

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000724 Date Listed: 6/22/88

Dorris Ranch Lane OR
Property Name County State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Linda McClelland
Signature of the Keeper

6/22/88
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Although section 8 of the nomination indicated George A. Dorris to be a significant person, and although the text of the nomination documented his significance, criterion B was not checked on the nomination form. A 6/22/88 telephone conversation with Elizabeth Potter of the Oregon SHPO confirmed that criterion B should have been checked.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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MAY 12 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dorris Ranch
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Foot of South Second Street at Dorris Avenue not for publication
city, town Springfield vicinity
state Oregon code OR county Lane code 039 zip code 97477

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>15</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] May 4, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Sinda McCellard 6/22/88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/experimental garden,
orchard, nursery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation
Agriculture/orchard

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Gothic (vernacular)-house
Early 20th Century American/Craftsman-barn #1
No style/utilitarian-garage, freezer house,
barn #2

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls wood/shingle
concrete block
roof asphalt (composition shingle)
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Period of Significance

1892-1936

Significant Dates

1899
1903
1925

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

George A. Dorris (1858-1936)

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Willamalane Park and Recreation District

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 109 acres Eugene East, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A 1,0 49,855,0 4,875,25,0
 Zone Easting Northing

C 1,0 49,832,0 4,874,35,0

B 1,0 49,917,0 4,874,59,0
 Zone Easting Northing

D 1,0 49,832,0 4,875,21,0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description A parcel of land in the William Masterson DLC No. 61, Section 2, and Section 11, T18S, R3W, Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the northwest corner of said DLC No. 61 thence Southerly 760' more or less to the point of beginning; thence Easterly 650' more or less; thence North and Easterly approximately 220' to encompass Dorris Barns #1 and #2; thence Southeasterly along the outer margin of the east perimeter service road 3,070' to a point on the South line of Section 2; thence Southwesterly in a line parallel with the See continuation sheet southernmost service road 2,860' more or less to a point on the West line of the Dorris Ranch; thence Northerly

Boundary Justification (continued)

The nominated area of 109 acres encompasses eight specialized orchard sections, the original service road network, the diversion dam channel, ranchhouse, freezer house, garage, and two barns which were functionally interdependent features of the historic filbert ranch developed and operated by George A. Dorris in the period 1892-1936.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary L. Horvat, Dorris Ranch Coordinator, with Robert Z. Melnick, Consultant
 organization Willamalane Park and Recreation District date November 1987
 street & number 151 North Fourth Street telephone (503) 726-4335
 city or town Springfield state Oregon zip code 97477

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INTRODUCTION

Dorris Ranch, a classic example of an early 20th century agricultural site in the Willamette Valley, is situated at the confluence of the Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette River, in the center of Lane County. Typical of landscapes along the Middle Fork, Dorris Ranch is rich and diverse, containing 3750 lineal feet of river frontage, fertile agricultural land, lush riparian vegetation, dense conifer and deciduous woodlands, and open pasture. Much as it did when George Dorris purchased the property in 1892, Dorris Ranch presently consists of 250.75 acres of landscape and structures, riverfront and pasture, roads and orchards, water channels and walkways. Nationally recognized as one of the most successful commercial filbert orchards in the United States, Dorris Ranch has consistently maintained its reputation for its outstanding operations, innovative farming methods, and abundant production for over 80 years.¹

SITE DESCRIPTION

On October 27, 1892 George A. Dorris, purchased 277.87 acres of rich bottom land, river frontage, and scrubby hillside from Marietta and George Thurston. Purchased for a sum of \$4000.00, Dorris Ranch was owned and continuously operated by Dorris family members for 78 years. The Dorris family later sold approximately 22 acres to adjacent land owners, reducing the total Dorris Ranch acreage to 256 acres.

The property is currently held in three separate ownerships. In 1970, with funding assistance from the Willamette Corridor Project, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and a generous contribution from previous owners Ben and Kay Dorris, the Willamalane Park and Recreation District purchased 176.5 acres of the Dorris property.

Dorris Ranch was acquired by Willamalane Park and Recreation District in 1971 through a series of events. The effort began in 1970 when a local realtor notified Gary Walker, then Superintendent of Willamalane, that the Ranch was for sale. Walker contacted Ben Dorris who informed him that the Dorris family would very much like to see the Ranch under District ownership, and that they would delay sale for a reasonable period so that Willamalane could seek funding sources.

Through the efforts of a number of people, it was decided that the land would be placed in public ownership. The purchase of Dorris Ranch was a result of the combined interest and dedication of the Director of the the City of Eugene Parks & Recreation Department, the Director of the Lane County Parks Department, Willamalane Park & Recreation District, the Governor of Oregon's Willamette River System Committee, the Director of the Willamette Corridor Project, local business leaders, the Oregon State Highway Commission, and U.S. Congressman John Dellenbach.²

The final agreement, made partially possible through funding from the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Oregon State Highway Division's Willamette River System Corridor Project, divided the land into two parcels, one owned by the State of Oregon and the other owned by Willamalane, with Willamalane responsible for all use and maintenance of the property. The final financial package, settled in 1973, was made possible through a donation of over \$52,000 from Ben and Kay Dorris.

¹ Springfield News. George A. Dorris obituary. September 17, 1936.

² Willamalane Park and Recreation District. 1986. pp. xi-xii.

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Beginning in 1973 there were numerous discussions, public hearings and proposals regarding the future of the Ranch. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s there were a variety of uses proposed for this land, including a golf course, archery ranges, and other active recreational uses.³ Finally, in 1979, through the **Dorris Ranch Land Use Plan**⁴, Willamalane agreed, in principle, to protect and use the historic resources of Dorris Ranch, rather than devote the property to solely recreational uses. It was not until 1986, however, that the **Dorris Ranch Facility Development Plan**⁵ was prepared, thereby ensuring protection of the historic resources of Dorris Ranch

Willamalane's holdings contain 64 acres of filbert orchards, the Dorris House built in 1899, and the majority of the grasslands and woodlands. Reynold Briggs, longtime Ranch caretaker, owns and controls 5.5 acres of the property containing the original 1880s house, and two of the orchards at the northwest corner of the property. The state park system owns the remaining seventy-five (75) which includes the remaining 11 acres of filbert trees, forest, and riverfront land. The State owned parcel is controlled by Willamalane under a lease agreement with the State. After considering several options for development, the Board of Directors of Willamalane unanimously approved a special task force proposal in 1984 to protect, maintain, and develop the historically significant and successfully producing agricultural land as a living history farm and agricultural museum. Since that time Willamalane Board and Staff members have been carefully designing long range plans for future development and operations of the Ranch.

The area proposed for nomination to the National Register contains significant historic resources situated on combined Willamalane and State owned property totalling 109 acres. The 98 acres of Willamalane owned property contains 65 acres of filbert trees, the Dorris House, Freezer House, Garage, Roads, Barns, Diversion Dam and Swimming Pool. The remaining State owned property proposed for nomination contains 11 acres of filbert trees.

