



FACT SHEET: HABITAT MANAGEMENT and RESTORATION

Habitat Management and Restoration: What are they?

Management	When a landowner conducts some kind of activity that changes vegetation, hydrology (water), or other things that affect native habitats, it usually is termed “habitat management.” Often a landowner’s management includes “restoring” a native habitat, and that is discussed below under “restoration.” Sometimes landowners change management to improve a native habitat.
Restoration	Restoration of habitat is restoring land or a stream to improve function with the intent to benefit native vegetation, fish and wildlife species. Restoration usually is a one-time activity, although sometimes several steps are implemented. Purposes of restoration can be to gain lost or modified wildlife habitat function, to reduce fire danger, or to regain components of landscape heritage. Restoration can be a passive, such as changing grazing schedules to allow more native plant growth, or active, such as planting trees along a creek or removing fir from oak stands. “Enhancement” is used to mean a less complete restoration activity often because habitat is partially functional. In all cases, deciding the purpose and developing a habitat “target” or “desired future condition” is the first step.
Stewardship	After the more abrupt change that can be brought about by restoration, stewardship or maintenance generally includes all the activities needed to keep an area in proper functioning condition once it has been restored. It might include periodic activities such as mowing or invasive plant removal, and may include mechanical or manual tasks, or both. Often, activities are termed “management activities” when they involve a change in how something is done (e.g., grazing an area differently), and “maintenance activities” when they are designed to continue and activity without change (such as annual mowing).

The **purposes** of management and restoration of habitats are many, and may differ somewhat between landowners. Whether it is to make better habitat for native animals and plants (and some might say, people), or to restore land “like it was when my grandparents settled here,” or produce specific economic benefits, restoration can be a very important part of a landowner’s management plan.

Restoration projects can be very broad, including providing – or attempting to provide – habitat and historic processes (such as flooding or controlled burning) for the native species that may have occurred previously in a particular area. Alternatively, **restoration can provide a simple nudge**, merely addressing one aspect of an historic landscape: such as replanting a riparian area, thinning firs that are overtopping oaks or introducing some native pollinator plants back into a former pasture. Small restoration actions sometimes are termed **enhancement**.

Passive restoration is a term that is occasionally used for an area where a change of management is done to let an area restore itself without a specific restoration activity (i.e., “active restoration”). Passive restoration could include ending grazing or altering the grazing times in a certain location, or letting beavers return to a section of a creek.

Most commonly, restoration will be some combination of active and passive, and will occur on only a portion of an ownership. Here are some examples of restoration activities, and more than one of these could occur on a single site, and they could be phased in over time:

Restoration activity	Maintenance activity on the restored area
Thin firs and other trees crowding oaks (occasionally other oaks) to reduce competition	Occasional removal of fir seedlings. Possible occasional flash grazing, mowing or cool underburning to prevent vegetation buildup.
Remove blackberry from a stream bank or remove Scot's broom near oaks, and replant with native plants	Periodic mowing or light grazing in fall to keep down woody vegetation, and/or spot spraying of restarts
Replant trees in a riparian zone to provide stream shade	Periodic removal of competing vegetation until trees are tall enough to survive
Remove introduced grasses from a wetland and replant with native species	Annual mowing, controlled burning (possible in some situations), or grazing to maintain desired features
Allow existing native plants to flower and fruit (passive restoration)	Alter livestock grazing: generally, light and late in the season

Are There Different Ways to Do Management and Restoration?

There are several options for types of assistance and even different options for land ownership. All of the options shown below are **voluntary** on the part of the landowner. Any of these could be applied in whole or in part, or in various combinations on a property. Permits may be needed for activities under any scenario, and some have tax implications that should be discussed with a land planner or tax accountant.

Type	Explanation
Independent	Owner conducts restoration and management activities independently. Occasionally, neighbor assistance or equipment is used.
Technical assistance	A landowner may seek technical assistance which may come directly from the LTWC, or the landowner may be referred to an appropriate private consultant or public agency such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
Financial and logistical assistance	Some landowners seek financial assistance to conduct restoration. Financial assistance can be small and targeted at something as simple as building a fence. Or it can have several parts, such as fencing, thinning of dense trees, removal of blackberries, planting with native plants, and other tasks, sometimes under a single grant.
Conservation easement	In general, a third party (such as a land trust or an agency) purchases and holds an easement on a portion of a property to further special conservation values there. While the landowner still owns the property, some rights (such as resource extraction or development) are purchased by the other party, and annual checks may occur to assure maintenance activities are protecting the identified resource.
Property donation or sale	Some conservation organizations occasionally accept donations or purchase land with very high conservation values. It may be an entire ownership or simply a portion of a site.

Landowners who pursue the first option (independent restoration), often do not contact the Long Tom Watershed Council, or if so, it may be only one time. The LTWC primarily works with landowners in the second and third categories above: to provide technical assistance, or as a partner to help acquire financial assistance and implement. In a few cases, if the landowner so desires and a property has high conservation values, the LTWC may refer a landowner to other appropriate groups for discussing income from selling a conservation easement or a portion of an ownership.

The last table (on the next page) shows a simple process for developing a restoration plan.

Steps in Habitat Management and Restoration

Step	Who	Explanation
List the goals for the site and identify the “desired future condition” of any area to be restored	Landowner	The goals should be the focus of all the next steps. They should be realistic and achievable.
Determine the best and worst aspects of the restoration areas	Landowner, biologist	Where are the best native habitat areas to protect? Where are there invasive weed infestations to treat? Surveys during spring or summer will be needed to make these determinations.
Determine what it would take to get each area to its desired condition	Landowner, restoration planner	Restoration planning can be done in some cases by the landowner, but most often assistance from a planner is used to help determine methods and priorities.
Determine what ongoing compatible management activities and maintenance would be needed after restoration	Landowner, technical assistance	Much of this is the responsibility of the landowner, so it must be achievable. Vegetation maintenance using mowing, flash grazing, spot herbicide application, or occasional sapling removal is often needed.
Determine funding, roles and timelines	Landowner, technical assistance	The LTWC can help direct landowners to other appropriate agencies or contractors, or can help directly with grant writing and contracting. LTWC may provide periodic monitoring after the project as well.