



# landscapes

CONSERVING AND CARING FOR THE LANDS AND WATERS THAT SUSTAIN CENTRAL OREGON.

DESCHUTES LAND TRUST NEIGHBOR NEWS {SPRING 2021}

DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/NEIGHBOR-NEWS

## OCHOCO PRESERVE TAKES SHAPE

*Welcome back to your Ochoco Preserve neighbor newsletter! Last fall we shared news about the Land Trust's plans for Ochoco Preserve, the 185-acre property on the Madras Highway just west of Prineville that the Land Trust conserved in 2017. Our long-term vision for the Preserve is starting to take shape, and we wanted to give you a sneak peek into the future!*

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 it challenging to farm. When the Land Trust conserved the property in 2017 one of our goals was to work to restore the Preserve's extraordinary natural resources. Both Ochoco Creek and McKay Creek meet the Crooked River at Ochoco Preserve, creating the opportunity for incredibly rich habitat for fish and wildlife.

Our restoration efforts will center around returning many of the historic natural processes that the Crooked River, Ochoco Creek, and McKay Creek would have had. To do that we need to give these streams a boost by changing where and how they currently flow at the Preserve. This means giving them the space to meander and adding more side channels and natural structures to improve habitat for fish and wildlife. And it means creating floodplain and wetland habitat so these waterways can store, and then release, cleaner, cooler water back into the system.

Ochoco Preserve also has significant potential for community connections. One of our goals is to develop educational sites and trails to share the story of the land and its amazing natural resources. We're working with numerous community partners, including the City of Prineville, Crook County Parks and Recreation, and Crook County School District to ensure access, trail connections, and educational options that are robust and inclusive.

We'll spend the remainder of this year completing designs, raising funds, and preparing for our first phase of implementation which will include removing all the structures from the property by early 2022. We look forward to sharing more details in future newsletters! ➤



### RESTORATION NEWS

*As the restoration at Ochoco Preserve moves forward, please remember the Preserve will remain closed to the public. This is especially important when we remove structures and bring in restoration equipment. If you'd like to receive updates on the project, please follow the link below to share your email address with the Land Trust.*

**Learn more: [deschuteslandtrust.org/ochoco-restoration](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/ochoco-restoration)**



BETHANY ROWLAND

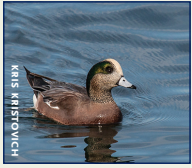


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KRIS KRISTOVICH

## BIRDS OF THE CROOKED RIVER

The arrival of spring always brings a chatter of noise outside our windows. As we venture out into the newly warm sunshine, birding offers an excellent way for people of all skill levels to explore the great outdoors. Here are four birds you might see along the Crooked River near the Land Trust's Ochoco Preserve.



KRIS KRISTOVICH

### American wigeon (*Mareca americana*)

Wetlands along the Crooked River are home to this special duck. The white patterning on male American wigeons resembles a bald head leading many to refer to these ducks as a "baldpate."



KRIS KRISTOVICH

### Evening grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)

This species with striking plumage migrates irregularly, choosing to stay in northern forests year-round or migrating farther south if northern cone crops are poor. In the West, these birds migrate to lower elevations in winter.



JAMES STAS

### Northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*)

These slender raptors might be confused for owls, but they're not related. You can find them hunting in low flight above open fields and wetlands. Males fly in impressive barrel rolls as a mating display at breeding grounds.



KRIS KRISTOVICH

### Spotted sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*)

Possibly one of the most memorable shorebirds, the spotted sandpiper has a characteristic teetering motion giving it the nickname "tip-tail." Look for them teetering just about anywhere near streams, lakes, or ponds.

Learn more: [deschuteslandtrust.org/crooked-river-birds](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/crooked-river-birds)



JOAN AMENO



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LAND TRUST

## VOLUNTEER!

The Land Trust has teamed up with the Crooked River Wetlands Complex to plant and grow new monarch butterfly gardens. Volunteers are needed to help water and tend these new native plant gardens. Donate your time to help monarch butterflies and other pollinators thrive!

Learn more: [deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer)