

SEASIDE RURAL COMMUNITY PLAN



2040

**ORDINANCE 24-10
ADOPTED FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Seaside Rural planning area comprises approximately 101,400 acres within the southwest quadrant of Clatsop County, stretching from the Pacific Ocean to east of Highway 53. The majority of the planning area is zoned F-80. Clusters of residential development can be found along Highway 26 and Highway 53. The Seaside Rural Planning Area includes the unincorporated community of Hamlet. This area of Clatsop County is sparsely settled and consists primarily of forest lands.

Size: 101,400 acres
e911 Address Points: 390
(Source: 2020 Decennial Census)

The landscape units which occur in the Seaside Rural planning area are:

- **Marine Terraces:** At Cannon Beach, the marine terrace deposits extend inland for about 3/4 mile into the planning area. Most of the development that has occurred in the City is on the marine terrace formation. The land slopes from mountain to sea, affording many homes a view. This area is contained within the Cannon



Beach Urban Growth Boundary.

- **Alluvial Lowlands and Uplands:**

Alluvial Lowlands

There are two areas of alluvial lowlands within the Seaside Rural area; the Necanicum River which empties into the estuary within the Seaside city limits, and the North Fork of the Nehalem River that drains the eastern part of the planning area. The Necanicum River has carved out an alluvial valley for about 16 miles through sedimentary rocks in the northern part of the Seaside Rural area. The valley is underlain by gravel deposits. The alluvial gravels consist of poorly sorted sand, silt, and clay with some beds of basaltic pebbles and cobbles. The largest alluvial lowland is the valley created by the North Fork of the Nehalem River. This valley extends about 6 miles north from the Tillamook County line. The North Fork drains much of the southwest part of the County ultimately into Nehalem Bay, just after it joins the main stream of the Nehalem River. This area consists primarily of silty clay, clay, and silty clay mixed with gravel. The slope of the lowlands is gentle, between 8 and 9%.

Alluvial Terraces

Alluvial terraces are found along the northern portions of the Necanicum River and generally east of the Nehalem along the North Fork. Terrace deposits consist mostly of clay and gravel. This landscape unit is scarce in the planning area.

- **Sedimentary Lowlands:** In the Seaside Rural area, this landscape unit occurs in the western portion of the planning area in and around Cannon Beach. They range in elevation from 50 to 500 feet, and are generally composed of sedimentary rock of Oligocene to Miocene age. They tend to have rounded ridge tops with slopes varying from 10 to 60%. Most of the area containing this landscape unit is in timber production.
- **Sedimentary Uplands:** Sedimentary uplands consist of Coast Range Mountains over 500 feet, underlain chiefly by sedimentary rocks. Slopes may vary from 10 to 60%. Sedimentary uplands compose the most common landscape unit in the planning area, interrupted in places by massive basalt outcrops. Most of these lands are utilized for timber production, but there are some other land holdings containing this landscape unit in the Hamlet area. In the Hamlet area the slopes are not above 20%, thus reducing the presence of hazards.
- **Basaltic Lowlands and Highlands:** Basaltic lands are underlain by igneous material. Most of the highlands are over 1,200 feet in elevation though outcrops of basalt are also exposed at lower elevations. Slopes are frequently over 40%. They are scattered throughout the planning area, but the most prominent outcrops encompass Angora, Onion, and Twin Peaks and Sugarloaf Mountain.

- **Estuary and Coastal Shorelands:**

Ecola Creek Estuary

Ecola Creek is a well-mixed tidal creek having very low marine biological and moderate terrestrial biological value. Tidal influence extends to just above the U.S. 101 bridge a total distance of one-half mile. Ecola Creek has no definable eel grass beds or tidelands. The adjacent land, as well as the land edge character, is moderately diverse and is comprised of a bulrush and sedge wetland above the U.S. Highway 101 bridge and a small wetland area located within the Cannon Beach city limits.

Ecola Creek has sediments of mixed sand, gravel, and mud. These sediment types combined with low salinities limit Ecola Creek to small anadromous fish runs of coho and steelhead trout. But for its size, Ecola Creek sustains a fairly large stable run of native sea run cutthroat trout. The City of Cannon Beach has utilized approximately 68 acres of the marsh to the west of Highway 101 for an artificial marsh sewage treatment system.

- **Headlands and Points:**

Tillamook Head

The most northerly and largest coastal headland in Clatsop County is Tillamook Head, which has been described as "a complex of bold headlands, points of land, intervening coves, and shallow indentations." West Point, Bird Point, and Indian Point are part of this promontory.

Tillamook Head is composed of middle to late Miocene basaltic intrusive rock which includes thick sills, dikes, ring dikes, and pod-like bodies. The seaward side of the headland consists of basaltic flows and sills. Many active landslides have been mapped in the Tillamook Head area, which have caused and continue to cause damage to roads and infrastructure in Ecola State Park.

Much of the area on top of Tillamook Head that is under State control contains old growth forest, and as such constitutes a rare natural area in Clatsop County. The Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation has previously acquired additional acreage at Tillamook Head to provide a buffer to protect the park forests against wind throw which could occur when the adjacent forests are logged. The expansion of the park also protected the historic and primitive character of the headland trail, providing viewpoints of the farthest exploration area of the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1806.

Map 2 shows their locations in the Seaside Rural planning area. These designations and locations, which were identified in the late 1970s, should be reviewed by DOGAMI to verify the locations. Detailed descriptions of each landscape unit can be found in Goal 2: Land Use Planning of the countywide Comprehensive Plan.

Purpose of the Seaside Rural Community Plan

While the land surface area of the County remains constant over time, inevitably the population has and will continue to grow. There will be greater demand and need for more land for commercial, industrial and urban or suburban type development. The choices made in the use of land have consequences and impacts that may reverberate for generations. For example, the decision to commit land to a subdivision precludes the use of that land for many other purposes for decades to come.

With this awareness, the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan was developed for the purpose of providing a guide to development and conservation of Clatsop County's land resources. It is a generalized long-range policy guide and land use map that provides the basis for decisions on the physical, social and economic development of Clatsop County.

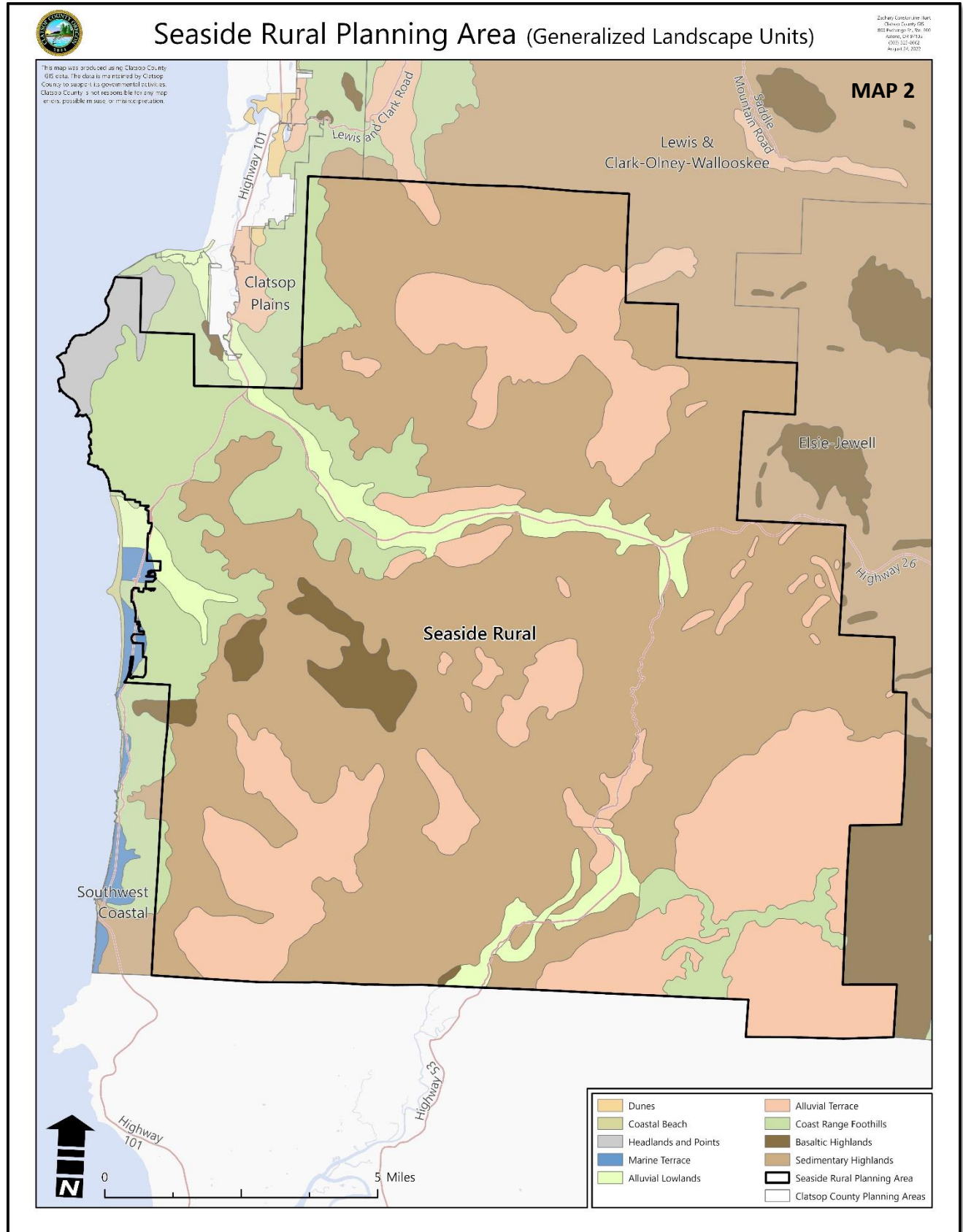
The Plan also coordinates the various factors which influence community development such as sewer and water, transportation, housing, commerce, industry, schools, land use, recreation, and natural resources. It establishes goals and policies which recognize and plan for the interrelationships and interactions of these factors. The Seaside Rural Community Plan builds upon the work of the countywide Comprehensive Plan by identifying trends and issues specific to the planning area and developing policies to address those concerns.

The Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan and the attendant community plans are a statement of public goals, policies, objectives and standards, developed in accord with Goal 1: Citizen Participation and public input, that are intended to be used in making specific decisions about present and future land use, along with various maps. To determine whether a specific land use proposal is appropriate, a decision must be made concerning the applicability of each goal, policy or standard to the proposed project. A proposed development must be consistent with both the county's Comprehensive Plan, applicable community plan, and development standards in order to achieve the vision outlined in these foundational documents.

Review and Updates

The original Seaside Rural Community Plan was adopted on July 23, 1980 (Ordinance 80-07). Since originally adopted, the Seaside Rural Community Plan has been amended twice:

- **81-07:** Goal 16: Estuarine Resources exception to allow a wetlands/marsh wastewater treatment system in and adjacent to the Ecola Creek Estuary
- **Ordinance 83-17:** Amendments to address comments from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)



CRITICAL HAZARD AREAS

STREAM FLOODING

While housing sites along rivers are picturesque, many of these scenic locations are hazardous floodplains - the area intended by nature to accommodate the discharge and overflow of its waterways.

Major flood areas of the Seaside Rural area are on the Necanicum River and the North Fork of the Nehalem River between the southern County border and the hatchery. These streams overflow their banks at certain periods of the year, when heavy rainfalls, melting snow, high tides, strong winds, or restricted channels occur.

STREAMBANK EROSION

The outer banks along channel curves are the most susceptible to streambank erosion because it is there that the momentum of the water carries it against the bank with the most force. Actual erosion rates are not known but are quite severe in spots along the Necanicum.

Allowing trees and other vegetation to remain on the banks, (i.e., providing a buffer) is essential to the health of the stream generally. The riparian vegetation stabilizes the banks and provides shade and cooling. In areas of severe streambank erosion, it sometimes becomes necessary for a property owner to install riprap or other protection when a home is in danger. Sometimes this type of action can cause potential harm to neighboring properties.

MASS MOVEMENT

Much of the land in the Seaside Rural area consists of old landslide topography which are land areas of rolling ground in which landslides could have occurred up to several thousand years ago. Due to the geologic conditions of the region these areas are still subject to movement. Such landslides are occurring in Ecola Park and above Cannon Beach. Many smaller unmapped landslides are present and can move when disturbed. Human actions, such as construction of buildings or roads, have also precipitated landslides. Landslides, soil creep, slumping, or rockfall are all elements of mass movement.

HIGH GROUNDWATER

In the alluvial lowlands near streams, high groundwater is near the surface much of the year. High groundwater can create hydrostatic pressure problems in that water pressure can fracture the floors and walls of basements if allowed to build up. Health

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hazards can also be created where septic tanks cannot drain properly. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) rules prohibit the issuance of septic tank permits when the permanent groundwater level is within 5-1/2 feet of the ground surface.

In the Seaside Rural area, major areas of high groundwater occur along the Necanicum River and North Fork of the Nehalem just north of the Tillamook County line. There are also minor areas between the mouth of the Klookchie Creek and the Necanicum Fish Hatchery.

WILDFIRE

Fire is an essential part of Oregon's ecosystem, but it is also a serious threat to life and property particularly in the state's growing rural communities. Wildfires are fires occurring in areas having large areas of flammable vegetation that require a suppression response. Areas of wildfire risk exist throughout the state with areas in central, southwest and northeast Oregon having the highest risk.

The *Future Climate Projections Clatsop County* report issued by the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute in February 2020, states that over the last several decades, warmer and drier conditions during the summer months have contributed to an increase in fuel aridity and enabled more frequent large fires, an increase in the total area burned, and a longer fire season across the western United States, particularly in forested ecosystems. In Clatsop County, the frequency of very high fire danger days per years is projected to increase on average by 10 days, with a range of -3 to +28 days by 2050. Given the predominance of forested land in the Seaside Rural Planning Area, increased wildfire frequency poses a significant risk.

TSUNAMI

Tsunamis have historically been rare in Oregon. Since 1812, Oregon has experienced about a dozen tsunamis with wave heights greater than 3 feet; some of these were destructive. A small area to the east of the city limits of Cannon Beach is located within the tsunami regulatory line. DOGAMI provides maps detailing the inundation zones. Tsunami impacts in this area will likely destroy roads and structures and isolate this area for weeks. An evacuation route should be located within the Seaside Rural Planning Area.

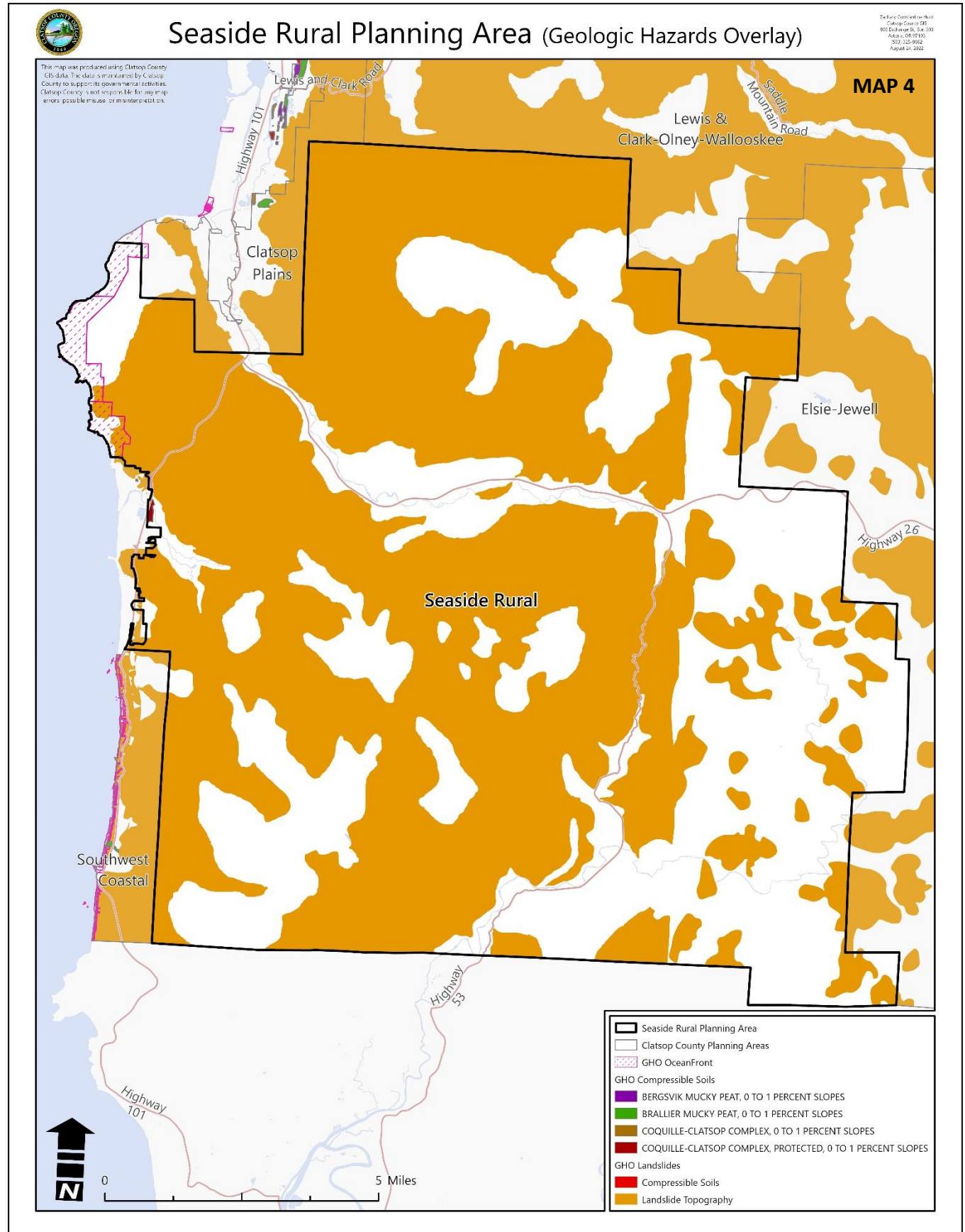
In May 2022, the Board of Clatsop County Commissioners adopted the Tsunami Evacuation Facilities Improvement Plan (TEFIP). The TEFIP specifically identifies opportunity areas within the Seaside Rural Planning Area where additional assembly areas and evacuation routes could be provided. The TEFIP also identifies gaps in existing evacuation routes and recreational trails that could be addressed through the construction of additional trails and amenities.

