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# NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN



2040

**ORDINANCE 24-09**

**ADOPTED FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09**

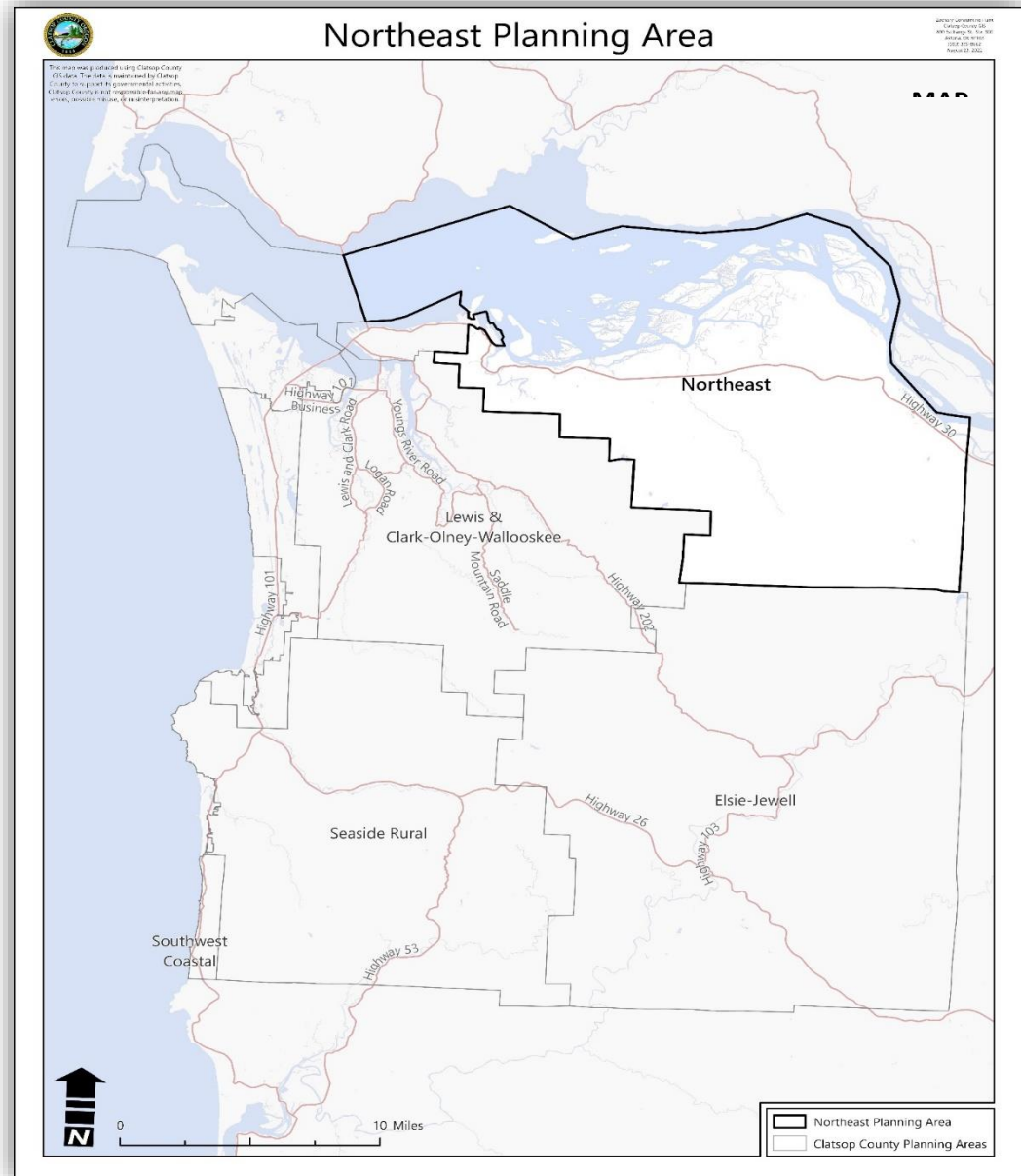
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## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

The Northeast planning area includes all of the area along U.S. Highway 30 from the east County line to the eastern edge of Astoria's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The southern boundary generally follows the drainage patterns of the coastal hills and valleys. There are no incorporated cities in the planning area, but it does contain the unincorporated communities of Westport, Knappa, and Svensen. In 2003, those communities were designated as Rural Communities and new zoning districts were developed and applied to those areas (Ordinance 03-10).

Northeast Clatsop County is a predominantly rural area with forest lands covering most of the land. Farming occurs along the Columbia River because of the creation of the various diked tidelands. Upland farming is carried on in logged off areas and was, at one time, a common occurrence. Over the years the Knappa and Svensen areas have developed into rural residential housing. The gentle sloped topography of the alluvial terraces and sedimentary uplands along with sufficient water supply has led to this development.



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The Astoria (including Tongue Point) Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is the western boundary of the area and has historically provided the economic base for employment. Tongue Point was once an active naval facility and then became a storage area for World War II ships. Westport on the eastern part of the County has traditionally provided employment through the logging and wood products industry.

U.S. Highway 30 provides the main route of transportation east and west with numerous County roads bisecting and paralleling the highway. The communities of Knappa, Svensen and Westport provide commercial services to the residents, as well as for some highway travelers.

The estimated 2020 population of the Knappa-Brownsmead CCD (Census County Division) was 2,144 persons. This is an increase of 7.58% from 2010, when the population was estimated at 1,993. Precise population estimates for the Northeast Planning Area are difficult to extrapolate from the Census data, as the Census Tracts do not align with the planning area boundary.

### Planning Area Demographics

#### Size:

**Population:** 2,144 (Knappa-Brownsmead)

**e911 Address Points:** 2,211

(Source: 2020 Decennial Census)

### Landscape Units

The landscape units which occur in the Northeast planning area are:

- **Alluvial Lowlands:** Alluvial lowlands in Northeast Clatsop County include the lowlands along the Columbia River estuary such as areas southeast of Tongue Point and the areas both east and west of Wauna. Also included are those areas surrounding Brownsmead, the John Day River and Big Creek. Many of these areas consist primarily of valley floors and possess soils which are poorly drained and constitute serious limitations for development and sanitary facilities.
- **Alluvial Terraces:** In the Northeast area, alluvial terraces are found along the Columbia and John Day Rivers. The soils of the alluvial terraces consist of well to moderately drained silty soils of the Walluski-Knappa Association. Knappa soils occur on the better drained, front faces of the terrace. Permeability is moderate and slope varies between 0 to 25%. Walluski soils occur on the lower terraces. Walluski soils have severe limitations for septic tank drainfields due to slow percolation and wetness.
- **Coast Range Foothills:** Coast range foothills in the Northeast study area generally start close to the Columbia River shoreline and



range southward until they reach heights of about 2,000 feet and become the coast range (i.e. Bradley cliffs). There are some soil limitations due to the high clay and silt content. Foundation characteristics for these soils are generally poor and may have limitations for septic tanks and drainfields.

- **Estuary Wetlands, Coastal Shorelands and Waterbodies:** The Columbia River estuary, its wetlands, tributaries and shorelands are important to the Northeast community as well as the entire state. The Columbia River is the largest river in western North American and plays a major role in the economy, fish and wildlife habitat, energy production, water supply, and scenic and recreational values of the area. The estuary also contains the following sub-areas:

***John Day River – Settlers Point***

There is limited development potential in the area. The John Day River being relatively narrow and shallow makes increased river traffic unlikely and could further increase dike erosion. The shorelands of the John Day area are either low and flood prone or steep and unsuitable for intensive development.

Residential houseboat use has clustered around the John Day bridge for many years. There are also many recreational boathouses in use. The John Day boat ramp is located nearby. In 2003, in coordination with the Department of State Lands and the Department of Environmental Quality, the County revised its regulations and standards for recreational boathouses, floathouses and duck shacks. While all of the existing structures have been allowed to remain as legal non-conforming uses, new floating structures are only permitted within the exception area established within a limited portion of the John Day River.

Tidal marshes are found at the river mouth with significant fish and wildlife values. Fringing tidal marshes also are found adjacent to the railroad along much of the Columbia River shoreline. The tidal marshes at the mouth of Twilight Creek have been intensely studied and are a valuable natural resource. There are several small docks and walkways giving access to tidal channels, managed primarily by a local waterfowl hunting club. Maintenance and improvement of docks and duck shacks is expected. Dike erosion is a major concern in this area.

***Settlers Point, East to Ivy Station and Svensen Island***

Most of this area is characterized by rural residential use, agriculture and some forestry. The wetland areas of Mary's, Bear and Ferris Creeks were at one time diked and in agriculture use. In 2018, CREST submitted applications to for an estuary enhancement project to restore hydrologic connectivity, including floodplain and tidal processes, between the Columbia River and the Bear, Mary's, and Ferris creek basins. This project was completed in 2019.

Svensen Island is entirely diked and presently used as pasture with several houseboats and private moorage facilities close to the bridge. Some problems with erosion of dikes on the north side of the island have occurred.

***Ivy Station to the mouth of Blind Slough***

Tidal marshes surrounding Calendar Island and fringing the shoreline north of the railroad have significant fish and wildlife value. Big and Little Creeks, a large tidal spruce swamp at the mouth of the creeks, and Knappa Slough are all predominant features with very high fish and natural resource values. The North Coast Land Conservancy has obtained the old growth spruce swamp at Big and Little creeks and at the mouth of Blind Slough. This estuarine environment is the most important area for anadromous fish populations in the Northeast County, especially with the Big Creek Fish Hatchery located upstream. It also provides needed habitat for bald eagles, great blue herons, and waterfowl. Under the stewardship of the North Coast Land Conservancy, the area is now being conserved and managed. Knappa Slough also has significant historical and archeological value. The Knappa dock was demolished by Clatsop County Public Works in 2019 due to liability and safety issues.

The freshwater wetland areas north and south of Blind Slough are some of the largest, undisturbed tidal spruce and shrub swamps along the shoreline of the estuary. Natural resource values are high and probably similar to the Big Creek area. Blind Slough, Prairie Channel, and Knappa Slough have numerous houseboats, used mainly for recreation. These are now considered legal non-conforming uses and new houseboats cannot be located in these areas. Water quality is good, water deep enough so that grounding at low water is not a problem, and there are no gillnet fish drifts in the area.

***Gnat Creek – Brownsmead***

Gnat Creek, with its wetlands, riparian vegetation and important fishery has been recommended for protection by the Nature Conservancy in previous decades. However, information from Clatsop County Assessment and Taxation indicates that the properties immediately adjacent to Gnat Creek remain under private ownership. The recreation value of the stream for sport fishing is high, however, and some pressure exists for installation of private docks on the adjacent shore.

The CREST Plan designated the marsh Conservation with a policy to carefully evaluate each project for docks or moorages. The policy further states that projects or alteration which would have a detrimental impact on fishery values would not be permitted.

The Northeast Plan designates this area south of Brownsmead Hill Road Natural because of the high fisheries value and rich diversity of marsh plants and wildflowers, including wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia* - a plant species of concern) as well as habitat for

marsh wildlife. The wet marsh habitat and dense brush areas naturally restrict access but uses on adjacent lands should also be controlled to avoid possible impact to the site.

The Brownsmead area, according to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service has the best agricultural land in Clatsop County, and is designated Exclusive Farm Use (EFU). The public boat launching facility at Aldrich Point should not be expanded as the traffic generated by the facility already creates conflicts with local rural farm uses and there are several other water access points available to the public. Private docks are located mainly on Blind Slough.

