

Prairie, Oaks, and People

An investment strategy



Acknowledgments

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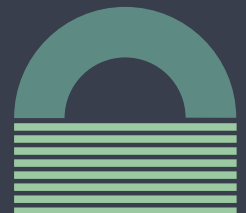
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Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture and staff time of multiple partner organizations.

Land Acknowledgment:

Indigenous Tribes and bands have been with the lands that we inhabit today throughout the Northwest since time immemorial and continue to be a vibrant part of the region today. We would like to express our respect to the First Peoples of this land. It is important that we recognize and honor the ongoing legal and spiritual relationship between the land, plants, animals, and people Indigenous to this region we now call the Pacific Northwest. The interconnectedness of the people, the land, and the natural environment cannot be overstated; the health of one is necessary for the health of all. We recognize the pre-existing and continued sovereignty of the federally recognized Tribes who have ties to this region and thank them for continuing to share their traditional ecological knowledge and perspective on how we might care for one another and the land, so it can take care of us.

Pacific Northwest from Oregon Legislative Commission of Indian Affairs



A Conservation Business Plan and Investment Strategy

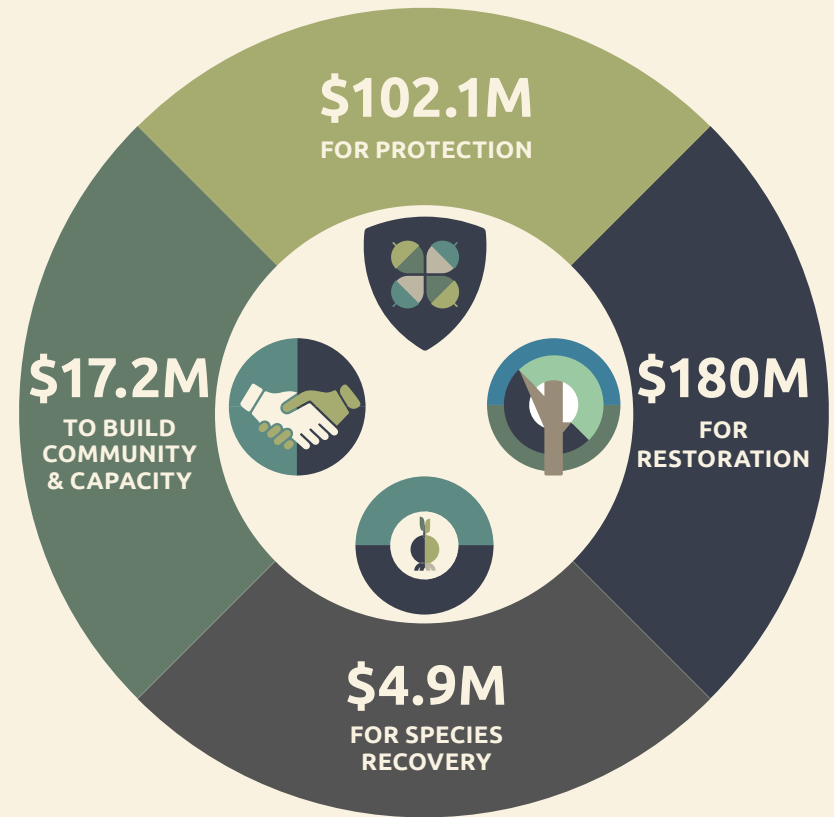
If you are reading this plan, it's because someone believes that you can make a difference in the quest to save oak and prairie in the Pacific Northwest.

Over the last decade, conservation practitioners, agency staff, tribal partners, scientists, landowners, and community members have been working together to develop the knowledge, policies, and funding streams to more rapidly protect and restore what remains of oak and prairie ecosystems from northern California to southern British Columbia. We are making progress, but we need your help.

We believe that vibrant, resilient ecosystems are essential in our communities. Oak and prairie systems are icons of the Pacific Northwest landscape and are intrinsic to where and how people live, farm, and recreate. These systems are rich in biological diversity and are a unique and vital ecosystem but they are slow-growing and under threat. Conserving them now is critical.



The oak and prairie community is positioned to effectively put conservation investments on the ground now.



IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WE ARE ASKING FOR:

- \$102.1 million for protection
- \$180 million for restoration
- \$17.2 million to build community and capacity
- \$4.9 million for species recovery

FUNDING THIS INVESTMENT WILL RESULT IN:

- protection of 10,200 acres
- restoration of 60,000 acres
- direct outreach and relationship building with thousands of landowners and community members
- creation of at least 25 job opportunities for tribal and non-tribal partners

Prairie, Oaks, and People

Collective Strategic Thinking

The authors of this plan represent nine regional partnerships across the Pacific Northwest working to advance oak and prairie conservation through land protection and restoration, advocacy, species recovery, and community engagement. Our partners are land trusts, conservation districts, watershed councils, Tribes and First Nations, academics, state and federal agencies, forestry, agriculture, recreation interests, local governments, landowners, and non-government conservation organizations.

Our existing oak and prairie partnerships and many of our individual partners have engaged in extensive strategic planning in recent years, working through rigorously structured processes to establish logic chains, test our assumptions, and identify barriers and pathways to successful outcomes. Those formal structured processes have provided the foundations for this plan, which in turn represents our collective strategic thinking.



Western Wood Pewee. Photo Credit: Jim Leonard



This plan is intended for you

This plan is intended to speak to a range of audiences including private foundations, philanthropists, governments, and the business community who see benefit in contributing to the goals and outcomes described in this plan. There are significant funding opportunities and this plan is our way of connecting those timely opportunities to the clearly defined restoration needs of oak and prairie ecosystems and the people who depend on them.

Purpose of the Document

With targeted, coordinated investment, we can revitalize these imperiled oak and prairie ecosystems and the range of important benefits they provide.

USE OF FUNDS

- Describes priority areas of investment and how funds will be used to achieve critical outcomes for oak and prairie ecosystems.

DIVERSITY OF FUNDING POOLS

- Highlights the diversity of funding pools and where they will be most useful in achieving those outcomes.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Elevates the cultural significance of oak and prairie landscapes and increases funding for tribal priorities.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

- Coordinates investment strategies to optimize and leverage funding to the greatest extent possible.

BENEFITS

- Highlights the benefits of collective action.



Short-eared Owl, Baskett Slough NWR Credit: Jim Leonard

People connect to these landscapes

Many people have a natural affinity for oaks and prairies due to their scenic beauty and open accessibility. When people treat oak systems with care and respect – preventing conversion to more developed uses, shepherding low-intensity fire, preventing the spread of invasive species – we enjoy a host of benefits including reduced high-intensity wildfire, improved soil and water quality, abundant flowers for pollinators, opportunities to hike, bike, bird, and hunt, increased property values, and an overall improved quality of life. And because oaks can sprout back after devastating disturbances like high-intensity wildfires and being cut down, these trees provide resilience and optimism following negative impacts.

Why Oak and Prairie

They are also among the most imperiled. The First Peoples of this region have long relied on oak trees and prairies for food and cultural practices, using fire to maintain and nurture habitats that support hundreds of plant and animal species, many of which hold cultural importance. Today, these are the landscapes where the majority of the human population in the Pacific Northwest live, farm, and recreate. As a result, these meadows, tree-dotted savannas, and dense woodlands are disappearing at an alarming rate. This makes them a top regional priority for conservation.

