

Wildfires in a Changing Climate

Three Questions with Ryan Haugo, PhD, Oregon Director of Conservation Science

Wildfires and smoke were big issues for Oregonians in 2017 with high-profile fires around the state and historically poor air quality in several communities. We asked Ryan Haugo for his perspective on the current and future state of wildfire in Oregon.



Q: It seems like wildfires are getting worse in Oregon and across the West. Is that true, and if so, what are some of the causes?

Ryan: Wildfires are getting more severe, and many more acres are burning than even just 20-30 years ago. Particularly in eastern and southwest Oregon our forests are out of whack because of past

management practices including decades of fire suppression. This means more fuel for the inevitable fires, and more severe fires more often. Unfortunately, climate change is only going to make things worse.

Q: What role does climate change play in wildfires in Oregon?

Ryan: Climate change is creating hotter, drier and longer fire seasons. We need to accept the fact that we are going to be living with wildfires and work to be better prepared for them. We need to create fire adapted communities and healthy, resilient forests that provide clean water, clean air and economic benefits to Oregon communities.

Q: How do we get there and what is The Nature Conservancy doing to help?

Ryan: Our forest team is thinking big and working on multiple fronts: we're helping to identify the most important places to promote ecological restoration; we're working with the US Forest Service, the Oregon Department of Forestry and local communities to plan and implement mechanical thinning more efficiently; and we're joining partners to conduct controlled burns and re-introduce the natural low-intensity fires that help keep these forests healthy and resilient. The big solutions we need are going to be found at the intersection of science, forest management, public policy and societal change, so that is where we are working.

SPRING TRAININGS

The Nature Conservancy's spring trainings provide volunteers with a variety of opportunities to develop and expand leadership and naturalist skills while helping protect some of Oregon's most remarkable places. To learn how to apply, please visit [Nature.org/OregonVolunteer](https://www.nature.org/OregonVolunteer).

Volunteer Naturalist Leadership Trainings

Volunteer Naturalists greet visitors, answer questions and foster compliance with visitor guidelines.

Tom McCall Preserve
Saturday, March 31

Cascade Head Preserve
Saturday, May 19

Crew Leader Training

Crew leaders provide support and leadership for work parties across the state. Volunteers commit to leading two work parties during the 2018 field season and applications are handled on a rolling basis.



Coming Soon: A New Home for Conservation



The Nature Conservancy's work is best seen in the beautiful, natural places we work to protect and restore, but each day, our efforts in the field are supported by science and strategy from our state headquarters in Southeast Portland. Thanks to the generosity of donors who saw the significant need for more sustainable and functional facilities, we will soon begin a major renovation project on our 40-year old building located at SE 14th and Morrison.

Featuring improved efficiencies, modern technologies and more

collaborative spaces, including a large community room addition, the Oregon Conservation Center will open its doors in Spring of 2019. It will be a home for thought leadership, partnerships, and new solutions to address large scale, multifaceted challenges such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, modernizing fisheries management, advancing collaborative forest restoration and developing innovative approaches to sage grouse habitat protection.

We believe more is achieved by working together, so in addition to serving as the hub for our work around the state, our many partners in conservation will be able to use the Oregon Conservation Center for meetings and events. This space will inspire action, nurture dialog, engage the community and literally bring more people to the table on behalf of nature.

[LEARN MORE Nature.org/Oregon](https://www.nature.org/Oregon)



Burning and Learning – Good Fire at Sycan Marsh

This past October, Sycan Preserve Steward and Burn Boss Katie Sauerbrey led controlled burns on over 1000 acres on our Sycan Marsh Preserve and neighboring land. This served as a two week training opportunity for 77 fire professionals and included an intensive fire behavior research project with 21 scientists from multiple agencies and universities learning together in the field.

Controlled burns help decrease the threat of high-intensity, high-severity wildfires while also improving forest health, soil productivity and wildlife habitat. Our fire team works in public-private partnerships to apply good fire to the landscape while training fire workers and advancing the science of fire.



FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

The Nature Conservancy's "Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future," or LEAF program, brings students from urban high schools to work with Conservancy staff in the field for the month of July.

LEAF students work alongside our staff on science and stewardship projects and learn more about careers in conservation. In 2018 we will welcome a crew for the first time to Zumwalt Prairie for what is sure to be a rewarding month in northeast Oregon.



