

RICH CONNECTIONS TO THIS LAND

Camp Polk Meadow has been an important place for people for thousands of years.



Sahaptin young women. Photo: Deschutes County Historical Society.

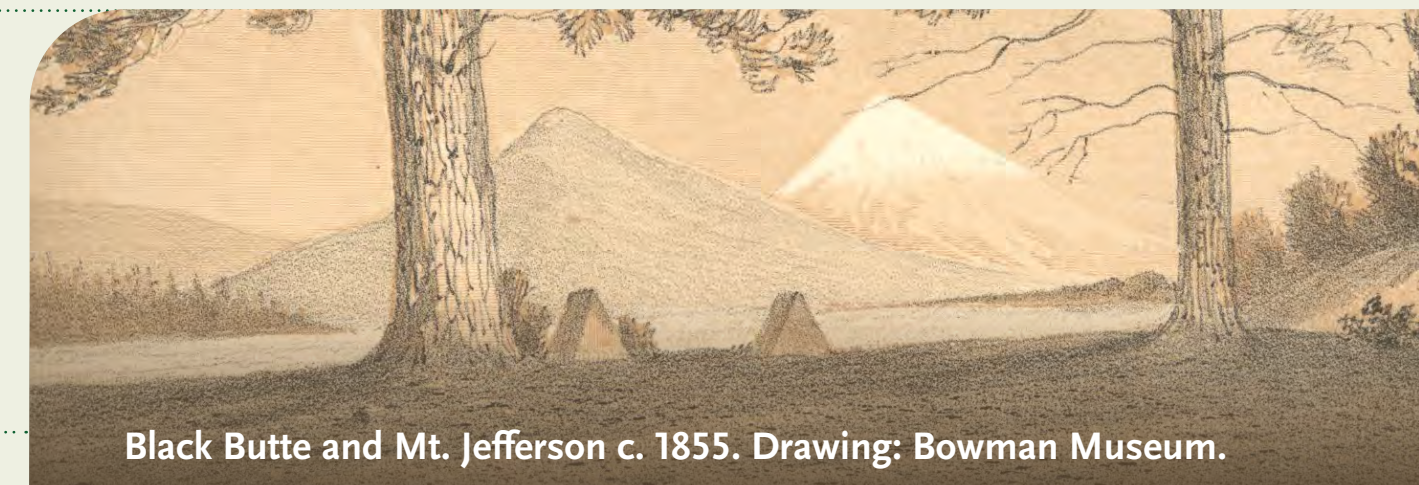
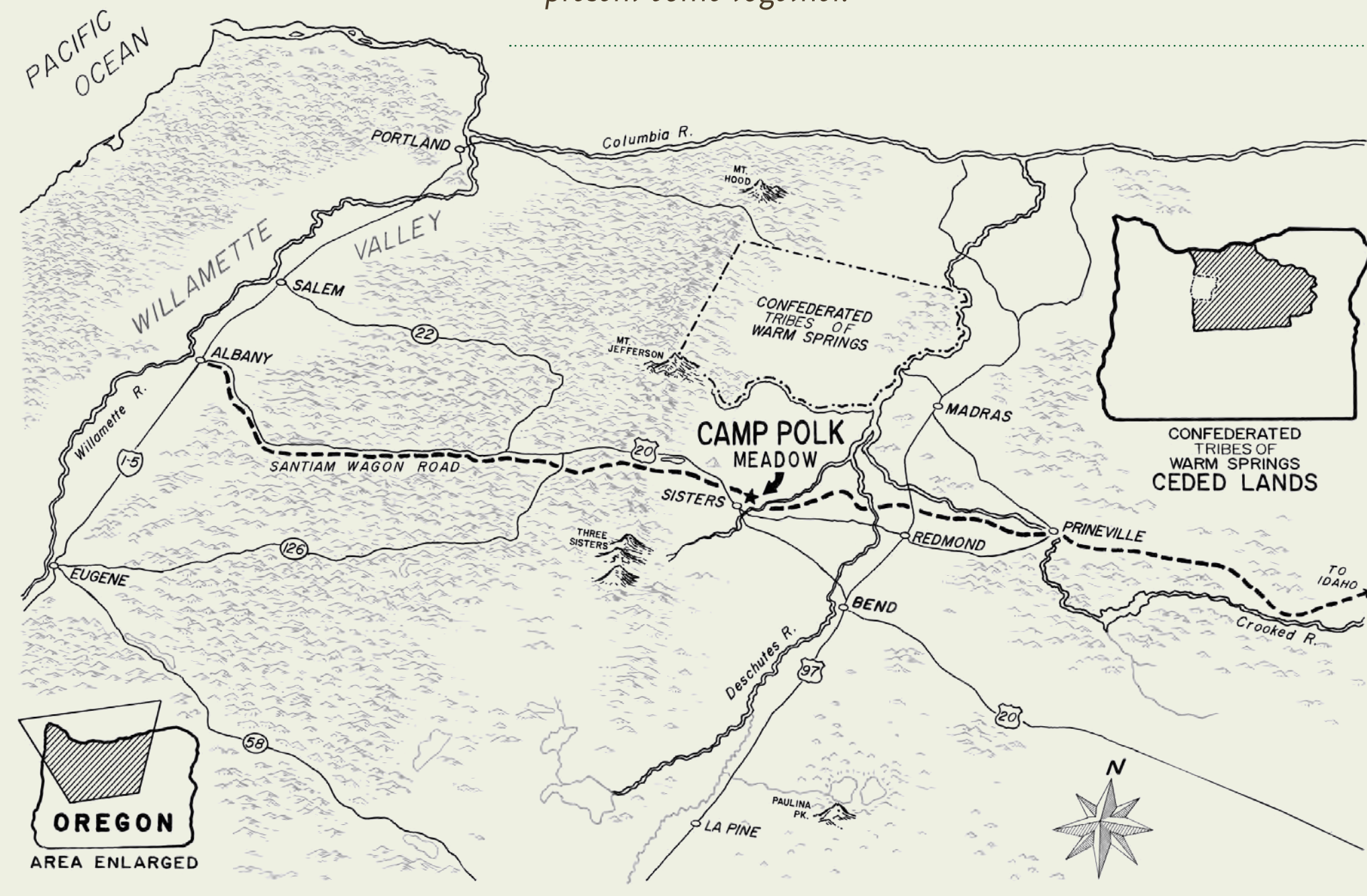
Native Americans

