

Neighbor News

Your Connection to Land Trust Preserves



Rimrock Ranch Restoration Complete

The Whychus Creek restoration at Rimrock Ranch is wrapping up! Crews were on site all summer working to restore 1.5 miles of Whychus Creek and the surrounding valley floor. Our goal: improve habitat in and around the creek for fish and wildlife, and the resulting transformation is dramatic! **Accomplishments include:**

- **Floodplain shaping:** To reconnect Whychus Creek to its historic floodplain, crews removed soil in some places to bring the elevation of the valley floor down, and also added soil/materials in other places to bring portions of Whychus Creek up. Up to 4 ft of soil and rock (~50,000 cubic yards!) was removed in the process.
- **Newly created habitat:** More than 50 acres of the valley floor was made accessible to water flows to provide habitat for fish and wildlife.
- **Maintaining habitat:** During the floodplain shaping, islands of mature vegetation were left throughout the valley floor to provide habitat for fish and wildlife and help naturally re-seed the restoration area. Pools were also left in the otherwise filled Whychus Creek channel, and new pools were created throughout the floodplain. Both will provide near-term habitat for fish as the restoration evolves.
- **Woody debris:** ~3,000 trees (some whole with root wads intact) were placed across the valley floor to help slow water and reduce erosion as the restoration project evolves. This woody debris also gives stream processes time to settle in before the creek chooses its preferential paths. Woody debris also provides important habitat for fish and wildlife.
- **Water release:** Water from Whychus Creek was released from the temporary bypass channel to the valley floor in a phased approach. The first release included the lower third of the restoration area, and then several days later, water was released onto the remaining portion of the restoration area.

What's next? Planting! This fall, 37,000 native plants will be planted in the restoration area. Then we will let the restoration area rest, evolve, and grow. **Stay up-to-date on Preserve news:** deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news



Rimrock Restoration Tour

Join the Land Trust on September 20, 2023 for a Rimrock Ranch restoration tour! Restoration specialist Jason Grant will lead you through the section of creek that was restored this summer while you learn about efforts to improve habitat in and around the creek for fish and wildlife. See the newly restored meadow and creek and learn about what's next in this multi-phase, multi-year project.

Learn more:
deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes

Did you know?

We've restored 5.5 miles of Whychus Creek and ~140 acres of the valley floor! Together we're creating a more resilient future where fish and wildlife can thrive in a changing climate!



5.5
Miles of creek restored

Native Plant Restoration Projects Progress

The Land Trust has been working for several years to restore the native plant communities at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve and Indian Ford Meadow Preserve. While our methods have been different depending on the location (remember all that plastic at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve?), our goal remains the same--to improve habitat for native plants and animals. How are these restoration projects progressing?

This year marks the fifth year of native plant restoration in the Hindman Springs portion of Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. We are focusing on the hillside that slopes down to the meadow from Hindman Springs. Topography here is much more challenging, and since we can't use soil solarization, we have been using some herbicides and hand pulling to control weeds, followed by planting of native grasses. This approach is far less labor and resource intensive, but it also means we have to contend with more weeds and less water. Our hope is that after treating and pulling the weeds, we will have the start of an established native plant community that can grow for a few years without competition from weeds.

The previous four phases of the Hindman Springs restoration continue to evolve and establish. The oldest phase is now reestablished with a diverse native grass and wildflower community, but it is also experiencing reinvasion of some cheatgrass and other weeds. Some weeds are certainly inevitable, but as long as the native plant population continues to survive, we can be assured that this area is providing a resource-rich habitat for wildlife.

At Indian Ford Meadow Preserve, our four acre restoration project has been surprisingly successful! Four years of weed control and two years of planting grasses and spreading native seed has transformed the area from 100% invasive weeds into a meadow with a diverse bunchgrass community. Though there are still weeds to address, particularly Russian thistle, this portion of the meadow is vastly improved. We'll be planting more grasses this fall, treating weeds, hoping for a wet spring, and then watching this area continue to improve.

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news



Plan for Pile Burning

Huge thanks to all our neighbors for your support and patience as we completed all our forest restoration projects! Of note, we will be burning piles from forest restoration efforts at Aspen Hollow Preserve this winter. The pile burning will be weather dependent and will be completed in consultation with the Oregon Department of Forestry. Stay tuned for more details: deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news



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