

# Idaho update

WINTER/SPRING 2021



*"The Visitor Center is in such a beautiful place, with a view of the entire Silver Creek area. On a clear day, the view out towards the mountains is absolutely amazing."*

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## PAMELA AND EDWARD TAFT

### Building a Brighter Future for Silver Creek Preserve

Silver Creek Preserve is a special place for Pamela and Edward Taft. They first visited in 2014 while on vacation, where they were charmed by its stunning natural beauty and, as avid wildlife enthusiasts, thrilled by a moose sighting. Silver Creek became a place that Pamela and Ed have often returned to enjoy more wildlife viewings, canoe its crystal-clear waters and witness sunsets that can only be described as "magical."

Now, the Tafts are laying the foundation for a brighter future for the Preserve by generously supporting The Nature Conservancy's Silver Creek Enhancement Plan—a five-year project benefitting both people and nature. The Tafts' lead gift makes possible a key element of the enhancement

plan: a major renovation to the Preserve's Visitor Center, featuring an expanded facility with a new classroom and other essential upgrades.

Pamela and Ed are excited for the public to enjoy the revitalized Visitor Center as an environmental education resource for the entire community. "Our hope is that people will be able to do a lot more there, with opportunities for events and an outdoor amphitheater for lectures," says Ed.

The Tafts' lasting contribution will enhance the visitor experience for the thousands of people who frequent the scenic Preserve each year. "It's a gem of a place," says Pamela. "We're excited to see it made better for more people to use and enjoy."



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The Nature  
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# Reimagining Silver Creek Preserve



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Idaho is a state carved of rugged peaks and raging whitewater, so perhaps it is the still, tranquil nature of Silver Creek Preserve that takes our collective breath away. For over four decades, The Nature Conservancy has worked to restore Silver Creek's high-desert spring and protect its inspiring natural qualities from development with generous support from our donors and community.

But now, a confluence of threats has placed Silver Creek in jeopardy. An increasingly unreliable snowpack means less dependable flows and higher stream temperatures, threatening the health of the fishery. The ageing infrastructure no longer meets the needs of visitors. And the lack of educational programming prevents opportunities to engage visitors in critical conversations about conservation, climate change and the relationship between people and nature.

That's why TNC launched the Silver Creek Enhancement Plan to ensure the health and vitality of the Preserve and protect its important role in the region's economy, watershed and community. The enhancement project will restore a greater variety of habitat for fish that meets the needs of their various life stages. It will create a community space that educates, inspires and serves our community and youth. And it will provide safer, more accessible ways for people of all ages and abilities to delight in, learn from and engage with this special place.

Thank you for being a part of this legacy. We look forward to enjoying the next chapter of Silver Creek with all of you.

Melissa Masucci  
Director of Development, The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) international membership organization. Its mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

The Nature Conservancy meets all of the Standards for Charity Accountability



Printed on 30% post-consumer waste paper, saving\*:



**0.4**  
million BTU's of  
energy



**180**  
gallons of water



**3 lbs.**  
solid waste



**460 lbs.**  
net greenhouse  
gases prevented

\*Environmental impact estimates were made using the Environmental Paper Network Paper Calculator Version 4.0. For more information visit [www.papercalculator.org](http://www.papercalculator.org).



## Science-Driven Restoration

Conservation and stewardship have been the heart of TNC's work at Silver Creek since 1976. The conservation priorities of the enhancement will focus on revitalizing Silver Creek's aquatic ecosystem through actions that restore stream function, boost water supply, enhance aquatic habitats and expand riparian buffers. "We are actively collaborating with our partners and local stakeholders to restore Silver Creek and its tributaries," says Erika Phillips, Silver Creek's watershed manager. "Our goal is to improve the resiliency of this diverse, spring-fed aquatic ecosystem and its wild trout fishery, while also demonstrating the value of science-based restoration techniques and community-based solutions." This effort will also include implementing first-of-their-kind water market mechanisms, irrigation infrastructure efficiency projects and projects to improve channel conditions.



