

SUMMARY of Draft Habitat Management Plan For Lane County's Howard Buford Recreation Area

CONSERVATION VISION

The long term vision for Mt. Pisgah and the Howard Buford Recreation Area is the conservation and restoration of a dynamically functioning prairie-savanna complex, as well as river systems with healthy riparian and aquatic processes and communities in ways that support compatible recreational and educational uses. The upland systems should sustain a mosaic of savanna, oak woodland, and upland prairie with inclusions of wet prairie. This prairie-savanna complex and riparian aquatic systems should support a stable and diverse community of rare plants and animals including federally and state listed threatened or endangered species and the habitats that support them.

CONSERVATION TARGETS & PROPOSED OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) identified eight "conservation targets" to protect under the umbrella of the Habitat Management Plan. Key objectives or actions to sustain the targets are summarized below each.

Public Use

Sustaining compatible recreation and enjoyment of the park is a conservation target. Public use will benefit from management actions that increase safety, interpret park habitats and reduce potential harm to the conservation targets.

- Manage vegetation to improve public safety and enjoyment of the park.
- Control poison oak along designated trails.
- Identify, establish, and manage "fire safe zones" for use in the event of major wildfire. Post signage about fire evacuation routes and safe zones at trailhead kiosks.
- Develop signage and interpretive programs to increase public appreciation of the park's habitats.
- Encourage or require all park users and their animals (horses, dogs) to stay on trails.
- Manage trail system to reduce impacts from recreation. Design and build trail with consideration of adjacent habitats and hydrology. Install seed removal kiosks at each trailhead for use by hikers, dog-owners and equestrians.

Willamette Riparian System & Floodplain

- Remove earthen fill and artificial barriers to allow the river to interact with its floodplain.
- Restore side channels, back water sloughs and alcoves that historically connected to the river.
- Restore floodplain habitat diversity by planting native plants.

Creeks & Streams

- Remove barriers to fish passage up to one mile upstream on streams that flow into the Willamette River.

Oak Woodland

- Use prescribed fire every 7 to 13 years to sustain much of the park's oak woodlands.
- Sow seed or plant native grass and wildflowers to increase native coverage in oak woodlands.

Buckbrush Chaparral

- Use prescribed fire every 50 to 75 years to expand and sustain about 40 acres of rare chaparral.
- Sow seed or plant buckbrush and associated native grasses and wildflowers to increase native coverage in areas designated within the future conditions plan as chaparral.

Prairie and Savanna

- Identify accessible, high-priority areas to manage for prairie and savanna habitat. Reduce the cover of encroaching native trees and shrubs on priority areas.
- Use prescribed fire to every 3 to 7 years to sustain much of the park's prairie and savanna.
- Sow seed or plant native grass and wildflowers to increase native coverage in prairie and savanna.

Wetland Prairie

- Maintain and expand rare wet prairies.
- Use prescribed fire every 3 to 5 years to sustain the habitat.
- Expand wetland prairie by girdling or removing encroaching trees and shrubs.

Bradshaw's lomatium

Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*) is a federally endangered wildflower found at Buford Park.

- Actions to maintain and expand wetland prairie habitat will help sustain this conservation target.

THREATS & PROPOSED OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS

The Technical Advisory Group identified 22 "threats" to the long term viability of the conservation targets. Six of the threats were characterized as high or very high and, if not addressed, will harm many or all conservation targets. Proposed objectives and actions to alleviate the three threats that pose the greatest potential harm are described below.

Habitat-modifying Invasive Vegetation

- Maintain an Early Detection Rapid Response program for "new" invasive weeds. Utilize trained volunteers to report new weed sightings, and follow up quickly to confirm report and control the weed.
- Prioritize control of invasive plants first along vectors of distribution, then on outlier populations, and finally control main populations.
- Invasive plants proposed for control include false brome, Maltese starthistle, spotted knapweed, cotoneaster, English ivy, Japanese knotweed, shining geranium, reed canary grass, and tansy ragwort.
- Following control activities, plant suitable native species.
- Encourage or require all park users and their animals (horses, dogs) to stay on trails. (Hikers, horses and dogs spread the seed of invasive plants.)

Habitat Modifying Invasive, non-native terrestrial animals

- Identify problem species and areas of occupation and work with agencies and landowners to reduce their populations in the Mt. Pisgah area.
- Develop inter-agency "Early Detection Rapid Response" program to report problem animals in Mt. Pisgah area.
- Discourage the release of domestic animals into natural areas.

Impacts/Trampling from management

- Define "best management practices" to reduce impacts on public use and habitats.
- Foster inter-agency partnership to develop an equipment-cleaning facility and/or to secure equipment designated for use in Mt. Pisgah area (to reduce spread of weeds from other sites).