

# Crystal Springs Creek Watershed

## A. GEOLOGY

**1. Crystal Springs Creek** watershed lies between the Willamette River bluffs on the West in the Sellwood-Westmoreland area and an ice age gravel terrace on the East in the Eastmoreland-Woodstock area.

### **2. 10,000-15,000 Years Gravel Terrace Formation**

The Columbia River's Missoula Floods, at the end of last ice age, covered east Portland 400 feet deep and formed at least five wide north-south gravel terraces, which step down several hundred feet across the East side of city, to the Willamette River. Springs were common at the base of these gravel terraces. East west streets in SE Portland (Hawthorne, Powell, Holgate, and Woodstock) ascend the westernmost terrace between SE 20th and 41st.

**3. Crystal Springs Creek** originates from springs along the west slope of the Eastmoreland-Woodstock gravel terrace at between 60 to 150 ft elevations. The primary springs flow west out of the Reed College Canyon and from the hillside east of Crystal Springs Lake on Eastmoreland Golf Course. Springs feeding nearby Johnson Creek are found in Johnson Creek Canyon on the Springwater Corridor, which cuts through this same terrace.

**4. An ancient Willamette River channel or slough.** once flowed north through the area, from the downtown Milwaukie to the Oregon Convention Center area, between the Eastmoreland and Westmoreland neighborhoods. Most of the Creek follows a southerly course of about two miles in the flat bottomland formed by this old channel

## B. HISTORY

**1. Crystal Springs Creek** is one of the last remaining free-flowing creeks in east Portland, which was not undergrounded as the City developed in the past 150 years. This watershed has urbanized in that time, but retains extensive open space along the creek.

**Watershed 1850:** Native fir forest, wetland, and scattered lowland farms near the Willamette.

**Watershed 2010** Major transportation corridors Union Pacific Railroad and Mc Loughlin Blvd, Eastmoreland and Westmoreland Neighborhoods, Reed College, Eastmoreland Golf Course, Westmoreland Park and Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden.

### **2. 1840s Donation Land Claims**

Pioneer farms of Alfred Llewellyn (DLC 49) and Jacob Wills (DLC 57) occupied much of the **Crystal Springs** watershed 632 acres, 534 acres respectively. The 1852 BLM

Cadastral survey map of this township (T1S, R1E) shows at least four primary springs in the watershed along the Eastmoreland-Woodstock terrace, between present SE Holgate and Johnson Creek. These tributaries flowed west out of “thick timber” into a wide wetland/meadow, about 2 miles by ¼-mile wide, which fits the present Crystal Springs Creek corridor. The survey map also shows Llewellyn’s small cultivated area next to the northwest end of the Crystal Springs meadows.

**3. 1868-70 Oregon and California Railroad (now Union Pacific)**

First railroad to Salem and California bisects the Crystal Springs meadows.

**4. 1883 Sellwood town site** developed south of present Tacoma Street. at the southwest corner of the Crystal Springs meadows.

**5. 1890s-1910 Ladd family consolidated Crystal Springs Farm** out of smaller farms, for stock raising. The farm included most of watershed. William S Ladd (1826-93) was Oregon’s most prominent and wealthiest 19th Century civic and business leader. The Ladds owned multiple demonstration farms in Portland region with a focus on cattle breeding.

**6. 1908 Ladd Estate Co. formed** to develop the family’s large farmlands in east Portland and Oregon Iron Co lands in Lake Oswego/Southwest into neighborhoods. (I.E. Ladd’s Addition, Laurelhurst, Eastmoreland, Brooklyn, Westmoreland, Dunthorpe, Country Club Estates/Lake Oswego) William M Ladd, 1855-1931, President of Ladd Estate Co.

**7. 1909-10 Eastmoreland and Westmoreland** neighborhoods platted by Ladd Estate Co. out of the **Crystal Springs Farm**

**8. 1910 William M Ladd donates first 40 acres of land for Reed College** from the Crystal Springs Farm, College developed and opens in 1911. Ladd on first board.

**9. 1916 William M Ladd donates 160 acres for development of Eastmoreland Public Golf Course**, from the Crystal Springs Farm. Portland’s first public golf course.

**10. 1930s McLoughlin Blvd** built through Crystal Springs area as limited access state highway 99E to Salem.

**11. 1936 Westmoreland Park**, ponds, and new creek channel developed as a Works Progress Administration project. The parkland between Westmoreland neighborhood and the railroad was a former wetland that had been converted to an airstrip, dairy, and brickyard.

**12. 1950 Crystal Springs Rhododendron Gardens** established on Crystal Springs Lake at the east edge of the Eastmoreland Golf Course. International rhododendron test garden.

*This information was compiled and generously shared by Richard Ross.*