### ***Clifton Channel and Bradwood***

The old fishing community of Clifton still has several residential structures that are occupied on either a full- or part-time basis. This area was previously used as a staging area for fishing the Clifton Channel with gillnet fish drifts. In December 2012, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted 4-2 to ban gillnets from the mainstem of the Columbia River.

The aquatic areas of Clifton are designated "Conservation" and zoned Aquatic Conservation Two (AC-2). The purpose of the AC-2 zone is to "conserve designated areas of the Columbia River Estuary for long term uses of renewable resources that do not require major alterations of the estuary, except for the purpose of restoration." The shoreland immediately adjacent to the water is designated "Rural" which would allow the development of on-shore fishing facilities and marina development in conjunction with expanded water use.

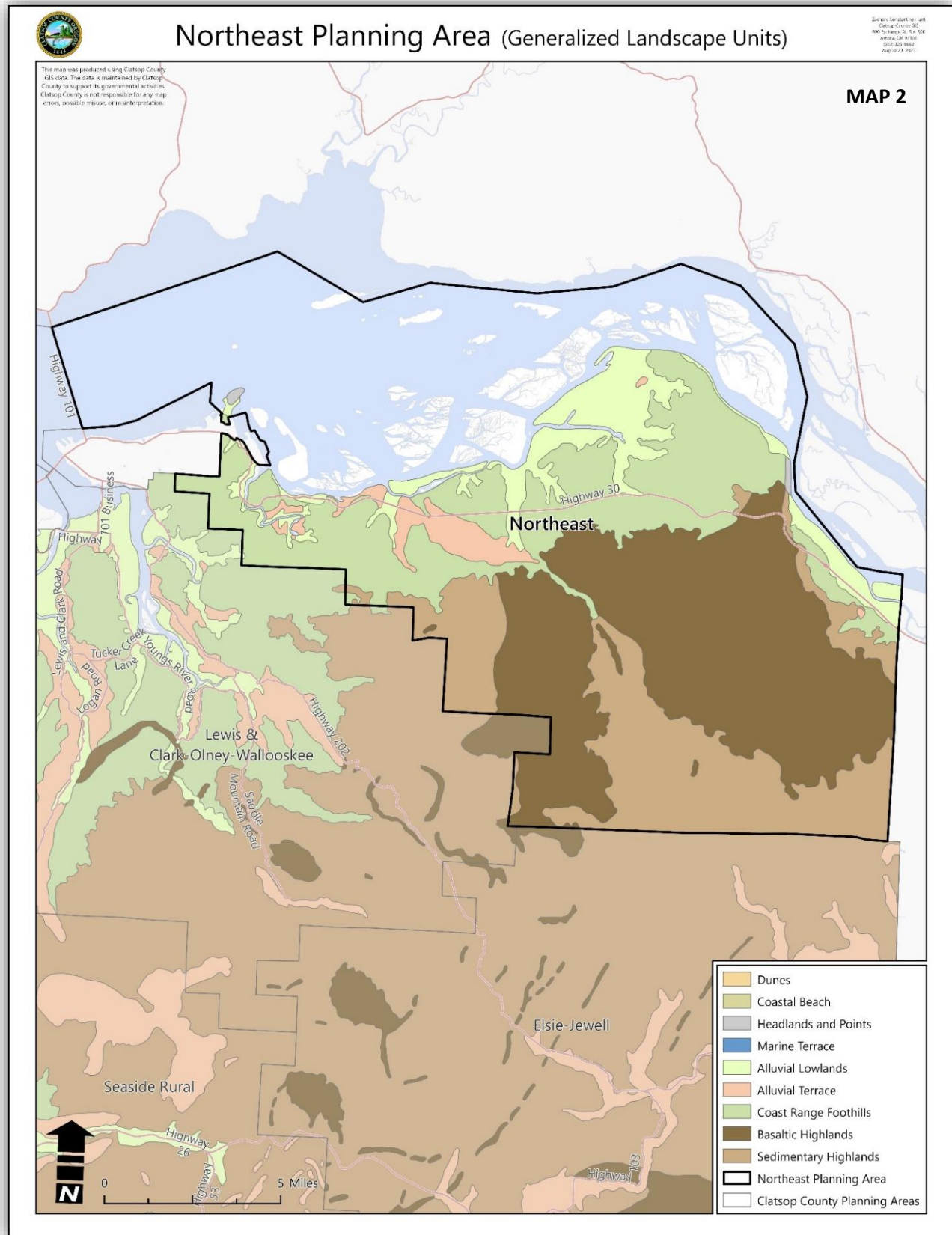
The Bradwood industrial site has been dormant for many years. In the past several decades, the site was proposed for a liquified natural gas (LNG) facility and a destination resort. The site contains a variety of zones, including Aquatic Natural, Aquatic Development and Marine Industrial. Both the Aquatic Development and Marine Industrial zoning would allow small to medium sized water dependent uses. There is deep water close to shore and some available vacant land. There are constraints to development, however, including poor highway access and the proximity to the wildlife refuge.

- **Sedimentary Uplands:** In the Northeast study area of Clatsop County there are significant areas of sedimentary uplands. Sedimentary uplands are characteristically lower and/or more gradually sloped than the basaltic highland, and are generally found at elevations above 250 feet.
- **Basaltic Highlands:** Basaltic highlands in the Northeast study area of Clatsop County are found in the interior, which include both Nicolai and Wickiup Mountains.

- **Headlands and Points**

**Map 2** illustrates the generalized landscape units in the Northeast planning area. Further discussion on the landscape units capacities and limitations can be found in the Northeast Environmental Plan (1974) and in Goal 2: Land Use Planning of the countywide plan.





### **Purpose of the Northeast Community Plan**

While the land surface area of the County remains constant over time, inevitably the population has and will continue to grow. There will be greater demand and need for more land for commercial, industrial and urban or suburban type development. The choices made in the use of land have consequences and impacts that may reverberate for generations. For example, the decision to commit land to a subdivision precludes the use of that land for many other purposes for decades to come.

With this awareness, the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan was developed for the purpose of providing a guide to development and conservation of Clatsop County's land resources. It is a generalized long-range policy guide and land use map that provides the basis for decisions on the physical, social and economic development of Clatsop County.

The Plan also coordinates the various factors which influence community development such as sewer and water, transportation, housing, commerce, industry, schools, land use, recreation, and natural resources. It establishes goals and policies which recognize and plan for the interrelationships and interactions of these factors. The Northeast Community Plan builds upon the work of the countywide Comprehensive Plan by identifying trends and issues specific to the planning area and developing policies to address those concerns.

The Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan and the attendant community plans are a statement of public goals, policies, objectives and standards, developed in accord with Goal 1: Citizen Involvement and public input, that are intended to be used in making specific decisions about present and future land use, along with various maps. To determine whether a specific land use proposal is appropriate, a decision must be made concerning the applicability of each goal, policy or standard to the proposed project. A proposed development must be consistent with both the county's Comprehensive Plan, applicable community plan, and development standards in order to achieve the vision outlined in these foundational documents.

### **Review and Update**

The original Northeast Community Plain was adopted on December 24, 1979 (Ordinance 79-14). The Northeast Community Plan, along with the community plans for each of the five other planning areas in Clatsop County is broken down into landscape units. Goals, objectives, policies and/or recommendations are provided for each of the landscape units. Additional sections in each community plan also include specific policies for the planning area related to the 18 statewide planning goals. Since originally adopted, the Northeast Community Plan has been amended several times:

- **Ordinance 80-08:** Changing an area of Brownsmead from the Rural designation to Rural Exclusive Farm Use

- **Ordinance 80-12:** Amendments to address existing and future use at the Wauna Mill site
- **Ordinance 83-17:** Amendments to address comments from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
- **Ordinance 03-10:** Designating Knappa, Svensen and Westport as Rural Communities

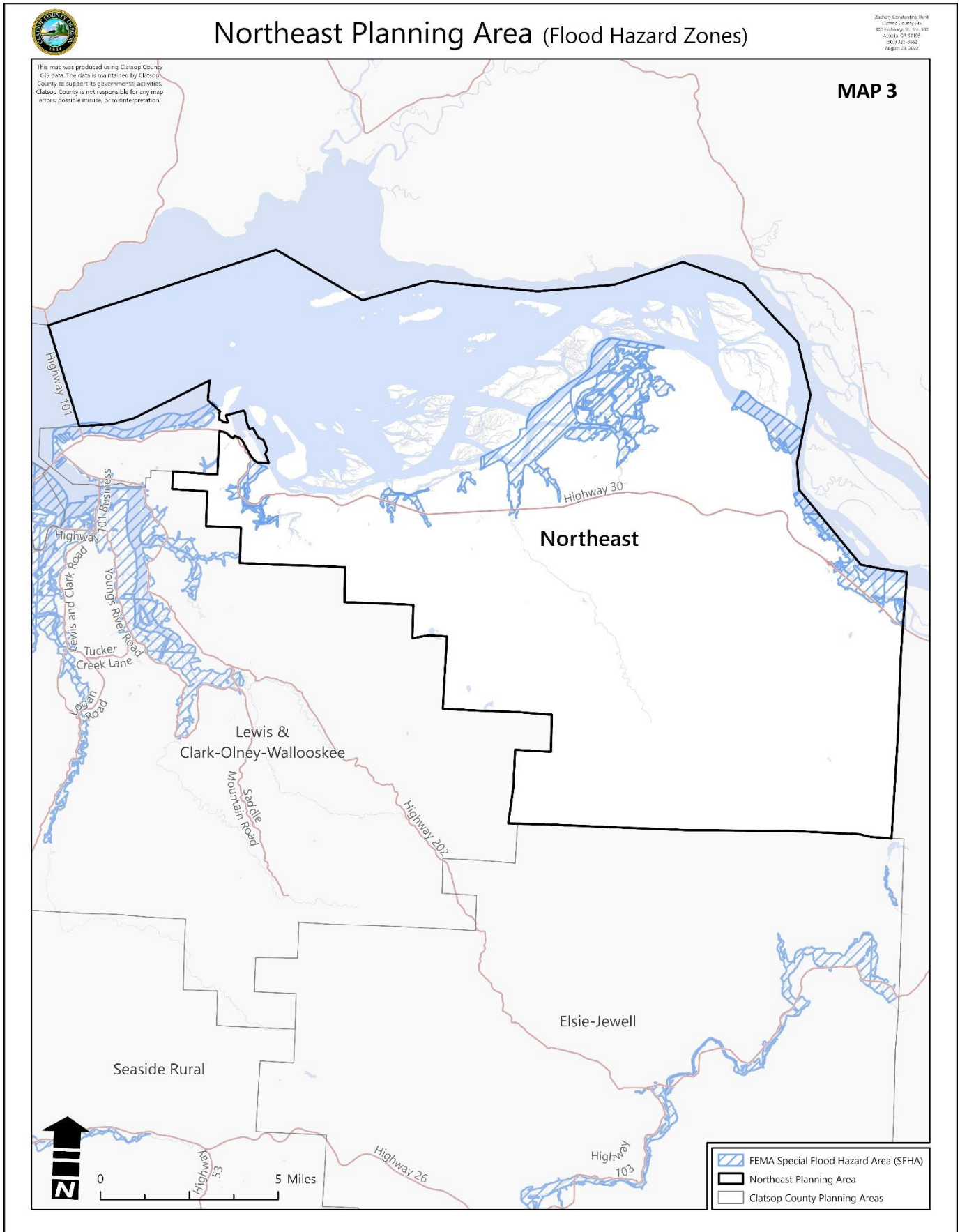
## CRITICAL HAZARD AREAS

Areas within the Northeast are susceptible to the following natural hazards:

