Working cooperatively with landowners to conserve land for wildlife, scenic views, and local communities.
This past May, the Land Trust had the great privilege of hosting award-winning author John Daniel at a recognition event for Five Rivers Society members. Daniel, a native Oregonian, read several of his poems and talked about the rivers, water, and lands that connect us all. Toward the end of his reading, he said something to the group that resonated with many in the audience.

“Tolstoy said, ‘If you do not care for the land, it will not care for you.’ That is a truth, a fact, a responsibility we all share. And in many corners of the world, we are seeing people standing up, saying yes, we care for the land. We care for the river. We will be good stewards. And so will you. But it’s not enough just to care. We must act. We must share responsibility. And so, I ask you, will you stand with us today? Will you commit to sharing responsibility? Will you commit to help us dream of and do things bigger than ourselves? Because if you do, you will have a place in the history of this land. You will be remembered. And you will be remembered well.

As the Land Trust continues to pursue a transaction with the owner of Skyline Forest, we’ve made the most of this quiet period to acquaint the local community with all the forest has to offer—and to see what’s at stake if this 50 square mile forest isn’t protected. This past year was a busy one for outings in Skyline Forest. If you didn’t have a chance to explore Skyline Forest, here are some tantalizing tidbits to get it on your calendar for next year.

Hiking trails in Skyline Forest range from short forested walks along Bull Creek to more strenuous butte hikes with excellent views of surrounding mountains. The three-mile Bull Springs hike is a great introduction to the forest, with a fairly flat hike along Bull Creek to the springs where the creek bubbles out of the ground.

The nearby Snag Springs/Juniper Point loop is a more ambitious 9.5 mile hike which covers broad terrain from small springs to a rocky plateau with views of Smith Rock State Park and the Ochoco Mountains. Trails wind through mixed conifer forest and visit Juniper Point, a rocky overlook with old growth juniper, beautiful spring wildflowers, and outstanding views.

Three Creek Butte is a quick two-mile hike to the top of a volcanic cone on the western edge of Skyline Forest, with spectacular close-up views of the Three Sisters and Broken Top. Hikers can drive to the bottom of the butte to begin their climb, while horseback riders can begin at the Upper Three Creek Sno-Park and travel for 11.5 miles round trip to reach the summit.

Increasingly, mountain bikers can be found exploring a network of trails in Skyline Forest, many of which were built for the long-running Cascade Chainbreaker mountain bike race. Riders reminisce that riding Skyline is like riding the Phil’s Trail area 20 years ago. While the trails aren’t quite as firm or well-marked as those at Phil’s, they’re also much less crowded. At Skyline Forest, bikers find relative solitude, with a mix of single track and old logging roads that offer the fit rider with solid navigational skills nearly limitless opportunities for new adventures.

Most exciting is the promise of trail connections to come: if the Land Trust can protect Skyline Forest, we’ll be able to link trails from Bend to Sisters. Imagining being able to hike or ride a highline trail connecting the Phil’s Trail system to the Peterson Ridge Trail System on the outskirts of Sisters. Such a trail would offer spectacular views, longer distances for hiking and biking, and more terrain to explore.

The Land Trust’s long-running quest to protect Skyline Forest continues. We’ll keep working to protect our scenic views, important wildlife habitat, and unique recreational and educational opportunities. You can help protect Skyline Forest by visiting, exploring, and sharing the forest with your family and friends. Then, you can help make sure the Land Trust can conserve the forest one day, by becoming a member.
Western juniper (Juniperus occidentalis) often gets a bad rap. Water hog, interloper—this tree, aided by modern fire suppression, excels at taking up space in the arid high desert. Sometimes we forget it is a native species and that it has its place in our native landscape. The Land Trust's Whychus Canyon Preserve is chock full of juniper trees and many of them are beautiful, old growth wonders, gnarled by the years and covered with chartreuse lichen. These we keep. Others we remove.

This spring, crews were busy at Whychus Canyon Preserve completing the first phase of forest restoration at our newest Preserve. The property hosts a diverse mix of forest types with juniper woodlands on the plateau above the canyon, ponderosa pine groves along the shaded north faces of the canyon walls and floor, and aspen stands along the wet creek bottom. This diversity is due to the Preserve’s location on the edge of two distinct habitat types: the Sisters-area ponderosa pine woodlands and the sagebrush steppe of the high desert.

