

# DLT tackles another creek restoration project

By Craig F. Eisenbeis  
Correspondent

Fresh off the resounding success of the Whychus Creek restoration at Camp Polk, the Deschutes Land Trust (DLT) is gearing up for yet another major creek restoration project at their Whychus Canyon Preserve, which is downstream from Camp Polk. Beginning in July, bulldozers and heavy equipment will begin to reshape the canyon floor and streambed of the 930-acre preserve.

Amanda Egertson, stewardship director for the Land Trust, explained that the lessons learned during the Camp Polk restoration will help to move this next project along much more quickly. "It's going to be a little bit different from Camp Polk. We will be releasing water and doing the plantings all in the same year."

The two-mile project at Camp Polk took four years.

"This is a six-mile project," she said. "We can't afford to go at the same pace; it would take more than 20 years."

Another difference is that Camp Polk's restoration

centered primarily around a single meandering channel to spread the creek across the floodplain. The plan at the Whychus Canyon Preserve calls for a many-channeled "braided" pattern for the creek to follow.

"I feel like we can accomplish a lot more with the braided system," Egertson said.

The six-mile project begins at the southwestern, upstream end of the preserve and will end at the far end of Rimrock Ranch, where the creek enters a relatively narrow canyon on public land.

Egertson explained that more than 50 years ago, the stream channel was straightened to prevent flooding; but the unintended result was the destruction of many miles of fish and wildlife habitat.

"In all," she said, "18 of Whychus Creek's 40 miles were straightened."

Much of the restoration work will focus on removing the artificial berms and barriers that have kept the creek from spreading out across its natural floodplain. Although more complicated than it sounds, the major thrust of the project will be to push the



PHOTO BY CRAIG EISENBEIS

The Deschutes Land Trust's stewardship director, Amanda Egertson (far left), explains this summer's creek restoration plans at the Whychus Canyon Preserve.

half-century-old berms back into the gouged-out channel so the creek can flood out across the whole canyon floor as it once did.

The Whychus Canyon Preserve straddles four miles of Whychus Creek. Originally established in 2010, it was opened to the public in 2011

and doubled in size in 2014. The first phase of the project will begin on land that is part of that most recent acquisition.

Two miles of creek on Rimrock Ranch completes the contiguous six-mile stretch of the project, which has been divided into six "reaches" of

approximately one mile each. The adjacent Rimrock Ranch, another part of the DLT system, is currently linked to DLT through a landowner conservation easement; and an agreement was recently completed that would eventually bring the ranch under

See PROJECT on page 28

Fascinating historic chairs are in the shop! The early 1880s steam bent ash rocker now has a hickory bark seat woven on it. The maple side chairs are from 1929 and 1935. These are part of a group being re-laced with rawhide for Lake Creek Lodge in Camp Sherman. These seating materials are exceptionally long lasting! What's in your attic that needs restoring?



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