

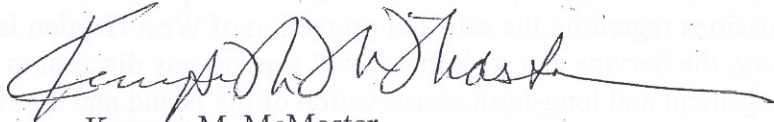
In light of these conditions, the Island would be considered an import conservation asset regardless of its location. Its presence in an otherwise highly urbanized metropolitan region accentuates this importance. It is one of the largest pieces of unprotected habitat left in the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Region and has been identified as a regionally significant natural area and a "habitat of concern" under Metro's Goal 5 Inventory.

Of course, the same issues that underlie the Island's conservation value also create the potential for substantial adverse impacts related to industrial, commercial, or residential developments or activities that may occur on the Island in the future. The Service believes any effort to minimize or avoid these impacts and maintain or enhance the conservation value of the Island is worthwhile. Stakeholders interested in the issues should pursue related opportunities as they present themselves. The current request from Audubon and its partners seems to represent such an opportunity, especially in light of the fact that the organizations have committed to seeking funding that would help the Port satisfy economic objectives while still providing for conservation.

If the Port and other stakeholders determine that Audubon's effort (or any other effort in the future) does indeed represent an opportunity for collaboration and for balancing regional economic and environmental objectives, the Service, to the extent staff and funding are available, will be eager to provide support and actively contribute to a successful outcome.

Please feel free to contact me or Monty Knudsen of my staff at (503) 231-6179 for additional information or discussion regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kemper M. McMaster", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kemper M. McMaster
State Supervisor