



Klamath Siskiyou

Oak Network

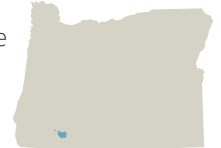
Little Butte Oak Initiative

OAK WOODLAND & PRAIRIE HABITAT



Black-throated Gray Warbler is a focal species in oak conifer habitat.
(credit: Frank Lospalluta)

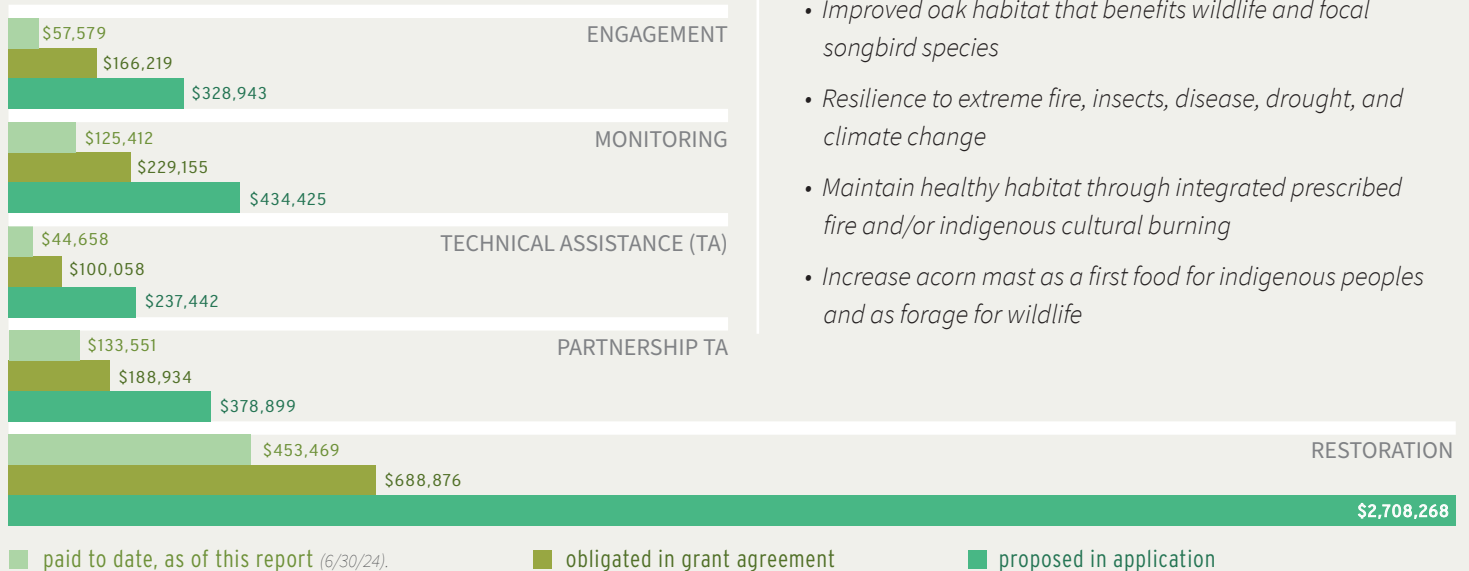
The Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network's initiative is aimed at preserving oak-prairie habitats in southern Oregon's Klamath Siskiyou Bioregion, focusing on four ecosystems: oak savanna, oak chaparral, oak woodland, and oak conifer. Key areas include the Little Butte Creek Watershed and Table Rocks.



The Initiative's primary goals are to combat fire exclusion and conifer encroachment through restoration efforts and strengthen partnerships to support future conservation initiatives.

Funding

OWEB awarded \$4,087,977 in funding for the first two of an anticipated 3 biennia. At the time of application, the FIP anticipated leveraging an additional \$2,823,065 throughout the life of the initiative.



Benefits

- Improved oak habitat that benefits wildlife and focal songbird species
- Resilience to extreme fire, insects, disease, drought, and climate change
- Maintain healthy habitat through integrated prescribed fire and/or indigenous cultural burning
- Increase acorn mast as a first food for indigenous peoples and as forage for wildlife

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant program supports high-performing partnerships to implement strategic restoration actions and measure ecological outcomes through coordinated monitoring. In January 2022, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) awarded a FIP grant to the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network. This report documents cumulative progress since the FIP was initiated in 2022. Work completed under the FIP grant program is part of a much larger on-going collaborative effort of federal, state and local agencies, tribes, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations in Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network Planning Area. Accomplishments included in the report only reflect actions completed with OWEB FIP funding.

