



# Two Rivers, Three Sisters

A MASTERPIECE OF MODERN FOLK ART

Two rivers frame the Sisters County, Whychus Creek and the Metolius River. A community's effort to revitalize these waterways inspired the creation of this forty-foot long quilted masterpiece. With



Native fish are returning to spawn for the first time in 40 years and a community is rediscovering a gem in its own backyard.

a special focus on Whychus Creek which runs through Sisters, *Two Rivers, Three Sisters* is the story of a river and a community coming together.

Thanks to the efforts of many partners, water once again flows in the creek, native fish are returning to spawn, and a community

is re-discovering a gem in its own backyard. *Two Rivers, Three Sisters* celebrates Whychus Creek's rediscovery and

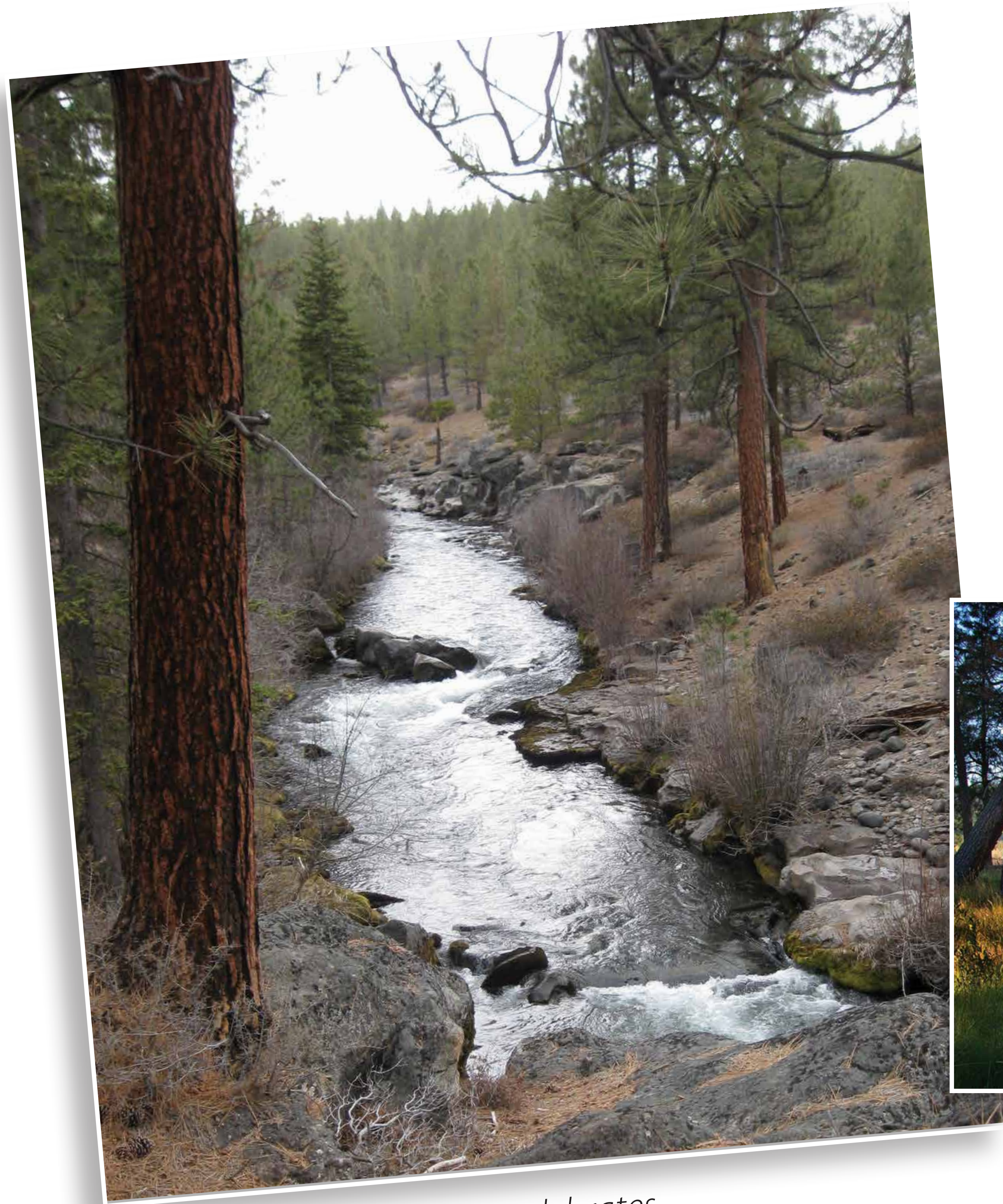


The quilters of *Two Rivers, Three Sisters* find inspiration at Whychus Creek.

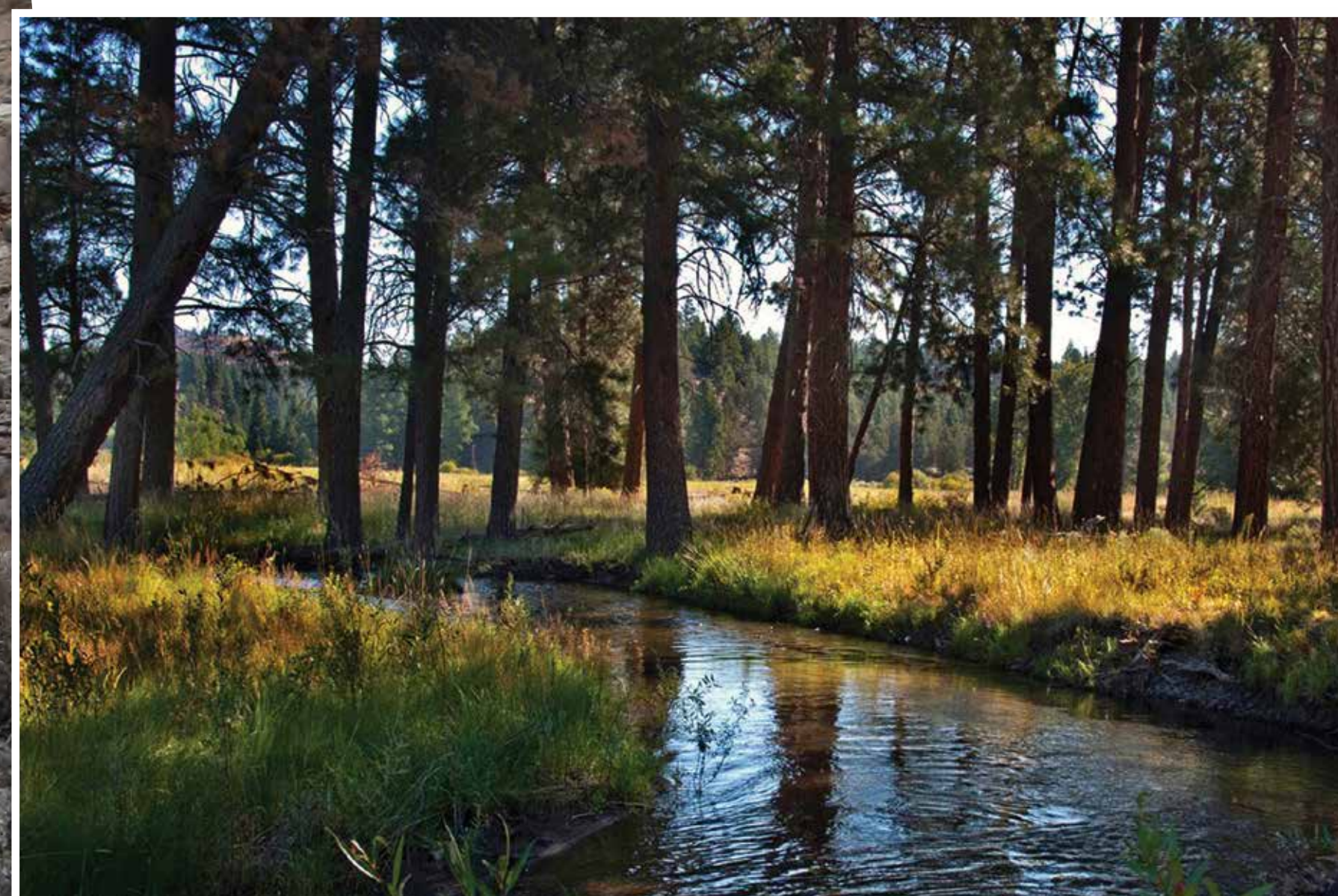
connects the many organizations working together for its restoration.

