

Prairie Monitoring

RESOURCE BRIEF

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

North Coast and Cascades
Inventory and Monitoring Network



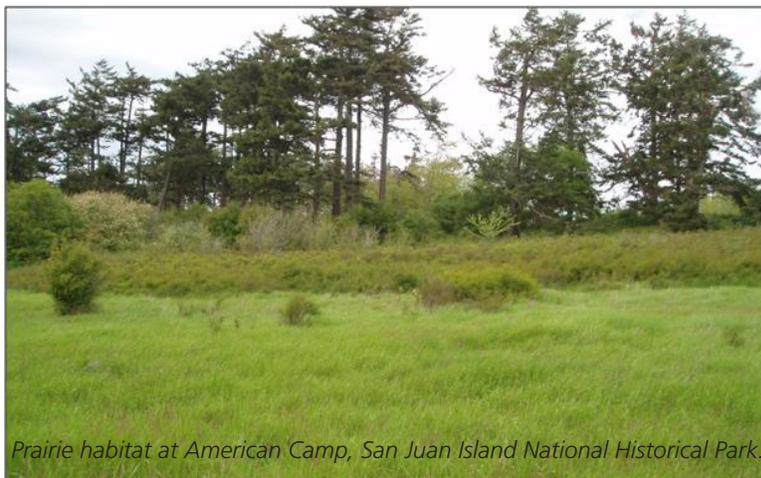
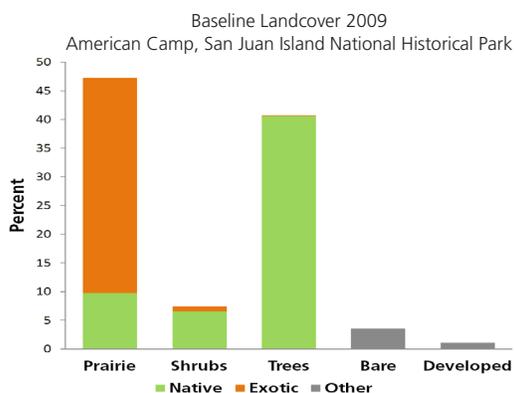
IMPORTANCE

Prairies and Garry oak woodlands were once extensive in the lowlands of Washington and Oregon. Today, it is estimated that less than 3% of these areas still exist and many are severely degraded. These communities are an important component of landscapes in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (EBLA) and San Juan Island National Historical Park (SAJH). Historically, prairies provided an important visual and biologic component of the matrix of landscapes that today comprise the cultural landscape. The landscape in San Juan National Historical Park included large treeless areas prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 1800s. During the historic period of the Hudson Bay Company (1853-1875), Bellevue Farm was established in the area now called American Camp and over 4,000 sheep, cattle, horses, and hogs grazed on much of the area. Following the historic period, continued farming and the introduction of rabbits altered the native prairies. Despite the past alteration of these landscapes, significant remnants of native prairies and oak woodlands remain in SAJH. Currently about 695 acres of prairie remain at American Camp and 64 acres at English Camp. Recent surveys documented at least 87 patches of native prairie distributed across the American Camp landscape.

Contacts:
Regina_Rochefort@nps.gov
Mignonne_Bivin@nps.gov

Monitored at:

*San Juan Island National Historical Park
American Camp and English Camp units*



Prairie habitat at American Camp, San Juan Island National Historical Park.

OVERVIEW

The goal of the prairie monitoring program is to detect and describe changes in the extent and quality of prairie and oak woodlands communities in San Juan Island National Historical Park. Evaluating the quality of these communities is an initial step in the development of restoration goals and selection of specific restoration methods.

There are four primary objectives addressed in this protocol:

- 1.) Detect change in the extent of vegetation cover types.
- 2.) Detect change in the proportion of areas dominated by exotic and native species.
- 3.) Detect change in the quality of prairie cover types.
- 4.) Detect changes in composition and diversity of prairie cover types.

Initially, monitoring will focus on American Camp, but it will be expanded to the Young Hill area of English Camp when additional funding becomes available.

STATUS

Ecological Integrity Scorecard based on data collected at American Camp in 2009

Indicator	Rating	Interpretation
Landscape Structure		Good Condition: The distribution of prairies and forests today is similar to that of the mid 1800s.
Abundance of Exotic Plant Species		
All Cover Types		Significant Concern: Approximately 38% of vegetation is exotic (62% is native).
Trees		Good Condition: <1% of tree cover is exotic.
Shrubs		Caution: Approximately 28% of all shrub cover is exotic (72% is native).
Prairie		Significant Concern: Approximately 80% of prairie vegetation is exotic (20% is native).
Quality of Native Prairie Cover		
Exotic cover		Caution: 87% of native prairie patches have <50% cover of exotic species.

