

Marys Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area restoration: 2024 annual report



June 2025

Report for U.S. Forest Service, Siuslaw National
Forest, Agreements #22-SA-11061200-008
and #22-PA-11061200-009

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Institute for Applied Ecology



PREFACE

Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) is a non-profit organization whose mission is the conservation of native ecosystems through restoration, research, and education. IAE provides services to public and private agencies and individuals through development and communication of information on ecosystems, species, and effective management strategies. Restoration of habitats, with a concentration on rare and invasive species, is a primary focus. IAE conducts its work through partnerships with a diverse group of agencies, organizations, and the private sector. IAE aims to link its community with native habitats through education and outreach.



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Cover photographs: Southwest scenic view from West Point Meadow including roadside restoration area and wildlife snags. Photo by Aynesley Wilson, July 1, 2024.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 900 acres of unique meadows and forest compose the Marys Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area (Marys Peak SBSIA). Co-owners of the area include the U.S. Forest Service (FS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and City of Corvallis. Collectively these agencies protect and enhance this regionally rare habitat. The Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) is conducting habitat restoration in partnership with the FS, Siuslaw National Forest, which owns most of the land in the Marys Peak meadow complex.

In 2024, IAE performed a variety of restoration activities which incorporated invasive weed treatment, native seed collection, native seed dispersal, trail obliteration, and managing a common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) seed amplification field. Invasive weed herbicide, scythe mowing, steaming, and hand pulling treatments targeted oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), creeping velvet grass (*Holcus mollis*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), hairy cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). Native seed collection of 14 species totaled 1.655 pounds comprised of annual and perennial forbs and graminoids. IAE broadcast 0.17 pounds of native seed to disturbed ground from trail obliteration. A common yarrow seed amplification field was in its second year of growth and produced 15.7 pounds of seed. To support restoration efforts, IAE hosted 15 volunteer events, totaling 618 hours of labor that removed weeds and took photo monitoring points. Future restoration activities will include chemical and mechanical weed treatments, mowing and/or burning to reduce creeping velvet grass thatch, conifer sapling removal to preserve open meadow habitat, native seed collection, common yarrow seed amplification, and revegetating disturbed areas with appropriate native plant materials.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marys Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area (Marys Peak SBSIA) is a 924-acre parcel of land mostly owned by the U.S. Forest Service (FS), Siuslaw National Forest, and smaller portions owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the City of Corvallis. Marys Peak is in the Coast Range on the western edge of the Willamette Valley 15 miles southwest of Corvallis, Oregon. The 130-acre unique meadow complex on top of Marys Peak are the highest meadows in the Coast Range, containing a plant community not found elsewhere in the range. Marys Peak SBSIA includes a xeric rock garden, a population of noble fir (*Abies procera*), noble polypore (*Bridgeoporus nobilissimus*), and a riparian area that is the headwaters of Parker Creek. The Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) has supported restoration efforts at Marys Peak SBSIA since 2014.

The Marys Peak SBSIA meadow complex consists of six designated meadows, although some of these are now contiguous due to tree removal (Figure 1). This report covers restoration actions primarily occurring within Trek, Summit, and West Point Meadows.

Noble fir, Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) surround the Marys Peak SBSIA meadows and have potential to reduce the acreage of open meadow without active management. Zald's 2009 study of five meadows in the Coast Range determined a 34.7% decrease in grassland acreage at Marys Peak SBSIA between 1948 and 1994 (Zald, 2009). Zald found that the decline in acreage was mainly due to tree encroachment, especially closer to the forest edge (Zald, 2009). While the population of noble fir on Marys Peak is a unique occurrence and is valued as an integral part of the 924 acres of Marys Peak SBSIA, the expansion of this conifer into the meadow threatens to reduce valuable open meadow habitat.



Figure 1. Marys Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area meadow designations.

