

# CELEBRATING THE PROTECTION OF BIG CREEK, OREGON



## AT A GLANCE:

**Acreeage:** 193 acres

**Total Cost:** \$4,070,000

**Source of Funds:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Nature Conservancy

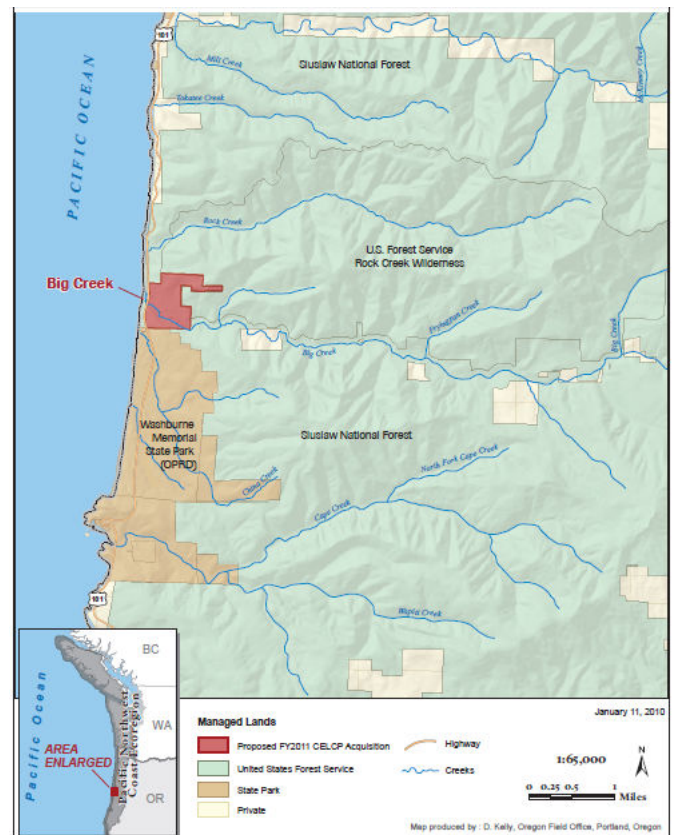
**Property Owner:** Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

## Project Overview

Big Creek consists of 193 acres of forest, freshwater stream, grasslands, shrublands, and riverine estuary habitat along the central Oregon Coast in Lane County.

## Biodiversity Significance

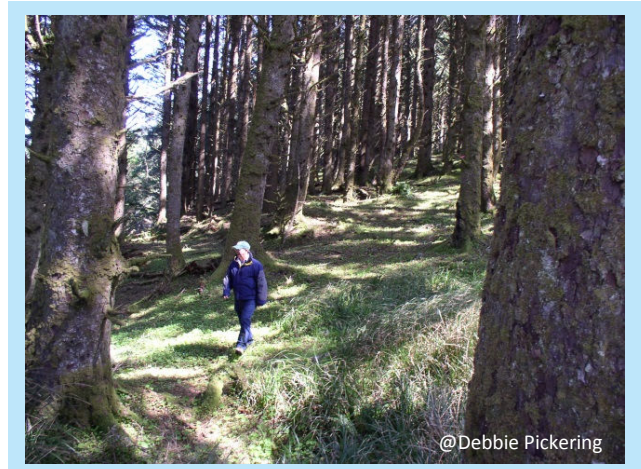
Protection of this property ensures a continuous, intact canopy across five coastal watersheds, improves water quality, and prevents habitat fragmentation. The property includes land on both sides of Big Creek, designated critical habitat for federally threatened coho salmon, and hosts a rich community of habitats and rare, threatened, and endangered species. A viable population of the federally threatened Oregon silverspot butterfly is present on the property, along with 132 acres of federally designated critical habitat. The silverspot is in crisis at every site it occupies and desperately needs habitat. The property includes high-quality habitat for at least nine other imperiled species and provides suitable nest sites for the federally threatened marbled murrelet and federally threatened northern spotted owl, which have been seen foraging on the property.



## Management

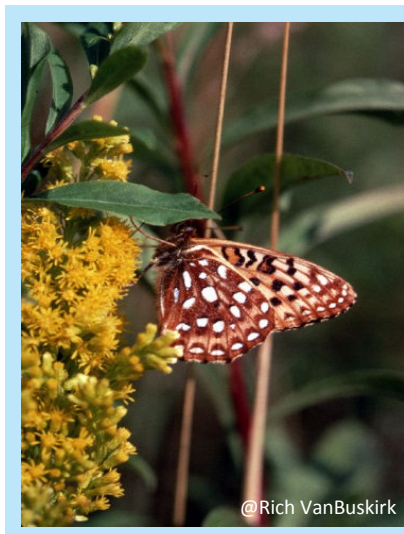
In December 2012, the Big Creek property was transferred to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) which will manage it primarily to benefit wildlife. Prairie habitat for the silverspot butterfly is being actively improved, thanks in part to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, by clearing encroaching trees and planting native grasses and wildflowers. In addition, nonnative species are being treated in the property's prairie and riparian habitats. This work is conducted through a coalition composed of Oregon Parks, the Nature Conservancy, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and local partners through an interim management plan.

OPRD is considering a hiking trail that will connect the Big Creek property to Washburne Park, existing trails on Siuslaw National Forest, and the beach. Both the Oregon Conservation Strategy and the Oregon CELCP plan note the need to acquire high-value coastal properties such as this one – with beach access and undeveloped, natural areas – for public recreational use.



## History on Big Creek Financing

The Nature Conservancy purchased the Big Creek property in May 2009 for the appraised value of \$4.07 million. The funds to acquire this property were the result of a successful collaboration between numerous partners. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board awarded \$2 million in state funds, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awarded funds through its Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program, and the Nature Conservancy provided privately fundraised monies. With the funding in place, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department took title of the property and will own and manage it in perpetuity.



## A Conservation Success

This project enjoys broad support from federal, state, and local entities including Lane County and the Audubon Society. In addition, certain individuals have been very passionate and dedicated to the protection of this site – some as long as 30 years. Seeing this site put into permanent protection is a reason to celebrate!