



WOOD
RIVER
LAND
TRUST



THE ORCHARD
AT THE
COLORADO GULCH PRESERVE

COLORADO GULCH PRESERVE: ABOUT



PRESERVE DETAILS

Acquired:
2016 (Bench property acq. in 2018)

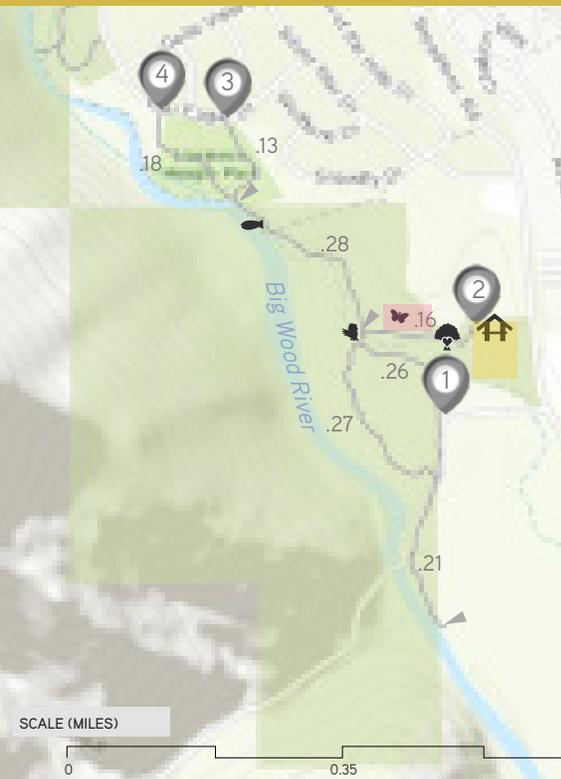
Acres Protected:
160

ABOUT

Thanks to the support of our community, what originally started as a small conservation easement has now become one of the most celebrated protected areas along the Big Wood River, and serves as one of the most important components of the Hailey Greenway. In 2018, the Colorado Gulch Preserve was expanded by nine acres thanks to the generosity of a silent donor and big fan of the Land Trust. This preserve is well-regarded as a community treasure, and rightfully so. With a multi-use trail system, protected river corridor, habitat for wildlife, and multiple ongoing restoration projects, this area has plenty to offer everyone in the Valley.

With this proposal, the entrance of the Preserve off of Red-feather Way will be developed into a complete outdoor community environmental education hub. From the expanded parking area and information center, the Wood River Land Trust will have the opportunity to utilize the Pollinator Initiative Meadow or the Community Orchard to engage with student groups, volunteers, and other partner organizations. The combination of the Pollinator Initiative Meadow and the Community Orchard will provide a wide array of engagement opportunities - from citizen science monitoring to fruit tree pruning.

PRESERVE MAP



COLORADO GULCH PRESERVE LEGEND

- WRLT Preserve
 - The Orchard
 - The Pollinator Meadow
 - Trail
 - Distance Marker
 - Preserve Entrance
 - 1 Colorado Gulch Parking Area (see directions above)
 - 2 Redfeather Way Kiosk
 - 3 Heagle Park
 - 4 Heagle Park Tennis Courts
- Points of Interest:
- Information Kiosk
 - Pollinator Meadow
 - Heart Rock Tree
 - Fishing Beach
 - Hooty & Footbridge

VIRTUAL TOUR



THE ORCHARD AT THE COLORADO GULCH PRESERVE

VISION

The Colorado Gulch Orchard is a community program that brings people together around food production while demonstrating how conservation and agriculture can go hand-in-hand. The historic homestead fruit orchards of the Wood River Valley have largely been converted to residential space. By hosting a two-acre orchard available to the public, the Land Trust will bring back fruit trees and shrubs that provide food for our community and habitat for wildlife. The orchard will be a place for students and adults to volunteer and learn about aspects of fruit tree production – planting, harvesting, pruning, watering - and how birds, insects, and other wildlife use orchards as habitat. Together, we can experience historic ways of life while preserving open space for our community.



