



landscapes

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**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.

BUILDING A NEW COMMUNITY VISION FOR SKYLINE FOREST

JAY MATHER

As longtime Central Oregonians know, the Land Trust has worked for nearly 20 years to permanently protect Skyline Forest—the 33,000 acre forest between Bend and Sisters. Those efforts produced many conservation options and multiple pieces of state legislation to support conservation of the forest, which in turn have helped protect the forest for the last 20 years and through several real estate booms. Because the Land Trust can only move at the pace and will of the landowner, we still have yet to find a permanent conservation solution for Skyline Forest. But we haven't given up, and we believe the solution is out there!

Towards that end, the Land Trust is leading a new effort to develop a community vision for Skyline Forest. Together with a coalition of community groups, we are working to create a robust, community-wide effort that engages local organizations, leaders, and community members in creating a shared vision for Skyline Forest's future conservation and management. This visioning process will include:

- **Stakeholder sessions:** We will work with a professional facilitator to host a series of working sessions attended by stakeholders including recreationists, local nonprofit and conservation groups, tribal members, land managers, county/city/state government officials, neighbors, fire managers, and others. These sessions will be designed to identify and map current community priorities for Skyline Forest and also to solicit input for a vision for future management.
- **Tours:** To learn more about Skyline Forest and its current and future value to the larger community.
- **Community Input Survey:** This survey tool will be used to gauge community support for conservation of Skyline Forest, and it will provide an opportunity for the local community to comment on future management and use.

We expect this new visioning process will be ongoing from April through June. Look for more information in our monthly e-newsletter about how you can get involved. Skyline Forest protects important wildlife habitat, tremendous recreation opportunities, and the scenic green foothills that set off the Central Oregon Cascades. Together we can ensure that we find a conservation solution to permanently protect this treasure of Central Oregon. —

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/skyline-forest



CONSERVATION OUR NEW ADDITION

WASIM MUKLASHY

The Land Trust is pleased to report that we've conserved more of Priday Ranch! The Land Trust conserved the 4,500 acre Priday Ranch in 2020, and we recently conserved another 160 acres along Ward Creek, just north of the main portion of the property.

Home to rugged canyons, abundant wildlife, and ten miles of creek, Priday Ranch is located north of Madras, Oregon. The newly protected Ward Creek parcel is across Highway 283 and protects approximately 1.5 miles of Ward Creek. This section of Ward Creek is also extremely rugged with a deep canyon, thick streamside vegetation, and abundant beaver. It's a remote place, with no buildings and acres of wide open expanses of relatively healthy native bunchgrass communities.

Ward Creek is, of course, the jewel in this high desert landscape. It is home to summer steelhead and resident redband trout as it flows into Antelope Creek at Priday Ranch and then eventually joins with Trout Creek. In the past few years, Trout Creek and its tributaries have experienced some of the lowest flows ever recorded, with many of the lower portions of Trout Creek dry for much of the year. Ward Creek, however, provides year-round water through this newly protected section to its confluence with Antelope Creek. Year-round, cool water habitats are vital for the young summer steelhead that mature in these creeks and for the larger steelhead population that needs these refuges during drought years as our climate continues to warm.

A wide range of other wildlife species are found in and along Ward Creek. Rocky Mountain elk and mule deer use this region for winter range. Jackrabbits, bobcats, and cougars use the grasslands and stream corridors for various life stages and needs. Beavers benefit from robust streamside vegetation which provides food and building materials for their dams. Finally, ground-nesting birds and raptors, like golden eagles, use the grassland and sagebrush habitats for food and cover.

Conserving this new section of Ward Creek ensures habitat for fish and wildlife are protected forever, and that the creek and its surrounding lands continue to provide clean, cold water for human and natural communities. The Land Trust will be taking time over the coming year to document conditions at the property and develop a plan for managing the parcel in conjunction with the rest of Priday Ranch.

Priday Ranch can be visited on guided tours. Get to know this new gem of Central Oregon by signing up for a walk or hike today: deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes —



SPRING IS FOR WILDFLOWERS

Spring in the high desert is a tentative thing: sun and warm temperatures one day followed by snow the next. The only sure sign that spring is really here is the arrival of wildflowers.

Central Oregon, with its deserts and high mountain meadows, is chock full of wildflowers. While we certainly can't list them all here, we can share ten of our favorites found at Land Trust Preserves. Some are common, others worth the wander:



GOLDFIELDS: MARCH-APRIL

Goldfields, *Crocidium multicaule*. One of our very first wildflowers of the season! You'll find these dime-size flowers carpeting the sagebrush flats. Single yellow flower with 8 rays ¼-½in long on a delicate stem up to 6in tall.



SAND LILY: APRIL-MAY

Sand lily, *Leucocrinum montanum*. Another early bloomer that can be found in sagebrush flats and pine forests. It grows in rosette-like bunches with 4-8 white flowers per bunch. Flowers have 6 petals; leaves are 4-8in, flat and linear.



BITTERROOT: MAY

Bitterroot, *Lewisia rediviva*. A desert beauty growing in rocky, open soils. White to pink flowers burst from rosettes on the ground. Named for Meriwether Lewis whose samples grew two years after collecting (rediviva = restored to life)!



YARROW: APRIL-SEPTEMBER

Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*. A widespread native at home in sagebrush meadows and pine forests. Leaves are feathery and flowers grow on tall stems in an umbrella-like cluster. Each white flower has 3-5 rays and a yellow center.



ARROWLEAF BALSAMROOT: MAY-JUNE

Arrowleaf balsamroot, *Balsamorhiza sagittata*. One of our showiest wildflowers lighting up hillsides with sunny, disk-like faces. Grows in clumps with large widely triangular leaves that have heart-shaped bases. Yellow flowers are 2½ -4in wide on 1-3ft stems.



