

Friends of French Prairie

Friends of French Prairie
is an Oregon non-profit corporation

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May 8, 2015

Chair Clem and Rural Communities & Land Use Committee;

Friends of French Prairie is a land use advocacy organization in north Marion County, with the goals of preservation of farm land and promotion of agriculture.

This letter conveys our opposition Senate Bill 534. The current State land-use laws provide a method for the provision of water and sewer to airports. Yes, that does include annexation, but that is an established principle in Oregon, and relates strongly to the fact that these are urban services which typically are associated with significant capital costs and lay the foundation for future development.

When I met with Senator Girod, the sponsor of this bill, he was quite candid that the ask originated at the Aurora Airport, where proponents and developers have worked hard for years to maintain their independence from as much municipal and government oversight as possible, while they push forward development plans that always come at the expense of farm land.

Our membership is principally residents of French Prairie and would significantly and negatively be impacted by the consequence of this type of bill upon Aurora Airport and the surrounding agricultural lands. In the case of the Aurora Airport, this bill will lead to commercial development. The recent conclusion of the update to the Aurora Airport Master Plan illustrates the case, as lengthening the runway will take 30 acres of EFU farm land south of the airport (see attached Exhibit 1). A larger airport with the urban services provided by this bill will facilitate further commercial development, taking more and more farm land. Of note, the Aurora Airport sits on Class I and Class II (Amity silt loam and Willamette silt loam) soils (see attached map, Exhibit 2)

The scope of this bill is statewide, and though we tend to think of Oregon as replete with farmland and economically bolstered by the agricultural sector, allow me to share some facts:

- Oregon contains 62.9 million acres of surface area
- Of that, 16.4 million acres are in agriculture (26%)

- However, only 4.6 million acres are designated as High Value Farmland (7.3%)
- Of that, only 1.2 million acres is designated as Prime Farmland (1.9%)

40% of Oregon's High Value Farm Land is in the Willamette Valley, and 78% of its Prime Farm Land is likewise in the Willamette Valley. To the degree that this bill enables airports to develop and expand on farm land, it will do so by consuming one of our most important and fundamental natural resources.

We strongly urge the Rural Communities Committee not to pass this Bill. Since 1980 Oregon has lost 6.6% of its agricultural land, much of it high value farm land. Oregon does not need yet another state-wide vehicle to drive the loss of farmland.

