

PASSED

IN THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER No. 03-1-21-1) IN THE MATTER OF ENDORSING THE EFFORTS OF
) THE MCKENZIE RIVER TRUST AND THE MCKENZIE
) WATERSHED COUNCIL TO SECURE FUNDING FOR
) THE ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION OF THE
) MCKENZIE WATERSHED HABITAT

WHEREAS, Lane County is a founding member of the McKenzie Watershed Council, and as an active partner in the Council, seeks to support the Council's mission to foster better stewardship of the McKenzie Watershed resources through voluntary partnerships and collaboration by a consensus-based process involving all stakeholders within the watershed; and

WHEREAS, over the last seven years the McKenzie Watershed Council, through a community-driven, consensus-based process, has determined existing conditions within the watershed and provided recommendations for future actions to maintain watershed health which are contained in documents such as Action Plan for Water Quality and Fish and Wildlife Habitat (January 1996), Technical Report for Water Quality and Fish and Wildlife Habitat (February 1996), McKenzie River Sub-Basin Assessment (February 2000), McKenzie River Conservation Strategy (January 2002), and McKenzie Watershed Benchmark System (April 2002); and

WHEREAS, these analyses by consensus of the Council have determined priority actions, strategies, partnerships and focus areas for the McKenzie Watershed Council; and

WHEREAS, the highest priority focus area has consistently been identified as the confluence area of the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers due to its present and historic habitat and species richness and diversity, and its critical role in the recovery of several threatened and declining species; and

WHEREAS, among the highest priority actions has consistently been the encouragement of the protection and restoration of key fish and wildlife habitats by the voluntary action of Watershed Council partners working in cooperation with willing landowners; and

WHEREAS, the Council has identified and endorsed collaborative strategies such as conservation easements and fee title acquisition as an appropriate tool to achieve Council Benchmarks for protection of key fish and wildlife habitats; and

WHEREAS, representatives of Lane County, the McKenzie Watershed Council, the McKenzie River Trust, local interest groups, regulatory agencies and private landowners, including representatives of the Green Family, have convened as a group known as the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence Project Steering Committee to engage in a process to envision the future of the McKenzie-Willamette confluence; and

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WHEREAS, the Steering Committee has assessed conditions at the confluence with Biological Evaluation of the Willamette River and McKenzie River Confluence Area (September 2000) which notes that

"compared with much of the rest of the Willamette Valley, (the area) provides an unusual abundance and variety of natural wildlife habitat" (p. 39)

and

"Of most significance are the braided channels of the old lower McKenzie River... Here, exist some of the best opportunities to protect and enhance fish and wildlife. The area between the old McKenzie River channel and the Willamette River (hereafter called the Green Island complex) provides some of the best existing channel diversity (alcoves, side channels, and ponds) and vegetation types to support fish and wildlife. In addition, the cool and productive McKenzie River heavily influences this section of the confluence area. Consequently, there should be a high priority put on protecting and enhancing habitat in this area since this is where natural functions are least disturbed." (p. 45); and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee has offered a vision for the confluence in Land Use, Flood Control and Habitat Enhancement Guidelines for the Confluence Area of the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers (November 2001) which in part states:

"... to work within social constraints and opportunities to enhance key ecological processes and, where practical, to restore lost habitat richness to the Confluence Area. Vestiges of the naturally functioning river system still exist. To the extent that these features contribute to the hydrologic dynamic and biological diversity of the confluence ecosystem, they should be preserved, restored, enhanced or emulated. Toward this end, hallmarks of the desired future condition include the following habitat types and habitat-creating processes:

- A dynamic connection between the river and the flood plain, with flood events that alter the course of the river to create new habitats, including islands, side channels and alcoves;
- A broad flood plain, with diverse aquatic (ponds, active and inactive side channels) and terrestrial (areas of vegetation and openings) habitat types;
- Multiple "braided" channels that change through time;
- The presence and creation of islands;
- Diverse channel composition including riffles, deep and shallow pools, backwaters, and gravel bars;
- Variety of bank and edge conditions varying from very gentle gradient, shallows, pools, undercut banks above pools reinforced by massive root structures;
- Variety of substrates from fines to heavy cobbles;
- Presence of large aquatic (side channels, ponds and other areas) woody debris, particularly large cottonwood and conifer (>2' diameter), in combinations of jams and individual trees, providing velocity breaks, shelter, backwater refuge and vegetation succession;
- Terrestrial (island and mainland) vegetation, particularly trees, in a broad variety of age (emergent to old growth) and indigenous species classes;

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- A tree canopy that is, in areas, thousands of feet wide;
- Areas of freshly disturbed bare ground at or near the water level, loam to cobble, produced by recent flooding, providing the new conditions for the next generation of vegetation succession; and
- Connected habitats that possess the historic features described above" (page 7); and

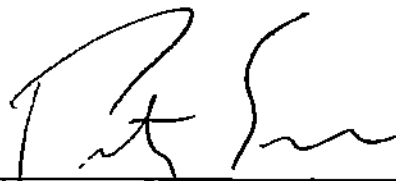
WHEREAS, the Green Family, landowners of a significant amount of land within the confluence area that retains the above-described characteristics, have voluntarily entered into negotiations with, and agreed to sell to, the McKenzie River Trust 850 acres of such land for the express purpose of conserving and enhancing these significant characteristics for the future benefit of watershed health; and

WHEREAS, the McKenzie River Trust, a non-profit 501(3)(c) organization registered in the State of Oregon and an active partner in the McKenzie Watershed Council, with a mission to protect special lands in Lane and Douglas Counties through voluntary partnerships with willing landowners, has agreed to purchase said land from the Green Family and provide management consistent with the Green family's objectives; and

WHEREAS, this acquisition is consistent with the McKenzie Watershed Council's mission to foster stewardship of the McKenzie Watershed resources through voluntary partnerships, and is likewise consistent with the Council's goals and benchmarks.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that on this day, Jan 21, 2003 the Lane County Board of Commissioners met and voted to endorse this transaction and efforts of the McKenzie River Trust and the McKenzie Watershed Council to secure funding for the acquisition and restoration of this important habitat.

DATED this 21st day of January, 2003.



Chair, Lane County Board of Commissioners