

Port of Portland's Streaked Horned Lark Habitat Conservation Plan

January 18th, 2017

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Presentation Overview

- **Streaked Horned Larks:** Unique Habitat Requirements
- **Airports:** Dedicated Land Use
 - Streaked Horned Larks (SHLA) on airports
- **Potentially Conflicting Land-uses:**
 - FAA– Aviation Safety
 - USFWS– ESA Species Conservation
 - Industrial Lands
- **Habitat Conservation Plan**
- **Conclusions & Recommendations**



Streaked Horned Lark

(*Eremophila strigata*)



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*Streaked Horned Lark
Historic Range
and
Current Breeding Sites*

Legend

- Lark Occurrences
- Historic Range



Area of Enlargement

SHLA's occur on short, sparse habitats in open landscapes

- Lowland prairie
- Coastal uplands
- Agricultural lands
- Dredged material deposition sites
- Undeveloped industrial sites
- Airports
- Airports known to have SHLA





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Conflicting Land-use & a Species at Risk

- Our goal is to support conservation of the SHLA *where it can be accomplished in a manner that does not put the species at risk and where it is a compatible and sustainable land use.*
- Successful conservation of the species relies on compatible land-use planning when managing for safe airport operations at Portland International Airport (PDX) and dedicated industrial areas at Rivergate.



Airfields & Wildlife Habitats *(often not compatible)*



USFWS Response to Comments in the SHLA Final Rule, Oct 03, 2013

- *“First, the birds are at risk of mortality by plane collisions...”*
- *“Secondly, the FAA regulations require airports to take immediate action to alleviate wildlife hazards whenever they are detected (14 CFR Part 139.337)”*
- *“This... would severely limit the potential to increase the SHLA populations at airports...”*
- *“...airports are clearly not ideal for conservation and recovery efforts...”*



Special 4(d) Rule Exemptions under the Act:

- Routine agricultural and ranching activities
- Management activities at airports:
 - Incidental take of STHL's caused by accidental aircraft strikes
 - Management of forage, water and shelter [14 CFR Part 139]
 - Mowing, discing, other vegetation management
 - Hazing, harassment of wildlife that pose a risk to safe operations
 - Routine maintenance/repair of roads and runways



Port's Stakeholder Engagement

- Member of the SHLA Working Group since 2007
- Co-funded SHLA research since 2007
- Attempted to negotiate a CCAA with USFWS pre-listing
- Attempted to find alternative off-site conservation areas
- Engaged with USFWS, USACE and FAA
- Engaged airports in the region with SHLA's – common voice
- Engaged with aviation industry organizations – ACI-NA, AAAE, BSC-USA
 - Elevate awareness of the issues and conflicts for airports
 - Advocate on behalf of the aviation industry
- Formally commented during the federal public process

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Explored long-term strategies to coax larks off Port properties

- Attract larks to areas without high human-wildlife conflict issues with playbacks and decoys.
- Some response but,
 - Strong site fidelity
 - No recruits
 - Foraging only



The Need for an ITP & HCP

Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA

- Incidental Take Permit (ITP): allows permit holder to proceed with an otherwise legal activity that would cause incidental 'take'.
- Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP): alternate conservation strategy that minimizes and mitigates for the 'take', demonstrates a net conservation benefit to the species.