Less than one percent of historic large ponderosa pine forests remains in our region. Though ponderosa pine woodlands probably never carpeted our Whychus Canyon Preserve, small groves provided important shelter and food for species moving along the habitat edge. Over time fire suppression and juniper encroachment made those pine stands more vulnerable to beetle outbreaks and mistletoe infestations. By thinning juniper and a few pines, the Land Trust hopes to reduce catastrophic fire and insect danger while improving wildlife habitat for a myriad of bat and bird species as well as elk and mule deer.

Aspen woodlands are also limited in our region due, in part, to fire suppression, juniper encroachment, and grazing. At Whychus Canyon Preserve, aspen can be found in groves along the canyon floor where Whychus Creek provides moisture. These aspen stands were facing stiff competition from juniper and excessive browse by mule deer. To even the playing field, we thinned the juniper and created downed juniper corral around certain groves to keep deer from browsing the small vulnerable sprouts. The end result will be healthier aspen woodlands that benefit water quality and quantity and provide habitat for nesting and migratory songbirds.

This fall the Land Trust will burn slash piles from the now thinned, steep slopes of the Preserve. Once we secure additional funding, we’ll begin the next phase of forest restoration at Whychus Canyon Preserve: thinning juniper along the north canyon rim and southern plateau. Our plan is to leave the old growth beauties that dot the landscape, retain clusters of mid-aged trees, and remove many of the younger juniper that have multiplied in the absence of periodic fires. Though we’ll likely be unable to return fire to the Preserve, continuing forest restoration will help us keep juniper functioning as an important but not overwhelming part of the high desert.

Our forest restoration at Whychus Canyon Preserve is guided by restoration ecologist Darin Stringer of Pacific Stewardship. Funding for this project was made possible by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife matched by contributions from Land Trust supporters during the Preserve’s acquisition campaign.

When Land Trust Board member Kim McCarrel was a child she lived in a rural area outside of Salt Lake City. There, she could walk her dog through the hills for hours and never see another person. “I loved that place, and it never occurred to me that it could ever change. Then, when I was in college, the area was subdivided. The sagebrush, scrub oak, and cottonwood trees I cherished were replaced by houses, roads, and sidewalks. I felt devastated at the loss, and it convinced me that development is not always the highest and best use for a piece of land,” Kim recalls.

Kim and her husband Steve are from Utah and Idaho respectively, but moved to Oregon in the early 1970s. They lived and worked in Portland and in the mid-80’s bought a vacation home at Black Butte Ranch to escape the rain. The McCarels joined the Land Trust in 2000, and increased their involvement during the Metolius Preserve campaign. They’ve been steady contributors ever since.

“When I was growing up, I wanted to help protect pieces of land for people to explore like I did when I was growing up. It’s really a simple vision, but one with profound implications for us all.”
Back in 2000, when the Land Trust was only five years old, a few dedicated volunteers gathered to plan educational tours of the newly acquired Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.

They developed a tour route and determined the best way to share the human and natural history of the meadow. That first year they led a handful of public tours, the following year a dozen. Today that dozen has grown into a successful Walk + Hike program with 100 outings each offered year. The common thread: dynamite volunteers who lead each and every outing.

From April through October, volunteer hike leaders take people to see the stream restoration at Camp Polk Meadow, the birds at Indian Ford Meadow, the views of Whychus Canyon and the fall colors of the Metolius Preserve. In the course of a season, they will guide more than 600 people (twelve times as many as they did in 2000) through a Land Trust protected land. Attendees come away with new natural history knowledge and an understanding of the importance of land conservation.

Who are these hike leaders? They are retired teachers, anthropologists, electricians or working biologists, land-use planners, and geologists who all find time in their busy schedules to volunteer for the Land Trust. This year we are very pleased to recognize one of these outstanding leaders as one of our 2012 Volunteers of the Year.

Jane Meissner has been a Land Trust member since 2004 and a hike leader since 2009. A self-taught naturalist who taught hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing at COCC for 20 years, Jane was raised in Central Oregon and spent much of her childhood outdoors learning about wildflowers with her mother Virginia Meissner (of Meissner sno-park fame). Jane leads a wide variety of hikes for the Land Trust exploring wildflowers, forest ecology, stream restoration, wagon road history, and more.

“Jane is a huge asset to our hike program. An experienced naturalist who knows the birds and the bees, Jane also brings wonderful stories of growing up in Central Oregon before this was the place to recreate. It’s often her reflections that help visitors understand why protecting these places is so important,” says Chad Chalfant the Land Trust’s executive director.

