

Chapter 11

The Salem Metro Area Community Resource Unit

Section One: Baseline Social and Economic Information

A. Community Description

Geographic Features

Salem is a community born of the river. It was bounded historically by the Willamette River on the west and northern flanks of the city. The CRU currently is bounded on the north beyond Keizer, Hayesville, and Labish Village. On the west it takes in the West Salem area of Polk County and proceeds south along the Willamette River. Its south border generally corresponds to the Santiam River near its confluence with the Willamette, and the east line is a few miles east of Interstate 5 and Salem Hills out to Howell Prairie. Figure 31 shows a map of this Community Resource Unit.

Salem is also a town of diverse economic statuses and housing types. Some neighborhoods are upper middle class professional areas while, within a few blocks, sometimes high density apartments, lower income, and outright poverty prevails. While there are areas dominated by particular characteristics, or bounded by key natural and human barriers, residents did not think much in terms of neighborhoods.

"I don't think of Salem as having separate neighborhoods. I think of Salem as one big Salem." [business owner]

"People don't really think of Salem in terms of boundaries. There's just East Salem and West Salem. Downtown sees itself as West Salem."

Figure 31
Map of the Salem Metro Area Community Resource Unit

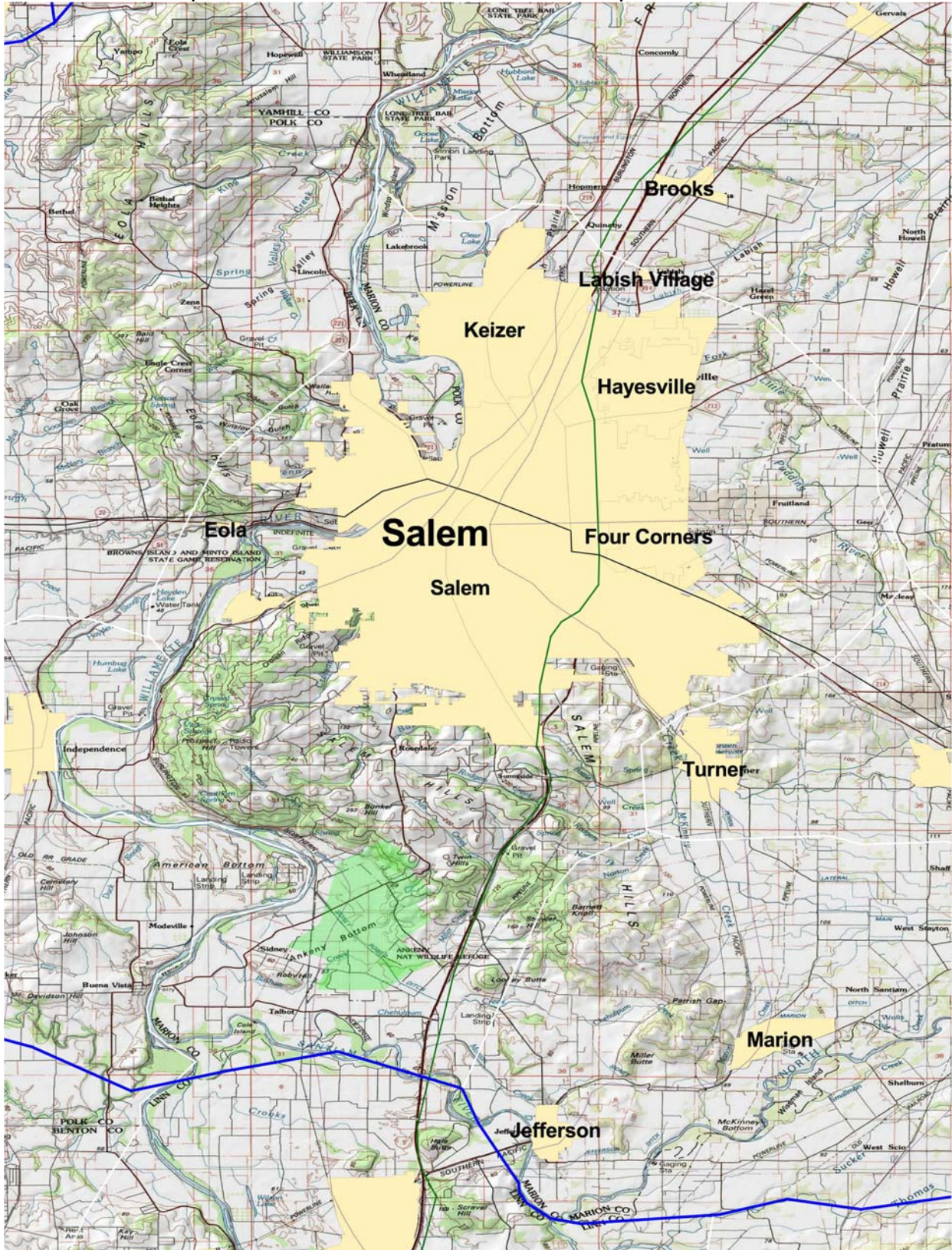
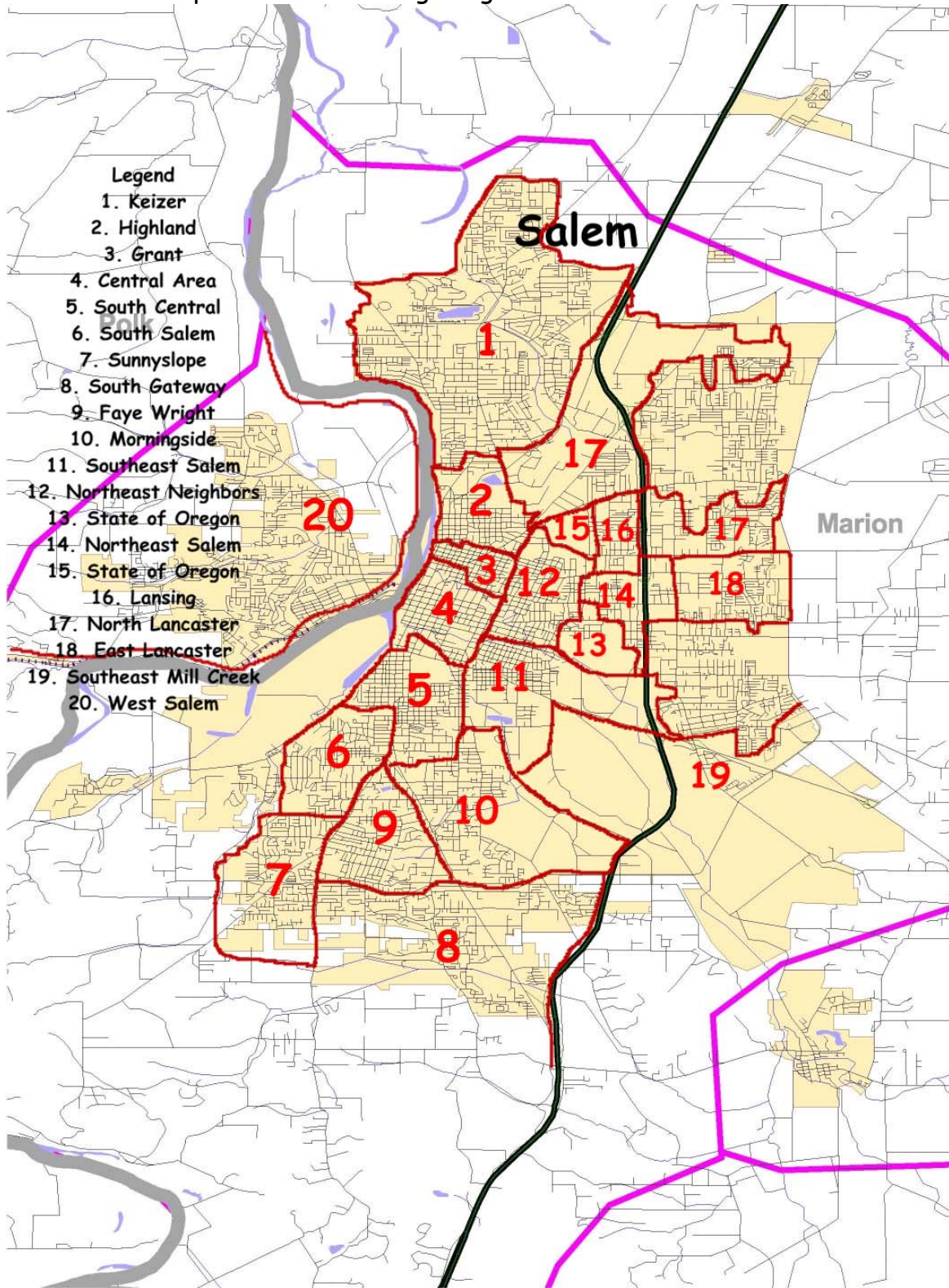


