The Nature Conservancy is committed to 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.

Helping Dept. of Defense Partners in Europe

Recently, Sanders Freed and Casey Dennehy assisted the Dept. of Defense demonstrate to our European Partners the benefits of partnering with NGOs. The Conservancy's partnership with Ft. Lewis and McChord Air Force Base was used as the primary example of how the military can utilize NGO partnerships to mutually benefit both parties. Sanders traveled to Germany and Casey to Romania to assist in workshops hosted by DoD's European Command.

A goal of the workshops was to educate staff from European countries about the benefits of partnerships like ours with Ft. Lewis and McChord. Those partnerships provided an exportable template of NGO involvement with military entities, one that can be transferred to a variety of situations, not just biodiversity conservation. Both Sanders and Casey found that Department of Defense partnering with NGOs was virtually nonexistent in Europe and that the current paradigm perceived NGOs as adversarial. Therefore, there is a large opportunity for enhancing and fostering interactions between our allied countries and their NGO communities. Sander's and Casey's participation at the workshops encouraged attending nations to develop positive cooperative partnerships in the future.

Sanders Freed demonstrated co-operative partnering with European military by sampling some local refreshments during his visit to Germany.

Bringing Science and Restoration to Prisons

Daeg Byrne works with inmates at Stafford Creek Correctional Center.

The Conservancy joined an innovative program, developed by Nalini Nadkarni of Evergreen State College, that brings hands-on conservation projects to inmates of Washington's penal system. Conservation is one portion of The Sustainable Prisons Project. The Conservancy 's effort involves propagation of up to 250,000 plugs of prairie forbs. These plants will provide the foundation of prairie seed production, including seed beds at Ft. Lewis. Daeg Byrne, the Conservancy's specialist in prairie plant production is overseeing the project and providing technical expertise.

Recently, the project created significant media coverage, with stories through regional television, radio and newspaper outlets. The project was also highlighted internationally, as a featured story on the Conservancy's intranet newsletter. In the near future, look for continued coverage, as CNN is scheduled to produce a story.

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Prairie Conservation

Fire Learning Network Exchange Helps Ft. Lewis

Part of the TNC Fire Crew after assisting on a burn on the edge of Ft. Lewis Artillery Impact Area.

This spring Ft. Lewis faced the challenge of a significant transition in their wild land fire unit. This unit helps protect Ft. Lewis training lands and resources by extinguishing wild fires and setting prescribed burns. Ft. Lewis has a long track record of active fire management that has helped maintain some of the most significant conservation lands in the ecoregion. This year the Fort reached out to the Conservancy's Fire learning Network to bring Conservancy fire bosses to the installation. Two individuals, one from Florida and one from North Dakota will be spending three months each assisting Ft. Lewis fire teams throughout the spring and summer. The burn bosses will lead training exercises, supervise fire suppression efforts and conduct prescribed burns. The opportunity of helping Ft. Lewis and its habitats is invaluable in itself. The program has also helped increase our staff's experience with fire, and is helping all partners in South Sound reach their goals for prescribed fire this year. Additionally, these extremely experienced individuals have given strategic advice which has strengthened our program as well.

Black River

Restoration of Mima Creek Unit More than 20,000 native trees and shrubs were planted at the Mima Creek unit of the Black River Preserve as part of a multi-stage restoration project to improve habitat conditions on the property for neo-tropical migrant birds, waterfowl, and amphibians such as the Oregon spotted frog. The plantings will provide important habitat for these species and will increase water storage capacity on the property over the long, which is important for fish and amphibian species. Future restoration actions include development of shallow depressions to improve breeding habitat for frogs and amphibians and open water for ducks and other birds. This work was funded by USFWS and NRCS.

Shotwell's Open House If you missed or still can't get enough of the open house at Shotwell's Landing don't worry. You can now enjoy it vicariously through the web. Take a look at these two short videos.

Shotwell's Open House – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51nHsHY0cTA

Shotwell's Kiosk - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ9ZMQ3QJXQ

Cooperative Conservation

Taylor's Checkerspot Workshop and Action Plan Coordinating and promoting conservation actions of a species that ranges across political boundaries is challenging. The 2008 Taylor's Checkerspot workshop provided a venue to meet that challenge. Biologists, managers, and policy-makers came together to discuss the status of the species and to generate conservation action. To ensure that information presented and discussions had were available in perpetuity, comprehensive proceedings of the workshop were produced are now available for download from southsoundprairies.org. In addition, to capitalize on the momentum generated at the workshop, a range-wide working group is forming and a draft species action plan has been generated. Having all entities affected by the species across the historic range working together to identify and implement conservation actions provides the best chance for recovery success.