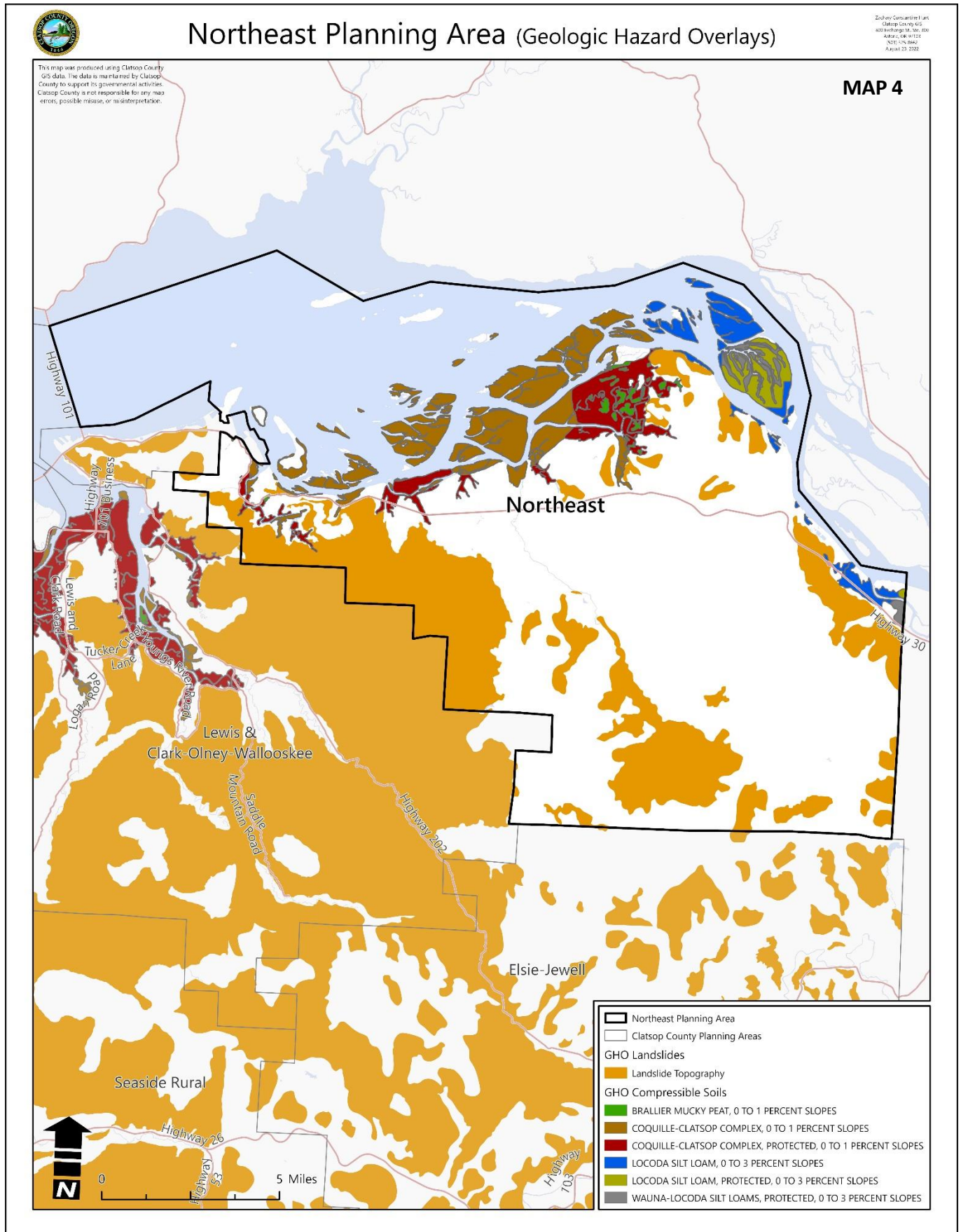
1. **Mass movement:** Landslides are the major geologic hazard of the uplands. Landslide topography is present and occurrences of inactive landslides are typical. The sedimentary rock of the upland area is much more susceptible to landslides than are the basalt outcrops of the higher peaks. areas of the Northeast (i.e. above George Hill Road and south of the John Day River Road) are suitable for construction if a thorough site investigation is carried out.
2. **Stream flooding:** Some areas along Big Creek have chronic stream flooding and erosion problems that can be solved through careful construction
3. **Streambank erosion:** Streambank erosion can undermine and erode lands containing agricultural crops, grazing lands, dwellings, or other structure.
4. **Wildfires:** As climate changes occur, wildfires may become more frequent and intense in areas once thought immune to this type of hazard. As new development occurs in forested areas, additional fire mitigation/retardant standards may be required.

Hazard areas in the Northeast County are shown on **Maps 3 and 4**.

These areas may pose risks for the construction of buildings, utilities and roads, and for the safety of persons living in those areas. The degree of risk varies over these areas. For example, s; certain sites in landslide-prone or mass movement







## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system in the Northeast as well as the whole County, has been greatly influenced by the natural features of the land and water; the single most important factor being the Columbia River.

Highway 30 is the major state highway in the Northeast. The highway is in good repair. On weekends and holidays, traffic volumes increase, becoming particularly gridlocked as vehicles reduce speeds and enter the Astoria city limits. While highway approaches are minimized by the Oregon Department of Transportation, additional residential development on the north and south sides of Highway 30 are collected via local roads to limited access points with the intersection of the highway. During peak traffic hours, the increased local traffic may have difficulty accessing or exiting the highway. As noted on **Table 1**, below, traffic on U.S. Highway 30 had been increasing prior to the start of the pandemic lockdowns in March 2020. While traffic volumes dropped in 2020, it is anticipated that those volumes will again continue to rise beginning in 2021 and through the 20-year planning horizon.

<b>TABLE 1: U.S. HIGHWAY 30 TRAFFIC VOLUMES (2018-JULY 9, 2021)</b>			
	<b>AADT*</b>		
<b>ROAD SEGMENT</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Columbia/Clatsop County Line</b>	6,797	7,500	6,900
<b>0.02 Miles East of Westport Ferry Road</b>	6,873	7,600	7,000
<b>0.02 Miles West of Westport Ferry Road</b>	6,322	7,000	6,400
<b>0.20 Miles East of Taylorville Road</b>	6,056	6,700	6,300
<b>0.20 Miles West of Taylorville Road</b>	4,566	5,100	5,400
<b>Fertile Valley Creek Bridge</b>	5,551	6,200	5,500
<b>Big Creek Bridge</b>	6,797	7,500	7,000
<b>0.03 Miles West of John Day Road</b>	7,819	8,700	8,400
<b>0.05 Miles West of Nimitz Road</b>	9,577	10,600	10,600

\*AADT: Average Annual Daily Trips

Source: Oregon Department of Transportation, State Highway Traffic Volumes

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The automobile is the major transportation mode in the Northeast. There is limited bus service for the area. Per information from the 2019 *Clatsop County Housing Strategies Report*, 39% of working residents work somewhere outside of Clatsop County. Of the jobs available within the county, 70% are filled by persons who live within the county. However, if that data is more finely filtered by employment within incorporated areas, the majority of those positions are held by non-residents of the city where the job is located. This indicates that while people may reside in one area of the county, they are commuting to employment in other parts of the county.

Rail service is provided by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation and is limited to freight traffic. Major rail traffic is from Portland and consists mainly of exports of lumber and paper products from the Wauna mill. Water transportation is also utilized by other industries. The Columbia River handles all classes of waterborne commerce including dry cargo ships and tankers up to 50,000 tons, barges, commercial fishing vessels and pleasure craft. Many of the sloughs and channels are used for transportation.

### WATER SYSTEMS

While the Comprehensive Plan and companion community plans identify water districts that operate within the unincorporated regions of Clatsop County, the County does not have jurisdiction over these special districts. These facilities are subject to state regulations, which are overseen by the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Services program. It should be noted that the information provided in **Table 2** below is only a static representation of the water districts at a specific point in time. The Northeast Planning Area includes the following water districts:

TABLE 2: NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA - DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS				
System	Number of Connections	Estimated Total Population Served	Existing Source and Water Rights	System Size (Range of Connections)
Burnside Water District	112	315	Purchased Surface Water	SMALL: 1-299
Fernhill Community Water System	91	300	Purchased Surface Water	SMALL: 1-299
Georgia Pacific CO LLC Wauna	1	700	Surface Water	Data Not Available
John Day Water District	101	350	Purchased Surface Water	Data Not Available
Knappa Water Association	574	1,800	Groundwater	LARGE: 300+
Olney-Walluski Water Association	233	530	Purchased Surface water	SMALL: 1-299
OPRD Bradley State Wayside	2	383	Groundwater	Data Not Available

<b>TABLE 2: NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA - DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS</b>				
<b>System</b>	<b>Number of Connections</b>	<b>Estimated Total Population Served</b>	<b>Existing Source and Water Rights</b>	<b>System Size (Range of Connections)</b>
<b>Wauna Water District</b>	68	188	Groundwater	Data Not Available
<b>Westport Heights</b>	40	90	Groundwater	Data Not Available
<b>Westport Water Association</b>	165	550	Purchased Groundwater	SMALL: 1-299
<b>Wickiup Water District</b>	636	1,590	Surface Water	LARGE: 300+

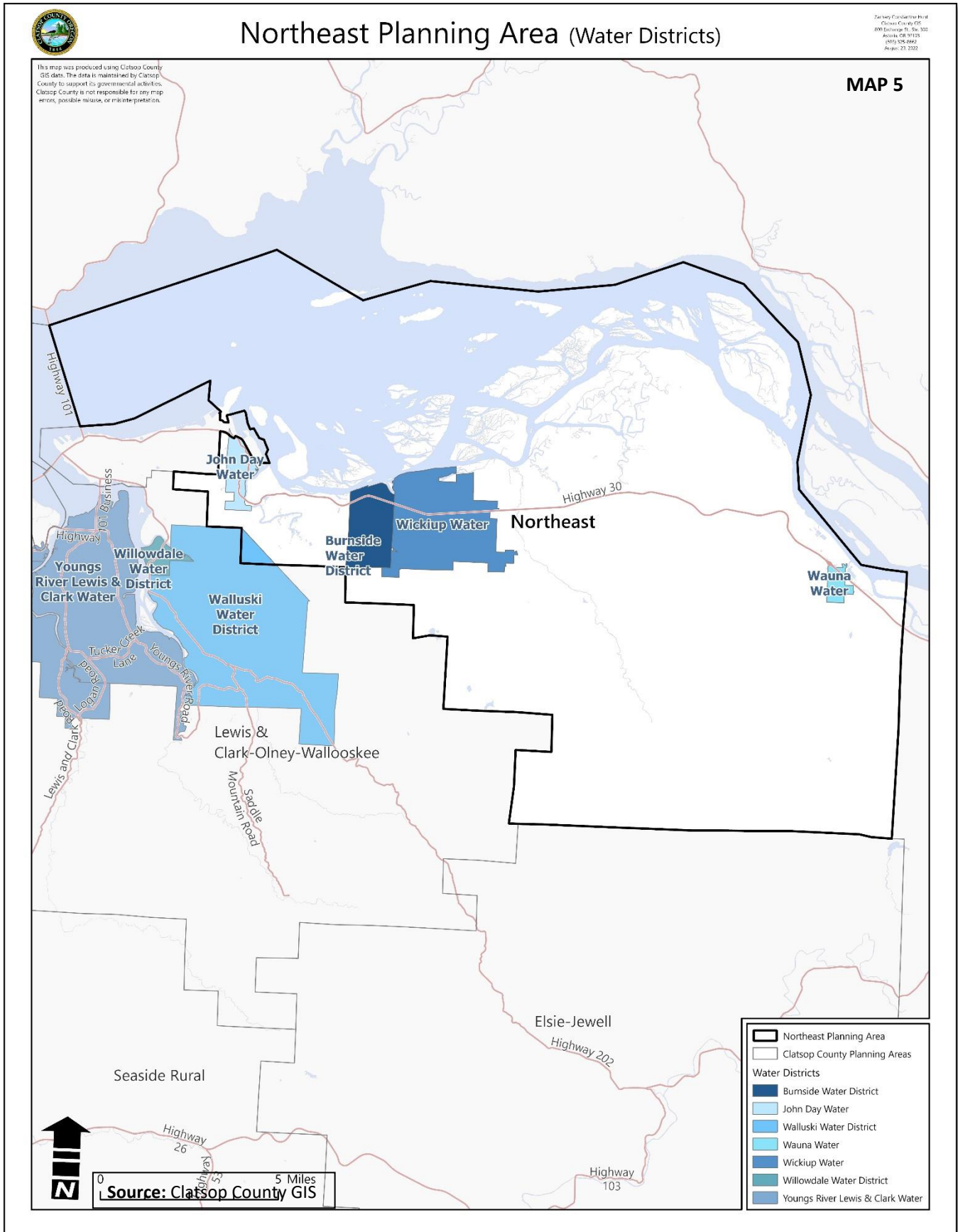
**Source:** Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Data Online, October 19, 2021

