

Neighbor News

Your Connection to Ochoco Preserve



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Ochoco Preserve Project Update

The second phase of the Ochoco Preserve Project continues to reshape the face of the Preserve. This year we are focusing on creating new main channels and side channels along Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River, creating new floodplains, and establishing locations for trails and educational sites. **Highlights thus far include:**

- **Constructing a new Crooked River alignment.** The new alignment provides more curves, channels, and complexity that will create more diverse habitat for plants and animals.
- **Constructing a new Ochoco Creek alignment.** Like the Crooked River, the new alignment provides more diversity in channel structure and habitat types.
- **Constructing new floodplains.** Both the Crooked and Ochoco alignments include new floodplains that give water space to spread out and slow during high flows.
- **Adding more fish and wildlife habitat.** Riffles (shallow parts of a stream that have rough water) and deep, calm pools have been added to Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River. Riffles and pools help diversify habitat for native fish.
- **Building habitat log jams.** Thanks to local landowners, more than 2,500 juniper and ponderosa pine trees were used to build more than 60 habitat structures in and around the stream. Stream and floodplain wood creates habitat for fish and wildlife, helps protect soils as the restoration project evolves, and provides places for new plants to grow.
- **Establishing locations for community connections.** During construction, crews have been laying the groundwork for the trails and educational sites that will be built in phase three.

What's next? Planting, lots of planting! We'll be adding more than 60,000 native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees in the newly restored portion of the Preserve this fall, and we'll need lots of volunteer help. Lend a hand today: deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer

2,500
Whole trees

More than 2,500 juniper and pine trees were used in the restoration to build habitat structures. These new structures will help provide fish and wildlife habitat in and along the waterways.



Join a guided tour!

Join the Land Trust on a guided tour of Ochoco Preserve! Each year volunteers lead free walks at Ochoco Preserve. This year's tours will be on the Crooked River Wetlands side of the river to accommodate construction efforts, but participants will have a great view of the project in progress!

Details:

deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes



Flexing Muscles for Mussels

This summer, as part of the Ochoco Preserve Project, the Land Trust worked with a variety of partners to help rescue mussels at the Preserve. Mussels? Yes! Freshwater mussels are native to our rivers and streams in Central Oregon.

These mussels burrow themselves into the sediment under the water on the banks or at the bottom of rivers and streams and filter the water for food and oxygen. In the process they provide incredible benefits to us by keeping our water clean by taking impurities out of the water—even removing pharmaceuticals and E.coli! In addition, they are an important part of a waterway’s habitat and food web.

In June, staff and volunteers helped collect and rescue more than 1,800 freshwater mussels from the Crooked River and Ochoco Creek. The mussels were then relocated to a safe part of the river/creek not under construction. Most of the mussels were floater mussels, which are more tolerant of warmer temperatures and sediment than most other mussels in the Pacific Northwest. More than 20 western ridged mussels were collected as well. The western ridged mussel is currently under consideration for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Many thanks to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Xerces Society for their help with the mussel rescue. We look forward to building a better home for these critical critters as the Ochoco Preserve Project continues!

Stay up-to-date on Ochoco Preserve: deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news



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Volunteer!

Be a part of the Ochoco Preserve Project! Volunteer for a Preserve work party this fall. We will need lots of help planting new native plants in the newly restored portions of the Preserve. Watch our website for work party dates!

Learn more:
deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer



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