

Vegetation, Fish, Wildlife, and Open Space

Wildlife habitat areas in Mountlake Terrace that have been identified and mapped are shown in Figure EN-2.

Two upland wildlife habitats of state-recognized significance remain within Mountlake Terrace. One is the acreage including and surrounding Veteran's Park near Interstate 5 and north of 236th St SW. The character there is wooded, with second growth forest and steep topography.

The area associated with Lyons Creek, both the East Terrace tributary and the west tributary are classified as Priority Habitat by the Washington State Department of Wildlife. One of the largest open space tracts in the region is the property at the southeast corner of the city, owned by the shareholders of Abbey View Cemetery. The property is outside the city limits of Mountlake Terrace and is identified by the City of Brier as a source of community trails and natural resources. Within the approximately 40 acres is a 10-acre natural pond that is used to provide water to irrigate the cemetery. This property, together with adjacent greenbelt spaces along Lyons Creek, contributes positively to salmon habitat in Lyons Creek.

State-listed bird species within Mountlake Terrace include pileated woodpeckers, bald eagles at Lake Ballinger, and at Veteran's Memorial Park.

Fish species in Lyons Creek and Halls/McAleer Creeks include Coho salmon as well as cutthroat, sculpin, chinook, and sockeye salmon. Lake Ballinger is stocked with rainbow trout and is also known for cutthroat, catfish, yellow perch, and largemouth bass.

North of the city in unincorporated Snohomish County is Scriber Creek, with a significant wetland area, bird and animal habitat. It is presently unknown whether or not Lynnwood or Mountlake Terrace will annex this property. Scriber Creek also supports coho salmon, a species listed by the State Department of Wildlife as "endangered". Drainage enters this area from Mountlake Terrace and Brier.

The City has approximately 265 acres of land for use as parks and open space. These areas can provide important habitat for animal and plant species. The canyon and ravine that is a large portion of Terrace Creek Park is an example of habitat conservation efforts. Open space in the City includes a network of parks, undeveloped portions of environmentally critical areas, some unimproved right-of-ways, and set-aside areas of planned unit developments.

In its natural state, Mountlake Terrace was covered with mature coniferous forests. Most of this tree cover was commercially harvested after the turn of the century. Some dense regrowth stands of evergreens and native deciduous trees are found on steep slopes and ravines. Most of the remaining vacant land and right-of-way for utilities are covered with native grass and shrubs. Most of the remaining tree cover is on private property and in Terrace Creek Park. The total effect of this existing tree cover contributes greatly to the atmosphere of the community.

Much of the existing vegetation has been preserved only because it was on land that is difficult and expensive to develop. However, the City now protects certain habitat for animal and plant species by regulating development activities in the vicinity of these habitats.







Lake Ballinger and streams running through the City provide fish habitat. Under the federal Endangered Species Act, chinook salmon, coho salmon, and bull trout are listed as “threatened or endangered” in Snohomish County. Improving habitat for fish is an important component of recovery for endangered species. The City protects fish habitat in part, by implementation of state laws, such as the State Environmental Policy Act, the Shoreline Management Act, and the Growth Management Act.

Open space has always been a critical issue in Mountlake Terrace, and the Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies directed at monitoring and protecting sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, marshes, streams, utility right-of-ways, and unique areas of environmental significance. The desired effect of the policies is the preservation of areas identified as “natural open space” including restricting intensive recreational development.

The remaining areas of forest, ground cover, and vegetation on private property play an important role in the community. These areas include reserves of planned unit developments of past years, particularly along the Lyons Creek and Terrace Creek areas. Vegetation reduces erosion, strengthens slope stability, and regulates the quality, quantity, and rate of stream flow. It provides shade to streams to help maintain water temperatures in lakes and ponds and offers food and shelter for a variety of wildlife. It also has the benefit of providing an aesthetically pleasing backdrop to our community.

As further growth and development occurs in Mountlake Terrace, vegetation will serve in softening visual and physical impacts. Its role will be to knit contrasting land uses and architectural styles together, conceal unsightly areas, provide limited relief from environmental pollutants, absorb stormwater, prevent erosion, and offer habitat for small forms of wildlife.

Legend

-  Wildlife Priority Habitat and Species Borders (Washington Dept. of F & W)
-  100-year Floodplain (FEMA)
-  Wetlands/Areas of Saturated Soils
-  Streams
-  Streams Below Ground
-  City Boundary

Please note:
The information on this map originates from a variety of resources and is a general representation only. Data shown on this map may be outdated. Other critical areas may be designated as sensitive or critical areas, subject to on-site analysis and additional regulation in accordance with City codes.

Figure EN-2

**Critical Areas:
Biological Features**

