



# Priority Turtle Conservation Area: Rinearson Pond



**Location:** Meldrum Bar Park, Gladstone, OR, Clackamas County; Willamette River to the west, River Road to the east; Meldrum Bar Park Rd to the south; SE Meldrum Rd to the north. At the confluence of Rinearson Creek and the Willamette River.

**Ownership:** City of Gladstone. Robinwood Riviere Property Owner's Association.

**Site Description:** Rinearson Pond forms the northern boundary of Meldrum Bar Park, an 85.37-acre regional park used year-round by fishermen and boaters. The park also receives heavy use during the spring, summer and fall by organized baseball, softball and soccer leagues. About 30% of the park is natural vegetation, including the area around Rinearson Pond and an adjacent large wetland. Rinearson Pond was formed in the 1990's by the creation of an earthen dam impounding Rinearson Creek. In 2011, it was determined that the dam violated the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and fish passage rules. Local landowners enjoy the pond and would like it to remain as it adds to their property values. Cascade Environmental Group, based in Portland, has been hired to modify/remove the dam and clean up the pond using funds related to the Portland Harbor Superfund site.

**Turtle Significance:** A breeding population of Western painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta belli*) currently occupy the pond. Surveys completed in 2013 identified 15 individual Western painted turtles of all ages, as well as evidence of breeding. Over a dozen non-native red-eared slider turtles were also identified.

### Current Threats to the Population:

- Habitat Loss - The planned dam removal/modification will lessen/remove the open water area available to the turtles.
- Invasive species (plant and animal) - This site contains red-eared sliders, bullfrog and nutria populations. It is being actively managed for invasive plant species, particularly reed canary grass.
- Connectivity - The Rinearson Pond Dam is located just upstream of the stream's confluence with the Willamette River just downstream of its confluence with the Clackamas River.
- People/disturbance - There are few to no regular disturbances to turtles at this site as the northern edge is buffered by quiet suburban private property and the only trail from Meldrum Bar Park is situated away from areas regularly observed as being used by turtles for basking and nesting.

### Opportunities for Conservation :

- The site currently has plentiful natural basking structures, adequate depth profile and nesting areas that have been used for years. Maintaining these features throughout the dam removal and habitat restoration is the key to maintaining a native turtle population at this site.
- Trapping and removal of red-eared sliders, bullfrog and nutria populations would reduce competition and predation pressures.

### Active Conservation Partners:

- ODFW: [www.dfw.state.or.us](http://www.dfw.state.or.us)
- Susan Barnes, ODFW Conservation Biologist: [susan.p.barnes@state.or.us](mailto:susan.p.barnes@state.or.us)

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