Summit, Trek, and Appendix Meadows

Active restoration conducted by IAE at Summit, Trek, and Appendix Meadows is funded by the U.S. Forest Service, Siuslaw National Forest, under Stewardship Agreement #22-SA-11061200-008. These three meadows, while nearly contiguous at present, have undergone some distinct changes in the last seven years. In 2016, 2018, and 2020, the FS removed trees to improve meadow connectivity and reduce conifer encroachment into the open grasslands. In 2016, conifer trees were removed from Appendix Meadow (Figure 2, Appendix A) providing connectivity to Trek Meadow. In the same operation, the FS removed trees from the eastern edge and interior of Trek Meadow, thinned the campground, and removed a couple of trees from Middle Meadow. In 2020, FS surveys discovered creeping velvet grass (*Holcus mollis*) in Trek Meadow. Subsequent discussions of treatment options led to the Stewardship Agreement with IAE.



Figure 2. 2016 tree removal in Appendix Meadow, Trek Meadow, and campground (July 2015, August 2016).

Middle and Saddle Meadows

In 2018, the FS removed trees connecting Middle and Saddle Meadows (Figure 3, Appendix A). There is a natural establishment of native meadow species occurring after the 2018 tree removal and is being monitored by the FS. This combined meadow would be a quality candidate for future restoration activities, such as weed abatement and revegetation. Creating a diverse meadow matrix to link the entire meadow complex would improve wildlife habitat and enhance the overall quality of the Marys Peak SBSIA.

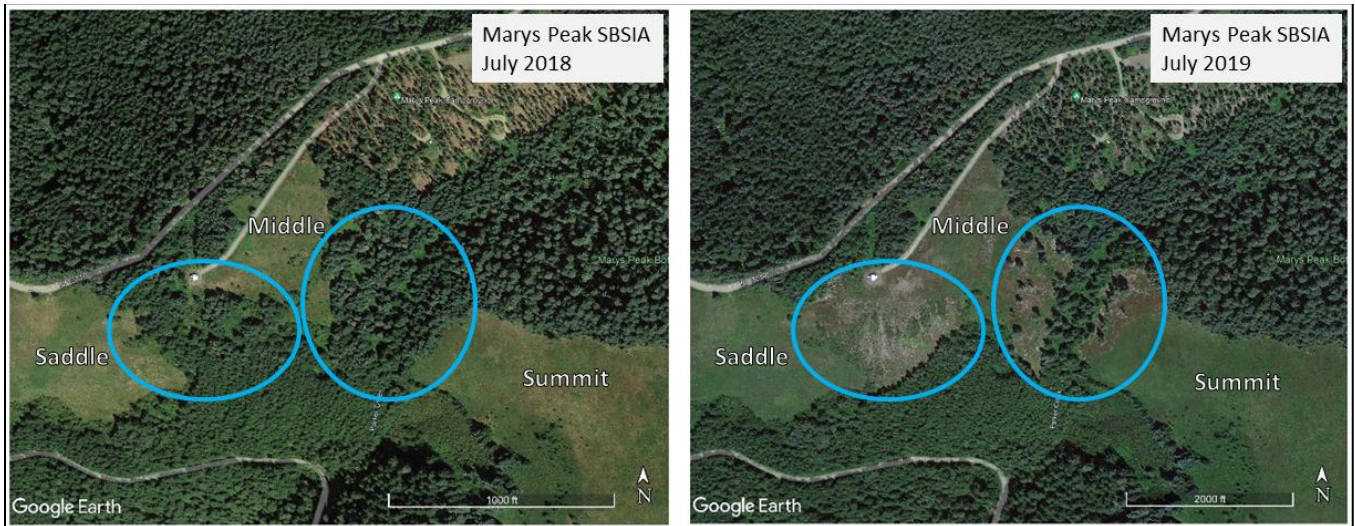


Figure 3. 2018 tree removal between Middle and Saddle Meadows (July 2018 and July 2019).

West Point Meadow

West Point Meadow comprises 12.5-acres west of the Marys Peak summit and is collectively owned by the City of Corvallis and FS. IAE restoration activities at West Point are funded by the FS, Siuslaw National Forest, under Agreement #22-PA-11061200-009 and an agreement with the Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas (AFRANA). IAE has been involved in restoration at West Point Meadow since 2019, when IAE assisted Trout Mountain Forestry, a private land management contractor, in the restoration of areas disturbed by tree removal and improvements to a transmission tower access road in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 4, Appendix A). IAE's primary activities included invasive species treatments, native seed collection, plant propagation, and revegetation through seeding and plug planting. Although IAE was not directly funded by FS for the work at West Point, FS staff provided input on weed control and seed collection that was used to perform restoration.

Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) occurs along the gravel access road and around the transmission towers in West Point Meadow. Treatments that occurred from 2019-2020 were effective at reducing the abundance and spread of oxeye daisy before and after tree removal. Each year less roadside oxeye has been observed and no evidence of the population spreading to newly opened areas has been reported.

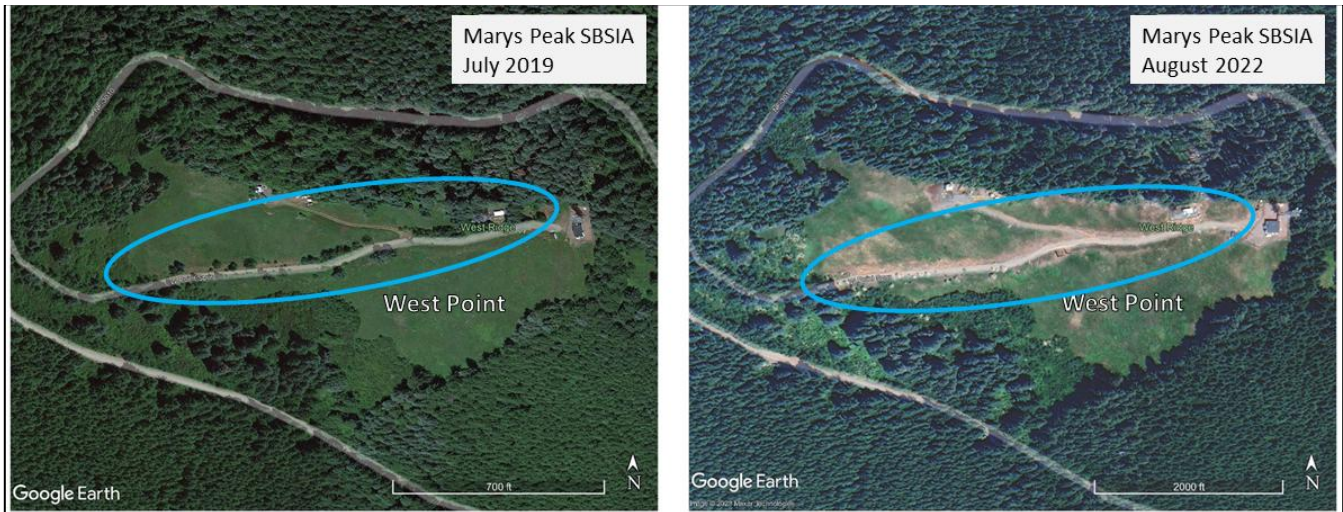


Figure 4. 2020 Tree removal in West Point Meadow (July 2019, August 2022).

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project is to rehabilitate unique meadow habitat at Marys Peak SBSIA and reduce effects of disturbance from infrastructure maintenance, visitor traffic, and invasive weeds. There are three primary objectives to this project:

1. Reduce abundance of invasive grasses and forbs in the meadows,
2. Reduce meadow encroachment through conifer seedling removal, and
3. Increase native plant abundance and diversity in disturbed areas.

3. RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

In 2024, restoration activities at Marys Peak SBSIA focused on treating invasive weeds and reducing noble fir encroachment. Restoration occurred within Trek, Summit, Appendix, and West Point Meadows. IAE did not conduct restoration in Middle Meadow or Saddle Meadow. The FS performed invasive species treatments in 2024 as well, but those activities are not covered in this report.

Seed collection and amplification

Revegetating disturbed areas with native plants requires a large quantity of native seed. In 2024, IAE collected seed from 14 meadow species across multiple meadows within Marys Peak SBSIA (

Table 4). IAE also continued seed amplification of common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) using seed previously collected in 2020 from the Marys Peak SBSIA. The common yarrow production field was in its second year of growth and produced 15.7 pounds of seed in 2024 (Table 2). Additionally, The Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas (AFRANA) funded three production fields to grow small-flowered blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), Oregon sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), and slender phlox (*Microsteris gracilis*), and 1.072, 6.29, 0.0006 pounds of seed were produced in 2024, respectively (Table 2). IAE will use the seed harvested from amplification fields to grow plugs and revegetate disturbed areas at Marys Peak SBSIA.

