

Say's phoebes, rock pile restoration, ponds, morels, rabbitbrush

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By Jeff Clarke



A few months ago Gus moved the NCP osprey nest 150 yards to the north so the nesting birds wouldn't be disturbed by pump slough traffic. When the ospreys returned to the ranch, they took to the new nest location immediately.





A pair of Say's phoebes didn't mind the human's presence at the Orchard House. They built a nest in the barn and successfully raised six young! I watched both parents bring food to the young for at least two weeks.



The parents would perch on this hose before they entered the barn with food. I assume they were assessing potential danger.





This spring seeps deep in the depths of Last Draw. Before MPG's day, it fed a stock tank.





The field crew dug out the muddy seep and built three small ponds. We hope that amphibians will use the deeper pools to lay eggs.





We will work to remove reed canary grass in the Northern Floodplain this year. We started the first project a few weeks ago. We began by weed whacking all the old stems, then we burned the entire field. When the grass regrows to six inches tall, we will spray it with glyphosate. Once we have controlled the invasive grass problem, we will plant hundreds of willows and native grasses.





Even though we haven't had much rain, we found some morel mushrooms near dead cottonwood trees and water.





James removed the plastic exclosure from this rabbitbrush that was planted two years ago. When planted in the right spot, rabbit brush explodes!





Weeds colonized the old compacted road built to access the clubhouse pond during construction. We sprayed and whacked the weeds.





Once the weeds were removed, we loosened the soil, planted it with native grasses and forbs, and smoothed the soil. With a little rain, the road will vanish.





A turkey vulture clued me in to this fresh deer kill. I checked back the next day to see what was left. All I found was a rib cage!







The field crew wanted to beautify the Rock Pile and make it a nice destination for folks to meet. To do this we removed several trailer loads of debris, added some nice rocks, planted a bunch of grass and forb seeds and created a parking area. A picnic table will soon be added.





A great blue heron rests atop a dead cottonwood.

