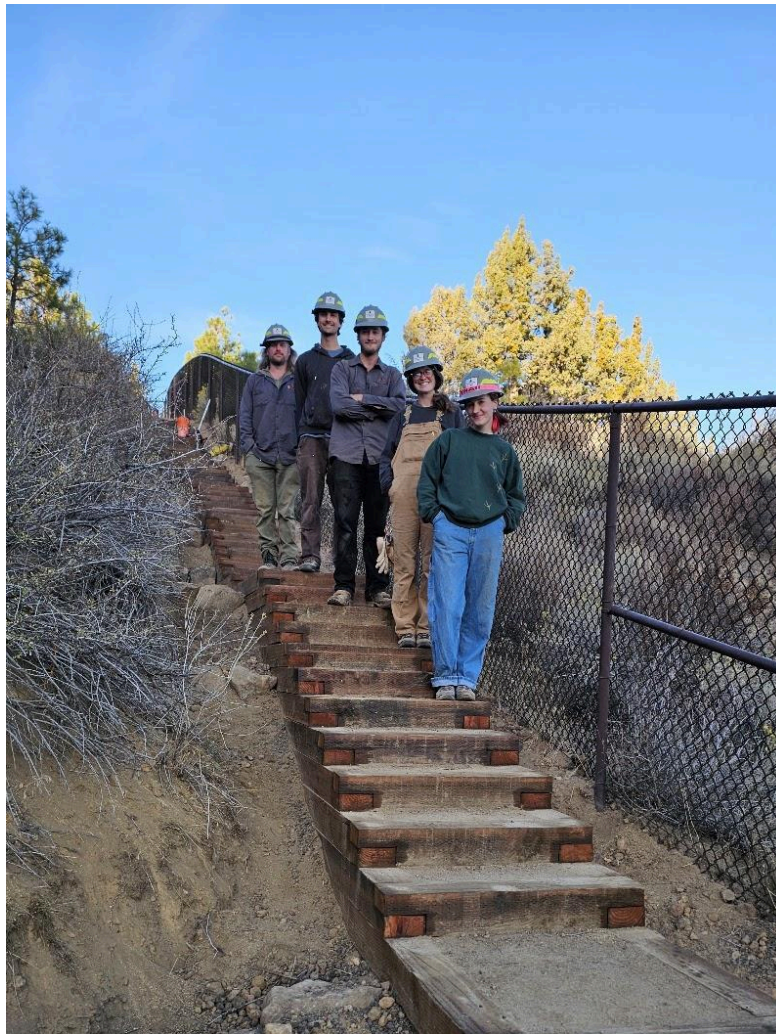




DTC Trail Crew Dispatch

2026 Trail End of Season Dispatch



Crew on Pilot Butte Staircase

Summer officially flew by this year and the crew did a phenomenal job throughout the season! We were all over the Deschutes National Forest in the second half of the summer season and for the first time as a crew we worked within city limits completing a new staircase on Pilot Butte.

Before getting into everything we accomplished as a crew this year I would like to extend a special thank you to **Ethan Brown** who really stepped up this year and led the crew masterfully. I can easily say that without him this season would not have been nearly as successful. Many thanks to Ethan for his professionalism, great attitude, and leadership.

Detailed below are all the many accomplishments the crew was able to achieve this year. Be sure to check out the link at the end of this update for what we were up to in the early portion of the season.

Continued Trail Logouts



The crew remained steadfast in their clearing of trails throughout the Deschutes National Forest in the second half of the season.

Over the course of the season we successfully opened approximately 94 miles of trail, removing approximately 800 logs in the process. As previously mentioned in

the mid-season review this milestone is particularly impressive given that early-season IFPL restrictions meant trading chainsaws for crosscuts. The best part of having to pivot to using crosscut saws was that we all got to spend time with each other learning new techniques as well as learning about each other since we didn't have to yell over the sound of the saw.



