

Decade of the Oak Campaign Strategy

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**Pacific Northwest
Oak Alliance**



DECADE
OF THE
oak

Introduction

The Decade of the Oak is a decade-long, grassroots outreach initiative to build awareness and support for oak conservation by connecting individuals with their communities and local landscapes. The campaign highlights the ecological, cultural, and economic importance of oak habitats and spans from British Columbia to northern California.

Decade of the Oak is led by the [Pacific Northwest Oak Alliance](#), a collaborative of partners with a shared commitment to oak and prairie conservation. The Oak Alliance includes nine voluntary regional partnerships comprising of local, state, and federal agencies, Tribes and First Nations, conservation nonprofits, and research organizations. It is spearheaded by [Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture](#).

This campaign strategy document, alongside the [digital communications toolkit](#), is intended to support outreach, engagement, and communications with potential and existing partners, communities, and participants. It provides language to guide messaging and make participation in Decade of the Oak a success.

Campaign Goal

The **overarching goal** of the Decade of the Oak is to educate, engage, and inspire people across the Pacific Northwest to value, care for, and restore oak landscapes.

Campaign Taglines

- Oaks on Common Ground
- Growing the Next Generation of Oaks and Oak Stewards

Core Activities

The Decade of the Oak is a collaborative effort, and a chance for partner organizations to directly engage their communities around the protection, restoration, and value of oak trees and oak habitat. Core activities include:

- **Amplifying** partner efforts to protect and restore oak habitats.
- **Sharing** inspiring success stories from landowners and communities.
- **Hosting** engaging, inclusive events that reach diverse audiences.
- **Providing** accessible educational resources about oak ecosystems and conservation programs.
- **Connecting** with communities, funders, policymakers, and businesses to share the benefits of oak conservation for communities, the climate, and ecosystems.

Success Outcomes

- **Community Engagement:** Public recognition and engagement with oak conservation grows across the region. Participation increases in oak-focused events, storytelling campaigns, volunteer opportunities, and educational activities, helping to cultivate a new generation of oak stewards.
- **Program and Policy Influence:** Public agencies, Tribes and First Nations, and elected officials increasingly recognize the importance of oak ecosystems, resulting in stronger policy support, increased public funding, and alignment of conservation programs that prioritize oak and oak habitat restoration.

- **Stewardship Support and Landowner Action:** Landowners, land managers, and communities gain greater access to the knowledge, technical assistance, partnerships, and financial resources needed to care for oak habitats, resulting in increased stewardship and restoration across private and working lands.

Key Resources

Campaign Webpage

The Decade of the Oak campaign webpage is hosted on the Pacific Northwest Oak Alliance website: oakalliance.org/about-pnoa/decade-of-the-oak.

You can also access this page via the following hyperlink: bit.ly/DecadeOfTheOak.

Partners are welcome to share information about upcoming [oak-related events](#) through this website, as well as suggest additional resources, guidelines, and materials for the communications toolkit.

Communications Toolkit

The Decade of the Oak webpage is intended to be a centralized campaign landing page and includes a communications toolkit. Here, you can download files for branded logos, stickers, QR codes, one-pagers, and infographics. There is also information about the campaign fonts and colors.

We encourage you to incorporate these resources into your own websites, social media, events, and other channels to build momentum for Decade of the Oak. For example, you can stamp your infographics and images with the Decade of the Oak logo. Cohesive branding and messaging will unify this campaign across our organizations and regions.

Social Media Accounts

One way to engage and connect to key audiences is through the Decade of the Oak social media and through partner-affiliated social media. Decade of the Oak has an Instagram account ([instagram.com/decadeoftheoak](https://www.instagram.com/decadeoftheoak)) and a Facebook page ([facebook.com/decadeoftheoak](https://www.facebook.com/decadeoftheoak)). We will use these accounts to showcase hopeful and compelling content including:

- Restoration and conservation efforts
- Upcoming oak-related events
- Tools and resources

Through social media, we can share photos of your events and projects, the people participating in them, and the beautiful oak landscapes that the campaign celebrates. **We hope that the campaign itself will generate interest and enthusiasm and that by sharing our work through centralized platforms, we can amplify our collective impact and reach more people than our individual groups normally would.**

Decade of the Oak is meant to be a collaborative effort between all participants, so you are welcome to suggest social media content for the campaign's Instagram and Facebook pages. You can also tag these accounts or use the #DecadeOfTheOak hashtag and we will reshare your content. Tagging us and using the hashtag will also help us gather data about our audience, reach, and impact. You are encouraged to work together to celebrate each one another's work and amplify each other's content through your own accounts as well.

Topline Messages and Talking Points

Why Decade of the Oak?

