



EAST
CASCADES
OAK
PARTNERSHIP

Lifting up Nature & People

Our outlook on oaks
& why we need you

photo by Paloma Ayala

Oregon White Oaks

(Quercus garryana)

"We were taught that everything around you has a life. That without it, you wouldn't have a life and you wouldn't have an identity. So we have to respect this old tree that is there for us, and we give thanks for it."

*Levina Wilkins, Yakama Elder,
in a 2018 presentation to ECOP*



Why Oregon white oaks matter

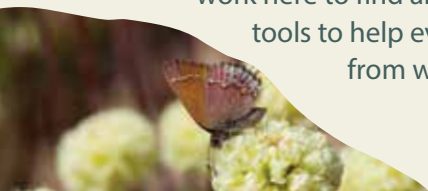
Oaks are simply the most noticeable part of a complex system of air, water, soil, plants, and animals that together, make an **oak system**. When we talk about oak systems, we're not just talking about trees—we're talking about the songbirds in the canopy, the cavities in the oaks, the lichens on the branches, the grasses and wildflowers in the understory, and the pollinators buzzing between them, and so much more.

How ECOP supports your relationship with oaks

East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP) is a group of people from agencies, tribes, non-profits, and the interested public who, like you, know and love the Columbia River Gorge and the East Cascades.

We explore questions about **wildfire and drought**. We worry about quality forage for livestock and wonder what we can do to make life easier for **wildlife** and **pollinators**. We're a team informed by sound **science, community input, and traditional ecological knowledge**. Collectively, we design and provide tools and resources that can help each of us make choices that are good for oaks and for you. That's why you're such a critical part of our equation!

We're talking with the people who live and work here to find answers and we're building tools to help everyone get the most from what we learn.



When we make space for oak trees to live and grow, they provide us with a thriving variety of life

They uphold biodiversity

Our oak habitats support more than **300 species** of plants and animals; from lichens that grow in the crevices of ancient oaks and songbirds perched in their leafy crowns, to pollinators that feed on flowering plants and large black bears who forage for acorns before hibernation.

They are powerfully resilient

With deep, hearty tap roots, oaks can **survive drought** where pine and fir trees cannot. Their **natural fire resistance** can lower the temperature of wildfires burning near homes and they often re-sprout when they're burned or cut, hastening recovery after a disturbance.

They provide food and shelter for animals while they support recreation

Oaks support **first foods** important to Indigenous people and house abundant game like deer, elk and turkey. They provide **shade and forage** for the livestock at the heart of our agricultural economy and a stunning backdrop for the hiking and biking trails that are key to tourism



photo cred



An unspoken fixture of the Columbia River Gorge and East Cascades, Oregon white oaks appear to be everywhere. But across the entire planet, this species of oak **only grows** here in the Pacific Northwest.

While they're plentiful here, they have **lost ground** across huge portions of their historic range. This means our home is an **essential region** for Oregon white oaks—and it's why we're called to **uphold their legacy**.



Sun exposure and rainfall dramatically impact what grows where in the East Cascades.

Fire-Adapted

Oaks have thick bark and waxy leaves that resist burning, and often sprout back after being burned.

100"

Mountains

Forest

Oak Woodland

Oak Savanna

Grasslands

Precipitation Rate

11,250 ft.

