

Southeast Neighbors

April 21, 2008

Review Committee and Members of the Board
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer St. NE, Suite 360
Salem OR 97301

Re: Letter of Support for City of Eugene's East Fork Amazon Headwaters Land Acquisition Grant Application

Dear People,

Southeast Neighbors is an active city-recognized neighborhood association representing about 13,000 residents and some 6200 households in Eugene, Oregon. Our neighborhood is bounded roughly by Willamette Street to the west, 30th Avenue to the north, and by Spencer Butte and the ridgeline hills to the south and east.

This area of the City of Eugene includes most of the primary headwaters of Amazon Creek. Amazon Creek, in turn, defines the primary watershed for some 60% of the total area of the city, extending through town from the southeast to the north and west, out to the well-known West Eugene Wetlands.

We are writing in support of the City of Eugene's East Fork Amazon Headwaters Land Acquisition Grant Application. For several years our neighborhood has studied and documented the special values of this area, while working to build public awareness of the crucial value of this property for ecosystem services and compatible, low-impact outdoor recreation.

The East Fork Amazon Headwaters Forest is one of the most pristine habitat areas in and around Eugene — which also happens to be in a unique location. It is rare and wonderful for residents of our steadily-densifying city to be able to walk among 500-year-old trees, home to pileated woodpeckers and rare mosses and lichens, and crisscross native streams connecting upland pocket wetlands, home to red-legged frogs and other threatened plants and animals.

This property is a significant area for stormwater mediation as well as being biologically important. It currently provides great hydrological benefits in an area of steep slopes and active earthflows, documented by LIDAR imaging. As the Army Corps of Engineers has demonstrated, if it were to become intensively developed, the hydrological impacts downstream to our slowly-recovering Amazon Creek system would be heavy, and in some was probably irreparable.

Because of our immediate location, our neighborhood sees itself as a steward, on behalf of the entire community, of the Amazon Headwaters and the health and continuity of upper Amazon Creek. Preservation of the few remaining undeveloped reaches of the Amazon Creek headwaters is the very highest priority identified repeatedly by residents of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Lisa Warnes
Vice President, Southeast Neighbors
lisawarnes@efn.org
Box 1588, Eugene, OR 97440
(541) 484-2210