



Adoption of Oak Savannah Management on Private Lands in the Willamette Valley, Oregon

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Willamette Valley's white oak (*Quercus garryana*) savannahs and woodlands have been disappearing from the rural landscape at an alarming rate. Management of this ecosystem has the potential to make significant contributions to the economic and ecological health of the Valley by providing wood for wine barrels as well as critical habitat for a number of species in decline, such as the Western gray squirrel, white breasted nuthatch and Western bluebird. Although techniques and strategies for oak ecosystem restoration and management have been developed, only a handful of private landowners have adopted them. As a direct result, supplies of white oak timber products are viewed as unreliable by potential consumers and species dependent on healthy, functioning oak habitats have declined. The American Forest Foundation initiated a NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant project to demonstrate the potential for innovative oak woodland conservation management. The project focused on increasing the adoption of oak ecosystem management by family forest owners and promoting oak wood utilization. The project activities included cost share assistance and outreach to leverage the impact of on the ground work. Cost share assistance was provided to seven family forest owners to implement practices on 176 acres. Over 100 family forest owners, who collectively hold nearly 10,000 acres, attended demonstration field days that highlighted oak management practices and economic opportunities associated with oak wood. In addition, an interpretive trail installed at a landowner property near Benton County will serve as a permanent educational resource. Landowner awareness signs, distributed to over 30 landowners that are implementing recommended oak management practices on over 2,000 acres, will ensure that efforts by family forest owners to restore this important ecosystem are recognized.

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