<sup>10</sup> Willamalane Park and Recreation District, *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*, 1987, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p.4

George and Ben Dorris developed and perfected the “tipped method” of filbert tree propagation, an innovative method that became popular among Northwest orchardists.

In April 2005, the Dorris Ranch orchards received Oregon Heritage Tree status, commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the first commercial filbert orchard at the Ranch. The Oregon Heritage Tree Program was established by the Oregon Travel Information Council to help increase public awareness about the important contribution of trees to Oregon’s history and heritage.

A state-wide dedication ceremony was held at Dorris Ranch, and a plaque was placed near the entrance to the orchards, which reads, “The first commercial-sized planting of hazelnuts in Oregon occurred when George Dorris planted a five-acre orchard here in 1905. In addition to growing trees for nut production, Dorris started a hazelnut nursery that operated for 40 years and produced an average of 70,000 trees per year. It is estimated that more than half of the trees in Oregon’s hazelnut industry originated from Dorris Ranch nursery stock.”

Acquisition  
History:

Willamalane acquired the bulk of Dorris Ranch between 1970 and 1973, in a variety of transactions, including funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Willamette River Park System Corridor Project, a loan from the Springfield Park Development Committee, and a donation from Ben and Kay Dorris.<sup>12</sup>

In 1988, 75 acres of mostly riparian land that had been purchased by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Division in 1973 was deeded to Willamalane.

Reynolds Briggs managed the orchards for George and later Ben Dorris for 44 years. In 1972, when Ranch ownership was transferred to Willamalane, the 5-acre parcel containing the Original House, pond, and two orchards near the Ranch entrance was given to the Briggs Family. Willamalane acquired the property in 1999.

Today, the District owns 258 acres, including approximately 75 acres of filbert orchards.

Planning History:

Throughout the 1970’s and into the 80’s, there were numerous discussions, public hearings and proposals regarding the future of the Ranch. Proposals included a golf course, archery ranges, and other active recreational uses.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Willamalane Park and Recreation District, *Dorris Ranch Facility Development Plan*, 1986, p. xi-xii.

<sup>13</sup> Willamalane Park and Recreation District, *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*, 1987, p. 1.

In 1979, the *Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan* was developed, and by its adoption the District agreed, in principle, to protect and use the historic resources of Dorris Ranch, rather than devote the property to solely recreational uses.

In 1984, the Willamalane Board of Directors unanimously approved a special task force proposal to protect, maintain, and develop the historically significant and successfully producing agricultural land as a living history farm and agriculture museum.<sup>14</sup>

In 1986, the *Dorris Ranch Facility Development Plan* was prepared, with the goal of “ensuring that in coming years the Ranch continues to be a meaningful source of appreciation for this area’s past and an inspiration for its future.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1987, a nomination was submitted for 109 acres of Dorris Ranch to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, including the majority of the filbert orchards, barns, Dorris House, Freezer House, roads, diversion dam and swimming pool. Not included on the National Register is the entry area, Briggs House, Tomseth House, riparian and upland areas.

In October 1989, the *Dorris Ranch House Historic Structures Report* was completed. The team of consultants attempted to determine the appearance, use and historic significance of each structure included in the Dorris House complex, up through the 1940’s.

In 1990, a District-wide Facility Assessment Report included an inventory and evaluation of the structures at Dorris Ranch.

Existing Facilities: Dorris Ranch contains a variety of structures, many of which have historic significance. The three former residences on the site include:

Marietta and George Thurston built the original 1880’s homestead (the Original House or the Briggs House). It is located near the entrance to the Dorris Ranch, and was built in the vernacular style of the period – a typical Oregon farmhouse with a porch. The existing ground floor is approximately 1,091 sq ft. The Briggs House has gone through extensive remodeling from the 1940’s on, including an attached walk-in pantry, attached garage, and wood shelter. These alterations, along with the application of T1-11 exterior siding, have significantly altered its historic character.<sup>16</sup> The Briggs House is not listed on the Historic Register. There is currently a renter in the house and it is not open to the public.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 1

<sup>15</sup> Willamalane Park and Recreation District, *Dorris Ranch Facility Development Plan*, 1986, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Briggs House Feasibility Study: Phase One Improvements*, Prepared for Willamalane Park and Recreation District, December 1999.