[LEARN MORE Nature.org/LEAF](https://www.nature.org/LEAF)

COVER TOP TO BOTTOM Eagle Creek Fire © iStockphoto; Ryan Haugo. © Hannah Letinich; THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM Oregon Conservation Center from SE 14th and Belmont. © Lever Architecture; Meeting and event space. © Lever Architecture; TNC volunteers at Portland's Mt. Tabor Park. © Tim Jewett; OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE A Forest at Sycan Marsh Preserve before and after controlled burns. © TNC; Sycan Preserve Steward and Burn Boss Katie Sauerbrey. © TNC; LEAF students celebrate together. © Mitch Maxson/TNC

oregon nature

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION:

TO CONSERVE THE LANDS
AND WATERS ON WHICH
ALL LIFE DEPENDS

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DENNIS AND KAREN SHASHA

A Family's Gift to Conservation and Learning



Students explore at Tom McCall Preserve at Rowena. © Morgan Parks

Longtime Conservancy donors Dennis and Karen Shasha reside in New York but also own a home in Hood River which they visit for skiing, climbing, hiking, and windsurfing. With the purpose of honoring Dennis' late parents and giving back to a part of Oregon they love, the Alfred and Hanina Shasha Foundation has established the Shasha Family Endowment and the Shasha Family Fund for Conservation Education.

According to Dennis, his parents "fervently appreciated the openness and acceptance of people in the United States and particularly loved the varied nature of the country." Both Alfred and Hanina were born in Baghdad but had to leave Iraq due to religious persecution. They eventually immigrated to the United States where they met and were married. Alfred was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in 1946 after being awarded

three Bronze stars for his service in World War II. Hanina studied Islamic architecture in Egypt, earned an interior decorating degree, taught French and enjoyed painting.

The Endowment will provide dedicated funding for stewardship in Oregon, with preference given to activities at the Tom McCall Preserve in Rowena. Some of the earliest fruits of this gift can be seen at Tom McCall this summer with the installation of new interpretive and trail signage for the preserve.

The Fund for Conservation Education will support a research fellowship at Portland State University dedicated to developing the scientific foundation for Natural Climate Solutions within the Pacific Northwest. It is truly a privilege to have been chosen by the Shasha family to help honor Alfred and Hanina Shasha in this way.

Restoration Work Party Schedule

There are numerous opportunities this spring, summer and fall to enjoy the great outdoors while working with Conservancy ecologists and volunteer teams to protect some of Oregon's most critical habitats. Many events are family friendly. Register online at Nature.org/OregonWorkParties.

MARCH

Saturday, March 17

Tom McCall at Rowena

Trail maintenance on the McCall Point hiking trail

Saturday, March 24

Miami Wetlands

Flood debris cleanup

Wilkes Creek Headwaters

Planting native species with Portland Parks & Recreation

APRIL

CELEBRATE EARTH MONTH WITH US!

Saturday, April 14

Whetstone Savanna

Remove invasive curly dock from vernal pools

Camassia Natural Area

Help remove ivy from this Portland-area gem

Saturday, April 21

Wilkes Creek Headwaters

Plant native species with Portland Parks & Recreation

Saturday, April 28

Kilchis Estuary

Flood debris cleanup

MAY

Saturday, May 5

Agate Desert

Remove invasive wild oats and other weeds from native prairie habitat.

Saturday, May 5

Kingston Prairie

Pull invasive Scotch broom and join our staff on a native wildflower walk

Saturday, May 19

Noble Oaks

Remove wood fence and view spring wildflowers

JUNE

Saturday, June 2

Cascade Head

Remove blackberry and enjoy one of the Coast's best views

Saturday, June 9

Powell Butte Nature Park

Trail work and native plant care with Portland Parks & Recreation

Saturday & Sunday, June 9-10

Sycan Marsh

Fence removal and repair

Saturday, June 23

Sandy River

Remove invasive species

Saturday, June 30

Upper Table Rock

Pull invasive starthistle and collect native seed atop Upper Table Rock

JULY

Saturday, July 7

Nesika Beach

Remove Scotch broom, English ivy & holly

Saturday, July 14

Popcorn Swale

Remove invasive teasel

Saturday & Sunday, July 14-15

Juniper Hills

Fence removal

Saturday, July 21

Cascade Head

Pull Canada thistle and collect native seed on the pinnacle

AUGUST

Saturday & Sunday, August 11-12

Cascade Head

Pull Queen Anne's lace & collect native seed

Saturday & Sunday, August 25-26

Blind Slough Swamp

Pull purple loosestrife and English ivy on land and by canoe. We'll work full days on Saturday and Sunday.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday & Sunday, September 8-9

Zumwalt Prairie

Perform fence work, invasive species removal and monitoring, trail maintenance and facilities improvements

Saturday, September 22

Cascade Head

Collect native seed, remove blackberry and celebrate coastal volunteer efforts

Saturday, September 29

Mt. Tabor Park

Help with a variety of restoration activities around this Portland Parks & Recreation site and enjoy an end of season celebration

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 13

Willow Creek

Plant native species in Fender's Blue Butterfly restoration area

Tom McCall at Rowena

Trail maintenance on the McCall Point hiking trail

Join us for a hike!

The Nature Conservancy offers FREE guided naturalist hikes at some of our most special Oregon preserves. Each hike features natural resource history, preserve information and fun facts. Head to [Nature.org/OregonEvents](https://www.nature.org/OregonEvents) to learn more and to register.