EARTHQUAKE / CASCADIA SUBDUCTION ZONE EVENT

A Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) event is the most likely event to severely impact the Seaside Rural Planning Area. In the event of a CSZ event, this area will be isolated as roads and transportation systems will likely be severely damaged or destroyed. CERT volunteer training should be encouraged and cache areas and assembly points should be identified and developed. The County should promote education to ensure that residents and households are prepared to be self-sufficient for a minimum of two weeks in the event of a CSZ occurrence.

General policies regarding flood hazards, stream flooding and other hazards are contained in Goal 7: Natural Hazards of the Countywide Comprehensive Plan.





PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

WATER SYSTEMS

There are no water districts in the Seaside Rural planning area.

The City of Seaside provides water to Stanley Acres and the area to the south of Seaside. The main water supply is from a source on the south fork of the Necanicum River about eight miles southeast of the city. An auxiliary supply source is located on the Necanicum River below the reservoir. The water treatment plant can produce approximately 2,800 gallons of drinking water per minute, or 4.032 million gallons of water per day. On a peak summer weekend, the amount of water usage is approximately 2.5 million gallons per day. In January 2021, the City completed construction of a 5-million gallon reservoir and pump station in Seaside's East Hills. The reservoir provides water to the new middle and high school buildings and to Pacific Ridge Elementary. The new pump facility replaces decommissioned pump stations in Sunset Hills and Whispering Pines.

In the event that availability of water is limited, the City utilizes the following service order of priority:

- Properties within the City limits
- Properties within the Urban Growth Boundary
- Other properties

The water line does provide an abundant source of water for good fire protection for this section of the Seaside Rural planning area.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Seaside Rural residents are served by septic systems. Because of soil limitations, lot size, and slopes, each proposed subsurface sewage disposal site is considered on an individual basis.

A critical consideration in septic tank operation is development density. Problems result when development densities become too great for the soil to accommodate the resulting effluent discharges which could eventually surface and/or contaminate wells and other groundwater sources, creating a potentially dangerous health situation.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system in the Seaside Rural area, as well as the whole County, has been greatly influenced by the natural features of the land and water.

The major highway running north and south in the planning area is U.S. Highway 101 from the Cannon Beach junction to the county line. No major improvements are currently planned for this facility. The City of Cannon Beach has three highway access points into the City, which has increased efficiency and safety for drivers.

Highway 26 (Sunset Highway) is the major State highway in the area which runs east-west. This road provides a connection between the coast and Portland. There is some concern that in the future the highway will expand to a four-lane system with very rigid controls on access. Access is not a problem at present but could pose problems at various curve sections of the highway.

The other principal road is State Route 53, a narrow two-lane mountainous highway which runs from Necanicum Junction, 13 miles east of Seaside on the Sunset Highway, south into Tillamook County. Some large dips and dangerous curves make this route unsuitable for intensive use. There are no railroad, water or air transportation facilities in this section of the County. There is also no transit bus service provided in the area. The area is not expected to build up to the extent that public transportation will be needed. The automobile, therefore, is the major transportation mode.

Bicycling in the area is primarily recreational in nature. The terrain and nature of the highway system makes bike travel difficult and hazardous. There are no designated bikeways and none are planned, although U.S. 101 is a part of the Oregon Coast Bike Route and the TransAmerica Trail. A bikeway may be appropriate, however, from the Cannon Beach junction south to Cannon Beach along "Old Highway" 101. Creation of an off-road bike path to bypass the Highway 101/Highway 26 junction is included in the County's Transportation System Plan, adopted in 2015.

SCHOOLS

The Seaside Rural planning area lies primarily within the Seaside School District #10. Portions of the northeast quadrant of the planning area are within Astoria School District #1 and portions of the southeast quadrant are within Jewell School District #8. In 2018, voters approved a bond initiative to allow the Seaside middle and high schools, as well as District administrative offices to be relocated outside of the tsunami inundation zone. Those facilities were completed in 2020 and the previously-used school facilities have been sold.

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The Jewell School District prepared a facilities improvement plan in 2017. That plan includes additional housing for faculty and expansion of the gymnasium facilities.

TABLE 1: SEASIDE RURAL PLANNING AREA – SCHOOL SYSTEMS					
System	Seaside School District #10				Jewell School District #8
	Pacific Ridge Elementary	Seaside Middle School	Seaside High School	Cannon Beach Academy Charter School	Jewell School
Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12	K-5	K-12
Enrollment	654	374	427	45	114
Capacity					
Year Built	2003	2020	2020		

Source: Oregon Department of Education

FIRE PROTECTION

There are three Rural Fire Protection Districts in the Seaside Rural planning area:

Seaside Rural Fire Protection District

Seaside Fire and Rescue was established in 1904. It is an all hazards department that responds to emergency medical calls, structure and wildland fires, and water rescues. The City of Seaside's paid fire staff include the Fire Chief, Division Chief of Prevention, Division Chief of Operations, and two firefighter positions. The department also provides mutual aid to the Hamlet, Cannon Beach, and Gearhart rural fire protection districts. Per the 2020 Seaside Fire & Rescue Annual Report, there are 14 volunteer firefighters.

Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection

The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District extends from the north Cannon Beach city limits to the Arch Cape tunnel. The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District was formed in 1947 to protect the citizens of the Cannon Beach area from the threat of fire. As the area grew, so did the need for more space and equipment. A second station was built in Arch Cape and in 1996, the original station (located downtown) was replaced with the current station at 188 East Sunset. The original mission of the volunteers was to extinguish fires; however, it soon became apparent that there were other demands for service. In the 1950's search and

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rescue was formed, and in the 1970's Emergency Medical Services. Soon after high angle rescue and surf rescue joined the list of provided services.

Today Cannon Beach Fire District personnel provide firefighting and EMS services to the Northwest Oregon coastal communities of Cannon Beach, Arch Cape, and Falcon Cove and a tourist population of 750,000 to 1,000,000 annual visitors. As of 2020, paid professional staff included a Fire Chief, Recruitment and Retention Coordinator/Lieutenant, and one part-time administrative staff. Volunteers include two lieutenants and 11 firefighters. The district, as of 2018, had an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 3.

Hamlet Rural Fire Protection District

The Hamlet Rural Fire Protection District covers portions of Highways 26 and 53 and the Hamlet area. The district levies a tax of 1.2429 and has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) classification of 4. Per information from USFireDept.com, Hamlet RFPD operates two stations utilizing an all-volunteer force. The District provides the following services, in addition to offering mutual aid to Seaside Fire and Rescue and Elsie Vinemaple RFPD:

- Advanced life support
- Basic life support
- Emergency medical responder
- Haz-mat operational level
- Rescue operational level
- Structural fire suppression
- Wildland fire suppression

The District has a high call volume of motor vehicle accidents on Highway 26 and performs rescues on hiking trails and logging roads utilizing drones and GPS coordinate training.

POWER GENERATION

Currently, all electrical power in Clatsop County is supplied by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and is distributed, mainly, through the Pacific Power and Light Company (PP&L). Small amounts of electricity are sold to and distributed in the Seaside Rural area by the Tillamook Public Utility District. The primary PP&L transmission lines serving the County are 115 KV lines from substations in Astoria, Cannon Beach, Fern Hill, Knappa Svensen, Lewis and Clark, Seaside, Warrenton, and Youngs Bay (**Source:** 2021 Oregon Distribution System Plan, PacifiCorp).

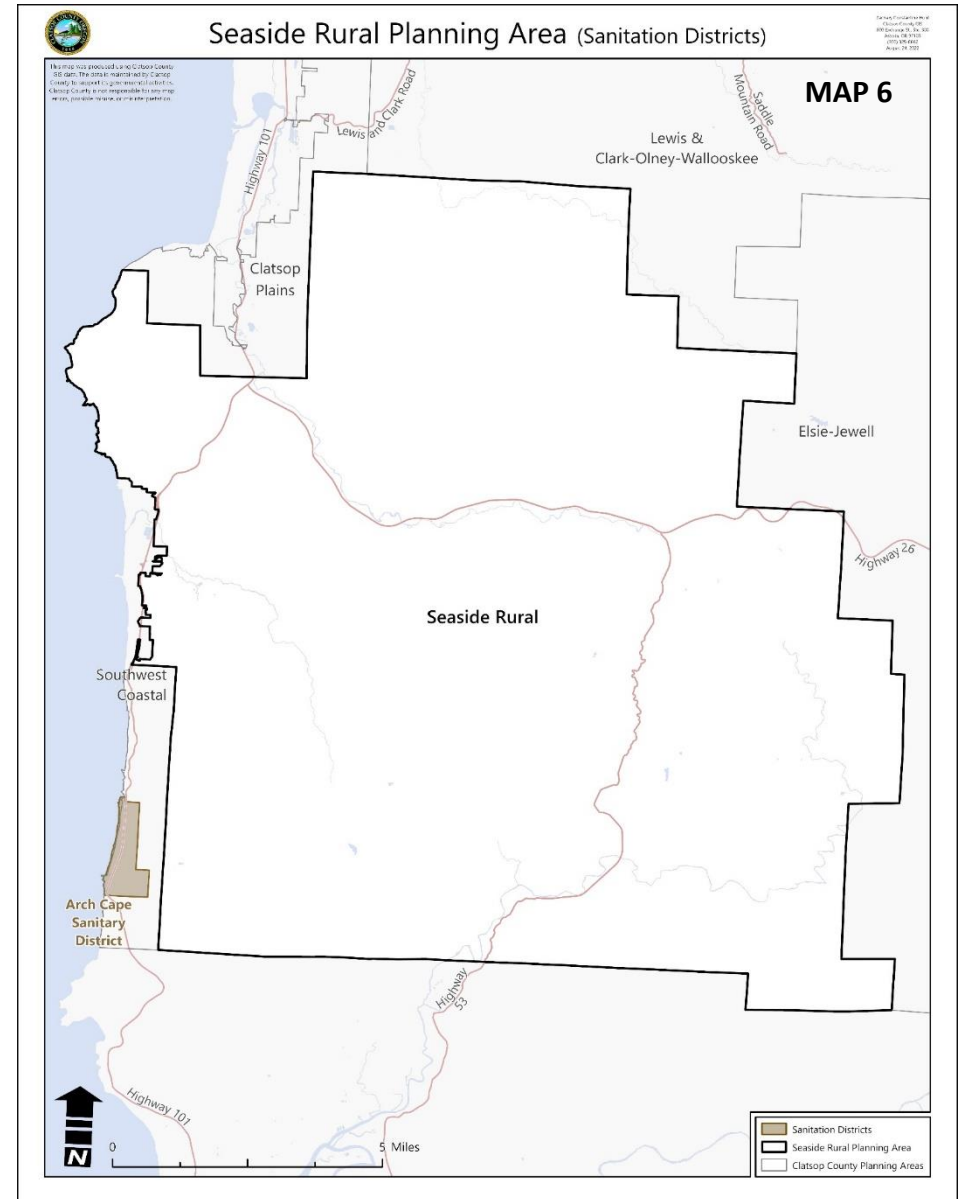
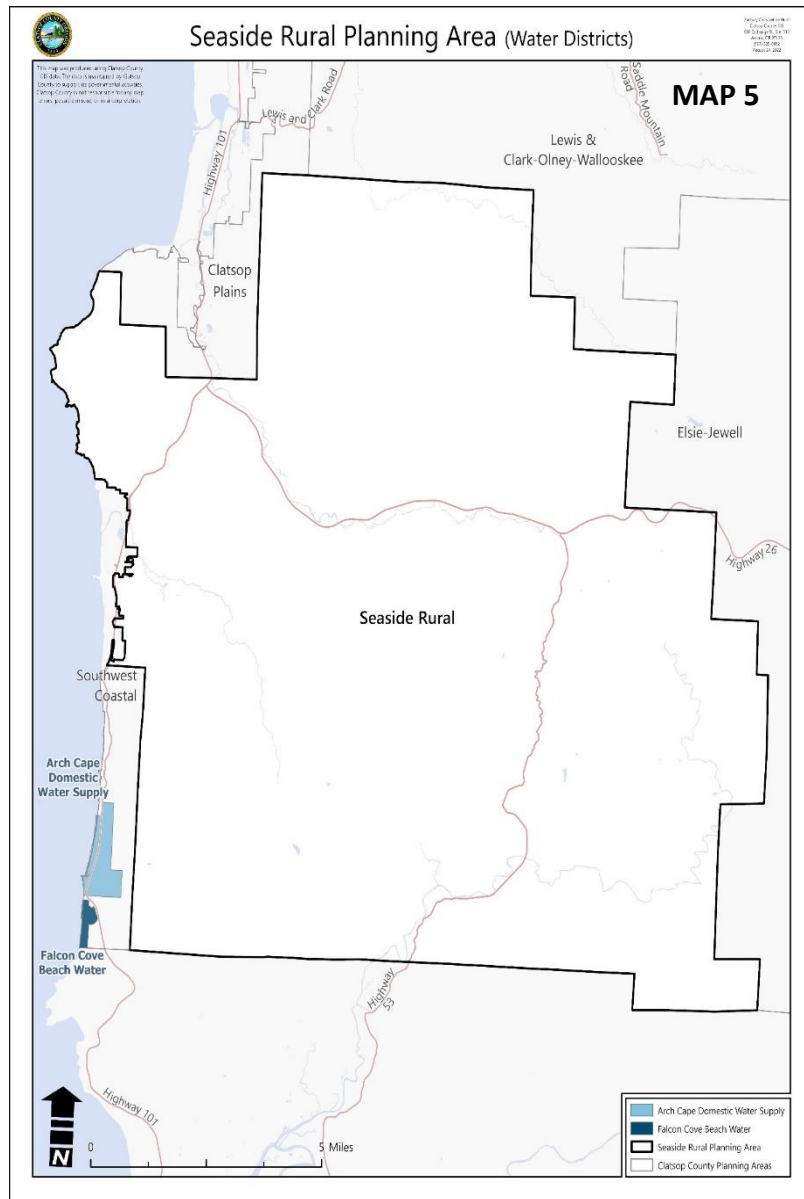
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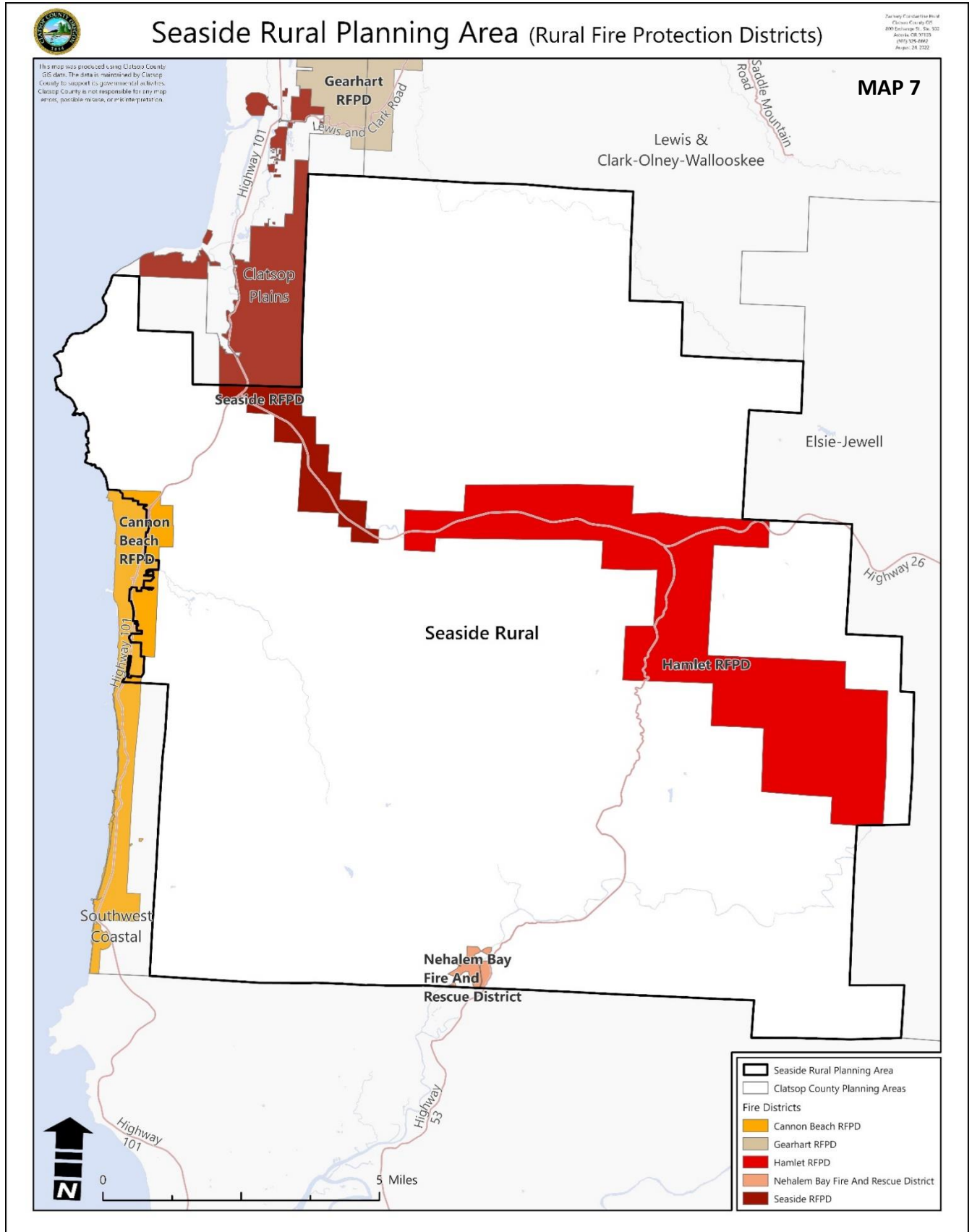
The Tillamook Public Utility District has a 24.9 KV line extending into Clatsop County which presently serves homes on Highway 53 from the State Fish Hatchery south to the County line.

There are no natural gas lines serving this area of the County.

Some of the statistics concerning public facilities are updated in the Goal 11: Public Facilities and Services element of the Comprehensive Plan. Also see the Public Facilities and Services Background Report and County-wide Element for additional information and policies.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

MINERAL RESOURCES

The two most common mineral resources in Clatsop County are sand and gravel, and crushed rock deposits. Sand and gravel are found in stream channels and bars, in the alluvial deposits of the stream valleys and in certain rocky beaches. Crushed rock is rare and valuable and is basaltic in origin. It has also been noted during the update of this plan that the economic benefits must also be tempered with measures to protect residents from negative impacts from blasting associated with mining activities. Such measures might include limitations on hours when blasting activities could be conducted. Information from DOGAMI indicates the following active surface mining operations in the Seaside Rural Planning Area:

TABLE 2: SURFACE MINING OPERATIONS		
SITE NAME	PERMITTEE	LOCATION
Volmer Creek	Big River Excavating	https://www.google.com/maps/@?api=1&map_action=map&center=45.913868,-123.894119&zoom=16&basemap=satellite
Square Creek Pit	Bayview Asphalt Inc.	https://www.google.com/maps/@?api=1&map_action=map&center=45.939774,-123.934647&zoom=16&basemap=satellite

The Seaside Rural Planning area has many other areas of igneous rock and intrusive basalt outcrops. These areas of basalt rock should be examined for possible sites of future rock quarries to help the County meet its growing demands. Most of the areas are presently in forest management.

Policies and standards relating to mineral resources are handled in the Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces Background Report and Countywide Element.

WATER RESOURCES

Per information from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) the Seaside Rural Planning Area is located within the North Coast Basin, which extends from the Columbia River to the southern Tillamook County line (Figure 1). The basin consists of eight watersheds. Two of the six watersheds that drain to the Pacific Ocean are located within the Seaside Rural Planning Area:

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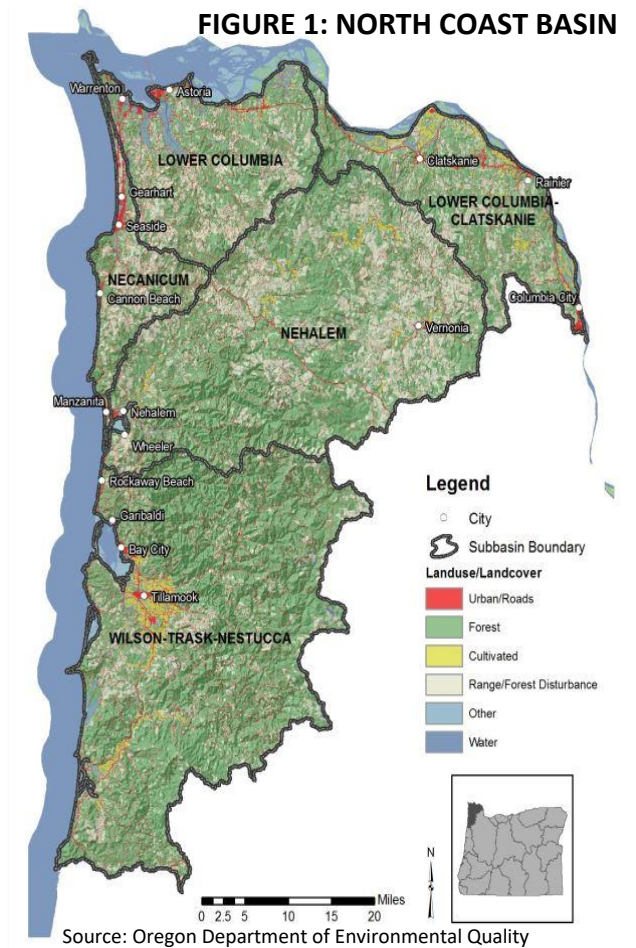
- Necanicum
- Nehalem

The Seaside Rural area contains many streams transporting water to the ocean. The major rivers in the area are the Necanicum River, which flows northwest through the northern part of the study area, and the North Fork of the Nehalem, which flows southwest and drains the southeast part of the planning area. Ecola Creek drains most of the area immediately behind Cannon Beach. Circle and Klotchie Creeks are major tributaries of the Necanicum River.

Grassy Lake and Soapstone Lake are the only lakes in the area. Grassy Lake is a small, successional lake rapidly turning to marshy bog in the uplands between Onion Peak and Sugarloaf Mountain. Soapstone Lake is a 10-acre lake at 550 feet elevation, and is located east of Highway 53. The Seaside reservoir, located two miles south of the City, is a two-acre body of water used to supply water to the City of Seaside and selective residents of the Seaside Rural area.

Cannon Beach obtains water from part of the Ecola Creek watershed located about 3/4 of a mile upstream from the confluence of the forks. The City has taken an active role in managing its watershed, purchasing more than a thousand acres and developing the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve (ECFR) Plan. Located approximately one mile from the Pacific Ocean, the ECFR covers approximately 1,040 acres and is owned by the City of Cannon Beach. With a maximum elevation of 3,075 feet, the headwaters of the watershed are steep and mountainous. Over 95% of the lands in the watershed are managed for industrial timber production

The streams in this area of the County are an invaluable resource. These streams provide water for the residents of the area, as well as providing habitat for both fish and wildlife. The streams in the area fluctuate considerably between January and August. During the winter months when the streams are at their peak, there is a sufficient supply of water in the stream channels.



Groundwater/ Surface Water

Most of the Seaside Rural Planning Area is underlain by fine-grained marine sedimentary rocks and volcanic rocks of low porosity and permeability. Water yields are low, except in the alluvial plains (along rivers). Rain falling on the impermeable slopes of volcanic and marine sedimentary rock is rejected and runoff is rapid. The amount of water that enters the rock units is small, although it will often yield an adequate amount for domestic use. Groundwater in the alluvial plains is more abundant due to the permeability of the gravels and sands and seepage from the river. Generally, water can be obtained at shallow depths in the wider floodplain areas.

