

IMPACT

REPORT 2023

Working in partnership...

2023 was a big year for the partnership! After successfully securing our first Focused Investment Partnership Grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board in 2022, we have catalyzed our first full year of implementation. 9 grant proposals with ECOP partners including Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Mt. Hood National Forest, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department are now under agreement! We are grateful to the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation, Pacific Birds, and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for supporting Oregon white oak conservation throughout the East Cascades.

In 2023, ECOP engaged hundreds of participants through 16 events and learning tours and 4 quarterly meetings. ECOP's workshops and tours focus on core competencies like wildflower and grass identification, utilization of prescribed fire, as well as learning opportunities around monitoring and grazing practices. We updated, printed and distributed targeted brochures around oak and fire adaptability, grazing, and rural residential living - connecting communities with the resources and knowledge they need to thrive in oak habitats. We translated our "Role of Oaks" poster and created Spanish language outreach materials inviting folks to experience and appreciate local oak landscapes.



227

ACRES OF PRIORITY
OAK HABITAT ASSESSED
& PRIORITIZED

220

ACRES OF INVADDED OAK
UNDERSTORY UNDERGOING
TREATMENT

Technical Assistance

What is a technical assistance project?

ECOP allocated funding to four Technical Assistance (TA) projects in 2023. TA support allows ECOP-dedicated staff at Columbia Land Trust to facilitate working groups and advance work on management guidance, current condition assessment tools, and native plant material sourcing and development in response to needs identified during strategic planning. TA also improves shovel readiness for future priority restoration projects through surveys, permits, and assessments, including Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's cultural resource surveys on the White River Wildlife Area, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's restoration assessments in the Columbia River Gorge. TA expands the reach and improves the quality of future restoration treatments!



Foundations for Restoration

ECOP partners with leadership from NRCS refined and field tested a classification approach that describes the incredible diversity of oak systems in the East Cascades, and the response of those systems to disturbances like fire and restoration. The resulting ecological site descriptions will form the basis of our current condition assessment tool and help partners chart a restoration pathway towards improved ecological condition!



Projects Promoting Shovel Readiness

- Oregon Parks and Recreation - 227 acre Oak stand restoration assessment in the Scenic Area completed
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife - Cultural Resource survey on 6,000 acres

“Working together, and utilizing the tools and frameworks (ECOP is developing), ECOP partners can more effectively build the capacity to deploy conservation strategies that are adaptive to ecological change, empowering of stakeholders, and that manifest in functional, intact oak systems with improved ecological integrity.”

- Chase Brown, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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With a little help from our friends...



Learning Tours and Events

From targeted learning tours to quarterly meetings with speakers and networking opportunities, ECOP participated in 20 events in 2023 - sharing management guidance, emerging science, and facilitating collaborative learning in oak habitats with nearly a thousand people. Thanks to our new YouTube playlist, there is no limit to how many will benefit from the partnership's outreach and learning opportunities.



Working Groups

Rooted in collaborative action, 3 working groups have assembled to tackle monitoring, development of the Current Condition Assessment Tool and oak Ecological Site Descriptions, and to address gaps in native plant materials access throughout our FIP geography. Working groups dedicate hundreds of hours collectively toward addressing knowledge gaps, resource limitations, and advancing conservation strategies.



Focused Investment Partnership Progress

- 8 Applications to OWEB, allocating \$1.3 million of OWEB FIP funds toward strategic conservation actions outlined in ECOP's Strategic Action Plan
- Onboarded two full time ECOP staff positions
- Completed our Monitoring and Outreach Plans

“In a time of changing climate, this Focused Investment Partnership initiative is well suited to support biodiversity in oak woodland and prairie habitats, and help protect vulnerable communities from catastrophic wildfire.”

