

**Firstname Lastname**  
1234 NE Street Way  
Bend, OR 971212

We defend & plan for  
Central Oregon's livable future.



## Welcome, Kavi Chokshi!

*Our new Membership and  
Engagement Manager*

This spring, Kavi Chokshi joined the LandWatch team, bringing a passion centered around climate action, sustainability, and mindful living.

With a degree in Marketing from the University of Delaware and studies in Entrepreneurship from Lund University in Sweden, Kavi is driven by the opportunity to make a positive difference. Having grown up in four countries, Kavi brings an international lived experience to LandWatch.

Kavi comes from a wide range of previous work experience; he's founded a tech start-up, led UX design at a financial services start-up, and channeled extensive volunteer energy into two political campaigns right here in Central Oregon.

You'll find Kavi wearing many hats at LandWatch, coordinating volunteers, hosting fundraising events, cultivating community relationships, and more. He is always interested in having a conversation over a cup of coffee (or a hike) about LandWatch's work and how to get involved. You can reach Kavi at [kavi@colw.org](mailto:kavi@colw.org).

## Transitions for LandWatch Staff and Board

This is a season of growth and change for the LandWatch team. While we welcome new faces, we say farewell to others.

Moey Newbold, our Director of Urban Planning, stepped down from her position in early June to embark on new adventures in Baltimore, Maryland. After spending a decade with Central Oregon LandWatch, Moey has made a lasting impact on our community. In the last few years, she launched a community vision with the BCD Initiative in the Bend Central District and has been a staunch advocate for equitable growth that protects the landscapes she calls home. We wish Moey the best in bringing that passion for sustainable planning to her next city.

On our Board of Directors, we welcome Rachel Albright, our newest board member. Rachel has been an active philanthropist for over 30 years, an environmental advocate, and an explorer of the great outdoors. As we welcome Rachel, we extend a thank you to Adam Albright, board member emeritus. Adam served on our board for many years and has been a lifelong defender of our natural resources and landscapes. We thank Adam for his leadership and dedication.

Photo: Derek Sears



For 35 years,  
we have been  
working to create  
well-planned cities  
& protect wild,  
open spaces.

Dear Supporter,

Maybe it's just me, but has your sense of time changed during the pandemic? The days blur together, and the calendar in my neglected office is months out of date. Details like the specific time of day or day of the week seem less relevant. Instead, I focus on the season, paying attention to subtle changes in nature that mark the passing of time and hint at changes to come.

Presently, signs of a bright summer unfold all around us. In our forests, snowmelt moistens soils that, once warmed by the sun, brim with fragrant wildflowers. The exposed ridges of the Central Cascades are visited by multitudes of migrating tortoiseshell butterflies, just passing through. The warm and welcoming evenings lengthen into short nights that echo with a chorus of frogs.

During this season, we see life open up to possibility around every new corner. It is a time to explore. It is a time for movement and action.

At Central Oregon LandWatch, this time is also marked by movement and action. As we celebrate several legal victories this month, including a win in federal court for the protection of wetland areas from logging in the Ochoco National Forest, new threats emerge. We will continue the fight for our old-growth forests and wildlife habitat.

As we face another year of sustained drought across the region, we will press on in our mission to restore the Deschutes River. We believe that a push for water equity and conservation is the only way forward for our fish and farmers.

At LandWatch, our drive for staunch land use advocacy is motivated by our fierce love for this place. We know that our supporters share this appreciation.

As you read this newsletter, see yourself as we do, a member of our community of supporters who inspire and make possible LandWatch's work to defend our region's waterways, wildlife, forests, and farmland while creating welcoming spaces in our cities and towns.

We thank you for your commitment to LandWatch as we continue to defend and plan for Central Oregon's livable future.

Together for Central Oregon,



**Ben Gordon**  
Executive Director



# Fighting a federal rollback of forest protections

## We can't stand to lose our biggest trees

*Rory Isbell, Staff Attorney*

This past January, just days before the inauguration of President Biden, a President Trump political appointee in Washington D.C. signed a last-minute decision to roll back protections for big trees on six National Forests in Central and Eastern Oregon.

This decision allows for logging of big trees larger than 21" in diameter on 7.9 million acres of National Forests in Central and Eastern Oregon — including on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. With a single pen stroke, the Trump administration bypassed a promised public process and decided our biggest trees can be logged and sold.