## Infrastructure Improvements

TNC strives to provide a positive experience at Silver Creek Preserve where visitors can experience first-hand the benefits of conservation. In November 2020, Blaine County approved a Conditional Use Permit and a Site Alteration Permit to expand the existing Silver Creek Visitor Center. This expansion will add a 1,422 square foot classroom suitable for approximately 25 students and other community events, with construction expected to begin in 2021. Investing in facility improvements will ensure that the Preserve remains a beloved public resource and an inspiration for community-based conservation. The project will also include accessibility improvements to existing trails and boardwalks and additional fishing access structures like steps and ramps. This will help provide safe entry locations for anglers while also protecting riparian and streambank resources.

## Inspiring the Next Generation

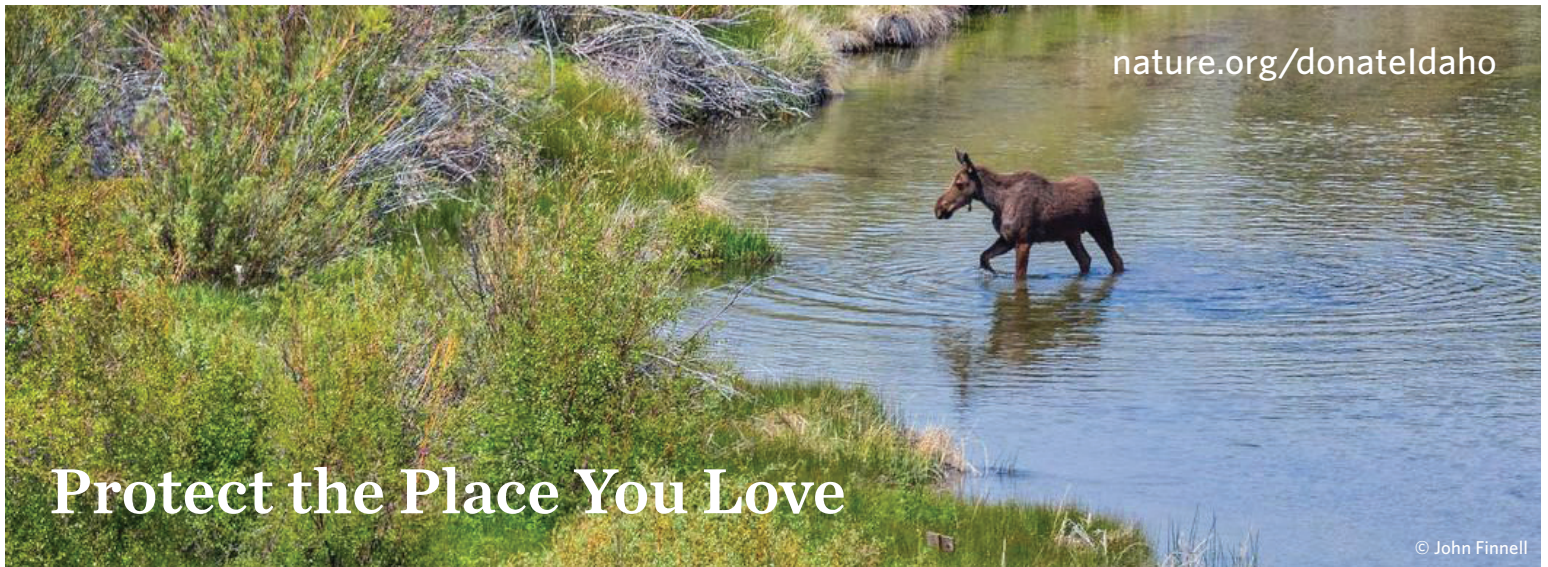
The long-term success of our work today depends on cultivating the next generation of environmental conservationists and advocates. By concentrating efforts to expand outreach and educational programs at Silver Creek, the Preserve will be a catalyst for empowering youth and community members to be active conservation ambassadors. This will be accomplished by providing on-site educational activities for field trips, family-focused events, self-guided tours and summer internships. Our new programming will be developed with community input, including from local educators. Through these new opportunities, TNC envisions Silver Creek as a place where students, educators and volunteers will foster and strengthen the values that lead to deep personal commitments to conservation.



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Silver Creek is one of the most spectacular natural places in Idaho. For decades, visitors have come for legendary fly fishing, others for the plentiful wildlife watching opportunities. Whatever your reason, we invite you to join us in protecting the place we all love. Together, we can create a Silver Creek where everyone can experience first-hand the benefits of conservation—to learn from it, be inspired by it and enjoy it.

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