Figure 32
 Map of Salem Showing Neighborhood Resource Units



Settlement Patterns

Salem was incorporated in 1857. It had 111,945 people in 1990 and 136,924 people in 2000, an increase of 18%. Keizer had a population of 22,961 in 1990 and 32,203 in 2000, an increase of 29% (Census Data, Table Two).

Figure 32 shows a map of Salem with the approximate neighborhood areas as defined by the city. A description of key neighborhood areas follows.

In Northeast Salem neighborhoods (Areas 12 and 14 of the neighborhood map), houses are somewhat close together with little front or backyard space. The quality of the homes are fair and the area is generally middle class. This area seems well-established and some streets need repair.

The area between Mission and Market along Hawthorne (Area 16) comprises almost three "classes" of neighborhoods, middle to upper, middle, and middle to lower. Despite the diversity, no gathering places of note were discovered, except Clancy's coffee shop at Hawthorne and Market. This gathering place straddles the border between "Northeast Salem" neighborhood, as designated by the City, on the south and "Lansing" on the north. Clancy's is a comfortable gathering place, designed to feel like home, with couches, partially-completed puzzles on the coffee table, and a TV in the corner. The owner knows many of her clientele and it clearly is a place where people come to share information. Section C describes conversations there related to public lands.

The second gathering place on Market bordering both of these same neighborhoods (Areas 14 and 16) is Blueberry Café. Here too, the owner has personal knowledge of his customers and visits many of the tables, asking patrons if the food was satisfactory. Patrons are neighborhood residents, Willamette University students, and senior citizens. Although the neighborhood has some Hispanic businesses and other businesses hire Hispanics, Blueberry's appears to be an Anglo gathering place.

Similarly, on State Street, between "Northeast Neighbors" and "Southeast Salem" neighborhoods, is Sibley's Omelette Unlimited. It is an older, neighborhood restaurant with rich wooden beams holding up the ceiling against the slanted roof. It is frequented by a group of older gentlemen that gather each morning as well as by Willamette University students. This residential area of Salem had perhaps the highest density of RVs and boats. Most of the boats were for fishing—smaller ones with outboard motors but quite a few were larger and more powerful. The RVs ranged from small travel trailers of ancient vintage to the more expensive, larger motorhomes, associated with more expensive, larger homes.

Southeast Salem (Area 11 of neighborhood map) has many Hispanic residents, and many, new professional complexes. Some of the areas within this zone are quite low income and were referred to by residents as "Felony Flats." The area between 25th and 12th and Mission to State was described as "the worst" neighborhood in Salem by people who lived there. The area has a high turnover of renters and high degree of social isolation. While the low rents attract people, they usually don't stay long if they can get out. Longer-term residents said it was much worse 15 years ago, but that responsive police attention the last few years has really helped.

"When I get home from work, I lock my door and stay to myself."

"A lot of care centers for the elderly went in along 14th Avenue. This is a bad place for old people to live, but the rent is so low. Locals are not glad they're there."

One resident described the low income pattern of mobility. People start in Southeast Salem because it is so affordable, then move to Grant, then to Keizer and finally to Portland. As families come under attention and pressure from law enforcement and social service agencies, they often move. This pattern takes 5-8 years.

The businesses along 13th in this area relate with each other but not with the neighborhood, drawing their customers from the larger metropolitan area. Railroad tracks split up the area, fostering foot traffic through the railroad yards to get from a nearby school to a residential area to the east.

