

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT



Silver Creek Enhancement Project

Photo © Steve Dondoro

Serving our community, restoring our fishery and creating future environmental leaders.

Silver Creek is one of the most beloved natural places in Idaho. Biologically, economically and culturally relevant to Central Idaho, Silver Creek Preserve has been a cornerstone of our community and a destination for nature-lovers for over forty years. However, fluctuations in annual snowpack, higher stream temperatures, aging infrastructure and rapid increases in recreational pressure in the watershed have placed this community landmark at risk.

The Nature Conservancy is facing these threats and laying the foundation necessary for a more resilient and sustainable future through the Silver Creek Enhancement Project. The project addresses the watershed's toughest conservation challenges through innovation and community-engaged science.

Building on decades of conservation efforts, this project will revitalize Silver Creek's unique aquatic ecosystem, help sustain its wild trout fishery and provide refuge for an abundance of wildlife while providing an enriching visitor experience and expanding community and youth education opportunities. We invite you to partner with us to build the future of Silver Creek.



Photos © John Finnell

Resource Conservation and Restoration

Following its successful restoration project at Kilpatrick Pond, TNC implemented a watershed-scale analysis to identify the areas with the greatest conservation needs. In addition to areas outside the bounds of the Silver Creek Preserve, the Stalker Creek and Loving Creek stretches of the Preserve were identified as high-priority, ecologically significant stream reaches, and restoration of these stretches were identified as the next steps in a watershed-wide restoration effort.



In addition to flow issues facing the entire system, the Stalker and Loving Creek reaches suffer from heavy sedimentation, lack of diversity of habitat and elevated summertime temperatures which threaten the health of this world-class trout fishery. Through the Silver Creek Enhancement Project, TNC is implementing our first phase—major restoration on Stalker Creek—with Loving Creek to follow in subsequent years. Restoration efforts include stream channel reconfigurations to enhance quality and diversity of habitat, narrowing and deepening of stream channel to uncover spawning gravels, restoration of pool and riffle habitats and increasing and diversifying riparian buffers and stream-side vegetation. These actions will improve the resiliency of this aquatic ecosystem and the fishery while also demonstrating the value of science-based restoration techniques. The overall goal is not only to restore this important tributary, but to also inspire partners and local stakeholders to take similar actions where needed.

Education and Outreach

Core to TNC's vision for the future of Silver Creek is the idea that it could become a place of exploration and learning for all ages. Through both formal educational opportunities and partnership programming with local nonprofits, we seek to build a stronger conservation ethic and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

We envision environmental education programming in support of State of Idaho science and environmental education curriculum, seasonal offerings for partner groups in service of youth engagement, interpretive displays to engage youth and families and an expanded corps of volunteers. We strive to inspire the community and our future environmental conservationists to find science-based solutions for challenges such as climate change, freshwater conservation and habitat protection.

Visitor Experience

Everyone deserves the opportunity to enjoy the splendor of Silver Creek. After nearly 45 years of continued habitat restoration and stewardship investment, TNC is undertaking its first major infrastructure improvement. Barrier-free access, safe facilities and a field-trip assistance program are all part of an expanded vision to better serve the community and provide opportunities for all people to experience positive connections with nature.

Through this project we have constructed a redesigned Conservation and Education Center with a classroom facility, established clear fishing access points and improved trails and amenities that better connect the public with the surrounding landscape and conservation education. These and additional infrastructure improvements coming soon will strengthen Silver Creek Preserve as a unique place of refuge for both people and nature.