We recognize the lands we are working to conserve and restore are the same from which Indigenous people were forcibly removed following the wars of 1855, against their will, disrupting lifeways and actively undermining their rights to safety, health, language, and culture. “Pre-settlement” is a term we often use in the conservation community to refer to a historical or reference ecological condition. But not only does the term “pre-settlement” imply a vacancy that requires occupation, it also fails to recognize that Indigenous people shaped those historical conditions that conservationists now aspire to emulate. Although tribal peoples were removed from their homelands, they remain committed to stewardship of these landscapes. Today, the conservation community is working to understand and address the multi-dimensional impacts of colonization – a violent and traumatic process backed by federal and state policy – on Indigenous communities. At the nexus of land ownership and land management, conservation organizations have a unique opportunity to participate in healing through partnerships, advocacy, and repatriation. The leadership of tribes and their openness and commitment to partnerships and ongoing work across the region is accelerating our collective work to protect, restore, and steward oak and prairie landscapes.

Oak and prairie systems are some of the most biologically diverse, culturally important, and climate-resilient habitats in the Pacific Northwest.



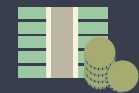
HERITAGE

Oaks are rooted in the heritage of many people; we have deep connections to these landscapes. Oak and prairie landscapes have particular cultural significance for our tribal partners, who bring traditional ecological knowledge to our shared stewardship strategies.



ECOSYSTEM

Oak and prairie ecosystems are among the most diverse in the Pacific Northwest, hosting many endemic plants and more than 300 vertebrate species, including a variety of oak-associated birds that are continental priorities for conservation.



ECONOMY

Healthy oak and prairie habitats produce direct economic benefits for landowners and local communities.



CLIMATE

Oak and prairie landscapes are drought-tolerant and fire-adapted, meaning they can withstand many of the impacts of climate change.

The Case for Conservation

Fast facts: oak and prairie

The first edition of this plan (2017) built the case for long-term investments to restore a signature feature of the region's historic landscape and to ensure that imperiled species, such as the Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly, Oregon Vesper Sparrow, Lewis's Woodpecker, Kincaid's Lupine, and Western Pond Turtle, survive into the future. Since the plan was published, the conservation community has worked to increase the pace and scale of oak and prairie conservation, conserving and restoring thousands of acres of critical habitat spanning public, private, and tribal lands; delisting numerous species, and launching joint communications efforts to expand public support. Local partnerships now span the range of Oregon white oaks, dramatically increasing local conservation capacity. But we have now entered a new phase of need and urgency. Impacts from climate change are no longer theoretical; we need to be more proactive in managing the effects of drought and wildfire on humans and ecosystems. As the Pacific Northwest attracts more people, rural residential development and urban sprawl are exponentially increasing pressure.



We have now entered a new phase of need and urgency.

Although habitat loss resulting from these threats is difficult to quantify precisely, mapping of historic conditions suggests that reductions in oak and prairie systems are widespread and substantial; populations of native species are declining, and many species are already gone from parts of their historic range.

10%

REMAINS OF HISTORIC OAK & PRAIRIE RANGE



- Across the Pacific Northwest, oak and prairie communities historically occurred west of the Cascades from northern California to British Columbia but can now only be found on approximately 10% of its historic range.
- In Oregon, an estimated 25% of historic oak habitat remains and only 1% of native prairies.
- In Washington, prairies are one of the state's rarest ecosystems, with only 3% of historic prairies remaining.
- In British Columbia, less than 5% of oak and prairie habitat remains in fragmented patches.
- In California, a third of oak woodlands and forests have been lost to agriculture and urban development.

5% REMAIN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

3% REMAIN IN WASHINGTON

25% REMAIN IN OREGON

66% REMAIN IN CALIFORNIA

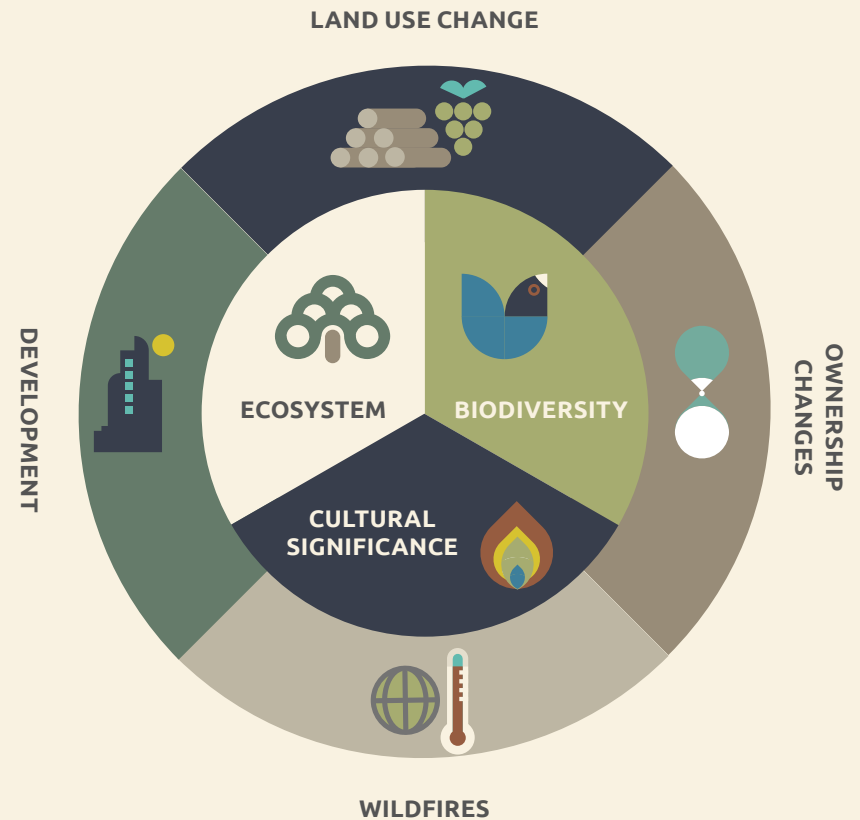
The Case for Conservation

Investing now in oak and prairie systems and species is critical



We have the information, tools, and partnerships to do something about these threats.

- 46 species that depend on oak and prairie systems are so imperiled they are legally regulated.
- Culturally important first foods, plant materials, and medicines foundational to the lifeways of Indigenous people are threatened by the loss of habitat and access.
- Oak trees are very slow growing – it takes 100-200 years to regrow an oak woodland – and old trees provide the significant ecological function found in these ecosystems. Plants that grow in the understory are often displaced by weeds following excessive grazing or soil disturbance, making intact oak woodlands effectively irreplaceable.
- Much remaining oak habitat occurs in the wildland-urban interface, putting oaks in the way of rural and urban development. As population growth accelerates, urban growth boundaries will expand.
- A massive transfer of land between generations is triggering the potential for large-scale changes in land ownership and management.
- Land is being cleared for vineyard development, second homes, and timber investment management companies are subdividing land to the highest bidder.
- Increased drought and soaring temperatures combine with fierce winds to drive increasingly large wildfires, threatening communities and forests across a region underprepared for fire.



3 Billion birds lost in North America

Since 1970, we have lost one in four North American birds. This staggering decline includes both migratory and resident species. As landscapes lose their ability to support bird populations, protecting and promoting healthy oak and prairie habitats across the Pacific Northwest is essential to halt and reverse the decline of species such as the Oregon vesper sparrow, oak titmouse, and black-throated gray warbler. While these trajectories are alarming, there is still time to either reverse or mitigate these impacts. The main drivers of conversion, conifer encroachment, and invasive species are all issues we know how to solve. We have the information, tools, and partnerships to do something about these threats.

