



South Sound Program Highlights October – December 2013

The Center for Natural Lands Management is committed to conservation within the South Sound region, the Willamette Valley/Puget Trough/Georgia Basin ecoregion and throughout the Northwest. The Center performs outstanding stewardship, protects key conservation parcels and promotes a conservation community of cooperative partners.

Plug planting efforts prepare habitat for butterfly releases

CNLM has been intensifying plug planting efforts to prepare habitat for Taylor's checkerspot introductions this spring. CNLM and partners planted 152,000 plugs of 25 different species over five sites this fall. Host plants like harsh paintbrush were planted in largest numbers, but plantings also included nectar plants such as Puget balsamroot. This effort could not have been possible without the dedication of volunteers, the Department of Corrections Prairie Restoration crew, and CNLM's Americorps members.



Volunteer Etsuko Reistroffer planted food and nectar plants for a future Taylor's checkerspot release at Tenalquot.

Gopher surveys on JBLM confirm new occurrences

CNLM staff member Bill Kronland led an effort to conduct mound surveys on Joint Base Lewis-McChord this fall. The goal of the surveys was to locate new occurrences of Mazama pocket gopher and to confirm continued presence of the species on the Artillery Impact Area on JBLM. New occurrences were confirmed directly adjacent to the Artillery Impact Area, suggesting mechanisms that have maintained prairie in the Artillery Impact Area may be benefitting surrounding landscapes. Mazama pocket gophers continue to occupy the Artillery Impact Area, which represents some of the highest-quality prairie remaining in the South Puget Sound region.

Rare species working groups set priority actions for the year

Three rare species working groups had their annual meetings this quarter. These meetings bring together experts and practitioners in each species' conservation community to present annual updates. Perhaps most importantly, the working group meetings are a forum to set priorities for action. The top 'next best action' for the conservation of the streaked horned lark, Mazama pocket gopher, and Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, are respectively: seek opportunities to secure sites dedicated to lark conservation; protect occupied habitat; and annually monitor all known populations. The working group summaries and priority action lists for the [Mazama pocket gopher](#), [streaked horned lark](#), and [Taylor's checkerspot](#) are all available on the newly launched [CPOP website](#), where you can also learn about the partnership, access rare species information, and get the latest news from the prairie oak conservation community.

ACUB Cooperators share insights at first-ever ACUB Summit

The South Sound conservation community gathered for the first-ever ACUB Summit. The Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program is aimed at reducing encroachment pressures to JBLM and military training by conserving and restoring prairie habitats on lands outside the base and working to increase the numbers and sizes of prairie ESA status species on those lands. ACUB has been a key funding source and catalyst for cooperation that has allowed the conservation community in south Puget Sound to succeed in initiating new populations of Taylor's checkerspot and Mazama pocket gopher, expanded the availability of native plants, and restore hundreds of acres of prairie habitat. The Summit provided a comprehensive overview of the ACUB program and details of individual projects, including habitat restoration, research, species translocation and more. Jeffrey Foster of JBLM presented CNLM's Hannah Anderson with an award to thank her for her leadership and vision as administrator of the ACUB program. Presentations will be made available soon.



Hannah Anderson was awarded a plaque for her accomplishments.

Expanding partnerships with NRCS provide opportunities for landowners

Landowners can obtain assistance to improve their working lands, thanks to new incentives and increased funding from the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) for prairie restoration work. CNLM is working with landowners who are taking advantage of cost-share programs to benefit their working lands while improving prairie habitat.

Expansion of seeding experiment provides guidance for large-scale seeding efforts

The Regional Native Seed Project, with support of the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#), is now in its fourth year, providing hundreds of pounds of seed, greenhouse germination rates for several species and now field germination rates and best management practices for seeding 24 prairie species. This project initially developed seeding methods and rates for three species (Roemer's fescue, Oregon sunshine, slender cinquefoil); now with increased seed production, we are able to install the seeding experiment with a large mix of grasses, forbs, annuals and perennials. Preliminary results from this study are already providing guidance for our large-scale seeding efforts. The expansion of the experiment will provide information about a larger suite of species, allowing us to use our precious seed resources efficiently for regional prairie restoration.



Cara Applestein and Mark Roth carefully sowing treatment plots at South Weir.