Table 1. 2024 Native seed collected

Scientific name	Common name	Amount (lb.)	Collection date(s)
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	pearly everlasting	0.006	October 8 and 22
<i>Apocynum androsaemifolium</i>	spreading dogbane	0.0005	October 8 and 22
<i>Castilleja hispida</i>	harsh paintbrush	0.0322	August 15
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	field mouse-ear chickweed	0.0122	July 10 and 24
<i>Collinsia parviflora</i>	small-flowered blue-eyed Mary	0.0018	July 10
<i>Danthonia californica</i>	California oatgrass	0.3385	August 7
<i>Erythronium</i> sp.	fawn-lily and glacier lily	0.016	August 15
<i>Gilia capitata</i>	bluehead gilia	0.0132	August 15
<i>Lilium columbianum</i>	tiger lily	0.0104	September 8
<i>Lupinus latifolius</i>	broad-leaved lupine	1.078	August 2, 7, and 15
<i>Microsteris gracilis</i>	slender phlox	0.0024	July 10 and 24
<i>Penstemon cardwellii</i>	Cardwell's penstemon	0.0952	August 15 and 20
<i>Ranunculus occidentalis</i>	western buttercup	0.0125	June 24 and July 10
<i>Scrophularia californica</i>	California bee plant	0.0361	August 7

Total: 1.655 lb.

Table 2. Seed amplification yields and future funding sources

Scientific name	Common name	Yield (lb.)		Funding source*	
		2023	2024	2025	2026
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	common yarrow	1.5	15.7	AFRANA	-
<i>Collinsia parviflora</i>	small-flowered blue-eyed Mary	-	1.072	AFRANA	-
<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i>	Oregon sunshine	0	6.29	AFRANA	MP-008
<i>Microsteris gracillis</i>	slender phlox	-	0.0006	AFRANA	-

*Contract with Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas (AFRANA), Stewardship Agreement #22-SA-11061200-008 (MP-008), Stewardship Agreement #22-SA-11061200-009 (WP-009)

Volunteer photo monitoring point project

In August 2023, IAE initiated a monthly photo monitoring project with assistance from AFRANA and community volunteers. Eleven points were designated for photo points within Trek, Middle, and West Point meadows and photos were taken in the four cardinal directions once a month (Appendix B). Multiple volunteers participated in compiling a full calendar year of photographs. These photos will serve as a visual comparison throughout the seasons to document changes resulting from restoration efforts.

Furthermore, one volunteer, Zachary Foster, has taken on the task of taking 360° images at each point that can be processed for use with viewing software. These images will be provided to the FS before the agreement ends. In 2024, volunteers took monitoring photos on February 24, April 23, May 14, May 23, June 19, June 21, July 24, and July 25.

Trek, Summit, and Appendix Meadows

The focus of work at Trek and Summit Meadows includes invasive weed treatment, meadow edge conifer removal, user-created trail obliteration, and post disturbance revegetation. IAE and FS obliterated the user-created trail in fall 2024 and post disturbance revegetation began with seeding and planting FS provided plugs.

Siuslaw National Forest staff discovered creeping velvet grass in Trek Meadow in 2020, and additional surveys and initial treatments occurred in the following years. This rhizomatous species forms thick mats of dense thatch that physically inhibits growth of native meadow species. Every year of this project, IAE or FS staff discover new patches in Trek meadow or along Marys Peak Road above the campground, so we enlarged the treatment zone. The treatment areas of creeping velvet grass total 3 acres, with the largest 2.35-acre area inhabiting space on both sides of the road near the parking lot (Figure 5).

In 2024, IAE continued implementing a diversified treatment plan for this species, including applying broad spectrum glyphosate herbicide and weed steaming. IAE applied glyphosate herbicide targeting creeping velvet grass in May and July (Table 3, Figure 5). A Forest Service-owned weed steamer was used to treat creeping velvet grass. Early spring steam treatments would likely be more effective since we observed a low mortality rate with only one treatment in June.

Table 3. 2024 management actions at Marys Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area.