A Roadmap to Ecological Reciprocity

How oaks benefit us:



OAKS PROVIDE FOOD FOR PEOPLE, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS



OAKS CREATE LIVABLE SPACES



OAKS BRING VALUE-ADDED ECONOMIC BENEFITS



How we can behave more reciprocally to oaks:



BUILD ECOSYSTEM AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



RECONNECT PEOPLE TO OAK AND PRAIRIE



INTEGRATE AND ADVANCE TRIBAL PRIORITIES IN A HOLISTIC APPROACH THAT SPANS TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES

Our Why



Community and Landscape Resilience

Restored forests are resilient forests

Commercially cultivated conifers have reduced forest diversity and resilience to disease. In non-commercial forests, the removal of Indigenous fire stewardship followed by fire suppression policies has dramatically increased tree density and fuel loadings, creating conditions ripe for extreme wildfire. In many locations, Douglas-fir, true firs, western red cedar, and other conifers are now stressed or dying due to the interaction of drought and increased temperatures under climate change. Many of these landscapes were formerly dominated by highly stress-tolerant oaks, often with scattered ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. When we restore oak habitats, we reduce the density of less drought-tolerant conifers. These actions simultaneously create space for oak regrowth and reduce fuel loads to increase community resilience to wildfires and drought. In turn, we protect the water supply, conserve biodiversity, support culturally important foods and medicines, and capture carbon.



Partners in prairies. Credit: Sara Evans-Peters

Bridging land management and livelihoods

Community resilience is a dynamic concept involving iterative collective learning across social, ecological, and economic systems. When applying this model to the management of oak and prairie habitats, community resilience connects land use, regional agricultural viability, food systems, and ecological processes. Collaborative partnerships thinking beyond the “preserve” model are building community resilience by connecting animal and fiber production systems and conservation grazing in a way that builds soil health and supports habitat, while also providing a livelihood for rural families. Advancing strategies through a community resilience lens keeps working lands working while reducing development threats.

Community and Landscape Resilience



Landscape mosaics with oak habitats protect everyone

Extreme wildfires can have heartbreaking impacts on local communities as well as regional and nationwide health impacts, as demonstrated by the 2023 wildfires in western Canada and eastern US, and the September 2020 US wildfires on the west coast. Oregon white oak

woodland and savanna, in particular, can be extremely important for reducing extreme wildfire risk— their waxy leaves lack the terpenes and other volatile oils that conifers have, and oak’s broad leaves burn slowly and are highly fire resistant. The open canopy structure of oak woodland and savanna means wildfires are more likely to stay on the ground and not become fast-traveling crown fires with extreme flame lengths. As a part of a diverse landscape, oak habitats can help reduce fire spread and offer control points when suppression is needed to protect lives and property. Additional fire load from grasslands during dry summers can be managed by removing thatch buildup with periodic prescribed fire or mowing.



Cherry Hill 8 Willamette Valley 2021. Credit: Sara Evans-Peters



Prairies build underground reservoirs of carbon

Oak and prairie grasslands are effective carbon sinks, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change by absorbing and storing significant amounts of carbon. Because grasslands dominated by perennial species such as native bunchgrasses and wildflowers often develop extensive root systems, they can store most of the carbon they capture underground. As roots decay, they turn into soil organic matter, building stores of carbon that are much better protected from wildfire than above-ground carbon storage in trees. And unlike conifers, when oaks are top-killed they regrow rapidly, beginning to recapture carbon and recreate tree canopy in the years immediately following a fire.

Right: Nestucca NWR Prescribed fire for prairie restoration. Credit: USFWS Pacific Region

Our Why

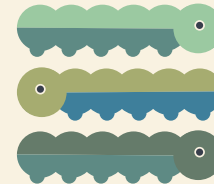
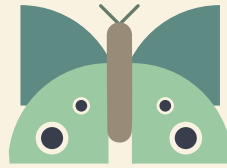
By the Numbers

Oak and prairie ecosystems are among the most diverse in the Pacific Northwest

300+

ECOSYSTEM SPECIES

Oak and prairie ecosystems host many endemic plants and more than 300 vertebrate species.



900+

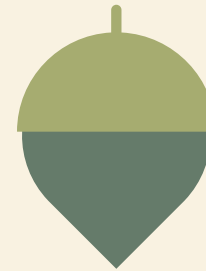
CATERPILLAR SPECIES

Over 900 caterpillar species depend on oak systems in North America.

+200

NESTING HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE SPECIES

Oak trees provide nesting habitat for over 200 wildlife species, representing all classes of terrestrial vertebrates, sustaining a reservoir of native biodiversity.



1M

ACORNS IN A LIFETIME

A fully mature Oregon white oak can produce 1000's of acorns each season and about 1 million over its lifetime.

+500

YEAR LIFESPAN

Oak trees can live up to 500 years.



ON THE MENU

Going back 600,000 years to the mid-Pleistocene, there is evidence of our hominid ancestors dining on acorns.



MILLIONS

DIVERSITY AND ABUNDANCE OF LIFE

The diversity and abundance of the little life forms that operate in leaf litter numbers in the many millions, including detritivores and fungi.

Focused Conservation Efforts Produce Results

Focused conservation efforts have already led to the successful recovery of three listed species. We attribute this to public-private-tribal collaborations.

Since 2012, three species that rely on oak and prairie habitats have been recovered and removed from the US Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Canada’s Species at Risk Act (SARA). Six additional species are on their way through downlisting.



Species	Past Status	Current Status
Golden Paintbrush	Endangered (US ESA)	✓ Recovered Removed from US Endangered Species Act in 2023
Bradshaw’s Lomatium	Endangered (US ESA)	✓ Recovered Removed from US Endangered Species Act in 2022
Nelson’s Checkermallow	Endangered (US ESA)	✓ Recovered Removed from US Endangered Species Act in 2023
Fender’s Blue Butterfly	Endangered (US ESA)	✓ Downlisted Reclassified as Threatened under US Endangered Species Act in 2023
White-topped Aster	Threatened (Canada SARA)	✓ Downlisted Removed as Candidate Species from US Endangered Species Act in 2012 ✓ Downlisted Reclassified as Species of Special Concern under Canada Species at Risk Act in 2011
Mardon Skipper	Candidate (US ESA)	✓ Downlisted Removed as Candidate Species from US Endangered Species Act in 2012
Common Nighthawk	Threatened (Canada SARA)	✓ Downlisted Reclassified as Species of Special Concern under Canada Species at Risk Act in 2023

By the Numbers

While tremendous progress has been made on species recovery, there is still work to do.



46 oak and prairie-associated species are listed as Threatened or Endangered at the Federal, State, or Provincial levels including:

19 listed under the US Endangered Species Act

10 listed under the Government of Canada's Species at Risk Act.