During the twentieth century, so many big trees were logged throughout Oregon that many wildlife species were running out of habitat. In LandWatch's early years, we successfully saved many of the remaining big trees on the Deschutes National Forest, with targeted victories in the Metolius River Basin and Sisters Ranger District.

To respond to the catastrophic loss of most of our big trees, the Forest Service adopted rules known as the

Eastside Screens in the mid-1990s. The Eastside Screens protected all trees greater than 21" in diameter on six eastside forests from being cut down for timber.

For decades, the Eastside Screens protected our biggest trees and old growth forests, giving wildlife a chance to rebound. Then, in 2020, the Forest Service announced it was planning to amend the 21" rule. They claimed that certain big trees need to be logged to mitigate wildfires. We were skeptical about the motivations from the get-go, especially because these big trees are naturally resistant to wildfire and keep forest floors wetter and cooler.

The surprise decision by the Trump administration to make sure this environmental rollback was finalized before inauguration day confirmed our suspicions

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

**7.9 million acres**  
affected area in National Forests in Central and Eastern Oregon

**21" diameter**  
trees larger than this size may be logged under the federal rollback

**42%**  
amount of forest carbon held by trees larger than 21" diameter

*Photo: Mckayla Crump*

## Fighting a federal rollback (Cont.)

that this rule change was politically motivated. Simply put, it was designed to be a giveaway to the timber industry. Big trees of all species provide homes for wildlife, provide shade, stabilize soils, create moist microclimates, protect water, and store atmospheric carbon. And if you're like us, their very presence on the landscape is the cornerstone of why we love our Oregon forests.

Big and old trees also store a significant amount of carbon. While big trees, larger than 21" in diameter, make up only 3% of our forests, they hold 42% of forest carbon. That means one of the best and easiest things we can do to help mitigate climate change is to leave all of these big trees standing.

One of the Biden administration's key priorities is mitigating the ongoing climate crisis. Executive Order 13990 calls on federal agencies to review Trump administration decisions for their climate impacts. We're hopeful that the Biden administration will call on the Forest Service to review the decision rolling back protections for our big trees for its impact on the climate. That is why we recently sent letters to then-Senior Advisor for Climate at USDA Robert Bonnie and White House National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy asking them to review the Trump administration decision.

So far, we haven't seen the Forest Service put their disastrous rollback of protections for big trees into action, which is good news, but they have not pulled it back either. So, even though there has not yet been a timber sale proposing to log these big trees pursuant to the decision, we have to keep careful watch.

LandWatch will continue to advocate for our big trees and work to keep the chainsaws away from these pillars of our forest ecosystems.

# Governing Land

## Political Advocacy at the Oregon State Capitol

*Nathan Hovekamp, Wildlife Conservation Director*

We can see the light at the end of the tunnel for our legislative advocacy work in Salem this session. Constitutional sine die is June 27. In these last few weeks of the session, some bills are becoming new law, and the number of bills still alive has been greatly reduced. We win when bills we support advance or when bills we oppose die, and we lose with the obverse. As usual, the results in this 2021 legislative session have been mixed, with many a cause for celebration and a few defeats. Throughout this session and into the next, LandWatch's long-term legislative strategy remains solid.

When the session began this past January, we identified priority areas that we knew we needed to track. On our radar were bills related to wildlife conservation, water use, wildfire and land use planning, rural development, and housing. We began by sorting through thousands of bills to identify critical legislation that needed both our staunch support and our opposition. As those bills progressed throughout the legislature, we offered written and oral testimony and rallied the public when necessary. As the session progressed, we've kept a watchful eye as bills made it to the floor for a vote or died in committees along the way. While we still await the end of the session to see which policies will ultimately pass, we have a few victories to celebrate.

### WILDFIRE

We are currently cheering on SB 762 A, a wildfire bill that would begin statewide wildfire risk mapping and include stipulations for defensible space, building codes, wildfire smoke mitigation, and refinement of the Wildland Urban Interface definition.

### WILDLIFE

We publicly opposed two bills that posed significant threats to our wildlife populations. HB 2610 would have weakened fish passage requirements for our rivers and threatened our fish species, while HB 2797 would have allowed the use of dogs to hunt mountain lions throughout the state. Both bills have died, giving us reason to celebrate.