The 2,450 sq ft. Dorris House was built in 1899 by George Dorris. Ben Dorris and his wife Kay did extensive remodeling in the late 1930's and early 1940's, including enclosing the original porch for sleeping quarters, extensively remodeling the kitchen, adding a new bathroom to the second floor, and new exterior cedar shingles to the exterior. In the next several years, a new garage, changing house/playroom and freezer house were constructed directly south of the Dorris House (see below) The Dorris family also built a 2,250 sq ft in-ground swimming pool in the late 1930's, which was naturally fed by the river and ground water. The house is listed on the Historic Register, and a detailed Historic Structures survey was completed in 1989. There is currently a renter/caretaker in the house and it is not open to the public. Under Willamalane ownership, repairs have been made as needed and as funding is available, including a new shake roof in 1999.

The 1910 Tomseth House was moved to Doris Ranch in 1995. It was a donation from the Timber Products Company to the Dorris Ranch Foundation. It is not included in the National Register of Historic Places. Accessibility improvements have been made. It has a rental/caretaker's apartment on the second floor and is used for public rentals on the main level.

Accessory structures include:

The Barn is a 2,310 sq. ft wood-framed structure with shake siding and corrugated metal roof, built in the 1930's. It is located near the park entrance. The interior was partially remodeled in 1992. A wood floor was added to the first level and interior lighting was added throughout.

Across the driveway from the barn is a 640 sq ft concrete-block restroom and storage facility formerly used as a farm equipment storage building. It was originally built in the 1940's. Restroom upgrades were made in 1992. The 20 ft by 32 ft building contains two toilet rooms, each with one composting toilet and one sink, and a drinking fountain. The waste from the sinks and the drinking fountain are piped to an on-site sewage disposal system consisting of a septic tank and drain field. Waste from the toilets is piped to a Clivus self-composting system.

The Dorris House garage (1,140 sq ft) and freezer house (160 sq ft) are located adjacent to the Dorris House. They are both wood-framed structures built in the early 1940's. Shortly after the property was acquired by Willamalane, the changing house/playroom was dismantled and removed from the Ranch. A temporary greenhouse, constructed on the original changing house/playroom foundation was removed in the 1980's.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Dorris Ranch House Historic Structures Report, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, October 1989, p. 2.

The Pump House is a 330 sq ft wood-framed structure originally built with shake siding and a metal roof. It was probably built in the 1920's, but the exact date of construction is not known. The pump was used to draw water from the well for the Dorris House and a few other locations at the Ranch; it was later used as a storage facility. The Pump House was restored in 2001 with a grant from Springfield Utility Board, and is now used as a Trading Post for the Living History Program.

The "old garage" was the original garage located adjacent to the Dorris House. It was built in the early 1900's. All that remains of the original garage are two of the walls. The 300 sq ft structure was moved in the 1940's to the Pump House area. A corrugated metal roof was added to the walls, and the two ends are open.<sup>18</sup> Today, it is commonly referred to as the shed and is used as a picnic shelter and outdoor classroom. It was also restored in 2001. A fire recently burnt a portion of the south wall. The information kiosk and park entrance were designed and built by University of Oregon students in 1993.

In 1994, the Dorris Ranch store opened at South Second and South A streets, promoting and selling Oregon-produced filbert products. In 1997, after passage of statewide Ballot Measure 47, it was closed.

Park Usage:                    Approximate number of visits to Dorris Ranch 2004:

Facility Rentals: 2,100 users

Special Events: 4,700 participants (Includes the Living History Festival and Haunted Hayride)

Trail Talks: 150 participants

Living History Program: 1,855 participants

Kids Club Camp: 4,300 campers (Count is calculated on the number of participants per day)

General Public Use: 17,100 users

Total : 30,205 visits to Dorris Ranch in 2004

Ranch facilities are also used by Kids Club on No School Days, and by staff for meetings at the Tomseth House.