23 EXTIRPATED SPECIES



23 priority species are extirpated or near extirpated from at least one ecoregion in their historic ranges

>50 other species are vulnerable and at risk of continued decline to levels qualifying for listing as Threatened or Endangered

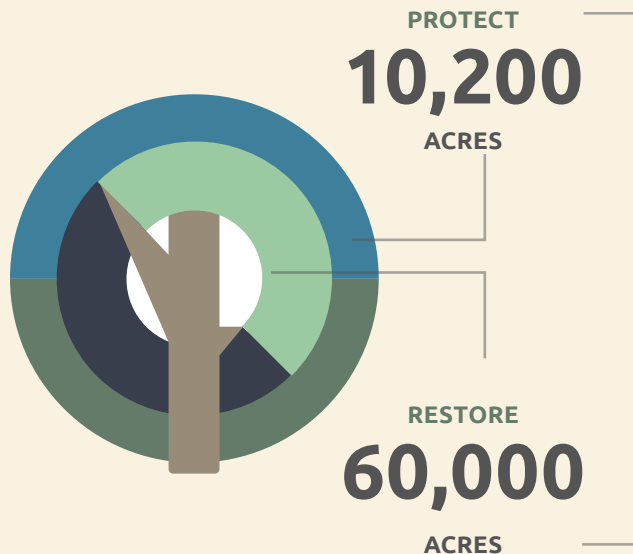


North Star

Goal:

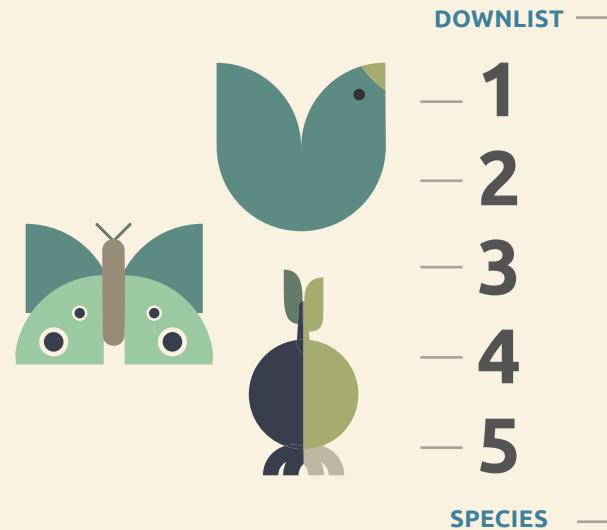
Our goal is to protect and rebuild healthy oak and prairie systems across the Pacific Northwest to sustain their important biological, cultural, and economic values.

The strategy described here defines the specific goal and outcomes for our collective work and estimates the dollar amounts needed for investment in oak and prairie protection, restoration, species recovery, and organization capacity building.



5
YEARS

We will protect 10,200 acres of at-risk oak and prairie habitat and restore 60,000 acres of degraded habitat over the next 5 years.



10
YEARS

We will downlist five imperiled species over the next 10 years and establish the ecological and social foundations to support their persistence over time.



We will effectively communicate the benefits and capacity needs of oak and prairie habitat restoration and conservation to build a broad collaborative community focusing its resources on ecological and community well-being.

North Star



Strategies

BUILD ecosystem and community resilience

- ✓ Create a network of public, private, and tribal conservation lands that sustain functioning ecosystems across the landscape.
- ✓ Create more fire-resilient communities and fire-adapted ecosystems.
- ✓ Increase forest and soil carbon capture and sequestration through ecosystem restoration.
- ✓ Maintain biodiversity by protecting the ecological structure and composition of native oak and prairie plant communities.
- ✓ Increase local agriculture viability by connecting grazing strategies and landowner needs with habitat management objectives.

RECONNECT people to oak and prairie

- ✓ Expand social, political, and financial support for conservation efforts.
- ✓ Help people connect to oak and prairie systems through recreation, education, stewardship, community science, and Indigenous lifeways.

INTEGRATE AND ADVANCE tribal priorities

- ✓ Support and contribute to tribally-led conservation initiatives.
- ✓ Expand tribal natural resource capacity including tribally-led restoration workforces and capacity for cultural burning.
- ✓ Integrate ecocultural stewardship, including Indigenous knowledge, into conservation practice.
- ✓ Increase tribal access to ancestral homelands and culturally important resources through ownership and management agreements.

Capacity Investments

Our theory of change identifies 6 capacity investments that are critical to healthy oak and prairie landscapes.

Theory of change

When we thoughtfully increase our targeted outreach and messaging efforts, we gain public, landowner, and decision maker support to fund and implement the strategies in this plan.

When we invest in building tribal, NGO, and agency capacity, increase our skilled workforce, and increase our restoration supply chain we have the ability to meet the demand of conservation at a lower cost. When we increase access to technical and financial assistance, landowners have the resources they need. Together, this results in a host of benefits for people and the landscape, including increased resiliency, biodiversity, strengthened local economies, resources, and health.

1

TARGETED,
MEANINGFUL
OUTREACH



2

USE SCIENCE
AND INDIGENOUS
KNOWLEDGE AS A
GUIDING TOOL



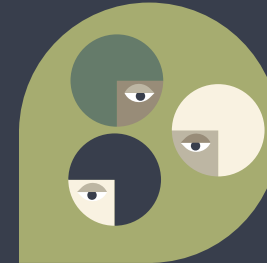
3

INCREASE TRIBE,
NGO, AND AGENCY
CAPACITY



4

BUILD CONSERVATION
WORKFORCE



5

STRENGTHEN
RESTORATION SUPPLY
CHAIN



6

INCREASE
LANDOWNER
INCENTIVES
AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE



Investment Strategy

The investment strategy developed as part of this plan is designed to focus resources on the highest-priority needs over the next 5 years. It also presents funding requests that can be realistically implemented within that time frame. It defines the baseline level of resources needed for conservation partnerships to operate effectively, secure funding, and coordinate and implement on-the-ground restoration work. We have thought very carefully about what is needed to achieve our goals and objectives, considered where those funds may originate based on existing and projected sources and programs, and sought to align funding with the projected capacity needed to implement conservation strategies.

Implementing this Investment Strategy will be the shared work of the oak and prairie partnerships, tribes, landowners, land trusts, agencies, and organizations. Restoring the function of this landscape comes at a price, but so too does catastrophic wildfire, fragmented landscapes, damaged soils, noxious weeds, and loss of biodiversity. The costs presented here are based on data from restoration professionals and conservation planners who have extensive experience developing budgets for on-the-ground project work.

Who will fund this?

One of the premises of this plan is that we need a holistic and innovative approach to financing oak and prairie conservation work. To achieve the outcomes envisioned in this plan, the cost of protecting and restoring resilient ecosystems can no longer be left to the realm of public dollars alone; conservation efforts must draw from a variety of public and private financing to be successful. We propose a diverse allocation of source funds as follows. These estimates are based on current and anticipated capacity within each sector based on new sources of funding and increased engagement as funders more clearly understand the benefits of investing in oak and prairie conservation.

What will this fund?

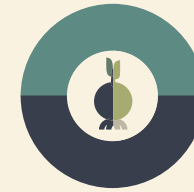
This plan organizes the work of restoring and protecting oak and prairie ecosystems into four main categories of conservation activities, all of which are essential to achieving our broad goal.



