

Neighbor News

Your Connection to Land Trust Preserves



DESCHUTES
LAND
TRUST

Monarch Visit at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve

The king of butterflies visited Camp Polk Meadow Preserve last summer! Volunteers and staff spotted this distinctive orange and black butterfly hanging out on the milkweed we planted at the Preserve. While no mating or egg laying occurred in our milkweed patch, we'll be keeping a keen eye out for new monarch activity this summer and will keep our fingers (and antennae) crossed in hopes of more visitors!

Though Western monarch butterflies are native to Central Oregon, they are relatively rare to observe. Why? Their population is in severe decline. As recently as the 1990's, more than 1 million monarchs were recorded overwintering in southern California. This past winter just 9,119 monarch butterflies were observed at overwintering sites. This number is a precipitous decline from the past few years, and is the second lowest overwintering population ever recorded since tracking began in 1997.

Why are monarch butterflies struggling? Habitat loss is a big factor in monarch population declines. Monarchs are directly linked to milkweed plants. Female monarch butterflies lay their eggs **ONLY** on milkweed leaves; if there is no milkweed around when they are ready to lay eggs, they simply won't lay eggs. Milkweed is also the only food that monarch caterpillars eat on their way to transforming into a butterfly. Of all the plants from which monarchs sip nectar as adult butterflies, milkweed makes up about 1/3 of their food. Milkweed is absolutely critical to monarchs, from egg to caterpillar to adult butterfly. Without milkweed available, monarchs cannot survive.

That's why the Land Trust has been working for years to conserve and restore habitat for monarchs, and we need your help! You can help boost the number of native milkweed plants that are available for monarch butterflies. Visit native plant nurseries to purchase pesticide-free native milkweed. Or grow your own milkweed from seed (details at right). Together we can make a difference!

Learn more: deschuteslandtrust.org/monarch-butterflies

146,538
Milkweed Seeds

Thanks to our partners at U.S. Fish & Wildlife and U.S. Forest Service, the Land Trust has given away 146,538 showy milkweed seeds for Central Oregonians to grow. Together we are helping monarchs!



Got Milkweed?

The Western monarch butterfly is native to Central Oregon and is sadly facing a drastic population decline. You can help by planting native showy or narrowleaf milkweed in your yard or garden! Even better, we'll send you free native milkweed seed. Simply follow the link below to request your seeds and we will mail them to you!

Free Milkweed: deschuteslandtrust.org/milkweed

Helping Native Fish Thrive

Each spring, the Land Trust participates with partner organizations in efforts to reintroduce spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead in the upper Deschutes River region. This year, from March through May, we helped acclimate juvenile Chinook and steelhead into Whychus Creek at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.

Acclimation is when smolts (1 year old fish in this case) are contained for a short period of time, typically a couple of weeks, in water from the stream or river they would naturally return to for spawning. Smolts are particularly sensitive to the smell of the water from their home creek and imprint, or store the smell in their brain, to help them find their way back to the same area when they return from the ocean as adults. Our hope is that long-term, the smolts acclimated at the Preserve will come back one day.

Meanwhile, the Land Trust is pleased to share that we've spotted steelhead redds in the recently restored portion of Whychus Creek at Rimrock Ranch! Redds are the nest where fish lay eggs, and their presence is a resounding endorsement of work that we undertook to improve habitat at Rimrock Ranch the last few years. Prior to the Whychus Creek restoration project, the creek's fast-moving water and larger gravel sizes were less suitable for redds. Fish need slower water and the right size gravel to lay eggs in a spot that keeps the eggs the right temperature and provides aerated water.

Acclimation and redds, combined with this year's record returns for steelhead on the Deschutes River, are good news for native fish! We look forward to seeing more success stories as we continue to help improve habitat for their return. **Watch our website for more:** deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news



Join Us for Walks + Hikes!

Join the Land Trust on a guided tour of Rimrock Ranch or another of our Sisters-area Preserves. Each year volunteers lead free outings at Land Trust Preserves. From restoration tours to wildflowers to geology, you are guaranteed to learn a little more about your backyard!

Details:

deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes



SCIENTISTS LOOK FOR SPAWNING NESTS AT RIMROCK RANCH.

CELEBRATING
30
YEARS

CONSERVATION. COMMUNITY. CARING FOR THE LAND.

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