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**LAND
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LAND TRUST

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

VOICES FOR WHYCHUS CREEK

SKYLINE FOREST

TWELVE YEARS LATER

Geoff and Mary Crow moved to Sisters in 2002, purchasing a home on Whychus Creek. “The creek was little more than a trickle then; a damp place in the high desert that we could step across in the late summer without getting our feet wet,” says Mary. While the previous owner spoke of days when he could catch large fish in the creek, Geoff and Mary wondered if that little trickle could ever support fish and flow freely again.

The Crows first got involved with the Land Trust through friend and long-time Land Trust volunteer, Norma Funai. “Geoff and I have always believed the earth and our environment come first. Humans have the duty and power to protect and heal the fragile habitats which surround us, and the vision of the Land Trust is in line with these beliefs,” says Mary.

In 2014, the Land Trust’s Campaign for Whychus Creek was launched to finish protecting Whychus Creek—the Crow’s backyard creek and the heart of the Sisters community. Mary and Geoff joined the Campaign early, helping share the story on guided Land Trust hikes or with friends in town. Last summer, they attended a restoration tour at Whychus Canyon Preserve to personally see the work that had been done to heal the creek.

“Geoff and I were astounded and shocked,” says Mary. “The restored creek was truly one of the most beautiful sights I’d seen since I got involved with the Land Trust. To see what was accomplished in such a short period last summer was beyond inspiring.”

The tour also inspired Geoff and Mary to deepen their support of the Campaign for Whychus Creek. “We need to do whatever is necessary to protect the creek—for wildlife and the future,” says Mary. “The Land Trust has impressed us over the years with the way it approaches conservation through restoration and preservation.”

It was 2005 when the Land Trust first announced we were working with Fidelity National Title with the goal of protecting Skyline Forest as a Community Preserve.

The goal: protect wildlife habitat, ensure an opportunity for sustainable forest management, and provide recreational opportunities for Central Oregonians. Twelve years later we are still working to conserve this 33,000 acre ponderosa pine forest—one of the largest swaths of private land in the area. **Here’s an update on what we’ve accomplished to date:**

Skyline Forest is not developed. This in itself is a huge success! In 2005, the forest was headed for the auction block, ready to be divided into multiple smaller parcels. The Land Trust’s efforts to create a Community Preserve helped demonstrate the property’s value to the community and removed the threat of an auction and bidding war. Today, the forest remains a productive working forest accessible to wildlife and our local community via hosted Land Trust tours.

Skyline Forest is still under threat. But we’ve outlasted a 9-year speculative investment gamble that included a bid for limited development, and established a working relationship with the current owner, Whitefish Cascade Forest Resources. Whitefish has indicated its long-term plan is for sustainable timber harvest, which is consistent with the Land Trust’s goals for protecting the property. We continue to believe permanent conservation of the property is in the best interests of both the landowner and the community, and remain optimistic that Whitefish will one day partner in a conservation project with the Land Trust.

Skyline Forest has many partners invested in its future. Since 2005, the Land Trust has developed and nurtured multi-year, multi-agency partnerships to protect Skyline Forest. And we’ve been successful. Among other things, these efforts resulted in the state’s purchase and creation of the Gilchrist State Forest—the first new State Forest in 60 years! We’ve also worked to create statewide legislation to help protect working forests like Skyline Forest, and we have twice secured federal Forest Legacy funding (\$4 million dollars!) to help purchase and protect Skyline. Today, we remain committed to finding a way to conserve Skyline Forest.

The end result: Skyline Forest is in a better position today than it has ever been. The current owner is interested in sustainable timber harvest, the community recognizes Skyline as an important resource, and the Land Trust continues to work towards its protection.

Learn more:
deschuteslandtrust.org/skyline



Mary and Geoff live in the Sisters area and enjoy hiking, skiing, kayaking, biking, gardening, birding, socializing with friends, and the never-ending task of restoring an old house.

Join Mary and Geoff in conserving and caring for Whychus Creek via the Land Trust’s Campaign for Whychus Creek:
deschuteslandtrust.org/campaign



WILLOW SPRINGS PRESERVE

The Land Trust is very pleased to introduce our newest project: Willow Springs Preserve! Established in March of 2017, thanks to the early supporters of the Land Trust's Campaign for Whychus Creek, this 130 acre Preserve is home to one mile of Whychus Creek, creekside meadows, juniper and pine woodlands, and rimrock cliffs.