PROTECTION



RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP



SPECIES RECOVERY



CAPACITY AND COORDINATION

Core Conservation Activities

Core Conservation Activity	Definition and examples of sub-activities
Protection	Fee-title acquisitions of lands and conservation easements
Restoration and Stewardship	Restoration (ex. conifer removal, fuels reduction, tree and understory planting, weed control, prescribed fire) and ongoing stewardship (ex. agriculture best management practices, prescribed grazing)
Species Recovery	Native plant materials partnership coordination, species-specific research
Capacity and Coordination	Partnership coordination, tribal natural resource program capacity, tribal conservation priorities, access to ancestral lands, state and multi-state outreach, local engagement, and policy and program development

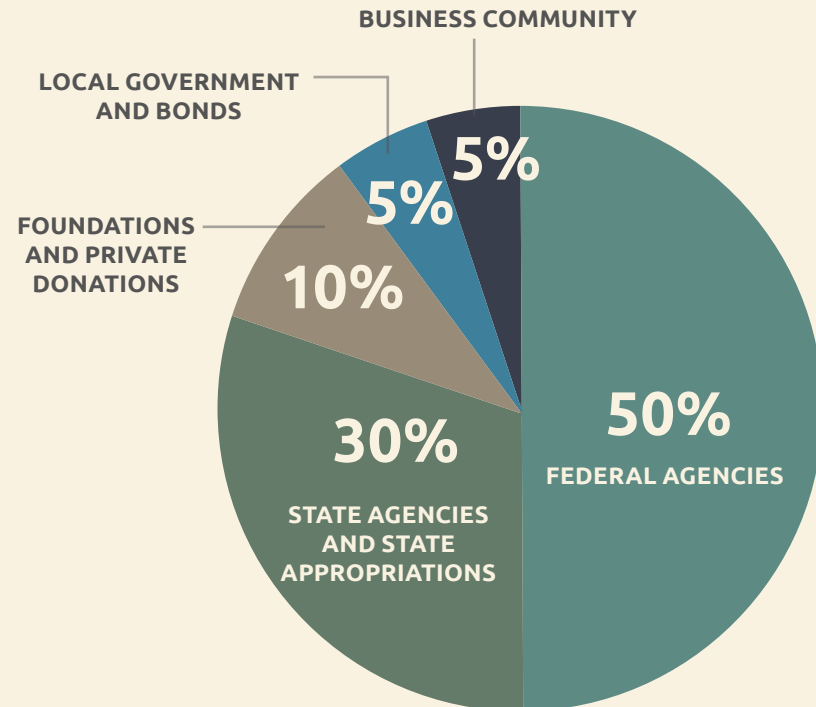
Investment Strategy

Proposed allocation of source funds based on current and projected flows of funding and investment priorities from different sectors.

Sector	Examples Include	Allocation
Federal Agencies	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, National initiatives, Recovering America's Wildlife Act, Farm Bill programs, and other funding through the National Resource Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other federal agencies, Land and Water Conservation Fund	50%
State agencies and state appropriations	Habitat and wildlife programs, fuels reduction and fire recovery, natural and working lands conservation programs, climate funding	30%
Foundations and Private Donations	Grant awards and philanthropic giving that align with habitat conservation and climate resilience	10%
Local government and bonds	Conservation district tax bases; local bond measures; partnerships with/ investments from recreation, tourism, and development sectors; issuance of green bonds	5%
Business community	Corporate Social Responsibility Programs, green financing, carbon markets, impact investing, and resiliency bonds	5%



Western Meadowlark Baskett Slough NWR.
Photo Credit: Jim Leonard



What We Can Get Done, Together.

The following estimates were generated in partnership with conservation practitioners and with input from individual organizations. **This budget reflects the annual level of funding needed by partners to achieve targets under each core conservation activity.**



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

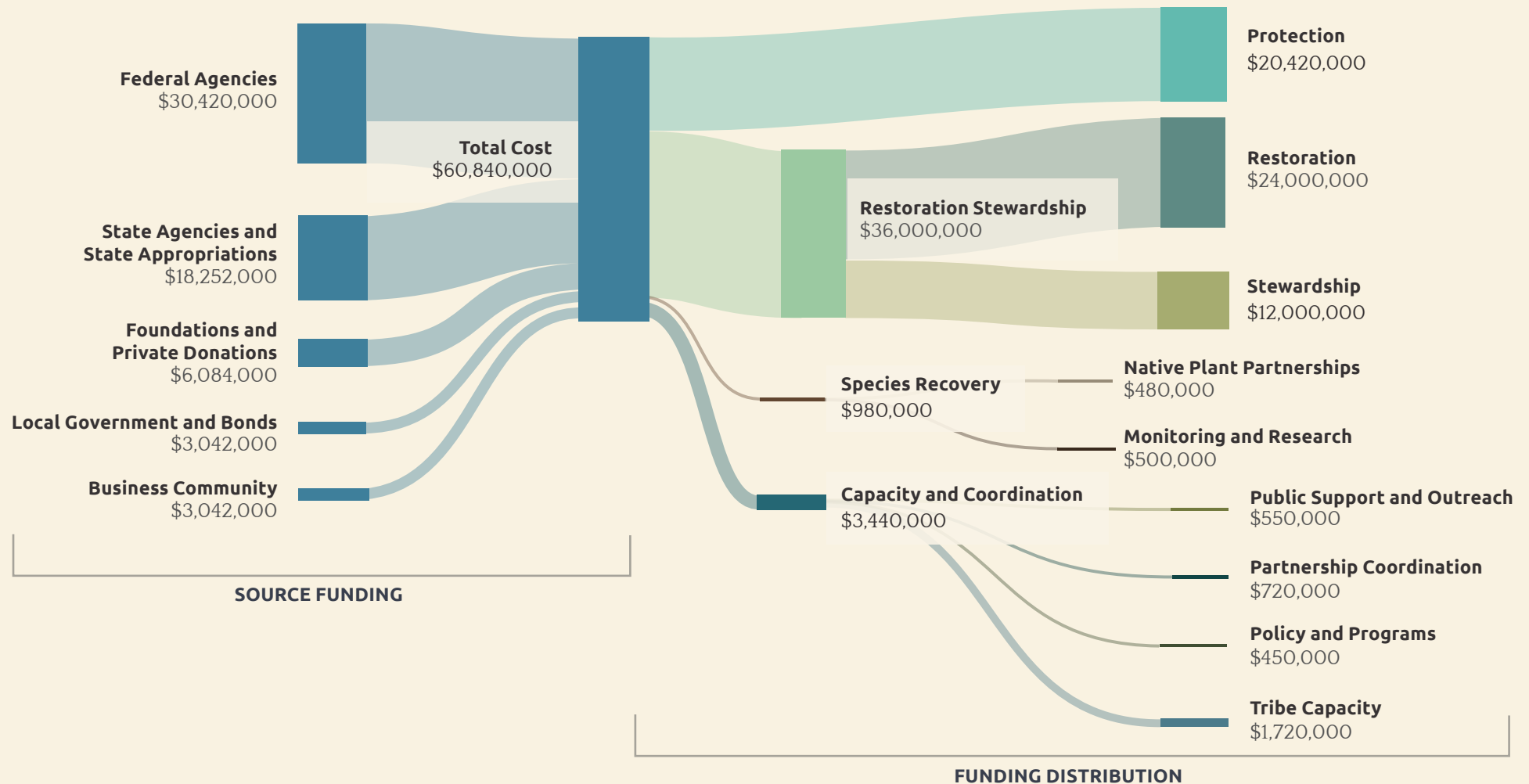
- Working Lands in Northern California. Working lands easements in Northern California are large and have enormous conservation potential. Partners are positioned to protect an additional 28,000 acres of oak rangeland across 66 ranches. Averaging \$10,000 per acre, working lands easements are cost-effective and will result in climate refugia, landscape-level connectivity, migratory corridors, and vast swaths of conserved habitat.
- Coastal Oak and Prairie in British Columbia. These properties may be small but as the northern extent of numerous species ranges, protecting and restoring these landscapes in B.C. could be a critical component of climate-smart conservation action. While costly, oak and prairie protection and restoration in British Columbia is critical to support neotropical migrants.