MASIM MUKLAHY

Spotted mountain bells, *Fritillaria atropurpurea*. A beautifully delicate native lily found in forests near openings. Brownish bell-shaped flowers have yellow-red spots and grow 5-25in tall. This uncommon lily takes a keen eye to find!



SPOTTED MOUNTAIN BELLS: JUNE

Red columbine, *Aquilegia formosa*. A stunningly delicate native that grows in moist, partly shaded areas. Drooping bright red and yellow flowers grow on stalks up to 4ft tall. Hummingbirds and butterflies love columbine nectar.



RED COLUMBINE: MAY-JULY

Mariposa lily, *Calochortus macrocarpus*. A sagebrush jewel that blooms intensely lavender on tall 8-23in stems. Mariposa is 'butterfly' in Spanish, and kalo and chortos are Greek for 'beautiful,' and 'grass.'



MARIPOSA LILY: JUNE-JULY

Scarlet gilia, *Ipomopsis aggregata*. Trumpet-shaped, bright red flowers on stems up to 3ft tall. Flower color may vary from scarlet speckled with white, to pale pink speckled with red. Grows in dry soils in woodland openings and meadows.



SCARLET GILIA: JUNE-AUGUST

Washington lily, *Lilium washingtonianum*. This native lily seems like it came straight from the flower shop with its classic shape, smell, and size! Large white to pink flowers on tall, 2-8ft stems. Grows in dry forests and is named for Martha Washington.



WASHINGTON LILY: JUNE-JULY

Disclaimer: While we've done our best to be accurate, bloom times are different every year due to weather, location, site conditions, and more.

Learn more about our native wildflowers on a guided Land Trust hike: deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes

ANGELA BOHLKE

After a pandemic delay, the restoration of Whychus Creek at Willow Springs Preserve will kick into high gear this summer!

The Land Trust is collaborating with our restoration partners on a low-tech approach that uses natural processes to restore the creek over several years. If stream restoration conjures images of heavy machinery moving soil and sculpting a new creek channel, replace that image with one of small crews working together to build more than 130 structures by hand in a 3/4 mile stretch of Whychus Creek. What will these structures look like? Well, a lot like log jams and beaver dams.

Most of the structures used in the restoration will be post-assisted log structures. These look like log jams in the stream, and are constructed with vertical wooden posts that are angled against placed logs in order to provide stability. Small juniper trees, ponderosa pine trees, and other branches will be used to create these structures.

These structures will extend partway across the creek and deflect the flow of water in different directions, helping Whychus Creek transform from a single channel into a braided series of channels that spread across the valley floor. This transformation will help create a variety of habitat types for fish and wildlife: deep pools, fast flowing sections, slower ponds of water, and plenty of wood in the creek. It will also allow the creek to spread across the valley floor, slow high waters, and connect the creek to underground water. This, in turn, helps cool the creek and keep it at a healthy temperature for fish and other wildlife.

Smaller beaver dam-like structures will also be built on side channels to create slow water pools, offer different types of habitat for fish and wildlife, and help connect Whychus Creek to the surrounding meadow. These structures are designed so that water can flow through them, even though they will span an entire side channel of the creek. Some of these dam-like structures will first be built in the dry meadow. Once the log structures on the main channel have begun to do their work, water will flow towards these mini-dams and they will become part of the creek system.

Neither type of restoration structure is intended to be permanent. Eventually, high flow water events will wash them away, and the woody debris will accumulate in other parts of Whychus Creek, creating additional habitat downstream.

With the restoration at Willow Springs Preserve taking several years to complete, we look forward to seeing how Whychus Creek evolves and changes over time. **Stay tuned as this project continues!**



JAY MATHER

WASIM MUKLASHY

The Land Trust's vision for the future of Ochoco Preserve is about to become a reality! This spring we will kick off the first phase of building a new Preserve with healthy streams, flourishing native plants and wildlife, and new connections for the community. The first phase will focus on habitat restoration in and around the McKay Creek portion of the Preserve. **Highlights include:**

- 1. Creating a new meandering McKay Creek with side channels.** A new meandering main channel will be moved onto the Preserve, doubling its overall length to one mile. An additional mile of side channels will also be built.
- 2. Building a new floodplain.** Land surrounding the McKay Creek main channel will be lowered to create a new floodplain that will be up to 300-400 feet wide and give the creek more room to spread out and slow high water flows.
- 3. Adding more stream habitat.** Woody debris will be placed within McKay Creek via log jam structures, small dams that mimic beaver dams, and other fixed wood structures. In addition, riffles (shallow parts of a stream that have rough water) and deep, calm pools will be added to the creek. This will create more habitat types that will benefit fish and wildlife.
- 4. Constructing an acclimation pond.** Fish reintroduction efforts will receive a boost with a newly created acclimation pond. The pond will help accustom young spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead to McKay Creek, before they are released to journey to the Pacific Ocean and, hopefully, back to McKay Creek again to spawn.
- 5. Establishing 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 future phases.

It will be a busy spring and summer at the Preserve, but the end result will be much better habitat for fish and other wildlife and a healthier McKay Creek for us all. Though trails and educational offerings are still several years in the future, you can learn more about the restoration on a guided tour, or lend a hand this fall, when volunteers will help plant more than 70,000 native plants in the newly restored portion of the Preserve. ➤

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/ochoco-vision



GARY MILLER

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



VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

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



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Explore the nature of Central Oregon from home! Follow us on Facebook or Instagram, learn about the nature of Central Oregon on our blog, or join our monthly e-newsletter to get the latest on conserving and caring for land in Central Oregon: deschuteslandtrust.org



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

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