The Effects of Thinning and Burning on the Distribution of Bracken Fern and Salal in Skokomish Savanna Restoration

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• **Background:** Prior to European settlement, savannas of the southeastern Olympic Peninsula were primarily managed by anthropogenic (deliberate) burning for harvesting of plants and for hunting.

• Bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) rhizomes, harvested from savannas, long served as one of the major carbohydrate sources for native tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

• **Restoration Need:** Fire management stopped, and a less diverse woodland plant community developed.

• **Salal** (*Gaultheria shallon*) is the dominant and competitive understory species and shade-intolerant plants, like bracken fern, have been suppressed.

• **Objective:** Determine the effect that thinning and burning has had on the abundance and distribution of bracken fern and salal.

• This study will help to inform Forest Service management decisions in the restoration of Olympic Peninsula savannas to their pre-European condition.

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