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<sup>18</sup> *Facility Assessment Report, A Technical Report of Facility Conditions*, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, April 1990, pgs 69, & 79-80 .



## Orchard

### Management:

The 2005 Orchard Management Plan implemented by contract orchardist Gary Rodakowski includes the following (as of November 2004):

Pruning (Jan-Feb): Prune the Walnut and Goat orchards with the TOL hedger. Remove and burn the pruning.

Eastern Filbert Blight Sprays (Mar-Apr): Apply three fungicide sprays starting at bud break in mid-March and again every two weeks with an air blast sprayer, weather permitting.

Fertilizer (Apr): Apply 30,000 lbs. of urea fertilizer.

Orchard Floor Management (Apr-Sep): Flail vegetation on the orchard floor as needed. This is done when the vegetation is six to eight inches high, four to six times/year.

Sucker Control (Apr-Sep): Spray suckers with chemicals when the suckers are six to nine inches tall, three to four times/year.

Filbertworm Control (Jul-Aug): Two full sprays with the insecticide Asana XL. On the Briggs orchards, the insecticide Confirm will be used. The Briggs Orchard has been sprayed with Confirm for the last four or five years.

### Financial Facts:

The total gross revenue from filbert nut sales over the past 10 years has been \$788,000

The total net revenue from filbert nut sales over the past 10 years has been \$202,935.

The average price per pound of filberts over the past 10 years has been 47cents.

The total pounds of nuts harvested in the past 10 years (dry weight) equal 1,694,323 lbs.

The smallest nut harvest (dry weight) in the past ten years was 80,133 lbs. in 2002. The largest nut harvest was 257,229 lbs. in 1995.

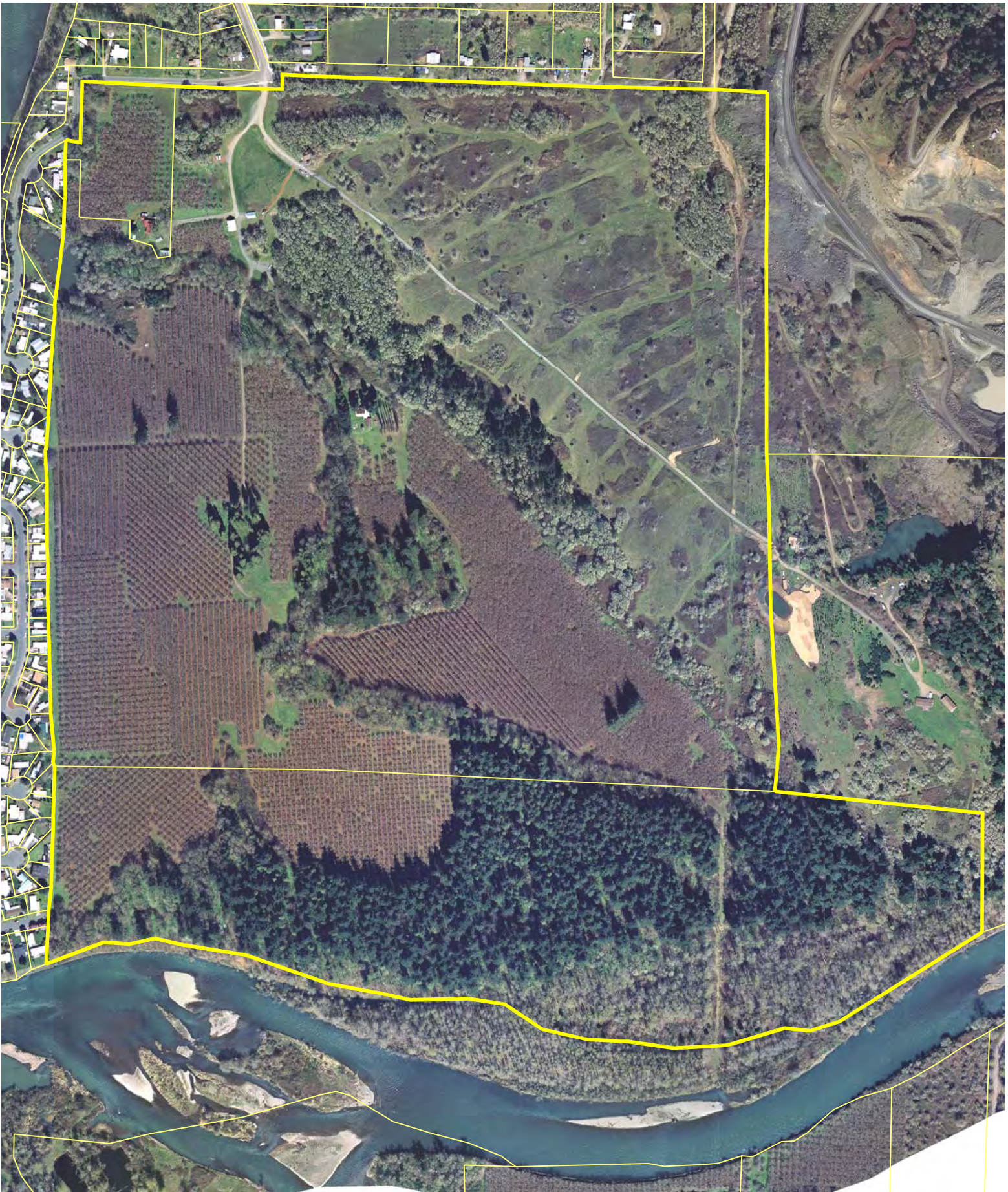
The general fund subsidizes Dorris Ranch programs with approximately \$40,000/year.

