F01: Pilot Projects for Biodiversity Conservation

LTA Rally 2007

Living Lands Project
Defenders of Wildlife
LIVING LANDS:

Helping Land Trusts

Conserve Biodiversity

Defenders of Wildlife
Living Lands Mission

To support and increase the capacity of the land trust community to conserve biodiversity on private lands through financial and technical assistance.
Living Lands: Why now?

• Standards 8, 11 and 12

• IRS and taxpayers need conservation donations to be worthy of a federal tax benefit

• Land trusts need to document “conservation purposes” in easement language

• Funders want strategic planning

• State Wildlife Action Plans
Survey Responses

• **Assistance or training needs:**
  - Conservation planning
  - Habitat restoration and management
  - Monitoring
  - Identifying funding sources
Living Lands Resources


• Written resources for land trusts: www.defenders.org/livinglands

• Case studies

• Small grants for biodiversity pilot projects
Pilot Projects Overview

• **Purpose:** to support and increase capacity of the land trust community to conserve biodiversity through technical and financial assistance.

• **Types of projects considered:**
  - capacity building
  - habitat restoration
  - remove a specific barrier to a project
Pilot Project Overview cont’d

• Criteria summary:
  - Local, regional or statewide land trust
  - Up to $10,000 for a biodiversity project
  - 1:2 match
  - 2 year grant period
  - Land must be permanently protected
Pilot Projects

- **Important dates**
  - January 15, 2008 applications due
  - March 17, 2008 decisions made
  - May 5, 2008 grant period begins
Pilot Projects

• Applications online
  – www.defenders.org/livinglands

• Questions?
  – Aimee Weldon (Project Manager), aweldon@defenders.org
  – 1130 17th St NW, Washington DC 20036
  – 202-682-9400
2007 Pilot Projects

• $59,300 awarded to 7 land trusts
  - Greenbelt Land Trust, OR
  - Teton Regional Land Trust, ID
  - Nisqually Land Trust, WA
  - Washtenaw Land Trust, MI
  - Eastern Sierra Land Trust, CA
  - Taos Land Trust, NM
  - Sudbury Valley Trustees, MA
Touch-Me-Not Mountain Preserve
Eagle Nest, New Mexico
Touch-Me-Not Mountain Preserve

Eagle Nest, NM

Legend:
- Red: Touch-Me-Not Mountain Preserve
- Green: Existing Conservation Easement (Natural Habitat)
- Pink: Prospective Conservation Easement (Natural Habitat)
- Light Blue: Colin Neblett Wildlife Area
- Gray: Proposed Limited Residential Development

*These boundaries are approximate*
Touch-Me-Not Mountain Preserve
Eagle Nest, New Mexico
Preserving Special Resources in Mono County, CA

Benton Hot Springs Valley

EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST
• CA Wildlife Action Plan recommends “agricultural and rangeland management practices that are compatible with wildlife and habitat conservation.”

• Mono County General Plan states that property should remain ag land and wildlife habitat
Resources on the Property

- Agriculture
- Historic
- Wildlife
- Plants
- Wetlands
- Water
- Scenic
• 114 species of birds counted so far
• Bird list compiled by local Audubon Chapter
Plant Habitats

- Sagebrush scrub
- Wet meadow
- Alkali meadow
- Ponds, springs and seeps
- Riparian
Goals and Tasks for the Project

- Learn what resources are on the property
- Create effective and efficient monitoring protocol based on experience with the property
- Utilize grazing to enhance habitat and biodiversity
- Educate and engage communities based on resources of the property
Reserved Rights and Restrictions for Benton Hot Springs Valley Conservation Easement

- Landowner can continue to use and enjoy the property
- Limited eco-tourism activities
- No new roads, subdivision, or development
- Continued grazing as guided by an adaptive Conservation Plan
- No water export
Conservation Plan for Grazing Management

- Collaboration with landowner to ensure that habitats and water resources are maintained
  - Timing of grazing
  - Number of cattle
  - Best management practices
  - Maintenance and monitoring of springs and wetlands
  - Invasive species control
Nisqually Land Trust
Mount Rainier Gateway
Initiative
Nisqually Land Trust Protected Properties 2006
DNR Match Contribution
Land

Phases 1 & 2 Properties

Phase 3 Target & Alternate Properties

DNR Match Contribution Land

Ashford Phase 3 Map B

Data derived from: WSDOT, WDOE, WADNR, Gifford Pinchot NF, Mt. Rainier NP
Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet Federal Critical Habitat

- Phase 3 Target and Alternate Properties
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest
- Phases 1 & 2 Properties
- Elbe Hills State Forest
- Tahoma State Forest
- State Forest Boundary
- National Forest Boundary

Marbled murrelet (Brachyramphus marmoratus marmoratus)
Northern spotted owl (Strix occidentalis caurina)

Map center: 46° 46' 8" N, 121° 58' 27" W
Lone Star Ranch Easement

199 acres in
Willamette Valley Oregon
Lone Star Ranch - T12S, R6W, S03
199 Acres Total
Summary List of Strategy Habitats

Strategy habitats in the Willamette Valley region include wetlands, riparian zones, floodplains, and aquatic habitats.

