

# landscapes

KRIS KRISTOVICH

## *In This Issue...*

- NEW PRESERVE TRAIL SYSTEMS
- CONSERVING THE CROOKED RIVER
- LEASH-UP TO HIKE WITH FIDO
- WEED WARRIORS UNITE



DESCHUTES  
**LAND  
TRUST**

*The Deschutes Land Trust works cooperatively with landowners to conserve land for wildlife, scenic views, and local communities.*

# NEW TRAIL SYSTEMS FOR TWO PRESERVES

STEVE PEDERSEN

## The Land Trust established the *Metolius Preserve* in 2003.

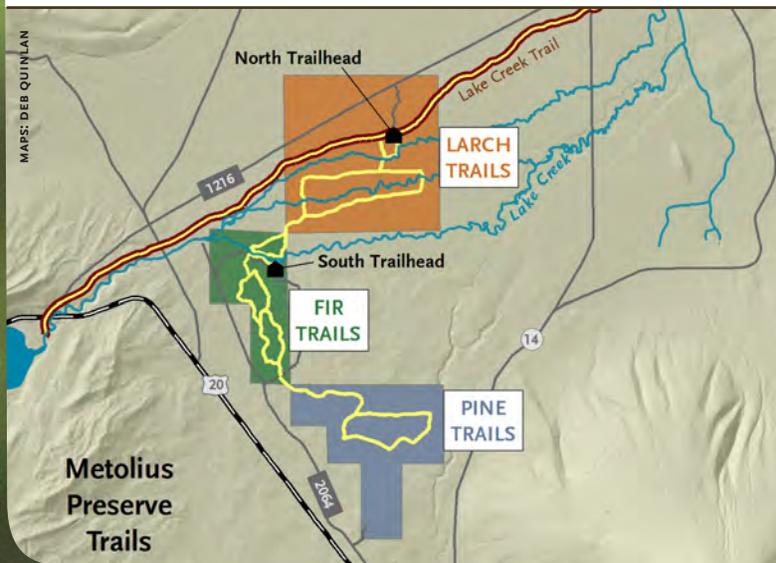
Located west of Camp Sherman, the 1,240-acre Preserve is home to pine forests, three forks of Lake Creek, a host of wildlife species, and more than 10 miles of trails. This past fall the Land Trust's trail system underwent a major transformation! We now have three distinct sections named for the predominant tree species:

**Larch Trails:** Accessed via the Preserve's North Trailhead, the Larch Trails take visitors through one of the most ecologically diverse sections of the Preserve. Fall is spectacular here when red and orange vine maple leaves and brilliant yellow larch needles shine.

**Fir Trails:** Accessed via the Preserve's South Trailhead, the Fir Trails include the Betsy Johnson Interpretive Area with educational signs that tell the story of native fish. Fir Trails also radiate southward through fir and pine forest loaded with beautiful golden bracken fern each fall.

**Pine Trails:** Also accessed via the South Trailhead, the Pine Trails take visitors on a long loop through restored pine forest. These trails are a great place to observe white-headed woodpeckers and other cavity nesting birds foraging for food on the snags.

LEARN MORE: [DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/METOLIUS-PRESERVE](http://DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/METOLIUS-PRESERVE)



## The Land Trust established *Whychus Canyon Preserve* in 2010 and expanded the Preserve in 2014.

Located northeast of Sisters, the Preserve contains four miles of Whychus Creek, meadows, old growth juniper, cottonwood, and aspen stands. It also includes more than 7 miles of trails. Whychus Canyon Preserve's new trail system is divided into four sections:

**Wagon Road Trail:** This trail follows a portion of the historic Santiam Wagon Road. It is lovely in spring when the tiny desert wildflowers begin to bloom.

**Rim Trails:** These trails follow the canyon rim, providing stunning views of the canyon and the Three Sisters. In spring, Rim Trails are dotted with the brightly colored blooms of balsamroot, paintbrush, and lupine.

**Meadow Trails:** These trails provide access to the juniper and sagebrush meadows at the top of the canyon. Meadow Trails are flat for easy walking and offer a bounty of early spring wildflowers.

**Creek Trails:** These trails are accessed via the Rim Trails and follow Whychus Creek along the canyon floor. Visitors can enjoy the shade and quiet of the lush green vegetation that lines the creek.