Since time immemorial, Native Americans, including the Warm Springs, Wasq'u (Wasco), and Paiute Tribes, have lived in or visited this region. They visited places like Camp Polk Meadow on their seasonal rounds to hunt and gather food and other resources for clothing, tools, and ceremonial uses. Together these Tribes represented four language families with rich community and trading networks. Today, these Tribes are represented by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

The arrival of Euro-Americans in the 1800's was devastating to Native American communities. As settlers cleared forests and built settlements, they brought disease and disrupted traditional Tribal territories which led to forced displacement and cultural suppression. By 1834, only a remnant of the robust Native American population remained. Between 1850-1870, the United States government further disrupted lifeways by forcibly moving most Tribes onto established reservations through treaties. The impacts of this displacement are still felt today, but Native American communities are building a strong future through their connection to the land.

A Meadow With a Story

Camp Polk Meadow has been a historical crossroad for people for thousands of years. The map below depicts some of these connections and how past and present come together.



Black Butte and Mt. Jefferson c. 1855. Drawing: Bowman Museum.

Euro-Americans

The first Euro-Americans began to travel through this area in the early 1800s in search of beaver to trap. By the 1840s-1850s, survey parties were mapping and seeking westward routes. From September 1865 to May 1866, soldiers were sent to what is now Camp Polk to camp and “protect” settlers and travelers on the new road that was being built, the Santiam Wagon Road. In reality, the soldiers never encountered Native Americans and instead spent their time building small cabins and helping construct the Wagon Road. The name Camp Polk for Polk County in the Willamette Valley, home to most of the soldiers, would stay with the meadow for generations to come.

Learn more about the cultural history of Camp Polk Meadow as you walk the interpretive trail.



In 1868, Samuel Hindman (pronounced Hineman) acquired 160 acres that included Camp Polk Meadow. Then, between 1868–1870, Samuel and Jane Hindman and their three children moved to the western portion of Camp Polk Meadow. The Hindmans maintained the Santiam Wagon Road and managed Hindman Station—a store, post office, and a place to house travelers.

Learn more about Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, leer en español, listen with an audio reader, or download for reading later. Adapted and reprinted with permission from Martin Winch's *Biography of A Place*.



HINDMAN STATION

The Hindman family (pronounced Hineman) played a significant role in the settlement of Camp Polk and Central Oregon.

Settlement and Native Communities

Between 1843-1845, westward migration began along the Oregon Trail. This migration, tied to the belief that Euro-Americans had a divine right to settle the Western US, had deep and lasting impacts on Native American communities. As settlers cleared forests and built settlements, they brought disease and displaced Indigenous peoples who had their own deep ties to the land. Recognizing and honoring the Indigenous perspective on settlement allows us to appreciate the full historical context of this place.



Wagon road toll station, circa 1866. Photo: Bowman Museum.

The Santiam Wagon Road

The Santiam Wagon Road was built in the 1860s to connect the Willamette Valley to the grasslands of Central Oregon and the gold mines of eastern Oregon and Idaho. It followed well-known trails and travel corridors used by Native Americans. It was nearly 400 miles long and served as a livestock trail and freight route over the Cascades from 1865-1939. In 1868, Samuel Hindman purchased 160 acres of land from the Wagon Road Company for \$400. His house and barn would become Hindman Station on the Santiam Wagon Road.



Hindman Station

Hindman Station was established by Samuel Hindman between 1868-1870 as a stopping place on the Santiam Wagon Road. It was where travelers made their final preparations for trips east across the high desert or west across the Cascades. The Station offered a store for replenishing goods, a post office, and a place to rest cattle and horses. For the Hindman family, the Wagon Road offered an opportunity for barter and some cash to supplement subsistence ranching.

By 1885, a new bridge over the Deschutes River at Tetherow began diverting more traffic via Sisters, bypassing Camp Polk and Hindman Station. The Camp Polk post office moved to Sisters in 1888. By 1900, the Columbia Southern Railroad connected to Shaniko (north of Madras), taking much of the freight traffic—especially wool wagon trains—away from the Santiam Wagon Road. By 1911, the Oregon Trunk Railroad reached Bend, further rerouting traffic and marking the end of the Santiam Wagon Road and Hindman Station.



