

Beavers, porcupines, trumpeter swans, river clean up, forest thinning

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I've noticed many precariously chewed trees left by beavers, making me wonder when and how they finish the job. To investigate, I pointed trail cameras on freshly gnawed cottonwoods. Beavers rarely chewed through the whole trunk. Instead, the risk-averse rodents often let the wind bring down teetering trees. The beavers paid close attention to noise when felling trees and dashed like scared sawyers at signs of cracking.



As winter has advanced, porcupine- inflicted damage in the fruit orchard has escalated. Porcupines gnaw tree bark to reach the tender cambium layer for winter food. I discovered four porcupines hiding out in culverts close to the orchard.



To prevent further damage to the important fruit trees, we trapped and relocated the porcupines to the North Floodplain.





A family of trumpeter swans took a break on the edge of an unseasonably ice-free Bitterroot River.

The field crew walked the river collecting garbage that had accumulated along the boundary of the ranch. We were happy to find less garbage than normal.



A motivated group of “JUMPers” laid out and constructed two large buck and rail fences in the North Floodplain. These fences will protect a new age class of cottonwood and ponderosa pines to grow free from deer browse.



We started our new winter thinning project near Miller Creek. Without frequent fire, Douglas fir trees grow densely, shading the understory. We will space conifer trees 30 feet apart and encourage the deciduous understory to flourish.



We are always looking for creative ways to guide hungry ungulates away from our young deciduous trees. This “hinge” treatment lays existing trees from dense stands over new saplings to discourage travel and browsing, allowing the new trees to thrive.



In a dry start to winter, inversions and hoar frost remind us of the snow we wish we had.



