

Deschutes Land Trust

By Mary Krenowicz

The Deschutes Land Trust works cooperatively with landowners to conserve land for wildlife, scenic views, and local communities. Since 1995, the Land Trust has conserved more than 9,115 acres of land in the Deschutes River basin—in Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, and Klamath Counties—working with landowners who volunteer to conserve their land.

The Deschutes Land Trust works with landowners to craft an agreement that allows them to keep their land and protect the natural resources in perpetuity. Land considered for protection—including those important for wildlife habitat, sustainability of productive land (such as agriculture and timber), and open space valued for its scenery—must meet federal and state conservation criteria, including forest, stream, and wetland restoration; species and habitat protection; and weed management.

The Deschutes Land Trust owns nine nature preserves that are managed for the benefit of wildlife and people. Camp Polk Meadow Preserve is a signature project northeast of Sisters, where the Land Trust purchased 151 acres in 2000. The Preserve includes meadows, aspen and pine stands, and two miles of Whychus Creek, which has been restored. Other Land Trust preserves include Aspen Hollow (58 acres), Indian Ford Meadow (63 acres), Metolius (1,240 acres), Metolius River (30 acres), Ochoco (85 acres), Thomas (7 acres), Whychus Canyon (930 acres), and Willow Springs (130 acres). These preserves are open to the public either through guided tours or general public access.

Hundreds of volunteers provide conservation and education services for the Deschutes Land Trust. They help guide tours, restore native plant communities, maintain trails and interpretive facilities, and conduct ecological surveys. In the winter the Deschutes Land Trust hosts free Nature Nights that explore environmental topics.

Recent projects include the establishment of the Ochoco Preserve in Prineville, the Trust's first Community Preserve. The Deschutes Land Trust continues to work on a landmark effort to conserve the 33,000-acre Skyline Forest between Bend and Sisters. If successful, it will be the Northwest's largest community forest with multiple stakeholders who will work for sustainable forest production, wildlife and scenic preservation, and access to recreation opportunities.

Sources

Deschutes Land Trust. <http://www.deschuteslandtrust.org>

The Oregon Encyclopedia

https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/deschutes_land_trust/