

TARGETED HERBIVORY: PLANT COMMUNITY RESPONSE AND CULTURAL RELEVANCY IN A WILLAMETTE VALLEY OAK SAVANNA

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Land managers today face novel management challenges in Willamette Valley oak savanna plant communities, given decades of shrub encroachment and nonnative species introductions, increasing wildfire risk, and the desire to protect cultural values. Restoring historic ecocultural fire regimes is a priority but cannot be solely relied upon. Mowing is an option but is limited by seasonal restrictions and offers mixed success in sustaining plant communities of interest. Long-term herbicide use is not desirable to protect cultural uses. In response to these issues, a partnership among the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Long Tom Watershed Council, and Oregon State University set out to explore targeted grazing by goats and sheep as a potential supplemental management tool to address shrub encroachment. The study site is on Tribal-owned land near Sheridan, OR with relatively high native grass and forb diversity, periodic invasive grasses, and a high density of native and nonnative shrub growth. This observational study set out to measure and compare changes to plant community structure and composition before and 1 year after either mowing, targeted grazing, burning, or no action. In this poster presentation, we outline the partnership's objectives, study design, and first year results. Land managers may consider these outcomes alongside cultural and logistical factors when determining best options for restoring and sustaining oak savannas.

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