Samuel Hindman maintained the Wagon Road from Santiam Pass all the way to the Crooked River! Photo: Bowman Museum.

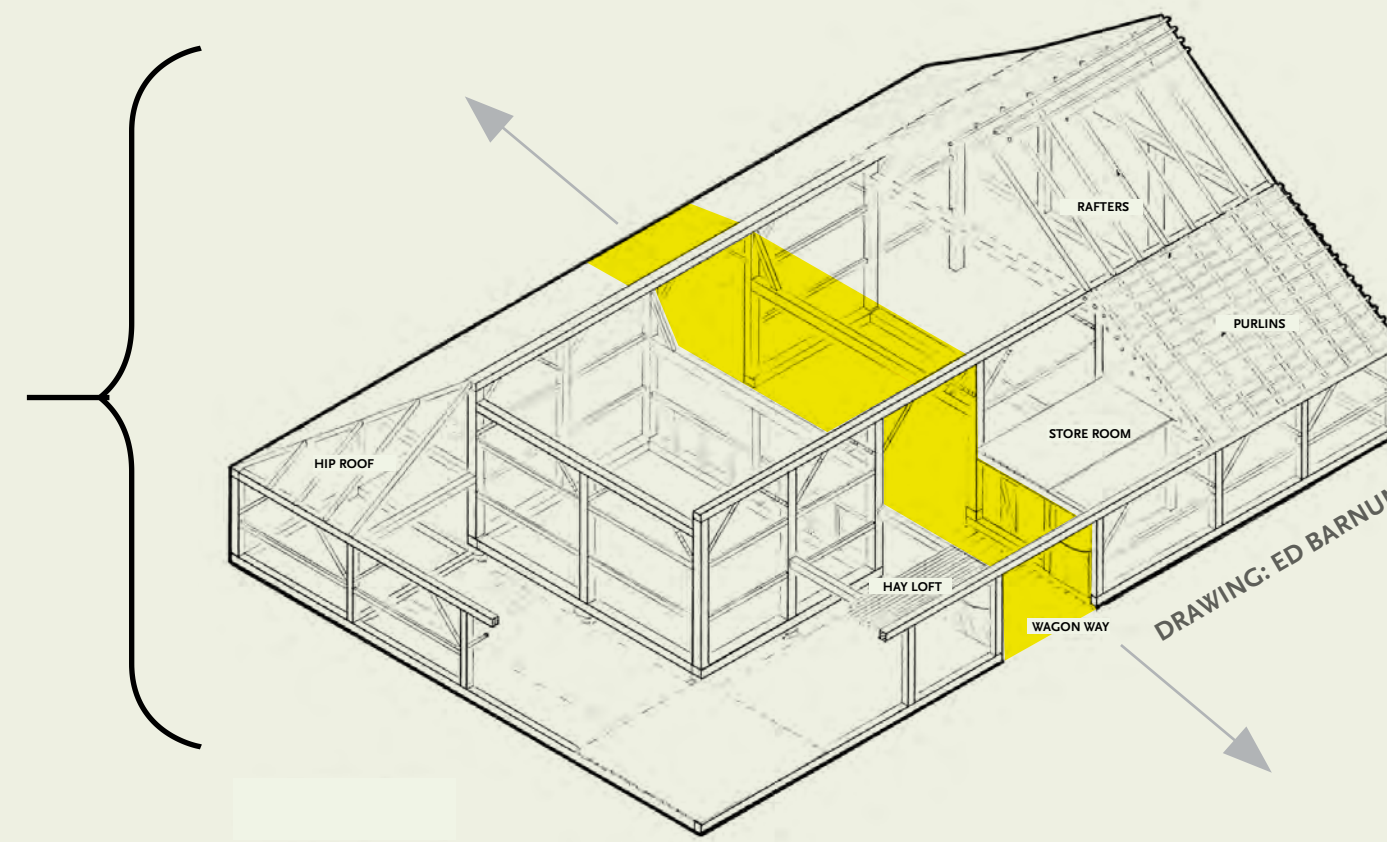


Over time, the era of wagons and wagon roads made way for the new modern world of trains and cars. Photo: Bowman Museum.



HINDMAN BARN

Today, the posts and beams from the Hindman Barn are all that remain of Hindman Station.



Wagon Way for Unloading

A distinctive feature of the barn is the 10 foot wide wagon way that passes north-south through the center of the barn. It allowed hay wagons to be unloaded directly into the loft or other parts of the barn.



Barn 101

Built in 1870, the barn is the only remaining structure from the Santiam Wagon Road era and is one of Deschutes County's oldest structures.

- The Hindman barn originally measured 75' long by 50' wide. It was an impressive structure built for permanence and handcrafted by Samuel Hindman who was skilled with axe and timber. What you see in front of you is all that remains of Hindman's barn—the inner core structure that is 62' long x 25' wide.
- Samuel Hindman was described as an “axeman”—a man who cleared a line of sight for road and land surveyors. He used his skills to build this barn and likely drew on his knowledge of barn construction from time spent in Ohio, Iowa, and the Willamette Valley. The blueprint to the left—drawn in 1972 when the barn was still standing—shows some of the construction details and key features.
- By 1960, the Hindman barn was no longer used for daily ranching activities and began to deteriorate. A windstorm damaged the already failing roof in 1990, sealing its fate. By the time the Deschutes Land Trust acquired the meadow in 2000, all that was left was the structure you see today.