Willow Springs Preserve is located northeast of Sisters, just upstream from the Land Trust's Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. It is one of only a handful of meadow properties on Whychus Creek where the creek can slow down, spill its banks, and create choice wildlife habitat. The biological importance of these meadows is huge, especially considering all the arid land surrounding them. They provide diverse stream and side-channel habitat for fish, robust streamside vegetation for wildlife cover, and wetlands for amphibians and songbirds. Willow Springs Preserve, like Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, Whychus Canyon Preserve, and Rimrock Ranch, provides the meadow habitat that fish and wildlife need to survive in our high desert. Now as a Land Trust Preserve, Willow Springs provides a permanently protected home for salmon and steelhead to swim, for songbirds to nest and forage, and for deer and elk to roam.

The Land Trust's overarching goal for the property, like all of our Preserves, is to protect and restore native wildlife habitat. As a new Preserve, we focus first and foremost on thoughtfully creating the management plan that will guide the future of the land. Land Trust management plans are robust documents that identify the key conservation values, outline how they will be protected in perpetuity,

and determine what, if any, resources require restoration or enhancement. These plans also outline educational and recreational use.

Initial drafting of management plans involves copious biological inventories and time spent getting to know the property, resident wildlife, and our neighbors. We dedicate the time to these efforts because we know it will help us most effectively care for the property into the future. Management plans are also an important part of our National Accreditation.

As we work to complete these plans for Willow Springs Preserve, we know initial efforts will focus on weed management, biological inventories, and planning for longer-term efforts like creek and meadow restoration. We will also evaluate how best to share the Preserve with the community! Learn more and take a virtual tour of the Preserve on our website. Then, join us this spring and summer for guided tours of the Preserve to see first-hand this beautiful part of Whychus Creek that is now protected forever. —

— **Learn more:** deschuteslandtrust.org/willow-springs

Thank you to the many donors who've contributed to the Land Trust's Campaign for Whychus Creek! Those early gifts enabled the Land Trust to move quickly and acquire Willow Springs Preserve. While we're a step closer to realizing the vision for Whychus Creek, we're not done yet. **Help us raise \$400,000 by June 30th:** deschuteslandtrust.org/campaign

LAND TRUST

JAY MATHER

DEB QUINLAN



KRIS KRISTOVICH



JANE STEVENS

Willow Springs Preserve is named for the abundant and diverse willows at the property, as well as nearby springs which contribute an influx of cold water to the creek. Wilson's warbler, along with many other species of wildlife, will benefit from the newly created Preserve.



TREES TO KNOW

Central Oregon has a diverse array of native trees whether they are evergreen or deciduous. Here are five common species that are also found at Land Trust protected lands.



LAND TRUST

MA WILSON

BACKGROUND PHOTO:
PONDEROSA PINE

WESTERN JUNIPER

GRAND FIR

- **Ponderosa Pine, *Pinus ponderosa*:**

Evergreen. Large pine (often 60-130' tall) found in dry forest lands. Needles 4-10" long in bunches of 3. Cones 3-6" by 2-3" with curved barbs. Bark of young trees is dark brown, but matures to a reddish-brown, breaking into scales shaped like jigsaw puzzle pieces. On a warm day, the furrows of mature ponderosas often smell like vanilla or butterscotch!

- **Western Juniper, *Juniperus occidentalis*:**

Evergreen, smaller (25-40' tall), found in dry sagebrush steppe. Mature leaves are tiny, scale-like, yellowish-green, tightly encasing the twig. Bark is reddish-brown, fibrous, shredding, becoming furrowed. Juniper's small blue berries give gin its distinctive flavor. Junipers are an iconic species of the west and can live more than 1,000 years!

