
Metro

Fernhill Oak Forest Restoration Plan

Gaston, Oregon



A degrading hazelnut orchard is transformed into an abundant oak woodland, enhancing and preserving local ecology and habitat while providing a conveniently accessible peaceful respite for surrounding urban residents.

SERVICES

Ecological Restoration

In 2015, Metro, the Portland metropolitan area's regional government, acquired two parcels of land in Gaston, Oregon totaling 246 acres. The purpose of the acquisition was to protect the nearby Tualatin River and improve wildlife habitat. In addition to farmland, the property included swaths of wetlands, floodplains, and riparian forests. An active hazelnut (filbert) orchard covered over 80 acres of the southern parcel, but it was declining due to a fungal disease.

Metro sought to transform the orchard into an abundant oak savanna and woodland habitat that would synergistically interlace with existing Douglas-fir/Oregon white oak forest, and eventually incorporate public access points through a trail connection. For help in developing a restoration concept and a plan to execute it in alignment with their vision, Metro turned to Biohabitats.

After analyzing site ecology and water infrastructure, Biohabitats prepared project restoration plans, which included a project implementation schedule, a map of plant communities, and recommendations for tree removal, wood debris disposal, site stabilization, drainage modification, and planting schedules while considering methods to reduce erosion. Biohabitats also identified all necessary permits and prepared a project budget.