



The Nature Conservancy is committed to prairie conservation within the South Sound region and the Willamette Valley /Puget Trough/Georgia Basin ecoregion. The Conservancy will continue to perform outstanding stewardship, protect key conservation parcels and promote a conservation community of cooperative partners.

Ft. Lewis and McChord Project

Gray Squirrel Presentation – The results of the gray squirrel monitoring pilot project were presented at the 2005 meeting of the Northwest Scientific Association. Sanders Freed discussed the results of this project with a variety of scientists from the region. The project was well received and interest in the project and techniques was gratifying. Gray squirrel conservation was also discussed with Jim Kenagy from the Burke Museum. Jim and his students have been conducting genetic studies of the western gray squirrel.

Road Decommissioning – The Nature Conservancy is working with Ft. Lewis on initial efforts to decommission unnecessary roads on the training areas of Ft. Lewis. Roads on Upper Weir Prairie, along Muck Creek and near Filander Lake were decommissioned this year. These actions are designed to reduce unnecessary access to sensitive resource areas, while still allowing the access needed for military training.



WCC crew helps place a log barrier across an entrance to a decommissioned road on Upper Weir Prairie, Ft. Lewis.

McChord Surveys – The Nature Conservancy will be conducting a variety of natural resource surveys for McChord Air Force Base. Surveys for aquatic species, mammals and water howellia are slated over spring and summer. The Conservancy will be working with Entrix Inc. on the aquatic survey, as well as, a project to control aquatic pest plants along Clover Creek. Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife is working with The Conservancy on the mammal survey. Staff members are especially excited about looking for carnivores, especially in the South Approach Zone area of McChord.

Thurston County Project

Cavness Easement – Otis and Arlene Cavness own a 670 acre ranch just south of Tenino on historic Frost Prairie. The Cavnesses have donated a conservation easement on their property to The Conservancy. The property contains one of the largest oak woodlands in the South Sound region, along with historic prairie, wetland and upland forest. The property also borders a significant portion of Scatter Creek. In addition to the donation of the easement, the Cavnesses have allowed The Conservancy to initiate restoration actions on portions of the property. This restoration is funded as part of a grant through the Stewardship Partnership Program of US Fish and Wildlife. The agricultural production on the ranch will continue while Mr. and Mrs. Cavness survive; after their death, the property will be limited to conservation activities. At that time more extensive restoration will help reestablish the full mosaic of natural habitats that once occurred throughout the region.



Spring profusion of buttercup on the Cavness Ranch.

Mima Corridor Project - A significant new private landowner project was initiated on Mima Prairie. The 'Mima Prairie Corridor Project' received \$25,000 of funding from the Landowner Incentive Program of WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The project seeks to enhance the biological link between Glacial Heritage Preserve and Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve by restoring the private lands between and near these preserves. The project started off well with control of Scotch broom on 50 acres immediately south of Mima Mounds NAP, the Bordeaux Ranch conservation parcel. The program complements and expands the core efforts at the two protected prairies.

Science Presentations – Eric Delvin gave two presentations at the recent Society for Ecological Restoration conference. Eric reported the latest results from the wipe-on herbicide trials and described our efforts with WA Dept. of Natural Resources to rid Mima Mounds NAP of Scotch broom. Both projects drew considerable interest. If you would like to know more about the projects give Eric a call, 360-570-0083.

Mima Prairie Land Steward – We are pleased to announce Alison Smith has joined our staff as the Mima Prairie Land Steward. Alison will work with Eric Delvin on Glacial Heritage, Mima Mounds and other lands around Mima Prairie. Alison has extensive experience controlling knotweed along the Sandy River in Oregon. She will be leading our knotweed control efforts along the Chehalis River, where we are finishing efforts along the Black, Elk and Wishkah Rivers this spring.

Rare Species Recovery Project

South Sound Prairies . Org – Take your browser to www.southsoundprairies.org to try out the new web site of the South Puget Sound Prairie Landscape Working Group. This site is designed to give both professional conservationists and the general public a quick overview and the latest information about our prairies. The site contains an extensive set of technical documents. Check out the site and let us know what you think, it was designed with the assistance of students at the New Market Vocational Skills Center in Olympia.