



landscapes

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

DESCHUTES LAND TRUST NEIGHBOR NEWS {SPRING 2020}

DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/NEIGHBOR-NEWS

MEET OCHOCO PRESERVE

Welcome to your Ochoco Preserve neighbor newsletter! You may have heard that the Land Trust purchased and protected the property from the George family in 2017. Located on the Madras highway just west of town, Ochoco Preserve includes agricultural fields and parts of the Crooked River, McKay Creek, and Ochoco Creek.

As a neighbor of the Preserve we want to share with you all of the reasons Ochoco Preserve is such an amazing place. And we want to keep you up-to-date on our plans for the future. Towards that end, you can read about the partnerships we are building in the Prineville community to help plan for the future of Ochoco Preserve on the backside of this news bulletin.

Historically, much of Ochoco Preserve consisted of wetlands along the Crooked River. The property was converted to farmland in the mid-1900s, but high groundwater levels and difficult topography (low spots, stream channels, and an old Crooked River channel) made this property challenging to farm. At the same time, the property's unique setting where three streams meet gives it extraordinary natural resource value. The Land Trust purchased the property to conserve and enhance the natural resources on site that benefit us all.

Ochoco Preserve is home to two creek confluences, or places where two bodies of water meet. Both Ochoco Creek and McKay Creek meet the Crooked River on the Preserve, creating incredibly rich habitat for fish and wildlife. Conserving these areas allows wildlife to thrive and helps keep our water clean. This year the Land Trust will be drafting restoration and community engagement plans for the Preserve and we look forward to sharing those with you soon! ➤

Learn more about Ochoco Preserve: deschuteslandtrust.org/ochoco-preserve



AN AERIAL VIEW OF OCHOCO PRESERVE WHERE MCKAY CREEK MEETS THE CROOKED RIVER. PHOTO: SCOTT NELSON/CRWC.



ASPEN VALLEY RANCH: PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND

Did you know the Land Trust has other conserved lands in the Crooked River region? We recently worked with a local rancher to conserve a portion of his family-owned and operated cattle ranch in Post, Oregon. In 2010, we worked with another local landowner on Mill Creek to conserve their land.

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/conserving-crooked-river



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE NATURAL WORLD

The Land Trust has been working to conserve land in the Crooked River region since 2007, but we don't do this work alone! We are fortunate to have many ongoing partnerships that help us be more effective in our work.

First and foremost, we partner with local landowners to conserve their land. Our approach to conservation in the region has been, and will continue to be, voluntary conservation with willing landowners. We know many farmers and ranchers have a long-standing relationship with their land and want to keep it in agricultural production. Our primary conservation tool—a land preservation agreement—allows us to do just that. We use this flexible tool to conserve land for important natural resource values, while keeping the land in private ownership and in agricultural production.

We've also worked for many years to help conserve land around regional creeks and rivers—the Crooked River, Mill Creek, Ochoco Creek, and McKay Creek, for example. We work collaboratively with the Crooked River Watershed Council to coordinate efforts that help keep water clean and more plentiful. In a similar vein, the Land Trust has partnered with Crook County Rotary Club the last two years to help with Ochoco Creek clean-up efforts within Prineville.

More recently, we began partnering with the City of Prineville at their Crooked River Wetland Complex to lead educational tours of the Wetlands and the Land Trust's Ochoco Preserve (which is just across the Crooked River from the complex). Volunteers for both organizations lead free public tours to share the wonder of birds, get fresh air, and learn more about the natural resources at both properties. While many of our 2020 tours had to be canceled due to the pandemic, we look forward to offering more next year! —



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210 NW IRVING AVENUE, SUITE 102, BEND, OREGON 97703
[DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG](https://deschuteslandtrust.org) PHONE [541] 330 0017

HELPING BUTTERFLIES THRIVE!

Last year, the Land Trust partnered with Barnes Butte Elementary to help monarch butterflies. A group of students from the school helped rear and release monarchs provided by the Land Trust. The Western monarch butterfly is native to Central Oregon and is sadly facing a drastic population decline. This year students will continue to help by planting pollinator gardens!

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/monarch-butterflies