



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

**Summary of the major habitat types and species occurring at Wapato Access Area on Sauvie Island
Prepared by Kammy Kern-Korot, Senior Conservationist
For Oregon State Parks interpretive signage**

1) The existing oak savannah contains rare and declining Oregon white oak trees (*Quercus garryana*), plus encroaching Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), non-native grasses (e.g. Orchard grass) and clover, Canada thistle, and other herbaceous weeds, and large patches of Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*). At least one native upland (Dewey and Thick-headed) sedge (*Carex deweyana* and *c. pachystachya*), Common self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), native trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) and some lupine was found. Because of the competing invasive blackberry, the native shrub understory is limited. Normally, we might find tall Oregon grape, snowberry, red flowering currant, Baldhip or nootka rose, oceanspray, Western serviceberry, etc. and possibly Willamette Valley Ponderosa Pine trees.

Re: wildlife, we can note that black-tailed deer (which I have seen on site) and California quail use it, and we hope iconic species such as white-breasted nuthatch, Western gray squirrel and acorn woodpeckers might use them as we "restore" more oaks to the site. White breasted nuthatch and Bullock's oriole were surveyed there. We'd like Acorn and Lewis woodpeckers – the latter known to occur historically in oak habitat on Sauvie; the former sighted more recently. The former is one of the iconic oak species, along with western gray squirrel, which we hope to have some day.

Small mammals include weasels [per Sue B.] -- which feed on rabbits, rodents, and birds -- and others expected to use the site include: deer mice, vagrant shrews and voles (all observed at wetland meadows at Burlington Bottoms) and gophers, ground squirrels and moles. There are certainly coyotes using Wapato Access Area and are likely hunting in multiple habitat types.

Expected bats include: Big brown bat, California myotis, Long-eared myotis, Silver-haired bat, Long-legged myotis, Little brown bat, and Yuma myotis [based on 2005 survey done for ODFW at Oak Island].

2) Re: Virginia Lakes: The plant community: Although invasive reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) dominates the palustrine emergent wetlands, we were delighted to find historically-significant wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia* var. *latifolia*). There is also nodding beggar's tick (*Bidens cernua*), Giant / broad-fruited bur-reed (*Sparaganium eurycarpum*), *Polygonum amphibium* var. *stipulaceum* ("water smartweed / -knotweed/ -lady's thumb"), two clumps of cattail (*Typha latifolia*), jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), toad rush (*Juncus bufonis*), and woody wetland plants around the edge including clustered rose (*Rosa pisocarpa*), red osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera / sericea*) and willows (*Salix spp.*). There are other non-native herbaceous weeds such as moneywort / creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) and Bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). Small duckweed (lemma minor) and invasive parrot feather (*Myriophyllum brasiliense*) occur in the deeper areas. I saw another reference to the fact that Native American women did use their feet to separate the wapato tubers from the substrate and then harvest them when they float to the surface. This would be an interesting fact to include.

Wildlife: beaver (+ minks and muskrats [per Sue B.]) have been observed, nutria expected. (Mink eat fish [presumed absent from the Lakes], frogs, and other prey species found in or near water; muskrat eat aquatic plants, (fish – presumed absent), turtles, snails and amphibians.) Brush rabbits would be expected in the wetland shrubs.

Virginia Lake(s) is important for reptiles and amphibians. Painted turtles have been known to occur in Virginia Lakes and will hopefully spend more time when/if we add basking logs; we believe they are nesting or attempting to nest in the grassy areas of the uplands / oak savannah. Amphibians come to over-winter from the forest across the road in fall, if they survive the road crossing, when fall rains begin. Pond-breeding amphibians observed include rough-skinned newt, red-legged frog, long-toed salamander, Pacific tree/chorus-frog (*Pseudacris regilla*), and northwestern salamander. They lay and attach their eggs in late winter / early spring to the nodding beggars tick, willow and other wetlands plant species.

Audubon's bird survey found: Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Virginia Rail, Sora, Pied Billed Grebe, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Harrier, Great Blue Heron. American bittern is expected.

Re: waterfowl, mallards nest in the area of the open water wetlands of Virginia Lake. Species surveyed by Audubon include: American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Northern Pintail, Common Merganser, Cinnamon Teal, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck. ODFW added that the following are likely: Hooded Merganser, Pied-billed Grebe, Coot, and possibly Snipe.

3) Riparian (upland) forest, dominated by Black cottonwood trees (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) and Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*), with licorice fern (*Polyodium glycyrrhiza*) growing on the ash, plus red alder (*Alnus rubra*), cascara, red osier / twig dogwood, Indian plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*), nootka rose, and English hawthorne

Wildlife: Mammals would include weasels, rodents, squirrels, brush rabbits, etc. Bats expected include: California myotis, Yuma myotis, Long-legged myotis, Hoary bat, Silver-haired bat, Little brown bat, Big brown bat, California myotis [based on 2005 Survey in Cottonwood Gallery Forest elsewhere on Sauvie Island].

4) Palustrine forested wetlands, dominated by Oregon ash trees, with cottonwood, Pacific and Scouler's willow (*salix lucida* sp. *lasiandra* and s. *scouleriana*), Black / swamp gooseberry (*ribes lacustre*), red osier dogwood, spirea, clustered rosa (r. *pisocarpa*) and stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Mary re: birds? Amphibians, beaver and nutria would be here, of course, plus more aquatic prey hunting mammals like mink and muskrat. Weasels, brush rabbits and small rodents would also be expected to occur. Bats expected include: Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)*, Silver-haired bat, Hoary bat, Little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)*, Yuma myotis, California myotis, Long-legged myotis [based on 2005 survey in Cottonwood/Oregon Ash gallery forest elsewhere on Sauvie Island]. (*documented at Wapato AA)

5) Mixed conifer forest (Douglas fir, grand fir, bigleaf maple): we expect that the forested cover on the south side provide escape cover and day time loafing areas for resident black-tailed deer. Rodents and non-aquatic mammals, including [short-tailed] weasels, would also be found here.

Potential owls at Wapato include:

Barn owl

Northern Pygmy owl

Western Screech owl

Western Long-eared owl (never seen)

Northern saw-whet owl

Great horned owl / *Bubo virginianus* (known to occur – resident species)

Short-eared owls? (Report that there used to be a colony on the South end of the Island)

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