Most wells in the alluvial lowlands produce good quality water for domestic use. Hard water, usually high in calcium and magnesium is likely to occur in wells in marine sedimentary and volcanic rocks. Many residences within the Seaside Rural Planning Area utilize independent surface water drinking systems for potable and domestic water. The rights to utilize surface waters is overseen by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD). While OWRD monitors streams, reservoirs, and canals to determine the amount of surface water available for allocation it does not test homeowners' drinking water. Many of these independent surface water systems are not registered, which may preclude residents and owners from receiving notice when spraying activities occur on nearby resource lands.

FOREST LANDS AND AGRICULTURE

Forest Lands

In the Seaside Rural Planning Area, the majority of the forest land is in private and public ownership and covers over 90% of the total land area. These lands are intensively managed for timber production, a primary industry of the County. Recognizing this fact, the major forest lands are preserved in the Plan under a Forest Lands designation.

Agriculture

Some agricultural activity in the Seaside Rural Planning Area occurs along the Necanicum River Valley, the North Fork Nehalem River Valley, and two areas along the Little North Fork. While these areas were previously thought to have low potential for agriculture because of past development that resulted in small parcel sizes, farming does occur in the area on a small- to moderate-scale. These activities are considered compatible with rural residential living.

General policies concerning agriculture and forestry can be found in Goals 3: Agricultural Lands and 4: Forest Lands of the Countywide comprehensive plan.

OPEN SPACE, HISTORIC, RECREATION, SCENIC AND NATURAL AREAS

RECREATION

There are a variety of recreational facilities and opportunities within the Seaside Rural Planning Area. Each is described in further detail below. General recreational policies can also be found in Goal 8: Recreational Needs of the countywide Comprehensive Plan.

State Parks

Within this planning area, there two State parks: Ecola and Elmer Feldenheimer State Natural Area.

Ecola State Park has picnic facilities as well as a hiking trail to the top of Tillamook Head or across the head to Ecola Point and Indian Beach. The park stretches along nine miles of coastline and offers outstanding sightseeing and recreational opportunities, including cliff side viewpoints of secluded coves, forested promontories and a long-abandoned lighthouse. The park's network of trails includes an eight-mile segment of the Oregon Coast Trail, and a 2 ½ mile historical interpretive route called the Clatsop Loop Trail.

Elmer Feldenheimer is a Forest Preserve to the east of Ecola and was created to protect forested areas in Ecola State Park.

Oregon Scenic Waterways

In 2019, a 17.5-mile portion of the Nehalem River between Henry Rierson Spruce Run Campground and the confluence with Cook Creek near Cougar Valley State Park, was designated as an Oregon Scenic Waterway. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department is currently working with a Rules Advisory Committee to finalize river-specific rules for the designated stretch of river.

County Parks

North Fork Nehalem Park - This three-acre park is located on Highway 53. No facilities are provided, although the park has fishing access, open space and water access.

Kloutchie Creek Park – This park is located off U.S. Highway 26, about 2 ½ miles southeast of the U.S. 101 junction, five miles from Seaside and Cannon Beach. The park is comprised of 25 acres and has restroom facilities, trails and water access. A four-mile mountain biking trail system, built in conjunction with the Northwest Trail Association and GreenWood Resources was dedicated in 2019.

The park is also home to the Sitka Spruce Oregon Heritage Tree Site. In December 2006, a windstorm caused a large amount of rotted wood to break free from the tree at the site of an old lightning scar. One year later, the tree fell victim to a second windstorm that broke off the trunk about 80 feet from the ground. In February 2011, the Parks Department had a further 40 feet of the remaining snag removed, due to concerns about decaying wood falling from the trunk and putting visitors at risk. Though no longer rising to its 200-foot height, the tree's 17-foot-diameter trunk and two fallen sections still convey to visitors the giant spruce's massive size. The downed portions have been left in place to serve as nurse logs for a new generation of Klooky Creek giants.

These facilities are considered adequate to satisfy future needs for parks and open space. Additional camping, fishing and boat launch sites, however, could be developed along the area's rivers. Loss of traditional fishing spots have occurred as the area has built up.

When the original planning process for the Seaside Rural Planning Area took place in the late 1970s, residents at that time expressed a need for slow change in the area. During this current update, the citizen advisory committee members expressed the need for more commercial and community services and the need to provide additional tourist facilities such as campgrounds and park amenities. Recreational facilities which cater to the tourist industry should still be closely monitored to ensure that noise levels are kept at a minimum and traffic congestion is prevented. New major highway improvements driven by increased use and promotion of recreational resources in the area are a concern.

Trails

Highway 101 receives extremely heavy long distance and local bicycle traffic during the summer months. U.S. Highway 101 is the route for two bicycle routes: the Oregon Coast Bike Route and the TransAmerica Trail. This bike route is very dangerous, having many curves and no barriers preventing automobiles from entering the bike lane.

The Soapstone Lake Trail is an approximately 2-mile-long trail located east of Highway 53, between MP 5 and 6. The trail follows an old road to the former site of the Lindgren Cabin, which is now located at Cullaby Lake County Park. The lake provides an opportunity to see a variety of wildlife, including beaver and eagles.

Additional information and policies regarding recreation and natural resources are found in the Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas and Open Spaces Background Report and County-wide Element, Goal 8: Recreational Needs Background Report and County-wide Element and Ocean and Coastal Shorelands section of the Goal 16: Estuarine Resources and Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands Background Report and the County-wide Element.

OPEN SPACE, HISTORIC, SCENIC AND NATURAL AREAS

Open Space

As the Seaside Rural Planning Area becomes increasingly popular as a recreation, retirement and residential area, private land will be developed at an accelerating rate. Huge portions of the area, however, are and will remain in open space. Open space is one of the benefits of resource management. Resource management lands, such as forest and agriculture lands, provide economic value which requires some form of protection to maintain their utilization. A majority of the Seaside Rural area will be preserved for forest uses.

Parks and other recreational areas provide open space as part of their function. Ecola Park, Elmer Feldenheimer State Natural Area, North Fork Nehalem Park, and Klookchie Creek Park together encompass over 2,500 acres of open space. Additional open space is being preserved through the acquisition and conservation efforts of the North Coast Land Conservancy (NCLC) and other organizations.

In 2016, the North Coast Land Conservancy (NCLC) acquired the 340-acre Boneyard Ridge on Tillamook Head, creating an unbroken, 3,500-acre corridor of conserved land stretching from the ocean shore to the Necanicum River floodplain between the communities of Seaside and Cannon Beach. In June 2022, the Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District purchased 1,500 acres of forestland adjacent to Oswald West State Park, the NCLC's Rainforest Reserve and the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve. This purchase will permanently protect the source of Arch Cape's drinking water. The corridor, which encompasses an entire watershed, and includes the near-shore ocean, headlands, forested watershed, floodplain, and estuary, will also create a wildlife corridor.

Historic and Scenic Areas

Historic Resources

Historical sites which have been inventoried in the Seaside Rural area include the Tillamook Head Trail, Tillamook Rock (lighthouse), Clark's View (on Tillamook Trail), Indian Beach (Ecola State Park), WWII Memorial (Highway 53 Junction) and an old cemetery on Hill Road in the Hamlet area.

The Tillamook Head Trail leads south from Seaside over Tillamook Head through Ecola Park and into Cannon Beach. Clark's View, which is marked by a monument, is located 1,138 feet above sea level. This site was visited by Captain William Clark while on a trip

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to Cannon Beach. Indian Beach is on the site on an early Native American fishing camp. These three sites are currently publicly owned and protected.

A lighthouse exists on Tillamook Rock that has been in existence since 1879. Official use of the light, however, was discontinued in 1957 and the rock and lighthouse are now privately owned. Although there have been many speculative ideas to convert the lighthouse to such things as a gambling casino, access to the property is difficult and extremely dangerous. The structure itself is in a deteriorating condition and receives constant punishment by crashing breakers.

The World War II Memorial naming the Sunset Highway, once the Wolf Creek Highway, is located at the junction of Highway 53 and Highway 26.

Hamlet was named by early pioneers for its size. A post office was established there in 1905. The old cemetery has been donated to the community for preservation. The Hamlet School is owned and maintained by the Hamlet Historical Schoolhouse, a non-profit charitable organization.

Clatsop Chinook or other archeological sites exist in the Seaside Rural area. As development occurs, there will be inadvertent discoveries of areas, particularly around bodies of water, where the Clatsop Chinook utilized sites for temporary fish or food-gathering camps. Information regarding inadvertent discoveries of human remains, village sites and encampments should be reported to the Chinook Indian Nation and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Scenic Areas

Scenic areas in the Seaside Rural area include the rivers and highways. The highway from Silver Point to the Cannon Beach junction is a designated U.S. 101 Scenic Corridor, including a 50-foot buffer on both sides. Access is limited, no highway frontage is allowed, and all uses must be setback in accordance with Oregon Department of Transportation regulations. Billboards and signs can also degrade scenic qualities. These are controlled by the Oregon Department of Transportation and local policies regarding highway commercial developments and the prohibition of off-premise signs.

