

Swans, watercress, logging, beaver activity, great horned owl

January 7th, 2016



By Jeff Clarke

We recycled 2,200 pounds of metal rubbish gathered in 2015. Barbed wire and mangled metal enclosures filled most of the trailer.



We aren't sure if wind or animals knocked over this buck and rail fence. We repaired it.





I've seen more swans in the Bitterroot this year than ever before.

Loggers started a new thinning project in December. They will remove most smaller conifers that are competing with one another and remove or girdle conifers infected with dwarf mistletoe.





The thinned timber will be deposited into the base of draws to help prevent erosion and add new habitat for all kinds of critters.

Last week we watched horses (not the assumed elk and deer) strip the needles from several planted ponderosa pines. They left most terminal buds intact. New buck and rail fences should prevent this from happening in the future.



Tracks in the snow show us that the buck and rail fences deter most animals from messing with the trees within.



Last week we staged several piles of hay near barren hillsides. In the spring, we will spread seed on the slopes and cover it with the hay.



Flocks of turkeys scour the hay piles for wheat kernels.



Rabbit fur litters the snow like confetti. I assume a raptor fed in the tree above.



A leak in the underground stock tank line creates a pond. It doesn't appear animals have noticed this new water source yet.



Green watercress grows in the nutrient rich spring waters in lower Woodchuck.



Burdock waits beside Woodchuck Creek in hopes of a furry passer-by.



Mature cottonwood trees lay like match sticks after beavers visited in 2015.



A great horned owl hides in dense cover.





A heart-shaped balloon rests deep in a thicket in Tongue Creek.



A drab winter day can still be beautiful!