

Article 16: Estuarine Resources

An estuary is the tidal mouth of a river, where the freshwater stream is met by the tide. Estuaries are home to unique plant and animal communities that have adapted to brackish water – a mixture of fresh water draining from the land and salty seawater. Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. Many animals rely on estuaries for food, places to breed, and migration stopovers. Estuaries are delicate ecosystems that provide essential habitat for wildlife.

Statewide Planning Goal 16 provides the principal guidance for the planning and management of Oregon's estuaries. The overall objective of Goal 16 is to "to recognize and protect the **unique environmental, economic and social values** of each estuary and associated wetlands; and to protect, maintain, where appropriate develop, and where appropriate restore the long term environmental, economic and social values, diversity and benefits of Oregon's estuaries". To accomplish this, the goal establishes detailed requirements for the preparation of plans and for the review of individual development projects and calls for coordinated management by local, state and federal agencies that regulate or have an interest in activities in Oregon's estuaries.

The goal requires individual estuary plans to designate appropriate uses for different areas within each estuary based on biological and physical characteristics and features, and to provide for review of proposed estuarine alterations to assure that they are consistent with overall management objectives and that adverse impacts are minimized.

Local Context

Estuary management plans and zoning are part of coastal communities comprehensive plans. Estuary management plans allow local jurisdictions the ability to manage its estuaries for the benefit of the public and natural resources in a way that meets the needs of the community. The 1982 Lincoln County Estuary Management Plan (LCEMP) continues to be the principal document for managing the estuarine resources of the Yaquina estuary system. At over 40 years old in most places, updating the estuary management plan is timely. **An updated plan is expected in the near future and an update process is underway. Article 16 will be updated when the estuary management plan is complete.**

The 1982 LCEMP establishes overall management policies for the entire estuary system and sub-area policies for different portions of the estuary system. Toledo is covered by the Toledo Sub-Area policies. The 1982 LCEMP divides the water surface into management units with three main classifications of development, conservation, and natural. For Toledo, the applicable management units (MU) within the Urban Growth Boundary are MU 12 (development classification – Corps authorized channel), MU 25 (conservation classification), MU 31 (development classification), MU 32 (development classification), and MU 33 (natural classification). MU 30 (conservation classification) is located south of the 1982 Urban Growth Boundary on the west side of the Yaquina River. MU 34 (conservation classification) is located upstream from the mouth of Mill Creek just outside of the 1982 Urban Growth Boundary. In 1984, the 1982 LCEMP, as adopted by the City of Toledo, was amended to include "industrial submerged crossings" as a use permitted in management units 12 and 31. The designated

management units in the 1982 LCEMP do not extend beyond the 10th Street barrier on the Olalla Slough or beyond the tidegate on Depot Slough.

The 1982 LCEMP also identified potential areas that may be suitable for mitigation or restoration projects. The 1982 LCEMP should be relied upon for descriptions and limitations.

The City of Toledo anticipates working with the Port of Toledo, the Army Corps of Engineers, and other governmental agencies in developing a new or revised dredged material disposal plan in the future.

Environmental, Economic and Social Values– Goals 1 and 2

Recognize and protect the unique environmental, economic and social values of the Yaquina River Estuary and the associated wetlands.

Protect, maintain, appropriately develop, and appropriately restore the long-term environmental, economic and social values, diversity, and benefits of the estuary.

Policy 1 Regional Planning. Continue to participate in the regional approach to estuary planning and management and to support and update the Lincoln County Estuary Management Plan.

Policy 2 Compliance with the Estuary Management Plan. Ensure that properties along the estuary are managed in compliance with the Lincoln County Estuary Management Plan.

Policy 3 Adequate Provision for Development. Ensure adequate provision for development consistent with the Overall Oregon Estuary Classification and according to the following general priorities (highest to lowest):

- a. Uses which maintain the integrity of the estuarine ecosystem.
- b. Water dependent uses requiring an estuarine location.
- c. Water related uses which do not degrade or reduce natural estuarine resources and values.
- d. Non-dependent, non-related uses which do not alter, degrade or reduce estuarine resources or values and are compatible with existing and committed uses.

Policy 4 Conservation and Preservation of Natural Resources. Provide adequate provision for both conservation and preservation of natural resources when managing the estuary and lands adjacent to the estuary.

Policy 5 Public Access. Protect recreational values and ensure adequate public access to the estuary.

Policy 6 Dredge, Fill or other Degradation of Natural Values. Allow dredge, fill or other reduction or degradation of natural values of the estuary by human development activities only:

- a. If required for navigation or other water-dependent uses that require an estuarine location.
- b. If a public need is demonstrated.
- c. If no alternative upland locations exist.
- d. If adverse impacts are minimized and/or mitigated as much as possible.