The City of Astoria supplies water to the Burnside, Fernhill, John Day, Walluski and Willowdale districts. Per information from the *Astoria Water System Master Plan DRAFT*, dated February 9, 2021, the combined water usage of those seven districts, accounted for approximately 10% of the City's total metered water usage. Additional water service is provided to portions of east Clatsop County, such as the River Ranch Subdivision, by the Clatskanie Public Utility District (PUD).

The Wickiup Water District serves an estimated 1,590 people in the Svensen area from its water source at Little Creek. The system has connected with the Burnside system providing this district with the future potential to purchase water from Astoria.

The Knappa Water System serves an estimated 1,800 people in the Knappa and Brownsmead areas. A number of well systems are also being utilized in the area and may be a feasible alternative where the water districts have limited capacity.





## **SEWER SYSTEMS**

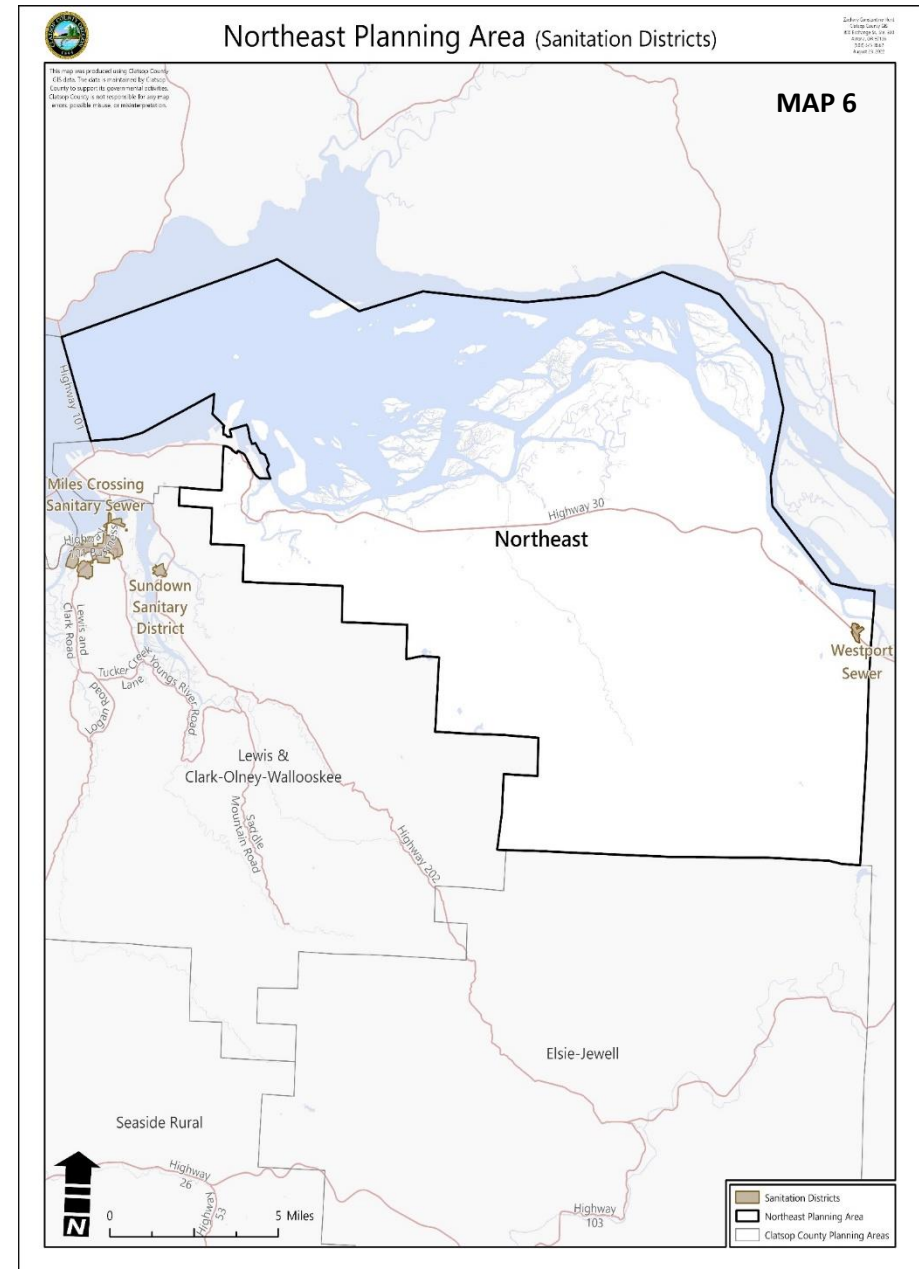
Septage disposal in the Northeast Planning Area is primarily through the use of individual private septic systems. The only sewer district that is operated within the Planning Area is the Westport Sanitary District, which is operated by Clatsop County Public Works. This district serves 90 connections and is funded by user fees. In 2007, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) required the district to expand and reconfigure its sewer plant to an ultraviolet treatment of wastewater in order comply with wastewater standards. Those improvements cost in excess of \$1 million and were funded by a \$1 million grant from the Oregon Economic Development Division, a \$112,250 loan from DEQ and by user fees.

While not connected to sewer systems, houseboats and floating structures are intrinsically combined with septage issues in the Northeast Planning area. Since 2000, expansion of this type of residence has been limited to a portion of the John Day River where they have historically been a way of life. Current regulations of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) concerning sewage disposal indicate that additional houseboats are unlikely to be allowed in the future. The County is required to support all requirements and standards required by DEQ with regard to houseboats and floating structures.

## **DIKING DISTRICTS**

There are 10 diking districts within the Northeast Planning Area:

- John Day #14 (also known as John Day Diking District): Active
- Svensen Island District (formerly known as Svensen Island Drainage Improvement District): Registered as an improvement district in 1976



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- Karlson Island #10 (also known as Karlson Island Diking District): Last record in 1939
- Knappa #12 (also known as Knappa Diking District): Last record from 1947. No long official, but function unofficially.
- Blind Slough Dike Improvement #7 (formerly Diking District #7; also known as Blind Slough Diking District): Became a Diking Improvement Company in 1986
- Gnat Creek #4 (also known as Blind Slough / Gnat Creek Diking District): Last record was in 1961
- Blair Diking District: Map was from 1937, but no other records exist. District may never have come into existence
- Tenasilahee Island #6 (also known as Tenasilahee Island Diking District): Dissolved January 6, 1984
- Westport Drainage Improvement #15 (also known as Westport Drainage District): Active
- Clatsop #1 Drainage Improvement Company: Active
- Clatsop Diking Improvement Company #7: Active

As noted above, many of these diking districts are no longer active. This has implications for the responsibility for ongoing repairs and maintenance. Because much of the agricultural land along the Columbia River and contributing sloughs and streams was created by constructing dikes, these areas are vulnerable when maintenance is deferred. Rising sea levels will also impact dikes and the land behind those structures if the dikes are not properly maintained.

### **SCHOOLS**

There are three school districts within the planning area: Astoria District #1, Knappa School District #4 and Clatskanie School District #6J. In 2018, voters approved a \$70 million bond initiative for investments in safety and security, needed repairs and energy efficiencies, replacement of a portion of the Astoria Middle School, and investments in vocational and technical education.

In November 2021, voters approved, by a 68%-32% affirmative vote, to approve a \$14 million bond measure to make improvements to Hilda Lahti Elementary and Knappa High School. The funds will be used to construct a new building containing classrooms, a science lab, a learning hub, and to construct a gym at the elementary school. The monies will also be used to develop a new preschool. Other maintenance issues, such as deteriorating roofs, and upgrades to electrical, heating and ventilation systems are also scheduled as part of the bond package.

TABLE 3: NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA – SCHOOL SYSTEMS								
System	Knappa School District #4		Astoria School District #1				Clatskanie School District #6J	
	Hilda Lahti Elementary	Knappa High School	John Jacob Astor Elementary	Lewis and Clark Elementary	Astoria Middle School	Astoria High School	Clatskanie Elementary	Clatskanie Middle School
Grades	K-8	9-12	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	K-6	7-12
Enrollment	349	141	357	424	433	562	367	282

Source: Oregon Department of Education At-A-Glance District Profiles 2020-21

## FIRE PROTECTION

The Northeast planning area is served by a the Knappa-Svensen-Burnside-Brownsmead RFPD and the Westport-Wauna RFPD.

The Knappa Fire District services approximately 100 square miles within Clatsop County, from Bradley Summit on Highway 30 to the city limits of Astoria. In 2020 the District responded to over 550 calls for service, including the following:

- Fires
- Medical
- Public assists
- HAZMAT
- Wildland fire
- Mutual aid calls

The District, which was formed in 1955, has merged with the Brownsmead fire district and with the John Day-Fernhill RFPD. The District's main station is located on Hillcrest Loop. Sub-stations are located in Svensen, Brownsmead and on Highway 30 east of the John Day River Bridge. The District has an ISO rating of 4.



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## **NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09**

The Westport-Wauna RFPD serves a population of approximately 380 within a 3-square mile district, per information from the Oregon State Fire Marshal's 2020 Annual Report. The District also has an ISO rating of 4. The District is primarily volunteer-operated and has only one paid staff position.

### **POWER GENERATION**

The primary Pacific Power & Light (PP&L) transmission lines serving the County are 115KV lines from substations in Astoria, Cannon Beach, Fern Hill, Knappa Svensen, Lewis and Clark, Seaside, Warrenton, and Youngs Bay (Source: 2021 Oregon Distribution System Plan, PacifiCorp). Transmission lines operated by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) traverse the northern portion of the Northeast Planning Area.