### HOUSING

At LandWatch, we know smart and compact growth is key to accommodate Central Oregon's growing population while protecting wildlife and our natural environment.

We supported SB 458, which promotes compact and more affordable housing development within existing boundaries of cities and towns. In allowing for land divisions to support middle housing, we knew this bill could help balance housing needs while preventing sprawl. This bill was passed and is currently awaiting the Governor's signature.

### RURAL LAND USE

There were two bills we opposed related to rural land use. At LandWatch, our goal is to protect rural areas for farm and forest use and prevent sprawling development from fragmenting the land. HB 2655 would have decreased minimum lot sizes in rural residential areas, and HB 2705 would have allowed for the proliferation of accessory dwelling units in rural areas. Both of these bills died and will not become statewide policy.

### CLIMATE

While we are still awaiting a final decision, things are looking up for HB 2488A. This bill proposes an amendment to Oregon's statewide land use planning goals, modifying Goal 1 to include consideration for climate justice. We know that Oregon's land use planning system, when properly used, can reduce our statewide carbon footprint and plan for a more sustainable future.

Soon attention will shift at the state level away from this legislative session and toward other matters. Finalizing the state budget and appropriations will of course be prominent. Then, coming into the late summer and on into the fall, the open 2022 gubernatorial race and Congressional and state legislative redistricting, including especially adjustments in the House and Senate district lines in Central Oregon, will predominate.

Even as the 2021 session comes to a close, LandWatch is already working on plans for our legislative advocacy going forward. Our long-term efforts include focusing on our priority issue areas, considering a proactive agenda in developing bills in addition to responding to future proposed legislation, and strengthening our voice and relationships with decision-makers and allied interests.