Date	Location	Management Action
3-Apr 18-Apr	Trek, West Point	Manually removed oxeye daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>), and St. John's wort (<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>)
10-May	Trek	Applied glyphosate herbicide to large creeping velvet grass (<i>Holcus mollis</i>) patch on both sides of Marys Peak Road
13-May 31-May	Trek, West Point	Manually removed oxeye daisy, and St. John's wort
8-Jun 15-Jun	Trek	Manually removed oxeye daisy with volunteers
25-Jun	Summit, Trek	Manually removed oxeye daisy with NCCC
26-Jun	Trek, West Point	Manually removed oxeye daisy, and foxglove (<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>) with AmeriCorps NCCC
	Trek	Treated creeping velvet grass with FS weed steamer
27-Jun 28-Jun	Trek	Manually removed oxeye daisy with NCCC
1-Jul	Campground, West Point	Manually removed oxeye daisy and foxglove
22-Jul	Trek	Applied glyphosate herbicide to creeping velvet grass regrowth and missed clumps
24-Jul	Trek	Manually removed oxeye daisy, and hairy cat's-ear (<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>) with NCCC
		Mowed roadside hairy cat's-ear with scythe
		Collected native seed with NCCC
	Summit, Trek	Collected native seed with Elderberry Wisdom Farm
25-Jul	West Point	Took photo monitoring points.
		Manually removed foxglove
2-Aug	Summit, Trek	Collected native seed with volunteers
7-Aug		Collected native seed with Elderberry Wisdom Farm
9-Aug	Appendix, Trek	Mapped current extent of creeping velvet grass
15-Aug		Collected native seed
18-Sep	Trek	Tested a sod cutter for trail obliteration and discussed action plan with Matt Smith and Kraig Lindelin (FS)
24-Oct		Reduced soil compaction by tilling trail, cut sod from new trail and along edges of decommissioned trail, and planted sod in the decommissioned trail for erosion management with Matt Smith (FS)
25-Oct		Scattered seed along the decommissioned trail
13-Nov		Manually removed oxeye daisy, and hairy cat's ear with NCCC

*U.S. Forest Service (FS), AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), Elderberry Wisdom Farm volunteers (Elderberry Wisdom Farm), local community volunteers (volunteers).



Figure 5. Creeping velvet grass (*Holcus mollis*) treatments (left) and manual treatments at Trek, Summit, and Appendix Meadows (right).

Controlling the spread of oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), hairy cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and other invasive plants before they spread throughout the Summit Meadow rock garden is a priority to ensure the unique diversity of that habitat. In 2024, IAE with the help of AFRANA, community volunteers, and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) performed multiple treatments to reduce weed abundance.

In April, May, June, and July, IAE staff and community volunteers hand-pulled oxeye daisy, dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), and hairy cat's-ear along the entire gravel road from the summit down to the parking lot, and along the paved road to the western forest edge of Trek Meadow (Table 3, Figure 5). The plants were pulled and left on the trail edge to desiccate before flower pollination and potential for seed ripening occurred. In November, IAE staff and NCCC treated roadside oxeye daisy and hairy cats' ear using soil knives to cut rosettes out of the ground (Table 3). No herbicide applications occurred in 2024 targeting non-native forbs.

In fall 2024, IAE and the FS obliterated the user-created trail leading from the Trek Meadow parking lot up to the false summit in the southeast of Trek meadow (Table 3). The FS mapped and cut a new trail that leads through the forest to access this area from a different direction. The work included rototilling the main stretch of trail to reduce soil compaction and release native seed to germinate. We used a sod cutter to remove strips of vegetation and plant them in the user-created trail creating miniature check berms to divert winter rainwater and reduce erosion. We scattered 0.17 pounds of native seed to this freshly tilled area in October (Table 4). This area will receive seed and plugs in fall 2025 from seed collected in previous years of this project (Table 3, Table 4)



Figure 6. Trail obliteration in Trek Meadow included rototilling (A), sod cutting (B, C) and creating erosion reduction berms with sod and logs (D).