HINDMAN BARN CRAFTSMANSHIP

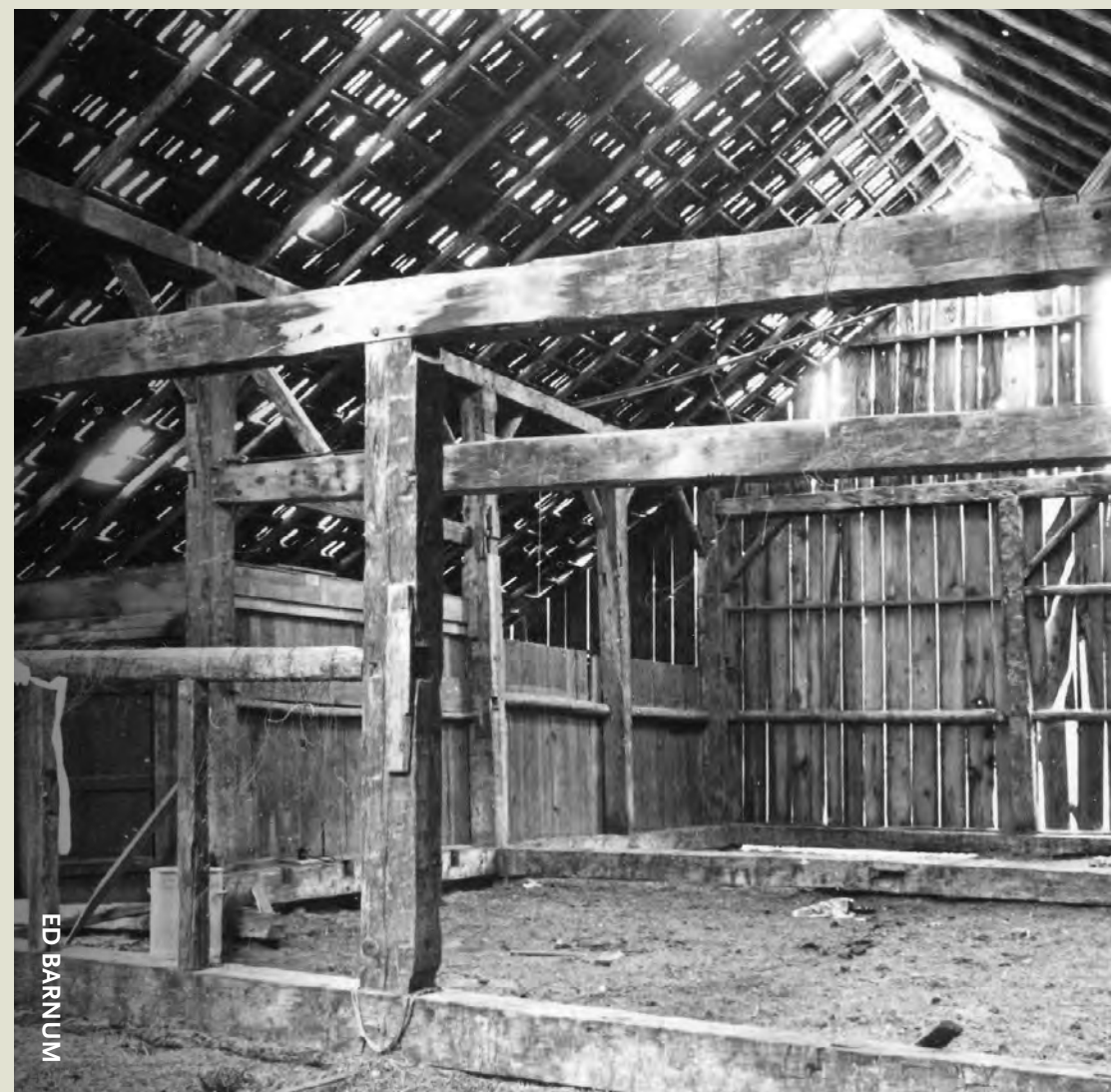
Since much of the barn was lost over time, construction details are based on the observations of the craftsmanship we see today.



Stone Foundation

Foundation stones provided solid footing for sills and posts. Most of the barn was probably built around the same time (1870) because the plank framing, structural members, and construction appear consistent throughout. Of course, over the years, the barn was altered for different uses.