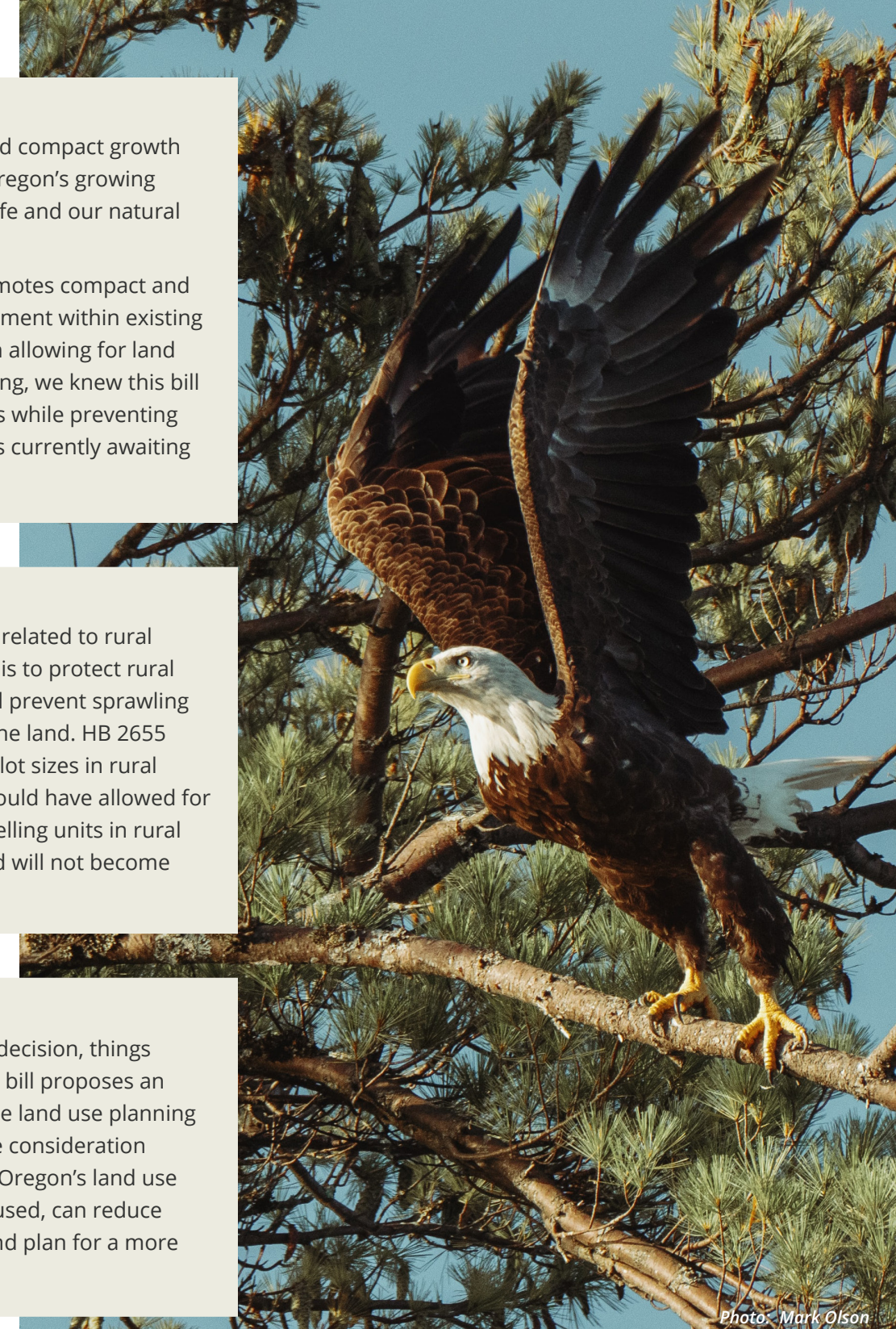


Photo: Mark Olson

# The precarious river rages

Photo: Caitlyn Burford

## The illusion of the Deschutes during drought

Tod Heisler, Rivers Conservation Director

The Deschutes was once a very stable river. Before Wickiup Dam was completed in 1949, the Deschutes River exhibited very consistent seasonal flows. It's common for most rivers to experience high flows with the onset of spring rains and melting snow and very low flows by the end of the summer. These rivers may experience flow fluctuations of 80-90% in a year. But the Deschutes is different.

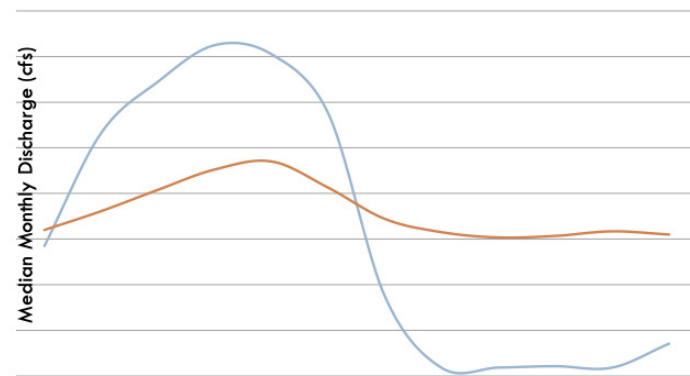
The Deschutes River is believed to be the largest spring-fed river in the U.S. The water in the river originates high in the Cascade Mountains, where 10-20 feet of snow accumulate each winter. In the spring, the snowmelt seeps directly into porous volcanic rock rather than running off the surface in creeks and streams. Hydrologists say that 80% of the river's flow comes from groundwater rather than surface water. The stable flow in the Deschutes is caused by an extensive network of springs that pour into the river throughout the year.

The construction of Wickiup Dam dramatically changed the hydrograph of the Deschutes. What was once a river with very stable flows is now a river with high fluctuation. We see flood-level flows every spring while the river is dewatered every winter.

There are grave consequences of this flow regime imposed by dam operation. Before Wickiup's

construction, the more stable historic flows of the Deschutes supported abundant wetlands with a rich diversity of aquatic plant and animal species. The floodplains were full of sedges teeming with amphibians, fish, birds, beaver, otter, and many others. Over the past 70 years, the high flows released from Wickiup Reservoir flooded the wetlands to such an extent that the aquatic vegetation could not survive. Today, where there were once rich wetlands, we find barren mudflats. These high, scouring flows also stripped away the willows, dogwoods, and other riparian vegetation needed to anchor and stabilize the river's banks. The massive erosion resulting from these forces dumped sediment on spawning gravels, clouding the river.

Median Monthly Flows Below Wickiup Reservoir: Regulated and Unregulated



Blue shows flows regulated by the dam, while red shows unregulated flow levels.