Deepwood Museum in this neighborhood is a 150-year old mansion that is currently used for weddings, but is also used by Master Gardeners and others with a connection to nature. There is a conservatory there and its public grounds serves as a gateway to Bush Park off of 12th and Mission. At nearby Oregon Disability Sports, staff indicated an active use of state parks and public lands, and wished for free or reduced entrance fees to federal lands because of the overuse of state facilities.

East Salem, generally, is deeply affected by the presence of the State Hospital and Prison. Many high-density, low income apartments are scattered throughout this area, and the local high school has many students with a parent in one of the facilities. The presence of these institutions adds to the turnover experienced in these neighborhoods. In addition, residents reported many problems with drugs, drug houses, and gangs several years ago, but stated the situation has improved in recent years.

Farther southeast in Salem is the neighborhood of Morningside (Area 10), bound by Commercial on the west, Boone Rd. S.E. on the south, South Pacific Railroad on the east and Vista Avenue on the north. This area is composed of residential homes showing a mix of neglect and appreciation, with homes seldom larger than three bedroom, and with RVs and boats everywhere. The area is also agricultural/industrial—Norpac plants and some produce operations are located in this area.

In South Salem (Area 6), the borders are Liberty and Browning Avenue south, while for the Faye Wright neighborhood (Area 9), the natural borders are Commercial and Liberty Streets. The latter streets are the location of shopping and retail services in the area. It is clearly a more affluent part of town and is comprised primarily of working professionals. The southern area of Salem is the locus of much of the city's growth.

Homes in this area are accompanied by a number of boats but ATVs, horse trailers, and other outdoor "toys" are not evident.

"I take my boat to either Detroit Lake or the coast, depending on the fishing season."

"RV use is growing, you can see them in the area, but I don't know where they travel."

South Gateway (Area 8), a neighborhood in South Salem, extends from Kuebler on the north, Interstate 5 on the east, Salem city limits in the south and Liberty Road on the west. It contains a mixture of retirees, working class and professionals. Some areas with older trailer homes are almost exclusively long-term retired people. RVs and boats are prevalent.

Gathering places in South Salem include Mike's Steak and Seafood House, Sharky's, a working class tavern, and Cilini's, a coffee shop serving diverse groups of people

West Salem (Area 20) is demarcated by the Willamette River, which separates it from historic and present downtown. Once past the River on Highway 22, the area has many fast food and commercial establishments along Wallace Road beyond which is a mix of multi-family housing and walled housing developments as Wallace climbs the ridge. All along the edges of a middle-class suburb are expanses of natural areas and small farms.

Publics

Salem is a community of many diverse publics, including young families, senior citizens, college students, and business people. It has very wealthy people and very poor people. In recent years, many newcomers have migrated in, typically from California. Japanese people, as business and industry owners, are a distinct public.

Latinos are an increasing segment of the population in Salem, as throughout much of the U.S. West. In Salem, the proportion of total school enrollment has been climbing steadily, while the neighborhoods are peppered with Latino businesses. School officials said that this population is one of the toughest to which to provide quality education. Their poor attendance is associated with the need to care for families and the lack of dual language programs. While gangs were a problem five years ago, today their influence is much reduced.

Networks

See Section Two.

Work Routines

Internet; census

Support Services

Residents did not seem aware of their neighborhood associations. While association chairs contacted thought that the associations were able to exert a positive influence in their neighborhoods, most residents we talked with were unaware of them. There were notable exceptions. People that tended to be "plugged in", such as Chamber of Commerce people and store owners, were aware of neighborhood associations, but the "man on the street" tended not to be. Neighborhood Association maps are available at www.cityofsalem.net.

Marion County Multifamily Housing conducts a program to improve landlord/tenant relations called the "Enhanced Safety Property Program." Designed to minimize friction and turnover, it teaches landlords how to screen tenants and protect their property from misuse and it teaches tenants how to be better tenants and find the best housing.

Local firefighters do charity events and rely on volunteers to distribute flyers.

Salem's Waterfront Park (Figure 33) is a popular outdoor area for city residents.

Recreational Activities

See Section Three.

