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NEWSLETTER

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DESCHUTES
LAND
TRUST

Fire on the Land

From lightning strikes to Indigenous stewardship of the land, fire has been a part of Central Oregon for millennia. It has shaped our forests, meadows, rivers, plant communities, and wildlife habitats. Even now, it's a part of the land. The Land Trust experienced this firsthand in 2025, as we conducted our first prescribed burn and also had two wildfires move across four of our Preserves. As we continue wildfire recovery efforts and plan for our second prescribed burn, let's take a look at how fire is shaping the places protected by Deschutes Land Trust.

Prescribed Burns at Metolius Preserve

2025-2026 Burn Goals:
Healthy forests, diverse native plant communities, and thriving wildlife.



Next Step:
Prescribed burn #2 planned for May 2026!

Highlights

1. Developed prescribed burn partnerships with Deschutes National Forest and The Nature Conservancy.
2. Completed pre-burn restorative mowing of brush and understory shrubs.
3. Completed first prescribed burn in May 2025! Met all burn goals.
4. Black-backed woodpeckers immediately returned to forage, wildflowers and bunchgrasses bounced back and bloomed within weeks.



Cram + Flat Fire Date Highlights

JUL - AUG 2025

Cram Fire (95,736 acres) and Flat Fire (23,346 acres) burn 5,271 acres of Land Trust Preserves.



SEPT 2025

Burn assessment and restoration planning underway at all impacted Land Trust properties.

OCT - DEC 2025

Priority weed management underway.



NOV 2025 - FEB 2026
Bulldozer line restoration and seeding underway.

JUNE 2026

Whychus Canyon Preserve targeted to reopen after hazard tree removal.



See the full timeline and learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/fire

Restoration Roundup

Caring for the rivers and streams that flow through our Preserves is a top priority for the Land Trust. Why? Our protected lands help wildlife thrive, they keep our air and water clean, and they help us fight against climate change. This past year we've seen major changes in restoration funding availability, so we wanted to share an update on where the Land Trust's current stream restoration projects stand.



Ochoco Preserve

The Land Trust completed the design for Ochoco Preserve in 2021 and then the first phases of stream restoration in 2022 and 2024. The Land Trust is currently working to raise funds for the final phase of restoration and site development. Given funding challenges, this phase will likely be two separate projects. One would focus on the final restoration efforts along the Crooked River, where new stream channels, floodplain, and wetlands will be created. The second would focus on finishing trails and access details, including building footbridges over the Crooked River and Ochoco Creek. Our hope is to start phasing implementation in 2027 and beyond.



Whychus Canyon Preserve + Rimrock Ranch

The Land Trust has been working with our restoration partners since 2014 on restoring portions of Whychus Creek that flow through Whychus Canyon Preserve and Rimrock Ranch. We completed the first phase of restoration at Whychus Canyon Preserve in 2016. The Rimrock Ranch portion of the project was completed in 2021 and 2023. Planning is currently underway to complete the final portion of the restoration on the remainder of the creek at Whychus Canyon Preserve. The Land Trust is working with our partners at the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC) to apply for restoration design funds. Implementation would begin no earlier than 2028.



Paulina Creek Preserve

The Land Trust is actively working with contractors to design restoration plans for Paulina Creek. We hope to complete the design by the end of 2026. Permitting is also underway. Once the design is finalized, we can begin to raise funds for implementation. Implementation would not begin until 2028 at the earliest.



Willow Springs Preserve

The Land Trust is collaborating with our restoration partners at the UDWC on a low-tech approach that uses natural processes to restore the creek over several years. Phase one was completed in 2022, and the second phase in 2024. The project team is currently working to assess impacts from this winter's high flow events to determine how to implement the final phase. Remaining project work will likely be phased, with some limited activities in 2026 and the majority of work in 2027.



Priday Ranch

The Land Trust received funding in 2026 to begin restoration planning for Trout Creek. Design efforts are currently underway, with the goal of developing a preliminary design to restore one mile of Trout Creek near the western side of the Preserve. This would be the first phase of the Land Trust's stream restoration efforts at the Preserve. Permitting and fundraising are planned for 2027, with the goal of implementing no later than 2029.



Restoring rivers and streams is a complex, many-year investment in building healthier lands and waters that can adapt to our changing climate. When we break ground on a new stream restoration project, years of effort have already gone into planning and fundraising. That's why the Land Trust is committed to moving these projects forward to help our protected lands thrive.

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/stream-restoration



Nature Kids at Home: Hand Lens Fun!



A speckled pattern on a flower's petals. The intricate veins of a leaf. Some things are hard to see, and that's where hand lenses and loupes can help you explore the natural world more closely. These tools help magnify the teeny, tiny details all around us and can be a fun way to explore the natural world with your family. So, plan your next family outing with a hand lens! Here's how to get started:

- 1 Learn the lingo.** Loupes are small, professional magnifying glasses that are labeled with a magnification number. A 2X loupe makes an object two times its actual size. Simple, plastic hand lenses are great starting tools for kids.
- 2 Take time to focus.** Hold the loupe/hand lens close to your eye, like it is one half of a pair of glasses. Lean towards the object and move your head to find the sweet spot where it comes into focus. Be sure to keep the loupe/hand lens close to your eye!
- 3 Say wow!** Once you have found the sweet spot of your hand lens and have focused your object, you have unlocked the ability to discover a whole new part of nature. Maybe the lichen growing on a tree looks like an alien forest. Do you see new colors, shapes or textures?
- 4 Have fun!** Use your hand lens to explore the outdoors! You can make a scavenger hunt with different shapes and textures you find. You can get artsy and draw what you see under the lens. Count how many tiny critters you observe.

Nature Kids

I ♥ Nature! with Nature Kids

Would you like to get the kids in your life outdoors, excited about the things you love about the natural world? The Land Trust's Nature Kids program is here just for you! Get ready for your kids to explore, imagine, and grow through hands-on activities and experiences outside.

Nature Kids outings are guided family nature walks just for families with kids ages 5-10. What can you expect? Get creative by making unique insect art or nature mandalas. Learn about how birds communicate, the ways that flowers attract pollinators, or how monarch butterflies make their amazing migrations. Find your whimsy with a teddy bear picnic and wildlife inventors!

Offered at Land Trust Preserves and in Bend, Madras, Prineville, and Sisters. Find the full schedule online!

Get outside, explore the nature of Central Oregon, meet other families, and have fun with the Land Trust's Nature Kids!

Learn more!



For more tips on how to help kids explore nature, visit:

deschuteslandtrust.org/kids



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Explore Our Lands

Join the Land Trust April-November for free, guided walks or hikes to explore the nature of Central Oregon!

deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes