



Priority Turtle Conservation Area: Peninsula Drainage Canal



Location: Northeast Portland in the Columbia Slough Watershed. Multnomah County. The southern end of the canal is located near 1880 NE Elrod Drive. Canal extends north toward NE Marine Drive.

Ownership: Multiple private and public properties including private residential, industrial businesses, golf clubs, Port of Portland, Oregon Department of Corrections, Metro, City of Portland, and Portland Parks & Recreation. Canal and associated levees are managed by Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD).

Site Description: A 1.5-mile long isolated slough segment created in the early 1900's. The canal and associated levee are managed by MCDD for flood risk reduction. The canal is a closed system with no inputs or outputs except for direct rainfall and evaporation. A drainage pipe in the canal allows for water level management; it generally remains closed all year. The west levee is dominated by bottomland hardwood forest; snags are present. The east levee is managed for non-woody, low-stature vegetation (grass) as part of the Columbia River Levee System. Large wood is present in the canal – some was placed by MCDD. Within [Oregon Conservation Strategy Conservation Opportunity Area #056](#). Designated as a Special Habitat Area by the City of Portland.

Turtle Significance: This area may support the second largest population of Western painted turtles within the City of Portland. Multiple age classes are present. Nesting has been confirmed on the east levee. A Western pond turtle was observed at this site in 2011. Turtle surveys were conducted in 1984, 1985, 2011, and 2016.

Current Threats to the Population:

- Recreational activity on the east levee disturbs basking turtles and nesting activity.
- Vegetation management on the levees (mowing, herbicide application) affects nesting habitat quality and timing of availability; there is risk of direct mortality.
- Large reproducing populations of invasive red-eared sliders, carp, and bullfrog may be negatively impacting the native turtle population.
- There are significant movement / road crossing hazards along the levees and at NE Elrod Drive.

Opportunities for Conservation :

- Site existing and future recreation trails to protect turtles from disturbance.
- Conduct canal and levee maintenance to avoid and minimize harm to turtles.
- Maintain and improve nesting habitat conditions.
- Protect nesting turtles and known nest sites from disturbance and predation.
- Improve connectivity to Elrod Ditch and the Columbia Slough.
- Reduce red-eared slider, carp, and bullfrog populations.
- Educate landowners and recreationists on [Turtle BMPs](#).

Active Conservation Partners:

- MCDD, <http://www.mcdd.org/>
- ODFW, <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/>

Penninsula Drainage Canal



*Columbia Edgewater
Country Club*

*Riverside Golf
& Country Club*

Peninsula Drainage Canal

Columbia Slough

NE Marine Dr

NE 33rd Dr

 Oregon Native Turtle
Working Group