Table 4. 2024 Marys Peak seed inventory.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Seeded 2024*	Total in Inventory
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	western pearly everlasting		0.010
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	red columbine		0.010
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	common yarrow	0.01	0.394
<i>Bromus carinatus</i>	California brome		0.4796
<i>Carex californica</i>	California sedge		0.0963
<i>Carex mertensii</i>	Merten's sedge	0.01	0.0338
<i>Carex pachystachya</i>	Chamisso sedge		0.0298
<i>Carex subfusca</i>	pale broom sedge		0.00245
<i>Castilleja hispida</i>	harsh paintbrush		0.0485
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	field mouse-ear chickweed		0.01455
<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	fireweed	0.01	0.0198
<i>Collinsia parviflora</i>	small flowered blue-eyed Mary		0.0186
<i>Danthonia californica</i>	California oatgrass	0.01	0.8389
<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	blue wildrye		0.8411
<i>Eriogonum nudum</i> var. <i>nudum</i>	barestem buckwheat		0.078
<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i>	woolly sunflower		0.0311
<i>Erythronium grandiflorum</i> ; <i>E. oreganum</i>	glacier-lily; Oregon fawn-lily		0.2868
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	mountain strawberry		0.007
<i>Gilia capitata</i>	blue gilia		0.0132
<i>Iris tenax</i>	toughleaf iris		1.29535
<i>Lilium columbianum</i>	tiger lily	0.1	0.2354
<i>Lupinus albicaulis</i>	sickle-keel lupine	0.01	
<i>Lupinus latifolius</i>	broadleaf lupine	0.02	1.078
<i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>	stary false Solomon's seal		0.019
<i>Melica bulbosa</i>	oniongrass		0.001
<i>Microsteris gracilis</i>	slender phlox		0.0059
<i>Penstemon cardwellii</i>	Cardwell's penstemon		0.1576
<i>Phacelia heterophylla</i>	varileaf phacelia		0.0075
<i>Phacelia nemoralis</i>	bristly phacelia		0.02
<i>Phleum alpinum</i>	alpine Timothy		0.0234
<i>Ranunculus occidentalis</i>	western buttercup		0.0179
<i>Scrophularia californica</i>	California bee plant		0.06565
<i>Senecio triangularis</i>	arrowleaf groundsel		0.055
<i>Turritis glabra</i>	tower mustard		0.0015
Total (lb.)		0.17	6.2367

West Point Meadow

2024 restoration activities at West Point Meadow primarily focused on reduction of non-native oxeye daisy, foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), and collecting native seed for future revegetation effort. No herbicide applications occurred in 2024.

Foxglove remains present in West Point meadow, though it is visually less abundance due to manual treatments. In April, May, June, and July, IAE hand pulled foxglove throughout the meadow before it set seed (Table 3, Figure 7). Regular hand pulling and/or herbicide treatments will be necessary for many years to decrease the abundance of foxglove and deplete the seed bank.

Oxeye daisy occurs along the entire gravel road and around the tower buildings in West Point Meadow, though it is visually less abundance due to annual treatments. In April, May, June, and July 2024, IAE hand pulled roadside oxeye daisy and St. John's wort before it set seed (Table 3, Figure 7). Other non-native weeds of lower priority, such as common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), were present but sparse and were also hand pulled when identified. Hand pulling these species has proven to be an effective strategy and treatments are scheduled for 2025.

