

RESTORATION: Local effort considered 'groundbreaking'

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opportunity for future generations to take ownership of the project by planting new vegetation and participating in physical partnership. Chalfant refers to the Canyon Preserve as a "Community Preserve" and stresses the importance of the Sisters community being involved.

"My biggest worry isn't that we're going to cover every acre with homes, but that we're going to lose our sense of place, sense of connection to the land, the rootedness," he said.

Looking Forward

The restoration of Whychus Creek is an ongoing and tedious effort on the path to total recovery. But having Thorne and student scientists study the efforts brought much-needed insight to the effort.

For Chalfant and Houston, it was an answer to a dream, but also a step further in recovering a community treasure. Generations to come will inherit the land and will need to take ownership of it, Chalfant said. And without the community's effort and support, the restoration

wouldn't be where it is today. The Deschutes Land Trust and Upper Deschutes Watershed Council will continue their work to restore the Whychus and expand its access to northern reaches.

Public access to sensitive riparian zones will be limited, but trails along the rim may be in the future. For Chalfant and Houston, it's not about locking people out, but allowing the land to recover for generations to come.

Thorne expressed his gratitude for being a part of the project and said he was "impressed" with the "ground-breaking" efforts. He hopes for a bright future for the Whychus.

The Whychus Canyon Preserve has a long way to go to full recovery, but since 2016 the creek has seen drastic changes for the better toward a state of biodiversity not seen in the last 75 years.

Bringing scientist to Whychus fulfills dream

By **Cody Rheault**
Correspondent

Bringing Dr. Colin Thorne and his team of scientists to study restoration efforts on Whychus Creek is the fruition of a long-held dream. Two years ago, Ryan Houston, executive director of the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, reached out to Thorne and after talking over the project, the two decided to collaborate.

Having Thorne and the students observe the restorative work was an opportunity to learn what's working and what's not, Deschutes Land Trust Executive Director Brad Chalfant explained.

"We feel pretty good about what we see," he said, "but we want to make sure the experts are in agreement with that."

For the 15 students, they

spent 10 days studying different aspects of river ecology in two-day sections. Alternating from studying biology, geomorphology, hydrology, and vegetation they were led by Thorne in his

expertise and were able to put their studies into practice. For both Chalfant and Houston, it was a vital opportunity to learn from it and carry it on their other efforts.

"My hope is that the research done out here is a springboard for research throughout the Deschutes Basin," Chalfant noted.

Taking what they learn



PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

Ryan Houston and Dr. Colin Thorne observe new growth along the Whychus Canyon Preserve river basin.

from Thorne and his findings, they intend to apply it on other projects throughout the region. The issues found in the Whychus restoration are not singular, but common throughout the Deschutes River Basin. Learning from the experts will carry them to other parts of the region where they will benefit other waters as well.

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