VICINITY

Located in the midst of a continuously developing urban area, three quarters of a mile from downtown Springfield, and three miles from the urban center of Eugene, Dorris Ranch serves as a significant and unique preserve of rural agriculture. The land contiguous to the site is currently used for residential development, agricultural production, and a rock quarry. Adjacent land on the west which fronts on the Willamette River, has been subdivided for mobile homes and is largely occupied. The Willamette River borders the property to the south. Adjacent land on the east is a rock quarry. Land lying to the north between Dorris Ranch and the Springfield city limits is a hillside which has been zoned for low density residential use. The only access to Dorris Ranch is via South 2nd Street. The prospect of further urban growth along its northern edge makes the ranch an even more valuable resource as an historic site and natural buffer to urban development. The land uses adjacent to Dorris Ranch are controlled by the Eugene Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan, Lane County Lower Middle Fork Sub Area Plan, and Lane County zoning ordinances.⁶

³ See: "Dorris Park fire protection pact approved." *Springfield News*. 6/27/73.
"Dorris park still undeveloped." *Springfield News*. 1/2/1974.
"Board accepts Dorris ranch study." *Eugene Register-Guard*. 2/6/1980.

⁴ Ruff, Cameron, Lacoss and Associates. 1979.

⁵ Willamalane Park and Recreation District. 1986.

⁶ Willamalane Park and Recreation District. 1986.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

As with any landscape, with native, naturalized, and cultivated trees, shrubs, and grasses, the vegetation and physical appearance of Dorris Ranch has gradually and incrementally changed since 1892.

As shown by the General Land Office Surveys of 1851-53, most of the site at that time was wooded, with open grassland on the central section of the hill slopes.⁷ The woodland was probably patchy and brushy with little shady forest except in some places along the terrace edge above the river. Woodland composition was probably scattered oaks on the hillside, with grass and poison oak beneath, a mix of Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, and oak on the lower elevations, and a mix of cottonwood, maple, ash, alder and willow along the river edge. This pattern was due to repeated fires set by local Indians, a practice common throughout the Willamette Valley until white settlement began.⁸

Clearing of farm land between 1852 and 1900 removed much of the previous woodland. Grazing kept the hillside grassy except along fence rows and on the rocky slope at the base of the hillside, where young oaks began to grow around a scattering of old ones. Along the southern edge of the property a young thick growth of Douglas fir spread out from a core of older trees which shaded a small but growing forest of Douglas fir with a few apples coming in. Along the river's edge repeated flooding left a mixture of patches of old and new growth of riparian species.⁹

The basic pattern is still the same as before, although grazing has ended on the grassland, allowing for a new growth of rose thickets and scattered tree seedlings. The majority of the Ranch (western and southern three quarters, approximately 200 acres) is situated on the floodplain of the Willamette River. The terrain is flat to gently rolling with slopes not exceeding 8%. The Diversion Channel cuts across the floodplain, from the southeast to the northwest corners of the Ranch. Vegetation on the Ranch, all of which has been historically altered, consists of four major zones; riparian, forest, grassy hillside, and filbert orchards.

Riparian: Within the riparian zone, located adjacent to the river, are a maple and poplar woods, a slough zone dominated by alders, a willow edge, and the riverside gravel bar. Maples and poplars dominate the higher ground in the Riparian area. Alders, willows and ash occur in the lower and wetter areas. Also found within the Riparian area are open grassy zones and a lineal zone of poplar trees with a blackberry understory. Grasses and herbaceous plants occur along the gravel bar in areas less affected by the river's season variation.

Forest: An extensive amount of the Ranch is covered with forest comprised of mainly mixed coniferous and deciduous zones of Douglas Fir and Big leaf Maple. Along watercourses and ecotones exist linear zones of Big Leaf Maple. Finally there are two isolated zones almost exclusively comprised of Incense Cedar .

Grassy Hillside: One quarter of the Ranch (approximately 40 acres in the northeast corner) consists of grassy hillside. This area is composed of clumps of isolated trees and shrubs within a large grassy slope. From times predating Dorris occupancy the grasslands have been used as pasture and grazing lands or have lain fallow.¹⁰

⁷ Ruff, Cameron, Lacoss and Associates. 1979.

⁸ Lebow, Clayton G. 1987. "Cultural Resource Survey of the Dorris Ranch, Lane County, Oregon."

⁹ Ruff, Cameron, Lacoss, and Associates. 1979.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

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Slopes of Varied steepness, (ranging from 8% to 24%), poor soils, and shallow depth to bedrock all contribute to the area's limited past and future potential uses. Since the end of the Dorris ownership the area has not been maintained or grazed.

Filbert Orchards: The heart of Dorris Ranch lies in its filbert orchards. The orchards planted and nurtured by George Dorris and latter by his nephew Ben Dorris, have been in continuous successful operation for 84 years. Originally, George Dorris planted several crop varieties on his land including, peaches, cherries, grapes, walnuts, asparagus, and hops. Because of their susceptibility to disease, intensive labor requirements, and George's growing interest in filbert production, these crops were replaced by filberts, the crop that has remained and is still successfully producing today.

The Dorris orchard is one of the oldest filbert groves on the Pacific Coast and is the source of more than half of all the filbert trees now growing in the U.S.¹¹ George A. Dorris planted the first section of the orchard, less than an acre (50 trees) from stock which came from Europe via David Grenott, an early orchardist in California.¹² George Dorris was convinced that the Willamette Valley's mild climate and fertile soil were ideal for production of this recently introduced crop. It was from this small start that growers all through Oregon and Washington - where 98% of the nations filberts are grown - have acquired their planting stock. Now more than half the commercial filbert trees in America can be traced back to the original plot established by George Dorris.¹³

Today, the Ranch's seventy five acres of filbert trees, comprising the single largest vegetation zone on the site, is divided into 11 distinct orchards. According to the 1985 Filbert Tree Report issued by the Oregon Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, an orchard can be defined as any contiguous block of trees planted the same year with the same tree spacing.¹⁴ The 5 earliest orchards were planted at Dorris Ranch between 1903 and 1936, the remaining 6 planted between 1937 and 1957. The combined 75 acres contains approximately 9250 trees which produce, on the average, 56 tons of nuts annually. In comparison with the average Oregon filbert farm, which is situated on 24 acres of land, contains 3100 trees, and produces 18 tons annually, Dorris Ranch is significant in both size and production. Throughout development of the Ranch the orchards have acquired unique names with historical meaning. This system of naming enabled the hired hands to know which orchards to work in.¹⁵

The first 50 filbert trees were planted at Dorris Ranch in 1903. In that first planting were several tree varieties including Red Avelines, White Avelines, Davianas, and Barcelonas. Of these varieties George Dorris discovered that the Barcelona proved to be the only variety worth considering for commercial plantings. The Barcelona, superior in growth rate, and heavy nut yield, was also very attractive because it is self husking. At that time no machinery was available for husking the nuts and accomplishing the work with hired help was both time consuming and costly.¹⁶ Like nearly all varieties of filberts the Barcelona is self sterile needing some other

¹¹ Eugene Register Guard. October 25, 1951.

¹² History of Filberts in the Pacific Northwest. January 27, 1961.

¹³ Eugene Register Guard. October 25, 1951.

¹⁴ "Filbert Tree Report." Issued by Oregon Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. May 10, 1985.

¹⁵ Willamalane Park and Recreation District. 1986.

¹⁶ Schuster, C.E. "Northwestern Filberts." Country Gentleman. September 30, 1922.

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variety to cross pollinate it. The DuChilly variety has been used for this purpose. On this account, one DuChilly is planted to eight Barcelona trees, thus placing a pollenizer every third tree in every third row.