The Decade of the Oak is a celebration of the oak landscapes that shape communities across the Pacific Northwest and provide critical habitat for a myriad of species. It recognizes the beauty, history, and shared value of these places - from the lone oak shading a backyard to the sweeping savannas and woodlands that define our regional landscapes. It is also a call to action to help save and restore these important ecosystems.

For hundreds of years, these remarkable trees have been part of the places where people live, farm, gather, and recreate. Today, the majority of the Pacific Northwest's population lives within the oak landscape regions. As communities have grown and land uses have changed, many of these open meadows, tree-dotted savannas, and oak woodlands have gradually disappeared. Because of this, oak landscapes are now considered one of the region's highest conservation priorities.

The Decade of the Oak campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of these landscapes and to inspire people to care for them. By connecting individuals, communities, partners, and organizations, the campaign seeks to build broad public appreciation and support for the stewardship, policies, and investments needed to sustain oak landscapes for generations to come.

Elevator Pitch

The Decade of the Oak is a regional campaign that celebrates the oak landscapes of the Pacific Northwest and connects people, communities, and partners to the investment and stewardship needed to sustain them for generations to come.

Talking Points

General Information

- There are six main oak species in the Pacific Northwest, including Oregon White Oak, California Black Oak, Canyon Live Oak, Tanoak, Valley Oak, and Brewers Oak.
 - Oregon White Oak is the most common and widespread in Oregon and Washington.
- Oak trees are found throughout the Pacific Northwest. But oak and prairie habitats currently span only 10% percent of their historic range from British Columbia to northern California.
 - In British Columbia, less than 5% of oak and prairie habitat remains in fragmented patches.
 - In Washington, prairies are rare ecosystems. with only 3% of historic prairies remaining.
 - In Oregon, an estimated 25% of historic oak habitat remains, and only 1% of native prairies.
 - In California, a third of oak woodlands and forests have been lost to agriculture and urban development.
- Oaks are slow-growing species, so keeping existing trees healthy is key to thriving oak ecosystems.
 - Oregon white oaks are some of the longest-living species in the world.
 - A single oak can live to be up to 500 years old.
 - It can take 100 to 200 years to regrow an oak woodland.
- Anyone can become an oak steward and participate in the Decade of the Oak.

Climate Resiliency

- Oaks can tolerate a wide range of conditions and are naturally drought-tolerant and heat-tolerant, making them a climate-friendly and community-friendly species.
- Oak trees can establish in hot, dry places and offer shade to people, wildlife, and understory in areas that would otherwise be treeless.
- Oak-prairie ecosystems are effective carbon sinks, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.
 - Oaks have large tap roots that store carbon underground. If a severe fire consumes the tree, these tap roots allow the tree to recover quickly, continuing to sequester carbon and provide habitat almost immediately following a fire.
 - Oak-associated bunchgrasses grow deep, bulky roots that store carbon underground while also leaving space for flowering plants to grow between.

Wildfire Resiliency

- Stewardship practices that benefit oak ecosystems result in a lower risk of high-intensity wildfires, protecting people, property, and critical infrastructure.
- Oak ecosystems are naturally adapted to regular, low-intensity fire.
 - Because of their thick, furrowed bark, large oaks are resistant to burning by fire.
 - Oak leaf litter does not carry fire well compared to other species, which helps to slow or prevent the spread of wildfires.
 - Unlike other trees, oaks can often tolerate intensifying wildfires, continuing to provide habitat value where other trees may perish.
- 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.

Economic and Landowner Benefits

- Most of the remaining oak habitat exists on private lands, making small landowners especially important to preserve, protect and restore these important landscapes.
- A well-managed oak woodland is great for landowners concerned about wildfire.
- Oregon white oak woodlands and their understory full of forbs and wildflowers provide beautiful scenic viewsheds that are foundational to a tourism economy and help to increase property values.
- Many oak and prairie dependent species can persist on landscapes that support livestock grazing, commercial forestry, hunting, and other relatively low-intensity human uses. In turn, oak habitat supports working lands by enhancing soil health and water retention and by providing diverse forage.
- Oak landscapes also support valued recreation opportunities like hiking, biking, birding, and hunting.

Community Benefits

- Oaks are a culturally important species. Before settlement and colonization, native people of the Pacific Northwest commonly used fire to manage oak and prairie systems to create conditions that provided them with needed resources, including First Foods like acorns and camas bulbs.
- Prairie-oak landscapes are part of the ancestral homes of many tribes in Oregon, and the health of these systems remains an integral part of their cultural identity.

Ecosystem Benefits

- Oaks act as a keystone species, providing biologically rich habitat for over 300 wildlife species, including insects, birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, plants, mosses, and lichens.
- Even a single oak can provide critical habitat for many species because of their unique ability to be wildlife habitat islands in areas where habitat is scarce, such as in fields, rangelands, and forest edges.
- 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) thanks to collaborative efforts to restore and protect these habitats.
- However, 46 oak and prairie-associated species are listed as Threatened or Endangered at the Federal, State, or Provincial levels.

