



landscapes

CONSERVING LAND FOR WILDLIFE, SCENIC VIEWS, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

DESCHUTES LAND TRUST NEIGHBOR NEWS {SPRING 2015}

FOCUS: CAMP POLK MEADOW PRESERVE

HINDMAN SPRINGS: YOUR ACCESS POINT

The Deschutes Land Trust protected the 152 acre Camp Polk Meadow Preserve in 2000. The Preserve contains more than two miles of Whychus Creek with wetlands, meadows, aspen groves and ponderosa pine stands. The Preserve is broken into two parts. The Hindman Springs Area is open to the public during daylight hours year-round, and the rest of the meadow is closed unless on an approved Land Trust visit.

Visiting Hindman Springs: Hindman Springs is the only public access point at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. It is accessed via a short driveway off of Camp Polk Road that leads to an interpretive kiosk and parking area. From the kiosk visitors can walk a short 0.4 mile trail to explore some key features of Camp Polk Meadow:

Birds: Camp Polk Meadow Preserve is one Central Oregon's birding hot spots. More than 160 species of birds have been observed in the meadow. At Hindman Springs, you can find woodpeckers in pine groves, hummingbirds atop willows, and rails and soras in the wetlands.

History: Camp Polk Meadow Preserve has a long and illustrious history as a crossroads for Native Americans, explorers, soldiers and settlers. The Hindman barn on the Preserve is Deschutes County's oldest structure.

Spring flowers: Camp Polk Meadow Preserve protects a diverse array of plant families. Spring time brings a burst of color to the Preserve, as tiny desert wildflowers unfurl on the sagebrush meadow floor.

Visiting the lower meadow: The lower portion of Camp Polk Meadow Preserve is a closed wildlife refuge. Volunteers who sign up for our bird survey program or scheduled work parties can visit the closed portion of the meadow to help monitor bird populations and restore habitat. *The general public can visit this part of the meadow on a guided Land Trust bird walk or wildflower hike.* Details: deschuteslandtrust.org

*Please note, dogs are **not** allowed at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. Thanks for helping keep Camp Polk Meadow Preserve a sanctuary for wildlife. —*



ISABEL OWEN

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CAMP POLK MEADOW PRESERVE?

Join the Land Trust on a guided nature walk! Each year volunteers lead free nature walks at Land Trust Preserves including Camp Polk Meadow.

Whether it's a bird walk, history talk, or fall colors hike, you are guaranteed to learn a little more about your backyard!

Land Trust Walks + Hikes will be online on April 1. Details: deschuteslandtrust.org



BRONN DUDLEY



RUSS MCILLIAN

CAMP POLK MEADOW: THREE YEARS LATER

Camp Polk Meadow Preserve has been a hotbed of restoration activity in the past several years. The Deschutes Land Trust has been working with several restoration partners to bring the two miles of Whychus Creek and the meadow that surrounds it back to life. The massive restoration project culminated in 2012 with the return of Whychus Creek to its meandering path through the meadow. **How have things changed?**

- **It's greener!** Prior to restoration, the meadow was dry, dusty and devoid of typical creek and floodplain vegetation. During the restoration more than 180,000 native shrubs, grasses and flowers were planted throughout the meadow and along the banks of Whychus Creek. Today, the meadow is visibly greener year-round with a plant community that is well-established, diverse, and abundant. This vegetation helps stabilize creek banks, keeps the creek cold and clean, and provides habitat for a host of wildlife species.

- **There's more water!** Groundwater—the water under ground that is found in the spaces between soil and rock—has risen dramatically. Prior to the restoration, groundwater levels were more than five feet below the surface! Since the restoration, the groundwater has risen an average of three feet.

Why does groundwater matter? Groundwater helps regulate the temperature of creeks and rivers for plants, fish and wildlife. Meadows like Camp Polk act as sponges, holding groundwater throughout the year to release in warm summer months when streams are low. This influx of stored water helps cool Whychus Creek to keep it at healthy temperatures for fish and other aquatic life. Groundwater also helps keep the meadow plants thriving by keeping their roots in water.

- **There's more habitat for wildlife!** The restoration of Whychus Creek dramatically increased the amount of available wildlife habitat in the meadow and creek. There are now 34 pools (14 before!) in Whychus Creek that provide deep refuge for native fish and four miles of side-channels that are now accessible to fish for spawning and rearing. Finally, new wetlands, along with creekside and meadow vegetation, provide shelter, food and other resources for a myriad of wildlife species. —

DID YOU KNOW?

The Deschutes Land Trust is charting the future of Central Oregon with the **Campaign for Whychus Creek**: a three-year campaign to conserve and care for high priority lands along Whychus Creek. Make your mark on the future, get involved today: deschuteslandtrust.org/campaign



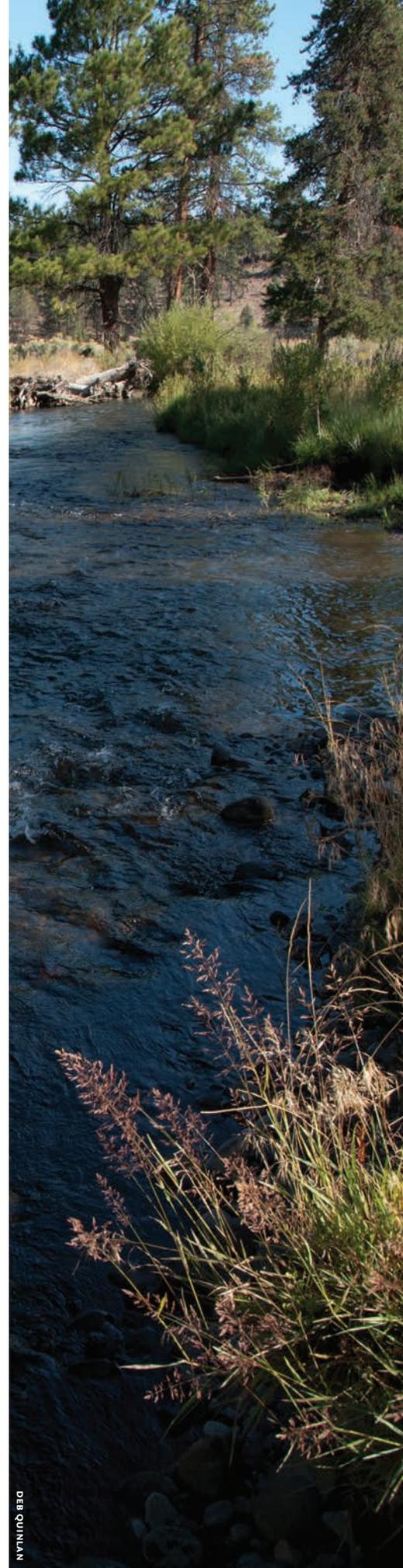
JAN KATHER



THE DESCHUTES LAND TRUST IS PROUD OF OUR GENEROUS FAMILY OF SUPPORTERS. JOIN US TODAY: DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/JOIN

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