Generally, Filbert trees are planted much closer than most other nut trees, produce higher yields per acre, and can be expected to come into commercial bearing at an earlier age than other nuts do.¹⁷ The first trees at Dorris Ranch were planted rather close together by today's standards, with trees spaced 12 x 15 feet apart. In the earliest orchards George Dorris planted strawberry plants between the filbert trees to best utilize space and the rich soil.¹⁸ By 1920 George Dorris was planting trees 20 by 20 ft. apart, and by 1937 trees were being planted as far apart as 25 x 25 ft.¹⁹

The Dorris Ranch nursery, a major focus of attention for 40 years, began operations in 1925, when Ben Dorris, George's nephew, came to work on the Ranch.²⁰ By the end of that first year, George and Ben Dorris had developed 5 acres of filbert nursery, located directly north of the Dorris House and swimming pool. During 40 successful years of operations, the nursery produced an average of 70,000 trees annually which were sold extensively throughout the Pacific Northwest. The nursery continued operating at full capacity until 1956 when 4 acres were converted to orchard. The remaining acre of nursery continued until 1965 when tree sales terminated.

The Dorris Ranch nursery was well known throughout the Northwest for both its innovative propagation methods, and continuously successful production.²¹ Together, George and Ben Dorris developed and perfected the tipped method of filbert tree propagation, an innovative method which soon became tremendously successful and popular among Northwest orchardists. As outlined in their 1934 publication, **Filbert Nursery Stock Grown By the Tip System**, George and Ben Dorris describe the tipped method as a process of propagating trees by layering, which consists of budding down young shoots so that they root in the ground and, when rooted, are severed from the parent plant. They continue to explain that the tipped method produces a single trunk, multi-branch tree, far superior in production, growth rate, and maintenance, than the bush-like tree produced by the earlier introduced suckering method. Throughout Dorris ownership of the Ranch, every tree planted was maintained in this manner.²²

Today, strolling through Dorris Ranch's captivating orchards, the visitor is able to observe the extraordinary results of George and Ben Dorris' efforts. Though the nursery is no longer in operation, the trees are maintained by local orchardist, Norman Evonuk, whose pruning, harvesting, and conservation methods closely resemble those of George and Ben Dorris. With the exception of the use of modern harvesting machinery and modern pest control methods, the appearance and operations of the Dorris Ranch orchards have not changed in 84 years.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ "Various products and Profits." *Anybodys Magazine*. Midsummer, 1910.

¹⁹ Schuster, C.E. *op.cit.*

²⁰ Dorris, Ben F. Oral History. August 7, 1981.

²¹ Eugene Register Guard. October 25, 1981.

²² Dorris, George A and Ben F. 1934. **Filbert Nursery Stock Grown by the Tip System**. Authors: Springfield, Oregon.

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ORCHARD INVENTORY

1. **Walnut Orchard:** The Walnut Orchard, situated on 25 acres in the center of Dorris Ranch contains approximately 2700 trees. According to Ben Dorris this orchard contains the first 50 filbert trees planted by George Dorris in 1903. Approximately .5 acres of the orchard, planted directly south of the Dorris House contains 50-60 trees planted 12 x 15 feet apart, and is divided from the remainder of the orchard by the Dorris House driveway. The remaining 24.5 acres contains approximately 2650 trees planted 20 x 20 feet apart. The Walnut Orchard is a contributing resource.
2. **Goat Orchard:** The Goat orchard, planted on 4 acres of land in the center of the Ranch, acquired its name after goats ate the first planting.²³ This orchard contains approximately 600 trees planted 20 x 27 feet apart. This orchard was planted in 1903. The Goat Orchard is a contributing resource.
3. **The Back Walnut Orchard:** The Back Walnut Orchard is planted in the southern most section of the Ranch. Approximately 1399 trees, spaced 18 x 18 feet apart are planted on 10 acres adjacent to the riparian zone, bordering the Willamette River. The close proximity between the trees indicates an early planting, sometime before 1920.²⁴ The Back Walnut Orchard is a contributing resource.
4. **Clump Orchard:** The "Clump Orchard" situated in the northwest section of the Ranch, was planted in an area where clumps of cuttings were planted annually for rootstock.²⁵ This orchard contains 4 acres of approximately 650 trees, spaced 24 x 18 feet apart. It was planted between 1945 and 1957. The Clump Orchard is a non-contributing resource.
5. **The Cannery Orchard:** The Cannery Orchard, situated on 5 acres, was planted on the site of the old asparagus canning shed in the western section of the Ranch.²⁶ This orchard contains approximately 1050 trees planted 24 x 24 feet apart. The greater distance between the trees indicates a more recent planting.²⁷ It was planted after 1950, after the fruit and vegetable cannery on this site was demolished. Due to its location on the site of the historic asparagus canning shed, the Cannery Orchard is of historic interest, but is a non-contributing resource.
6. **The Road Orchard:** The Road Orchard is located in the northeast section of the site, bordering the east fork of the main entrance road to the Ranch. The orchard is situated on 3 acres of land containing approximately 400 trees planted 18 x 29 feet apart. This orchard was planted between 1903 and 1936. The Road Orchard is a contributing resource.
7. **Unnamed :** This 3 acre orchard is located on the western edge of the Ranch bordered by the permanent residence mobile home park. The orchard contains approximately 260 trees spaced 24 x 18 feet apart. It was planted between 1903 and 1936. This unnamed orchard is a contributing resource.

²³ Willamalane Park and Recreation District, 1986

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ Schuster, C.E. "Northwestern Filberts." *Country Gentleman*, September 30, 1922

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9. Back Cherry Orchard²⁸: The Back Cherry Orchard, situated on 6 acres in the southwest corner of the Ranch is planted in an area where cherry trees once existed.²⁹ Bordered by the Willamette River to the south, and the permanent residence mobile home park to the west, the orchard contains approximately 1050 trees planted 24 x 24 feet apart. This orchard was planted ca. 1956. Due to its reduplication of an early cherry orchard, the Back Cherry Orchard is a contributing resource.

10. Front Cherry Orchard: The Front Cherry Orchard contains approximately 750 trees spaced 18 x 24 feet apart. This orchard was planted in the northwest section of the Ranch and is situated on 4 acres of land. This orchard was planted in the late 1930s. The Front Cherry Orchard is a contributing resource, planned by George A. Dorris.

11. The Mann Orchard: The Mann Orchard, named after the adjacent homestead of Leonard Manning, is located on 7 acres in the western portion of the Ranch.³⁰ This orchard contains approximately 450 trees, planted 24 x 24 feet apart, indicating that these trees were some of the most recently planted. It was planted between 1950 and 1956. The Mann Orchard is a non-contributing orchard.

12. The Nursery Orchard: The Nursery Orchard, containing approximately 500 trees is planted on the original Dorris Ranch nursery site. Trees planted on this 4 acre orchard are planted 24 x 24 feet apart, and were the last planted by Ben Dorris, shortly after nursery operations ended in 1957.³¹ Due to its location on the site of the original filbert nursery, the Nursery Orchard is counted as a contributing, area-preserving resource.

CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES AND OTHER COMPONENTS

Dorris Ranch is an excellent example of an early Willamette Valley agricultural site. The Ranch currently contains the core and substance of its original historic resources, planned, built, and developed by George Dorris between 1892 and 1936. Other minimal changes occurred between 1936 and 1970, before the property became publicly owned. As the Dorris agricultural intent and focus changed and became more specific so did the physical layout of the Ranch. Today Dorris Ranch contains contributing buildings and other structures dating from the earliest portions of the Dorris Era including: Dorris House, Freezer House, Garage, Barn, Roads, Diversion Channel, and Swimming Pool.

Dorris House: The Dorris House was built in 1899 by George Dorris and remodelled in the 1940s by Ben Dorris. It is a two-story structure, with a porch on the north and west sides. The west-facing open porch on the house was enclosed in 1940 and converted to a sleeping porch. The house has had substantial interior remodelling in recent years, although the exterior retains its historic integrity. The entry faces south, and opens into the courtyard created by the freezer house and garage. The main portion of this gabled-ended house is sided with Cedar shingles, is 30 feet by 24 feet, and extends in an east-west direction. The porches are seven feet wide, and extend

²⁸ Orchard 8, the Old Briggs Orchard, and Orchard 13, The New Briggs Orchard, are both planted on property owned by Reynold Briggs and are not being considered for nomination at this time.

²⁹ Willamalane Park and Recreation District, 1986

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *ibid.*

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seven feet beyond the house. There is also a shed addition on the east side, which is 18 feet by 28 feet. The house has a poured concrete foundation, 1 over 1 windows with wooden sashes, and a center brick chimney. The roof is covered with composition shingles.

Freezer House and Garage: The Freezer House and Garage complete the Dorris House complex. Both were probably built in the early to mid-1930s.³² The freezer house is 10 by 15 1/2 feet, with an entry area leading to main storage unit. The garage, also intact, is a two-bay structure, with gable ends. It is approached from the road which leads to the house, and helps to form the interior courtyard space, along with the house and freezer house. The garage is 32 feet by 22 1/2 feet.

Dorris Barn #1: The Dorris Barn #1 was built in the early to mid 1930's, using lumber from two hop barns which were dismantled when the family abandoned hop production. It is close to the original house. It is a modest Oregon barn, with gable ends.

Dorris Barn #2: The date of construction for the Dorris Barn #2 is unknown, although it is believed to have been built soon after Dorris Barn #1. It is a small gabled structure, more modest than the first barn, and constructed of concrete block and shingles.

Roads: The roads which run throughout the orchards retain their historic alignment³³ and width (approximately 20 feet), although there has been some modest grading in recent years. Historically, they served a variety of functions. The most important of these was to enable machinery, either horse-drawn or gas-powered, to enter the orchards without damaging the trees. This meant that the road alignment and curve radii was a critical feature of their layout. The roads in the orchards, as well as the main entry road leading to the Dorris House, retain these historic characteristics. They have not been paved and are of original gravel material.

Diversion Dam/Channel - Swimming Pool: In the early 1920s George and Ben Dorris excavated a stream channel that extended from the southeast to the north west corner of the property. According to Ben Dorris, the channel was a 3 ft. fall from the upper to lower ends. Ben Dorris acquired water rights in 1938 from the state of Oregon which enabled him to use the waters of the Willamette River by constructing a diversion channel. In its early stages the channel served to control surface runoff and seasonal flooding on the Ranch. The water was eventually used for both irrigating the orchards and as a water source for livestock on the Ranch. The swimming pool is a non-contributing resource.

In 1925 a diversion dam was constructed of rock and concrete at the S.E. corner of the property, adjacent to the Willamette River. The dam helped to control water moving onto the site from the middle Fork of the Willamette via a 3 ft. diameter 90 ft. tunnel which was regulated by a steel gate. During the course of the years improvements were made to the stream channel including low level check dams for irrigation, bridges for pedestrian access and in 1940 a concrete swimming pool and terrace were built directly behind the Dorris house.³⁴ According to Mary Dorris Trumpener, Ben's daughter who grew up at Dorris Ranch from 1936 - 1957, the pool was one of the

³² Dorris, George. Oral history. 1987.

³³ Dorris, Mary. Oral history. Dorris, George. Oral history.

³⁴ Ruff, Cameron, Lacoss and Associates. 1979.

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highlights of life on the Ranch.³⁵ The 97 foot by 28 foot pool is located directly north of the Dorris House. The concrete pool is 4 feet deep at each edge and slopes to 6 ft. maximum depth. George Dorris, Mary's brother, remembers a three tiered terraced wall to the west, running the entire length of the pool. According to George Dorris, the terraces was planted each year with Night Blooming Star.³⁶ The terraces, each 18 inches high were built of concrete, with 12 inch wide steps on each level. Though now nearly covered with vegetation, and not regularly maintained for over 25 years, the pool, terraces, and diversion dam are structurally sound and have retained their essential character.

³⁵ Trumpener, Mary Dorris. Oral History. July 10, 1987.

³⁶ Dorris, George. Oral History. June 18, 1987.

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1 of 22

Dorris Ranch
Vicinity of Springfield
Lane County, OR
looking to the southwest

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR

2 of 22

Dorris Ranch
Road Orchard
looking west

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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Dorris Ranch
Lulu Dorris among filbert trees
orchard unknown

Historic view, early 1930's
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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Dorris Ranch
Single Trunk Filbert Tree
Walnut Orchard

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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Dorris Ranch
Dorris House
Main Entrance
Western elevation

Historic view, early 1930's
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

6 of 22

Dorris Ranch
Dorris House
Main Entrance
Western elevation

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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Dorris Ranch
Stepping stones to main
entrance of Dorris House

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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8 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Dorris House
rear (south) entrance
southern elevation

Historic view, early 1930's
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

9 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Dorris House
rear (south) entrance
southern elevation

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477
151 North 4th St.

10 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Dorris House
side entrance
north elevation

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

11 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Freezer House
northwest elevation

Contemporary view 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

12 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Garage
south elevation

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

13 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Dorris Barn #1
Western elevation

Contemporary view 1987
Willamalane Park and recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

14 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Dorris Barn #2
northern elevation

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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15 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Orchard Road
vicinity unknown

Historic view, early 1930's
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

16 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Orchard Road
Main entrance road
northwest portion of site

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

17 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Diversion Channel
southeastern view
southeast portion of site

Contemporary view, 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

18 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Swimming Pool
under construction
eastern view

Historic view, 1940
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

19 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Swimming Pool
view of terraces
eastern view

Historic view, 1940
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

20 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Swimming Pool
northeastern view

Contemporary view 1987
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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Dorris Ranch
Filbert Harvest
Dorris Ranch

Historic view, early 1930's
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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22 of 22
Dorris Ranch
Filbert Harvest
Dorris Ranch

Contemporary view, 1986
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
151 North 4th St.
Springfield, OR 97477

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INTRODUCTION

Dorris Ranch, situated at the confluence of the North Fork and the Coast Fork of the Willamette River, is a landscape significant in the history of Springfield, the history of agriculture in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, and the history of Filbert nut culture in the United States. Since it was first developed by George A. Dorris in 1892, Dorris Ranch has remained remarkably intact. This historic landscape, composed of 250 acres of filbert orchards, roads, a water diversion channel, houses, a garage, a freezer house, a swimming pool, and other associated structures, is free of modern intrusions and illustrates, through its continued existence and use, the continuum and development of filbert nut culture from the earliest days as a young industry in the Pacific Northwest to the region's present role as the major filbert producing area in the country. (See Section 10.)

