



Lomatium Prairie & Floodplain Forest Restoration at Erickson's

Project Background & Description

Only about 1% of the historical 40,000 acres of wet prairie remain in the Long Tom Watershed. This project, located about 1/2 mile north of the Fern Ridge dam, is restoring wet prairie and floodplain forest habitats on a site adjacent to the Long Tom River. The site is comprised of 32 acres of wet prairie and 62 acres of hardwood floodplain forest, including some remnant oak savanna and woodlands.

This wet prairie contains one of the largest known **populations of Bradshaw's lomatium in Lane County**. This federally listed species is threatened by habitat loss and encroachment from trees, shrubs, and invasive species. Fire used to play an important ecological function in Willamette Valley prairie and savanna habitats because it created open areas for grasses and forbs by suppressing the growth of trees and shrubs. Lack of fire has altered plant diversity and stand structure, allowing trees like ash to encroach on the oaks and wet prairie. This has altered habitat conditions for birds and other wildlife.

Restoration includes removal of non-native species, thinning of encroaching trees and shrubs (such as ash), and removing an undersized culvert that presented a fish passage barrier to native fish such as cutthroat trout on the historic Coyote Creek channel.



This dense ash thicket has limited biodiversity and stand structure. These trees will be removed to allow prairie plant species to grow. In the oak woodland, smaller oaks will be thinned to increase understory plant diversity and benefit wildlife by allowing larger oaks to thrive and increase acorn production.



Existing wet prairie at Erickson's. This area has been mowed to remove invasive blackberry. The area dominated by an ash thicket will support a diversity of prairie plant species as seen here.



Federally-listed **Bradshaw's lomatium** is found in wet prairie on the site.



Lomatium Prairie & Floodplain Forest Enhancement at Erickson's

Restoration Techniques

- ◆ Salix Associates surveyed and mapped the Erickson site to determine the distribution of rare native plants and invasive plants, allowing the Council to minimize impact on rare plants and prioritize locations for weed control.
- ◆ Mowing, along with prescribed burning and herbicide treatment, will control invasive plants. Blackberry thickets will also be removed and bare areas seeded with native plants.
- ◆ Thinning trees within the floodplain forest will reduce the amount of competition the retained oaks face for light and space. This will improve their growth characteristics and acorn production. Existing wet prairie areas are being heavily encroached by ash trees, which will be removed to allow for prairie expansion and to benefit native prairie plant species.
- ◆ At the north end of the property, we will remove an undersized culvert across the main historic



This undersized culvert blocks fish passage on the historic Coyote Creek channel bed.

Environmental & Economic Benefits

- ◆ Removing encroaching trees and invasive plants from the wet prairie increases native plant diversity and will contribute to the recovery of **endangered species such as Bradshaw's lomatium**.
- ◆ Thinning dense stands of trees and shrubs will increase understory plant diversity in the floodplain forest.
- ◆ More plant diversity increases the abundance and diversity of native terrestrial invertebrates and wildlife such as salamanders. This improves habitat and food availability for rare woodland birds.
- ◆ Removal of competition increases light availability and oak acorn production, which contributes food for wildlife.
- ◆ Contractors from the surrounding area were used for all phases of the project which contributed to the local economy.



Invasive blackberry thickets will be removed from this transition zone ere mowed from this transition zone between the floodplain forest and prairie.

Project Funding & Support

Project Cost:	\$ 106,602
OWEB Funding:	\$ 60,152
Landowner Match:	\$ 1,850

Partners
 Paula Erickson, *Landowner*
 Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)
 Bruce Newhouse, *Salix Associates*
 Steve Smith, *U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*

The Long Tom Watershed Council thanks our partners and funders!