Figure 33
The Willamette River at Salem's Popular Waterfront Park



B. Citizen Issues Related to Community Life

Downtown viability

A number of residents voiced worry about the shape of downtown businesses, concerned about deteriorating buildings, vacancy rates, and the competitive attraction of outlying malls.

"Downtown is hurting because of all the large stores like Walmart that are now all over Salem."

"The bus system is awful. The routes are infrequent, sometimes only once an hour."

"Gang violence has significantly decreased in Salem over the last 5 years." [Law enforcement person]

Parks

"There is a bond issue that is going to be voted on this year that would fund park development city wide."

Increased growth

"Growth is good for Salem." [common]

Section Two: Communication Strategies

A. Informal Networks and Communication

Bulletin Boards

Library bulletin boards are widely-used and divided by topics, including environmental. These are actively used in the community. Wal-Mart's bulletin board displays a great deal of information.

Despite the urban nature of the Salem community, residents still rely on informal communication within their networks. Many neighborhood gathering spots throughout the city offer opportunities for meeting neighbors and sharing information. Among the important gathering places described earlier under Settlement Patterns are:

- Clancy's
- Blueberry Café
- Sibley's Omelets Unlimited
- Mike's Steak and Seafood House
- Sharky's
- Cilini's

B. Formal Groups and Communication

Figure 34
Organizations With Interest in Public Lands in the Salem Metro Area

Organization	Contact Information	Mission
Four Seasons Sports and Recreation Club	Pete Mathei (503) 945-2770 Happy hour, Mon 5-7 pm at Sweetwater Grill, 285 Liberty Road NE or Newport Bay Restaurant, Market and I-5. Meetings 1 st Mon, 5:30 pm, Elks Lodge, 2336 Turner Rd. SE	

The Chemeketans	P.O. Box 864 Salem OR 97308 www.chemeketans.org	Hiking Forest restoration projects
The Solstice Club	(503) 362-8257 P.O. Box 12831 Salem, 97309	
The Oregon Nordic Club	Posted on Chemketan web site	
Santiam Alpine Club	Chuck Hinkle (503) 316-1998 www.santiamalpineclub.org Annual banquet	
Northwest Steelheaders, Salem Chapter	(503) 897-3301 Meet at GI Joes, Lancaster St.	Numerous forest and riparian restoration projects
Northwest Ski Club	www.nwskiers.org	
Cascade Boy Scouts of America Association	Jennifer Hansen 4395 Liberty Rd. South (503) 581-6601 3 rd Wed/mo	Youth camps in the Jefferson Wilderness area
Salem Area Watershed Councils	Lisa Hemesath 105 High Street Salem, OR 97301 (503) 588-6177 lhemesath@open.org	
Claggett Creek Watershed Council	Gary Miller 105 High St. SE Salem OR 97301 (503) 399-5233 miller_gary@salkeiz.k12.or.us	
Glenn and Gibson Creek Watershed	Dorald Stoltz 1168 Willow Crk Dr NW Salem OR 97304	
Pringle Creek Watershed Council	Wendy Kroger 4873 Nina Ave SE Sale, OR 97302 (503) 381-0613 Kroger@open.org	

Section Three: The Public Lands Perspective

A. Uses of and Orientation to Public Lands

Salem residents described themselves, and were observed to be, outdoor-oriented. Nonetheless, when asked about relations with the Forest Service, many expressed confusion, stating that, "There isn't much forest around here". Many people expressed the opinion that the forest is out of reach for people who live in Salem, even those more oriented to the outdoors. A bike shop owner said that mountain biking has not caught on strong in Salem because the closest trails are 45 minutes away. He said people tend to go to the McDonald Douglas research forest or out toward the coast.

"There's not enough to do in Salem and you have to drive too far to get there. Over an hour drive is too far."

For boaters, Green Peter, Foster and Detroit Lakes are the most popular. Most boaters reported that they did not leave the water much, preferring to stay near the lakes rather than hike in the forest.