Dorris Ranch contains a variety of landscape components, all of which combine to communicate the ways in which filberts have been propagated, maintained, harvested and distributed - and the ways in which those agricultural techniques have changed with new technologies and changing economies.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

Dorris Ranch is of state and local significance and possesses integrity because of the following factors:

- its undisturbed physical condition and the individual components - including orchards, roads, structures, and other landscape alterations - which comprise this site; and
- the consistent and incremental development of this landscape - through the use of traditional and experimental agricultural practices; and
- the quality of design and the skill of execution of the construction, maintenance, and use of filbert orchards, structures, roads, a diversion ditch and other landscape components; and
- the feeling of continuity which Dorris Ranch conveys through the sensitive juxtaposition of components and elements from different phases of its history and the lack of intrusive modern elements.

Dorris Ranch is also significant because it:

A. is associated with a series of everyday events and practices in agricultural history and rural life that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Oregon history, and through its physical features and landscape components reflects the evolution of the agricultural landscape, and more specifically the landscape of nut orchards, over more than 95 years of human occupation, cultivation, and use; and

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B. is associated with the lives of persons, especially George A. Dorris, who have made significant contributions to the agricultural, economic, and social history of Springfield, Eugene, Lane County, and the State of Oregon; and

C. embodies in its totality the distinctive land use characteristics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century agricultural systems and practices that provided the necessary economic framework for the development of the area, and contributed to the economic and agricultural development of the region, and that through the modifications caused by economic necessities and technological advances has gradually and continually evolved into a contemporary agricultural site that retains components - most notably the filbert orchards - that are significant both individually and collectively, as well as structures, roads, and other landscape modifications that make Dorris Ranch an outstanding example of continuity and change in a rural agricultural environment.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Background

Filbert cultivation has played an important role in the agricultural and economic history of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest since the first quarter of the twentieth century. Internationally, there are four countries where filberts are a substantial commercial market: Turkey, Spain, Italy, and the United States. In the United States, although filbert production is minimal compared to the world market, almost all commercial filbert orchards are in Oregon and Washington.³⁷ Between 1929 and 1946 the overwhelming bulk of filberts were grown in Oregon.^{38,39}

³⁷ Peterson, Arno L. 1949. "Cooperative Nut Marketing in the Pacific Northwest." Unpublished Master's Thesis. School of Business Administration. University of Oregon. p.13.

³⁸ *ibid.*

The following chart indicates acres of bearing filberts in Oregon and Washington for the years 1929 through 1940:

Year	Oregon (acres)	Washington (acres)
1929	2000	290
1930	2500	380
1931	3100	460
1932	3700	560
1933	4300	650
1934	4800	740
1935	5600	760
1936	6300	790
1937	7000	1000
1938	7700	1250

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The period prior to 1929 was one of little record-keeping regarding filbert production. More importantly, it was during this era, as discussed below, that George Dorris began and expanded the filbert industry in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. In 1984, there were 25,000 acres in filbert production in Oregon with 3,263,500 trees, with a total production value of approximately \$8 million.⁴⁰

1939	8500	1500
1940	9300	1650

³⁹ "Filbert Tree Report". Issued by Oregon Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. May 10, 1985.

The following chart represents the entire filbert nut production in Oregon and the United States between 1927 and 1940:

Year	Production OREGON (tons)	Value of Production (Dollars)	Production U.S. (tons)	Value of Production (Dollars)
1927	120	19,000	120	19,000
1928	200	76,000	200	76,000
1929	200	60,000	200	60,000
1930	300	102,000	300	102,000
1931	380	95,000	420	105,000
1932	400	80,000	490	99,000
1933	930	279,000	1070	318,000
1934	1000	200,000	1210	244,000
1935	1100	286,000	1240	326,000
1936	1850	500,000	2100	568,000
1937	2230	479,000	2570	557,000
1938	2060	453,000	2440	548,000
1939	3300	726,000	3890	881,000
1940	2700	648,000	3210	801,00

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

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It is also worth noting the planting history of trees. In Lane County, where Dorris Ranch is located, there were 110,900 planted between 1900 and 1960, out of a total of 300,900 trees in the county as of 1984. In the State of Oregon, there were 895,500 trees planted during that same period, out of a total existing of 3,213,200 trees. Oregon currently accounts for 98.4% of existing trees in the Pacific Northwest. Equally important, of these trees, 82.2% are of the Barcelona variety, the species planted and promoted by George Dorris. Seven other varieties account for the remaining 17.8% of the trees in the region.⁴¹ Although the filbert nursery at Dorris Ranch was taken out over thirty years ago, there are filbert ranchers, throughout the state of Oregon, still living today who remember buying Dorris Ranch filbert nursery stock.⁴²

Dorris Ranch

The history of Dorris Ranch is the history of agricultural development in the Pacific Northwest, and more specifically, the recognition of the interrelationship between the culture and cultivation of filberts and the natural systems within which this agricultural landscape exists. The settlement, cultivation, and use of Dorris Ranch may be said to have developed through five distinct yet overlapping periods: Agricultural Experimentation, 1892-1905; Early Filbert Cultivation, 1905-1923; Filbert Production and Expansion, 1923-1936; Stabilization, 1936-1971; Preservation and Changing Priorities, 1971 - present.

Agricultural Experimentation, 1892-1905: Dorris Ranch, as we now know it, was purchased by George A. Dorris on October 27, 1892. It was originally part of Donation Land Claim 61, Notification Number 3730 of William A. Masterson and Eliza Jane Masterson in the 1850s. Although the land changed hands a number of times between 1867, when the Mastersons sold it until 1892 when Dorris purchased it, it remained largely uncultivated and unimproved, except for some hops and the original house, built in 1880 by Marietta and George Thurston. Dorris, a graduate of the University of Oregon and an attorney-at-law, purchased the property from the Thurstons for \$4000. At the time the property consisted of rich bottomland, river frontage at the confluence of the North and Coast forks of the Willamette, and scrubby hillside. This natural landscape setting still forms the context for the historic resources of Dorris Ranch.

Dorris was active in many varieties of agricultural ventures. He was an innovator and influenced other farmers in the area, primarily through his publications. As early as April, 1910, for example, he published an article in *Anybody's Magazine*, extolling the virtues of white asparagus.⁴³ In that year he had 25 acres cultivated in Asparagus and was looking forward to expanding to another 25. Dorris canned his asparagus that year, and apparently had great success with it.

In 1903 Dorris had obtained his first filbert trees. "I bought a lot of two-year old trees and set them out near the house. A few of them bore a nut or two that year... In that purchase were Red Avelines, White Avelines, Davianas and Barcelonas. Of these, the Barcelona is the only variety to consider for commercial plantings."⁴⁴ This early

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² Groshong, oral history. 1987.

⁴³ Dorris, George A. "Lane County's White Asparagus the Best." *Anybody's Magazine*. April, 1910. p.18

⁴⁴ Schuster, C.E. "Northwestern Filberts." *Country Gentleman*. September 30, 1922.

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purchase, indicative of Dorris' willingness to experiment with new crops, was to prove to be the beginning of a long and illustrious career in filbert cultivation.