Trails logged out during over the season included:

- Black Crater
- Tumalo 2 Trail
- Paulina Lakeshore Loop Trail
- Paulina Falls Trail
- Paulina Peak Trail
- Clovermeadow Trail
- Charlton Trail

- Lemish Lake Trail
- Metolius-Windigo Trail (Many Lakes Trailhead to Davis Lake)
- Lily Lake Trail
- Benchmark Butte Trail
- Bridge Creek & Swampy Lakes Trails (completing the full loop from Tumalo Falls to North Fork and down to Bridge Creek)
- Ray Atkeson / Davis Canyon Trail
- Metolious-Windigo Trail (Fawn Lake to Whitefish Horse Camp)
- Whitefish Creek Trail
- Crater Butte Trail
- Elk Lake
- Benchmark Butte
- Snell Lake
- Yoran Lake



Reroutes in Sisters



This year we got started on our RTP grant for creating sustainable reroutes in and around the Three Sisters Wilderness. Reroutes are always a great learning opportunity as the crew is able to see why the historical trail alignment is not working and why we are choosing the new alignment. **Ethan** did an exceptional job of leading these reroutes from laying out the new alignment to getting everyone organized and informed as to what was needed at each location.



This grant also gave us the opportunity to work with some of our partner groups. This was beneficial to all involved as many hands make light work and we were able to pass along skills to groups that haven't had a lot of opportunities to do this type of work in the past. Special thanks to Sisters Trails Alliance (STA), Central Oregon Trails Alliance (COTA), and Friends of the Metolius for joining us out on the trail!



Trails we improved by moving the historical alignment off unsustainable track to new sustainable track are as follows:

- **Millican Crater Trail** - Three (3) sections rerouted.
 - First Reroute - The crew completed a reroute section of trail that starts at the Millican Crater TH of approximately 500 ft in length. Starting at the trailhead the existing trail historically followed up a fall line which has led to significant erosion and cupped tread. New trail alignment now is more gradually sloped, contours across the hillside, and includes grade reversals and natural drainage.
 - Second Reroute - The crew completed a reroute section of trail that is approx 1/2 mile north of Trout Creek Trail and is approximately 875 ft in length. This particular section is in a 100% mortality fire scar and historically was in the bottom of a gully which continues to be deepened due to erosion leading to trail braiding. The new alignment moved the trail out of the gully to the south onto more favorable terrain with grade reversals and natural drainage.
 - Third Reroute - The crew completed a reroute section of trail that is not too far away from the second reroute and approximately 1,000 ft in length. It too is in a 100% fire mortality scar and historically the trail alignment was in the bottom of a gully which continues to be deepened due to erosion and has created trail braiding similar to the second reroute. The new alignment has moved the trail out of the gully and to the west onto more favorable terrain with grade reversals and natural drainage.

- **Green Lakes Trail** - One (1) section rerouted.
 - The crew completed a reroute section of trail located approximately one (1) mile south of junction with Scott Pass Trail #4068. The new trail construction was approximately 1,100 feet. As with the Millican Crater reroutes, this section of trail is also in 100% fire mortality scar. The existing trail was historically in the bottom of a broad plain. There are several intermittent streams that enter the plain and trail tread which essentially means the trail was acting as a stream bed during heavy rain and snowmelt. The new tread alignment moved the trail out of plain and onto NW hillside which situates the trail on more favorable terrain and includes grade reversals and natural drainage.

- **Metolius Windigoo at Camp Sherman** - One (1) section rerouted.
 - The crew rerouted a segment of trail that historically has followed Forest Road 1419-150 for approximately 2,500 feet. The trail historically was poorly marked, has potential for interactions between trail users and vehicles, and also the road travels along private property boundaries. The rerouted trail has been moved to the south and off the road by approximately 50 feet allowing for easier navigation and reduced user conflict.

- **West Metolius River (Friend of the Metolius)** - Two (2) sections rerouted.
 - The crew rerouted two (2) sections of trail totally approximately 1,000 feet of trail that are currently at the water's edge and are being undercut. The new trail takes the track away from riparian habitat and reduces the amount of trail brushing maintenance required while maintaining excellent views of the river. Both reroutes are in the section of the trail in between Lower Bridge and Candle Creek.
 - Thank you to Friends of the Metolius for joining us and helping improve the trail system!

- **Lower Butte Loops (STA/COTA)** - One (1) section rerouted.
 - The crew and STA/COTA rerouted a 4,000 foot section of trail that historically came close to Highway 20 and the proceeds to follows a confusing series of roads. The new rerouted section of trail now will bring the trail to a more intuitive junction and reduce visitor confusion.
 - Special thanks to Arthur Turlak and Steve Smith for helping out with the planning and trail alignment as well as the several members of STA that came out and did the manual labor to get this reroute functional!