The Clatskanie PUD, which was formed in 1940, provides electric services to the Westport area. The District also owns 50% of the 36 megawatt Wauna co-generation facility, which began operating in 1997. In 2020, 83.4% of the District's power purchases were from the Bonneville Power Administration (**Source:** 2020 Clatskanie PUD Annual Audit Report).

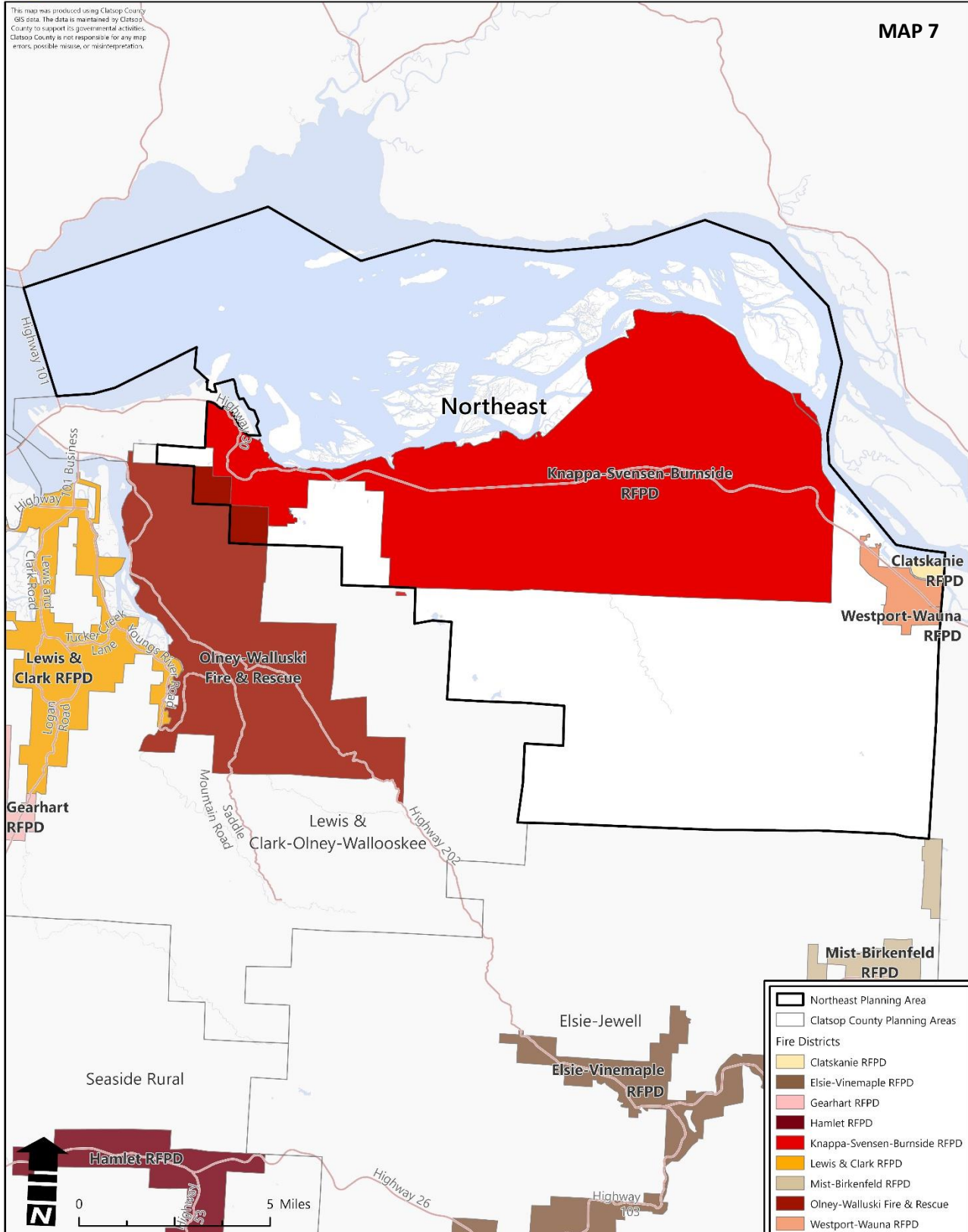
The natural gas main feeder line also bisects the Northeast. No power is directly produced in the County.



# Northeast Planning Area (Rural Fire Protection Districts)

Clatsop County GIS  
000 Exchange St., Ste. 100  
Astoria, OR 97103  
(503) 325-4600  
August 15, 2016

MAP 7



## NATURAL RESOURCES

### SURFACE WATER AND GROUNDWATER QUALITY

The occurrence and distribution of water, whether surface or subsurface, within Clatsop County is dependent upon many complex factors, including precipitation, topography, geology, soils, vegetation, and winds, waves, and tides.

Per information from the National Weather Service, average annual rainfall in the Astoria area is approximately 70.26 inches. Oregon State University places precipitation levels in the Northeast Planning Area between 70-100 inches per year. Much of this precipitation falls on the relatively impervious and steep slopes of the Coast Range Mountains. As a consequence, the waters rapidly run off, drain into the streams and rivers and thence, ultimately to the ocean. Despite the high precipitation in the County, relatively little of the water that falls as rain and snow in the mountains infiltrates into the ground to sustain the stream flows during the late summer and early fall period when there is relatively little precipitation. Thus, during the summer months, the streams have a very low flow because of limited groundwater storage.

The streams in the study area are an invaluable resource for the people in the region. These streams provide water for the residents of the area, water for irrigation and industry, and habitats for both fish and wildlife.

Two of the major streams in the planning area are Big Creek and Gnat Creek. As shown on **Tables 4 and 5**, below, these streams fluctuate considerably between January and August. In summer months, there may be insufficient flow to fulfill instream and off-stream water rights. For example, Big Creek has an average stream flow of 365 cubic feet per second (cfs) in January as compared to a flow of 28 cfs in August. Gnat Creek has an average of 232 cfs in January while in the summer months the stream decreases until August when it is 7cfs. During the winter months when the streams are at their peak, there is plenty of water in the stream channels and water supply is not a problem. As the streams dry up during the summer, however, if the existing water rights are exercised, water shortages may occur. Big Creek is an example of a stream that could possibly run dry in August. The average stream flow is 28 cfs. Existing water rights on Big Creek presently total 58.120 cfs. Should everyone use their complete water rights at the same time, Big Creek would have a stream flow of - 30.120, which removes all the water from the stream. As wildfires become more frequent and intense, this may present challenges and risks to area firefighters.

**TABLE 4: BIG CREEK STREAM FLOW AND NET WATER AVAILABILITY (Cubic Feet / Second)**

MONTH	NATURAL STREAM FLOW	COMSUMPTIVE USES AND STORAGES	EXPECTED STREAM FLOW	INSTREAM FLOW REQUIREMENTS	NET WATER AVAILABILITY
January	191.00	3.21	188.00	130.00	57.80
February	199.00	3.21	196.00	130.00	65.80
March	149.00	3.21	146.00	130.00	15.80
April	123.00	3.21	120.00	130.00	-10.20
May	92.20	3.23	89.00	78.00	11.00
June	46.40	4.08	42.30	52.00	-9.68
July	23.90	4.18	19.70	36.30	-16.60
August	16.70	4.14	12.60	25.20	-12.60
September	17.00	4.03	13.00	24.30	-11.30
October	20.80	3.21	17.60	50.00	-32.40
November	38.10	3.21	34.90	99.00	-64.10
December	131.00	3.21	128.00	130.00	-2.21
ANNUAL	97,000.00	2,540.00	94,400.00	64,100.00	36,000.00

Source: Oregon Water Resources Department

**TABLE 5: GNAT CREEK STREAM FLOW AND NET WATER AVAILABILITY (Cubic Feet / Second)**

MONTH	NATURAL STREAM FLOW	COMSUMPTIVE USES AND STORAGES	EXPECTED STREAM FLOW	INSTREAM FLOW REQUIREMENTS	NET WATER AVAILABILITY
January	122.00	1.28	121.00	0.00	121.00
February	127.00	1.28	126.00	0.00	126.00
March	94.90	1.28	93.60	0.00	93.60
April	78.10	1.28	76.80	0.00	76.80
May	58.80	1.28	57.50	0.00	57.50
June	31.80	1.31	30.50	0.00	30.50
July	18.80	1.32	17.50	0.00	17.50
August	14.40	1.31	13.10	0.00	13.10

TABLE 5: GNAT CREEK STREAM FLOW AND NET WATER AVAILABILITY (Cubic Feet / Second)					
MONTH	NATURAL STREAM FLOW	COMSUMPTIVE USES AND STORAGES	EXPECTED STREAM FLOW	INSTREAM FLOW REQUIREMENTS	NET WATER AVAILABILITY
September	14.70	1.31	13.40	0.00	13.40
October	16.5	1.28	15.20	0.00	15.20
November	26.10	1.28	24.80	0.00	24.80
December	81.00	1.28	79.70	0.00	79.70
ANNUAL	63,000.00	935.00	62,100.00	0.00	62,100.00

Source: Oregon Water Resources Department

It is anticipated that occurrences and duration of drought events will increase in the future.

#### *Gnat Creek Aquifer*

Groundwater usage in Clatsop County has increased along with development over the past 20 years to 30 years. From 1990 to 1995, approximately 250 wells were drilled within the county, compared to over 1,000 wells installed from 2015 to 2020.

Well production rates in the county vary significantly due to the heterogeneity of the Coast Range aquifers, with volumes ranging from less than 10 to over 300 gallons per minute (gpm). Relatively shallow wells, most completed to less than 200 feet deep in unconsolidated alluvium (permeable sand and gravel deposited by streams), have demonstrated fairly stable water levels over the past 20 years. However, stable groundwater levels demonstrated in some shallow alluvial wells could be due to an efficient hydraulic connection between the groundwater system and nearby streams; in some of these cases, most of the water pumped from hydraulically-connected wells actually originates from the streams (i.e., the groundwater aquifer is “recharged” primarily by water from surface water bodies). This capture of surface water by hydraulically-connected wells can cause or exacerbate existing low streamflow conditions.

Deeper wells constructed in basalt and sandstone aquifers within the northeast portion of Clatsop County typically demonstrate an even greater variability of groundwater levels and well yields. For example, a well at the Gnat Creek Fish Hatchery that is completed in sandstones overlain by basalt historically reported flowing artesian conditions, meaning that the groundwater system there is sufficiently pressurized such that water would flow freely above the ground surface if the well were not capped (however, the last water level from that well was submitted to the state in 1987, so it is not known if flowing artesian conditions still exist at that



location). Conversely, two other nearby wells operated by the Knappa Water District, one completed in basalt and sandstone and the other only in basalt, have shown groundwater level declines of about 100 to 140 feet over the past 20 years. Originally-reported well yields for these three particular wells ranged from about 100 to 300 gpm, although it is probable that the two wells suffering significant water level declines can no longer produce their originally-reported yields. Finally, deeper basalt and sandstone wells in this portion of the county may or may not be hydraulically connected to nearby streams.

Due to the exceptional variability of groundwater conditions in Clatsop County, particularly in the upland areas near Big Creek and Gnat Creek, a thorough site-specific hydrogeologic evaluation of prospective well sites should be completed prior to any potential groundwater development efforts by the county.

The aquifer area has been placed in a CONSERVATION designation reflecting the site's high forest site class and potential for forest uses. This designation will protect the aquifer from potential contamination from septic tanks until a study can be completed on the extent and potential of the aquifer.