Early Filbert Cultivation, 1905-1923: By 1910, Dorris' filberts were well known.⁴⁵ Of special interest was his use of both the DuChilly and Barcelona varieties, with the DuChilly used as a pollinizer.⁴⁶ It was especially important since, by that date, nut cultivation was becoming one of the important new industries in the Willamette Valley. "In the past two years the importation of nuts has doubled, while the home product has increased 100 percent... A nut orchard takes time, but, once bearing, it is a bank that is in no danger of failing."⁴⁷

From 1905 through 1923 Dorris Ranch expanded, and the growing and production of filberts took on a more prominent role, until filberts were the dominant and, eventually, only commercial crop at the Ranch. In February of 1912, Dorris purchased 200 filbert trees, 100 each of the Du Chilly and Barcelona varieties, from the Barren Hill Nursery in Nevada City, California, at a cost of \$30.00 per 100 trees.⁴⁸ In March, 1912, Dorris was advised by that nursery to let a strong new shoot grow and cut away the old one.⁴⁹ It's not clear if George Dorris followed this advice, but his later experience was to prove, to him, that this was the wrong way to cultivate filberts, and to lead him to develop new and innovative practices in filbert cultivation.

By 1916, George Dorris was known as a filbert grower of blossoming prominence. In February of that year he received a letter from the Vice-President of the Northern Nut Growers, in New York, asking for advice and information.⁵⁰ This is another example of his influence beyond Springfield and the state of Oregon.

In the same year, Dorris exhibited his filberts at the Agricultural Fair at Corvallis, Oregon, where they were well received.⁵¹ The plantings of Du Chill ys from 1912 were finally bearing, and Dorris was contacted by another regional grower, A.A. Quarnberg of Vancouver, Washington, regarding the source of the Dorris trees.⁵² It is not known if Dorris responded to the inquiry, but he was certainly becoming well known in the Northwest as a filbert grower.

During his own lifetime, Dorris was viewed as an important filbert orchardist. For example, a 1920 article published by the Better Fruit Publishing Company spoke of three prominent growers in the Northwest: Gillette, Quarnberg, and Dorris.⁵³ Gillette was in Nevada City, California, as was the Barren Hill Nursery from where

⁴⁵ "Various Products and Profits." *Anybody's Magazine*. Midsummer, 1910. p.35.

⁴⁶ Schuster. op. cit.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ George Dulac letters to GAD, February 20, 22, March 12, 1912.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, Mar. 12, 1912.

⁵⁰ Ira Ulman letter to GAD, February 13, 1916.

⁵¹ A.A. Quarnberg letter to GAD, January 18, 1917.

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Percy, Knight. "The Cultivation of the Filbert in the Northwest." Better Fruit Publishing Company. January 1, 1920.

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Dorris obtained 200 trees in 1912. Quarnberg was in Vancouver, Washington, and was characterized as "a tree lover with an experimental turn of mind... he made no extensive plantings [but rather] has made an extensive study of varieties..."

George Dorris was characterized in this article as the "first grower in the West who had sufficient faith in the filbert to make a real planting... [Although he started a number of years after Quarnberg] his results have been such that he has increased his acreage from year to year until he is probably the largest commercial grower in America..."⁵⁴

Equally important, the article underscored the difficulty of raising filberts, and remarked on the numerous failure to successfully cultivate the nut in the East, thereby giving greater weight and importance to the size of Dorris' orchards. Dorris reported that a 3-year-old tree bore 384 nuts; that a 5-year-old tree produced 16 pounds; a 6-year-old bore 21 pounds; a 10-year-old, 46 pounds; and a 13-year-old, 50 to 60 pounds. Dorris Ranch was characterized as "an ideal filbert location. His soil is a rich, moist river bottom."⁵⁵

At the meeting of the Western Walnut Association that year, Dorris gave a talk about filberts and especially Barcelonas. At a planting of 20 feet apart, with between 108 and 125 trees per acre, an acre of Barcelonas could produce substantial yields.⁵⁶

By 1922, the fame of Dorris Ranch filberts had spread. For example, an article in the September 30, 1922 issue of *Country Gentleman* on "Northwestern Filberts" stressed the prominent role which George Dorris played in this young agricultural industry.⁵⁷ Although the earliest known planting of filberts, at that time, was a small orchard in Douglas County, the author interviewed George Dorris as the principal grower in Oregon.

In that interview Dorris explained his use of DuChillys as pollenizers for the Barcelonas, and also his planting scheme. While he started out planting the trees on a 12 by 15 foot grid, he had enlarged that to a 22 by 25 foot grid by 1922. The earlier trees are planted closer, as can still be seen in the orchards today.

Filbert Production and Expansion, 1923-1936: In 1934 George Dorris and Ben Dorris published a small booklet about their method of cultivation. *Filbert Nursery Stock Grown by the Tip System*⁵⁸ was widely distributed

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

At 5 years	500 to 1,000 pounds
At 6 years	1,000 to 1,500 pounds
At 8 years	2,000 to 3,000 pounds
At 10 years	3,000 to 4,000 pounds
At 12 years	4,000 to 5,000 pounds.

⁵⁷ Schuster, C.E. "Northwestern Filberts." *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ Dorris, Geo. A. and Ben F. 1934. *Filbert Nursery Stock Grown by the Tip System*. Authors: Springfield, Oregon.

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throughout Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. In it George Dorris and Ben Dorris described the "Dorris Method" for pruning and planting filberts in order to achieve maximum production with minimum maintenance. The major problem with filberts, as discussed in this 1934 publication, are suckers - small shoots which grow from the roots up around the main trunk of the tree. The suckers create problems because "unless an immense amount of work is done in removing [them] from such a tree it generally gets out of control and forms a bush."⁵⁹ This adds expense, especially in maintenance time, and thereby reduces the economic return from an orchard.

In addition to comments about suckering, George Dorris also provided general "Suggestion to Prospective Filbert Growers." This advice came under the headings of "varieties, strain, and types." This modest booklet, published with private funds, is in fact a guide to successful filbert planting. George Dorris stressed the Barcelona variety, for its appearance and quality of nut, as well as its profitability. "The Barcelona is to filberts what the Bartlett is to early pears; what the Italian is to tart and the French is to sweet prunes; what the Royal Ann is to all purpose general cherries and the Montgomery is to sour cherries; what the Navel is to early and the Valencia is to late oranges; what the Early Mission olive is to all pickling olives; and what the Black Mission fig is to all figs."⁶⁰

Dorris vehemently advised that filberts be grown "on their own roots" rather than by the suckering method. "...the permanent growth [of] trees [are] always on their own roots, for the filbert, unlike most other fruit trees, lends itself to that method of propagation, thus assuring a perfect affinity between all its parts, a desirable condition practically impossible to attain in any grafted tree."⁶¹ It was the development of the "root" method which truly marks Dorris as a leader in filbert culture. It was through both this booklet and the extensive Dorris Ranch nursery that George Dorris had a lasting impact upon his fellow filbert orchardists and the agriculture of the state.

The substance of the booklet ends with an invitation, no doubt heeded by many planters in the area:

Having touched briefly on the essential points of variety, strain, type of tree and how to plant, in this little folder, we must forego discussion of other practices where costly mistakes may be easily made.

But those interested, whether they have planted or contemplate planting are welcome to call on us at any time and we will cheerfully give them the benefit of all we have learned in our 30 years experience. We do not know it all but can point out the mistakes we have made, and the mistakes that many are still blindly making.