Natural Areas

Onion Peak Preserve is the only natural area site listed on the Oregon Natural Heritage Register. Onion Peak is located approximately 9 miles southeast of Cannon Beach. This is a steep-sided, rock peak, the highest in the area, at whose summit is a small remnant of the original Pacific Silver Fir-Western Hemlock forest. There is also a grassy bald area and a rock garden

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community, both showing minimal disturbances. Found here are a significant number of rare and localized plant species. Onion Peak is included among the eight sites in Oregon listed as a Dedicated Natural Heritage Conservation Area.

Additional potential sites were identified during this plan update process, including:

- **Chapman Point** is the first headland to the north of Cannon Beach with Ecola State Park immediately north. This 100-acre area, which is now owned by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, includes a rugged headland which is very steep and rocky. This is a very pristine area and the fragile system likely cannot withstand excessive human use.
- **Sugarloaf Mountain** is 2 miles south and 5 miles east of Cannon Beach. The summit of the mountain is approximately 10 acres with a rock garden community of rare plant species. In 2021, approval was granted to construct a new communication tower in this area.
- Grassy Lake is a two acre lake which is rapidly filling in and approaching a bog stage. This area presents a good example of aquatic succession uncommon at this elevation and is included here for its scientific significance.
- Klookchie Creek Park, which includes amenities such as restrooms, trails, and a picnic area, also contains the remnants of the largest Sitka Spruce tree.

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August 24, 2002



FISH AND WILDLIFE

This area of the County provides excellent habitat for many forms of wildlife, mammals and birds, reptiles and amphibians. Some of the more common forms of wildlife found in the Seaside Rural area include:

TABLE 3: FISH AND WILDLIFE			
MAMMALS	BIRDS		GAME FISH
Roosevelt Elk	Pheasant	Sparrows	Steelhead Trout
Black-tailed Deer	Grouse	Solitary Vireo	Coho Salmon
Black Bear	Quail	Blackbirds	Chinook Salmon
Coyote	Mourning Dove	Widgeons	Chum Salmon
Bobcat	Pigeon	Shovelers	Cutthroat Trout
Muskrat	Grebe	Teal	Brown Trout
Mink	Phalarope	Owls	Rainbow Trout
Rabbit	Sandpipers	Peregrine Falcon	
Raccoon	Seagulls	Hawks	
Weasel	Cormorant	Marbled Murrelet	
Ground Squirrel	Murre	Jays	
Chipmunk	Killdeer	Oregon Junco	
Beaver	Tufted Puffin	Rufous-sided Towhee	
Mole	Thrushes	Starlings	
Shrew	Ducks	Finches	
Meadow Mouse	Merganser	Hummingbirds	
Mountain Beaver	Geese	Trails	
Red Squirrel	Crows	Cowbirds	
Cougar	Ravens	Golden Plated Warbler	
	Water Ouzels	Goldfinch	
	Golden Crowned Kinglets	Wren Tit, Bush Tit	
	Woodpecker		

With reference to big game, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife classifies areas within the County as Major Big Game

Range, Peripheral Big Game Range and Excluded Range. For a discussion on Big Game and other fish and wildlife resources see Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces Element.

The existence and management of vegetation is closely tied to the presence of wildlife. As large portions of the area's forest lands are logged, natural grazing habitat is created.

Wildlife, primarily anadromous fish and crustaceans populate the streams of the area. The Necanicum and Nehalem Rivers and Ecola Creek are the prime streams for anadromous fish runs. Anadromous fish hatch in upland freshwater streams, migrate to sea to spend a major part of their life, and return to the freshwater upland stream to spawn a new generation of fish. Important to these streams is the maintenance of water quality and low turbidity levels. A fish hatchery to augment the natural production of anadromous fish is located on the North Fork of the Nehalem. Soapstone Lake is stocked with cutthroat and rainbow trout. The streams and lakes of the area also provide water, as well as habitat, to many other species. The streambanks in the area are generally lined with red alder trees, which fulfill a dual function of shading the stream and keeping the water cool for fish, and holding the bank soils in place as a deterrent to erosion.

Within the Seaside Rural Planning Area coastal coho salmon are the only endangered fish species listed. The marbled murrelet, which is listed as an endangered species by the State of Oregon and as a threatened species by the federal government, utilizes old growth forests within the Seaside Rural Planning Area as nesting habitat.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The Seaside Rural planning area is an area of dramatic beauty. As one travels south from Seaside on U.S. Highway 101, the bold promontory of Tillamook Head looms as the first landmark of the planning area. The head offers outstanding vistas and stands of old growth sitka spruce forest in Ecola State Park on top of a massive rock formation.

Continuing on, the highway begins to drop into the area of Cannon Beach and Tolovana Park, between the Pacific Ocean and the relatively low but rugged peaks of the Coast Range. Sugarloaf Mountain (2,853 feet) is the most prominent peak to the east with the distinctive Double Peaks ahead, closer to the ocean. Haystack Rock and the Needles can be seen to the west.

The eastern section of the planning area contains the lush and productive river valleys of the Necanicum and Nehalem Rivers, a vast area of forested peaks and canyons including Saddle Mountain, clear-cuts, and dark basalt rock outcrops.

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Highway 26 provides the main route of transportation east and west, with Highway 53 for north-south travel to the County boundary. These routes basically follow the two rivers.

Homesites are scattered along the highways, with some tourist commercial development occurring at the major junctions.

It is the purpose and intent of Clatsop County to maintain the rural character of residential land outside urban growth boundaries within the Seaside Rural planning area by preserving and protecting concentrated open space and natural resources, and minimizing the impact of rural residential development on essential services, while also allowing low density residential development.

Therefore, it is the County's purpose and intent that all residential planned developments and subdivision developments in the Seaside Rural planning area shall be clustered which will ensure that the rural character is maintained. **Map 9** details the land use designations assigned within the Seaside Rural Planning Area. Detailed zoning maps can be located on the Clatsop County [website](#).

HOUSING

The Seaside Rural area is very sparsely settled, containing only 310 existing residences. Approximately 47% of the dwellings were constructed prior to 1980. Approximately 60% of the dwellings were constructed prior to 1990. Between 2005 and November 24, 2021, 39 permits were issued for new single-family and two-family dwellings in the Seaside Rural Planning Area.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Development

DEVELOPMENT areas are those with a combination of physical, biological, and social/economic characteristics which make them necessary and suitable for residential, commercial, or industrial development and includes those which can be adequately served by existing or planned urban services and facilities.

The Urban Growth Boundary for the Seaside Rural area is around Cannon Beach. The approximately 1,100 acres of land included both within the Urban Growth Boundary – both inside and outside the incorporated city limits, represents the growth needs of the City for the next 20 years. Lands within the boundary are presently served by sewer and/or water, or are capable of being serviced. No commercial forest lands are included in the boundary.

The Ecola Creek estuary, outside the city limits, is excluded from the Urban Growth Boundary. Lands with steep slopes, known or suspected geologic hazards, and which are considerable distances from city services are excluded from the boundary.

Rural Lands

RURAL LANDS are those lands which are outside the urban growth boundary and are not agricultural lands or forest lands. In the Seaside Rural area there are about four distinct areas where residential development has historically been clustered. Because of the unique circumstances which characterize these areas, different lot sizes have been designated.

In order to compliment Cannon Beach's Plan and to buffer the urban area from adjacent forest land, a two-acre zone has been designated for land outside of the Cannon Beach Urban Growth Boundary. The Seal Rock and Elkwood Mountain subdivisions, however, have been zoned for an average lot size of two acres because of ownership patterns existing at the time the original comprehensive plan was adopted in 1980.

The residential area from the Cannon Beach junction to Black Bridge is within the Seaside fire district and close to the commercial centers of Seaside and Cannon Beach. Because of the built-up nature of the area, this area has been zoned for two-acre parcels.

The area east of Black Bridge to the Highway 53 junction has been zoned for five-acre parcels because of the distance to commercial areas and the existing average lot size in 1980 when the comprehensive plan was originally adopted.

The area near the southern border of the County and close to Nehalem has been zoned for five-acre parcels. Many small ownerships occur in the area.

The parcels designated as Rural Lands are primarily clustered along the major transportation corridors, including Highways 101, 53 and 26.