2021 is destined to be one of the driest years in the past three decades. But, if you look at the upper Deschutes today, it's easy to misunderstand the extent of the drought. As the river flows through Bend at a whopping 1,600 cubic feet per second, who could be concerned about drought while the river rages? Despite the dry year, it is business as usual for Bend and Redmond's irrigation districts using water that is not essential for irrigation needs. The water being wasted across Central Oregon is tragic. Tens of thousands of acres are being irrigated inefficiently, in many cases simply to maintain a water right. As a result, the farmers who do require this water to support their livelihoods, along with the fish and wildlife who depend on a healthy river, bear the brunt of water shortages.

The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) submitted last year to U.S. Fish & Wildlife by irrigation districts represented an opportunity to address some of the severe problems in the Upper Deschutes River below Wickiup Dam. It was a chance to improve flows in the river.

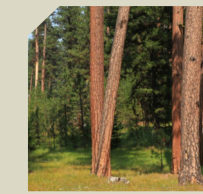
Unfortunately, in the approved plan, higher winter flows come too late and are insufficient to support ecological health, according to USFWS' own research. Spotted frogs, for instance, need water levels between 600-900 cubic feet per second (cfs) to support winter habitat. Unfortunately, under the HCP, only 400 cfs is required. Even that insufficient amount is not guaranteed for another 13-15 years. It is a hard truth to face, but it is distinctly possible that the Oregon Spotted Frog will not survive in the river that long.

In the summer, we see the other side of the coin, with flood-level flows. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes that "capping" summer flows is critical but does not impose this measure for 13 more years. We cannot wait that long to restore the river.

There are feasible, cost-effective solutions for putting more water instream in the winter (and lowering summer flows) much sooner. In the proposed plan, USFWS simply deferred to the irrigation districts' plan, one that relies on securing hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer funds for canal piping and doesn't require water users to conserve water despite evidence of widespread waste of water in districts with senior water rights. We need a better plan to restore the Deschutes.

## Case Updates

Carol Macbeth and Rory Isbell, Staff Attorneys



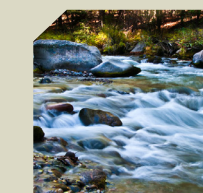
### PROTECTING FOREST LAND ON THE EAST SLOPES OF THE CASCADES

Oregon's land use laws are set up to protect designated forest lands from development across the state. Recently, areas of Ponderosa pine forest along the eastern slopes of the Cascades fell under threat when Deschutes County approved a proposal for development on designated forest land. When forest lands become divided, fragmented, and developed, wildfire protection becomes more costly, invasive species gain a foothold, and important wildlife habitat and recreation values are degraded or lost. In March, LandWatch challenged this decision in Deschutes County, recognizing that the decision was inconsistent with the land use laws that protect forest land base for forest use.



### SAVING FARMLAND FROM SPRAWL IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Earlier this month, LandWatch joined forces with the Jefferson County Farm Bureau to defend 67 acres of prime farmland in Jefferson County. The land is under threat of being rezoned for non-farm use. On May 11, we filed an appeal at the Land Use Board of Appeals to challenge a recent decision by Jefferson County that allows the City of Metolius to expand its urban growth boundary onto land zoned for exclusive farm use. As champions of Oregon's statewide land use planning system, we support planning for growth when necessary. But here, Jefferson County approved an urban growth boundary expansion without any demonstrated need for more land. Once farmland is rezoned away from exclusive farm use, it is likely to be developed with other uses and never farmed again.



### FIGHTING TO RESTORE STREAM-FLOWS IN WHYCHUS CREEK

Over the past year, LandWatch has commented on a proposal for a new hydroelectric facility on an irrigation pipeline near Sisters that diverts water from Whychus Creek. The Deschutes County Code allows for new hydroelectric facilities, but only if they come with plans for water conservation and stream enhancement for waterways. Despite some improvements to Whychus Creek over the past decade, fish still face lethally low river flows and high temperatures due to the shallow water every summer. Deschutes County recently approved the applicant's plans for a new hydroelectric facility, even though they proposed no new benefits for Whychus Creek and its struggling fishery. LandWatch is appealing the County's decision to the Land Use Board of Appeals because, in our understanding, the decision does not comply with the County code. There is a long road ahead for the restoration of Whychus Creek and any new hydroelectric facility should benefit creek restoration.