LEARN MORE: [DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/WHYCHUS-CANYON-PRESERVE](http://DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG/WHYCHUS-CANYON-PRESERVE)



## Meet our Trail Ambassadors!

These awesome volunteers hike our trails regularly to promote the safe, responsible, and enjoyable use of our Preserves.



JAY MATHER

*In the 1860s, Central Oregon was a wild and untrammelled place. Early travelers described the region as at once lush and barren with the region's rivers and streams providing the sustenance needed to survive. The Crooked River was one such place in a harsh terrain.*

Early travelers' journals tell the story of the Crooked River before settlement. Along the rivers and creeks, beaver dams and wetlands were abundant; grasses and willows thrived in rich soils replenished by flood waters; and salmon and steelhead thrived. "Peter Skene Ogden, a Hudson's Bay Company fur trapper...saw grasses standing 'seven feet high' and streams lined with willow."\*

Today our region looks different, yet the Crooked River remains a lifeblood for our community—both human and wild. And while the landscape will never return to pre-settlement conditions, we can choose to conserve important lands that humans and wildlife will need to survive into the next century. That's why the Land Trust has had a longstanding interest in conserving key lands in and around the Crooked River.

The Crooked River drains from the Ochoco Mountains and flows west-northwest through Prineville before joining the Deschutes River at Lake Billy Chinook. Major tributaries include McKay Creek and Ochoco Creek west of Prineville and Mill Creek east of Prineville. Sixty-eight percent of the land in the Crooked River basin is privately owned and much of that land is working farm, ranch or forest land. These working lands are the social and economic backbone of the area and also support elk and mule deer, antelope and sage grouse, redband trout, salmon, and steelhead.

Our approach to conservation in this region has been, and will continue to be, voluntary conservation with willing landowners. We know many farmers and ranchers have a long-standing relationship with their land and want to keep it in agricultural production. Our primary conservation tool—a land preservation agreement—allows us to do just that. We use this flexible tool to conserve land for important habitat values, while keeping the land in private ownership and in agricultural production.

\*Citation: [deschuteslandtrust.org/crooked-river](http://deschuteslandtrust.org/crooked-river)

## CROOKED RIVER CONSERVED LANDS:

- 1 **2007: Ranch at the Canyons.** We worked with Ranch at the Canyons to protect 550 acres and 1.5 miles of Crooked River frontage for fish and wildlife and scenic views from the adjacent Smith Rock State Park. The ranch remains privately-owned.
- 2 **2010: Coffey Ranch.** We worked with the Bauersfeld family to conserve Coffey Ranch, 492 acres of ranch land along Mill Creek. The ranch remains privately-owned and in agricultural production.
- 3 **2017: Ochoco Preserve.** The Land Trust established the 152-acre Ochoco Preserve on the Crooked River. The Preserve conserves the confluences of McKay and Ochoco Creeks.

## CROOKED RIVER PROJECTS IN PROGRESS:

- 4 **Demaris Ranch.** The Land Trust is working with the owners of Demaris Ranch to conserve their 2,000+ acre ranch on McKay Creek. Their property includes two miles of McKay Creek and its surrounding meadows, along with working ponderosa pine forests. The conservation agreement will maintain private ownership, forestry and ranching activities, and protect wildlife habitat.
- 5 **Aspen Valley Ranch.** The Land Trust is working to conserve a portion of the 15,000+ acre Aspen Valley Ranch near Post. The ranch stretches from the Maury Mountains, north across the Post-Paulina Valley and Crooked River, and up into the Ochoco Mountains. The conservation agreement will maintain private ownership, ranching activities, and protect key wildlife habitat.



Prineville and the Crooked River circa 1909-1914, from the Kiser Collection.

# LEASH-UP TO HIKE WITH FIDO

If you have a dog, you know the excitement the phrase “let’s go for a walk” brings. This spring, as you get ready to head out to your favorite Land Trust Preserve for a hike with your furry friend, we offer this reminder about the importance of keeping dogs on leash.