The U.S. Forest Service and National Forest Foundation are partnering to revitalize the creek in a Treasured Landscapes conservation campaign known locally as the "Tale of Two Rivers." The Deschutes Land Trust protects and restores private lands to further benefit the creek. The Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show initiated the piece to tell the story of Whychus Creek through the lens of fiber art. The project is a unique

showcase of the strengths of Central Oregon: rich artistic talent, stunning landscapes and partnerships that truly make a difference.



*Two Rivers, Three Sisters* celebrates Whychus Creek's rediscovery.



The restored Whychus Creek now meanders through the Deschutes Land Trust's Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.

Debb Quinlan

Enjoy an informative video of this display by scanning this code with your smart phone or tablet



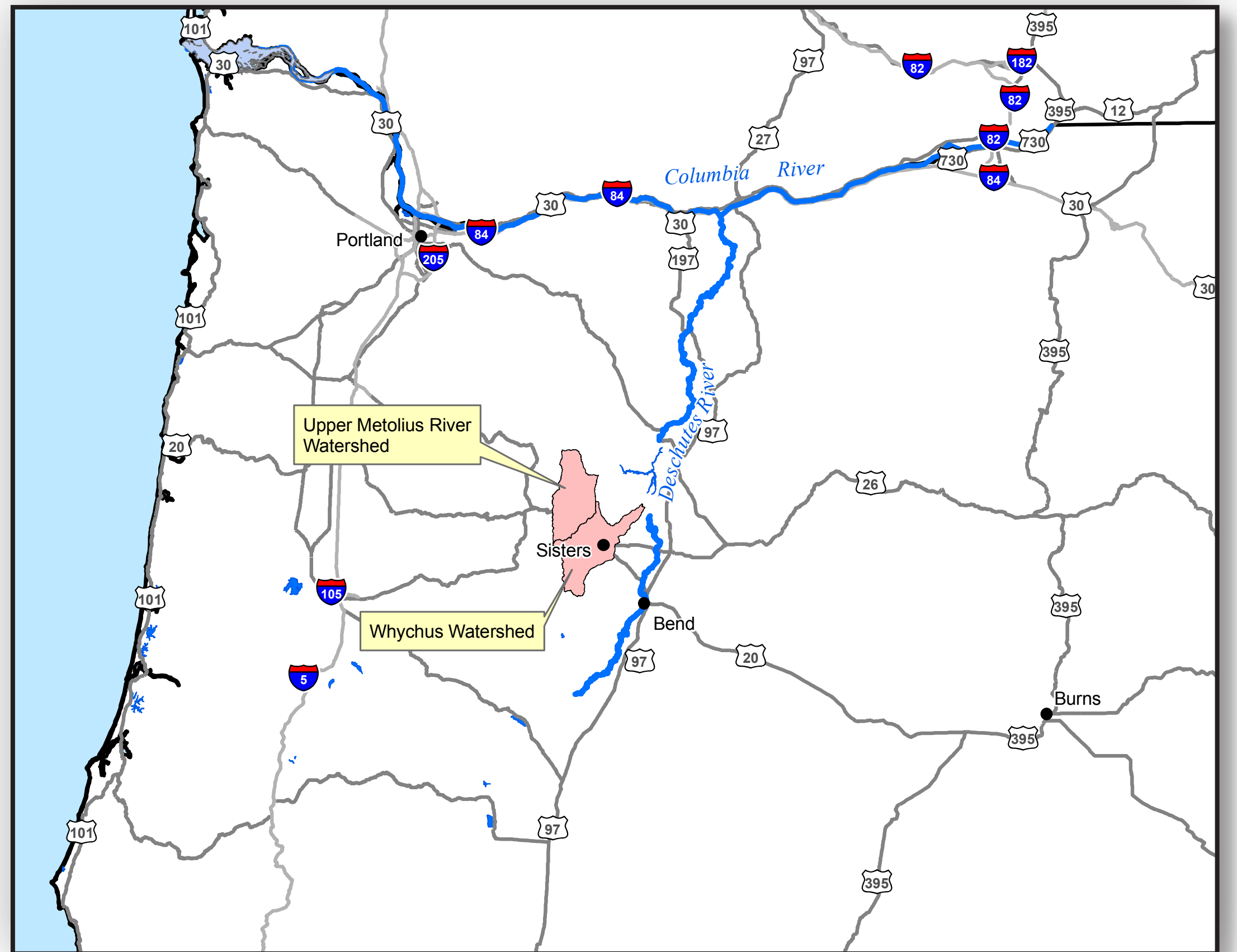




# THE LOST RIVER WHYCHUS

**I**n the mountains of Central Oregon, Three Sisters guard the headwaters of a lost river. A river once full of waterfalls and wild steelhead, providing key habitat for this iconic fish of the West—some called it “Whychus”.

As homesteaders came the river lost its name, then its water to irrigation, and finally its fish were blocked by hydroelectric dams. The river became a trickle of a creek, dry in the summer, its wild reaches forgotten.



Today, thanks to many partners, Whychus is coming back to life. We are rediscovering a river we had forgotten for a hundred years. And the Steelhead are on their way home.