PARTNERS

Bureau of Land Management – Medford District • Klamath Bird Observatory • Lomakatsi Restoration Project • Natural Resources Conservation Service • Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife • Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture • Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative • The Nature Conservancy • Understory Initiative • US Fish & Wildlife Service • US Forest Service – Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

GOAL

With the support of local community and Tribes, restore 2,180 acres of oak habitat using prescribed fire, and vegetation management.



- Maintain and increase the amount of oak habitat acres, and increase retention of native oak species.
- Protect target habitats from severe fire; reduce woody fuel loads and reintroduce low severity prescribed fires.

STRATEGIES

- Maintain and enhance native plant species diversity to benefit songbirds and other wildlife while providing climate benefits.



IMPLEMENTATION

Engagement

75
POSTCARDS
MAILED TO
HIGH-PRIORITY
LANDOWNERS

1
LANDOWNER
EDUCATED AND
ENROLLED

8
COMMUNITY
EVENTS

Planning & Adaptive Management

1
PRE-RESTORATION
FIELD REVIEW
WITH TRIBAL
PARTNERS

(TO INCORPORATE
ECOCULTURAL APPROACHES
AND ITEK INTO CONSERVATION
PLANNING)

1
PARTNERS
CO-PRODUCED
RESTORATION
PRESCRIPTION
1.0

1
POST-
IMPLEMENTATION
FIELD REVIEW

(TO EVALUATE RESTORATION
ACTIONS AND INFORM
ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Implemented KSON Ecological Monitoring Plan

463
ACRES MONITORED
PRE-TREATMENT

(TARGET 1,744 ACRES)



OUTCOMES

Near Term 0-5 YEARS

- Reduction in undesirable vegetation.
- Reseeded with native grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Prescribed fire and/or indigenous cultural burning integrated

Mid-Term 5-10 YEARS

- Health and diversity of oak and pine maintained.

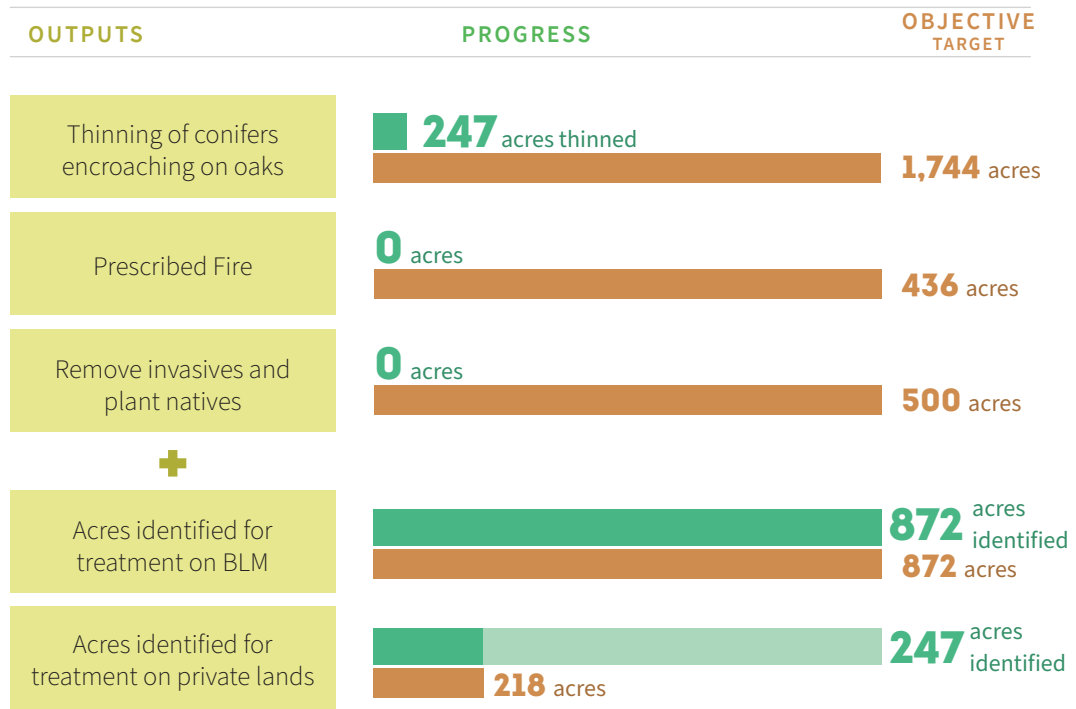
Long Term 10+ YEARS

- Oak habitats more resilient to climate change, and support cultural first foods and focal bird species.



FIP Initiative Progress, Biennia 1-2

Progress on outputs shown below represents actions completed through OWEB grants.