We take pride in the filbert industry of Oregon, for we were in it from the beginning and helped develop it, and any suggestions of value we may be able to give to any of our fellow growers will afford us the greatest pleasure.⁶²

Finally, George Dorris closed this "little folder" with a reminder of a prophecy which he made in 1914. At that time, at the meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society he delivered the first statewide address on filberts and prophesized: "I fully believe that in time the filbert groves of the Willamette Valley will rival the famous

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² *ibid.*

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groves of Naples, Sisily [sic] or Terragona." In 1934 he was able to say that "instead of a pipe dream it has become a reality that as fine filbert groves as there are in the world are now in the Willamette Valley - a dream come true."⁶³ The results of this vision can still be seen today, not only at Dorris Ranch, but at many orchards in the Willamette Valley, the McKenzie River Valley, and other areas in Oregon.

Stabilization, 1936-1971: When George A. Dorris died in 1936 he was lauded in local newspapers as an agricultural pioneer and as a major contributor to the local economy. His obituary in the Eugene Register Guard hailed him as "one of Lane county's most widely known residents, whose pioneer filbert plantings brought him national recognition for starting this branch of the orchard business in the United States."⁶⁴ George Dorris, the article continued, "started the most successful commercial filbert planting in the United States, and laid the foundation for the Pacific Northwest's filbert industry."⁶⁵

The Ranch was continued by his nephew and partner, Ben F. Dorris and his wife, Kay Dorris. During this period the Ranch continued active filbert production, although the nursery orchard was eventually discontinued. It was during the early 1940s that the swimming pool was built. Ben Dorris, who died on May 4, 1983 at the age of 93, was born and raised in Lewiston, Maine. He came to Eugene and Springfield in 1911 to attend the University of Oregon, where he majored in economics. After serving in World War I, he came to Dorris Ranch to work with his uncle George Dorris, with whom he eventually became a partner.

It was also during this period that Reynold Briggs came to work at the Ranch. Briggs, the last surviving full-time employee of Dorris Ranch during the historic period, served in a variety of roles from 1936 till 1973. His major role was as Ranch manager, overseeing harvesting, pruning, and other maintenance procedures. At the time of the sale and donation of the Ranch to Willamalane and the State of Oregon, Ben Dorris gave the original house and a small parcel of land, including some orchards, to Briggs for use throughout his lifetime. This property is still owned and controlled by Reynold Briggs and is not part of this nomination.

George A. Dorris

In addition to being a filbert grower and cultivator at Dorris Ranch, George A. Dorris was active in a number of other activities in Springfield, Eugene, Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest. He was graduate of the University of Oregon Law School and practiced law until he decided to devote his time to farming. His family came to Oregon in the 1860s⁶⁶ and was influential in Eugene throughout the later part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries.

George A. Dorris was born in Crescent City, California on March 17, 1858, the son of Ben F. Dorris and Cecile Pellet Dorris. Ben F. Dorris was one of the founders of the University of Oregon. His brother, George B. Dorris was a prominent lawyer in Eugene and was considered an Oregon pioneer, having moved from California to Jacksonville, Oregon in 1861.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Eugene Register Guard. September 17, 1936.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Eugene Register-Guard. September 17, 1936. George A. Dorris obituary.

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Dorris attended local schools in Eugene and the University of Oregon Law School, class of 1882, and practiced law in Astoria, Oregon with George Noland. He returned to Eugene and was member of the law firm of his uncle, George B. Dorris, until 1898, when he "retired" to his ranch in Springfield. His law practice was apparently undistinguished, for all local references to his personal history make note, especially, of the Ranch and filbert cultivation.⁶⁷

Dorris was active not only in his own agricultural endeavors, but was also a founding member of the Eugene Fruit Growers Association (EFGA), the commercial predecessor to Agripac, Incorporated. EFGA was a major cooperative commercial venture in the organization of the marketing of agricultural products in the Willamette Valley. Although it was based in Eugene, EFGA had an impact on the entire Valley, as well as other sections of Western Oregon. In 1926, for example, it acquired a drier for filberts and walnuts, which enabled the crops to be marketed to a wider area. Dorris was on the first Board of Directors, and continued to be active in that organization until his death.

Dorris also possessed some foresight regarding environmental issues. In 1912, George Dorris and his wife, Lulu, entered into a special agreement with the Deputy Game Warden for Lane County and the State Game Warden. This agreement declared his land to be a "wild bird and game refuge for the period of two years..." and granted the County and the State "the right to preserve and protect... all wild birds and game protected by the laws of the State of Oregon..."⁶⁸

George Dorris was equally concerned about "progress" and on February 24, 1924 he and Lulu entered into an agreement with The California Oregon Power Company which granted the company "the right-of-way and easement to erect, construct, repair, replace, maintain and use from time to time... the [Dorris Ranch] lands... for the transmission and distribution of electricity..."⁶⁹ It is one of the earliest of many such agreements which lead to the distribution of electricity throughout the County.

CONCLUSION

Dorris Ranch, with its orchards, roads, house, and other structures, is a significant landscape in Springfield, Lane County, Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest. It is a site which has developed and changed through the intricate weaving of human aspirations and natural forces. It is both representative and unique in the history of agriculture in this region. In most ways, there is no other place like it in this region: an agricultural landscape which, due its wise management and stewardship, has had a major impact on an important industry. It was the home of George A. Dorris, an innovator in the movement to improve filbert culture, production, maintenance and marketing, and someone who was also interested in the well-being of others. He was eager to share his knowledge about filberts, published the results of his experimentations with filberts, and was often a speaker at state agricultural meetings.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Agreement between George Dorris and the Lane County Game Warden and the Game Warden for the State of Oregon. 1912.

⁶⁹ Agreement between George and Lulu Dorris and the California Oregon Power Company. February 24, 1924.

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This place, this landscape, beyond all others, recalls for us today the efforts, successes, and even the failures of the early years of the filbert industry in this region. It is a landscape where we can clearly see the physical evidence of the history of filbert culture in the Pacific Northwest.