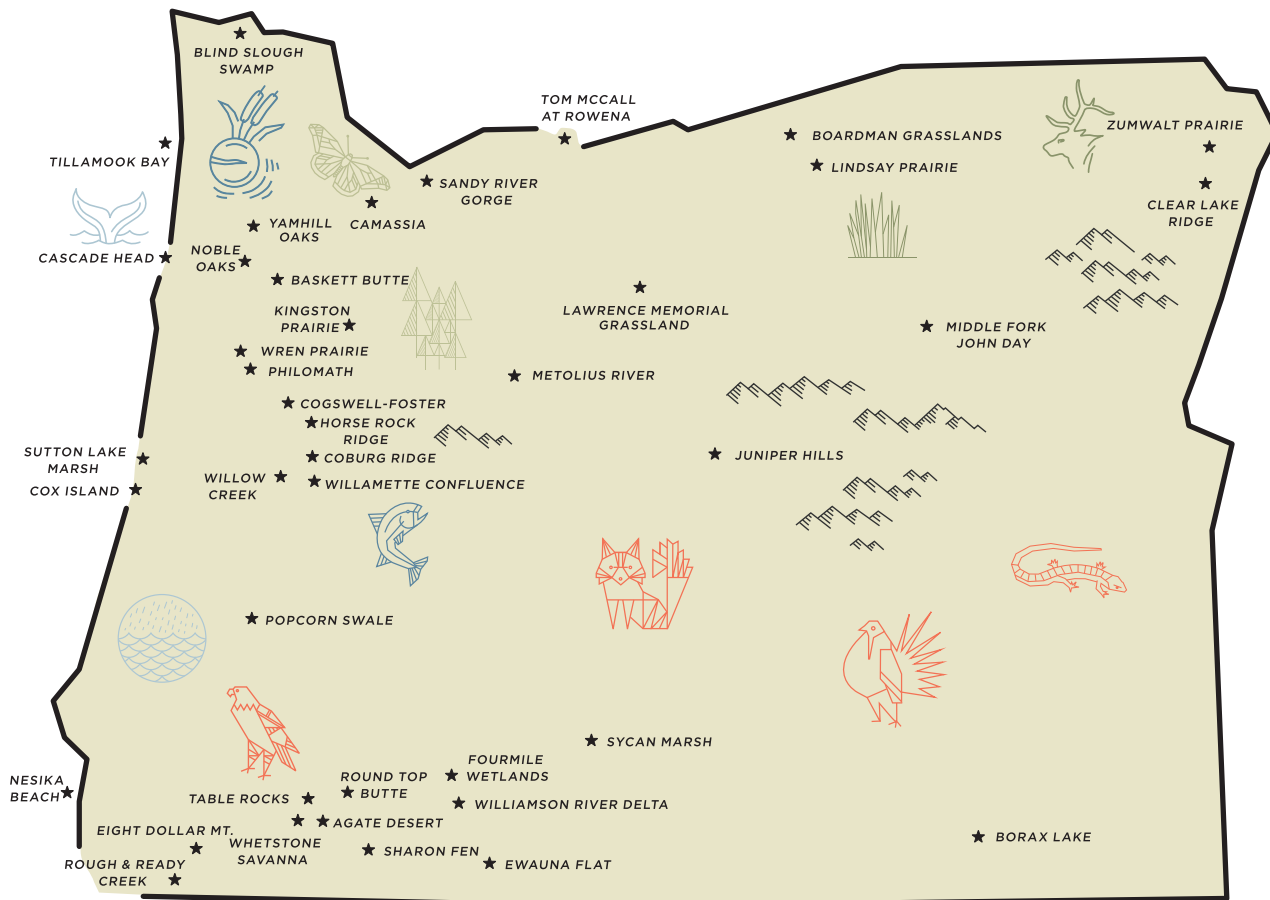


TABLE ROCKS

Medford, OR

Saturday and Sundays, April 7 - May 20

WILLAMETTE CONFLUENCE

Bird walks

Eugene, OR

May 16 and June 16

WILLAMETTE CONFLUENCE

Eugene, OR

April 7, May 12, June 9, August 11,

September 22

CAMASSIA NATURAL AREA

West Linn, OR

April 21, April 29, Mother's Day May 13

TOM McCALL PRESERVE

Mosier, OR

April 28 and May 19

SYCAN MARSH PRESERVE

Bird walk

Upper Klamath Basin, OR

May 5

WILLOW CREEK PRESERVE

Eugene, OR

May 12

JUNIPER HILLS PRESERVE

Southeast of Prineville, OR

June 9

CASCADE HEAD PRESERVE

Lincoln City, OR

July 28 and September 8

COBURG RIDGE PRESERVE

Eugene, OR

September 8