- **Grand Fir, *Abies grandis*:**

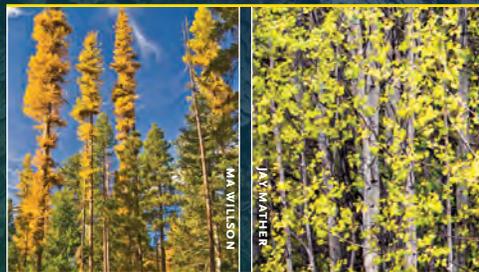
Evergreen. Medium to large trees, often 150-200' tall. Trees tend to have narrow shape, and smooth and pale gray bark. Needles are about 1" long and yellowish-green on top surface with white bands underneath. Cones are upright, cylindrical, 3-4", perched on the topmost branches. Cones of true firs do not fall intact like other conifer cones; instead their scales tumble off one-by-one when the seeds have ripened. Grand fir, with their highly aromatic needles, make wonderful winter decorations.

- **Western Larch, *Larix occidentalis*:**

Deciduous. Tall slender tree, often over 100'. Straight trunk with short branches near top. Bark reddish-brown with furrows. Needles about 1" long growing in dense clusters of 15-30 attached to short woody shoots. Needles, which are soft to the touch, are bright green in spring and an intense yellow in the fall. Cones are small (1-2") and held upright directly along branchlets. Larch is the only deciduous conifer, meaning its needles fall from the tree in winter.

- **Quaking Aspen, *Populus tremuloides*:**

Deciduous, small tree growing 40-80' tall. Slender main trunk. Leaves 2-3" are heart-shaped to round, green in spring, yellow to gold in the fall. Bark is greenish-white, smooth when young, but dark and furrowed on old trees or where it has been damaged. Aspen are the widest ranging American tree. They grow in groups of clones—genetic individuals of just one sex with interconnecting root systems. The largest known clone, in Utah, covers 106 acres!



MA WILSON

JAN MATHER

WESTERN LARCH

QUAKING ASPEN

You can find these and other trees at your Land Trust Preserves: deschuteslandtrust.org/trees

THE EAGLES OF ASPEN HOLLOW

The Land Trust established Aspen Hollow Preserve in April of 2015. The Preserve is home to pine and aspen woodlands, rimrock cliffs, one half mile of Whychus Creek, and a host of wildlife species including a pair of very famous golden eagles!

Each year, high in the cliffs of Aspen Hollow Preserve the celebrated eagle couple, Petra and Rocky, return to their nest to incubate and hatch their young. This year marks the eighth consecutive year the eagles have nested at Aspen Hollow Preserve, and they have a great track record—they have successfully hatched 1-2 eaglets each year.

Golden eagles are one of the largest birds in North America. They are dark brown in color with golden-brown plumage on their heads and necks. Females are larger than males, with a wingspan of 6-8 feet. Golden eagles feed on small to mid-size reptiles, birds, and mammals, and will also scavenge. When diving after prey, golden eagles can reach speeds of 150-200 miles per hour.

Golden eagles nest predominately on cliffs and tops of trees. Their nests are huge: 3-10 feet tall and 3 feet wide, weighing hundreds of pounds. They generally lay two eggs that are incubated by both parents, hatch in late March/early April, and then fledge in early-to-mid June. Between hatching and fledging, golden eaglets depend on their parents entirely for food.

Nesting golden eagles are very sensitive to disturbance. This, combined with limited habitat, means Aspen Hollow Preserve, and other Land Trust conserved lands, are increasingly important places for golden eagles to nest. That's also why the Land Trust avoids any activity at Aspen Hollow Preserve during nesting season. We would never want the golden eagles to abandon their nest and eaglets.

Lucky for us, East Cascade Audubon Society has found a way to let us all watch Petra and Rocky nest and tend their young. A live webcam has been set up 1,200 feet from the nest across the canyon at a nearby neighbor's home. Thanks to the Audubon Society, the neighbor who hosts the camera, and many volunteers, this is believed to be the only golden eagle nest camera in the country! It gives us all a great way to observe the behavior of a majestic species like golden eagles without disturbing them.

Learn more about the eagles on the webcam, or by joining the Land Trust for a free, guided hike at Aspen Hollow Preserve. This year will be the first year we are able to offer these outings, and we look forward to sharing the Preserve with you. —

Get to know your Land Trust!

The Deschutes Land Trust has been working cooperatively with landowners since 1995 to protect 8,900 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

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

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

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

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KIM MCCARRELL



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