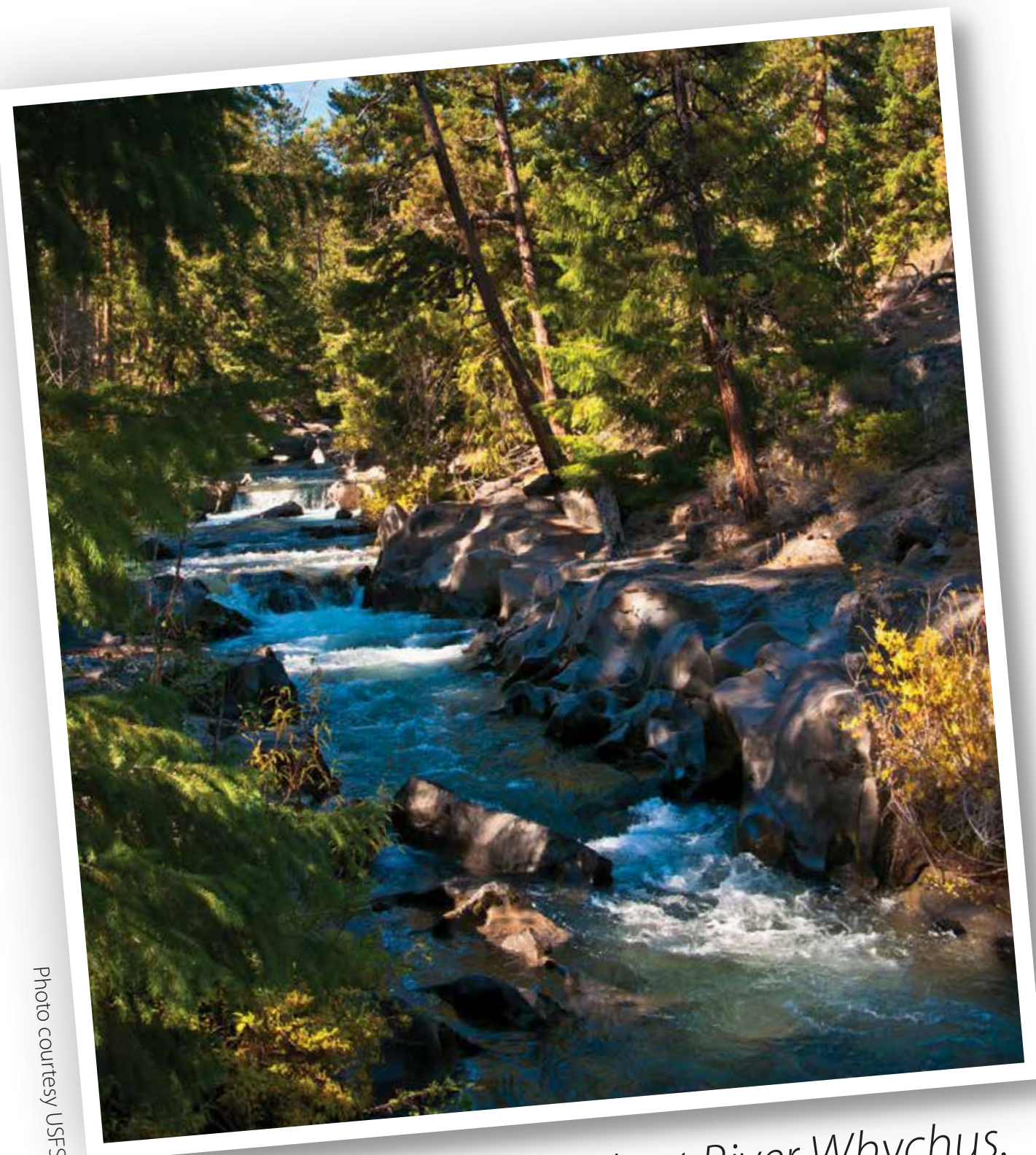


Photo courtesy USFS

The upper reaches of the Lost River Whychus.

*“The town people never used to care much about what went on with extra things around here. Their interest was in logging and their jobs. They liked to fish and hunt, I know that. But as far as taking any care of Whychus (Squaw) Creek or anything like that, that was just somebody else’s concern. I think there’s a vast amount of caring now. People that are here and see the potential of a stream going through town, a steady stream, not an off and on one.”*

–Jess Edgington, homesteader



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

There was great excitement in 2012 when the first Chinook salmon returned from the ocean to Central Oregon heading for the Metolius River.



Photo by Jay Mather

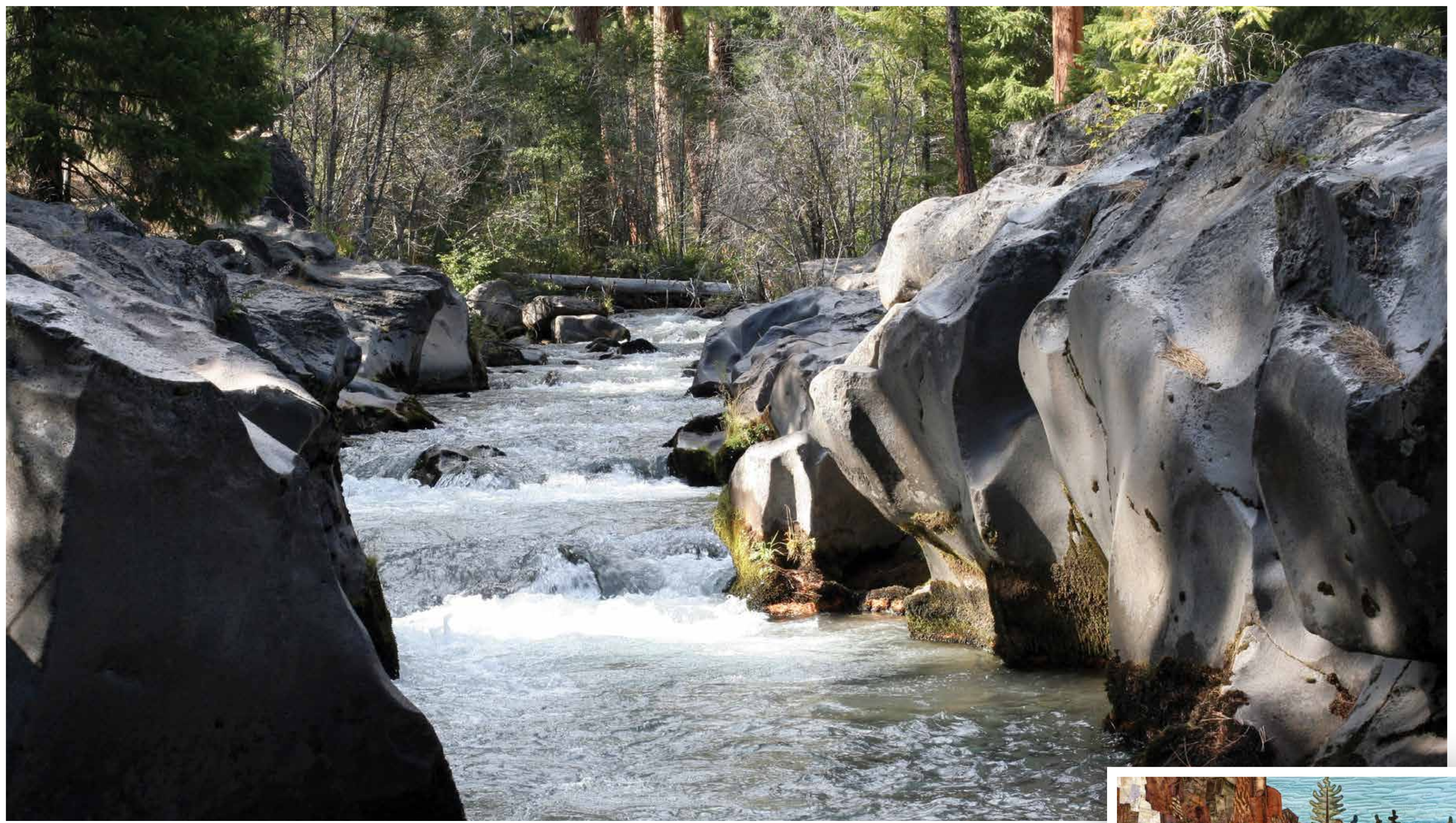
Volunteers help release steelhead fry at Deschutes Land Trust’s Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.