BACKGROUND

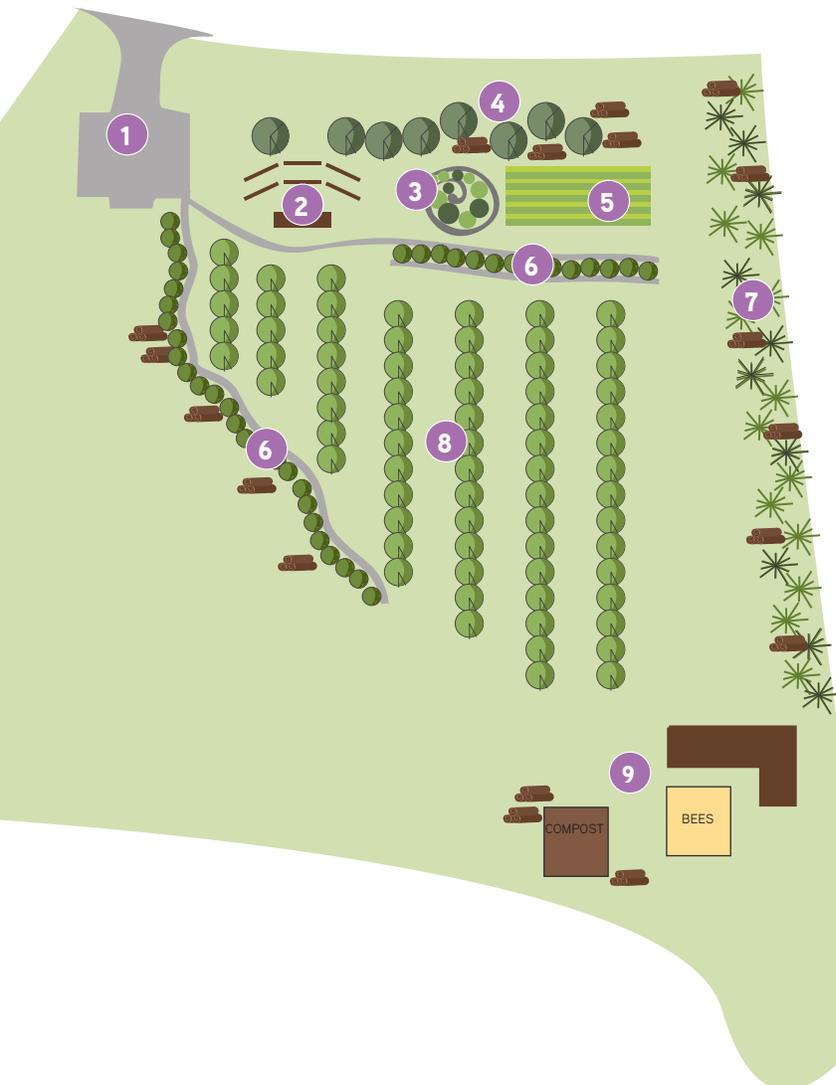
Conservation and agriculture can go hand-in-hand. Crops can be raised in ways that nurture soil health, provide habitat for native bees, birds, and wildlife, and are water-efficient. In fact, many traditional homesteads and pastoral farms practiced strategies of crop rotation, animal husbandry, and no-till planting, that maintained healthy lands for crops and the ecosystem. Over time, these systems have been transformed to produce high amounts of commodities at lower cost for our growing population.

The origins of the land trust movement began to preserve small family farms that were being bought up, consolidated, and converted into commercial agriculture. These small farms often included practices that provided habitat for wildlife, such as pollinator plant species, riparian vegetation, and native hedgerows. Within southcentral Idaho, Wood River Land Trust has worked with agricultural producers on conservation easements and practices that will enable crop and livestock production while improving ecosystem health. The Colorado Gulch Orchard will be a small-scale example of how historic fruit orchards in the Wood River Valley integrated crop production with conservation.

THE ORCHARD AT THE COLORADO GULCH PRESERVE

LAYOUT

Rows of fruit trees will feature varieties of apples, plums, apricots, pears, heirloom varieties, and test crops of fruit, such as Asian pears, quince, and peaches. On the perimeter, weaving rows of edible shrubs will be planted along walkways. Both native shrubs (elderberry, golden currant, salmonberry, gooseberries, serviceberries) and other shrubs (blackberries, raspberries) will provide fruit for our community, birds and pollinating insects. Other native bee habitat, such as brush piles, will be created along the perimeter of the orchard. A gathering space for community events will be created near the Orchard entrance for harvesting and other activities. Plots for other food crops, such as asparagus and corn, will be reserved and planted over time. A composting facility will use damaged fruit, leaves, and other elements to recycle nutrients from the Orchard for use in following years.



KEY ELEMENTS

1 Fully developed trailhead to serve the expanded use of the area. Inclusive infrastructure and ADA surfaces makes volunteer groups or classes available for community members of all ages or abilities.



2 Simple and natural outdoor classroom and gathering space to better accommodate educational opportunities - from school groups to adult education.



3 Herb and scent garden will also act as a demonstration space to inspire home gardeners to grow beautiful and low maintenance herbs at home.



4 Windbreak of evergreen trees protect the orchard from harsh winds. Brush piles will be placed throughout the trees for added pollinator habitat.



5 Other edible crops like asparagus, squash, or potatoes will provide additional teaching and demonstration opportunities for adult education classes.



6 Hedgerows of edible fruits will be grown along pathways - inspiring people to snack as they walk. The hard-scape will help contain brambling berries.



7 Native grasses and brush piles create habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Wild spaces along the edge of the property will demonstrate the intersection of conservation and agriculture.



8 Community orchard of heirloom trees. As the trees get installed and start settle in, they will offer endless opportunities for education from pruning to winterizing to integrated pest management to harvest!



9 Orchard infrastructure such as compost, tool barn and bees, will further allow for volunteers and classes to explore agricultural elements. A commercial grade kitchen in the old hop house will allow staff and volunteers to can excess and fallen produce for local food pantries.