## **AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

Agriculture is one of the primary uses of land in the Northeast. The Brownsmead community contains many dairy farms and other farms with vegetable crops such as corn and peas. The Knappa, Svensen and John Day areas are characterized by many small part-time farms interspersed with rural housing and woodlots. Livestock grazing is the predominant use of farms in these areas, especially in the lowlands subject to water inundation. Many of these farmlands were created and are protected by dikes. More detailed discussion on the impacts of these dikes is discussed in the Public Facilities and Services section, above.

Forest lands are also a predominant use of the land area of the Northeast. Those areas owned by corporate and state interests are intensively managed for timber production. Some small property owners operate holly tree farms or nurseries or manage woodlots. In 2019, the Oregon Department of Forestry began drafting a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). As currently proposed, the HCP would significantly limit the amount of timber that could be harvested on state-owned lands over the next 70 years. If approved as drafted, the HCP poses significant economic impacts for workers, employers, local governments and special districts.

## OPEN SPACE, HISTORIC, RECREATION, SCENIC AND NATURAL AREAS

The following discussion and policies are in addition to those found in Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces; Goal 8: Recreational Needs; Goal 16: Estuarine Resources; and Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands. Sites inventoried in this section that are in addition to those inventoried in the above referenced reports are local desires and are not to be construed as additional Goal 5 site requirements.

### RECREATION

Clatsop County and coordinating agencies have emphasized recreational resources by developing parks and picnic areas, boat launch sites, and beach access points within the Northeast planning area, including:

- **John Day County Park** - consisting of 54 acres on the river front, public boat launch, toilets and parking facilities.
- **Big Creek County Park** - consisting of 36 acres near the creek. The park contains a ball field and public access to Big Creek fishery and open space recreation. No facilities are provided at the park.
- **Aldrich Point Boat Ramp** - on one acre with one boat lane for Columbia River access. This privately-owned ramp and access point accommodate both motor boats and kayaks and is privately owned and operated.
- **Nicolai OHV Area** – Located approximately 25 miles east of Astoria off State Route 30, the OHV area offers opportunities for all classes of OHV's with easy to moderate trails that meander through 30 miles of working forest. The area, which has four designated campsites and a staging area, picnic sites, and restroom facilities, is operated by the Oregon Department of Forestry.
- **Westport Boat Ramp Park** - This 27-acre facility was officially opened to the public on February 1, 2022. The improvements include a public boat launch, picnic and restroom facilities and a park host.



*Nicolai Mountain OHV Area*



*Aldrich Point Boat Ramp*

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## NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09

Other access points and recreational facilities in the area are at Gnat Creek, providing fishing, hunting, and picnicking, and at the Bradley Wayside scenic viewpoint and picnic area. Several trails leading from the Gnat Creek Fish Hatchery connect to Gnat Creek Falls and the State Department of Forestry campground on the west side of Highway 101.

Ballfields and playgrounds are located at the Big Creek Park, and Knappa High School. Private riding stables and campgrounds are also located throughout the Northeast Planning Area.

The plan recognizes the importance of providing public access to the Columbia River, its tributaries, and sloughs. These access points, however, should be limited to preserve the area's natural environment for wildlife and to protect areas from overuse and potential damage.

### OPEN SPACE, HISTORIC, SCENIC AND NATURAL AREAS

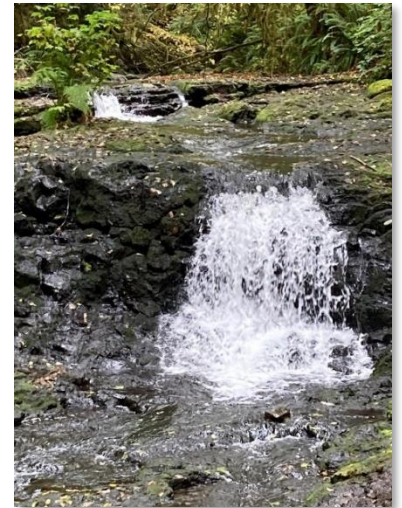
Northeast Clatsop County is rich in natural history and beauty. The abundant network of channels and shoals, the wooded islands on the river, high sheer bluffs, heavily forested mountains, and green meadows makes this area unique to the other coastal communities. This ancestral homeland to the Chinook Indian tribe, which remains unceded, was inhabited centuries before the coming of Lewis and Clark. Later loggers, fisherman, hunters and farmers found their way to this land by the river. Today, the Northeast Planning Area is still sparsely settled with much to preserve and enhance.

#### *Open Space*

Open space is one of the benefits that results from resource management, which relates to the ability of the land to yield a resource on a sustained basis. Resource management lands, such as forest and agriculture lands provide or have potential economic value which requires some form of protection to maintain their continued utilization. A majority of the Northeast area is currently preserved for forest uses, while the Brownsmead area has been preserved for agricultural uses.

Parks and other recreational areas provide open space as part of their function. Gnat Creek Park and Big Creek Park consists of large open spaces that will remain undeveloped. A complete inventory of recreation areas, including ballparks and playgrounds is contained in the Recreation Section, above.

Areas that are to be preserved in their natural state for resource or wildlife protection such as the Columbia River Islands, will provide large areas of open space in the Northeast.



*Barrier Falls*

The Northeast Community Plan encourages the clustering of homes to provide additional open space. In addition, the provision of acreage homesites maintains a rural open space character for much of the Northeast. Descriptions of these areas are contained in the following pages.

***Historic Areas***

Historical sites which have been inventoried in the Northeast Planning Area include the Lewis and Clark campsite near the old Knappa dock, and the Westport log tunnel. Two old sawmills, the Bradwood Sawmill and the Shepherd and Morse Sawmill, have also been identified and serve as important landmarks of the economic history of the County. These sites are potentially important to industry and are located on land especially suited for water dependent uses. What remains of their past use (i.e. pilings, foundations, etc.), however, will probably be removed to make room for new development. Signs would be appropriate to inform the public of the historical nature of these sites.

The Lewis and Clark campsite is also believed to be the site of a Native American village and has been investigated by amateur archeologists. A residence presently exists on the site and further excavation of the area may be difficult. Another archeological site is located under the railroad tracks in approximately the same area. Both sites are currently privately owned. The Westport log tunnel is in a forest management area and the owner has recognized its significance and intends to protect the area. A trail leading up to the tunnel is oftentimes used by hikers.

***Scenic and Natural Areas***

Scenic views that characterize the Northeast area include the vistas of Wickiup, Nicolai and other Coast Range Mountains and views of the Columbia River. The Coast Range Mountains dominate the landscape of the area and can be viewed traveling along the Columbia River Highway as well as through much of the planning area. The coastal foothills are a forest resource area and are protected from intensive development. The Columbia River Highway closely follows the river from the John Day River to Settler's Point providing many scenic vantage points. From this area eastward, a visitor to the area must leave the highway and follow a County road down to the river. Particularly interesting is the Knappa dock area and Aldrich Point, both areas having a boat dock or boat launch open to public use. The most satisfying scenic views, however, can be obtained from the thousands of acres of water open to recreational use.

The Bradley wayside, located near the top of Clatsop Crest, offers a sweeping vista of the Columbia River and surrounding miles of countryside. This is probably the most well-known scenic area and is preserved as a State Park.

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## NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09

Per OAR 660-022-0160, “natural areas” are areas listed in the Oregon State Register of Natural Heritage Resources. Within the Northeast Planning Area the following sites have been identified:

- Blind Slough Swamp Preserve (1995)
- Knappa Slough Island (1999)

Other potential site in the Northeast Planning Area for possible voluntary inclusion on the Oregon State Register of Natural Heritage Resources include:

- **Bradwood Cliffs:** The area consists of 40 acres of old growth Douglas Fir forest standing on a basalt ledge overlooking the Columbia River. This stand is highly natural and the old trees could continue to constitute a viable natural ecosystem protected.
- **Knappa Gorge:** This area consists of a scenic gorge with areas of basalt cliffs, outcroppings, and steep terrain with Big Creek flowing below. A logging road parallels the creek in the bottom of the gorge. Passive recreation potential is high; a trail up the gorge would be compatible with the natural character and could also support scientific research.
- **City of Astoria Watershed:** This 3,700-acre area contains the entire Bear Creek watershed down to the dam and Astoria reservoir. Included are Wickiup Lake and Middle Lake, both small and natural. Per information from the 2014 *City of Astoria Bear Creek Watershed Forest Resource Management Plan*, the majority of the property was logged from the 1930s to the 1950s. The reforestation efforts included a mix of planting, seeding and natural regeneration, resulting in a forest with a mixture of species, density and age classes.
- **Knappa Slough:** The approximately 150 acres is a segment of the natural shoreline on the Columbia River, comprising tidelands, fringe marsh, and riparian swamp. One of the few remaining segments of natural shoreline, the slough provides needed habitat for bald eagles, great blue herons, and waterfowl.
- **Big Creek and Little Creek Estuary:** This highly diverse estuary is exceptionally unique and one of the few remaining examples of pristine estuary on the lower Columbia River. The lowland is estuary dominated by a Sitka Spruce swamp with fringe marsh and riparian hardwoods bordering on the slough. The streams support large anadromous fish runs and provide excellent feeding grounds for the endangered Northern Bald Eagle.
- **Gnat Creek Falls:** Gnat Creek has a series of seven falls dropping a total of 1,500 feet in less than one mile, the highest having a drop of 60 feet. This very serene and beautiful area has some of the most spectacular waterfalls in Clatsop County. A well designed trail would alleviate some of the danger of maneuvering on the wet, steep slopes and open the area for hiking.
- **Gnat Creek Marsh:** The marsh is on a flat, lowland surge plain near the mouth of Gnat Creek on Blind Slough. It is dominated by a rich diversity of marsh plants. The marsh is generally undisturbed.



- **Plympton Creek Falls:** The falls lie in a steep forested canyon above Westport. Giant fire-scarred old Douglas Fir up to six feet in diameter cover the rocky steep slopes. A large 75 foot high basalt ridge blocks the canyon to form fan-shaped Plympton Creek Falls which drops 30 feet to a deep pool and gravel bar.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Northeast Planning Area is perhaps the most important habitat area for salmon and fish species, whales, eulachon, eagles, waterfowl, white-tail deer, owls, hawks, marbled murrelet, and other wildlife in Clatsop County.

Sensitive areas for fish in Northeast Clatsop County are rivers, streams, and estuaries. Big Creek, Gnat Creek, Bear Creek and Plympton Creek have been identified as anadromous fish spawning streams. Anadromous fish hatch in upland freshwater streams, migrate to sea to spend a major part of their life, and return to the freshwater upland stream to spawn a new generation of fish. Important to these streams is the maintenance of water quality and low turbidity levels. Fish hatcheries, which augment the natural production of anadromous fish, are located on Big Creek and Gnat Creek. These facilities are a significant component of the area's economic and environmental sectors.

Big Creek Hatchery, which began operation in 1941, is located 16 miles east of Astoria two miles south of Knappa off Highway 30, and is approximately three miles upstream from Big Creek's confluence with the Columbia River. Current water rights total 36,158 gallons per minute plus an additional 4.2 cubic feet second reservoir water right. All water supplies are delivered by gravity but can be pumped for reuse if required. The facility is staffed with 7.42 FTE's. Per information in the 2020 Program Management Plan, the Fall Chinook, Spring Chinook, Coho and Steelhead programs are harvest programs intended to mitigate for fishing and harvest opportunities due to habitat loss and blockages caused by the Columbia Basin hydropower systems. The Chum Salmon program is a conservation program intended to increase the number of naturally produced fish. (**Source:** Big Creek Hatchery Program Management Plan 2020).

