

# Neighbor News

Your Connection to Ochoco Preserve



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## Ochoco Preserve Project Update

The Land Trust wrapped up the second phase of the Ochoco Preserve Project last fall. Crews finished active construction in October, creating new main channels and side channels along Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River, broadening the floodplain, and establishing locations for future trails and educational sites. Then volunteers and planting crews added more than 72,000 native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees to the restoration area. What's next? **This year we'll be focusing on:**

- **Letting the restoration area rest, recover, and evolve.** Nearly 400,000 cubic yards of earthen material was moved during phase two (that's 40,000 dump truck loads of material!). All that earth movement means the Preserve looks a bit bare at the moment. But those thousands of native plants are doing their part to help hold the soil in place and grow in and fill that space. Growth will be slower at first as the plants establish roots, but it will take off in the coming years. We like to say the plants will sleep the first year, creep the second, and then leap the third!
- **Managing weeds.** Anytime we disturb large swaths of ground like we did at Ochoco Preserve, nonnative weeds are a major concern. Land Trust staff will be working diligently to manage weeds so new native plants can thrive.
- **Helping bring fish back.** The acclimation pond we built at Ochoco Preserve in phase one continues to host steelhead and Chinook salmon! Local fish and wildlife agencies deliver the fish each spring, they live in the pond for a couple of weeks, and are then released into McKay Creek to begin their journey to the ocean.
- **Sharing the Preserve with the community.** We are excited to once again offer tours of Ochoco Preserve for the community this spring-fall. Join us to see the Preserve in person, learn about future plans, and see the transformation underway.
- **Raising funds for phase three.** The Land Trust continues to work diligently to raise funds for the final phase of restoration and community access, with the goal of implementing in 2027.

Stay up-to-date on Ochoco Preserve: [deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news)



## Join a Guided Tour!

Join the Land Trust on a guided tour of Ochoco Preserve! Each year volunteers lead free walks at Ochoco Preserve. This year's tours will be at Ochoco Preserve where you'll have a great view of all that has been accomplished the last several years!

### Details:

[deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes)

**2,386**  
Pounds of Seed

Did you notice the bright green hills at Ochoco Preserve last fall? Hydromulch was sprayed on the soil to help prevent erosion, retain moisture, and boost the 2,386 pounds of native seed we sowed.





# High Water Events Test Ochoco Preserve

This winter a series of rain-on-snow events gave the Land Trust an opportunity to see how Ochoco Preserve's new restoration area responded to the influx of water. As our neighbors know, water levels were high in February and March, causing significant flooding throughout the Crooked River region. What happened at Ochoco Preserve?

The Preserve saw high water levels as well, and we were able to watch the restored portions of the Crooked River, Ochoco Creek, and McKay Creek respond. As we had planned, water spread out as it entered the Preserve and encountered improved floodplain access, helping slow floodwaters and reduce its erosive power. Fly over the project during high flows via the link to our video below!

In addition to helping the larger river system slow down and spread out during high flows, the restoration at Ochoco Preserve is helping to boost groundwater levels by providing permeable space for floodwater to infiltrate and recharge groundwater. This groundwater will be essential to helping all the new plants and seeds get established and flourish. We'll continue to bolster this young vegetation in the coming months and years with dedicated weed management and additional plantings.

In short, the Ochoco Preserve restoration area is doing well and will be even more ready next spring for high water events!

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## Volunteer!

Be a part of the Ochoco Preserve Project! Volunteer for a Preserve work party this year! We need help planting new native plants in the newly restored portions of the Preserve. Watch our website for work party dates!

Learn more:

[deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer)



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**30**  
YEARS

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