

# Oak Island Marsh – Jackson Bottom Wetland

in Hillsboro, within Jackson Bottom Wetlands



## AFTER

*Wetland habitat with bird boxes and snags*



## BEFORE

*Area is lacking diverse vegetation*

Jackson Bottom is a 650-acre preserve owned by the city of Hillsboro and the Unified Sewerage Agency. Approximately 80 percent of the preserve has been delineated as wetlands. Before enhancement projects began in 1979, most of Jackson Bottom was invaded by reed canary grass. This project was to restore a 5.7-acre area of reed canary grass wetlands as much as possible to known historic conditions. The restoration was also intended to increase year-round habitat value, encourage nesting waterfowl and other wetlands species and add to the ecological health of the system through diversification and planting of native wetland species. The monotypic stand of reed canary grass was changed to include habitats of mudflats, emergent vegetation, open water and nesting island. Two previously restored wetlands, Kingfisher and Meadow Mouse marshes, were planted using native wetlands species with funding from this project.

An existing reed canary grass field was excavated approximately three feet deep with the reed canary grass sod being peeled back below root base. The spoils were covered with the underlying soil (cove clay), which formed a berm on three sides of the restored marsh. The end result was an irregularly shaped wetland with natural-appearing peninsulas and islands. The slopes of the

islands and peninsulas have a 50:1-100:1 slope to optimize wildlife benefit. The site has standing water in most areas throughout the year. All exposed slopes were seeded with legumes to inhibit the reintroduction of reed canary grass. The islands, peninsula and edges were seeded and planted with native species (facultative/obligate) trees and shrubs preferred by wildlife.

Baseline data was collected by Oregon Graduate Institute research assistants. After the excavation permanent transects were set at multiple locations around the marsh. Information was collected bi-annually. Four permanent photo points were established and data was collected seasonally with citizen volunteers. Wildlife inventories were conducted at the site for two years prior to the project and citizen volunteers collect weekly inventories.

## Timeline and tasks

October 1991 .....	Planting of native vegetation at Kingfisher and Meadow Mouse marshes
February 1992 .....	Floodplain permit application/city
May 1992 .....	Marsh dedication and community information event; planning and design of Oak Island Marsh
June 1992 .....	OGI soil and vegetation characterization of site; excavation of site, establish elevation
September 1992 .....	Hand seeding of grasses and legumes by ODFW staff
November 1992 .....	Planting of native shrubs and trees; Oak Island Marsh dedication, public involvement day
ongoing .....	Photo documentation and OGI vegetation monitoring
December 1992 .....	Report outlining results of research to date by OGI
Ongoing .....	Five-year Jackson Bottom monitoring
1997 .....	Five-year monitoring complete
Ongoing .....	Public education about wetlands and restoration projects

## Benefits

The major focus was to increase wildlife habitat. A monotypic stand of reed canary grass, of little value to wildlife, was changed into a more diverse system that includes mudflats, emergent vegetation, open water and nesting island conditions. In 1995, 43 Canada geese fledged from Oak Island Marsh. Many school groups have visited the project. The volunteer monitoring program is becoming well established. Jackson Bottom receives a large number of calls from around the Northwest about the reed canary grass research. And the Oak Island Marsh project is very visible from the north viewing shelter, making it a favorite spot for the public to observe wildlife.

## Budget

Proposed – \$36,378

Actual – \$36,378

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife grant award – \$15,000

## Helpful hints – what worked, what didn't

- Plan way ahead and add a year or two to your planned calendar.
- Get as many people involved as possible by arranging on-site visits.
- Realize there are many experts out there, many ways of doing restoration and not everyone will agree.

- Write everything down.
- Plan for extra film and development.

## Partners

City of Hillsboro

City of Hillsboro Planning Department

Soil and Water Conservation Service (now Natural Resource Conservation Service)

Unified Sewage Agency

The Friends of Jackson Bottom

Jackson Bottom Steering Committee

Oregon Graduate Institute

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Portland Audubon Society

Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District

Toady's Nursery

Pacific University

Approximately 90 volunteers from Friends of Jackson Bottom and Pacific University

## Contact

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