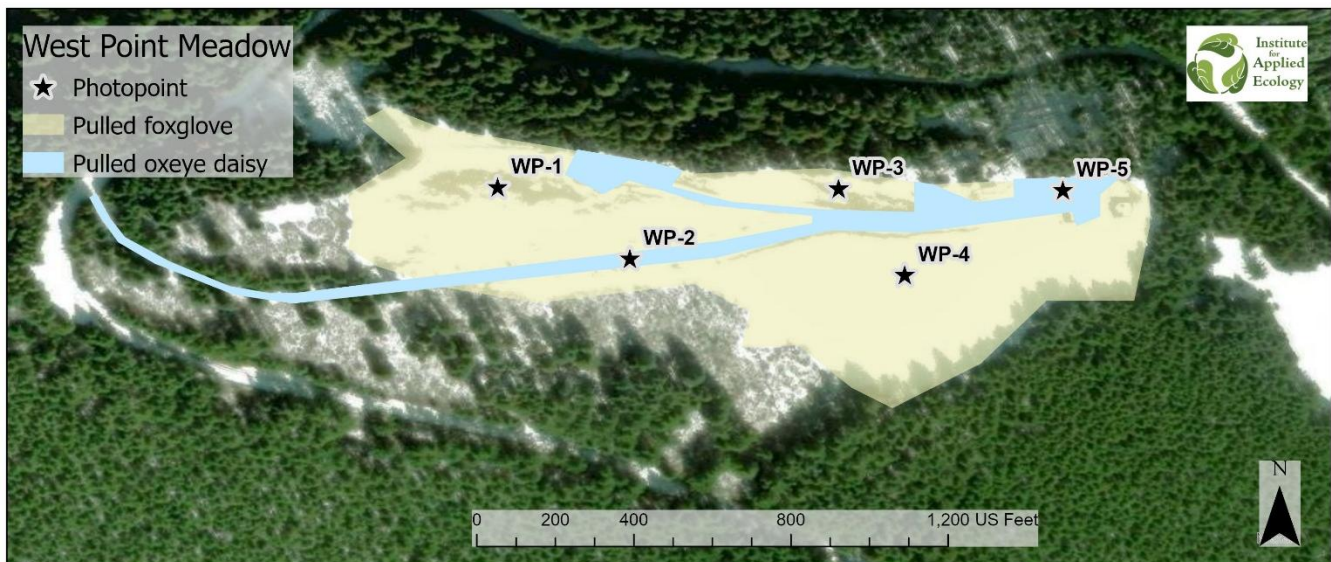


Figure 7. 2024 Treatments at West Point Meadow.

4. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The overarching goal of this project is to restore regionally rare high elevation habitat at Marys Peak SBSIA by controlling priority invasive species, managing coniferous encroachment, and revegetating disturbed areas with locally sourced plant materials.

We recommend the following management actions for 2025-2027:

Seed collection

Seed collection in 2025 should focus on the species in Table 5 and seed amplification fields should continue according to Table 2.

Table 5. 2025 Native seed collection targets

Scientific name	Common name
<i>Calochortus tolmiei</i>	Tolmie's star-tulip
<i>Castilleja hispida</i>	harsh paintbrush
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	field mouse-ear chickweed
<i>Cirsium edule</i>	edible thistle
<i>Erysimum capitatum</i>	western wallflower
<i>Erythronium grandiflorum</i>	glacier lily
<i>Erythronium oreganum</i>	fawn-lily
<i>Iris tenax</i>	tough-leaf iris
<i>Lilium columbianum</i>	tiger lily
<i>Penstemon cardwellii</i>	Cardwell's penstemon
<i>Phlox diffusa</i>	spreading phlox
<i>Ranunculus occidentalis</i>	western buttercup
<i>Scrophularia californica</i>	California bee plant
<i>Xerophyllum tenax</i>	beargrass

*Priority species names in **bold**.

Trek and Summit Meadows

- Pull oxeye daisy in spring before flowering. Once in full flower, pull and bag to remove seed if pedals have fallen off the inflorescence. If pulling labor is not available, treat it with glyphosate or triclopyr.
- Spot spray glyphosate to control creeping velvet grass. Applications should be made between late April and July.
- Revegetate creeping velvet grass treatment area and trail obliteration area with broadcast seeding and plug planting in 2025, 2026, and 2027 (if contract is extended).
- Continue June/July photo monitoring points for ongoing monitoring.

West Point

- Pull oxeye daisy in spring before flowering. Once in full flower, pull and bag to remove seed if pedals have fallen off the inflorescence. If pulling labor is not available, treat it with glyphosate or triclopyr.

- Treat foxglove manually with shovels and hand pulling in spring and early summer. If pulling labor is not available and plants are still in rosettes, spot spray with glyphosate. If seed pods have developed, bag the inflorescence to reduce the seed bank.
- Collect and sow disturbance-loving species along south facing road cut to hold bare ground.
 - Gather seed from edible thistle, common yarrow, fireweed, varileaf phacelia, barestem buckwheat, and pearly everlasting to redistribute on nearby bare ground.
- Continue photo monitoring points for ongoing monitoring.