Rural Agricultural Lands

Agricultural lands are those lands that are to be preserved and maintained for farm use, consistent with existing and future needs for agricultural products, forest and open space. There are only three parcels in the Seaside Rural Planning Area that are designated Rural Agricultural Lands. These parcels are located on the west side of Highway 53, adjacent to the Tillamook County Line.

Forest Lands and Conservation Other Resources

Forest Lands

Forest lands are those lands that are to be retained for the production of wood fiber and other forest uses. The majority of the Seaside Rural Planning Area is designated as Forest Lands.

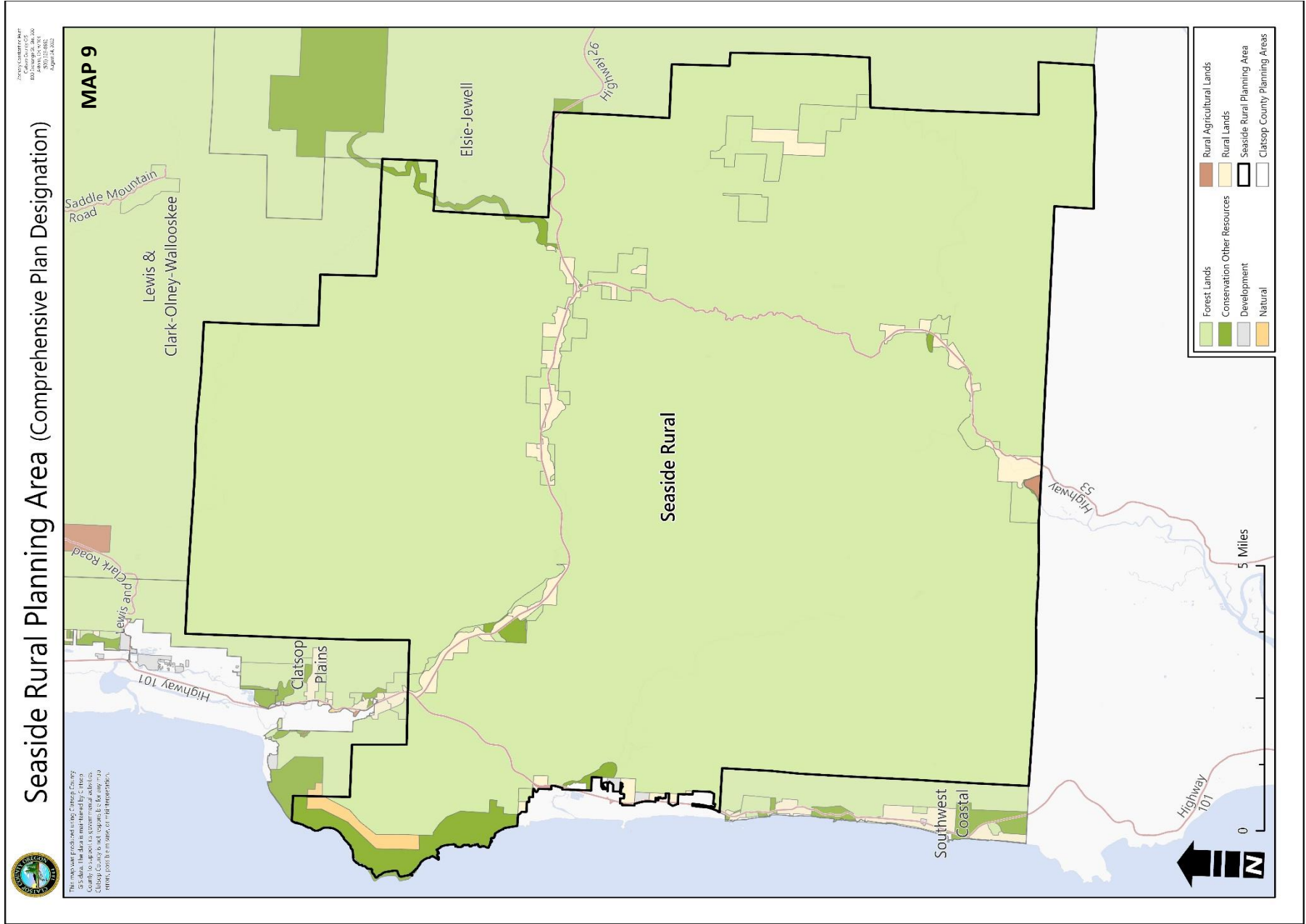
Conservation Other Resources

Conservation Other Resources areas provide important resource or ecosystem support functions such as lakes and wetlands and federal, state and local parks. Within the Seaside Rural Planning Area, lands designated as Conservation Other Resources are primarily zoned Recreation Management (RM), Lake and Wetland (LW), Open Space, Parks and Recreation (OPR), and Quarry Mining (QM).

Natural

A NATURAL area is defined as land and/or water units in which natural processes exist relatively undisturbed or can be restored to a nearly natural state. The only area designated Natural within the Seaside Rural Planning Area is in Ecola State Park. That portion of the park is zoned Natural Upland.

Detailed information on the County's six land use designations can be found in Goal 2: Land Use Planning of the countywide Comprehensive Plan.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

SEASIDE RURAL PLANNING AREA OVERALL GOAL

To preserve and maintain the present overall rural quality of life now enjoyed in the Seaside Rural area.

BASALTIC LOWLANDS AND HIGHLANDS POLICY

Policy A: Residential development on basaltic lowlands and highlands, located in the Hamlet area, should be confined to the area along existing roads which are not characterized by steep slopes.

TILLAMOOK HEAD POLICY

Policy A: Tillamook Head shall be preserved as a unique coastal land formation. Uses other than forest management, wildlife habitat, low-intensity recreation, natural and mineral resources shall be discouraged. New mining operations on Tillamook Head which are in view of Highway 101 shall be screened with an appropriate buffer of trees.

CRITICAL HAZARDS POLICIES

Policy A: The County should promote education to ensure that households are prepared to be self-sufficient for a minimum of two weeks as natural disasters can leave residents in the Seaside Rural Planning Area isolated.

Policy B: Evacuation routes should be located within the Seaside Rural Planning Area as identified in the Tsunami Evacuation Facilities Improvement Plan (TEFIP).

RECREATION POLICIES

Policy A: Non-intensive recreational uses of the shoreland and water areas that are compatible with the rural character of the Seaside Rural Planning Area (fishing, bird watching, picnicking) should be encouraged over high intensity uses.

Policy B: Public access to the Necanicum River and North Fork of the Nehalem River currently exists at several locations. If new data indicates a need in the future, new access should be developed on public land with adequate provisions

made for the protection of adjacent privately owned land. Riparian areas adjacent to new public access points shall be protected to the greatest extent possible.

Policy C: The County should pursue the development of a bike path along Old Highway 101 to Cannon Beach and may coordinate with ODOT to incorporate the bike path with Highway 101 improvements planned for the area.

Policy D: The County should work to identify and establish public access facilities along the main stem of the Nehalem River.

CULTURAL AREAS POLICY

Policy A: The County should encourage public and private property owners to allow archaeological excavations within the lower Nehalem area in order to increase knowledge and awareness of the history of this area.

HISTORIC AND SCENIC AREAS POLICY

Policy A: Uses of Tillamook lighthouse shall enhance historic preservation, maintain the integrity of the coastal waters, require little or no public access and shall not substantially alter the external appearance of the site except to restore its historic appearance.

Policy B: As resources permit, the County should work with affected property owners to determine if the following sites should be added to the County's Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces inventory of historic areas:

- Hamlet School
- Hamlet Cemetery

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Policy A: The County may support continued efforts by the Oregon Department of Transportation to improve safety and traffic flow at the junction of Highway 101 and Highway 26.

Policy B: Clatsop County should coordinate with ODOT to promote the installation of bicycle lanes, crosswalk, fog lines and curbing to separate auto and bicycle traffic. These improvements should be considered by ODOT for U.S. Highways 101, 103, 26, 53, and 202.

LAND USE DESIGNATION POLICIES

Policy A: The summit of Onion Peak boundary (as described in the Preserve Analysis, September 1979 by the Natural Area Preserves Advisory Committee) and a small meadow on the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain support sub-alpine type "grass bald" and "rock garden" communities with eleven or more rare or endangered species. These areas shall be designated NATURAL, and preserved for research and education. An established hiking trail is not recommended as the areas are small and fragile and could not tolerate trampling and soil erosion.

Policy B: The Elmer Feldenheimer forest preserve shall be designated NATURAL.

COORDINATING AGENCIES:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)
Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE)
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL)
Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
Department of Geology and Mineral Inventories (DOGAMI)
Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District

BACKGROUND REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DATA:

2021 Oregon Distribution System Plan, PacifiCorp