# THE PLACE WE CROSS THE WATER



For thousands of years, Native Americans followed this river to the high country to search for obsidian and food. Native American women were often seen in camps along the water and it became known as "Squaw Creek." Many Native Americans consider the word "Squaw" to be derogatory and in 2001, Oregon banned the term from public place names.

"Whychus Creek" (pronounced "Why-choose"), the earliest recorded name, was chosen for the creek. Government Surveyors in 1855 described "...a considerable stream... called by the Indians Why-chus". The word "Whychus" is believed to have been derived from Sahaptin language and means "the place we cross the water."



June Jaeger

Sisters Country Photography



Photo courtesy USFS

Obsidian is natural glass of volcanic origin that was used by Native Americans to make tools such as arrowheads, scrapers, and knives.

For more information about the Deschutes National Forest







# SETTLING SISTERS – NOT ENOUGH WATER TO GO AROUND



Photo by USFS



**W**hychus Creek and its tributaries drew early settlers to the Sisters area making ranching, farming, and water-powered log mills possible.

Federal policies to encourage settlement provided free property to settlers if they could irrigate and cultivate the land. The first water rights were filed on the creek in 1871. By 1890, a water powered sawmill operated on Whychus Creek.

Irrigation companies formed, building dams and ditches to help homesteaders grow crops. Summer flows were completely allocated to irrigation as early as 1912, leaving a dry section of creek bed. For many years, until very recently, many people didn't notice Whychus Creek.

*"1912 water rights were not worth a hoot. 1902's no good. We used to run [water rights from] 1902 and 1903 and 1904 out to Plainview when the creek was high, but after July you don't get that, its not there anymore. That's why you saw those vacant spots all out through Plainview where people tried to make a living and couldn't and had to give it up."*

*Jess Edgington, homesteader*



Photo by USFS

*Settlers needed more water from Whychus than was available in the creek. Water rights are prioritized by the date they are issued and only the oldest water rights were consistently met. Newer rights and the creek often went without water.*







# FINDING A LOST RIVER

**B**y the early 1990s, many groups began working together to restore the health of the watershed and recover the legacy of Oregon's iconic salmon runs.

Today we are rediscovering a river we had lost. With the re-creation of fish passage at Pelton-Round Butte Dam there has been a concerted effort to restore stream flows in Whychus; steelhead have been reintroduced, have travelled downstream over the dam



Students learn about the Whychus Creek restoration at Deschutes Land Trust's Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.

Photo by Deschutes Land Trust

and made it to the ocean. There was great excitement when the first fish returned in 2012.

People *can* bring back a lost river – steelhead leaping in the waterfalls won't be a dream much longer. We hope you'll enjoy rediscovering Whychus Creek with us.



Photo by Jay Mather

Volunteers plant some of the 200,000 native plants that were part of the Whychus Creek restoration at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.