Change in Willamette Valley Strategy Habitats

Historic (1995) Distribution of Strategy Habitats

Current (2005) Distribution of Strategy Habitats

Legend:
- Shrublands
- Oak woodlands
- Fir/cedar
- Riparian
- Wetlands and floodplains

Data Source: Oregon Natural Heritage Information System, 2007
I live in the Willamette Valley ecoregion

The Willamette Valley ecoregion is the most urban in the state. It is also the fastest growing ecoregion—it has nine of Oregon’s ten largest cities. Fertile soil and abundant rainfall make the valley the most important agricultural region in the state. Culturally, the Willamette Valley is a land of contrasts. Rustling urban areas are nestled within productive farmland. Pressure on valley ecosystems from population growth, landscale conversion and pollution is likely to increase as more people make the Valley their home.

Learning about the at-risk species and their habitats in your ecoregion gives you the information you need to get involved in conserving Oregon’s fish and wildlife for your enjoyment and that of future generations.

Strategy Habitats and Species

Important habitats in the ecoregion include oak woodlands, grasslands (including oak savanna), wetlands, riparian and aquatic.

Strategy species in need of help include western gray squirrel, northern red-legged frog, Oregon spotted frog, and yellow-legged frog, northwestern pond turtle, western meadowlark, western bluebird, Oregon chub, Pacific lamprey, and Feeder’s blue butterfly. See back of sheet for more information.

Northern red-legged frog: I live in the Willamette Valley ecoregion

Red-legged frogs live in cool damp forests and wetlands. Adults have red underlegs, hence their name. Their decline in the northwest is due, in part, to habitat loss and invasive bullfrogs.

Fun fact: It’s unlikely you’ll ever hear a red-legged frog call. They call underwater.
Partial List of Oregon Conservation Strategy Willamette Valley Ecoregion
Strategy Species and Invasive Species

Strategy species are species of greatest conservation need; they have low or declining populations due, many times, to habitat loss and degradation. Invasive species are non-native plants or animals that can negatively impact native habitats both economically and environmentally.

**STRATEGY SPECIES**

**Mammals**
- Townsend's big-eared bat
- Western grey squirrel

**Plants**
- Golden paintbrush
- Knapweed
- Nelson's checker-mallow
- Peacock larkspur
- Willamette daisy

**Amphibians and Reptiles**
- Northern red-legged frog
- Foot hill yellow-legged frog
- Northwestern pond turtle
- Western painted turtle

**Invertebrates**
- American grass bug
- Feeder's blue butterfly

**Fish**
- Chinook salmon (Lower Columbia River ESU, spring run)
- Coastal cutthroat trout (SW Washington, Columbia River ESU)
- Coho salmon (Oregon Coast ESU)
- Oregon chub
- Pacific lamprey
- Steelhead (Lower Columbia River ESU, summer run)
- Western brook lamprey

**Birds**
- Acorn woodpecker
- Sedge-billed sedgebill
- Streaked horned lark
- Western bluebird
- Western meadowlark
- Western purple martin
- Yellow-breasted chat

**INVASIVE SPECIES**

**Invasive Animals**
- Asian clam
- Bullfrog
- Cat (common, grass)/
- Eastern grey squirrel
- Eastern snapping turtle
- European starling
- Feral pig
- Fox squirrel
- Goldfish
- House sparrow
- Mosquito fish (Culussius)
- Mute swan
- Nutria
- Oriental weatherfish
- Red-eared slider turtle
- Virginian poison sumac

**Invasive Plants**
- Broussais (Scotch, Spanish, Portaiguese)
- Butterfly bush
- English ivy
- Eurasian watermilfoil
- False bramble
- Garlic mustard
- Geese
- Himalayan blackberry
- Knotweed (Japanese, giant, Himalayan)
- Kudzu
- Meadow rue
- Purple loosestrife
- Reed canary grass
- St. John's wort
- Tansy ragwort
- Yellow flag iris

A complete list of Strategy species can be found on the ODFW website. Click Conservation Strategy on the home page.

