



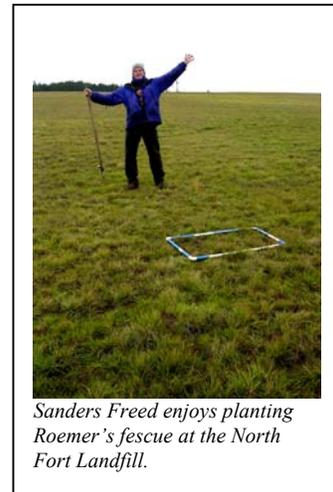
The Nature Conservancy is committed to prairie conservation within the South Sound region and the Willamette Valley /Puget Trough/Georgia Basin ecoregion. The Conservancy will continue to perform outstanding stewardship, protect key conservation parcels and promote a conservation community of cooperative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

Ft. Lewis and McChord Project

Gray Squirrel Monitoring - Recent monitoring and survey efforts for western gray squirrels on Ft. Lewis have yielded uncertain and incomplete results due to small population size and uncertainty about the location of core habitats. Thanks to support from Fort Lewis Fish and Wildlife, The Conservancy has successfully completed a pilot monitoring program utilizing hair snagging techniques. This technique yields spatially explicit information about the presence of western gray squirrels. The characteristics needed to separate western gray squirrel hair from other squirrel species were determined and the efficiency of hair snagging tubes tested. Results from the pilot study highlighted the wide distribution of non-native eastern gray squirrels within core habitat for western gray squirrels on the Fort and the persistence of western grey squirrels in four small locations. The Conservancy is now scaling up that pilot monitoring into a larger scale effort to monitor western gray squirrel distribution, response to habitat enhancement, and eastern gray squirrel encroachment

New Landfill Restoration – The Nature Conservancy is working with Ft. Lewis Public Works, Fish and Wildlife, and **Integrated Training Area Maintenance** programs in an innovative project to restore a large landfill to a mosaic of natural habitats. If successful, this restoration would create approximately 200 acres of prairie, oak woodland, conifer forest and wetlands. The Conservancy installed a test planting of grassland species on the landfill cap and is working with the other partners to continue planning for the restoration.

Ongoing Restoration - Restoration actions continued on several fronts. Enhancement of butterfly habitat on Johnson, Weir and 13th Division Prairies, and McChord AFB continues with the addition of more than 56,000 plants selected for their ability to provide known larval host and adult nectar plants and a diverse high value prairie plant community. Squirrel habitat was improved in Training Areas 8 and 10 with 60 acres of Scotch broom control and the planting of food resource trees and shrubs. Conditions on Weir prairie improved with careful application of a mixed herbicide/pulling approach to low-medium density scotch broom in 57 acres of good quality prairie. Over 200 acres of additional Scotch broom were mowed in prairie habitat across the two bases. The Ft. Lewis Fish and Wildlife and Forestry programs, and McChord AFB supported these actions.



Thurston County Project

Fall Enhancements – Prairies and oak woodlands at several sites were enhanced with supplemental plantings of native species during the fall. These sites were the Cavness Ranch, Wolf Haven, and Glacial Heritage Preserve, including the Green Diamond parcel. A total of 60,000 plugs were transplanted. Additionally, at Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, The Conservancy assisted with scotch broom control, contracted topping of Douglas-firs within the southern oak woodland and planted the rare and beautiful rose checkermallow.

Outplanting Experiment – A new experiment to measure the effectiveness of pretreatments on planting and seeding into prairies containing degraded vegetation was undertaken at two sites – the Green Diamond site within the Glacial Heritage Preserve and the Morgan property. The experiment is replicated with 6 plots at each site and tests 3 pretreatments (burning, application of Poast herbicide and a control), on the survivorship and growth of plugged and seeded native grasses and forbs. We hope the replication across sites will increase our confidence in the generality of the results.



Volunteers and WCC Crew – fall planting.

Golden Paintbrush Outplantings – The experimental outplanting of the federally threatened golden paintbrush continued at Glacial Heritage and Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve. The Nature Conservancy and WA Dept. of Natural Resources are working together to determine optimal outplanting techniques for this unique member of the prairie. This is the second outplanting of golden paintbrush at these sites.

Proposals for New Work – The Thurston County project submitted several proposals to help fund new projects and support on-going efforts. On the Black River, the development of the Black River Conservation Area Plan identified several information gaps that need filling to prioritize conservation actions. Proposals were submitted to survey stream conditions and water quality, determine aspects of salmon usage, map historical and current vegetation communities and document avian usage. For prairie conservation, The Conservancy is very excited about the Mima Prairie project that will help conserve lands throughout Mima Prairie. This project involves a significant outreach component that will help private landowners conserve prairies and oak woodlands. Other submitted proposals will help continue restoration at the Glacial Heritage Preserve and continue funding for the Quercas y Aves program. This year Quercas y Aves will include a bluebird translocation, which is a first step towards reintroducing other extirpated species.

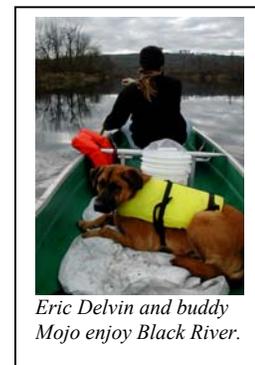
Rare Species Recovery Project

Recovery Actions in South Sound – A wide range of conservation entities are assisting in the recovery of rare prairie species in the South Puget Sound region. The Conservancy surveyed these entities to summarize the efforts completed over the last year and those planned for next year. It is hoped that this summary will fuel additional cooperation on recovery efforts and help identify actions that are needed, but are currently unplanned or not supported.

Black River Project

Knotweed Control – The Black, Elk, and Wishkah Rivers were the focus for knotweed survey and control. Working with members of the Chehalis River Aquatic Weed Task Force, The Conservancy completed knotweed control efforts throughout the Black and Elk Rivers and on upper portions of the Wishkah. The remainder of the Wishkah and hopefully additional rivers will be targets for our efforts in 2005. The crew used a new stem injection method for the application of herbicide, which initial monitoring suggests was effective and efficient.

Bergquist Property – The Conservancy assisted Capitol Land Trust in their application for a \$200,000 award by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The funds will help purchase a conservation easement on 75-acres. This property is just upstream from Rainbow Valley and features prime salmon habitat.



Eric Delvin and buddy Mojo enjoy Black River.

Worthington Property – The Conservancy purchased a new property along the Black River, just south and adjacent to our Black Lake Preserve. The Worthington Estate property is 65.5 acres and cost \$262,000. The property is within the boundary of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The Fish and Wildlife Service will be purchasing this property from us, along with the Black Lake Preserve in the near future.