- OWEB Executive Director Lisa Charpillouz Hason

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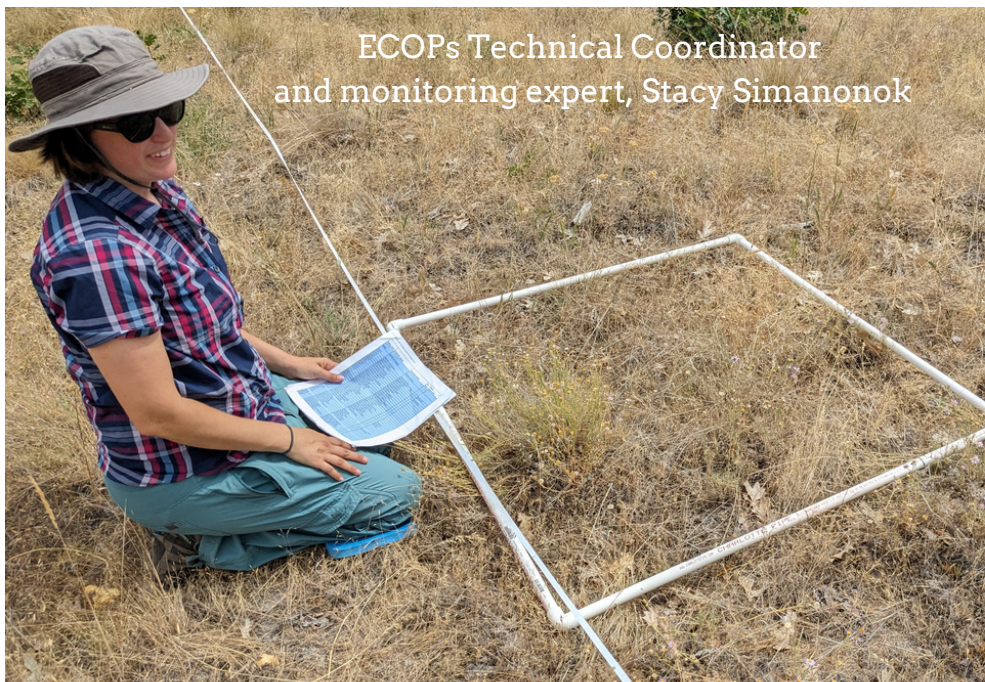
Monitoring

ECOP has developed a monitoring plan outlining our approach and specific monitoring questions. The standardized ECOP Monitoring Protocol is being used to collect baseline oak data as well as on specific forest management projects on partner lands. The first round of oak related data has been analyzed and ECOP staff presented results to the Wasco County Forest Collaborative.

As new restoration projects commence, the ECOP Disturbance Monitoring Protocol will be used to collect pre- and post-treatment data that will inform restoration success. In addition to this module, the ECOP Understory Module and ECOP Fire Module were developed and implemented in 2023.

What is next?

Working with partners at OSU and Cal Poly Humboldt, ECOP is strategizing ways to advance monitoring of oak thinning prescriptions and outcomes. We are securing funding through our FIP and private funding sources to further our understanding of oak treatment outcomes which can inform restoration prescriptions throughout the East Cascades.



108

PLOTS INSTALLED
TO DATE

ECOP
MONITORING PLAN
AND 3 MODULES
DEVELOPED



IMPACT 2023

Treating Invasives: Mt. Hood National Forest

ECOP FIP's inaugural restoration project...

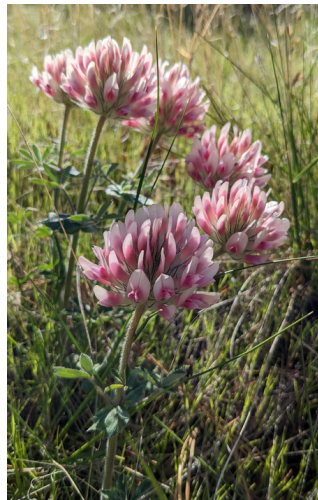


The first of many restoration projects to move through our FIP, the US Forest Service was awarded \$105,000 for invasive annual grass treatment and seed source development in the Mt. Hood National Forest. **200 acres of invasive annual grass infested oak woodland will be treated over the next 3 years.** Treatment will be followed by seeding with as much locally collected plant material as possible.

The ECOP FIP is rooted in collaboration, and this project is a perfect embodiment of mutual support. This project includes seed collection and growout, which will be used to reseed treated areas. **Extra seed produced will be deployed on restoration projects across ECOP's geography!**

“The East Cascades Oak Partnership empowers stakeholders to build foundations across ownership boundaries for a functional Oregon white oak plant community with high ecological integrity.”

– Kameron Sam, District Ranger
Mt. Hood National Forest



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