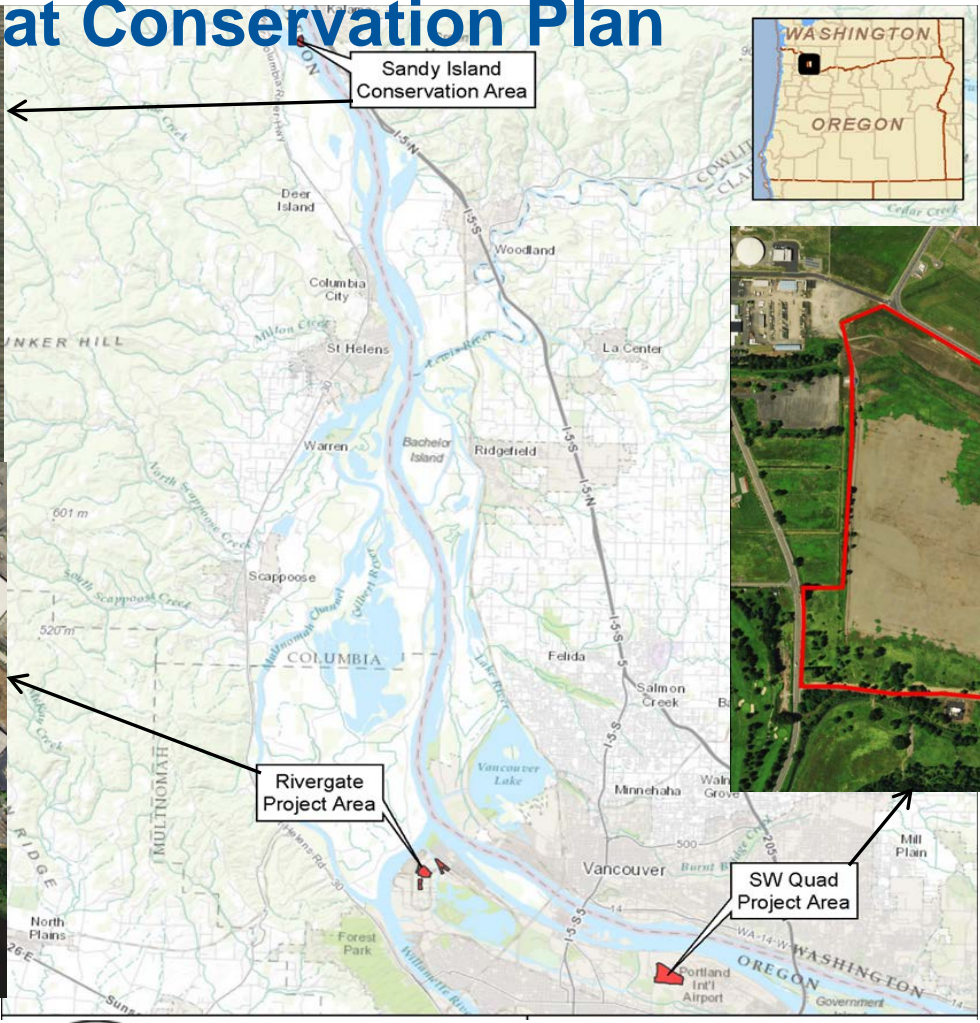


Port of Portland's Streaked Horned Lark Habitat Conservation Plan

- A proposal to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for an alternate conservation strategy under section 10 of the Endangered Species Act.
- If the application is approved and the Service issues an ITP, the ITP would authorize the Port of Portland to incidentally take streaked horned lark as a result of their proposed activities related to industrial land development and aviation wildlife hazard management.
- Federal Register Notice of Availability
 - 45 day public comment period
 - Nov 22nd, 2016 – Jan 06th, 2017

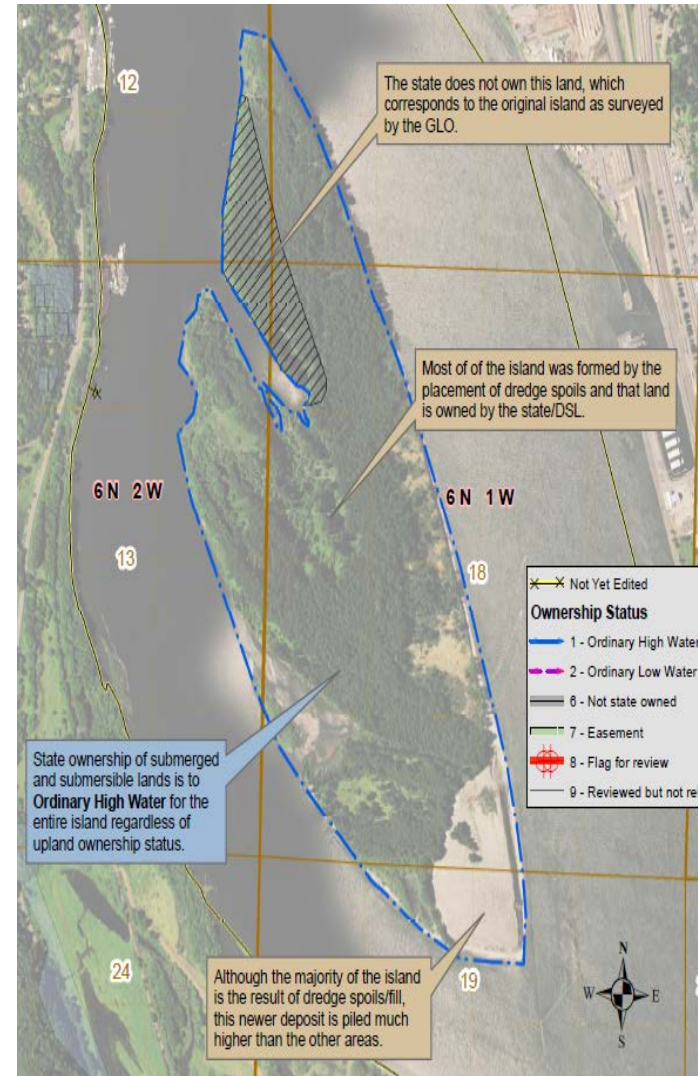


SHLA Habitat Conservation Plan



Sandy Island

- Columbia River mile 75.8
- USACE dredged material placement site - full
- Owned by DSL
- Designated Critical Habitat
- Occupied SHLA nesting habitat
- Conservation easement – 30 year term
 - Only dedicated SHLA site
 - No conflicting land uses



HCP Scope

- Bird surveys/monitoring: RG, SW Quad and Sandy Island
- Bird banding and monitoring
- Interim conservation: RG and SW Quad
- Habitat enhancement at Sandy Island
 - Tree removal and site grading
 - Signage
- O&M – Adaptive Management
- Periodic site disturbance
 - Scarify 50% every 3-5 years
- Research Opportunities



In Conclusion

- Support conservation of the SHLA or other listed species *where it can be accomplished in a manner that is not a conflict with safe airport operations or a constraint to industrial development now and in the future, and does not put the species at risk.*
- Purpose of ESA is *conservation* of the listed species.
- Conflicting land-use may put the species at risk.



A photograph of two birds, likely shorebirds, standing in a field of dry grass and gravel. The bird in the foreground is larger and has brown and white mottled feathers with a yellow and black head. The second bird is smaller and partially obscured behind it. The background is a soft-focus field of dry grass.

Questions?

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