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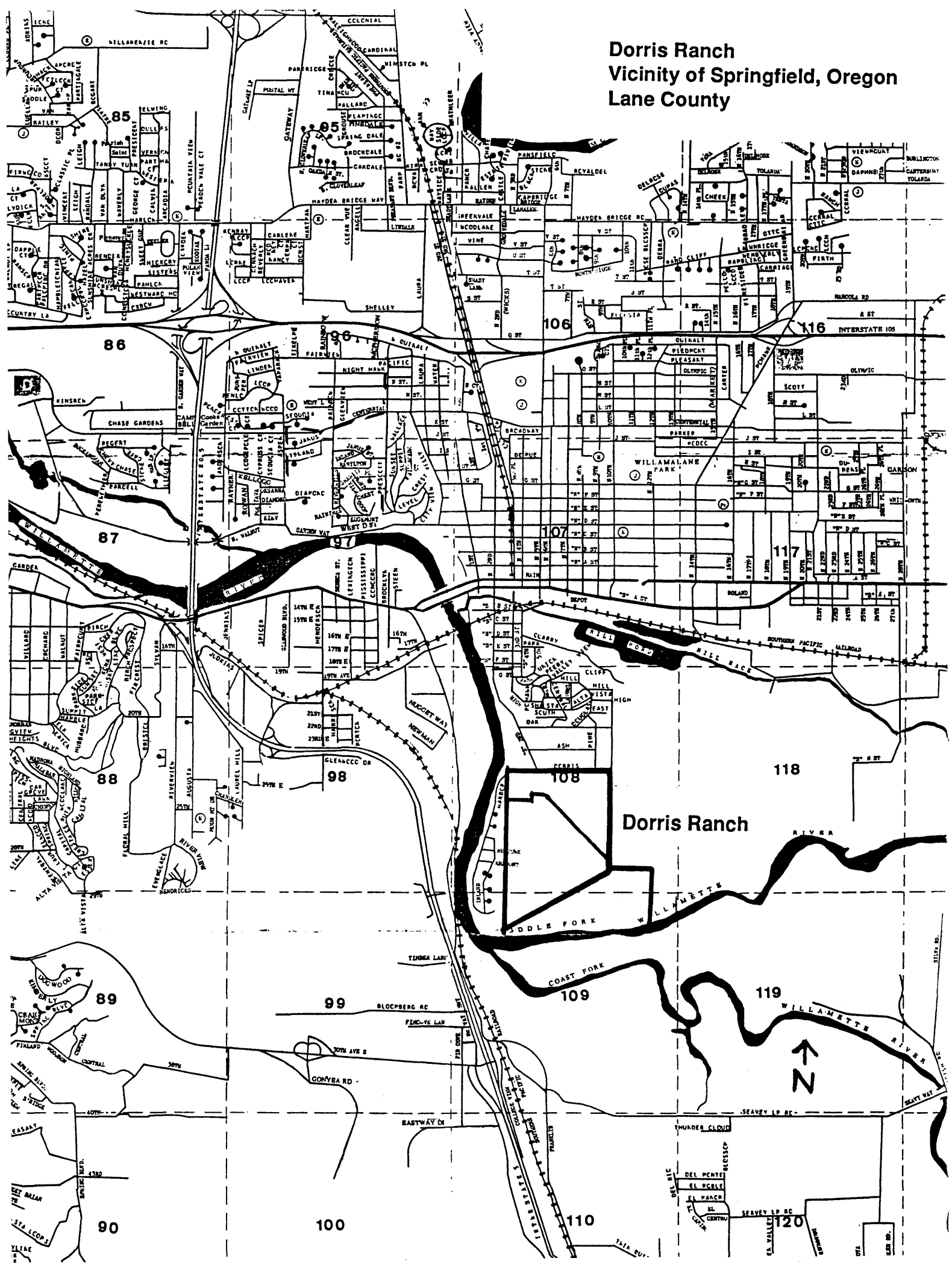
2,600' more or less along said line to the point of beginning, containing in all 109 acres, more or less.

UTM References

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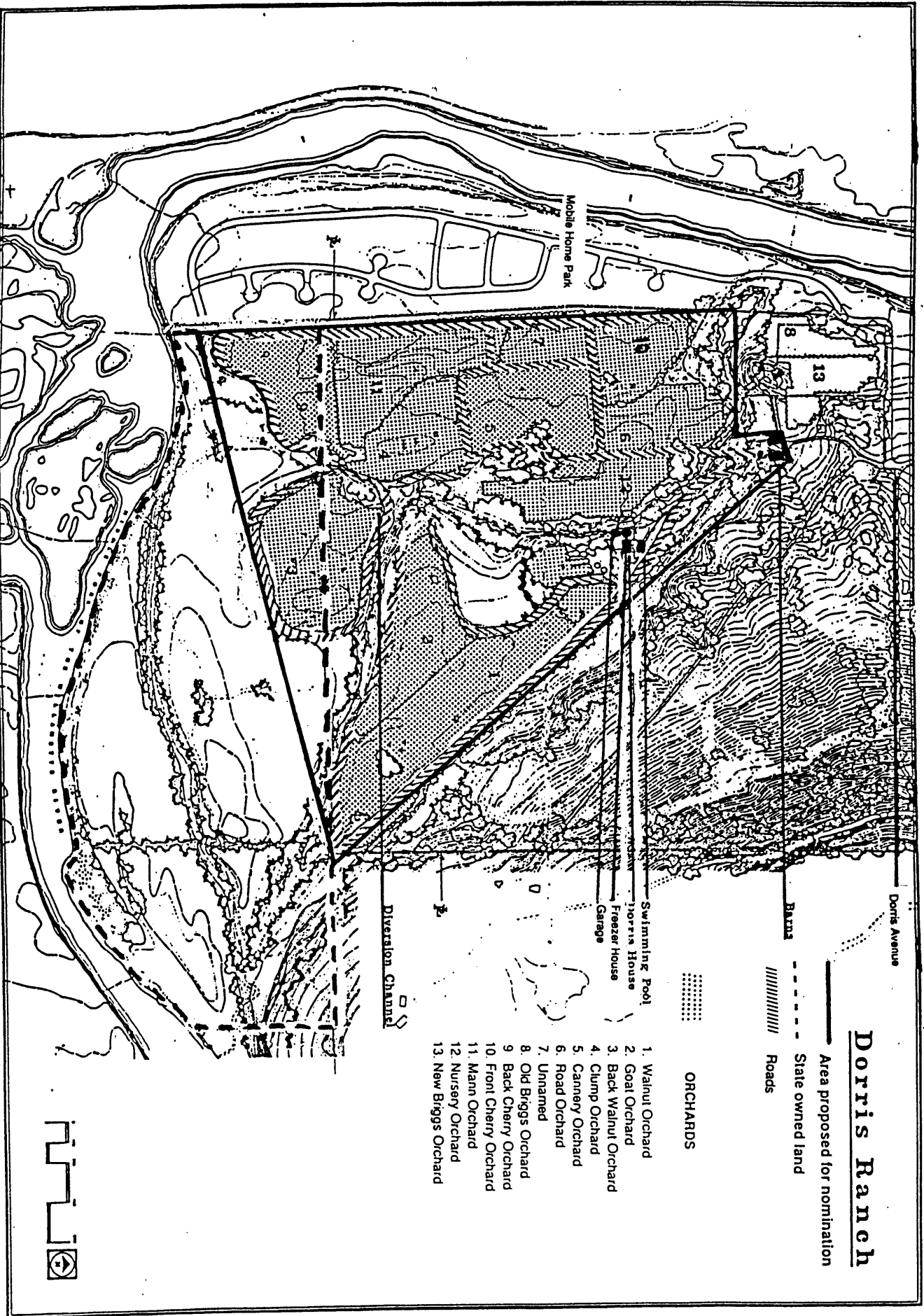
Dorris Ranch Vicinity of Springfield, Oregon Lane County



Total acreage proposed for nomination: 109 acres

Total Willamalane acreage proposed for nomination: 98 acres

Total State acreage proposed for nomination: 11 acres



Dorris Ranch

Area proposed for nomination

State owned land

Roads

ORCHARDS

1. Walnut Orchard
2. Goat Orchard
3. Back Walnut Orchard
4. Clump Orchard
5. Canary Orchard
6. Road Orchard
7. Unnamed
8. Old Briggs Orchard
9. Back Cherry Orchard
10. Front Cherry Orchard
11. Mann Orchard
12. Nursery Orchard
13. New Briggs Orchard

