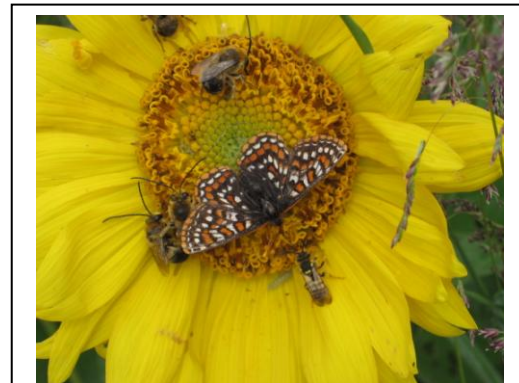


## South Puget Sound Program Highlights October - December 2010

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.

### Native Bee Abundance on South Sound Prairies

Preliminary results from a TNC 2009 pollinator survey led by researcher Cheryl Fimbel are just in. They suggest that native bee abundance on our South Sound prairies is relatively high compared to habitats studied elsewhere in the US - especially higher quality prairies where we have been working to restore native habitat elements such as abundant and diverse wildflower communities. Abundance was actually higher in prairies with high restoration input compared with prairies that we are not active in, but the difference is not significant. We also learned that some of our prairie wildflowers are not likely to be 'pollinator-limited' (i.e. seed production is not hampered by lack of pollination services) on prairies that we are actively managing. This means that our restoration actions appear to be supporting, and are supported by, resident pollinator populations.



Taylor's checkerspot and several native bees on a single balsamroot flower. Photo: Jim Lynch

### Native Seed Production for Prairie Enhancement

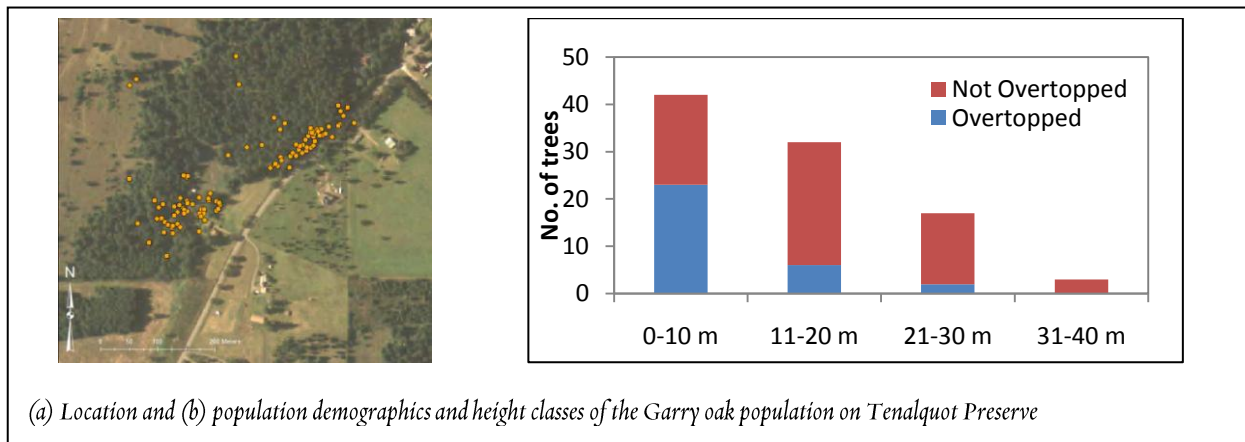
Seed production in the South Sound continues to reach new heights. In 2010, seed from 95 native prairie and oak woodland species was produced or wild collected for a total of 449 pounds. New highs in the production of Roemer's fescue, harsh paintbrush and other restoration species allowed more than 150 acres of prairies to be enhanced using direct seeding. With advances in our production locations, techniques and equipment, annual species such as sea blush and farewell-to-spring seed amounts tripled. Hopefully multiple perennial species will show similar increases next year as that stock matures an additional year. Sea blush and farewell-to-spring seed was used primarily for butterfly habitat enhancement on JBLM and WDFW sites although farewell-to-spring was also used on TNC and WDNR lands as well. This advance in production is mostly due to the Conservancy's partnership with WDNR's Webster Nursery where we currently have 6 acres in large-scale production of 23 native species. The Conservancy also increased our seed processing capabilities in 2010, with the purchase of several pieces of seed cleaning equipment. All told this year Shotwell's Landing processed and distributed more than an estimated 150,000,000 seeds.

#### Sources of Native Seed Production – South Sound, 2010

Shotwell's Landing Beds	39 lbs.
Webster's Nursery	65 lbs.
TNC Volunteers Wild Collected	20 lbs.
JBLM Collected	25 lbs.
4 <sup>th</sup> Corner Nursery – Fescue Field	300 lbs.

## Prairie Conservation

**Garry Oak Demographics at Tenalquot** – While those of us who have spent some time exploring Tenalquot Preserve have seen a few impressive, large Garry oaks (*Quercus garryana*), we never really knew about the extent and health of the oak population there. Recently, two Conservancy interns (Jared Tarr and Liza Norment) completed a comprehensive survey of the oaks on Tenalquot, collecting data on the height, crown class, health class, % crown contact, overtopping, and # of recruits for each tree (<1.3m) on the preserve. It turns out that there is a robust, healthy oak population, primarily existing along the southeastern edge of the preserve (Fig 1a) with approximately 77% of the 113 trees classified as ‘healthy’. Additionally, most of the large oaks are not overtopped by Douglas fir trees, however, over half of the smaller oaks (<10m) are (Figure 1b). This information will be used to inform future management of the oak population and to evaluate the conservation value of the property.



(a) Location and (b) population demographics and height classes of the Garry oak population on Tenalquot Preserve

## Cooperative Conservation

**Easy Communications** – Interacting with fellow prairie and oak conservationists has become even easier. Under the auspices of CPOP – the Cascadia Prairie Oak Partnership, the listserves from prairie and oak working groups in OR, WA and British Columbia have been merged. Now a single email can reach out to hundreds of your fellow prairie-oak practitioners. If you aren't on the listserv, just email [handerson@tnc.org](mailto:handerson@tnc.org) to be included.

## Regional Fire Program

**Fire Training Exchanges** - During fall quarter, there were several first time training exchanges of South Sound crew members with nearby burn programs. South Sound sent an engine crew of three to the Willamette Valley for two days after the North Sound burn season had been shut down from rain. This extra engine crew enabled the Willamette cooperative burn program to run two burn crews simultaneously, resulting in three extra burn units on TNC and USFWS preserves. In November, an engine and five South Sound crew members participated on three days of burning with the Yakama Tribe. Both of these exchanges were excellent experiences for South Sound firefighters to work in new fuels and terrain and with different fire program cultures. It was also a valuable regional networking event, and increased cross-program familiarity and integration.



Training exchange understory burn at Yakama Tribe Reservation.