

The Inside Story on Protecting Nature in

Oregon



Nestled in rolling hills west of McMinnville, Yamhill Oaks Preserve's native prairie and oak woodlands compose the northern Willamette Valley's first-ever protected area for the endangered Fender's blue butterfly. © Rick McEwan

Conservancy announces first preserve in Yamhill County

The new 272-acre Yamhill Oaks Preserve will protect oak and prairie—helping safeguard fish and wildlife habitats increasingly at risk in the Willamette Valley.

Greg Fitzpatrick learned—quite quickly—that he needs to keep a pair of rubber boots in his work truck. Fitzpatrick, a land steward for the Conservancy, manages five preserves in the Willamette Valley. But the new Yamhill Oaks Preserve is the first one that has a large stream. And no bridge.

Deer Creek, a tributary to the Yamhill River and important habitat for fish and other wildlife, runs through preserve. Healthy populations of the endangered Fender's blue butterfly and its host plant, the Kincaid's lupine, are also found here—across the stream.

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Special Insert:

2009 natural history excursions

Oregon in a changing world

Dear Friend,

As our climate warms, Oregonians are wondering: How will we be affected? What can we do to make a difference? In the conservation community we're asking those same questions.

Most discussion of the problem is about how to stem carbon emissions and slow the warming. The Nature Conservancy supports national legislation designed to reduce emissions. And in Oregon, we're proud that our state is ahead of most others in adopting ambitious emission reduction targets.

But there's an equally critical challenge for conservation. How do we adapt to changes already underway? How do we help fish, wildlife and ecosystems thrive in a warmer world? Some examples:

- ◆ At higher elevations such as the Cascade Range, precipitation will fall less as snow and more as rain. Runoff will occur faster and many seasonal wetlands will dry sooner. Protecting stream flows, floodplains and wetlands in key places will help avert impacts on fish, wildlife and downstream users.

- ◆ Some species may survive only by moving northward or up slope. Protecting a strategic network of natural corridors and buffer areas will help accommodate these shifts.

- ◆ Many of Oregon's forests will be drier and more susceptible to unnaturally severe fire and pests. Restoring millions of acres with mechanical thinning and prescribed fire will make our forests more resilient.

- ◆ Rising sea levels will drive coastal marshes further inland. We'll need to invest in new protected areas positioned to absorb future changes.

Protecting land and restoring habitats—the work we do every day—is key to helping species and natural communities adapt to climate change. But more research is needed to tell us where the risks are greatest and what conservation actions will be most strategic.

As a member of Oregon's Global Warming Commission, I can assure you Oregonians across our state are not only ambitious to curb emissions but also anxious to tackle the challenges of adaptation. One thing is certain: protecting the Oregon we love in a changing world will require significant resources, hard work and a lot of collaboration. I'm proud that the Conservancy and all our members are part of the solution.



Russell Hoeflich
Vice President and Oregon Director

For conservation strategies to deal with global warming, visit nature.org/climatechange. For Oregon's roadmap to address global warming, go to www.oregon.gov/energy/gblwrm/gwc/.

... Yamhill Oaks Preserve



In addition to prime oak and prairie habitats, the new Yamhill Oaks Preserve includes 1.5 miles of stream habitats important to fish and wildlife in the headwaters of Deer Creek, a tributary to the Yamhill River. © Rick McEwan

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Yamhill Oaks, the Conservancy's newest preserve announced in June, provides the first protected reserve for the butterfly in the northern Willamette Valley.

"We are thrilled to have a new preserve in the Willamette Valley," said Jonathan Soll, Willamette Basin conservation director for the Conservancy. "As recently as 150 years ago, prairie and oak savanna covered most of the Willamette Valley; today less than two percent of those habitats remain—very little of which is protected. Fortunately, Oregonians are committed to protecting and enhancing these important habitats, and this is a great place to do that."

Already Conservancy ecologists have started more detailed biological assessments and are developing management plans for the site, which is located in rolling hills west of McMinnville in rural Yamhill County. Site reconnaissance work this summer revealed more Kincaid's lupine, a threatened plant, found on the preserve than originally known.

"With these additional patches of Kincaid's lupine, we're hoping that Yamhill Oaks Preserve can be a major site for the Fender's blue butterfly, which can help stabilize the butterfly populations in the area," Fitzpatrick said.

At least 27 sensitive species are expected to benefit from the new preserve and restoration efforts there. Oregon oak habitats provide food and cover to over 200 species of wildlife, biologists say. Remnants of Willamette Valley native prairie harbor rare plants that grow nowhere else on Earth, as well as many songbirds including the western meadowlark, Oregon's state bird.

For years the property was farmed and used as pasture. With the land acquisition complete, stewards are beginning restoration work for native prairie, oak savanna and streamside habitats. The removal and control of invasive species is also critical, and soon

work will begin to remove Douglas-firs which have encroached and are overshadowing the oaks.

"As with all of The Nature Conservancy's preserves, we want this natural area to be an asset to the community," said Soll. "To facilitate that, we're working with the Soil and Water Conservation District, local nonprofits and our neighbors to manage the preserve, as well as to reach out to other landowners in the area who want assistance in conserving and restoring fish and wildlife habitats on their land."

With a \$1 million grant from the Bonneville Power Administration's Fish and Wildlife Mitigation program and \$100,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Conservancy purchased the 272-acre property from a private estate for \$1.1 million. The Conservancy is also working to raise private funds for a stewardship and research endowment of \$255,000 to support long-term management of the preserve.

A pioneer cemetery on site contains the graves of the original homesteaders, Isaac and Cordilla Agee, and some of their 14 children. The Conservancy will ensure the cemetery is maintained and made accessible to family members and researchers. Public access to the preserve will require prior permission from The Nature Conservancy.

