



**Name:** [Back to Home Waters/Squaw Creek](#)

**Location:** [Deschutes Basin, Oregon](#)

**Grantee:** [Deschutes Basin Land Trust](#)

The Back to Home Waters/Squaw Creek conservation project protects 1,120 acres of extraordinary wildlife habitat along Squaw Creek, a tributary of the Deschutes River in Central Oregon. With the support of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Wal-Mart, the Deschutes Basin Land Trust plans to purchase a conservation easement on a private ranch that is subject to high development pressure because of its scenic views and location. The easement will permanently conserve the property's fish and wildlife habitat while providing for its continued operation as a working ranch.



The Squaw Creek easement is part of the Land Trust's *Back to Home Waters* program – a landscape-scale conservation effort that supports the reintroduction of salmon and steelhead runs to streams where they've been absent for more than 40 years. This reintroduction effort – made possible by the pending construction of new fish passage facilities at the Pelton-Round Butte dams on the mainstem Deschutes – is one of the most ambitious fisheries restoration projects ever undertaken in the Pacific Northwest. The operators of the dams – Portland General Electric and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon – will begin reintroducing steelhead and chinook salmon to Squaw Creek and other upper Deschutes Basin streams in 2007. The Land Trust's Back to Home Waters program aims to provide sufficient high-quality habitat along these streams to make the reintroduction effort a success.



The Squaw Creek easement will be instrumental to the success of steelhead reintroduction efforts. Models developed as part of fish passage studies indicate Squaw Creek will provide over 42% of the steelhead production in the *Back to Home Waters* Project area. The easement property includes some of the highest quality riparian and stream habitats on lower Squaw Creek and will account for a substantial proportion of the stream's steelhead production.

The easement will also secure outstanding upland habitats, including critical mule deer winter range, habitat for sensitive neotropical birds, and golden eagle nest sites. The property provides a wildlife migration corridor between large federal ownerships – the 155,000 acre Crooked River National Grasslands to the north and 34,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands to the west – thus greatly enhancing the conservation accomplished on the property itself.

Protection of this property for its exceptional wildlife values is critical at this time because Deschutes County is the fastest growing county in Oregon. The Deschutes Basin Land Trust is working cooperatively with the ranch owners to conserve the property's significant wildlife values for the benefit of future generations.

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“Through our *Back to Home Waters* program, we’re working to restore the Deschutes Basin’s legendary runs of salmon and steelhead trout. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation helped us launch *Back to Home Waters* and now the new Acres for America program will help secure another critical reach of those home waters.”

*Brad Chalfant, Executive Director of the Deschutes Basin Land Trust*

## **ABOUT DESCHUTES BASIN LAND TRUST:**

The Deschutes Basin Land Trust was founded late in 1995 as part of America’s community-based Land Trust movement. The Land Trust acquires land or development rights to help conserve and protect the Deschutes Basin’s natural heritage and scenic vistas. The Land Trust doesn’t engage in political activity, but rather works cooperatively with private landowners and local communities to find creative ways to conserve important habitat, scenic views and open space. Since its founding, the Land Trust has protected over 5,500 acres in the Deschutes Basin. The Land Trust’s *Back to Home Waters* program seeks to facilitate the successful reintroduction of salmon and steelhead trout to the upper Deschutes Basin for the first time in 40 years.

