

**Deschutes Land Trust**

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DESCHUTESLANDTRUST.ORG

CONSERVATION. COMMUNITY. CARING FOR THE LAND.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****Deschutes Land Trust Welcomes Six New Board Members**

**Bend, OR—February 11, 2026**— The Deschutes Land Trust announced today that six new members have joined the Land Trust's Board of Directors. These new members are excited to serve and use their collective decades of experience to advance our mission. Each brings unique skills, expertise, and passions for conserving and caring land in Central Oregon to the Land Trust.

"The Land Trust is thrilled to expand the size and expertise of our already amazing Board of Directors," said Executive Director, Rika Ayotte. "We had more than 30 community members who were interested in serving on the Land Trust Board. These new members were chosen for their connections to community, their diverse lived experiences, and their considerable technical expertise. We are truly grateful for their service and commitment to conserving and caring for land in Central Oregon." New board members include:

**John Bailey** has spent a lifetime exploring his home state of Oregon, and all the West, appreciating the vast lands open to public use. John's professional background is in corporate finance, including a long career at Columbia Sportswear where he most recently served as treasurer prior to retirement. He is an active volunteer in the local community and has served on several nonprofit boards including roles as president and treasurer. John lives in Sisters and enjoys searching for rising trout, mountain biking, skiing, and spending time with his wife, two sons, and a dog named Stella.

**Vicki Finn** grew up enjoying summers on her grandmother's farm in Virginia where her passion for the outdoors and her appreciation for working lands began. Environmental conservation became her calling and public service the means. She served for 34 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, mainly in the Pacific Northwest, where she collaboratively led teams seeking lasting benefits for fish, wildlife, lands and people. She also coached mid-career employees in leadership—an honor of her career. Her connection to Central Oregon began in the mid 1990's when she and her husband fell in love with the beauty and tranquility of Camp Sherman. Today, she serves as a trail steward for the Land Trust and as a volunteer with the Oregon State University Extension Master Gardener Program. In her free time, Vicki enjoys reading, hiking, cycling, swimming, bird-watching, and spending time with her husband and two adult daughters.

**Kassidy Kern** grew up on a sheep ranch in Wyoming that has been in her family for more than 100 years. She began her professional career in video post-production and publicity, before moving into collaborative land use planning in the West. She has worked permanently with the Forest Service since 2010, and moved to Bend in 2013 to work as a Public Affairs Specialist for the Deschutes National Forest. She has worked for both the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests in recent years and now lives in Bend and serves as the Deputy District Ranger for the Bend-Fort

Rock Ranger District. In her free time, you can find Cassidy and her family hiking, paddle boarding, snowshoeing, sledding, and riding mountain bikes on Central Oregon's amazing and diverse public lands.

**Craig Nichols** was born on a cattle ranch in eastern Washington. He served six years in the US Marine Corp, and spent the majority of his life working outdoors as a rancher or in the outfitting business from the Yukon and Alaska to New Mexico. Craig has spent the last 35 years in Oregon managing a variety of ranches. He's worked with the Nature Conservancy in northeastern Oregon and with the BLM and Forest Service on grazing allotments and wildfires. Craig currently manages the Cross Keys Ranch next to the Land Trust's Priddy Ranch. In his spare time, Craig is an auctioneer and plays music for benefit auctions and fundraising events.

**Amy Paul** grew up in the Pacific Northwest, spent over a decade on the east coast working in global public health and development, and moved to Central Oregon to create a life closer to home in 2024. She quickly discovered Deschutes Land Trust Preserves, soaking in the beauty of Central Oregon. Amy participated in the first cohort of the Deschutes Land Trust's Emerging Conservationists of Central Oregon program and continues to deepen her engagement with and support for the organization's work. Professionally, she most recently served as a senior director at a professional services firm working to strengthen the use of digital technology in social impact contexts. In her free time, Amy enjoys hiking, painting, and building community in and around Sisters.

**Dr. Chuck Walls** is a board-certified veterinary surgeon with more than three decades of experience in advanced orthopedic and soft-tissue surgery. He practiced in both private practice and university settings where he specialized in complex orthopedic procedures. Currently retired from clinical practice, Chuck still enjoys consulting as well as teaching veterinary surgical techniques and skills. He is also co-founder of the McCabe-Walls Family Foundation, which supports initiatives focused on environmental and energy sustainability, animal welfare, educational advancement, and equitable community development. He and his family value time spent outdoors and believe strongly in protecting natural spaces for future generations.

#### **About Deschutes Land Trust:**

*The Deschutes Land Trust envisions 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. As Central Oregon's locally-based, nationally-accredited land trust, the Deschutes Land Trust has conserved and continues to care for more than 18,742 acres since 1995. For more information on the Deschutes Land Trust, contact us at (541) 330-0017 or visit [deschuteslandtrust.org](http://deschuteslandtrust.org).*

**Deschutes Land Trust**  
**Conservation. Community. Caring for the Land.**

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**Media resources:** [Board photos](#).

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