Park operations are paid for with nut revenue.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Site Map**





**DORRIS RANCH LIVING HISTORY FARM**  
**SITE MAP**

Willamalane Planning & Development  
March, 2005



scale: 1" = 500'



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Public Input Summary**

## **PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY**

### **Input from the 6/1/05 Dorris Ranch Management Plan Open House:**

#### ***From the Open House Questionnaire:***

Does this Management Statement reflect your understanding of how Dorris Ranch should be managed?

Yes ... (four responses)

Unsure.

Sounds good, but apparent conflicts between the different elements are difficult.

"...Restoring and protecting ..." especially oak savanna habitat, historical structures and riparian habitat.

The most important issues facing Dorris Ranch in the next 3-5 years:

I think you have pointed out the needs of the Ranch. It seems like more resources need to be used here. It definitely is not used enough. It is an awesome place.

- Orchard loss to blight
- Aging infrastructure
- Affirming and keeping water rights
- Protection of Savanna and beginning of invasive species eradication
- Conflicts of use (rental and park visitors)
- Lacking infrastructure to welcome/greet/provide comfort to visitors

The displays of the ranch are beautiful as well as the slide display. I'm more interested in the living history aspect and increasing public involvement and awareness. I think you have a possible "historical" gold mine, especially celebrating the Lewis and Clark years.

- The houses/buildings should be on a regular maintenance program rather than only fixing things on an emergency basis.
- More and well marked trails – especially on the east side where people can access the (to be built) Middle Fork Trail without going through the orchard. Especially during spraying, it gives people access to something when they come here and find the orchard closed.
- More trail signs and plant ID markers, esp. poison oak. Benches will be nice.

1. Orchard Management; 2. Trails; 3. Public Awareness

1. Orchard Management v. Recreational Use; 2. Facilities; 3. Trails

1. Orchard Management; 2. Recreational Programs; 3. Trails

1. Eastern Filbert Blight; 2. Oak Savannah/Habitat Restoration; 3. Facilities for Expanding Programs

1. Trails; 2. Historic preservation; 3. Public awareness.

I believe they are all important. However, some areas may need more work than others. For instance, public awareness needs attention. I talk to so many people who are not even aware that Dorris Ranch exists. If more people visited and found out how special Dorris Ranch is, they may pass on the word. People may be willing to volunteer to work on other categories such as trails. Friends of Dorris Ranch?