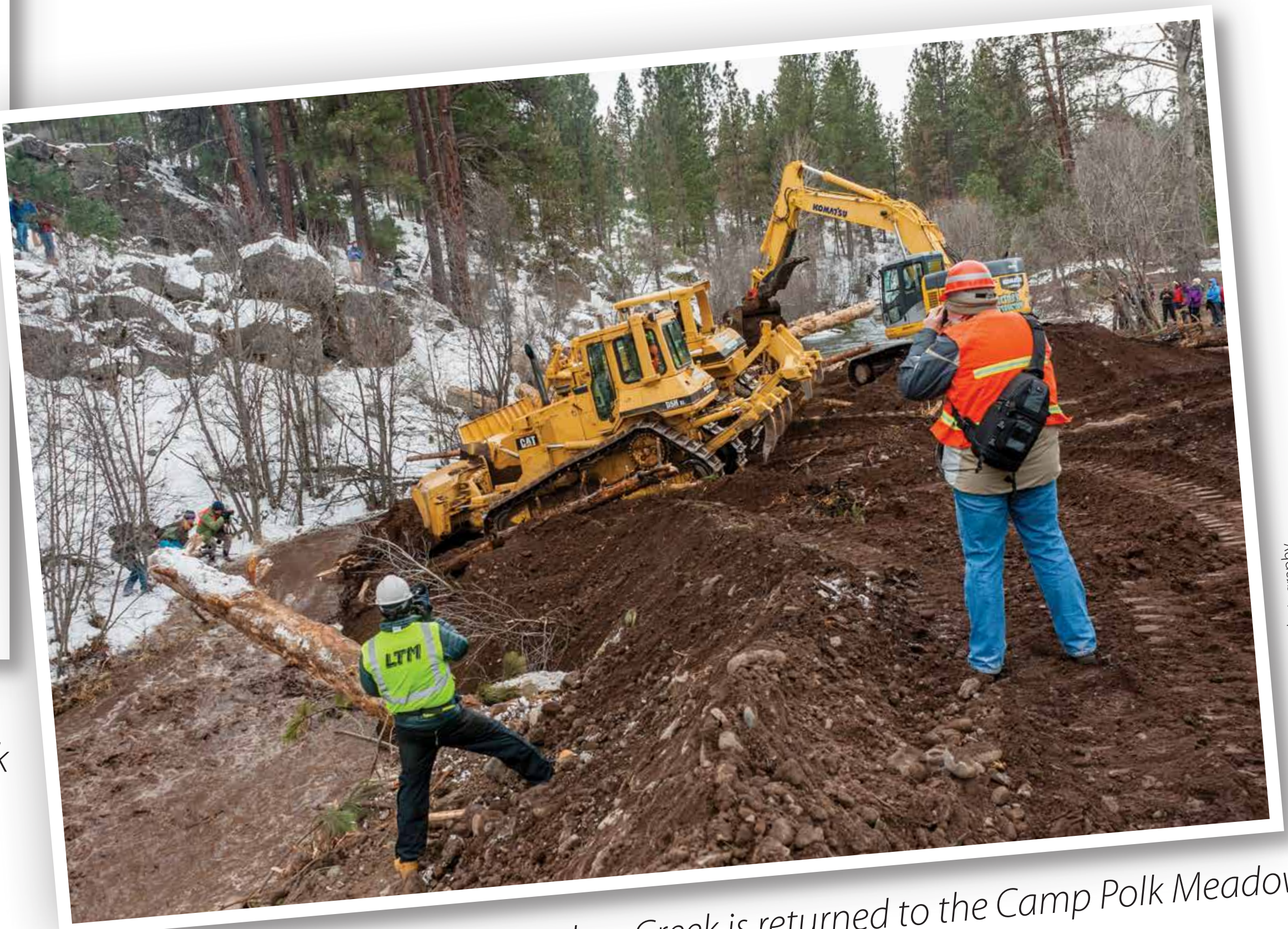


Photo by Sisters Country Photography

Volunteers watch as Whychus Creek is returned to the Camp Polk Meadow Preserve for the first time in 40 years







# THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION HELPS RESTORE A TREASURED LANDSCAPE

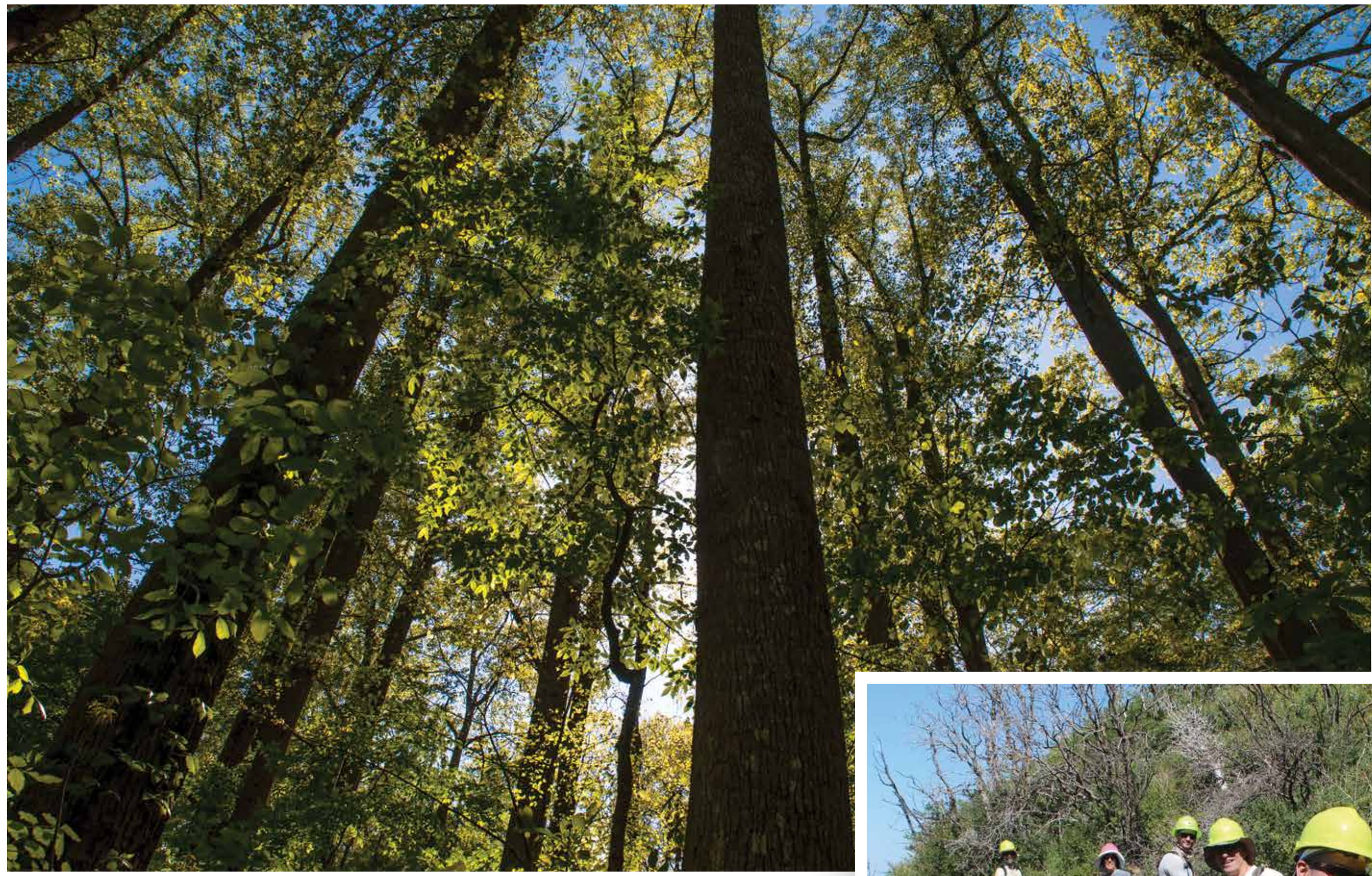


Photo courtesy National Forest Foundation



Photo courtesy National Forest Foundation

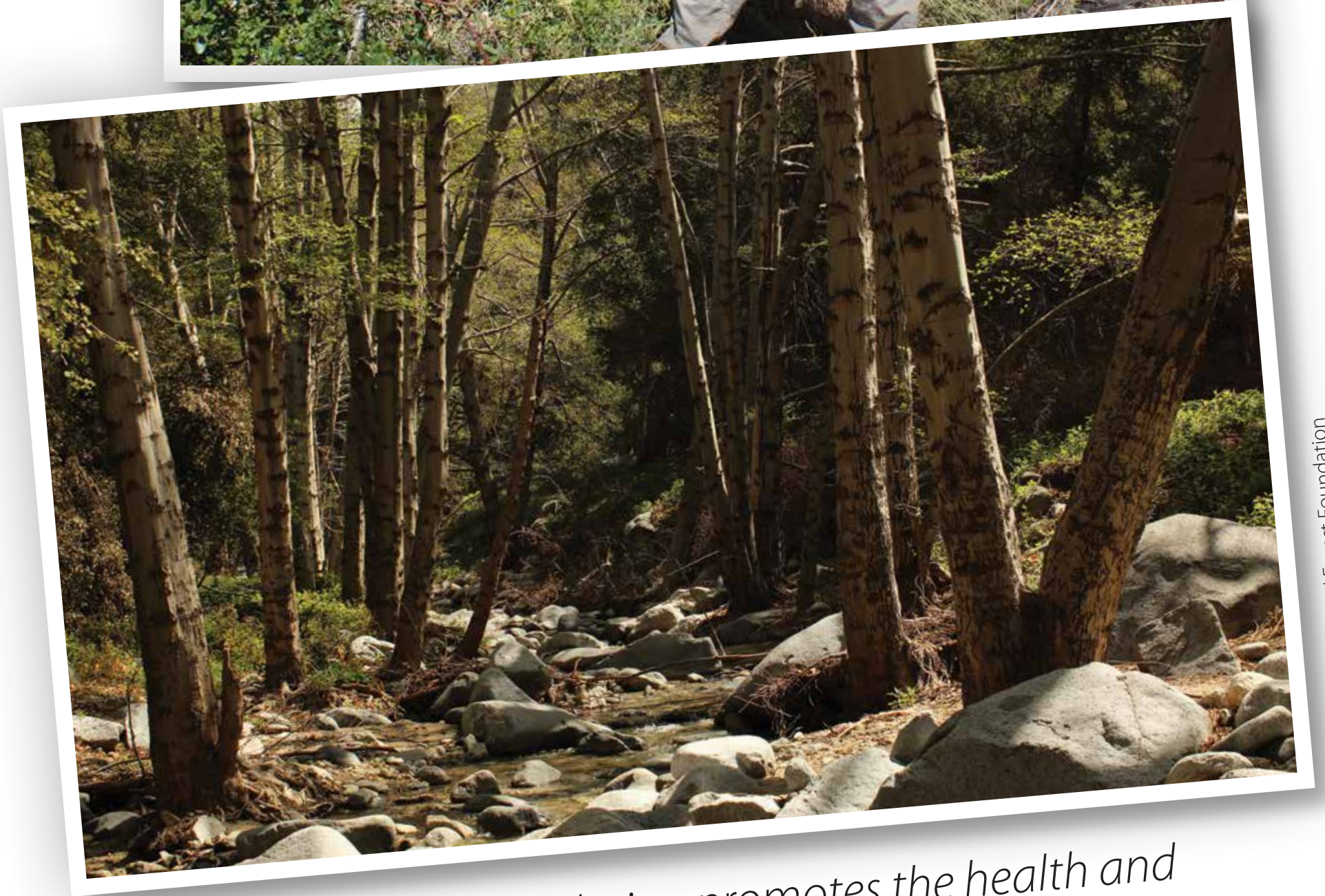


Photo courtesy National Forest Foundation

The Metolius River and Whychus Creek are the focus of the Tale of Two Rivers. The much-loved Metolius has suffered from heavy use because of its popularity. The lesser-known Whychus has been rediscovered after irrigation forced the river to dry up.

The National Forest Foundation is addressing damage done by recreational use, rejuvenating in-stream fish habitat, and revitalizing this special place for the thousands who visit each year. Much of this work was in preparation for the return of native sea-going fish. In 2010, a new fish passage on the downstream dam allowed steelhead and salmon to return upstream for the first time in years.

*National Forest Foundation promotes the health and enjoyment of our 193-million-acre National Forest System.*



For more on the NFF







# RESTORING WHYCHUS CREEK: A COMMUNITY EFFORT

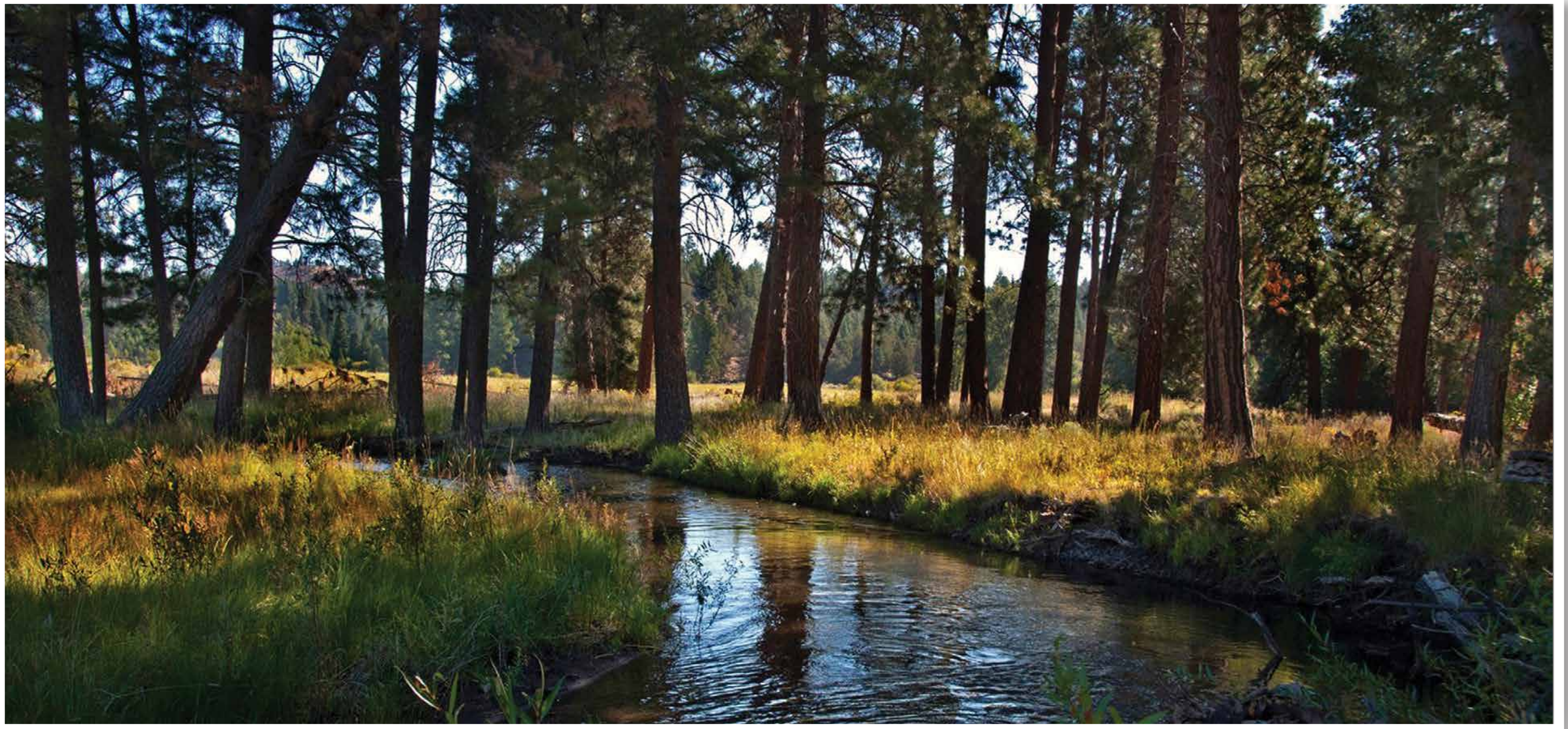


Photo by Deb Quinlan

The 152 acre Camp Polk Meadow Preserve was protected by the Deschutes Land Trust in 2000 with the dream of one day restoring Whychus Creek and its meadow. The Preserve includes wet meadows, aspen and pine stands, and two miles of Whychus Creek – critical habitat for salmon and steelhead.

