



*The Nature Conservancy is committed to prairie conservation within the South Sound region and the Willamette Valley /Puget Trough/Georgia Basin ecoregion. The Conservancy will continue to perform outstanding stewardship, protect key conservation parcels and promote a conservation community of cooperative partners.*

### ***Taylor’s checkerspot release at Glacial Heritage***

This quarter marks the first attempt to reestablish the rare Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly on a historic site in south Puget Sound, Glacial Heritage Preserve. The Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly is a subspecies of Edith’s Checkerspot and is in imminent danger of extinction. Mary Linders, a biologist with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is leading this pilot experimental project. The Nature Conservancy has been working with funding from partners like USFWS and NRCS to enhance the habitat for the checkerspot on the site since their extirpation in 1998. Thirty-two caterpillars raised at the Oregon Zoo were released and many began feeding normally. We may see the first Taylor’s checkerspot adults flying in April. The upper wing surfaces of the checkerspot have a distinctive red-orange / black and cream colored checkerboard pattern.



Taylor’s checkerspot larvae with identifying blue paint nestled in *Plantago lanceolata* at Glacial Heritage Preserve.

### ***Prairie Plant Production***



*Dan Montague and Misty Klotz admire the work at Shotwell’s landing.*

Plant propagation activities at The Nature Conservancy preserve on the Black River, Shotwell’s Landing, expanded significantly over the last quarter. More than 30 native prairie species are being grown to produce seeds for direct seeding restoration projects beginning this fall. 98% of those 30 species of native plants have now been seeded (not including fescue). The Nature Conservancy will be producing more than 130,000 plugs of multiple prairie species for planting this fall. Support for these activities comes from Ft. Lewis, USFWS, NRCS, McChord AFB, WDFW, and staff and volunteers from The Nature Conservancy.

## **Ft. Lewis and McChord Project**

**Prairie Plantings** – Several areas targeted for butterfly habitat enhancement and road decommissioning were planted with over 19,000 native prairie plugs planted by our wonderful Washington Conservation Corps crew. These plantings will improve habitat for Taylor’s checkerspot and other rare butterflies and reconnect areas bisected by roads.

**Broom Control** - Scotch broom mowing at Fort Lewis continued through the quarter. In all, about 400 acres were mowed to enhance prairie and oak habitats.



**New Weed Guy!** – Cliff Chapman has signed on to be our new Fort Lewis Noxious Weed Biologist. Cliff is a new resident in the Puget Sound area and comes to us from Indiana where he was born and raised in Indianapolis. He has been the Regional Ecologist with the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves for the last seven years. We are pleased to welcome him to our team!

## ***Thurston County Project***

**Glacial Heritage Preserve** – This quarter’s restoration work at the Thurston County Preserve focused on Douglas fir removal, native plantings, and Scotch broom control. Over the last year hundreds of invading conifers have been removed from the core prairie areas of the preserve. This quarter involved completing fir removal work funded by NRCS and USFWS. The areas that were disturbed from tree removal were then replanted in March. 40,000 native fescue plugs from seed collected on Glacial Heritage in July, 2005 were planted. Additionally Scotch broom was mechanically controlled over 100 acres on the site. Finally, TNC staff and volunteers continued to prepare the site for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Prairie Appreciation Day on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Check out the website at [www.prairieappreciationday.org](http://www.prairieappreciationday.org)

**Project Bluebird** – This quarter Project Bluebird expanded into the Mima Corridor. 25 bluebird boxes were placed with the help of local elementary students on private property adjacent to Mima Mounds NAP. One of the work days was featured in The Olympian. Be sure to see if bluebirds will nest again in the Project Bluebird web camera located at Wolf Haven International. Links for the web cam and the story are below. Support for Project Bluebird is provided from: USFWS, Pacific Education Institute, WDFW, Black Hills Audubon and The Nature Conservancy.

Olympian:

<http://159.54.227.3/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060219/NEWS01/60219011&SearchID=73236231876520>

WDFW web cam: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/bluebirdcam/index.html>



**New Mima Land Steward** - The Thurston County Project is also welcoming a new Mima Land Steward this quarter; Carri Marschner. Carri got her BA in Environmental Biology from the Colorado College and then earned her master’s in Environmental Science from Miami University, OH. Carri’s responsibilities are numerous, but she will mostly focus on managing restoration activities at Glacial Heritage, Mima Mounds NAP, and private lands in the Mima Corridor. Her strong science background will also be helpful in assisting partners with their research projects and in developing new studies to inform our management actions. Welcome Carri!