Core Conservation Activity	Cost per Year	Annual Targets and Definitions
Protection		
Tribes, First Nations, and Land Trusts	\$20,420,000	2,042 acres
Restoration and Stewardship		
Restoration	\$24 million	6,000 acres across 9 partnerships
Stewardship	\$12 million	6,000 acres across 9 partnerships
Species Recovery		
Native Plant Material Partnerships	\$480,000	\$80,000 for each of the 5 native plant materials partnerships for coordination
Species Monitoring	\$500,000	Identification of limiting factors to guide conservation actions
Capacity and Coordination		
Oak and Prairie Partnership Coordination	\$720,000	\$80,000 for each of the 9 oak and prairie partnerships for coordination
Tribe Natural Resource Capacity	\$720,000	\$80,000 for each of the 9 Tribes for Natural Resource staff capacity
Tribal Conservation Priorities	\$1,000,000	Flexible funding for tribes to advance priorities
State and Multi-State Outreach	\$100,000	Funded Year of the Oak Campaign
Local engagement	\$450,000	\$50,000 for each of the 9 partnerships to implement local outreach
Policy and program development	\$450,000	\$50,000 for each of the 9 partnerships to advance local policy and program development
Total	\$60,840,000	

What we can get done, together.

Annual Estimated Budget to Achieve Conservation Targets

One of the intended outcomes of this plan is to describe and make the case for the measurable and meaningful outcomes and co-benefits that result from investments in oak and prairie conservation. In addition to an increase in overall ecosystem health and protection of biodiversity, these investments will improve climate and wildfire resiliency, help protect critical cultural resources, help improve determinants of community health, and contribute to local economies.





Partnerships and Collaboration are Key

Since releasing the Plan in 2017, an increasing number of groups focused on oak and prairie conservation have invested thousands of partner hours in developing planning frameworks to support landscape-scale restoration. Together we are catalyzing proactive, voluntary, and community-led conservation.

As a result, across the Pacific Northwest, we are seeing unprecedented collaboration at the local level. Nine local partnerships, formalized through agreements, are engaging hundreds of organizations and many thousands of individuals to strategically advance conservation across public-private-tribal lands and leverage resources for a more rational and effective approach to oak and prairie conservation. These partnerships work at the multi-county scale to advance local conservation.

The oak and prairie partnerships are also working together beyond their individual borders. By pooling resources, coordinating throughout the ecoregion, sharing technical information, and generating consistent messaging on issues, we are leveraging opportunities that benefit from a shared voice and strength in numbers, through the Cascadia Prairie-Oak Partnership and the Pacific Northwest Oak Alliance.



Top: Acorn Woodpecker
Finley NWR. Credit:
Megan Nagel, USFWS

Bottom: Surveys in oak.
Credit: Jaime Stephens



Partnerships



Pacific Northwest Oak Alliance

The [Oak Alliance](#) envisions a united and dynamic coalition of public, private, and tribal partnerships transcending state boundaries. We strategically champion landscape-scale oak and prairie conservation, amplifying collective energy to build capacity, secure resources, inform policy, and garner widespread public support. Our vision is a future where these ecosystems play pivotal roles in fostering resilience, community well-being, biodiversity, wildlife populations, and economic vitality across the expansive Pacific Northwest. Led by Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture, the Oak Alliance functions as a collaboration.

Cascadia Prairie-Oak Partnership (CPOP)

Organized in 2010, [CPOP](#) is a community of people and organizations involved in prairie-oak conservation and species recovery efforts in western Cascadia, providing coordination for the technical prairie community in the Willamette Valley, Puget Trough, Georgia Basin ecoregion and beyond. CPOP serves as an information hub and improves outcomes by facilitating increased collaboration, idea sharing, and information transfer among the CPOP community. CPOP, which is led by Ecostudies Institute, provides a technical library, facilitates an active listserv with over 1000 people, workshops and working groups, and organizes a biannual conference that is the preeminent gathering for prairie-oak conservation individuals in the ecoregion and is accessible to all prairie-oak partnerships in the Pacific Northwest.



Top: Baby Oak Credit Sara Evans-Peters

Bottom: William L Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Credit: George Gentry USFWS



Partnerships



Native Plant Partnerships

Native Plant Partnerships work together through public-private partnerships to increase the availability of high-quality, climate-adapted native plants for understory planting, strengthening the restoration supply chain. New investment in oak and prairie restoration requires that we fill a significant gap in the restoration supply chain: the production and distribution of native plants and seeds for habitat restoration and invasive species control.

- Willamette Valley Native Plant Partnership
- Rogue Native Plant Partnership
- Umpqua Native Plant Partnership
- Columbia River Gorge Native Plant Partnership
- South Sound Prairie Partners
- British Columbia's Garry Oak Biobank Project

Species Working Groups

Species Working Groups are forums for partners to exchange information, promote science-based decision-making, and discuss and prioritize recovery actions for imperiled species.

- Oregon Vesper Sparrow
- Mazama Pocket Gopher
- Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly
- Oregon silverspot Butterfly
- Island Marble Butterfly
- Streaked-horned Lark



Top: Golden Paintbrush
Photo Credit: Mosa Neis
Pacific Rim Institute

Bottom: Taylors checkerspot butterfly, as seen on a flower at Joint Base.
Credit: Lewis McChord
USFWS D Grosboll



Partnerships



California Oaks Coalition

California Oaks works to conserve and perpetuate native oak woodlands and oak-forested lands, California's primary old-growth resource in partnership with members of California Oaks Coalition - 78 local, tribal, regional, state, national, and international organizations united by the vital role of oaks in sustaining ecosystem and cultural values. California Oaks supports the coalition through research and advocacy, project collaboration, public and agency education and outreach, and by sharing stories from coalition efforts to keep oaks standing.

Global Conservation Consortium for Oak

The Global Conservation Consortium for Oak (GCCO) brings together the world's oak experts, conservationists, and the botanic garden community to ensure that no wild species of oak becomes extinct and ensure healthy oak species and populations for the future. Led by the Morton Arboretum in collaboration with BGCI and dozens of other partners, the goal of the GCCO is to mobilize a coordinated network of institutions and experts who work collaboratively to develop and implement a comprehensive conservation strategy to prevent the extinction of the world's oak species.