To view a slide show and map of Yamhill Oaks Preserve, visit our Web site, nature.org/oregon.

Beyond the Blasts

Last fall we announced an innovative plan to return water to Williamson River Delta Preserve in the Klamath Basin. See new video and photos of how explosives helped us reclaim a wetland and restore two endangered fish—and the progress since—at our Web site, nature.org/oregon.

They came, they saw, they helped

Teenage girls from Texas help restore an Oregon river for wild salmon

Armed with machetes, an Austin-based group of teenage girls hacked away invasive teasel and other weeds and lugged woody debris to improve flood-plain channels, laboring for six days at the Conservancy's Dunstan Homestead Preserve on the Middle Fork John Day River. Not the way many high schoolers spend their summer vacation, to be sure, but these girls are different.

Working hard for nature isn't new to this dedicated group of nine. While sixth graders, they dreamed big and formed the Wildthings, their own personal crusade to help wildlife and the environment.

"There's such guilt from living in a consumer society," said group member Savannah Ritter. "Helping nature helps us feel better about ourselves."

Now seniors, the Wildthings have an impressive resumé that includes rehabilitating wolves, sea turtles and dolphins. But while the animal work was interesting, the girls decided two years ago to focus on restoring habitats or, as they describe it, "work that makes a real difference for everyone."

With some Web surfing, they discovered Dunstan Homestead Preserve and the Conservancy's efforts



The Wildthings are Texas high school seniors dedicated to helping wildlife and the environment. They organize fundraisers to cover their travel costs, including a visit this summer to help restore salmon habitat on Oregon's Middle Fork John Day River. © Laura Moran/TNC

there to restore former river meanders and stream-side vegetation. They decided they wanted to help improve habitat for wild spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead and other native wildlife, too.

Oregon's longest undammed river, the John Day is one of more than 30 sites where the Conservancy is working to ensure a secure future for Pacific Ocean salmon, part of our Campaign for a Sustainable Planet.

The Wildthings were captivated by Eastern Oregon. "We had planned to nap during the drive east from

Portland," Savannah said, "but the landscape was simply too spectacular to sleep through. We'd love to volunteer locally in Texas but, honestly, it's just too hot."

We think the girls from Texas are, well, way cool. "The Wildthings were a pleasure to have around," said Margaret Carey, preserve steward. "Their incredible energy and dedication were so helpful and inspiring. I sincerely hope we see them again!"

To read a Wildthing's first-hand account of working on the Middle Fork John Day, and to learn more about Dunstan Homestead Preserve, visit us on the Web at nature.org/oregon.

The Power to Save Our Salmon

You care about the Earth, so you recycle, drive as little as possible and, perhaps, buy green power. But did you know that, if you're a Pacific Power or Portland General Electric customer, your bill can help protect and restore Oregon's salmon habitats? The Nature Conservancy distributes the Salmon Habitat Fund to cost-effective, on-the-ground projects. Learn how to sign up at nature.org/oregon, and help save Oregon's salmon today!

Leave a legacy for future generations



Oswald West State Park, Oregon © Melissa Roy-Hart/TNC

What better legacy is there to leave than your commitment to protecting this great Earth for generations to come? Writing a check isn't your only avenue to doing so. Here are some additional tax-wise options for you to consider:

Gifts of Stock: By transferring appreciated stock to The Nature Conservancy, you can avoid the stock's capital gain tax while receiving a charitable income tax deduction for its full fair market value (if you itemize your deductions).

Gifts of Real Estate: The Nature Conservancy accepts gifts of all types of real estate, including undeveloped land and residential and commercial properties. By deeding the property directly to us, you can avoid capital gains tax as well as the time

and effort to maintain and sell the property. Real estate gifts can take several weeks to process, however, so plan accordingly for a 2008 gift. Minimum gift \$100,000.

Gifts that Provide Income: The Nature Conservancy offers a variety of gift plans that pay you and/or your loved ones an income for remaining lifetimes. You also receive an immediate income tax deduction, and may receive tax-favored income. Minimum age 50, minimum gift \$5,000.

For more information about any of these gift options, please contact Wes Milligan, director of planned giving, at 503 802-8100 or wmilligan@tnc.org. You can also fill out this coupon and mail it in the enclosed envelope.

Please send more information on:

- Gifts of Stock Gifts of Real Estate
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The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

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503 802-8100 nature.org/oregon Melissa Roy-Hart, editor

Last Great Places Society

We extend our deep appreciation to members of Oregon's Last Great Places Society—and to others listed here who have contributed gifts of \$10,000 or more since August, 2007—for maintaining The Nature Conservancy's capacity to preserve the diversity of life on Earth.

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Nike volunteers "Just do it" for nature

It's one of the best-known slogans in the history of advertising, but employees of Beaverton-based Nike are proving "Just do it" is more than a simple catchphrase.



© Nike, Inc.

Last May, 97 staff members spent their day restoring riparian habitats on the banks of the Sandy River outside Portland. Part of a collaborative project between the Conservancy and Oregon Parks and Recreation, four volunteer teams competed at building trails, pulling invasive garlic mustard and English ivy, and removing non-native Himalayan blackberry in preparation for a replanting project at Dabney State Park. "It was amazing to watch the Nike teams in action," said Jason Dumont, Portland area preserves manager. "With their spirit of friendly competition combined with the joy of working outside, they accomplished an enormous amount of work! We're really looking forward to seeing them again next year."

For more information about how you or your team can help protect Oregon's ecologically important lands and waters, please visit the volunteer section of our Web site, nature.org/oregon.