Sincerely



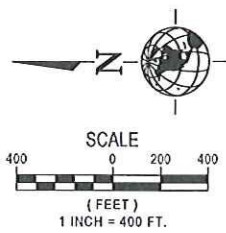
Benjamin D Williams

President, Friends of French Prairie



30 Acres of EFU land designated for runway extension

March 29, 2011



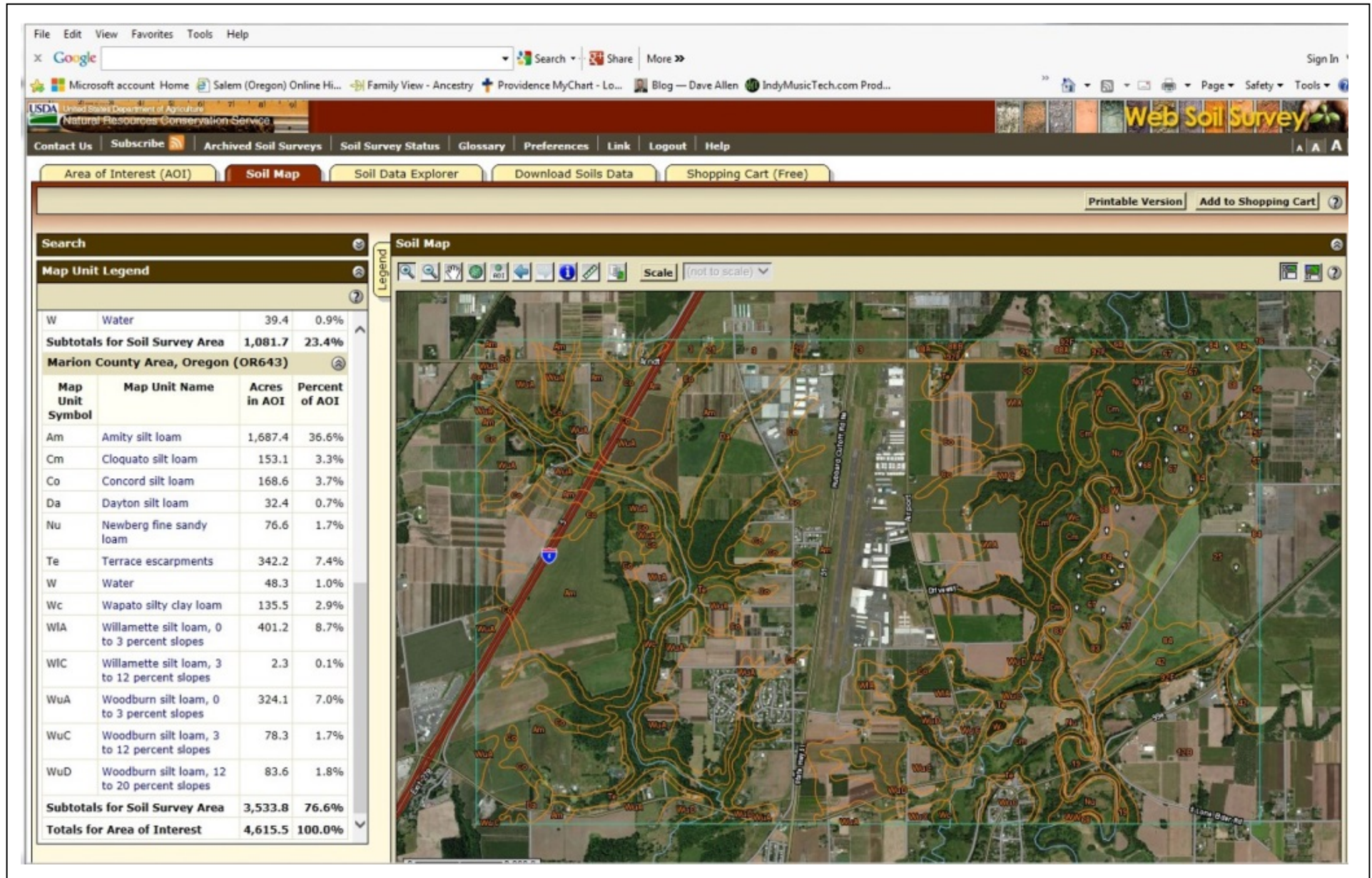
Legend

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Property Line | Aurora Rural Fire Protection District | Future Property Acquisition |
| Future Property Line | Future Apron Area | Future Avigation Easement |
| BRL 35' Building Restriction Line | Cargo Apron | |
| RSA Runway Safety Area | Vehicular Parking | |
| ROFA Runway Object Free Area | Hangar Development | |
| TOFA Taxiway Object Free Area | Fuel Station | |
| Service Road | Helicopter Parking | |
| Existing Buildings | Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) | |
| Future Buildings | Existing Building Removal | |
| Future Paved | Existing Building Hts | |
| Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) | Septic Drain Field | |

