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.

Streaked Horned Lark Workshop

Partners from around the region were brought together for this one-day workshop focused on the conservation of the streaked horned lark. Information regarding the natural history, conservation status, conservation and restoration efforts were presented. Participants identified gaps in knowledge and research and began working toward the generation of a conservation action plan. Attendees included representatives from state and federal agencies, landowners, biologists, and conservationists from a wide geographic range. Response to the workshop was so positive that participants are forming a working group and hope to meet in early November.

Streaked Horned Lark

Prescribed Burning a Success

In late September, crews from The Nature Conservancy, Department of Natural Resources, Washington Conservation Corps, and local fire districts set two fires on south sound prairies. These controlled burns are an effective way to maintain open prairies and keep out invasive plant species. 75 acres at Glacial Heritage Preserve near Littlerock were burned as well as 15 acres at a TNC preserve near Rainier. Fires must be hot enough to burn away non-native grasses and Scotch broom. A few weeks after the fire, the areas will be reseeded with native fescue grass. Local residents approve of the burning and can see positive results in the native prairies. Only 3% of the historic prairie habitat remains in Washington State and prescribed burning has proved to be an excellent method of maintaining and restoring this beautiful habitat.

Fire crew monitor flames from a prescribed burn on a south sound prairie.

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Ft. Lewis and McChord Project

Cavity Creates Duck Eggs
Last January and February Project Biologist Sanders Freed coordinated the implementation of 29 wood duck cavities on Ft. Lewis. There has been a 40% success rate for use thus far, a very positive outcome for the first year. Of those being monitored, there are six successful nests and four sites containing feathers or some type of activity. This is the first year of the project, expanding in the future to include the creation of nesting habitat for wood ducks as well as bats, Western gray squirrels, purple martens, and bluebirds.

A cavity is created in a tree…

…and wood ducks make a nest!

Nest boxes for purple martens on Ft. Lewis.

Thurston County Project

Mazama Pocket Gophers
During the late summer and early fall of 2007, WDFW and TNC reunited to continue the translocation of a Mazama Pocket Gopher population located just south of the Olympia Airport. During a period of about four weeks, 22 gophers were successfully trapped, pit-tagged with microchips, and released in predetermined mounds on Wolf Haven prairie. Post release, the activity of each gopher was monitored closely for 30 minutes and their status reviewed weekly. Since this project has begun, multiple fresh gopher mounds have been observed in the release area. Consideration of gopher activity at Wolf Haven will be included during future herbicide application and future revegetation projects.

A pocket gopher has been captured in order to be tagged.

Rare Species Project

Hannah Anderson Gets Married! Where we usually report on the latest happenings and accomplishments of the Rare Species Project, the space will instead be devoted to congratulating the project's manager on her recent marriage. Hannah has been working diligently on all of her responsibilities so that she can be gone for an entire month. Hannah will be returning November 5th from her honeymoon in Honduras where she and her husband will have been scuba diving and enjoying the rare species of Central America.