Photos: U.S. Forest Service, Google Maps



Left: *Projecto Mural draft design based on community conversations and listening sessions with stakeholder groups.*

Below: *We aren't waiting to reimagine the Franklin Corridor as a safe, welcoming, and vibrant public space - we're doing it! Through our partnership with Mecca Bend, COCC's ¡AVANZA! Program, the BCD Initiative, and thanks to our many financial supporters, we are bringing a new mural to life in the underpass. ProjectoMural expresses the cultural values and themes that emerged from a series of conversations between Latinx stakeholders and artists. Pictured: Artist Melinda Martinez freehands a depiction of The Old Mill. Photo: Mary O'Connor.*



# Reimagining Midtown Crossings

## Safe and sustainable transportation corridors for the Bend Central District

*Moey Newbold, Director of Urban Planning*

What makes a city or town a great place to live? We asked this question at our community conversation during the LandWatch Open House in May. Your answers painted a picture of a vibrant community that takes care of its residents, where you don't have to go far for a fresh glass of orange juice, where trees, wildlife, green space, and the night sky are a part of everyday life, and where owning a car is an option but not a requirement. We share this vision for Central Oregon's growing cities and towns, but we know it won't happen by chance. That's why our Cities & Towns program advocates for well-planned growth.

We've been taught to reduce, reuse, and recycle, but to grow sustainably, we also need to reimagine. Getting a new plastic bag every time you go to the grocery store wastes plastic, so we try to reduce waste by reusing sturdy bags we already have. The same principle applies to the land beneath us: instead of destroying wildlife habitat to build a new house every time someone new moves in, what can be done with the space we already have? With the BCD Initiative, Central Oregon LandWatch challenged the community to reimagine the heart of Bend.

Four years ago, nobody knew what the future of the Bend Central District (the BCD) would be. It didn't seem likely to change any time soon. Its crumbling sidewalks had been neglected for decades. Most people drove through and never stopped to notice how much underutilized space there was so close to the bustling west side of Bend. Midtown residents knew it was a short distance from their neighborhood to downtown and the river, but they didn't have safe routes to walk, bike, or roll there. It was difficult to imagine how this mishmash of industrial lots, fast food joints, and eclectic businesses could become a vibrant neighborhood with more housing options to accommodate Bend's growing population.

LandWatch engaged the community with creative outreach and events that sparked the collective imagination and made the BCD vision more tangible. There is widespread consensus that improving connections for people to bike and walk is needed to catalyze equitable redevelopment in the Bend Central District. The major barriers to safe and efficient east-west connectivity are the parkway, the railroad, and Third Street. To work around those barriers, we need to remodel the underpasses at Franklin Ave

and Greenwood Ave and create a new crossing at Hawthorne Ave. Thanks to our advocacy on the Transportation System Plan and the Core Area Plan, those projects are now on the City of Bend's shortlist for the next 5-10 years.

Rehabilitation projects are necessary, but a well-designed bridge that easily connects east to west for bicyclists and pedestrians would inspire the type of redevelopment Bend needs to become a more connected city that offers good quality of life for all residents. We worked with civil engineers and urban designers (Ashley & Vance and 10 Over Studio) to create a concept for the Hawthorne pedestrian bridge that fits with the community's vision for the area.

Time is of the essence, and an immense amount of funding (federal, state, and local) is available! Now is the time to solidify plans for the Midtown Crossings that align with the community's vision for our future urban landscape.



*Current crossing conditions at the Franklin Avenue underpass.*



*Rendering of a possible improved approach to the Franklin Avenue underpass by Vallier Design Associates.*

# Ensuring LandWatch's Sustainability

## Help us meet our \$50k Challenge Match

*Kavi Chokshi, Membership and Engagement*

This month, we find ourselves halfway through our recent fundraising campaign, Ensuring LandWatch's Sustainability: \$50K Challenge Match! A generous donor has agreed to match all contributions, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000. You still have the opportunity to support LandWatch and have your gift doubled.

There are three ways to qualify for the match:

### NEW MEMBERS

If you make your very first contribution to LandWatch, your gift will be matched.

### RETURNING MEMBERS

If you haven't given in the past year and donate now, your gift will be matched.