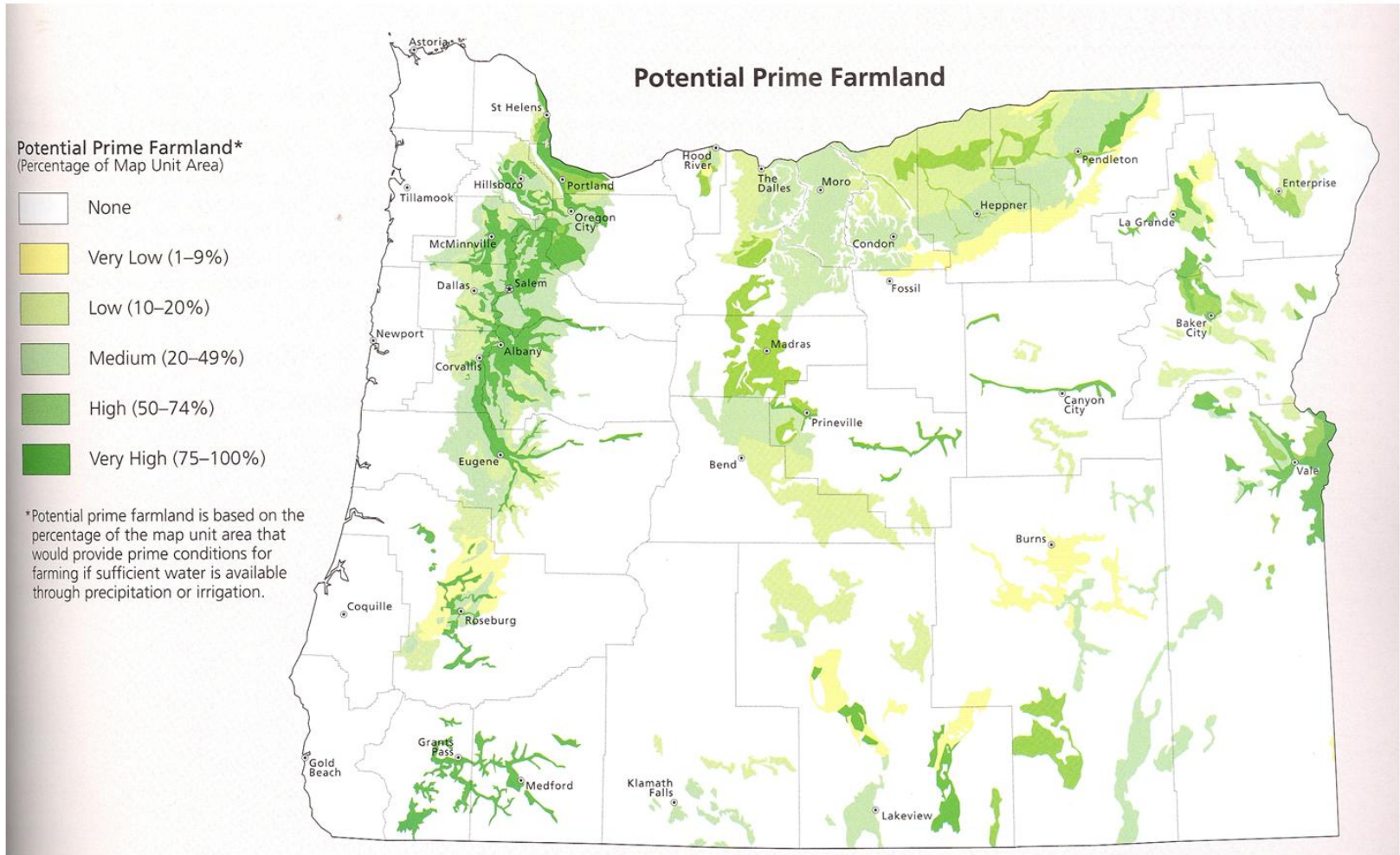
General Notes

Airport Reference Code (ARC) - C-II
 Runway strengthened to 60,000 lbs dual wheel gear
 Tower location per FAA / ODA meeting in April

USDA Web Soil Survey – Soil Types around Aurora State Airport



Principal soil types = Amity silt loam (Am) and Willamette silt loam (WIA)



Source: *Atlas of Oregon*, University of Oregon Press, 2001

Concentration of Prime Farmland in the Willamette Valley

Sustainability of the ag land base?

1 million acres of ag land is lost to development every year in the US.
Oregon's land use system helps slow the loss of farmland.