Monitoring Approach

The partnership is employing a robust scientific approach to measure progress toward site and landscape scale outputs. This involves spatially tracking the planning and implementation of restoration treatments, measuring change in eight Key Ecological Attributes, and conducting structured field implementation reviews, all designed to enhance adaptive management. Our well-designed databases ensure streamlined, efficient data collection and enable timely reporting on critical metrics and indicators. This approach strengthens project management, outreach, engagement, and ongoing investments in monitoring. Key Ecological Attributes and their associated indicators assess target conditions across stand, project, and landscape scales, providing a precise measure of treatment effectiveness. Our monitoring framework delivers two core outcomes: 1) documented ecological improvements, and 2) adaptive management that optimizes conservation strategies by using evidence-based insights to tackle knowledge gaps, such as the impacts of threats and complex ecological interactions. Implementation reviews, conducted through structured field dialogues, create opportunities for immediate feedback, shared learning, and adaptive adjustments by observing restoration sites before and after treatment—helping to continuously refine strategies for greater restoration impact.



Adaptive Management

Restoration

CHALLENGES

Gradient of oak habitats across the landscape and the need to incorporate chaparral treatments

Unprecedented Douglas-fir mortality across our FIP geography impacting options for implementation

Application of prescription 1.0 did not align with all partner expectations regarding thinning oak trees

Litigation of federal compliance

Appropriate noxious weed treatments and native seed mixes were difficult to anticipate prior to implementation



LESSONS LEARNED

Coalescing around removing chaparral when necessary to achieve overall restoration objectives for future fire behavior

Timely restoration actions are still possible within most of our high-priority sites; some sites were dropped because of safety limitations

During field review, differing partner perspectives were raised

Partners contributed substantive comments through the public comment period for the federal compliance process

We're improving our ability to adapt understory treatments to incorporate monitoring data



ADAPTATIONS

Co-development and implementation of prescription 1.0

Prescription removes all Douglas-fir under 10"

Developed a joint-fact-finding subcommittee to study this specific topic and bring recommendations back to the partnership

Shifted timelines for restoration on federal lands as needed

Updated seed mix recommendations/development and focal species for weed control

Monitoring

CHALLENGES

Overlap of spatial study designs that necessitate different spacing between sampling points

Limited to no funding for monitoring treatments on BLM lands that are being restored with matching funds

Key Ecological Attribute for acorn crops was envisioned as a tribally-developed protocol but tribal partner capacity was limiting



LESSONS LEARNED

Start with points that are furthest apart and use a GIS tool to add additional points

Several partners were successful submitting proposals through a BLM funding opportunity

After several years of communication with tribal partners we decided to limit the metric to acorn quantity and hold space for tribal partners to contribute to discussions around acorn quality in the future



ADAPTATIONS

Successful first application of the KSON Ecological Monitoring Plan with sampling points co-located across all metrics

Be ready to take advantage of opportunistic funding, but may need to have more foresight as to how to fund monitoring on matching acres at the onset of a project

Acorn counting protocol was developed and a pilot field season was completed

Adaptive Management

Engagement

CHALLENGES

Balancing review of materials with the timeliness of outreach

Advancing landowner engagement while not overpromising

Developing a comprehensive strategy that includes all partners, tribes and perspectives of how a formalized tribal engagement strategy would be best co-created and implemented. We are also recognizing the many definitions of “tribes” and who and what that means to each organization and agency regarding their own policies and mandates. This challenge has required a more inclusive approach that included compensating tribal citizens to attend scheduled Field Tours and provide input



LESSONS LEARNED

Developed a review matrix with clear expectations

We were clear at community events that even though the geography was large we were reaching out directly to landowners in strategic locations

Sharing information with partners and tribes and being transparent about the process of co-creating a KSON Tribal Engagement Strategy delivers a more comprehensive and inclusive outcome. The Ad Hoc Tribal Advisory Committee assisted the partners in understanding ITEK and local Tribal History including First Foods. (Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge)



ADAPTATIONS

Need to revisit and streamline even further

We generated an email list for interested community members to keep everyone informed, especially prior to media or events

Compensating tribal citizens to attend field tours and by sharing each step of the development of the KSON Tribal Engagement Strategy with our Ad Hoc Tribal Advisory Committee along with partners. We continue to outreach to new tribal leadership, tribal government leadership, tribal department staff and other partners to inform, educate and collaborate on restoration implementation and the KSON Tribal Engagement Strategy.

Partnership Capacity

CHALLENGES

BLM has many priorities and oak restoration is not high on the list; planning this project is an extra layer of work for the staff



LESSONS LEARNED

Commitment of the partnership for 50% of the restoration acres to occur on federal lands is meaningful



ADAPTATIONS

Additional partnership capacity for compliance pinch point (e.g. botany surveys) was instrumental to align federal compliance with partner-funded timelines