Other:

Carolyn Briggs was in my high school class – she might have more photos – I think I have her address if you want [Helen Wagner].

This is a wonderful asset – keep it natural

I would like to know more about finances. This would help shape my opinion on planning, management, etc. If the funding is not there, sacrifices need to be made, and projects prioritized, etc.

Organize volunteer groups. Mark trails with corresponding pamphlet to identify structures and plants better. Provide better access for alter-abled individuals. Consider involving U of O Historic Preservation program and Environmental Program students for projects. Coordinate outings and blight management better to avoid conflicts. Consider historic tours for the public that directly relate to why this is designated an historic place. Schedule trail maintenance and invasive species clean up. Develop better emergency plans. I believe the gate has really helped reduce vandalism. These are just some ideas with minimal financial impact. I'm full of other ideas and am willing to be a volunteer and help. [Dorris House tenant/caretaker]

***From the Open House Boards:***

Programs and Activities:

Information Kiosks

Interpretive signage

Take advantage of similar programs/facilities to co-promote Mt. Pisgah and Museum

Partner with walking groups, birding groups, etc.

Have promotional information at other popular WPRD parks

Orchard Management:

IPM is less effective

### ***Other Comments Received During and After the Open House:***

From Steve Poyser, Preservation Planner from SHPO: We should talk to Kitti Gale at the City about applying through them for a Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This grant program has just been expanded and there is more money available than previous years. We can't apply on our own, but we can coordinate through the City. He would be happy to come down and talk about opportunities for working together, and ways that SHPO can assist us with historic preservation at the Ranch. He was very impressed with the Ranch and with our "proactive" management plan process.

Message from Sally Wright, historic preservation consultant: Don't forget about the SHPO small grants program, the U of O Preservation Program, and also urges us to coordinate with Kitti Gale at the City in order to include funds for Dorris Ranch in their request to SHPO.

Additional input on file from the following individuals:

Jock Beal, Finley Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Ross Penhallegon, OSU/Lane County Extension Service  
Helen and Tricia Stanley, Dorris Ranch visitors  
Chris Melotti, wildlife biologist and neighbor

### **Input from the Stakeholder Review of the Draft Dorris Ranch Management Plan:**

Orchardist Garry Rodakowski sent a three-page letter to the Dorris Ranch Planning Team. He was concerned that "the District is shifting from giving priority to historic and agricultural use of the Ranch to giving the District's recreational programs the highest priority." He pointed out that we shouldn't "blame the horticultural practices [at the Ranch] for the increased liability ... the liability and conflicts have increased over the past twelve years as the District has put more people and programs into the orchard." He also questioned whether our worker training and education was adequate. He recommended a number of changes to the management plan, many of which staff made.

Overall, staff agrees that public use of the Ranch is a higher priority than orchard management, because Dorris Ranch is a public park. It was purchased as parkland with a historic orchard and associated structures. However, the orchard is an integral component of the park, and the goal of the management plan is to balance these competing interests and develop strategies accordingly.

In response to Garry's comments, staff made changes to the plan where the language implied that it was solely the orchard management that increased liability concerns at the Ranch. Language was added to make it clear that increased public access is a contributing factor. Staff also added two recommendations regarding OSHA procedures in order to emphasize our interest in continued worker health and safety. Staff took Garry's comments very seriously: the planning team met to discuss his input, and Bob and Rebecca met with him to review his input

and the staff response. At that meeting, Garry indicated that he agreed with the changes staff had proposed in response to his letter.

Input was also received from Ross Penhallegon, OSU/Lane County Extension Service. Ross raised the issue that if we grow other crops as a substitute for filberts, we may experience some of the same management issues. Staff made changes to the text to indicate that we would look at pesticide requirements and recreation impacts (among other things) before planting other historic crops.

Additional input was received from Springfield Historic Commission member James McNett, Preservation Planner Kitti Gale, and historic preservation consultant Sally Wright. All public input is on file.