5. REFERENCES

Zald, H. 2009. Extent and spatial patterns of grass bald land cover change (1948-2000), Oregon Coast Range, USA. *Plant Ecol.* 201:517-529.

APPENDIX A. MARYS PEAK SBSIA AERIAL IMAGERY 1994-2022

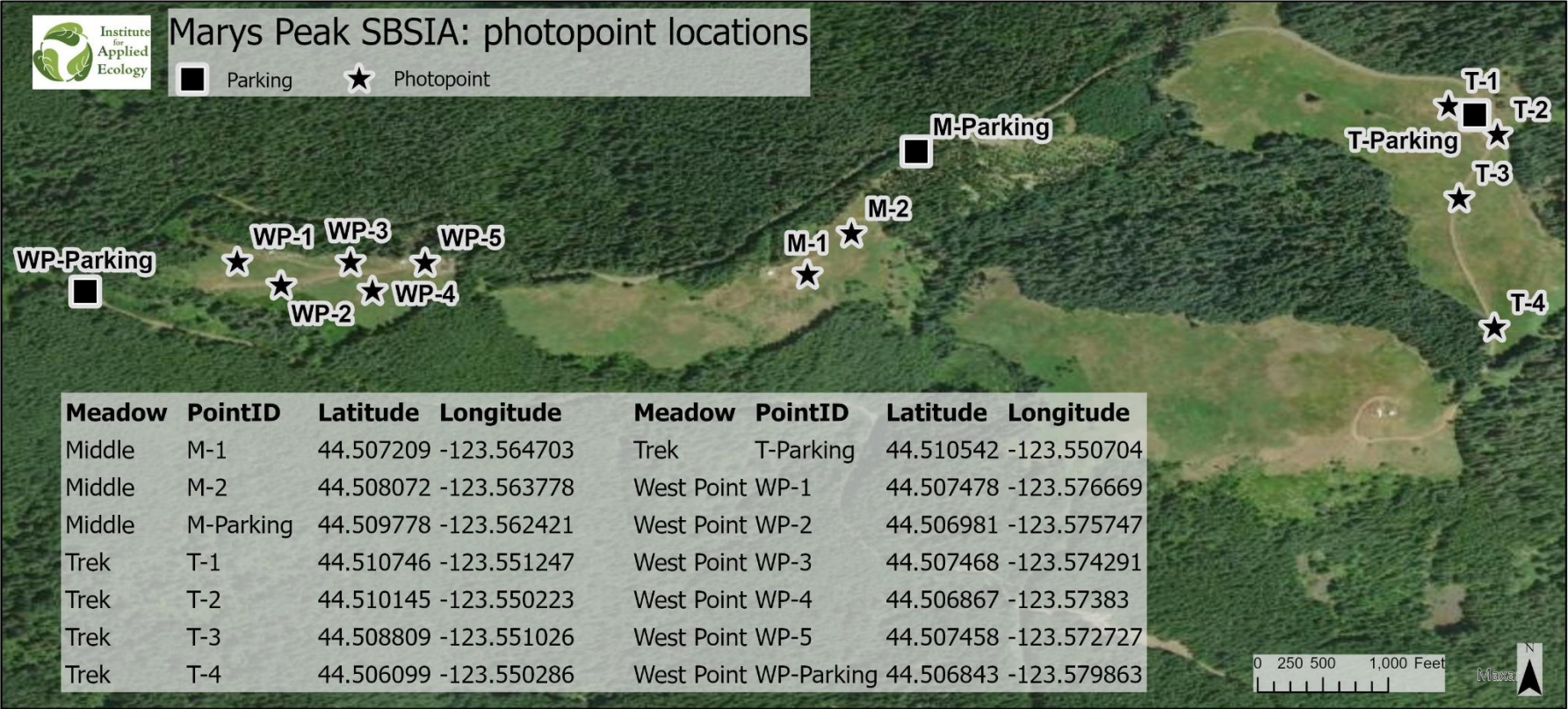








APPENDIX B. PHOTOGRAPH MONITORING POINTS



Trek Meadow point 1 facing West (T-1W)

Photo credit to community volunteers Zachary Foster and Robert White.





Trek Meadow point 2 facing East (T-2E)

Photo credit to community volunteers Zachary Foster and Robert White.



