

2024

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SPRING NEWSLETTER

VOL 28

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DESCHUTES
LAND
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Ochoco Preserve Project Phase Two

The Land Trust's Ochoco Preserve in Prineville will be a busy place this year! Phase two of the Ochoco Preserve Project will kick into high gear this spring and continue through the fall.

The Ochoco Preserve Project is a multi-year project to create healthy streams, flourishing native plants and wildlife, and new connections for the community at Ochoco Preserve. The Land Trust completed the first phase of the project in 2022, focused on restoring McKay Creek at the Preserve. The second phase will focus on restoring Ochoco Creek and a portion of the Crooked River at the Preserve.

Goals for this phase of the project include:

1 Create new main channels and side channels.

A new meandering Ochoco Creek will be built on the Preserve, doubling its overall length to one mile. Then a portion of the Crooked River (.06 miles) will be moved onto the Preserve, adding more curves and channel complexity. Finally, an additional mile of side channels will also be constructed.

2 Build new floodplains.

Land surrounding Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River will be adjusted to create a new floodplain that will give the waterways more room to spread out and slow high-water flows.

3 Add more fish and wildlife habitat.

Riffles (shallow parts of a stream that have rough water) and deep, calm pools will be added to Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River. Riffles and pools help diversify habitat for native fish. We will also use wood (from salvaged trees) to help build habitat 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.

4 Construct an acclimation pond.

Another acclimation pond will be built in Ochoco Creek, in addition to the one built in McKay Creek in 2022. The Ochoco Creek pond will help accustom young spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead to Ochoco Creek, before they are released to journey to the Pacific Ocean and, hopefully, back to the Preserve to spawn.

5 Establish locations for community connections.

Part of the habitat restoration will also include establishing locations for the trails and educational sites that will be built in phase three.

It will be a busy spring and summer at Ochoco Preserve, but the end result will be much better habitat for fish and wildlife and a healthier community for us all. You can learn more about the restoration on a guided tour, or lend a hand this fall, when volunteers will help plant more than 60,000 native plants in the newly restored portion of the Preserve. **Learn more:** deschuteslandtrust.org/ochoco-vision

Save the Date!

Ochoco Preserve Open House:

**MAY
22
2024**



Watch our website for more details!



Nature Nearby Scavenger Hunt

In Central Oregon we are fortunate to have so many beautiful natural areas to explore. Sometimes, though, we forget that you don't necessarily have to venture deep into the mountains to enjoy the beauty of the natural world. Grab your family, step outside your door, and discover #NatureNearby YOU! See more ideas for exploring #Nature Nearby: deschuteslandtrust.org/nature-nearby

Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, Sisters

From creek to forest to grassy meadow, this little Preserve is teeming with life. See if you can spot:

- A Western tanager
- The Hindman barn
- Milkweed plants for monarch butterflies



Metolius Preserve, Camp Sherman

Towering pines, burbling creeks, and amazing fall colors. Wander over to the Metolius Preserve to see if you can spot:

- A Western larch tree
- Lake Creek
- A mariposa lily

Paulina Creek Preserve, La Pine

Sign up for a guided Land Trust tour and explore our volcanic history, wet meadows, and pine forests. See if you can spot:

- A pronghorn antelope
- A sand lily
- Paulina Peak



Friday Ranch, Madras

Sign up for a guided Land Trust tour and take in steep canyons, plateaus, and wide open spaces. See if you can spot:

- A Western fence lizard
- An arrowleaf balsamroot
- Oregon swallowtail butterfly



Explore Our Lands

Join the Land Trust April-November for free, guided walks or hikes. From geology to wildflowers and family outings, our volunteer leaders help you explore the nature of Central Oregon. Join us today!

Walks + Hikes!





Feeling the Burn

Healthy forests, diverse native plant communities, and thriving wildlife are a few of the habitat goals the Land Trust is working towards at our Metolius Preserve near Camp Sherman. How do we get there? One of our tools is prescribed burning.

Prescribed burns are planned fires that mimic natural fires. They are forest management tools that are carefully planned for and managed. Central Oregon's forests benefited from fire for thousands of years. In fact, the removal of fire during the last hundred years has shown us exactly how important fire is. Small, regular low-intensity fires have been replaced by large catastrophic ones that make it harder for our forests to recover.

That's why we are working to reintroduce fire to the Metolius Preserve this year. We're planning to return this natural part of the forest cycle to provide a variety of benefits to the trees, plants, and wildlife. For example, soil fertility typically increases after low-intensity fires. After a fire, trees can also provide more food and shelter for wildlife since fires promote vegetation growth and help create snags, dead standing trees, that wildlife use for shelter. Prescribed burns also remove thick layers of duff on the forest floor (like pine needles, sometimes up to a foot deep!). Duff removal helps prevent future high-intensity wildfires and encourages new plant growth.

The Land Trust is currently working with our partners at the Sisters Ranger District and The Nature Conservancy to develop a burn plan and schedule the timing for a prescribed burn at the Metolius Preserve that will align with the prescribed burning of immediately adjacent Deschutes National Forest land. Forest restoration and prescribed burning are key parts of returning health and resilience to the Metolius Preserve. We look forward to seeing a thriving forest once again!

Learn more:

deschuteslandtrust.org/mp-forest-restoration

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