Objectives, Target Audiences, Outcomes, and Strategies

Objective 1: Increase Public Awareness of and Care for Oaks

Target Audiences

- Homeowners, small-acreage landowners, community members, urban residents, youth, recreationists, and park visitors.

Success Outcomes

- Broadened public awareness and engagement, demonstrated by increased acorn collection and oak planting events, volunteer activities, and local conservation efforts.
- Increased understanding and support of land management practices that support oak habitat restoration.

Strategies and Actions

- Share diverse stories about oaks (including private lands, city parks, and neighborhoods) in media, print, and online to inspire personal connections.
- Encourage small, impactful actions such as planting oaks or caring for oak landscapes.
- Develop and share educational materials that highlight the cultural heritage, ecosystem, economic, and climate resilience benefits of oak landscapes.
- Use relatable storytelling and diverse social media campaigns to connect with people.
- Host inclusive events and activities accessible to a wide range of participants.
- Develop educational materials and messaging that connect pre-wildfire restoration and post-wildfire recovery with oak restoration.
- Work with partners to expand audiences and develop shared strategies and tools for outreach.

Objective 2: Engage Decision-Makers to Elevate Oak Landscapes as a Regional Priority

Target Audiences

- Legislators, agency leaders, land use planners, and local elected officials

Success Outcomes

- Policymakers and agencies increasingly recognize and support programs and policies that sustain oak landscapes.

Strategies and Actions

- Promote the [Prairie, Oaks, and People Investment Strategy](#) through shared messaging.
- Host events, field visits, and community gatherings that provide opportunities for policymakers to learn about oak landscapes and engage with local partners and communities.
- Highlight supportive policymakers and community leaders in outreach materials to build visibility and momentum around oak conservation.
- Provide the public with information and tools to help them share their perspectives with decision-makers about the importance of oak landscapes, prescribed fire, and related conservation programs.

- Develop messaging and outreach that demonstrate the strong interest of communities, landowners, and partners in participating in oak stewardship and restoration efforts.

Objective 3: Increase Private Funding Opportunities for Oak Conservation

Target Audiences

- Donors, foundations, and businesses.

Success Outcomes

- Increased private funding investment supporting oak conservation efforts.

Strategies and Actions

- Promote the [Prairie, Oaks, and People Investment Strategy](#) through shared messaging.
- Develop clear opportunities for private investment in oak conservation, such as restoration projects, community programs, monitoring efforts, and regional partnership initiatives.
- Use storytelling to connect private funding with tangible benefits for communities, working lands, and landscapes.
- Create opportunities to recognize and celebrate businesses and donors that contribute to oak conservation.
- Build partnerships with local businesses to support and promote conservation efforts.
- Target activities and messaging to show the readiness of the conservation community to act.
- Highlight industries, land uses, and business practices that are compatible with and benefit oak conservation.

Objective 4: Increase Public Investment and Program Support for Oak Conservation

Target Audiences

- State and federal agencies, agricultural and forestry groups, fire programs, policymakers, tribal programs, and landowners participating in programs.

Success Outcomes

- Increased public financial incentives and compatible economic development opportunities for landowners and landowners enrolled in these programs, leading to measurable conservation outcomes on private lands.

Strategies and Actions

- Highlight stories and examples of landowners, Tribes, agencies, and community partners successfully stewarding oak landscapes.
- Showcase how oak stewardship supports broader regional priorities such as wildfire resilience, working lands, cultural resources, and climate adaptation.
- Highlight public programs, incentives, and technical assistance opportunities that support oak-friendly practices on working and private lands.

- Share place-based examples that demonstrate how public investments in oak landscapes benefit communities, working lands, and ecosystems.

Objective 5: Strengthen the Regional Oak Conservation Network

Target Audiences

- Regional oak partnerships, conservation organizations, Tribal Nations and First Nations, agencies, researchers, and community partners.

Success Outcomes

- Stronger collaboration and community among partners working on oak conservation across the region.
- Increased visibility of oak stewardship and restoration efforts occurring across the Pacific Northwest.
- A shared platform that demonstrates the breadth of people, communities, and organizations engaged in oak conservation.

Strategies and Actions

- Create opportunities for partners across the region to connect, share lessons learned, and highlight their work.
- Develop shared messaging, campaign materials, and storytelling tools that partners can use in their local outreach.
- Establish shared campaign hashtags and social media platforms where partners can post stories, photos, and updates about oak stewardship and restoration.
- Curate and amplify partner stories across campaign channels to showcase the diversity of projects, communities, and landscapes involved in oak conservation.
- Use campaign platforms to demonstrate the scale of the regional effort — highlighting the many organizations, communities, and restoration projects contributing to oak conservation.
- Create a simple online hub or repository that brings together partner stories, events, and project highlights from across the region.