"I am a lake and river lover. I do jet skiing and water-skiing. I talk to my customers about my interest and we share information about where to go and what to do. I read the magazine PWC [Personal Water Craft] which has great information on issues in the Northwest."
[Restaurant owner, East Salem]

"Our favorite lake for jet skis is Green Peter Reservoir because we can camp on the other side of the lake. It's never too crowded. We skied the Columbia one year and got sick from the water. We'll never go back there."

Snowshoeing is reported to be the fastest growing form of outdoor recreation in the area by a number of sporting goods stores. Rental snowshoes are sold out every weekend.

A number of residents and RV dealerships reported that RV ownership boomed throughout the 1990s and is continuing strong. While RVs used to be seen as for retired people, the sales boom reflects a demographic broadening in ownership. Now all kinds of people are likely to buy RVs. The higher-end RV parks keep their facilities very clean to discourage "riff raff". RVers tend to be "snowbirds" of retired people that travel seasonally to avoid cold weather or "weekenders" who travel with it as a relief from the work week.

Willamette University has collaborated with Parish and Bush Middle Schools to form an outdoor education program called "Outdoor Pursuits." This program arranges several different outdoor activities. University students are matched with middle school students. The idea is to create a mentorship situation while at the same time learning about the outdoors. Some of the activities include: hiking, cross-country skiing, and backpacking.

Community descriptions in Salem yielded discoveries of emerging connections between residents and the forest. The owner of a nursery at 13th and Wilbur, for example, said he is starting up the Willamette Bonsai Club, which does regular collection trips to the forest. He noted that one used to be able to go in for free, but now everything costs. Club members are interested in "little, little trees" that are associated with disturbance, "Say, for instance, there is road work and an area is being dug up."

Similarly, we met many individuals that use the forest in a regular way but who are not organized in groups. One woman hosting the Visitor Center is an avid mushroom collector with her husband. They are worried about rumors of safety while collecting—"Don't forget your gun," she jokes that they are told.

The City of Salem has a Natural Resource office that promotes salmon habitat and habitat planning. A Tree Preservation Ordinance was passed recently to promote urban forestry.

B. Citizen Issues Related to Natural Resource Management

Citizen Issues

Recreation

"How can the government think about banning jet skis on public lakes and rivers? I can see that standup jet skis are not always safe, but 3-seater jet skis are. If the problem is with the two-stroke engines, how come they aren't talking about banning outboard motors too?"

"What is happening with Detroit Lake this year? How come when the water level is low, the bad news is all over the place, but when it's good, we can't find out about it?"

"Detroit Lake was horrible when I was there Veteran's Day. It was a big party there. People were out on the road drinking. Many people were camping right next to the road. I saw a lot of trash. I just didn't feel like I was driving in the forest."

"People in Salem camp east of town. The coast has gotten too crowded. A lot of people go over to Jefferson Wilderness area."
[Sporting goods clerk]

"We don't know if it's safe to pick mushrooms anymore."

"There isn't one rock climbing store in all of Salem."

Access and Northwest Forest Pass

"Those mandatory Forest Passes are just not cool. Where is the money spent that is supposed to be put back into the land. People are hiking on trails that aren't in good shape. My friends think that Forest Pass money will never actually be used for that purpose."

"We don't like that certain trails are getting restricted for certain uses. Marion Lake, Lava Lakes, Paulina Lakes are all this way. I know

these areas are getting overused but people complain about the restrictions."

"I hear that a lot of people doing fly fishing support the closure of some of the old logging roads on Forest Service land because it protects the fishing. Popular fly fishing spots are the north fork of the Santiam, the Deschutes and the Crooked River." [Clerk at fly fishing store]

"Federal lands should be more cheaply available to agencies serving special needs populations. The state facilities have too many people and they are not always safe."

Water Quality

"How good can Salem's water be with all the lawns and fertilizers? I live on the outskirts and have a personal well. All my friends bring out empty jugs to fill up."

C. Management Opportunities

Communication Opportunities

Sporting goods stores in the Salem area have undergone dramatic changes in recent years. The small, independently-owned businesses are giving way to the giant corporate sporting good warehouses. While the former was characterized by high staff knowledge of public lands and outdoor activities, the same cannot be said today. While the new stores have young and outdoor oriented staff, their knowledge of public lands was generally very low. While they readily shared their perception of the customers' wishes and patterns of use, it became clear that their understanding of and their ties with land management agencies are rudimentary or nonexistent. Many departments had maps, but only had a few of the nearby public lands. Most expressed interest in developing relationships with the Forest Service or BLM through support for the classes they teach, use of bulletin boards, blurbs in various newsletters, and so on.