Gnat Creek Hatchery is located along Gnat Creek, a lower Columbia River tributary approximately 17 miles east of Astoria. The hatchery was constructed in 1960 as part of the Columbia River Fisheries Development Program, which was designed to enhance declining fish runs in the Columbia River Basin. The area of the site is 15.27 acres, leased from the Oregon Department of Forestry. Water rights total 21,643 gallons per minute from Gnat Creek, an unnamed stream and a well. Hatchery water is delivered by gravity flow from Gnat Creek. Water flows range from a high of 3,320 gallons per minute to a low of 1,810 gallons per minute. Well water is used for domestic purposes and the unnamed stream is not currently used for fish culture. The facility is operated with 3.0 FTE's. Per information from the 2019 Management Plan, the Spring Chinook and Winter Steelhead programs are harvest programs. (**Source:** Gnat Creek Hatchery Program Management Plan 2019).

Headwater areas are sensitive drainages that fish generally do not inhabit, but where human activities can cause a direct impact on downstream water quality. The goal for these areas is to reduce erosion and turbidity. Maintaining cold, clear and abundant water supply to promote and maintain healthy fish habitat is imperative. Headwater areas in the Northeast are located in areas planned for forest uses which thereby limits development.

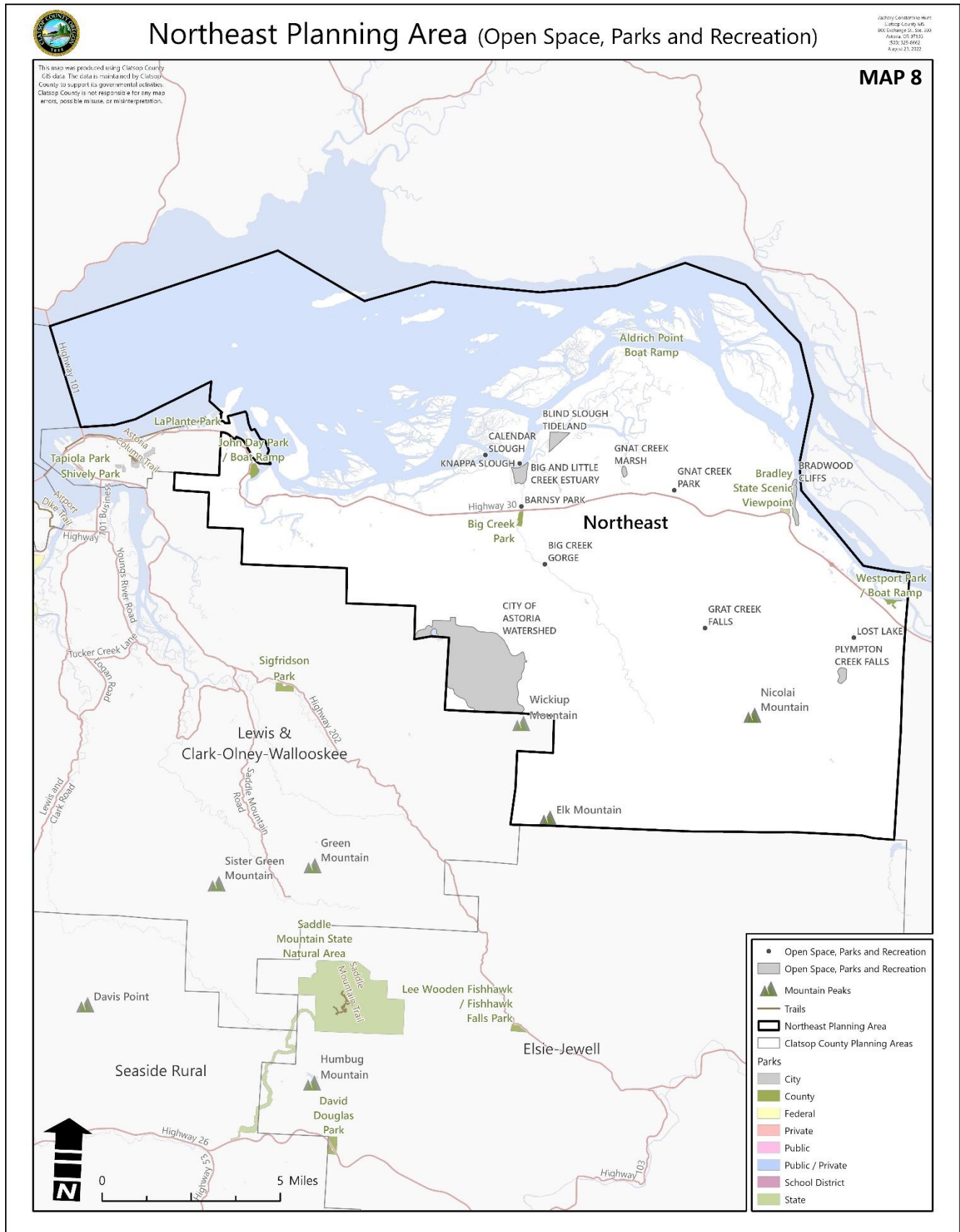
The Northeast Planning Area also contains one of the last remaining areas inhabited by the endangered Columbian White-tailed Deer. Essential habitat has been mapped to include all of Tenasillahe Island and areas north and east of Westport. Tenasillahe Island is part of the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer and is designated predominantly Conservation in the Lower River and Islands Plan.

The diked land east of Westport is designated Conservation Forest Lands which provides for farm, forest, and open space uses compatible with maintenance of Columbia White-Tailed Deer habitat. Portions of the peninsula north of Westport have previously been committed to residential use. Previous subdivision approval required installation of appropriate fencing and required the adjacent wetland be protected for continued habitat use. This wetland area has been designated "Conservation" in the CREST Plan.

The Northeast area is an important nesting, feeding and resting area for resident and migrating waterfowl. The Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge includes approximately 20 islands stretching over 27 miles of the Columbia River, from the mouth upstream nearly to Skamakowa, WA. The riverine islands contain tidal sand flats and marshes, forested swamps and upland pasture. These habitats support large numbers of waterfowl, gulls, terns, wading birds, shorebirds, and a variety of raptors and songbirds. This refuge has been protected with NATURAL and CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES designations in the Plan.

Bald eagles have historically nested in large numbers on the Lower Columbia River. Because of habitat destruction, the population has drastically declined. The Twilight Eagle Sanctuary has been established for the protection of bald eagle habitat.

Ruffed grouse, blue grouse, mountain quail, valley quail, and ring-necked pheasant are the most numerous and most hunted upland game birds in ODFW's Harvest Area 1, which includes Clatsop County. Maintaining a wide variety of vegetation is important, especially seed and fruit bearing plants. Declining populations of upland game birds may be attributed to chemical spraying of nuisance insects and vegetation, predator increases and habitat changes. With reference to big game, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife classifies areas within the County as Major Big Game Range, Peripheral Big Game Range and Excluded Range.



## DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

### ***Purpose and Intent of Rural Residential Development in the Northeast Planning Area:***

It is the purpose and intent of Clatsop County to maintain the rural character of residential land outside urban growth boundaries within the Northeast planning area by preserving and protecting concentrated open space and natural resources, and minimizing the impact of rural residential development on essential services, while also allowing low density residential development.

Therefore, it is the County's purpose and intent that all residential planned developments and subdivision developments in the Northeast planning area shall be clustered which will ensure that the rural character is maintained. **Map 13** details the land use designations assigned within the Clatsop Plains Planning Area. Detailed zoning maps can be located on the Clatsop County [website](#).

### **HOUSING**

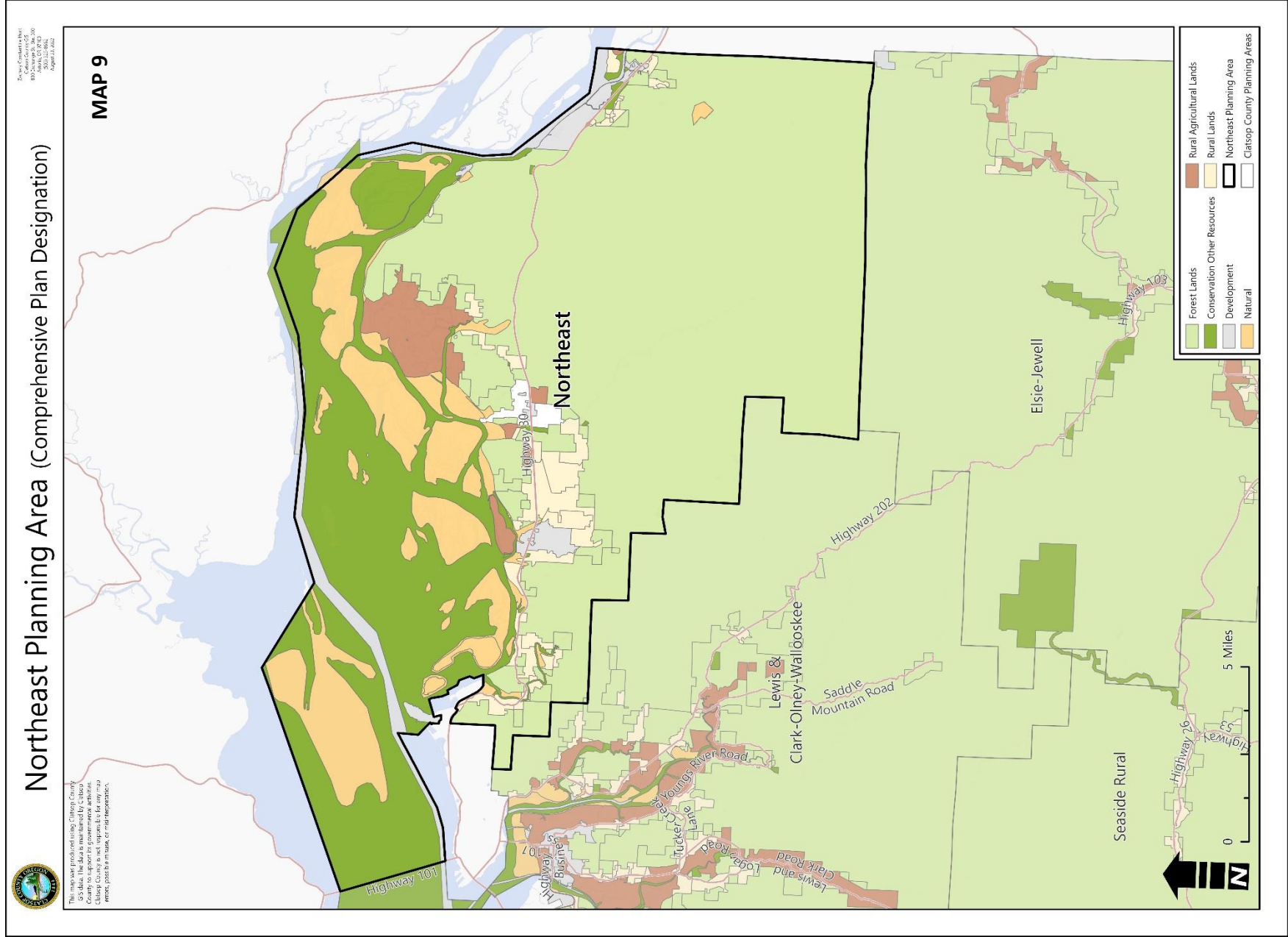
Per information from the 2020 decennial census, the Knappa-Brownsmead grew 7.6% between 2010 and 2020, have a population of 2,144. Svensen, which was not counted as a separate place in 2010, had a 2020 population of 853.

