10 Years of Restoration: Owens Farm

Has it been 10 years already? A decade ago our community came together to protect Owens Farm through an Open Space Bond Measure and Community Fundraising Campaign. Drivers heading south on Hwy 99 into Corvallis are welcomed by a vista of undulating meadows, riparian corridors and legacy oaks as they pass by the 312 acre Owens Farm. Since GLT’s purchase of 95 acres of the Farm’s wet prairie, oak woodlands and Jackson and Frazier Creeks, we have labored intensively to restore the biodiversity and ecology of the Farm’s historical habitats and provide ecological linkages throughout the Jackson-Frazier Watershed.

WET PRAIRIE

Mere months after purchasing the land in 2002, GLT retined two ryegrass fields and seeded a native wetland prairie mix that included American sloughgrass seeds hand-collected by staff and volunteers. Upon establishment of the native grasses, the fields were then planted with herbaceous seedlings and bulbs such as camas, Nelson’s checkermallow, and Bradshaw’s lomatium, starting in 2006.

OAK SAVANNA

A priority habitat for restoration at Owens are the 3acres of oak savanna. Surveyor’s notes from the General Land Office survey in the 1870’s indicated that most of Owens was occupied by oak savanna, but as we look at aerial images between 1936 and 1969 nearly all of the savanna and prairies were eliminated by encroaching woody vegetation or agricultural development. In 2003 Greenbelt, through habitat restoration contractors, began methodically clearing the oak understory in small increments. Where ten years ago stood an impassable 20 ft. high wall of blackberries and dense brush, there are now light-filled openings scattered with mature Oregon white oaks, and a largely native, herbaceous ground cover. In 2011, 350 maple stems were cut in a final canopy

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For more information, visit www.greenbeltlandtrust.org or 541.752.9609.
Volunteers + Greenbelt
A New Perspective

Volunteer Spotlight

If you come by our office on a Tuesday or Thursday, you will likely run into volunteer Jennifer Ward. Who compels someone with limited free time to use it as a volunteer? Let’s find out!

“Land conservation has always intrigued me and I find conservation at the local level especially compelling. Last fall I found myself with a few extra hours in my week and a desire to get current on my GIS skills and to expand my understanding of local ecosystems and conservation issues. Getting involved with GLT seemed like a good fit.

I first encountered Greenbelt at the Albany Farmers Market a few years ago. Last fall I contacted Jeff (Stewardship Manager) to see if they could use me. The project I am working on is an atlas of 1996 Willamette River flood photos. Greenbelt has about 90 digital aerial photographs covering the flooded Willamette and its major tributaries from Monmouth to Springfield. However, even though the photos are of places, there is no actual geographic data attached to them. Through georeferencing I am assigning correct geographic information to each photograph. This will allow them to be viewed and analyzed, separately or together, in their correct geographic locations.”

“With the chocolate brown floodwaters, these photos easily communicate the full extent of the River. Results expected are to be shared with a variety of partners to better understand the Willamette floodplain and plan ecosystem restoration. Jennifer’s dedication is really appreciated – without her efforts this project really would not have gotten off the ground.” - Stewardship Manager Jeff Baker

Wet Prairie Habitat Spotlight

A Sea of Forbs

“...prairie all luxuriantly clothed in a rich and heavy coat of vegetation... the upland savanna, and converting 6 acres of grass to upland prairie. We have also partnered with the Institute for Applied Ecology to enhance plant diversity in the wet prairies at both Owens Farm and the adjacent Jackson-Frazier Wetlands by moving competing vegetation and planting 11,400 wetland plants.

This is wetland species re-introductions.” – MattBlakeley-Smith, Institute for Applied Ecology

The work of restoration is never really complete, requiring continual stewardship to maintain the enhanced habitats, amid the ever-looming threat of encroaching vegetation and invasive weeds. While the work of Stewardship sometimes seems like a Sisyphean task, the rewards of restoring these native landscapes for our community are well worth the effort invested. We invite you to take a walk with us at Owens Farm this summer and see what a difference a decade makes!

The restoration of Owens Farm would not be possible without the assistance of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service (Partners Program), the Institute for Applied Ecology, and GLT volunteers!

The GLT Volunteer Program is in the process of being re-visionsed. We will continue to have public Stewardship Workdays, while also beginning to integrate specialized projects through ‘Job Descriptions’ found on our website, with projects updated as the needs of the organization evolve.

Examples of Volunteer Opportunities:
- Public Tour Leader
- Adoption Property/ Weed Monitor
- Photography Volunteer
- Outreach Specialist

Do you have an idea for a project that is not listed? Email info@greenbeltlandtrust.org to connect with the right Staff member who can help make your volunteer concept a reality!

10 Years of Restoration

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Volunteer Spotlight

Jennifer Ward