

## ODOT Lends A Helping Hand

An ODOT-administered project in South Central Oregon is helping the Redband Trout population rebound.

This project is part of a large restoration effort in the Drews Creek Watershed about 20 miles west of Lakeview in Lake County. The Drews Valley Ranch, downstream from the site, recently entered a conservation easement program. As a part of this plan, the Forest Service, the Oregon Department of Transportation and the ranch owners, Jack and Beverly Sparrowk, are working together to restore connectivity from Drews Reservoir to its headwaters.



The downstream end of the existing Drews Creek under Highway 140 sits about a foot above the water surface making it difficult, if not impossible, for fish to move upstream. So crews under contract to ODOT will replace a 60" x 130' culvert located at 140/Drews Creek with a new structure (arched piped) more suitable for fish passage. The arched piped will be embedded in the new stream channel and natural material will be added to the floor of the pipe to create a more natural stream bed.

The existing culvert will be left in place for temporary water management during construction and for small mammal passage after the arched piped is installed.

During July and August, crews are removing a reinforced concrete culvert upstream on Drews Creek, where the old highway used to pass. That culvert is an obstacle to fish passage, too. With the removal of the old culvert, the original stream channel will be reestablished...and fish will be able to travel more freely into their native spawning grounds.

In the end, ODOT, the Forest Service, and the Sparrowk family will enhance the natural home for the Redband and provide a more suitable habitat to enhance the fish population itself.