

Coyote, geese, buck and rail fences, erosion control

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By Jeff Clarke



Elk and horses wreak havoc on Partridge Spring and the surrounding vegetation every fall and winter. This summer we will build a large enclosure (yellow) to protect this area. Mike installed a stock tank east of the proposed enclosure, so animals still have a place to get water. The photos below show the area without and with protection.



No Exclosure



Exclosure



Two new buck and rail fences protect trees near the entrance gate. We removed plastic and metal exclosures so trees can continue their outward growth.





Erosion continues on the steep slopes in Tongue Creek. The photo below shows a buried erosion bar and soil upheld by plastic exclosures. In the near future we will erect metal fences on unstable slopes in an attempt to keep soil on the hillsides.





Mature bitterbrush add stability. We will attempt to establish more of these hearty shrubs on steep hillsides.





We continue to add woody debris to the bottom of Tongue Creek. In the event of a mass overland flow, this wood would catch sediment.







Several flocks of Canada geese relax along the Bitterroot River during the day, and feed on the ranch's wheat fields at dawn and dusk.





When the flocks of geese landed by the river, a coyote burst from the forest! It ran straight toward the geese's vocalizations. While en route, it noticed me and stopped in its tracks. We had a ten minute standoff and then it sauntered back into the woods. I'm sure this won't be the last time this coyote hunts these geese.





Ponderosa pines in the clubhouse floodplain continue to perish for reasons unknown. This photo documents a failed 2015 cone crop on a mature pine.







A northern shrike waits for a rodent.



During the mute days of winter I scan the treetops for any sign of life. I often mistake these Bullock's oriole nests for a live critter.





The prickly pear cactus soaks up warm January rays.