Land Trust protected lands are there for the purpose of conserving and caring for native wildlife. We choose to allow dogs on leash at several Land Trust Preserves because we love our pups as much as you do, and we like to think we can all co-exist peacefully. However, for the sake of wildlife, **we require that these dogs remain on leash** and their waste be removed. **Why does it matter?**



- **Dogs have predatory instincts:** Dogs that are not on leash have more opportunities to encounter and kill or injure wildlife.
- **Dogs love the chase:** Most wild animals do not have excess energy; rather, they are just barely surviving. Your dog’s harmless chase can easily exhaust a wild animal, leaving no reserves to fend off the next predator.
- **Dogs mark their territory:** Native carnivores and domestic dogs both communicate indirectly through scat and scent marking along trails. The presence of dog waste may deter native wildlife from using an area, or draw them in to investigate, which can be dangerous for both humans and wildlife.
- **Dogs are roamers:** Dogs that roam off-trail, dig, roll, or make beds in the dirt impact and/or destroy native vegetation, fragile desert soils, and potentially the homes of critters that live beneath the soil. These disturbed areas take a long time to recover in our very short growing season.
- **Dogs and people don’t always mix:** Trails at Land Trust Preserves are shared by all kinds of users, many of whom do not have a dog or do not want your dog—no matter how large or small, fierce or friendly, clean or muddy—running up to them on a trail. Leashing your dog respects other users.
- **Dog waste is a problem—your problem as a dog owner:** Dog waste is a nasty addition to many of our trails in Central Oregon. It is a major vector for disease for native wildlife and it doesn’t just disappear (decomposition in a dry climate takes a long time!). So it’s up to you to be mindful of your dog’s waste: Please pick it up and pack it out, wherever you go.



IN HONOR OF SUZIE. PHOTO: BYRON DUDLEY

Learn more at: [deschuteslandtrust.org/good-dogs](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/good-dogs)

# WEED WARRIORS UNITE!

*What’s faster than a speeding bullet? More powerful than a locomotive? Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound? Invasive weeds!*

But wait...there is hope. The Deschutes Land Trust has a secret weapon, a kryptonite of sorts—our Weed Warriors! This dedicated group of volunteers fights for those who cannot fight for themselves, battling invasive weeds at Land Trust protected lands throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

Invasive weeds are (you guessed it) plants we don’t want at our protected lands—just like you don’t want weeds in your garden. The trick with invasive weeds, however, is that they are “super weeds,” incredibly adapted to take over and win the battle. Native plants just can’t compete and need a leg up to survive and thrive.

Enter super-volunteers Ginny Elliott and Pat Green—our leaders in the weed battle. Mullein and knapweed snake their roots in deep, trying to spread their ranks far and wide, but never fear, Ginny, Pat, and their Weed Warriors are here! They help protect our native plants—like Peck’s Penstemon, milkweed, and buckwheat—that can’t compete against super invaders.

**What does it take to be a Weed Warrior?** A sense of duty and a willingness to get a little dirty! Our Weed Warriors visit our protected lands (including going to places not open to the public) three times a month. Armed with gloves, tools, and determination, the Weed Warriors help make the world a better place. **Will you join them?**



### Weed Warriors Details:

**When:** April-October, 1st Saturday, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays

**Where:** Land Trust protected lands

**How:** [deschuteslandtrust.org/weed-warriors](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/weed-warriors)

JOAN AMERO

LAND TRUST

# Get to know your Land Trust!

*The Deschutes Land Trust has been working cooperatively with landowners since 1995 to protect 9,052 acres in the region for wildlife, scenic views, and local communities. Interested in learning more?*

## Come On a Walk or Hike

Join us March-November for a free, guided hike at one of our protected lands. Learn more about the Land Trust and the nature of Central Oregon:

- [deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes)

## 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](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer)

## Share Your Land Trust Experience

Help build a community with a strong conservation ethic. Invite the Land Trust to speak at your book club or neighborhood gathering! Share your photos with us (#deschuteslandtrust) so others can see just how special Central Oregon's protected lands are to you! Details:

- [deschuteslandtrust.org/loveyourlands](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/loveyourlands)

Together we can chart the future of Central Oregon and make our community a better place to live. Learn more about what we do, where we work, and how we protect land in Central Oregon:

- [deschuteslandtrust.org](https://deschuteslandtrust.org)

JILL ROSELL

CHIP BELDEN



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