In 2012 the Land Trust, with the help of many community organizations and dedicated volunteers, finally returned

Whychus Creek to the meadow and restored habitat for fish and wildlife. Today Whychus Creek happily meanders across the meadow providing inspiration for quilters and local community members.



Photo by Jay Mather

An aerial photo of the Land Trust's Camp Polk Meadow Preserve shows the new alignment for Whychus Creek, and the network of supporting side channels.



Learn more about Deschutes Land Trust and the Whychus Creek Restoration







# PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION



Photo by Lisa Leonard

The National Forest Foundation, U.S. Forest Service and partners leverage our best thinking, conservation capacity, and community action by working together to improve the health of our National Forests. It truly takes a village to restore watersheds to their natural resiliencies. We are grateful for our tireless partners and volunteers who fuel this restoration. Over 500 Friends of the Forest volunteers donated 2,500 volunteer hours making projects happen.

We thank our partners in conservation: Deschutes Land Trust, Trout Unlimited, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, Deschutes River Conservancy, Sisters Trails Alliance, Friends of the Metolius and more. Our gratitude goes to our Forest Stewardship Fund ski and lodging partners in and around Sisters who support our efforts.



Photo courtesy National Forest Foundation



To learn more about the Treasured Landscape on the Deschutes National Forest



Photo courtesy Deschutes Land Trust

Restoration partners planning for the Whychus Creek restoration at Deschutes Land Trust's Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.







# QUILTING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

## A Central Oregon Icon Commissions a Masterpiece

**S**isters Outdoor Quilt Show (SOQS) educates and inspires the public about the art of quilting while enhancing the cultural and economic vitality of Sisters and Central Oregon. This non-profit organization puts on the largest outdoor quilt show in the world every July, attracting over 10,000 visitors each year.

Sisters, Oregon, a picturesque village at the foot of the Three Sisters mountains, has an international reputation as a quilting Mecca. Weaving together Central Oregon's artistic talent with the needs of the community, SOQS initiated the *Two Rivers, Three Sisters* project to do what quilts do best—tell a story.

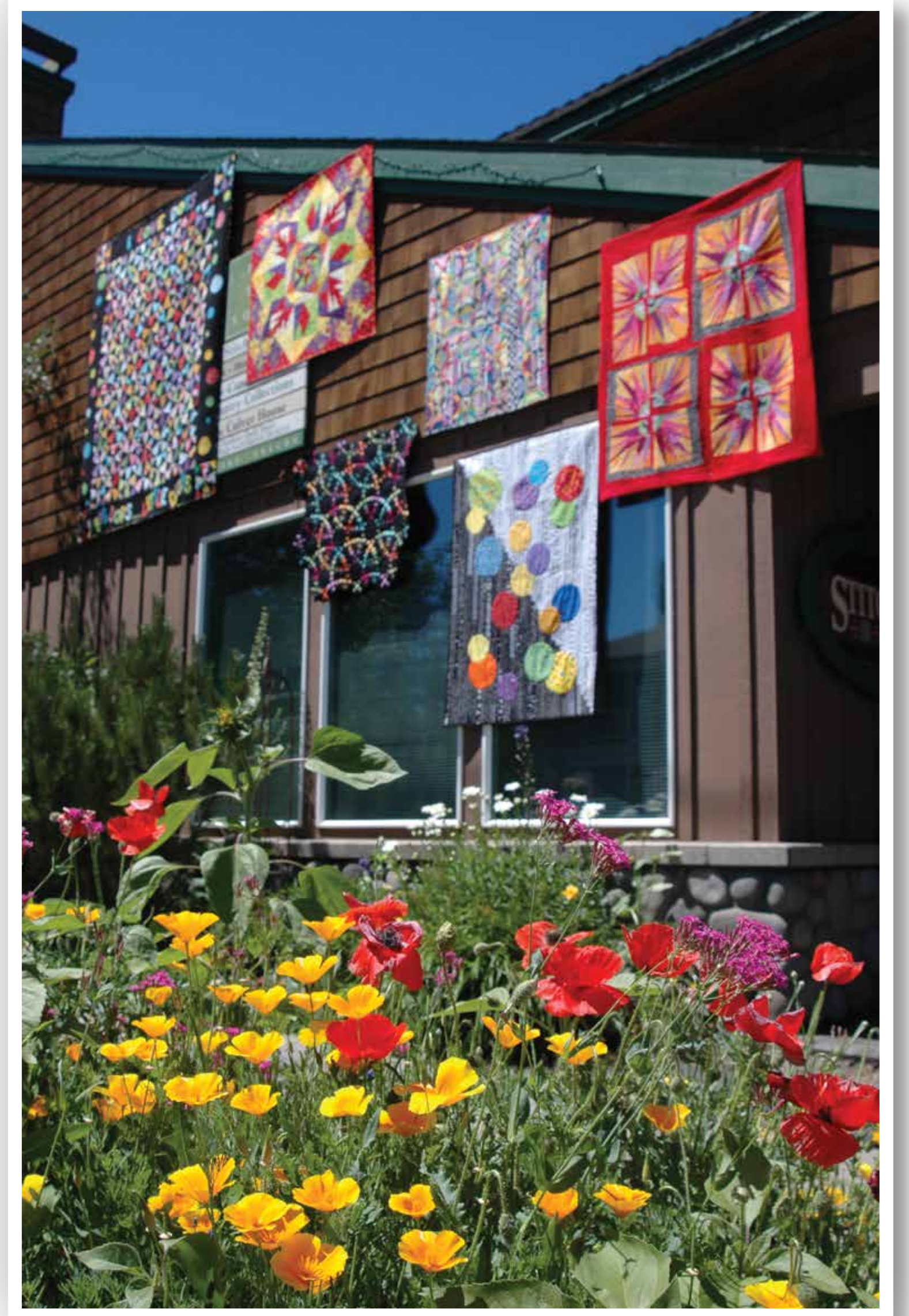


Photo by Sisters Country Photography



Photo by Sisters Country Photography



Photo by Sisters Country Photography



Photo by Sisters Country Photography

**SISTERS OUTDOOR QUILT SHOW™**

Learn more about  
Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show







# NATURE AS INSPIRATION

The creation of Two Rivers, Three Sisters was as free-flowing as the creek itself. Donna Rice, a participating quilter, diagrammed the panels, detailed where the river enters and exits each quilt and selected a 'river' fabric to provide continuity.

