



Deschutes Land Trust/Submitted photo
Pat and David Green pose for a photo with the weeds they've pulled at Willow Springs Preserve.

Author

Continued from B1

Kimmerer is someone the Land Trust has been hoping to have speak for years.

"In part, that's the beauty of the virtual," Mowry said. "There are a lot of speakers now who are not traveling because of climate change, and she's kind of one of them. It's just more accessible with virtual, which is kind of cool, to be able to bring a world-class writer and thought leader to Central Oregon to share their thinking."

The talks are held in the winter, when cold, wet weather may curtail activities such as hiking but not people's interest in ecology. Even as the door closes on Nature Night Talk, another one opens, and this door leads to fun in the outdoors.

"We usually pick up our in-person hikes — free naturalist-led hikes — April through November, so they're a great opportunity to actually get out and learn more about the natural history of Central Oregon," Mowry said. "Our goal for both those programs ... is to help share some of the amazing things about the nature of this area."

The Land Trust's organized events include wildflower walks, birding walks and bike rides. Of course, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the timeline is variable.

"We're hoping to start picking up our hikes again in April if the county risk level gets back to moderate," Mowry said. "It all depends on where we land."

Absent meddlesome pandemics, the Land Trust normally offers about 150 free annual hikes. The hikes are

More Information

"Braiding Sweetgrass" author Robin Wall Kimmerer will speak from 7 to 8:30 p.m. March 17 via Zoom. Tickets are free, but registration is required. To register, visit deschuteslandtrust.org/hikes-events.

On Tuesday, the Land Trust plans to post an array of other upcoming virtual events at its website, deschuteslandtrust.org, according to Outreach Director Sarah Mowry.

The Land Trust also offers numerous volunteer opportunities, from trail maintenance to stuffing envelopes. For more info, visit deschuteslandtrust.org/volunteer.

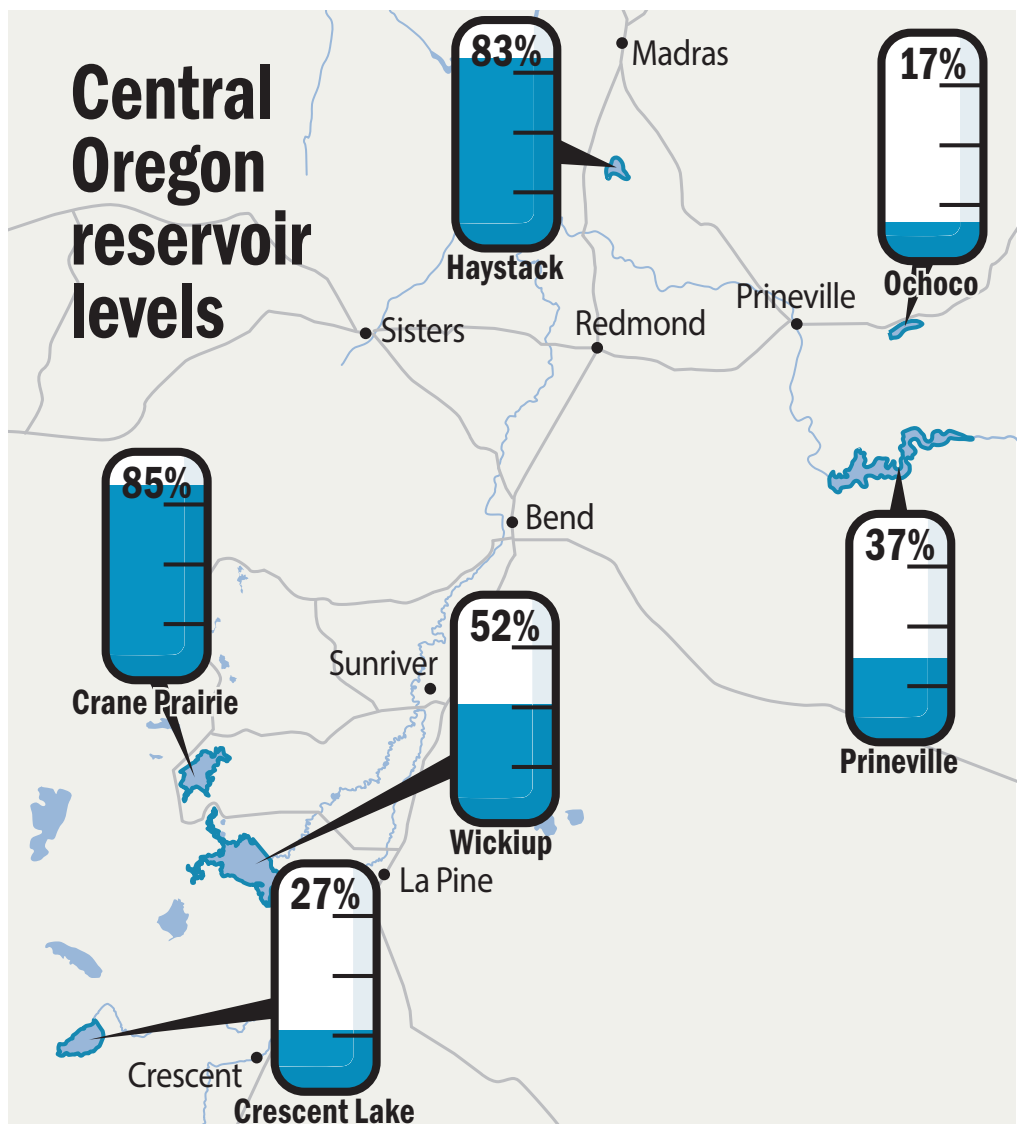
primarily run by volunteers, "amazing folks that are willing to get out there and share what they know, and do it for free, so it's really accessible for everyone, and it's a mix of adult and kids activities," Mowry said.

However, there's no need to sit at home waiting for group outings to come back online. While some of the 10 community preserves owned and cared for by the Land Trust are restricted to guided hikes, the 63-acre Indian Ford Meadow Preserve and the 151-acre Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, both near Sisters, along with the 1,240-acre Metolius Preserve, closer to Camp Sherman, are among those open for hiking during daylight hours.

"Our preserves are open to the public. ... People can do their own, self-guided walks. We have interpretive trails," Mowry said, adding that people can visit deschuteslandtrust.org for more information.

"Spring is here. I think people are starting to get that itch of going outside and getting back out hiking. The wildflowers are starting to come. I saw my first wildflower yesterday."

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Source: Bureau of Reclamation

Clarinda Simpson/Bulletin graphic

Fire restrictions

Fire danger is currently listed as Moderate in the Deschutes National Forest. Fire danger is listed as Low in the Ochocho and Willamette National Forests.

Industrial Fire Precaution Level is currently at Level 1 for the Deschutes and Ochocho national forests and the Prineville District — Bureau of Land Management.

Columbia Park access closure

As of July 22, Deschutes River access is closed due to safety concerns and to prevent further erosion to the river bank. The access point will be closed until further notice. For more information visit bendparksandrec.org

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