

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE



TUALATIN RIVER WATERSHED: *Drinking Water Source Protection and Restoration*

Located west of the Portland Metro area, the Tualatin River Watershed serves as the primary source of drinking water for residents of Washington County, Oregon. The county is the fastest-growing in the state: population growth and land use changes are expected to increase, potentially threatening the quality of the region's drinking water supply.

TPL's role

The Tualatin River Watershed Demonstration Project is one component of a program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to better align state drinking water programs with state and local land conservation and land-use frameworks. To advance this goal, The Trust for Public Land and a technical team of local and state experts developed a GIS-based model that identifies the lands within the Tualatin River watershed most important for conserving

water quality—including restoration sites. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was a key leader in this project, convening the technical team and gathering datasets for the model.

Project highlights

The technical team used the GIS model to create maps showing where communities can invest limited resources to meet these priorities:

- Protection of the lands most important to preserving water quality in source areas
- Restoration of impaired lands that are affecting water quality in source areas
- Habitat conservation

The maps are intended to help local governments, the state, and other technical service providers decide

where to invest resources in activities with landowners that benefit water quality.

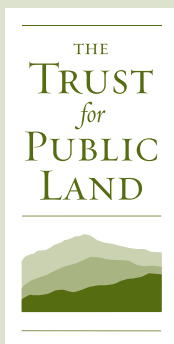
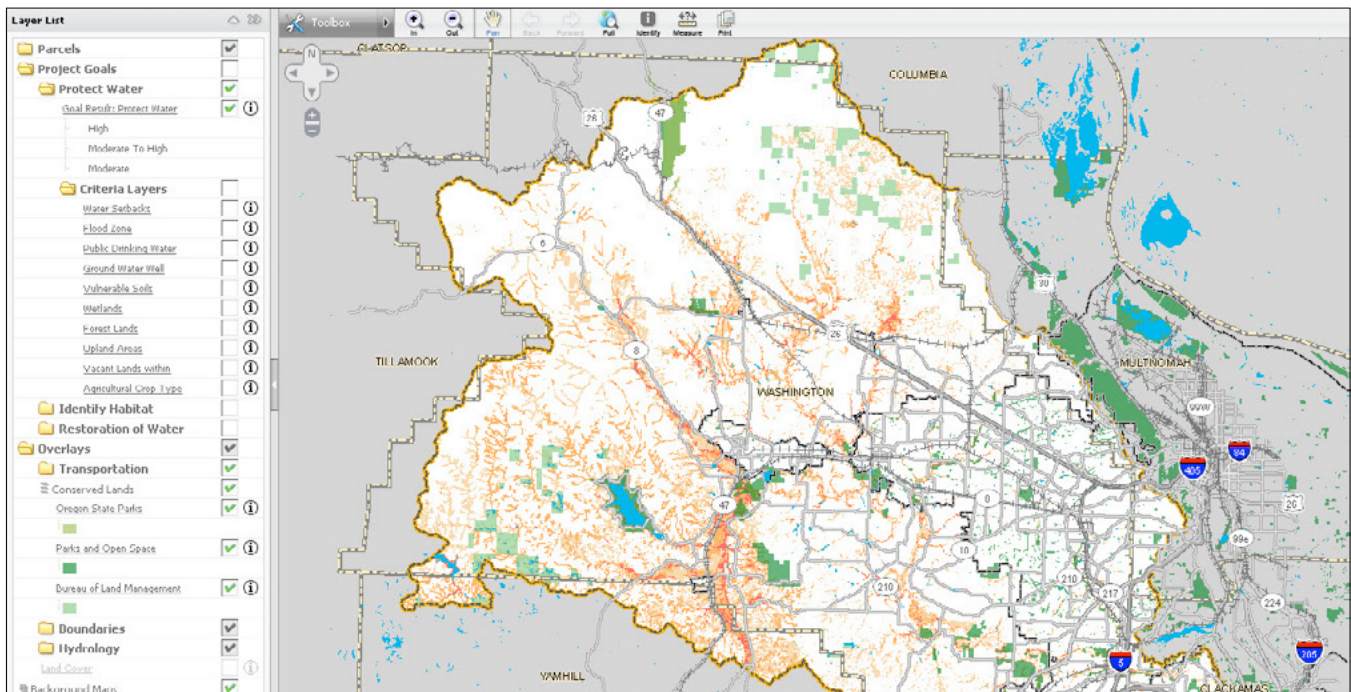
The TPL team also created an online version of these maps. The website is interactive and customizable—users can generate personalized maps that help target their outreach to landowners.

Results

The Oregon DEQ Drinking Water Division plans to repeat this landscape analysis in other watersheds across the state. Land conservation professionals have identified factors that are relevant to their work—such as the property size, adjacency to certain natural resources, and property value. Applying these criteria, which are built into the GIS tool, can help identify high priority parcels.

“The cooperative efforts within the team allowed exposure to a larger domain of GIS data/ applications, and this gave us the ability to apply new tools for developing specific drinking water protection actions in this watershed—and others across the state.”

—Sheree Stewart and Steve Aalbers,
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality



The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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