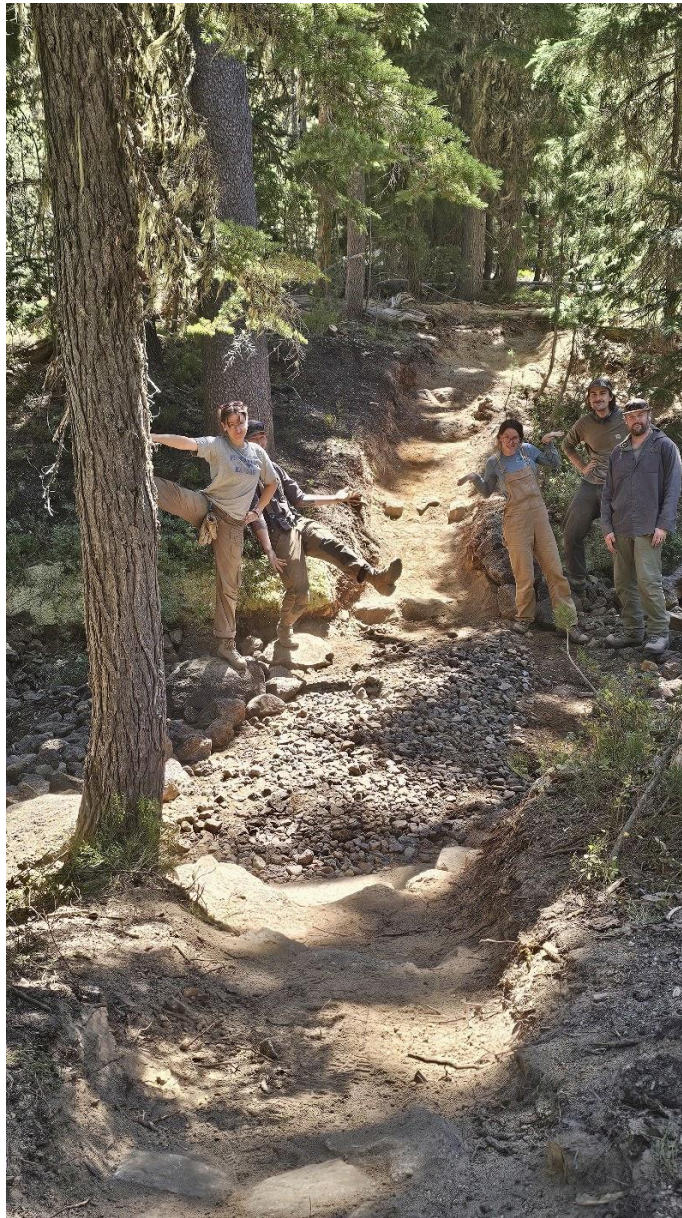
Whitefish Trail Bridge Demo



In order to get ready for a future project in the Diamond Peak Wilderness the crew was tasked with the demolition of a bridge that was structurally inadequate. Demo days are always a good time as we get to put our creativity to work in getting the old thing out to make way for something new. This bridge took a lot of work to remove all the hardware but the team was up for the challenge. This location was approximately five (5) miles away from the trail head so on top of the demolition work we hiked ten (10) miles round trip each day we went out to complete the demolition.



Summit Lake Hitch



Based on the success of our first hitch earlier this season we aimed to get out again and devote a week in the woods to a very cool project. **Ethan** put together a great plan for the hitch and ensured everyone was as organized as they could be prior to arriving at the Summit Lake camp location. We couldn't have had a better camping location and all of us enjoyed the lake after working hours including canoeing, swimming, sunset and bat watching.

This project is a multifaceted project and for this hitch we focused on the construction of a horse ford that will cross a seasonal flow rather than utilize a bridge that has seen better days. Construction of this ford involved many, many large rocks. The crew did an excellent job pacing themselves while moving rocks

and all learned how to properly place rocks for steps coming into and out of the seasonal stream crossing.