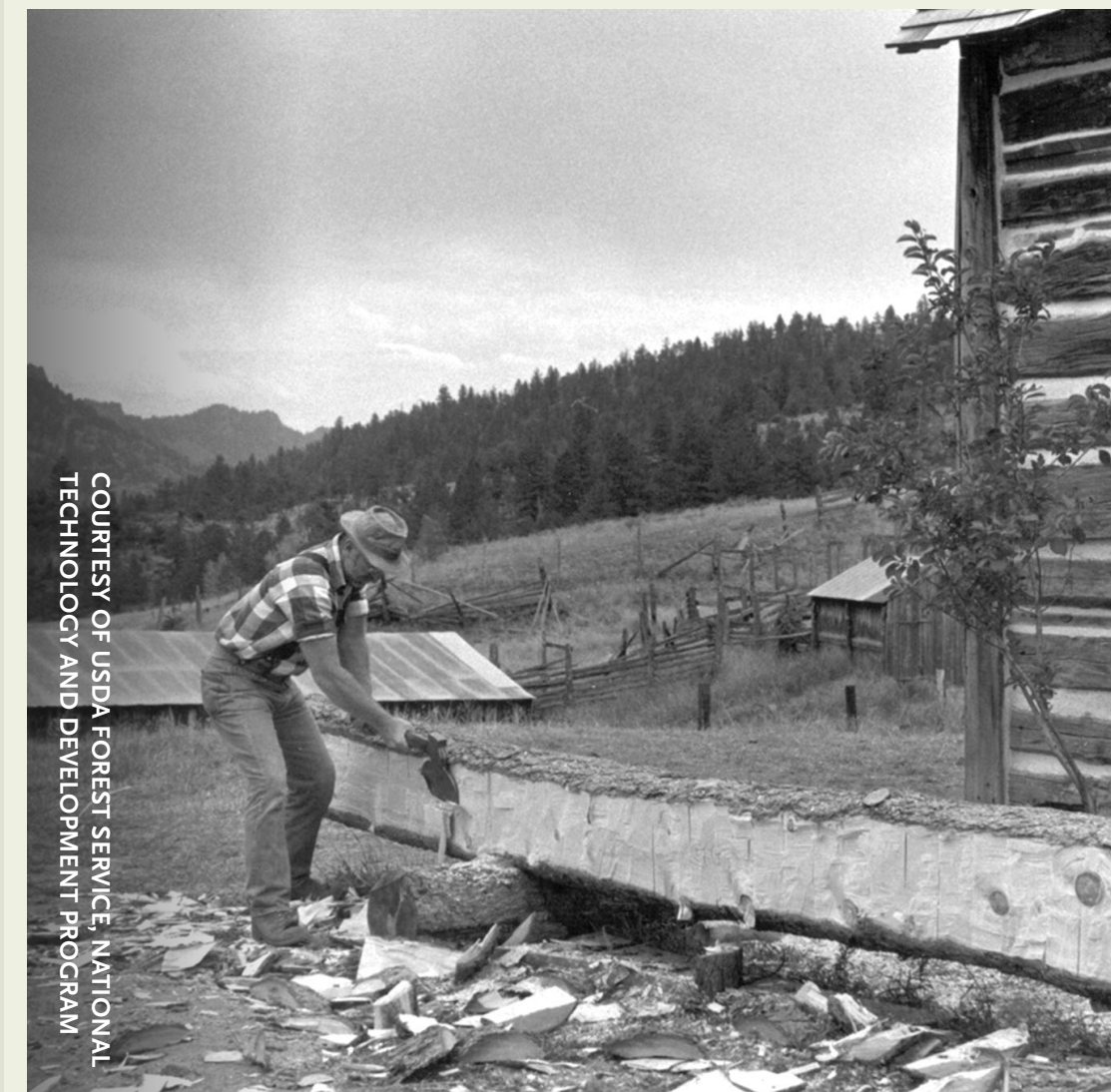
* Look at the foundation stone under the post to the left. The original post-and-rock footing, along with an original shim, remain today. Solid indeed!



Timber Framing

The timbers used to frame the Hindman barn were cut on site. They came from ponderosa pines that were large enough to produce straight heartwood beams 10" square. There are sixteen 14' tall posts on horizontal sills. The top beams that hold the structure together are 65' long, hewn from a single log!

* Stand next to the post to your left. With your cheek against the post, look straight up along the edge of the post. Do you detect a bend? This is the amazing perfection of heartwood pine and a talented axeman.



Hand Hewn

The timbers all show signs of a broad axe—not a draw knife, nor an adze. The barn siding, however, was sawn at a mill. At the time, milled lumber could have been hauled from Prineville, the Dalles, or from the Willamette Valley (an eight day round-trip with freight!).

* Look for axe marks on nearby beams. Then, look behind you at the sill on the ground. See some of the original remaining exterior siding.



Wooden Joinery

The barn has mortise-and-tenon joints that are secured with wooden pegs called trunnels. Samuel Hindman would have crafted these joints by hand. The kind of joinery and timber framing Hindman used were more sophisticated than the log structures that soldiers and many settlers used.

* Look at the top beams that hold the structure together. See if you can find any of Hindman's wooden trunnels or pegs.



HINDMAN BARN USE

The Hindman barn was in active use from 1870-1960 stabling livestock and storing hay.



Dairy and Stables

Dairy cows were kept on the north side of the barn. At the east end of the barn, directly in front of where you stand today, there were additional stables with wood flooring, the remains of which can be seen to your left. There was also a gutter (see photo above) in the middle of this floor, suggesting that cattle or dairy animals were fed and milked in this section of the barn. Milk from the Hindman place was sold locally for nearly a century.



A view of the barn from 1972 taken near your current location. The beams on the ground in front of you mark the original outer wall of the barn. Photo: Ed Barnum.

Wagon Road Station

The barn and homestead served as a stopping place on the Santiam Wagon Road. The Hindmans established a reputation for their hospitality and help to early settlers. Samuel Hindman hauled supplies from the Willamette Valley to sell at Hindman Station. He offered items such as matches, salt, coffee, Arbuckle brand work shirts, and a place to pick up the mail. The Hindmans also sold fresh vegetables from their household garden and from their land on nearby Indian Ford Creek.



NATIVE AMERICANS AND CAMP POLK MEADOW

Since time immemorial, Native Americans, including the Warm Springs, Wasq'u (Wasco), and Paiute Tribes, have lived in or visited this region.

