



Prairie conservation update

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COLLABORATION IS KEY when it comes to conservation and restoration initiatives. Wolf Haven is fortunate to partner with many impressive organizations and agencies in the effort to conserve and protect wolves. Our prairie restoration efforts are no different. Year-round, we collaborate with supportive partner organizations to restore the protected Mima Mound prairie on our Tenino site. Seed collection is one of our important collaborations. In 2021, volunteer

seed collectors gathered a total of 12 pounds of acorns from Wolf Haven. The acorns were so plentiful this year that the collecting effort was quick, and more than enough acorns were left behind for wildlife. The collectors sorted the acorns by adding them to a bucket of water: good acorns sank to the bottom while unusable acorns, including those already damaged or partially eaten by wildlife, rose to the top. Overall, volunteers collected a total of 60 pounds of acorns from four local prairies. These acorns will





be used for oak propagation in ongoing prairie restoration efforts.

Through the Sustainability in Prisons Project (SPP), nursery technicians at the Washington Corrections Center for Women cultivate garry oaks and over 30 other species used in Western Washington ecological restoration. The oaks are outplanted at Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) to increase the extent of oak woodlands and replace damaged oaks. SPP’s Conservation Nursery Manager, Carl Elliot, noted that, “approximately 1,500 oaks are planted out at JBLM each year. To have a consistent supply of oak saplings, SPP sows 3,000 to 4,500 oaks every other year or every third year due to the cyclical availability of acorns.” Elliot went on to explain that garry oaks produce acorns in a masting cycle: a mast year with numerous acorns is followed by one or more lean years of acorn production. He emphasized that collecting enough acorns in a mast year takes a dedicated and persistent effort from volunteers on the South Salish lowland prairies.

In addition to seed collection, the Center for Natural Lands Management’s annual prescribed burn is a critical component of prairie restoration for the Patrick Vance Dunn Memorial Prairie at Wolf Haven. Prescribed burns play an essential role by improving landscape resilience and promoting the growth of native plant species. Tubers, seed plants and medicinal plants all germinate after a fire. We have noticed that every year, in the spring, the native plants are especially abundant in the area burned the previous fall.

We are grateful to our partners in prairie restoration. We look forward to continuing to improve landscape resilience on the Patrick Van Duncce Memorial Prairie and other local prairies! 🐾

Photos: Volunteers work to collect and sort acorns on Wolf Haven’s prairie. At left: Center for Natural Lands Management staff perform a prescribed burn at Wolf Haven’s prairie.

Wolf Haven.

