



# Neighbor News

Your Connection to Land Trust Preserves



JAY MATHER

## Preparing for Fire at the Metolius Preserve

The Land Trust started a new multi-year forest restoration project at the Metolius Preserve this spring that will eventually include the use of prescribed fire. We have been interested in prescribed burning at the Metolius Preserve for more than a decade, but have been unable to move forward with a burn for a variety of reasons. Thanks to a new collaborative project with the US Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy, we are hoping to bring fire back to the landscape in the next several years to complement our larger forest restoration goals.

The Land Trust's ultimate goal for the forests of the Metolius Preserve is to create a forest that is resilient to the impacts of climate change and provides healthy habitat for native plants and animals. Much of the Preserve was selectively thinned in the last 20 years to create patches of widely spaced trees intermixed with denser clumps of trees and gaps with few trees. The resulting mosaic pattern of "gappy, patchy, and clumpy" mimics nature: forests of mixed-age trees with a variety of habitats for wildlife. When fire was removed from the landscape, these naturally occurring areas disappeared, leaving a more uniform forest. Reintroducing prescribed fire to the Metolius Preserve is one of the next steps in helping maintain and create mosaic patterns for the forest.

Before any prescribed burning takes place, however, we needed to prepare the Metolius Preserve and create safe conditions for a burn. In May 2023, the Land Trust mowed portions of the Preserve (~160 acres between two different sections) with a large brush cutter to remove shrubs and small-diameter grand firs that might intensify the fire. Now we are working with our partners on creating a burn plan that will help reintroduce fire and mitigate risks for the Camp Sherman community. We hope to complete the burn in the spring of 2024. Stay tuned for more details next spring!

**New to the Neighbor News or want to stay up-to-date on our Metolius-area Preserves? Visit: [deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news)**



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## Community Meeting

The Land Trust plans to hold a community meeting about the planned prescribed burn at the Metolius Preserve in the spring of 2024. We will gather with our partners from the Sisters Ranger District and the Nature Conservancy to share our burn plan and answer any questions you might have. Watch for dates and more details on our website.

### Details:

[deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news](https://deschuteslandtrust.org/neighbor-news)

**160**  
Acres

The Land Trust hopes to complete prescribed burning on ~160 acres of the Metolius Preserve in the spring of 2024!



# Kokanee and Sockeye Salmon

If you've spent time along the Metolius River or its side creeks in the fall, you've undoubtedly seen an influx of kokanee—those small reddish fish—who have spawned and are now finishing their life cycle. But do you know the story of kokanee and their link to sockeye salmon?

Historically, there were only two sockeye salmon runs in the entire state of Oregon. Sockeye are the only Pacific salmon that rear in lakes—in this case nearby Suttle Lake. Their incredible journey once took them from Suttle Lake through the Metolius Preserve to the ocean and back again—a distance of more than 700 miles!

When the dams were built on the Deschutes River, sockeye salmon could no longer make their amazing journey. Instead some adapted to their landlocked environment by transforming into kokanee (landlocked sockeye). Today kokanee mature in Lake Billy Chinook and lay their eggs in and along the Metolius River. Now that fish passage has been restored at the dams, kokanee/sockeye are once again able to make their journey to the ocean, returning as adult sockeye to spawn in and around the Metolius River. Though initial sockeye returns have been small, we are hopeful that we will see greater numbers as the fish have more time to carry out their natural cycle.

So, when you see kokanee in their final days along the river, know that they are part of a larger story linked to sockeye and their incredible journey. Places with healthy protected streams, like the Metolius Preserve, will be key to their future.

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



## Volunteer!

Donate your time indoors or out to help conserve and care for the land in Central Oregon. Together, we can restore our streams and forests, ensure we have clean air and water, and provide habitat so wildlife can thrive. Join us today!

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



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