RECOVERY OF LISTED SPECIES WITHIN THE NATIVE PRAIRIES OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY, OREGON

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Abstract: Oregon's Willamette Valley was once a widespread landscape of prairies and oak savannahs, maintained by burning from the Kalapuya native people. Regular burning ceased with Euro-American settlement and the Valley was gradually developed for agricultural and urban use. The decline in the prairies and their increased fragmentation has led to the decline of many species of native prairie plants and animals. As a result, four plant species (Bradshaw's desert parsley, Willamette daisy, Kincaid's lupine, Nelson's checker-mallow) and a butterfly (Fender's blue) have been listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oregon State Office has led in the preparation of a combined recovery plan covering these five prairie species. The plan designates recovery zones, has specific population and/or habitat goals for each listed species, and lists recovery actions. The Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex has been on the forefront of implementing recovery actions that work towards down-listing and de-listing criteria. With key parcels located throughout the Valley, the Refuges are considered critical anchors for recovering populations. Other key recovery sites are Nature Conservancy preserves, Wetland Reserve Program easement lands, and other public and private sites. Significant progress towards recovery has been made over the past five years through implementation of a variety of techniques and management actions including direct seeding, propagation and transplanting, woody vegetation removal, prescribed fire, and herbicide treatments. Key partners conducting related monitoring and research have included Oregon State University and the Institute for Applied Ecology.