Awash in a sea of purple and yellow hues, the Courtney Creek property, located just south of Brownville in the upper Calapooia Watershed, offers a glimpse back in time. Walking through the prairie you can imagine what the Willamette Valley looked like hundreds of years ago, when the Valley bottom was saturated in spring with wet prairie, now one of the rarest habitat types in North America.

Among the camas blooms you might spy a yellow, low-lying perennial, Bradshaw’s lomatium (pg. 2), scattered among the prairie grass. This unique property is home to one of the largest populations of this endangered plant remaining in the entire Willamette Valley, and the protection of this site will go a long way towards recovery goals for this sensitive species.

With your help, this summer Greenbelt permanently protected these 200 acres!

The protection of the Courtney Creek property represents a strong step forward into Greenbelt’s 10-year conservation vision for the mid-Valley ... a vision that is our promise to you.

As the pressures of limited funding, diminishing habitats, and a fragmented landscape mount, it is more important than ever that we buckle down and lead fearlessly into this vision where significant natural areas are protected, with forests, farmlands, wildlife corridors, hills, meadows, wetlands and watercourses weaving through and around our mid-Willamette Valley communities.

Sloshing through the Courtney Creek prairie this week, I pause to breathe in the wet goodness of soils teeming with bugs, the lichen dripping from the ash trees, and the spring bulbs hidden beneath my feet, readying for their grand entrances in the spring. This is the Willamette Valley, our home.

*Funding for this acquisition was provided by the Bonneville Power Administration’s Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and donors like YOU!*
Birds of a Feather

Did you know that the Western meadowlark (Sturnella neglecta), Oregon’s state bird, is listed as a critical sensitive species?

Western meadowlark are often considered a focal species for grassland bird conservation, and data from a Breeding Bird Survey indicate that they have one of the highest rates of decline (estimated to be 10% per year since 1968) among all grassland bird species in the Willamette Valley, where much of their open prairie habitat has been lost.

Look for the meadowlark perched on fence posts or shrubs at the edge of prairies, their sweet tunes filling the air.

A Burst of Yellow

Tucked beneath the showy camas blooms, you can almost walk right by the small busts of yellow, their pod-like blossoms reaching up into the air as if to say ‘hello’!

Bradshaw’s lomatium (Lomatium bradshawii), a low-lying perennial was once found extensively throughout the Valley’s dominant wet prairie habitats. These plants are pollinated by insects and over thirty species of solitary bees, flies, wasps, and beetles have been observed visiting the flowers.

This plant was added to the endangered species list in 1988 due to a dramatic decrease in population counts and the threat of continued habitat loss and modification. With less than 1% of historic bottomland/wet prairie habitat remaining in the Willamette Valley, it is critical to protect and manage sites like Courtney Creek, home to one of the largest remaining populations of Bradshaw’s lomatium in Oregon!

Member Highlight

The Betjemann Family

Peter and Julianna Betjemann have discovered that conservation is a lot like parenting. As parents and professional educators, they want to expose their boys, Henry (6) and Teddy (3), to the outdoors, but Peter and Julianna now realize that they have been the ones exposed.

If we give our boys a toy, their interest often lasts just minutes. If they find an anthill, the boys squat down and stare inquisitively for a long time. When I go at a kid’s pace, I slow down, crouch down, and notice details. I learn from my kids to be more present and I revel in their unfiltered lens of the natural world. When I’m more present, I better understand what’s around me. The undeveloped meadow I unknowingly biked past thousands of times I now know of as GLT’s Lupine Meadows and that it protects a sensitive ecosystem. Julianna has learned that the Mulkey Ridge trail and habitat she runs through are actively stewarded by GLT and are protected forever.

I’ve learned these valuable lessons from my kids, and it has changed the way I look at open space. If we want to protect land forever, we must be good stewards of it. I trust GLT to have the expertise to fill this role.

The Betjemanns want local land and water to be protected for their kids so that, together, they can explore and learn as they grow.

“We wanted to support local, so we became local supporters of Greenbelt Land Trust.”
Building onto Harkens Lake

15 acres permanently protected!

Like the final puzzle piece fitting in to unveil the full picture, Greenbelt’s recent addition of 15 acres at Harkens Lake completes a 400-acre interconnected network of lands. Over the last six years, Greenbelt, alongside committed landowners, has been building this conservation footprint, acre by acre.

This landscape is dynamic. Sitting next to the Willamette River, the entire floodplain adapts to water, coursing through the swales and side-channels in the winter and spring.

Ties to the land run deeply, embedded in the gravel bars creating islands in the stream, and coursing through the river’s cool channels. On a recent tour of the property, landowner Gary Horning spoke about his grandchildren representing the sixth generation of Hornings on this land. “I’m a farmer – I farm everything from hazelnuts, to pumpkins and grass seed. I also happen to farm habitat.” - Harkens Lake landowner, Gary Horning

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Training the Teachers

A Learning Laboratory at Bald Hill Farm

This summer’s Exploring Oregon’s Ecosystems program brought together 16 educators to spend three days emmersed in environmental education, from prairie ecology to river health. Through this nature immersion, teachers gained skills and knowledge to take back to their classrooms. At Bald Hill Farm, teachers explored oak savannas, discovering the diverse bird species that depend on this habitat, while also studying soils and restoration ecology.

“Because of this program, I am now so much better equipped to inspire and engage my students in science and nature studies!”

- 3rd-grade teacher, Hoover Elementary

* Special thanks to project leaders Marys River Watershed Council and the Institute for Applied Ecology!
Saturday, Sept. 30th, 11am-3pm
Fall Family Harvest Day
Celebrate fall at Bald Hill Farm! At this free, family-friendly event, join Greenbelt and the Corvallis Environmental Center for apple pressing and tasting, pumpkin decorating, guided nature walks, face painting, outdoor games, and more! This event is free, open to the public, and great for the whole family, so bring your kids and a picnic lunch to enjoy at the Farm.

Friday, Oct. 13th, 1-5pm
Savannah and Trail Workday
Join Greenbelt and OSU Service Learning students for an afternoon of restoring oak savanna habitat. We’ll be removing invasive species and Douglas-fir saplings before they get bigger and threaten oak restoration sites, and repairing trails to make them safer for the winter.

Saturday, Oct. 14th, 10am-12pm
Qigong at Bald Hill Farm
Come outdoors with us for Qigong (pronounced “chee gung”), a Chinese form of healing exercise practiced for thousands of years. Peter Eschwey of Soma Clinic for Natural Medicine in Corvallis, will be leading us through gentle movements to stretch the body, increase blood flow, improve mental clarity, and reduce tension—all in a beautiful natural area.

Saturday, Oct. 18th, 10am-2pm
Invasive Species Pull
Join Greenbelt and the OSU Civic Engagement Center to improve streamside habitat for wildlife at the Bald Hill Farm Conservation Area. Activity: We’ll be removing invasive plants growing along Oak Creek to improve wildlife habitat and to beautify a beloved natural area.

For more info and for a full list of upcoming events, visit www.greenbeltlandtrust.org