These are the supply stores that communicate with the public about public lands:

- GI Joes on Lancaster in South Salem; it has a map department with Forest Service maps but not of forests that are nearby; 145
- Cook's Stationery on State Street is well known for maps;.
- Wal-Mart greeters are familiar with fishing and camping spots;
- Fred Meyers, South Salem;
- Big 5 Sports: did not carry maps of the Willamette Forest but did of other areas. Most campers buying here go to Detroit Lake or to eastern Oregon.
- Gart Sporting Goods

GI Joes on Lancaster Street offers classes, the most popular at the moment being GPS [geographical positioning system] navigation. The store expressed interest in putting up a bulletin board on which the Forest Service and other agencies could post timely information. Contact is Kimberly Ellich, Assistant Manager.

Local recreation outlet stores are thus very active in trying to keep up with information for customers about where to go, current conditions, and maps and other resources that increase the value of the recreation experience. At the same time, we found enormous variation in the level of knowledge of store clerks. One opportunity is a yearly picnic or similar event that would update them about public land use in the region.

Boaters are registered and so represent a potential mailing list on boating issues. Specialized magazines are helpful in communicating information, such as PWC [Personal Water Craft].

"Because last year was so bad, the agencies should be on the ground this year, mingling with people at Detroit Lake. They have to regain their customer base."

During research, a number of neighborhood associations were contacted. Generally, they related issues of residents in their neighborhoods concerned with crime, parks, schools, and economic livelihood. Although ties to National Forest issues were not strong, a number voiced welcome to the Forest

Service to speak to their associations and offers to include a Forest Service/ BLM link on web pages were made.

The Cascade Boy Scouts of America Association reports frequent contact with the Forest Service because of youth camps in the Jefferson Wilderness area. Forest Service staff are generally given good marks for fire prevention education but sometimes the presentations are too advanced or not advanced enough. Also, kids have broader interest in the Forest that is not always addressed. A point of contact with the Forest Service and support in community service projects could further the use and value of the forest by the Boy Scouts.

The last chapter of this report presents JKA recommendations regarding Forest Passes. Generally, we believe a campaign to visually display information about the distribution of Forest Pass revenues would increase support for the program. A web site, use of local sporting goods stores, and other venues could be explored.

Action Opportunities

That so many people in Salem did not seem to have an active orientation to public lands is probably not a surprise to many, yet they influence forest policy by their membership in environmental organizations, and their participation in urban policies that make demands on forest management. At the same time, they are very interested in urban forests, parks, and outdoor amenities in their city, as well as clean water and other ecosystem products of the forest. These interests speak to a potential demand for education about the environment and ecology, and how to apply forest management to an urban setting.

The general management challenge in dealing with urban publics is the creation of urban/rural ties, or upland/lowland connections, so that both ecological awareness and a Forest Service constituency are broadened. Among the opportunities for accomplishing this objective are the following:

1. Expand natural resource education from the rural schools to include the urban schools. The Outdoor Pursuits program at the Parish and Bush Middle Schools is an example of a place where the Forest

Service would not have to lead, yet could offer tangible contributions. By fostering a love for the woods, the Forest Service would be fostering future forest use in today's youth who, as adults, would visit the woods knowing how to preserve them and build connections with the upland communities.

2. Foster the creation of hiking and biking trails in the urban zones through technical expertise and access to grants, and so on. Especially focus on trail systems that have potential of linking uplands and lowlands. Structure this action in a way that educates as it is implemented.
3. Broaden the Discovery Process to identify emerging forest interests, such as the new Willamette Bonsai Club. Early relationships could foster not only informed uses of the forest but create an urban constituency capable of a new consensus regarding forest management direction.
4. Engage in a visually based education campaign regarding the use of Forest Pass revenues, so that people can see how their dollars benefit the land.

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