### MEMBERS WHO INCREASE CONTRIBUTIONS

If you increase your donation from the past year, your gift will be matched.

**Additionally, if you join as a monthly or quarterly sustaining member right now, your donations for the full year will be matched.**


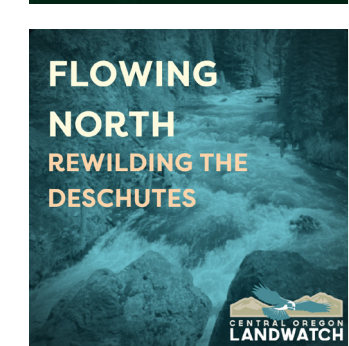


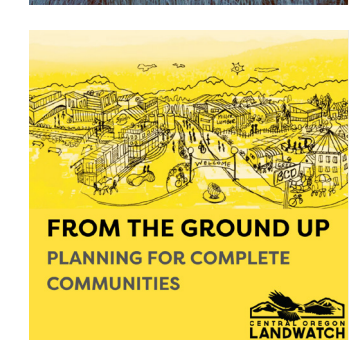
The majority of our funding (more than 75%) comes from individual donors and sustaining members. Because of supporters like you, we've been able to defend our region's beauty and unique character for more than three decades and continue to build healthy, sustainable, and livable communities. Your well-timed donation right now will go twice as far towards our work to keep Central Oregon livable. We thank you!

Visit our membership page for more information: <https://www.centraloregonlandwatch.org/members>

*Photo: Dan Meyers*

## Calendar of Events

Get to know more about our ongoing advocacy work or dive into a specific conservation issue at one of our upcoming events. You can register and find out more at [centraloregonlandwatch.org/events](https://centraloregonlandwatch.org/events).

 <p><b>THE WOODS WITHSTAND</b> THE FIERCE BATTLES FOR OREGON'S FORESTS</p>	<p><b>The Woods Withstand</b> <i>The Fierce Battles for Oregon's Forests</i></p> <p>From the diverse subalpine forests of the Cascades and the Blue Mountains to the dry ponderosa and juniper forests across the high desert, our wild forests make Oregon home. In this virtual event, we'll look at the ecological role of Oregon's forests and the fight for their conservation that continues today.</p>	<p><b>JUNE 23</b></p>
 <p><b>FLOWING NORTH</b> REWILDING THE DESCHUTES</p>	<p><b>Flowing North</b> <i>Rewilding the Deschutes</i></p> <p>The Deschutes River holds a distinct past, an iconic present, and a precarious future. The river today is not the same river as yesteryear. In this event, we'll dive into the ecological story of the Deschutes and the wild species that depend on it. Join us in the current struggle for the river's restoration.</p>	<p><b>JULY 21</b></p>
 <p><b>PAINTING THE METOLIUS</b> AN EVENING WITH ARTIST SHEILA DUNN</p>	<p><b>Painting the Metolius</b> <i>An Evening with Artist Sheila Dunn</i></p> <p>Join us for an evening in celebration of the Metolius River Basin with artist Sheila Dunn. LandWatch has a decades-long legacy of fighting to protect this landscape. This evening will feature an auction for the piece of original artwork, talk with the artist, and live entertainment.</p>	<p><b>AUGUST 20</b></p>
 <p><b>FARMING THE WILD</b> CENTRAL OREGON'S AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE &amp; THE WILDLIFE THAT DEPEND ON IT</p>	<p><b>Farming the Wild</b> <i>Central Oregon's Agricultural Heritage and the Wildlife that Depend on it</i></p> <p>While mountain ranges frame ranchland and eagles soar over pastures, Central Oregon holds beauty and heritage in its local agriculture. In this event, we'll dive into the role of land use in sustaining wildlife and protecting Central Oregon's farming future.</p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER 15</b></p>
 <p><b>FROM THE GROUND UP</b> PLANNING FOR COMPLETE COMMUNITIES</p>	<p><b>From the Ground Up</b> <i>Planning for Complete Communities</i></p> <p>Cities and towns don't happen by accident. They are shaped through years of policy and planning that lay the foundation for everything from commute time to the cost of housing. If you've ever wondered why some neighborhoods have parks and bike paths while others lack sidewalks, this event is for you.</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 20</b></p>