Traditional Use

Tribal groups including the Wasq'u (Wasco), Tenino, Tygh, Wyam, John Day, Molalla, and Northern Paiute traveled to Camp Polk Meadow on their seasonal rounds. They came from great distances over the mountains, through the desert, and up the Deschutes River to get to Camp Polk and other regional locations. They hunted game for food, clothing, tools, and ceremonial uses. They also speared, netted, and trapped fish in Whychus Creek. At that time, Whychus Creek had plentiful runs of steelhead and Chinook salmon. The first people also came to the meadow to dig roots and tubers. They gathered berries, nuts, flowers, seeds, and other plant material used for food, shelter, baskets, tools, and ceremonies.



Sahaptin “fast camp” domed shelter or wickiup, made from willow and canvas during the season for gathering food, in “root country.” Inset photo: Paiute woman with willow “winnowing basket” separating roasted pine nuts from their husk. Photos: Bowman Museum.

Culturally Important Foods

Delvis Heath from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs gives a blessing for the first steelhead to be released in Whychus Creek at a 2007 event. Inset photos: salmon, arrowleaf balsamroot, and wild rye are culturally important Tribal foods.

Colonization

In the 1800s, disease introduced by Euro-Americans killed many native peoples. By 1834, only a remnant—at most, one-eighth of the pre-contact population—remained. Native people who survived were increasingly separated from the places they knew and their way of life.

Camp Polk was part of the lands forcibly ceded to the United States in 1855 by the Tribes. Under the treaty, the Tribes relinquished approximately ten million acres of land and reserved the Warm Springs Reservation for their exclusive use. The Tribes also kept their rights to harvest fish, game, and other foods off the reservation in their usual and accustomed places.

Tribal Sovereignty

Today, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs represent Wasq'u (Wasco), Warm Springs, and Paiute tribes. The Land Trust honors their rights as a sovereign nation to harvest and manage fish, wildlife, and other first foods on their usual and accustomed lands, including Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. We also honor their traditional role as the original stewards of the land, helping care for and connect with the land since time immemorial.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs provide funding, technical support, and guidance for conserving and restoring Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. The Land Trust has worked with the Tribes for decades to care for the meadow, including helping support regional long-term efforts to return Chinook salmon and steelhead to the portion of Whychus Creek that runs through the Preserve. We are grateful for their long-term partnership and dedication to the balanced protection, use, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources.



THE HINDMAN HOUSE

The Hindman House sat south of the Hindman barn and was surrounded by pastures.



The Hindman family c. 1870. Left to right: Charley Hindman, Samuel Hindman, Jane Hindman, and Daniel Hindman. Daughter Sarah is not pictured. Photo courtesy of Joyce Hindman.

Making A Home

The Hindman House sat south of the Hindman barn next to a spring that provided water for people and livestock. The house was surrounded by pastures that led up to the barn. A version of the house—perhaps a log cabin—was probably built around the time Samuel and Jane Hindman settled at Camp Polk. Over the years, the house, like many houses, was renovated and added onto.

Samuel and Jane Hindman and then their children Charley, Sarah, and Daniel, lived in the house starting in 1868. This was in the early days of Euro-American settlement, and neighbors were few and far between. Stories from travelers, experiences with wildlife, talk about their own animals, and chores likely broke the overwhelming stillness. Life revolved around essential needs: food, shelter, and safety. The Hindmans adapted to scarcity and made do without many things.