**ODFW OFFICES**

Northwest Region Office, Clackamas
(503) 545-6940

South Willamette Watershed
Office, Corvallis
(541) 757-8186

Seaside Island Office
(503) 621-3488

Springfield Office
(541) 726-5415

Find your local Watershed Council.
(541) 685-8525
www.oregonwatersheds.org/

For more information on the Oregon Conservation Strategy, visit the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website.
www.dfw.state.or.us

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
3600 Cherry Avenue NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-987-6000
The Mill Creek Fen Project – Species Protection in Southeast Michigan

Presented by Mark Patrick
Land & Operations Manager
Washtenaw Land Trust, Ann Arbor, MI
End moraines (coarse till)

Glacial outwash
Mitchell’s Satyr

- Federally listed endangered species
- Only 21 known active sites (19 in MI)
- Seems restricted to calcium/magnesium rich areas (tamarack fens)

© Daria Hyde, MNFI
Figure 5. Mill Creek East Fen Complex
E. Massasauga Rattlesnake

- State species of special concern
- Federal candidate species
Blanding’s Turtle

- State species of special concern
Goldenseal

- State threatened species
Mill Creek Timeline

- 1832 – Family given land in Michigan
  Land Grant
Mill Creek Timeline

- 1832 – Family given land in Michigan Land Grant
- 1950’s – Family allows researchers on fen
Mill Creek Timeline

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- 1958 – over 500 Mitchell’s satyrs found in area
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- 1965 – 1 Satyr found
Mill Creek Timeline

- 1832 – Family given land in Michigan Land Grant
- 1950’s – Family allows researchers on fen
- 1958 – over 500 Mitchell’s satyrs found in area
- 1965 – 1 Satyr found
- 2000 – 17 Satyrs found
Mill Creek Timeline – cont.

- 2005 – Court orders resolution of family estate among siblings, potentially through sale of land
Mill Creek Project Partners

[Logos of various organizations]
Accomplishments

- Survey & Appraisals done Spring 2007
- Land/property disputes resolved
- Easement finalized September 2007
- 124 acres protected, including primary conservation zone
Challenges

- Balancing habitat management vs. landowner’s needs – burn example
- Grazing concerns
- Boundary dispute (from 1837!)
Long Term Goals

- Additional conservation easements on surrounding properties
- Permanent protection of 100% of Mitchell’s satyr colonies
- Partner with Huron River Watershed Council to implement water quality plan
- Support MNFI, MDNR(LIP), in maintaining fen habitat
Teton Regional Land Trust

Riparian Biodiversity Restoration and Capacity Building—Teton River Restoration Project
Our Mission

... to conserve agricultural and natural lands and to encourage land stewardship in the Upper Snake River Watershed for the benefit of today's communities and as a legacy for future generations.
Priority Natural Resources Dependent on Private Lands

- Wetlands, Wetland-dependent Birds
- Native Trout, Riparian Corridors
- Big Game Winter Range & Migration Corridors
- Rare Upland Birds
- Rare Plants and Communities
- Strategic Ranch Lands
- State High-Quality Farmland

A legacy of Lands in the Upper Snake River Valley
Strategic Program for Protecting Priority Natural Resources

- Strategic land protection
- Collaborative conservation planning
- Resource surveys - Ecological monitoring
- Targeted restoration - benefits to high priority conservation species
- Partnerships

A legacy of Lands in the Upper Snake River Valley
Collaborative Conservation Planning

- Working with multiple partners
- Identify priority habitats and wildlife use areas
- Strategic land protection
- Targeted restoration/enhancement
Restoration

- Program guided by BOD-approved policies
- Project must be approved by the BOD
- Willing landowner, on easement-protected land
- Suitable management scenario for protecting investment
- Target priority species and have landscape-scale benefits

Riparian, wetland and upland restoration
Riparian Biodiversity Restoration and Capacity Building—Teton River Restoration Project

• Landowner action and initiative

• Located on 200-acre easement property protecting ~1 mile of the Teton River

• Property is active cattle ranch

• Managed for fish and wildlife

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Project Goals

Short-Term
• Develop restoration plan to optimize property’s value to conservation priority species
• Have restoration expert mentor Land Trust staff during project planning & implementation
• Implement restoration plan using contractors & volunteers

Long-Term
• Improve instream & riparian habitat conditions for conservation priority species
• Cooperatively steward the project with landowner to maximize biodiversity
• Increase Land Trust staff ability to complete large-scale restoration
Priority Species

- Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy—*Species of Greatest Conservation Need*
- Rocky Mountain Population Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game Fisheries Management Plan
- Idaho Partners in Flight Plan
- Teton Basin Important Bird Area

A legacy of Lands in the Upper Snake River Valley
Project Accomplishments

- Reach Assessment by restoration expert
- Land Trust staff training
Project Accomplishments

• Design development
Project Accomplishments

• Photopoint establishment
Capacity Building

- Restoration expert mentoring through:
  - Technical review
  - Project and staff evaluation during and after implementation
  - Final report evaluating project, staff

A legacy of Lands in the Upper Snake River Valley
Project Monitoring

A legacy of Lands in the Upper Snake River Valley
Partnerships

- Landowners
- Volunteers
- NRCS
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Trout Unlimited
- Foundations
- Idaho Dept Fish & Game