

# Oxbow Regional Park Upland Meadow

along the Sandy River in East Multnomah County



**AFTER**

*Meadow is used by a variety of wildlife, including mule deer*



**BEFORE**

*Second growth alders and maples were removed and the meadow is prepared for native grasses*

Multnomah County proposed the creation of a 10-acre elk meadow in Oxbow Regional Park. The park has heavily forested old growth and second-growth vegetation. Upland meadow habitat was not widely available in the Sandy River Gorge. The elk herd that frequents Oxbow Regional Park had been drawn to nearby commercial agriculture and nursery fields resulting in considerable damage claims from nearby property owners and the issuance of a number of elk and deer kill permits by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Creation of a meadow coupled with the preexisting elk fencing program helped reduce crop damage. Elk herds in the Sandy River watershed are healthy and robust. The meadow does not assure elk survival except preventatives such as fencing and other forage areas will keep farmers from shooting them. More than 250,000 visitors a year visit Oxbow because of the unique wildlife viewing opportunities and this resource needed protection.

The meadow is located on Alder Ridge in the south central portion of the park. Thick second-growth red alder and big-leaf maple were removed. In a natural regime, forest fires would help create meadows for elk grazing. Lack of fire and the park's proximity to an urban area made it necessary to artificially create the meadow by cutting trees, grubbing roots and grading the site for yearly mowing and fertilization. Annual mowing and fertilization will be necessary to keep the grass and legumes healthy and vigorous and to prevent reforestation. Logging was done selectively on the site. One year later there are very few signs that the meadow was a forest.



## Benefits

The meadow provides the necessary grazing opportunities for big game on public (protected) land instead of private land. The number of habitat types in the park was expanded. The additional meadow edge will attract passerines and raptors. An increase in species such as meadow vole will increase the number of predators as well.

Private property owners feel government is working with them to reduce damage caused by the elk herd. Elk fencing and the meadow present a positive solution to the problem. The cooperative process between the public and private interests is an essential component in the success of the greenspaces program.

## Budget

Proposed – \$20,000

Actual – \$20,000

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife grant award – \$10,000

## Timeline and tasks

June 30 - July 31, 1994 .... Improvement of access road to site

Aug. 1 - Sept. 30, 1994 ..... Tree removal

Sept. 30 - Oct. 15, 1994... Grading of site

Oct. 15 - Oct. 25, 1994 ... Seeding

Spring 1995 ..... Overseeding

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

- Anticipate time and cost being more than first believed.
- Intergovernmental assistance on improving the road access fell through and had to be privately contracted out.
- Be accurate and firm on planting deadlines.
- Have planting materials ready and available. Rain and a busy season prevented the meadow from being limed at the most efficient time.
- Have knowledgeable and experienced people complete components of the project. Proper seeding was questionable. Overseeding was done the following spring.
- Native plants were salvaged and used by EnviroCorps.

## Partners

Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces

Multnomah County Land Use and Planning Department

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Oregon Department of Forestry

State Scenic Waterways Program

## Contact

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