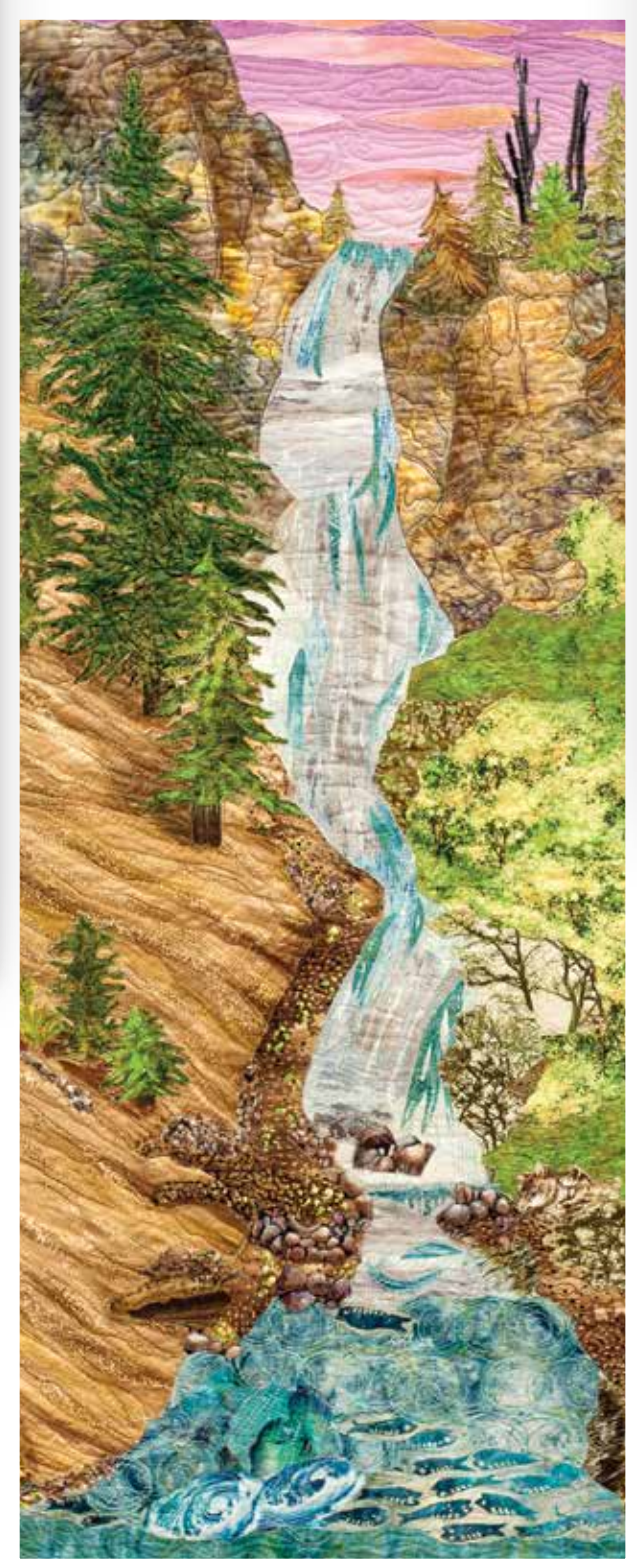
On a tour of Whychus Creek, twenty Central Oregon 'Master Quilters' gained an appreciation for the restoration projects underway and gathered images



## *The Waterfalls of Whychus*



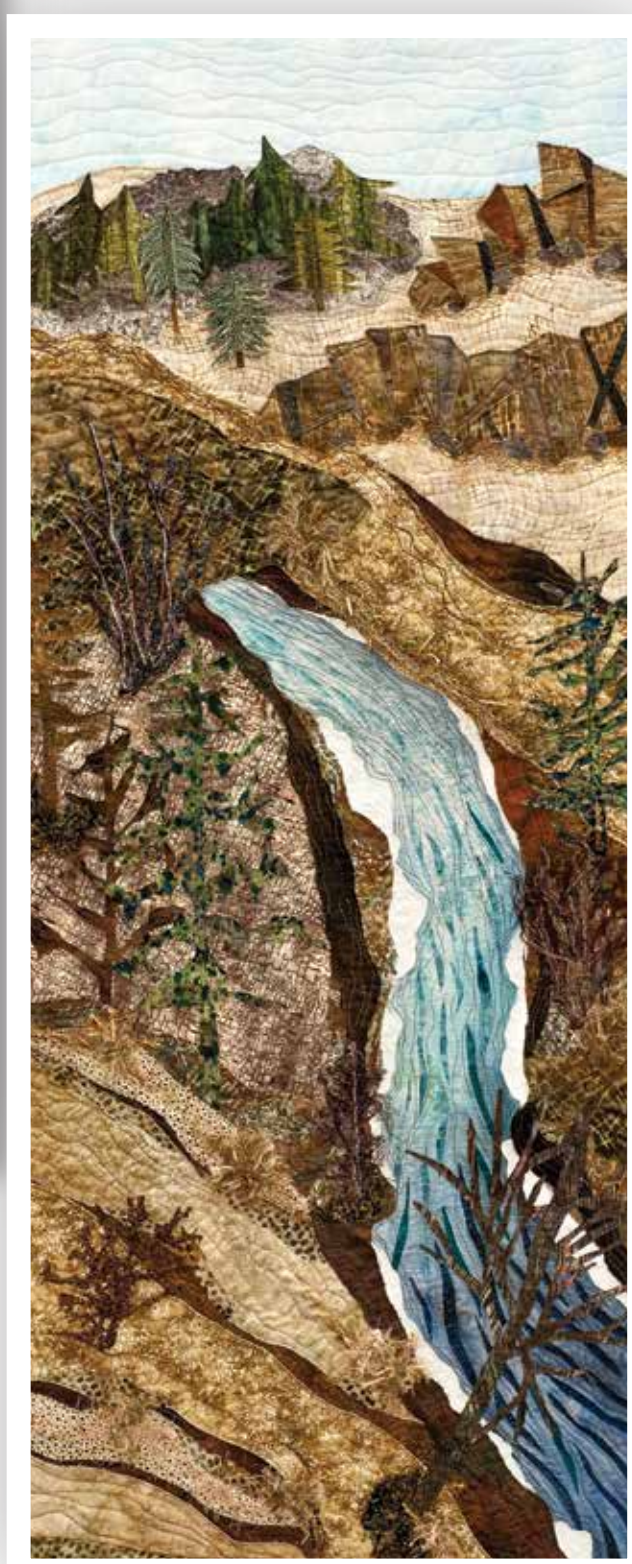
June Jaeger



Ruth Ingham



Donna Cherry



Charlene Kenny

and inspiration for their work. With this orientation and their imagination and creativity to guide them, eighteen of the quilters took on the creation of the quilt panels and four others elected to create the "Waterfalls of Whychus."

Proceeds from the sale of the quilts will go directly to restoration projects on Whychus Creek.