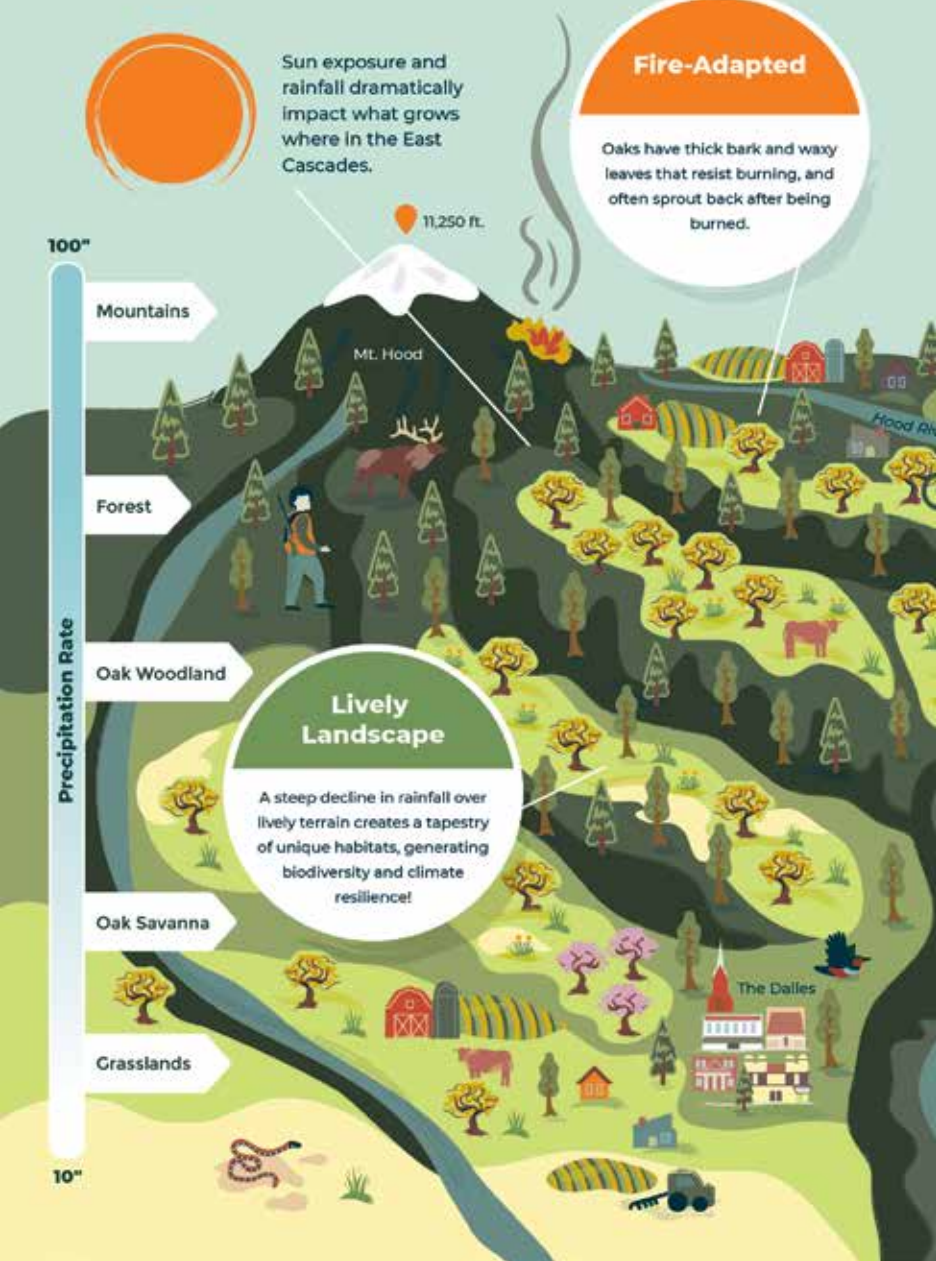
MT. Hood

Lively Landscape

A steep decline in rainfall over lively terrain creates a tapestry of unique habitats, generating biodiversity and climate resilience!

The Dalles

10"



Safe Homes

Oak cavities and bark provide safe homes for wildlife. Acorns provide the richest plant protein in the woods.

The Role of Oaks in the East Cascades



Not Just Oaks

Flowering plants and grasses grow under the oaks. They feed pollinators and house insects — the base of a food chain.

Providers

Foods and medicines grow and live near the oaks — including deer, elk, roots, and berries.



ECOP partners believe our quality of life is entwined with that of the Oregon white oak. Each of us has a role to play in this work; whether we're a rancher raising food for our neighbors, a timber grower providing wood products to the mill, or a hunter feeding our families. We're buoyed by our relationships with our partners and the work we're doing, together.

We hope you'll join us by:

Attending future ECOP events.

Sharing your own stories and questions with us.

Connecting friends and neighbors with our organization.

Partnering on collaborative projects to improve the oak systems around you, helping us to create practical management tools.

Participating in planning processes and providing public comment on the issues that affect oaks.

Learning about the role of wildfires and fire management.

Get connected:

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