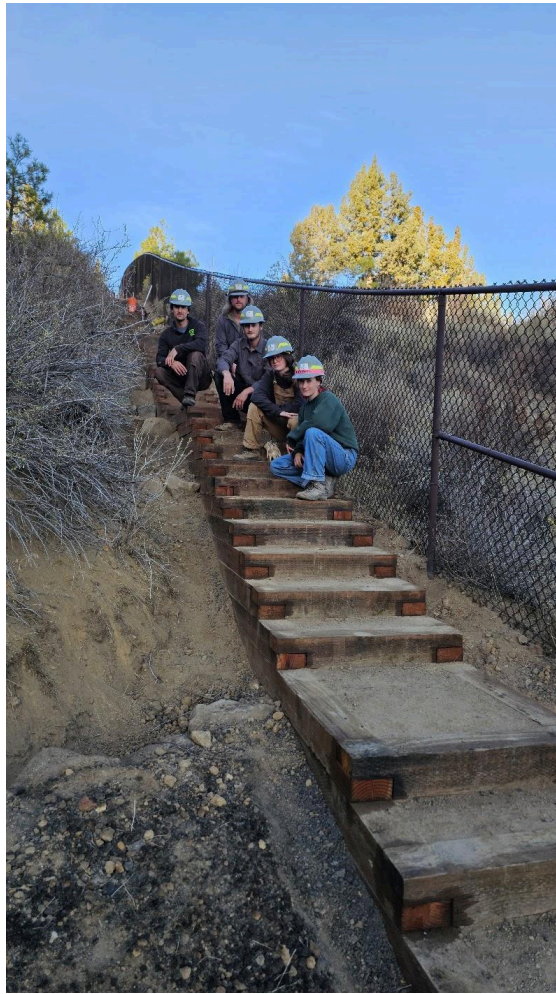


There was also a lot of small rock gathering and crush (crushed rock into three quarter minus sized gravel) to ensure the rocks we placed stayed where we wanted them. At one point in the week we had such a large pile of crushed rocks that the crew named it Mount Crush. Additional project accomplishments include placing large stepping stones in the stream for hikers to use, removing rocks from the stream bed and replacing them with crushed rock that was tamped down to provide sturdy safe footing for equestrian users.

The crew was also blessed with having **Jana Johnson** (Executive Director of DTC) come out and assist on the project. Jana brought great enthusiasm and knowledge to the project. **Justin Trosper** of the Crescent Ranger District also came out for an afternoon to assist, thank you to you both for the teamwork!



Pilot Butte Staircase



In September the crew transitioned into working solely on the stair replacement project on Pilot Butte that was funded by the Bend Sustainability Fund. We were joined by the Oregon State Park employees and without their help this project would have taken much longer. They were able to not only assist with the construction, but more importantly they provided several logistical and manpower help to move materials to and around the site. This was easily the most intensive project the crew did this year and possibly any DTC crew has completed in our four (4) year trail crew history. In total there were seventy-seven (77) stairs installed to ensure that the Base Trail remained open.

Much like the Dillon Falls stairs we completed last year all the materials were taken from raw materials including 12ft 6x6 pressure treated lumber and 20ft #5 rebar and cut down to size and lap jointed in the woodshop. Ethan and Camille headed up the woodshop and did a marvelous job ensuring we always had stairs ready to install throughout the process.





The process started off slowly as we learned the landscape and the process again with a new crew. The first week of installation we were average 2-4 stairs per day but we steadily improved our processes throughout and on the last day of installation we were able to install eleven (11) stairs in one day. One of the biggest challenges was ensuring the stairs remained in grade and did not start to float above the ground. This is why there are longer landings throughout the staircase which not only provide a resting place for those that need them but also ensured that the stairs did not float above the ground/fence.



While the staircase was the focal point of the project, the crew also ensured that heavy rain / water events would not negatively affect the newly constructed staircase by installing several drainages above, below, and throughout the staircase. Lastly, we rehabilitated the work area to cover up traces of our presence in the area.



Thank you to Visit Bend and their funding via the Bend Sustainability Fund and Oregon State Parks for their partnership on this project. It was a great to see all the partnership and cooperation that went into this project really pay off with a sustainable solution to a previously failing section of trail.



Odds & Ends

- The Crew was able to help the USFS Bend Fort Rock program by hauling heavy materials into Todd Lake to assist with the continued construction of the puncheon and Hayden assisted with the installation process.
- The Crew also assisted Central Oregon Trails Alliance (COTA) with opening a new corridor for the new Pinedrops trail as well as decommissioning user trails in the area. We hope to be able to better assist with this next year!
- If you or your organization has any interest in joining our crew for a day or have a project in mind that you believe will be a good fit for us please reach out directly to Jason Whittaker at Jason@deschutetrailscoalition.org
- Thank you to an amazing crew including Ethan Brown, Lexy Pickup, Camille Morris, and Hayden Linde for making this season a season of amazing accomplishments!

See what we got up to early in
the season [here](#)

By Jason Whittaker 10/11/2026

[Find out more about DTC on our website!](#)



Deschutes Trails Coalition
Bend, OR

Thank you

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND
VALUED PARTNERSHIP OF DTC



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