“I like that she may be encouraging others to see the value of preserved land not just for their use, but for the plants and animals. I really enjoy watching people develop an interest in the natural world,” notes Jane. And develop an interest they have! Jane has her own following of hikers that go where she goes because each adventure is so much fun. Congratulations Jane, and thanks for all your expertise and energy!

While our hike leaders often get all the credit for successful outings, there is another corps of volunteers who are equally part of the success: hike shepherds. Much like their namesake, shepherds volunteer their time to be the sweep at the end of the group of hikers. They also help with logistics, spot birds, relay information, and have even been known to tie shoes! Though this year was the first year we formally asked for shepherds to help on hikes, we’ve had one shepherd who has been hard at work since 2008. She is Pat Kearney, our other 2012 Volunteer of the Year.

A retired senior administrator in Student Affairs at UC Davis, Pat Kearney has been a Land Trust member since 2000. Pat first got involved with Land Trust hikes as a spotter on bird walks. Recognizing that leaders often struggled talking about birds and spotting them simultaneously, Pat would stay in the back of the group and call out birds she saw and then help attendees locate them in their binoculars. She quickly became indispensable to bird walk leaders and the Land Trust began looking for more “Pats” to help co-lead all our bird walks.

“As the years we progressed we realized Pat did so much more than just call out birds. She helped check-in attendees at the beginning of a hike, kept the group together while out on the trail, and was an extra hand in case of an emergency—once she even drove to find a participant who got lost getting to the trailhead,” says Sarah Mowry the Land Trust’s outreach director.

In addition to being “Chief Shepherd” at the Land Trust, Pat has taken the time to become an Oregon Master Naturalist so she can contribute more on her hikes, and she consistently volunteers for events and other projects. Thanks Pat, for all you do for the Land Trust!

A THOUSAND THANKS TO THE 211 INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WHO DONATED MORE THAN 5,601 HOURS TO THE LAND TRUST LAST YEAR!

WHYCHUS CREEK:
AT HOME IN CAMP POLK MEADOW PRESERVE

Whychus Creek is finally at home in Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. Since February, the creek has been following its historic course through the Preserve, meandering along the valley floor with quiet stretches of calm water and more rambunctious riffles and swirling pools. It’s a very different place than it was three years ago when we first began the restoration and the creek was trapped on the southern edge of the meadow.

One of the most dramatic changes has been the transformation of a dry dusty field to a lush wet meadow. Since we rerouted the creek, it’s been delivering a constant supply of water to the floodplain. As a result, the underlying water table has risen more than three feet in some places. Groundwater monitoring wells have even overflowed at times. New wetlands, springs, side channels, pools and ponds have also emerged, returning the Preserve to its historic wet meadow condition.

Wildlife are also responding well to the restoration. We saw native redband trout building redds (spawning beds) in the restored channel three weeks after the water returned to the meadow. Bald eagles are now a common sight, circling high overhead. Water birds appear more frequently. Beavers are busy at work rearranging the aspen and other streamside plants to their liking. River otters and elk are exploring the banks of the main and side channels. In June, we had a chance to watch Whychus Creek test its new floodplain. High flows coursed through the meadow, quickly filling pre-made side channels and scouring out new ones as needed. The fast-flowing creek overflowed its banks, spread out across the floodplain and—as designed—was slowed by logs and plants along the way. Though some soil eroded and a few of our newly planted shrubs were upended, the consensus is that Whychus Creek is now the dynamic creek we wanted it to be, with plenty of elbow room to move around the meadow.

Camp Polk Meadow Preserve will continue to change as the years progress. We will continue monitoring the restored channel and likely have lots of tales to tell as the changes become more pronounced. While we watch these stories unfold, the restoration team has begun to think about our next restoration project: restoring six miles of Whychus Creek further downstream. No small task, the goal is to restore the creek from the Land Trust’s Whychus Canyon Preserve all the way down to Rimrock Ranch (privately owned).

To do this the Land Trust must first acquire the property between Whychus Canyon and Rimrock Ranch. Once protected, we will likely restore portions of those six miles on a scale similar to Camp Polk, and provide less intrusive restoration where appropriate. The end result: a sizeable corridor of land and stream protected and restored for fish and wildlife. Onward!
ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Land Trust welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors this year.

Win Francis is a Bend attorney with Francis Hansen & Martin LLP. Win is returning to the Board, having helped found the Land Trust in 1995 and serving until 2003, and then again as co-chair of our Whychus Canyon Preserve campaign. A native Oregonian, Win brings both immense experience and a wry sense of humor to the Land Trust Board. Win’s family has a strong belief that Oregon’s geography deserves recognition and protection.

