

What are the boundaries of the Necanicum Estuary Natural History Park?

A natural history park is not bounded in the traditional sense of lot lines forming an edge, rather, the natural processes that define the park range from site-specific to global. In the same way, the park's boundaries are expansive and amorphous. Yet, to develop a park program and design, the park area needs to be defined. So the Necanicum Estuary Natural History Park can be considered at three scales of place: a large watershed scale, a middle town scale, and a site scale. The Natural History Park will be:

1. A Network (Watershed Scale)

From the top of the mountains to the ocean's near-shore, the Necanicum River watershed defines the largest area of the park, a network of open space. By defining the park at the watershed scale, the vision can include restoring connections within the watershed that will enhance habitat connectivity and the learning experiences of residents and visitors to the coast.

2. A Tidally-influenced Estuary (Landscape Scale)

At the town scale, the City of Seaside is a place with a unique identity derived from its coastal location and services. The rivers and associated open space within Seaside are part of this identity. The open space sites form a strand, a pattern forming a unified whole within the larger network, that together tell a story about the ecology of place, how human-environment interactions have shaped the town. The boundaries of this strand of open space could be the City limits, the Urban Growth Boundary, or the coastal area of tidal influence.

3. A Confluence (Site Scale)

This is the scale where everything comes together. The Necanicum Estuary is unique along the Oregon Coast with two rivers (Necanicum and Neawanna) and several streams (Neacoxie and Thompson Creek) entering the estuary at the confluence point. This confluence at Neawanna Point is at the center of the open space network, a hub, where all hydrologic influences come together yielding a rich estuary ecosystem. But there are other sites within and above the estuary where disparate landscape elements come together. Whether accessible places where plant communities change or a river reach where the tidal influence ends, transition areas or hinge points are opportunities for interpretation and engagement with the public.