

TYLER ROEMER

landscapes

In This Issue. . .

A NEW VISION FOR A NEW ERA
PRIDAY RANCH + CLIMATE CHANGE
A TALE OF TWO RESTORATIONS
OCHOCO PRESERVE TAKES SHAPE
SUSTAINABLE HIKING



**DESCHUTES
LAND
TRUST**

The Deschutes Land Trust conserves and cares for the lands and waters that sustain Central Oregon, so local communities and the natural world can flourish together for generations to come.

THE NEWSLETTER OF DESCHUTES LAND TRUST { VOL 25, SPRING 2021 }



JOAN AMERO



JAY MATHER

The Land Trust has been dedicated to conserving and caring for land in Central Oregon for more than 25 years. Last year, as we celebrated our 25th anniversary, we also took the time to plan for the future. Our Board and staff dedicated themselves to a series of visioning sessions where we asked the big questions. What is our vision for the future? How will we accomplish this vision through our mission? The end result: an updated vision and mission for the next 25 years of strategic land conservation.

Our Vision

We envision a future of strong and healthy natural and human communities—where we work together to conserve and care for the lands that make Central Oregon an incredible place to live, work, and grow.

- With the population of Central Oregon continuing to grow and our climate rapidly warming, we protect the rivers, forests, canyons, meadows, and agricultural lands that Central Oregon will need to thrive for generations to come.
- We conserve lands that are strong and adaptable to the changing climate and that sustain functioning natural systems, abundant native plants and animals, clean air and water, and healthy local communities.
- All people have an opportunity to meaningfully connect with this place, so that together we can build an interconnected community of people committed to protecting and caring for the lands we all love.

Our updated vision maintains a focus on our core work to conserve the lands and waters we all need to thrive. What's new? Our vision emphasizes working together to ensure healthy communities for people and nature. We also elevated the importance of climate change and the cascading impacts it has the natural world as we care for the land. Finally, our vision reflects the desire to equitably connect all people to the land so we can work together to care for it.

How will we accomplish this vision? With our updated mission:

Our Mission

We conserve and care for the lands and waters that sustain Central Oregon, so local communities and the natural world can flourish together for generations to come.

This mission reflects our core emphasis to conserve AND care for the land forever, as well as the idea that it is the land and water that support us all. Finally, it reflects our strong belief that when we all work together, we can thrive together.

Stay tuned for our new strategic plan later this year which will detail our goals and objectives to meet this ambitious vision and mission! We look forward to sharing it with you. ➤

Have you heard the news? Last year, the Land Trust conserved the 4,500 acre Priday Ranch, located north of Madras. With three creeks running through the property, a rimrock canyon ideal for golden eagles and other wildlife, sagebrush steppe, and native grasslands, it's an incredible place that is now protected forever. But, that's not all, it's also a property that helps address the impacts of climate change.

Since the Land Trust protects land forever, it's important for us to not only think about what plants and animals we're helping now, but to also think about what plants and animals might call places like Priday Ranch home in the future. When you factor climate change into that future, one of our goals is to ensure that the plants and animals present are able to move through and between our protected lands.

To understand how Priday Ranch can help address the impacts of climate change, we need to understand the concept of terrestrial resilience. This concept comes from a Nature Conservancy framework that is helping us evaluate lands for their ability to address the impacts of climate change. Terrestrial resilience can be broken down into separate parts. Soil, rock, slope angle, and slope direction are all considered geophysical features that support the diversity of life on land. More diversity in geophysical features means more microclimates and a more varied range of plants and animals in the area. Now, let's add connectivity to this picture. Connectivity is the ability of a plant or animal to successfully move across and between different areas in order to survive and thrive. Taken together, a diversity of geophysical features plus high connectivity provides terrestrial resilience. Written another way:

Diversity of geophysical features + high connectivity = terrestrial resilience

The higher the terrestrial resilience in an area, the more likely the area (and the plants and animals within it) will be able to withstand or bounce back from the effects of a changing climate.

How does this relate to Priday Ranch? The property is predominantly either above average or far above average in terms of its terrestrial resiliency. It has low-lying areas where Trout Creek, Antelope Creek, and Ward Creek wind their ways through meadows and canyons. There are also rolling hills, rugged highlands, and rimrock canyons. Overall, Priday Ranch has a wide variety of elevations and slope angles and other geophysical features. In addition, the surrounding lands are sparsely developed, which helps wildlife move in, across, and out of our protected lands, giving the property high connectivity. Added together, all of these factors mean Priday Ranch has the terrestrial resiliency that will help it (and us!) weather the impacts of climate change into the future. ➤



RYDER REDFIELD

A TALE OF TWO RESTORATIONS

This summer, the Land Trust will be embarking on two multi-year stream restoration projects along Whychus Creek—one at Willow Springs Preserve and another at Rimrock Ranch. Both projects have the same goals: to increase the variety of habitats both in the stream and along the stream, to reconnect Whychus Creek to surrounding meadows, and to make the entire stream system stronger.



WILLOW SPRINGS BEFORE RESTORATION

At Willow Springs Preserve, the restoration project will use a low-tech approach, transforming a single channel (like the rendering at left) into a braided series of channels that spreads out across the valley floor (like the rendering below).