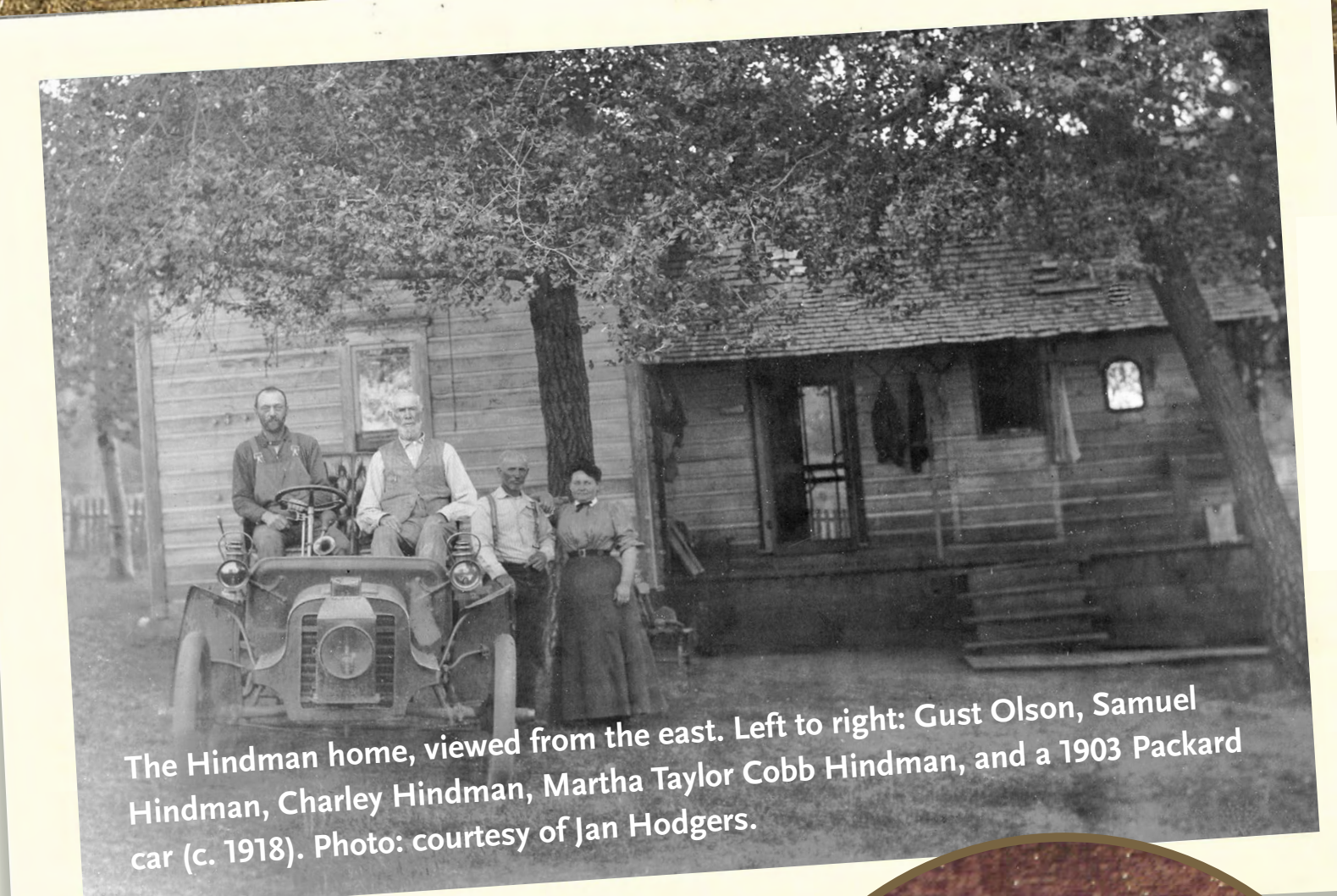
The Hindman house and barn. The dirt road in front of the fence marks the route of the historic Santiam Wagon Road. Photo: courtesy of Jan Hodgers.

Reconstructing the Hindman House

The Hindman house, much like the Hindman barn, lacks detailed written descriptions. The house was probably built of log and milled lumber that was added onto over time. We know that it was located on the Santiam Wagon Road, 125 feet north of the current Camp Polk road, near the edge of the wetland. According to Samuel Hindman, the house was situated over “a good spring of water right under the house in the cellar.” Later inhabitants would use the cellar under the kitchen to keep dairy products fresh. Today, the root cellar cooled by the springs is all that remains of the Hindman home. **Visitors can reach the root cellar by following the short trail to your right.**

What happened to the house?

In 1902, Samuel's son Charley married Martha Taylor Cobb and both lived at Camp Polk in the Hindman house. Martha managed the Hindman ranch until her death in 1940. In 1947, the Cutsforth and Mahaffey families purchased the Hindman ranch and moved into the Hindman house. By 1960, the house had deteriorated to the point where it had to be demolished.

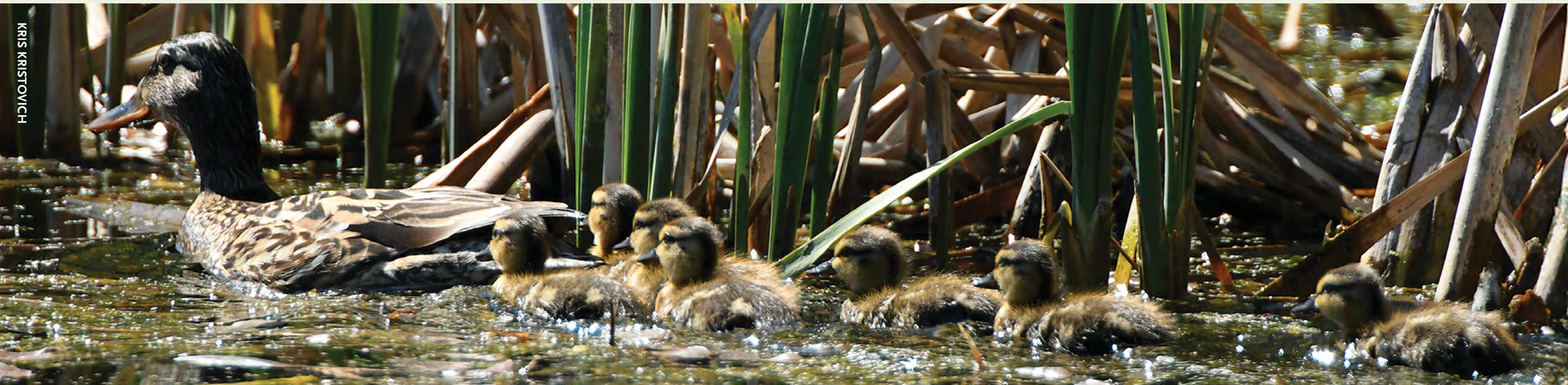


The Hindman home, viewed from the east. Left to right: Gust Olson, Samuel Hindman, Charley Hindman, Martha Taylor Cobb Hindman, and a 1903 Packard car (c. 1918). Photo: courtesy of Jan Hodgers.



WETLANDS FOR FROGS, SONGBIRDS, AND BUTTERFLIES

Wetlands—like the one nestled in the bushes before you—provide homes for wildlife, help clean and filter our water, and mitigate the impacts of climate change by storing carbon. These wetlands are here thanks to a series of underground springs that come to the surface in this location.



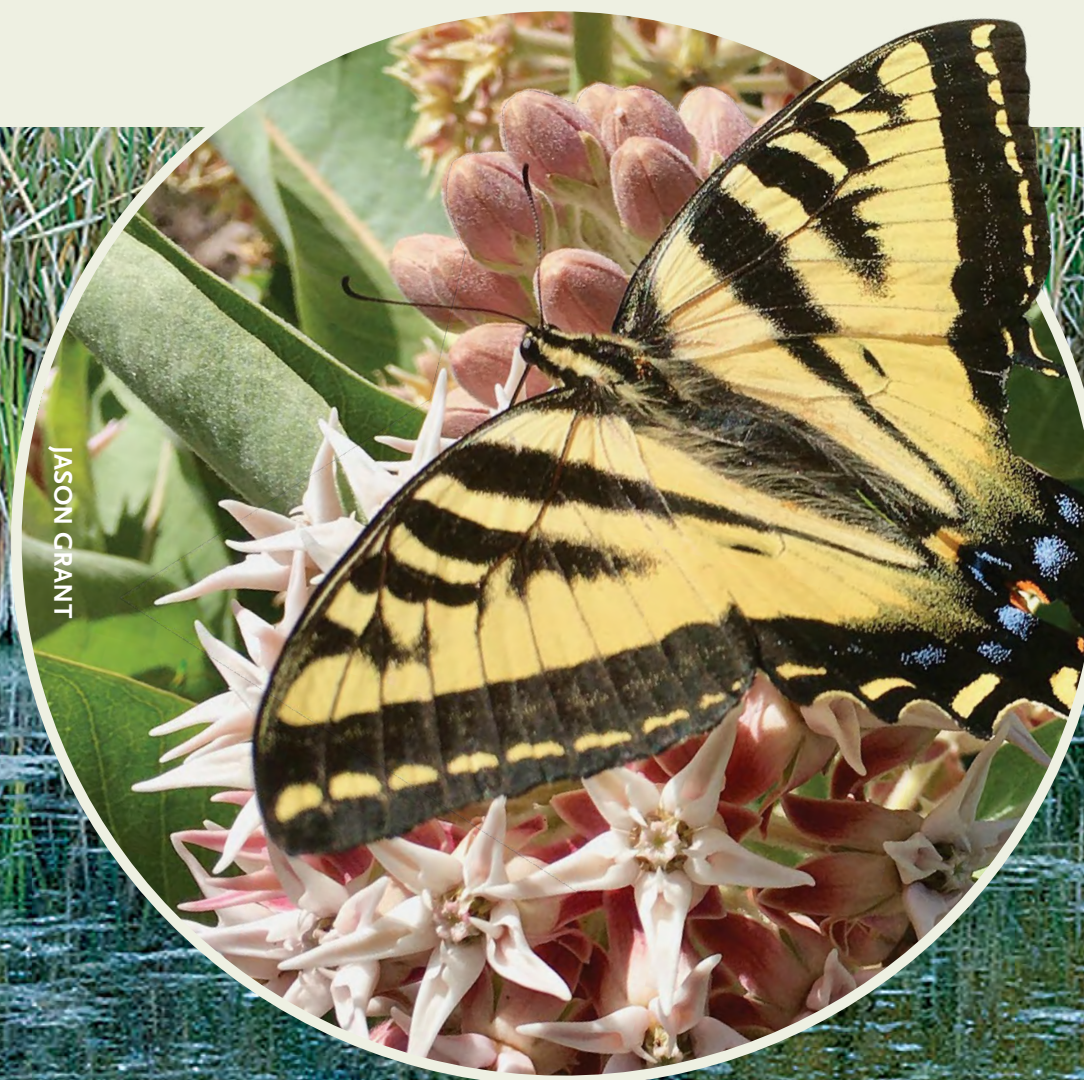
Pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*)

Tree frogs breed in these small, spring-fed ponds every year. Among the most common frogs in our region, tree frogs eat a wide variety of insects and are an important food source for birds, mammals, reptiles, and fish. Listen for these masked bandits singing in the ponds in the spring and summer, especially in the evenings and after a rain.



Western tiger swallowtail (*Papilio rutulus*)

Swallowtail butterflies are frequently seen here. Wetlands support a diversity of pollinator-friendly native plants that bloom and provide nectar and pollen resources from spring through fall. The Western tiger swallowtail sips nectar from these native plants and uses the muddy edges of the wetland to sip on salts and minerals. Look for their bright yellow and black pattern with small blue marks near their tail.



Red-winged blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

Red-winged blackbirds are also common at Hindman Springs. Males of this species are easy to spot with their dark black bodies and bright red shoulder badges. These bright badges help males attract mates. Female red-winged blackbirds are dark brownish with lighter streaking. Red-winged blackbirds nest and raise their young near standing water like our ponds. Listen for the female's "chit" or "check" call, a response to the male's "conk-a-lee."

Did you know?

Many female birds are less colorful than males because it helps them blend in and protect their young.

KRIS KRISTOVICH

Learn more about Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, leer en español, listen with an audio reader, or download for reading later.

