



Poised for Flight

Saving Endangered Species in Our Backyard

She's fresh on the scene, all grown up and ready to spread her wings. She's looking for food, a mate, and shelter for her offspring, in that order. If it's cold or raining she can't do anything except hunker down in the grass and wait. She'll be dead in three weeks no matter what, and the survival of an entire species hangs on her success.

Time is short for a Fender's blue butterfly, but this story might have a happy ending.

Twenty-one years after landing on the endangered species list, Fender's blue is poised to fly towards recovery.

Thanks to a community of conservation supporters and the public and private partnerships working to save this species and the iconic Willamette Valley habitat it calls home, Fender's blue will move from endangered to threatened status in 2022, an amazing success story for a butterfly that was thought to be extinct in 1937.

Golden paintbrush, Oregon vesper sparrow, Bradshaw's biscuit root, Willamette daisy, Fender's blue butterfly, and the list goes on. Why are there so many rare and endangered species in the Willamette Valley?

It's simple: over 99% of the native habitat in the valley has been converted to other uses, leaving these species on the brink of extinction.

Making an endangered species is easy. Saving them is hard. But Fender's blue isn't the only recent proof that we can save them when we bring the collective will and support of our community together.

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The majority of these species are on private land and recovery can't happen without collaboration and conservation by private landowners.

— Carolyn Menke
Stewardship Manager

— ” —

Golden paintbrush is a delicate, glowing spot of light on Pacific Northwest prairies. Down to 10 populations in 1997, and completely extirpated in Oregon, recent restoration efforts have resulted in the plant's recovery and allowed the US Fish and Wildlife Service to propose to remove it from the endangered species list.

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Golden paintbrush at Lupine Meadows



Bradshaw's desert parsley
at Courtney Creek

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Both Golden paintbrush and Fender's blue butterfly are protected at Greenbelt's Lupine Meadows property in Philomath. With your support, we are protecting the places that hold the fate of multiple species and working with our conservation partners to restore habitat so that more conservation success stories are on the horizon.

Saving species starts with protecting land. Our conservation staff are experts in finding the most important places to protect in the mid-Willamette Valley.

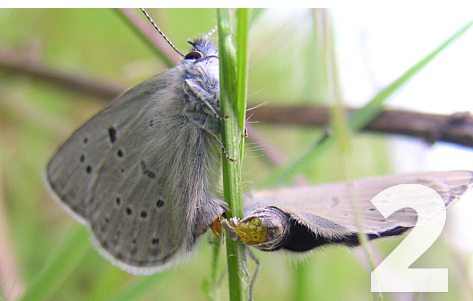
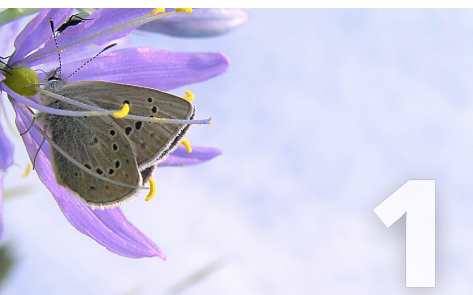
Bradshaw's desert parsley, a "biscuit-root" found only in wet prairies in the Willamette Valley, was listed as endangered in 1988, down to 11 populations and 30,000 plants. In 2017 Greenbelt purchased Courtney Creek, a property outside of Brownsville with a large Bradshaw's desert parsley population, ensuring it's permanent protection. Protecting and restoring places like Courtney Creek has allowed the species to thrive. Now numbering 11 million plants in 24 populations, the plant was taken off the endangered species list in March.

These victories in the valley can only happen because of conservation efforts on private land, where the majority of our disappearing species are found. The wildlife refuge system and other public lands are vital, but not big enough to ensure their survival.

For the biscuit root, private land protection was key to recovery. "In the case of Bradshaw's desert parsley, it is specifically Greenbelt properties east of the Willamette River that got this species over the finish line and off the endangered species list," says USFWS biologist and Greenbelt member Jarod Jebousek, "Public-private partnerships are crucial to the recovery of these species, and it is hugely important that Greenbelt is protecting these places in the Willamette Valley."



Kincaid's lupine
at Lupine Meadows



Home Prairie Blues: No Time to Lose

The Fender's blue butterfly spends all but a few weeks of its life as a caterpillar, mostly crawling around on and eating the leaves of its host plant, Kincaid's lupine. When it emerges from the cocoon and spreads those fresh blue, or in the case of the female, brown wings, it needs to get right to the important stuff.

First up is food. The adult butterflies feed on nectar from any available source, but the amount of sugar in nectar from native plants is sometimes ten times higher than that in non-natives. And for butterflies, sugar is a good thing, so restoring the native plant community, especially the wildflowers, is key to the effort to save Fender's blue.

After feeding, the male and female butterflies find each other and mate, and then the female needs to find a Kincaid's lupine on which to lay her eggs. The eggs hatch a week or so later, and the pin tip tiny larvae crawl around and suck the juice out of the leaves. By the end of June, the entire species is curled up and asleep at the base of the plants they were hatched on, waiting for the emergence of the lupine leaves in March, when the cycle begins again.

There is no multigenerational thousand-mile journey for Fender's blue. The Willamette Valley is home, and our last remaining native prairies are holding its fate. It's up to us to save it.

With your support of our work at places like Lupine Meadows to protect and restore native plant communities and connect native habitat, this icon of the valley will remain a bright spot of blue flying over our home prairies - the only place you can find it on the planet.

What's Important to Me: Audrey Perkins

"We live in a world where we have two basic ways of directing what is important to us: our votes and our dollars. I think people miss the opportunity sometimes to vote with dollars. We don't always need to wait for referendums to pass to pay taxes that we want to pay. We can easily self-tax something that is important to us! This is what I chose to do.

Greenbelt's work is so, so critical to me that I didn't want to miss a donation opportunity, so I asked if I could set up an automatic withdrawal to contribute each month - my self-tax!"



Audrey Perkins



Forest restoration tour, September 2021

Forest Restoration

Mulkey Forest Trail Closure Continues

This month Greenbelt wrapped up the first phase of a 2-year thinning and habitat restoration project on Mulkey Forest to connect ecologically important oak savanna, oak woodland, and prairie habitats, decrease wildfire risk, and increase access for wildfire response.

Thank you for your patience during the Mulkey Forest trail closure, and thank you to the volunteers who helped prepare the trail for re-opening. Unfortunately, events and the weather have worked against us in getting enough gravel up to one problematic, and very muddy 400-foot section of the trail, and the trail will need to remain closed for the next several weeks at least.

We will implement a permanent solution for this section of trail in the spring when soil conditions allow. For now, we are working on several solutions to make it passable through the winter. Rest assured we will open it as soon as possible. Stay tuned for updates, and a call for trail-loving volunteers!



Aerial image of project site, post-thinning



Logs removed to enhance oak woodlands and oak savanna habitat



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Donations can be made by cash, check, credit card, or through your bank account.

MAKE A LEGACY GIFT

Have you considered a legacy gift to the Land Trust?

Planned gifts are a wonderful way to leave a legacy for future generations! Join our Heritage Circle by letting us know that Greenbelt has been included in your estate plans.

MAKE AN IRA DISTRIBUTION

Individuals who are required to make a minimum distribution through their IRA may consider donating their distribution to the Land Trust, which also enables donors to avoid paying taxes on these assets.

DONATE STOCK

Donating stock is a smart and simple way to help protect the natural world.

When you make a tax-deductible donation of appreciated securities to the Land Trust, we sell the securities and use the proceeds to fund critical work.

More information on ways to support us: greenbeltlandtrust.org

Please contact Ashley Relf, Development Director: ashley@greenbeltlandtrust.org or (541) 752.9609