Approximately 130 different structures made of natural materials will be added to a 3/4 mile stretch of Whychus Creek. Most of these will be Post Assisted Log Structures, which look like log jams in the stream but instead they are constructed with vertical wooden posts that are angled against placed logs in order to provide stability. These will be used to shift the flow of the creek in certain directions.



RICK DINGUS

Smaller dam-like structures will also be built on side channels to imitate beaver dams, create pools, and help connect Whychus Creek to the surrounding meadow. Neither structure type is intended to be permanent and, instead, will change and evolve as stream processes take over. Finally, thousands of native plants will be added to the restoration area to provide stream shade, soil stability, and habitat for wildlife. We will complete the restoration at Willow Springs Preserve over the next several years.



JAY MATHER



WILLOW SPRINGS 2-4 YEARS AFTER RESTORATION

Rimrock Ranch

Meanwhile, downstream at Rimrock Ranch, Whychus Creek looks a bit different. The creek is more confined in its current channel, making it very difficult to connect it to the rest of the meadow. Similar to the restoration work we completed in 2016 at Whychus Canyon Preserve, bulldozers and diggers will move a lot of dirt in order to allow Whychus Creek to move across the valley floor once again. Woody debris will be added to the creek and the surrounding meadow, and the creek will then flow through the newly created surfaces and through existing pools. In the fall, we will add 37,000 new native plants to complement the islands of established mature vegetation that will be left throughout the restoration area. The creek and meadow will then rest, recover, and naturally evolve and grow.



We look forward to seeing how Whychus Creek evolves over time at both properties. Stay tuned for more details!

OCHOCO PRESERVE TAKES SHAPE

Our long-term vision for Ochoco Preserve in Prineville is starting to take shape! We've been working in the background for the last couple of years to develop conceptual designs for restoration and community access at the Preserve. As those designs are getting closer to fruition, 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 with you soon!

Learn more at: deschuteslandtrust.org/ochoco-restoration

DEB QUINLAN

WALKING LIGHTLY ON THE LAND

JILL ROSELL

Central Oregonians are fortunate to have easy and abundant access to so many local trails, parks, and natural areas. In the past year, as the pandemic curtailed activities, the importance (and demand!) for outdoor access became even more apparent to us all. As you head into the next outdoor season, here are five ways you can help care for the land so it will be here for all of us—human and wild—for years to come.

- 1 Reignite the relationship.** This year we've been so tangibly reminded that our actions both impact and are impacted by the actions of others—a reality that extends to our relationship with the natural world. One of the best ways to care for the land is to remember that interconnected relationship and reignite it. What can you do to give back to the land that gives us so much?
- 2 Pack out those peels.** Just as the natural world is interconnected, so is it delicately balanced. What may seem like a biodegradable banana or orange peel under a bush can truly have lasting effects on the natural world (read our blog post all about it!). One easy way to care for the land: pack out your peels, and of course, all your trash! It helps keep wildlife healthy and our natural areas natural.
- 3 Stay the trail.** Build up your willpower (and leg power!) to avoid shortcuts. Staying on existing trails safeguards sensitive plants and protects against trail erosion. Even waiting to the side of the trail while someone is passing (instead of walking off-trail) helps to prevent trail widening and the compaction and erosion of soils. As more and more people come to love our favorite trails, the human impact on these places will increase. But if we each do our part to lessen our individual impacts, we'll look forward to many more happy trails!
- 4 Don't pick...plant!** From stones and sticks to spring's most beautiful blossoms, there are so many neat and beautiful things to find outside. Loving and treasuring their beauty can help us feel connected to nature when we find ourselves back at home. Our suggestion for bringing nature's treasures into your life while still caring for the land: don't pick, plant! Instead of picking wildflowers, could you plant some native blooms at home? Not only will you be leaving the flowers for other critters, but you'll also be helping to increase native plant habitat at home!
- 5 Welcome others.** When we are welcoming in our favorite outdoor places, we can strengthen or encourage another person's love for the land. Sharing these places with *everyone* is one of the greatest ways to care for them. After all, for so many of us, falling in love with this land was the first step to caring for it and helping it thrive into the future. Let's encourage more folks to do the same!

MAP: DEB QUINLAN



OCHOCO PRESERVE (BRIGHT GREEN AREA OF MAP) WITH CONCEPTUAL RESTORED PORTIONS OF WATERWAYS (DARK BLUE).

TYLER ROEMER



DESCHUTES LAND TRUST

Explore Our Lands

Join us April-November for a free, guided walk or hike or visit one of our protected lands on your own. Learn more about the Land Trust and the nature of Central Oregon:

deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes



CAITLIN EDDOLLS

Volunteer With Us

Donate your time to tend trails, count birds, stuff envelopes, or help on hikes! Make your community a better place by volunteering with the Land Trust today:

deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer



LAND TRUST

Discover Nature from Home

Explore the nature of Central Oregon from home! Join Land Trust naturalists online for virtual events to learn about birds, butterflies, trees and more! Connect with nature via our blog and our Nature Bytes e-newsletter:

deschuteslandtrust.org



JOAN AMERO

JOAN AMERO



THE DESCHUTES LAND TRUST IS PROUD OF OUR GENEROUS FAMILY OF SUPPORTERS. JOIN US TODAY: [DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/JOIN](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/join)

LANDS IN TRUST PROTECTED FOREVER



210 NW IRVING AVENUE, SUITE 102, BEND, OREGON 97703

[DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG](https://deschuteslandtrust.org) PHONE [541] 330 0017