The biggest building boom occurred in 1967 when the Wauna Mill opened. Since that time, new construction has continued on a relatively steady basis within the Northeast Planning Area. Between 2005 and November 24, 2021, 254 permits were issued for the construction of new single-family and two-family dwellings in the Northeast Planning Area. During that same time period 912 permits were issued countywide, indicating that 27.8% of new homes constructed during that timeframe were located within the Northeast Planning Area.

The 2019 *Clatsop County Housing Strategies Report* states that over 60% of the housing stock in the entire county was constructed prior to 1980. Over 40% of the county's housing stock was constructed prior to 1950. The homes in the Northeast County are primarily single family detached dwellings.

As construction of buildings increases, proper sewage disposal by individual sewage systems becomes more imperative and the need for community sewers may become more prominent during the 20-year planning horizon. Increasing populations will also add pressure to the water districts that serve these neighborhoods. The availability of water and septic capacity must be considered in the housing plan for the area.

Goal 2: Land Use Planning of the countywide Comprehensive Plan includes definitions and details on each of the County's six land use designations. Discussion of each designation, specific to the Northeast Planning Area, is below.





## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

### ***Development***

Areas within Urban Growth Boundaries and Rural Service Areas are included in this designation. Lands within the Urban Growth Boundary are those determined to be necessary and suitable for future urban growth. The Urban Growth Boundary for the Northeast area is around the City of Astoria and Tongue Point.

A Rural Service Area is an unincorporated area located some distance away from a city and contains residential densities similar to those found in cities. The community of Westport has historically had fairly dense housing and has been a small commercial center for the residents and highway travelers. Poor soils, failing septic tanks, and raw sewage outfalls have contributed to the halt of any development in the area for years. A sewer district was formed to correct the situation and later dissolved. Portions of the community has been designated as a rural service area, following the installation of a limited sewer system that is managed by Clatsop County.

### ***Rural Lands and Rural Agricultural Lands***

RURAL LANDS. Rural lands are those lands which are outside the urban growth boundary and are not agricultural lands or forest lands. Rural Lands include lands suitable for sparse settlement, small farms or acreage homesites with no or hardly any public services, and which are not suitable, necessary or intended for urban use.

Many parcels in the Northeast Planning Area that are designated RURAL LANDS contain old town plats and fragmented land ownerships. These areas may require vacation and replatting or utilization of a Planned Development to protect the natural resources of the area. This designation also fulfills the recreational tourist demand for housing which has been characteristic of Clatsop County's Northeast area.

RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS. Agricultural lands are those lands that are to be preserved and maintained for farm use, consistent with existing and future needs for agricultural products, forest and open space. In the Northeast Planning Area, the lands surrounding Brownsmead/Blind Slough have been designated as RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS and zoned Exclusive Farm Use (EFU).

### ***Forest Lands and Conservation Other Resources***

FOREST LANDS AND CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES.

FOREST LANDS. Forest Lands are those lands that are to be retained for the production of wood fiber and other forest uses.

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## NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09

CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES. Conservation Other Resources areas provide important resource or ecosystem support functions such as lakes and wetlands and federal, state and local parks. Other areas designated CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES include lands for low intensity uses which do not disrupt the resource and recreational value of the land.

Lands designated as Forest Lands comprise a majority of the Northeast Planning Area and are typically located inland from the Columbia River. Lands designated as Conservation Other Resources are located primarily located along rivers and streams.

### ***Natural***

A NATURAL area is defined as land and/or water units in which natural processes exist relatively undisturbed or can be restored to a nearly natural state.

In the Northeast Planning Area, lands designated as Natural are located primarily located along the Columbia River shoreline and the islands within the Columbia River.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### GENERAL POLICIES

- Policy A:** Recognizing the contribution of shallow water areas, fresh water marshes, and wetlands to the biological productivity of the Columbia River estuary, the filling of such areas is discouraged. It is also recognized that to develop areas adjacent to the river, some dredging and filling will be necessary. Therefore, potential water-dependent and water-related sites that require the least amount of fill shall be preferred for development.
- Policy B:** Fishing is a traditional industry and lifestyle of the Northeast County. The fishing industry should be preserved and promoted:
1. through the allowance of boat houses, net floats and associated fisheries-related facilities in appropriate waterways,
  2. through production of fish by both hatchery and natural means, and
  3. through close evaluation of industrial development and other activities to ensure compatibility and maintenance of water quality.
- Policy C:** Natural areas in the estuary that are necessary to maintain a healthy balance with development and to maintain the existing quality of life in this area should be given full protection to ensure their preservation. Full protection shall include maintaining the Aquatic Natural and Conservation Shorelands zoning and the Conservation Other Resources land use designations.

### ESTUARY WETLANDS, COASTAL SHORELANDS AND WATER BODIES POLICY – IVY STATION TO THE MOUTH OF BLIND SLOUGH

- Policy A:** The Natural designation of the Big Creek spruce swamp is in recognition of the unique natural fish and wildlife values of this area. This area should continue to remain designated as Natural.

## HOUSING POLICY

**Policy A:** Current regulations of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) concerning sewage disposal indicate that additional houseboats are unlikely. These residences also block navigable waters which could otherwise be used by the public. Since 2000, expansion of this type of residence has been limited to a portion of the John Day River where they have historically been a way of life. The County should continue to support all requirements and standards required by DEQ with regard to houseboats and floating structures.

## RECREATION POLICIES

**Policy A:** Additional locations for public recreational access or expansion of existing facilities within the Northeast Planning area should be jointly considered by interested state agencies, the County's Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee and local recreational organizations to assess needs and protect the environment. Non-intensive recreational uses of the shoreland and water areas that are compatible with the rural character of the area (such as bird watching, canoeing, fishing, hiking, etc.) shall be preferred over high intensity uses.

**Policy B** Prior to expansion of existing or development of new recreational facilities along the river, the County shall assess the needs of the area, and review the proposed use based on the following standards:

1. Access from U.S. Highway 30 must be appropriately located and designed to provide for safe exit from and entry to the highway by large motor homes and vehicles pulling trailers.
2. State or County roads connecting U.S. Highway 30 with access points must be capable of handling the types and volumes of traffic that such a facility would create.
3. The impacts of site development and the resulting traffic upon local residential areas. The County will develop clear and objective standards to ensure that proposals will not have undue impacts on local citizens.

## HISTORIC AREA POLICIES

**Goal:** The history of Clatsop County is multi-faceted and should be recorded and preserved, whenever possible, for future generations.

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## NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09

- Policy A:** The County should pursue technical and financial assistance in order to protect, restore, or purchase significant historical areas, including the Westport log tunnel, that could fulfill the needs for parks, trails, recreation, natural and scenic resources.
- Policy B:** The County should work with the Department of Forestry and other adjoining property owners to develop a protection plan for the Westport log tunnel.
- Policy C:** The County may conduct additional analysis to determine whether Bradwood and Clifton should be included in the Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces historic resources inventory.

## SCENIC AND NATURAL AREA POLICIES

- Policy A:** In order to preserve the scenic views and vistas, off-premise signs and billboards shall not be allowed along the Columbia River Highway.
- Policy B:** Areas identified through the Oregon Natural Heritage Program, including Blind Slough Swamp Preserve and Knappa Slough Island, or the Columbia River Estuary Plan that are rich in wildlife or of a fragile ecological nature shall be considered for protection.
- Policy C:** The Gnat Creek marsh, Big Creek spruce swamp, Plympton Creek waterfalls, Bradwood cliffs, and important marshes along the Columbia River shall be protected from alteration.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE POLICIES

- Policy A:** The County may encourage programs and activities that increase native or hatchery runs on Plympton Creek, Little Creek, Mary's Creek, Ferris Creek, Bear Creek or the John Day River.
- Policy B:** Because of the importance of the Gnat Creek and Big Creek hatcheries, activities of development that could be detrimental to their water quality shall be discouraged in and all waters that drain into these creeks should be managed to avoid harmful effects.
- Policy C:** The County will require that any additional rural residential development at River Ranch be clustered on the more northerly portion of the site. The County will implement other measures recommended to it by the Oregon



Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, for minimizing the impact of additional rural residential development on Columbian White-tail deer.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

- Policy A:** To encourage walking and bicycling the County should coordinate with ODOT to include wide shoulders along state roads.
- Policy B:** The County may coordinate with ODOT to develop a footpath/bicycle path that would link Astoria and Knappa.
- Policy C:** Clatsop County should continue to support the efforts of the Sunset Empire Transportation District to maintain and, if feasible, to expand regular passenger bus serve to the Northeast area of the County.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES POLICIES

- Policy A:** The County should encourage all diking districts and landowners of affected areas to identify those dikes in need of repair and to take appropriate action with assistance from the Corps of Engineers and/or FEMA.
- Policy B:** The County may encourage or coordinate with the Oregon Water Resources Department to determine the extent of the aquifer believed to be along the basalt ridge from Knappa to Westport. Consideration should be given to utilizing this supply for future growth.
- Policy C:** Power systems which utilize solar (i.e. solar farms) and wind generated energy are well suited for the Northeast County and should be encouraged to locate here. The county recognizes that there are limited agricultural lands within the county, but there is also a need to balance that limitation with the need for renewable, sustainable energy sources. To achieve that balance, the county may encourage the use of small-scale solar installations (5 acres or less) that integrate grazing or other agricultural practices with the solar installation.

## ENERGY POLICIES

- Policy A:** The County should consider installation of public electric vehicle charging stations County-owned lands and parks within the Northeast Planning Area.

## LAND USE POLICIES

**Goal: To preserve and maintain the present overall rural quality of life now enjoyed in the Northeast.**

- Policy A:** The County should review the existing commercial zone in Westport and should prepare zoning code amendments to include a variety of permitted and conditional uses, such as single- and multi-family residential.
- Policy B:** The conversion of RURAL LANDS adjacent to forest land which are "built upon or irrevocably committed" to a higher density by rezoning shall be encouraged at Plan updates if it is determined that more land is needed for housing than was anticipated at the time of adoption of the Northeast Plan, and public facilities are adequate to serve higher densities. Conversion of these lands to higher densities should occur before conversion of resource lands (EFU, Forest) to housing.

### IMPLEMENTING OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULES (OAR):

None

### COORDINATING AGENCIES:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)  
Oregon Department of Education (ODE)  
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)  
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)  
Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE)  
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL)  
Oregon Health Authority (OHA)  
Department of Geology and Mineral Inventories (DOGAMI)  
Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District

### BACKGROUND REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DATA:

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**NORTHEAST COMMUNITY PLAN 2040 – DRAFT 09**

*Future Climate Projections Clatsop County*, Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, February 2020  
*Columbia River Estuary Regional Management Plan*, CREST 1979  
2021 Oregon Distribution System Plan, PacifiCorp  
2020 Clatskanie PUD Annual Audit Report  
Bald Eagle Technical Report, March 2016, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
*City of Astoria Bear Creek Watershed Forest Resource Management Plan, 2014*  
Big Creek Hatchery Program Management Plan 2020  
Gnat Creek Hatchery Program Management Plan 2019  
Northeast Environmental Plan (1974)