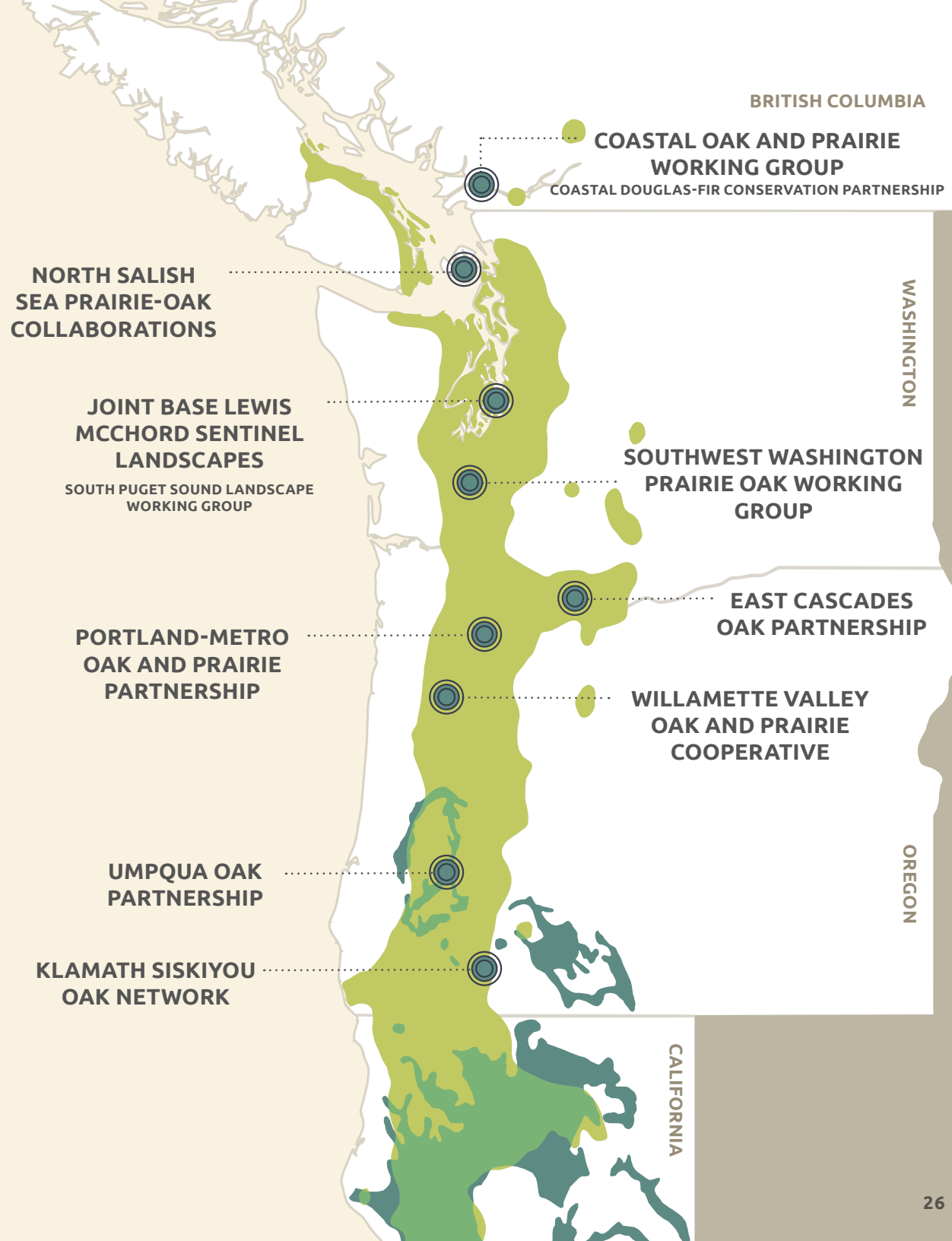
Top: Western Bluebird
Baskett Slough NWR.
Credit: Jim Leonard
Bottom: Camas in flower
at William L Finley NWR.
Credit: George Gentry
USFWS

Partnerships



Partnerships are the backbone to this strategy and the mechanism to get work done.

- WHITE OAK REGION
- BLACK OAK REGION
- BOTH WHITE OAK & BLACK OAK REGIONS





Landmark Investments

Long-term investments: Several agencies have committed to long-term, ongoing support of oak and prairie conservation.

\$46.5
MILLION

8,494
PERMANENTLY
CONSERVED
ACRES

1. OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
\$46.5 MILLION = 8,494 PERMANENTLY CONSERVED ACRES

Since 2011, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program has administered \$46.5 million of Bonneville Power Administration wildlife mitigation funds for the acquisition of 8,494 acres of oak woodland, oak savanna, and prairie habitat, critical habitat in the Willamette Valley, Oregon.

\$13.6
MILLION

227
LANDOWNERS
ENROLLED

2. NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE
\$13.6 M = 227 LANDOWNERS ENROLLED

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing in oak restoration on private lands across Western Oregon through strategic deployment of Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funds and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Since 2020, \$13,647,500 has been invested in Oregon through these programs for oak restoration resulting in 227 contracts with landowners.

**LAND
PROTECTION
PLAN**

22,650
ACRES

3. USFWS REFUGES
22,650 ACRES

In 2023, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with the Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative, created the Willamette Valley Conservation Area in accordance with the Willamette Valley Land Protection Plan. This gives the USFWS authority to work with willing landowners to permanently protect up to 22,650 acres of grasslands and oak woodlands, expanding the Willamette Valley National Refuge Complex.

\$5.5
MILLION

5
URBAN
ACQUISITIONS

4. METRO, PARKS AND NATURE
5.5M = 5 URBAN ACQUISITIONS

Since 2020, Metro has invested \$4,673,700 into the acquisition of 275 acres across 5 properties in the greater Portland, Oregon region. These properties increase public access to nature and provide a multitude of benefits in an urban area, providing space for people to experience nature in their own backyards. Thanks to voters, a new parks and nature bond will provide up to \$155 million for Metro to purchase natural areas from willing sellers and for large-scale restoration projects, many of which will be oak and prairie focused.



Landmark Investments

Regional Investments: Since 2020 landmark funds totaling \$52,600,000 have been invested into oak and prairie conservation, along with \$52,000,000 in partner funds leveraged, resulting in the protection of 26,000 acres and the restoration of over 34,000 acres.

Project	Investment	Funds Leveraged	Acres Protected	Acres Restored	Source	Where
Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network - Little Butte Oak Initiative	\$7,000,000	\$3,000,000	0	2,480	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board	Rogue Basin, OR
East Cascades Oak Partnership	\$7,200,000	\$13,800,000	15,000	17,000	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board	Wasco County, OR
Joint Base Lewis McCord Sentinel Landscapes	\$7,000,000	\$10,800,000	4,411	670	Department of Defense - REPI	South Sound, WA
Oregon Agricultural Trust: Restoring, Protecting, and Supporting Tribal Connection to Native Oak Habitat	\$9,200,000	\$6,665,941	1,200	1,281	Natural Resource Conservation Service - RCPP	Willamette Valley, OR
Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network - Upper Rogue Initiative	\$2,800,000	\$2,800,000	0	800	USFWS - America the Beautiful Challenge	Rogue Basin, OR
Yakama Nation - Healing Lands	\$2,500,000	\$3,600,000	2887	1,540	USFWS - America the Beautiful Challenge	Yakama Nation, WA
Mount Adams Resource Stewards West Klickitat County Wildfire Defense Project	\$5,518,000	\$0	0	1,744	USFS - Community Wildfire Defense Grant	Mt. Adams Foothills, WA
Central and North Wasco Joint Chiefs Restoration Partnership	\$2,700,000	\$612,114	0	993	USFS - Community Wildfire Defense Grant	Yakama Nation, WA
Central and North Wasco Joint Chiefs Restoration Partnership	\$4,400,000	\$7,200,000	0	7,888	USFW - Joint Chiefs - Central Wasco	Wasco County, OR
Columbia Land Trust - Klickitat Oaks Phase 1	\$4,300,000	\$4,400,000	2,666	0	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program	Klickitat, WA



Prairie, Oaks, and People

Call to Action

By investing in the conservation and restoration of oak and prairie ecosystems, we can safeguard vital habitats, preserve cultural values, and bolster community resilience against climate change. Your funding, advocacy, and action are crucial to achieving our annual goal of protecting over 10,200 acres and restoring more than 60,000 acres.

What role will you play in supporting this initiative to make a lasting impact?

Visit oakalliance.org/takeaction to learn what you can do.

Regulatory Status of Oak and Prairie Dependent Species

Oak and prairie-dependent regulatory species listed by US Fish and Wildlife Service as Threatened or Endangered under the Endangered Species Act, by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada as Threatened or Endangered under the Species at Risk Act, by a US State Agency authority as Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate, and/or listed by the Province of British Columbia as Blue or Red Species of Concern.

