Purpose and the Cooperative
The Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative is an emerging partnership with a long-term vision to conserve and maintain prairie and oak habitats within the Willamette Valley ecoregion through a regionally-focused, collaborative, and sustainable program.

Upcoming Strategic Action Planning Process
The Cooperative is embarking on an 18-month planning effort to develop a Strategic Action Plan with funding assistance provided by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (Focused Investment Partnership Program), Greenbelt Land Trust, Willamette Partnership, City of Eugene, Institute for Applied Ecology, and Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture. The overarching ecological outcomes of the 10-year Plan will be to protect, restore, and maintain a functional, resilient network of oak and prairie habitats in the valley through a coordinated and strategic approach.

Development of the Plan will be the catalyst to bring the partners closer together to coordinate their efforts under a unified strategy for oak and prairie conservation. The Plan will guide long-term actions that will result in conservation and restoration of a connected network of oak-prairie habitats capable of supporting native wildlife while being resilient in the face of climate change, land use changes, and invasive species.

Phases of the Planning Process
I. Partnership Development and Formalization (underway)
II. Oak-Prairie Planning Context and Data Compilation (winter and spring of 2018)
III. Development of a Consensus Oak-Prairie Conservation Concept Map (fall and winter of 2018)
IV. Strategic Action Plan Development (winter of 2018/2019)
V. Formalization of Cooperative and Plan Implementation (2019 and beyond)

Why Oak and Prairie Habitats
“Oak and prairie in the Willamette Valley Ecoregion are some of the most iconic, culturally important and imperiled in Oregon. Concerns about the dramatic declines of historically widespread oak and prairie habitat in the Willamette Valley are reflected in the prioritization of protection and restoration of these habitats in numerous conservation plans, including the Oregon Conservation Strategy, the Willamette Subbasin Plan, and USFWS Willamette Valley Conservation Study and Prairie Species Recovery Plan. Addressing this priority will necessarily bring together practitioners, planners and community groups, leveraging their individual skills and capacities through a cooperative approach and guided by a region-wide Strategic Action Plan.”

-Damien Miller, Project Leader, Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Planning Structure
Development of the Strategic Action Plan will rely on input and expertise of partners and stakeholders from around the valley. A Steering Committee has been formed and will provide overall guidance and direct the work of project consultants. A Working Group of technical experts, representing partner organizations will be formed in early 2018 with the goal of meeting periodically to provide input on specific aspects of the plan. Finally, a Stakeholders group, consisting of interested parties from around the Valley will be asked for feedback on key elements of the Plan and will play a critical, long term role in implementing the actions proposed in the Plan.

For More Information
To learn more about the Cooperative and opportunities to be involved, please contact Michael Pope at Greenbelt Land Trust (michael@greenbeltlandtrust.org) or project contractors Jeff Krueger (jkenvironments@gmail.com) or Carolyn Menke (carolyn@appliedeco.org).