Jim Nicol of Sisters owns McKinney Butte Consulting, a forestland advisory company. Jim brings extensive knowledge and expertise with forest finance to the board. A dedicated Sisters-area volunteer possessing boundless energy, he can also be found biking, running, skiing, and fishing with his wife Lisa or his trusty Chesapeake Bay retriever.

Bob Thomas is a lifelong resident of Bend. He brings to the Board a keen business acumen from his 37 year career in the family automobile business, Bob Thomas Chevrolet Cadillac Honda. As a long-time community leader, Bob and his wife Clella have served on many local boards. A passionate outdoor enthusiast, Bob can usually be found skiing, paddling, road biking, mountain biking or hiking.

We also bid adieu to three Board members who completed their terms of service.

Don Bauhofer joined the Board in 2002, bringing with him a wealth of experience in land transactions and a passion for the outdoors. As an avid fly fisherman and hunter, Don intuitively understood the importance of healthy wildlife habitat and used his business experience to advance our conservation work, particularly our long-running efforts to protect Skyline Forest.

Collins Hemingway first became involved with the Land Trust as a fundraising volunteer for our campaign to purchase the Metolius Preserve, and quickly found himself on the Board in 2003. His business marketing experience at Microsoft and as an author helped expand the Land Trust’s marketing efforts. Collins served two terms as Board President, overseeing our successful national accreditation effort.

Bill Rainey joined the Board in 2010, following an extensive career as general counsel for several large corporations. Bill’s experience with other nonprofits and his legal background greatly aided our effort to update the Land Trust’s bylaws and policies. As a member of the fundraising committee, Bill played an important role in helping to raise the funds to purchase what is now Whychus Canyon Preserve.

A fond farewell

With great sadness, the Land Trust notes the passing of one of our earliest Board members, Bill Dakin. Bill joined the fledgling Land Trust Board in 1996, shortly after we incorporated. Quiet and unassuming, his determination to grow the organization endeared him to fellow board members, staff, and volunteers. Whether using his accounting expertise, working on the land, or helping to raise funds, Bill helped in countless areas. While we miss Bill greatly, we know he took solace in ensuring his beloved Indian Ford Meadow would be protected for future generations. Thank you to the supporters (see page 15) who made a donation to the Land Trust in his memory.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Land Trust’s fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. This financial summary comes from the Land Trust’s yet-to-be-audited 11-12 financial statement. Audited statements are available upon request. A copy of the Deschutes Land Trust’s Form 990 can be found at www.guidestar.org.

Where did our support come from this year? What did your support pay for this year?

SEVENTEEN YEARS OF GROWTH
To the individuals, businesses, and foundations whose contributions make it possible for the Deschutes Land Trust to conserve and protect land in Central Oregon for today and tomorrow...

Five Rivers Society

* Family fund of the Oregon Community Foundation.

Five Rivers Society Foundation
In Honor of
Patti & Terry Bagwell
Lisa & Gayle Gary
Bill Burkart
Dennis & Susan Tower
The Brantley Family
Barbara Cook
Peter & Jeanette Nunnenkamp
Gordon & Carole Strode
Dr. Collins Scott
kip Running
Elke & Erhard Dortmund
Inge & Mike Wells
Paul Edgerton
Kelly Richards
Peter Feldman
Mark Dohrmann & Julie Deukerheim
Robert Fisher
Jessica Ekemberg
Chris Fisher
Powell C. Groner III
Christine & Geoff Groner
In Memory of
Sue Brewster
Benjamin Brinch
Bruce & Cathy White
Rick Rupp
Paul & Dele Adamsbaum
Lyle & LeAnn Pirch
Bob Woodward & Casey Sheahan
Joy & Emily Henry
In Honor of
Patti & Terry Bagwell
Lisa & Gayle Gary
Bill Burkart
Dennis & Susan Tower
The Brantley Family
Barbara Cook
Peter & Jeanette Nunnenkamp
Gordon & Carole Strode
Dr. Collins Scott
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Elke & Erhard Dortmund
Inge & Mike Wells
Paul Edgerton
Kelly Richards
Peter Feldman
Mark Dohrmann & Julie Deukerheim
Robert Fisher
Jessica Ekemberg
Chris Fisher
Powell C. Groner III
Christine & Geoff Groner
In Memory of
Sue Brewster
Benjamin Brinch
Bruce & Cathy White
Rick Rupp
Paul & Dele Adamsbaum
Lyle & LeAnn Pirch
Bob Woodward & Casey Sheahan
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