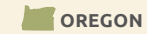
KEY: ENDANGERED THREATENED CANDIDATE RED BLUE

Species	U.S. FEDERAL	CANADA SPECIES AT RISK	CALIFORNIA	WASHINGTON	OREGON	BRITISH COLUMBIA
MAMMALS						
Mazama Pocket Gopher	T			T		
Columbian White-tailed Deer	T			T		
Western Gray Squirrel				E		
BIRDS						
Streaked Horned Lark	T	E		E		RED
Oregon Vesper Sparrow		E		E		RED
Lewis's Woodpecker		T				BLUE
HERPTILES						
Western Pond Turtle	T			E		RED
Pacific Gopher Snake						RED
Sharp-tailed Snake		T		C		
BUTTERFLIES						
Taylor's Checkerspot	E	E				RED
Fender's Blue	T			E		
Island Marble	E			C		RED
Island Blue		E				RED
Mardon Skipper				E		
Puget Blue				C		BLUE
Valley Silverspot				C		RED
INVERTEBRATES						
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp	T					

Species

U.S. FEDERAL

CANADA SPECIES AT RISK



PLANTS						
Willamette Daisy	E				E	
Bradshaw's Lomatium				E	E	
Golden Paintbrush		E		T	E	
Kincaid's Lupine	T			E	T	RED
Nelson's Checkermallow				E	T	
Deltoid Balsamroot		E				
Fragrant Popcornflower		E			C	RED
White-topped Aster		C			T	BLUE
Small-flowered Tonella		E				BLUE
Yellow Montane Violet		E				RED
Gentner's Fritillaria	E				E	
Large-flowered Wolly Meadow-foam	E				E	
Cook's Lomatium	E				E	
Rough Popcorn Flower	E				E	
Shaggy Horkelia					C	
Pale Larkspur				E	E	
Willamette Valley Larkspur					T	
Peacock Larkspur					E	
White Meconella		E		E	C	RED
Marigold Navarretia				T		
Thin leaved peavine (Lathyrus holochlorus)					E	
Hitchcock's blue-eyed grass					E	
Clara Hunt's milkvetch	E			E		
Ashland thistle				E		
Vine Hill clarkia	E			E		
Roderick's fritillary				E		
Marin western flax	T			T		
Santa Cruz tarplant	T			E		
Baker's meadowfoam				E		
Keck's checkerbloom	E					
Two-fork clover	E					

Oak and Prairie Dependent Priority Species and Breeding Range Occurrence

Priority Species include oak and prairie dependent regulatory species defined in Table 1 and breeding strategy species, sensitive species, or species of Greatest Conservation Need by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, by the Province of British Columbia, and/or identified as imperiled in the Partners in Flight Population and Habitat Objectives for Landbirds in Prairie, Oak, and Riparian Habitats of Western Oregon and Washington and/or Conservation of Landbirds and Associated Habitats and Ecosystems in the East Cascade Mountains of OR and WA and/or as a priority species from the Western Forest Initiative Data Synthesis: Northern Pacific Rainforest Bird Conservation Region Priority Birds derived from the Avian Conservation Assessment Database.

KEY: EXTIRPATED IMPERILED OCCURS

*Blank cells indicate range generally does not include this ecoregion.

Species

	BRITISH COLUMBIA	PUGET SOUND		COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE	WILLAMETTE VALLEY		KLAMATH MOUNTAINS		NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
	GEORGIA DEPRESSION	NORTH PUGET LOWLANDS	SOUTH PUGET LOWLANDS	EAST CASCADES	NORTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY	SOUTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY	UMPQUA	ROGUE	KLAMATH AND NORTH COAST
BIRDS									
Acorn Woodpecker					O	O	O	O	O
Ash-throated Flycatcher				O	O	O	O	O	O
Bell's Sparrow (belli)									O
Black-throated Gray Warbler	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Cassin's Vireo	O			O		O	O	O	O
Chipping Sparrow	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Common Nighthawk	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Golden Eagle	O			O				O	O
Grasshopper Sparrow				O	O			O	O
Lark Sparrow				O			E	O	O
Lewis's Woodpecker	E	E	E	O	E	E	E	E	
Loggerhead shrike				O					O
Northern Harrier	O	O	O	O	O				O
Oak Titmouse								O	O
Vesper Sparrow (affinis)	E	I	I		I	I	O	I	E
Purple Finch	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Short-eared owl				O					
Horned Lark (strigata)	E	I	I		I	I	E	E	
Western Bluebird	E	I	I	O	O	O	O	O	O
Western Meadowlark	E	I	I	O	O	O	O	O	O
Western Screech Owl	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Western Wood-Pewee	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
White-breasted Nuthatch (aculeata)			I		O	O	O	O	O
White-tailed kite					O	O	O	O	O

KEY: EXTIRPATED IMPERILED OCCURS

*Blank cells indicate range generally does not include this ecoregion.

Species

	GEORGIA DEPRESSION	NORTH PUGET LOWLANDS	SOUTH PUGET LOWLANDS	EAST CASCADES	NORTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY	SOUTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY	UMPQUA	ROGUE	KLAMATH AND NORTH COAST
BUTTERFLIES									
Dog Star Skipper			O		O				
Fender's Blue					O	O			
Hoary Elfin (Puget Sound segregate)			O						
Island Marble	E	O							
Island Blue	E								
Mardon Skipper			O	O				O	O
Oregon Branded Skipper (Salish Sea segregate)		O	O						
Propertius Duskywing	O	O	O		O	O	O	O	O
Puget Blue	O	E	O						
Puget Sound Fritillary		O	O		O	O			
Taylor's Checkerspot	O	O	O		E	O			
Valley Silverspot	O	O	O	O	E	E			
HERPTILES									
Western Pond Turtle	E	E	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Pacific Gopher Snake	E	E	E	O	O	O	O	O	O
Sharp-tailed Snake	O	E	E	O	O	O	O	O	O
California Mountain Kingsnake				E			O	O	O
INVERTEBRATES									
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp							O	O	O
MAMMALS									
Mazama Pocket Gopher			O						
Columbian White-tailed Deer					O		O		
Western Gray Squirrel			O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Species

	GEORGIA DEPRESSION	NORTH PUGET LOWLANDS	SOUTH PUGET LOWLANDS	EAST CASCADES	NORTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY	SOUTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY	UMPQUA	ROGUE	KLAMATH AND NORTH COAST
PLANTS									
Willamette Daisy					E	O			
Bradshaws Lomatium	E	E	E		E	O			
Golden Paintbrush	O	O	O		O	O			
Kincaid's Lupine	E	E	E		O	O	O		
Nelson's Checkermallow			O		O	O			
Deltoid Balsamroot	O	O	O	O	O	O		O	
Fragrant Popcornflower	O	O	O	O	O	O			
White-topped Aster	O	O	O		E	O			O
Small-flowered Tonella	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Yellow Montane Violet	O	O	O		O	O	O	O	O
Gentner's Fritillaria								O	
Large-flowered Wolly Meadow-foam								O	
Cook's Lomatium								O	
Rough Popcorn Flower							O		
Pale Larkspur			E		O				
Willamette Valley Larkspur					O	O			
Peacock Larkspur						O			
Shaggy Horkelia					O	O	O		
White Meconella	O	O	O	E	O	O	O	O	
Marigold Navarretia				E	O	O	O	O	
Thin leaved peavine					O	O	E		
Hitchcock's blue-eyed grass						O	O	O	
Clara Hunt's milkvetch									O
Ashland thistle								O	O
Vine Hill clarkia									O
Roderick's fritillary									O
Marin western flax									O
Santa Cruz tarplant									O
Baker's meadowfoam									O
Keck's checkerbloom									O
Two-fork clover									



Cover:

Left: Garry Oak and Camas Meadow Credit: Alanah Nasadyk Creative Commons

Right: White-breasted Nuthatch Credit: N. Lewis National Parks Service

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