

Silver Creek Marsh and Thompson Reservoir, north of the preserve on USFS Road 27. For more camping information, please call the U.S. Forest Service at 541 576-2107.

◆ Please pick up any litter that you find. Thank you!

How we work

The Nature Conservancy takes a cooperative, pragmatic and scientific approach to conservation. We identify places large enough in scale and rich enough in plant and animal diversity to achieve meaningful, lasting conservation results. We buy land at fair market value from willing sellers, accept gifts of land, restore key habitats, and work with partners to support conservation practices on public and private lands. We contribute to the local economy by paying property taxes, hiring and purchasing goods locally whenever possible, and supporting ecologically sustainable development activities such as grazing and timber harvesting where appropriate.

The Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization supported by over 24,000 households in Oregon and 100 companies. More than 1,100 Oregonians volunteer each year to help protect and restore Oregon’s natural heritage.

We thank our many public and private partners who make our work possible at Sycan Marsh, including:

- ◆ Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- ◆ Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ◆ U.S. Forest Service
- ◆ ZX Ranch

The Nature Conservancy is a leading nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

To date, the Conservancy and its one million members have helped protect more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.

In Oregon, the Conservancy owns or manages 48 nature preserves and has helped protect over 483,000 acres of important habitats.

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Cover photo:
The Wild and Scenic Sycan River
meanders through the marsh © Larry N. Olson

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discover
Sycan Marsh

a nature preserve
for wildlife
in Oregon’s
Upper Klamath Basin

Welcome to Sycan Marsh Preserve

Its name comes from a Klamath Indian phrase meaning “level, grassy place.” Surrounded by pine forest in the headwaters of the Klamath Basin, a vast wetland provides habitat to unique and threatened freshwater species. The marsh awakens in early spring to 10,000 tundra swans migrating north along the Pacific Flyway. Many other birds follow, including breeding greater sandhill cranes, black terns, white-faced ibis and yellow rails. Bull trout and redband trout frequent the creeks into the marsh, and recently, new species of mollusks have been discovered.

The Nature Conservancy first acquired property at Sycan Marsh in 1980 and today owns over 30,000 acres – including most of the 36-square-mile marsh and portions of the surrounding forest. In partnership with the historic ZX Ranch, which holds a grazing lease, we are researching compatible grazing practices that will provide economic benefit while preserving habitats for fish and wildlife.

While you are here

We ask our visitors to understand that Sycan Marsh is a nature preserve, not a park or recreation area. To help us protect and restore this special place – and for your own safety – please observe the following guidelines:

- ◆ Stay on the road. Opportunities to walk or hike are limited. No services or facilities are available.
- ◆ Do not collect plants, insects or other species or disturb soil, rocks, artifacts or scientific research markers.
- ◆ No hunting, fishing, camping or pets on the preserve. Nearest campgrounds are at

How to get to Sycan Marsh Preserve

From Klamath Falls, take Highway 140 E about 40 miles to Beatty. Ten miles past Beatty, turn left (N) onto USFS Road 30 (Ivory Pine Road). Follow USFS Road 30 for 12.7 miles, where the road splits. Take the left fork onto USFS Road 27 for about 25 miles. When you cross the Sycan River, you have reached Map Point 1.

From La Pine, drive two miles south on Highway 97 and turn left (E) onto Highway 31 towards the town of Silver Lake. About one mile W of Silver Lake, turn right (S) onto USFS Road 27 (Lake County Road 4-11). The sign at the junction is marked “Thompson Reservoir and Silver Creek Marsh Campground.” Follow Road 27 for 22 miles. Near milepost 18 there is a fork in the road; make sure to stay to the right. After continuing another 4.5 miles, you have reached Map Point 4.

To fully enjoy your visit, don’t forget your binoculars. We hope you enjoy the tour!

Welcome to the Sycan Marsh Preserve Self-Guided Auto Tour

Once on USFS Road 27, please use this map as a guide for the following points of interest:

1. Sycan River - Flowing in from the east, this Wild and Scenic River seasonally feeds water into Sycan Marsh, supporting a myriad of species and their habitats. In turn, the marsh slowly releases water back into the river – and, ultimately, Upper Klamath Lake and the Pacific. In this high desert environment, the river may be dry at this point in late summer and fall.

2. Long Creek - Clean, cold water is critical to the federally protected bull trout. Long Creek is the second largest tributary to the marsh – and the last remaining of three historic bull trout spawning grounds here. Conservancy ecologists are monitoring the needs and habits of these imperiled fish using radio tags and other technologies. With partners, we are revitalizing the creek and surrounding wetlands by restoring natural water flows and channel complexity and by improving grazing practices.

3. Coyote Creek - Coyote Creek is another tributary where the Conservancy is restoring streamside habitats. Looking upstream, you can see areas where banks are healing and riparian

vegetation is filling in, providing cooling shade, increased habitat complexity, and stability from erosion. Just north of the creek you may be able to see areas where springs are seeping from the hillside. Looking east, you may be able to see areas where we are removing structures and restoring historic water flow patterns.

4. Forestry work - Approximately 0.5 mile north of Coyote Creek, you can see where the Conservancy is thinning stands of ponderosa and lodgepole pine using environmentally sensitive techniques, clearing the way for larger trees to thrive and creating local jobs. Prescribed burns will restore historic conditions and a healthier forest, in turn benefiting the entire marsh watershed.

After this point, you may want to drive to USFS Road 28 for nice views of the marsh from the northeast. Road 28 and other roads continue for a 77-mile loop around the marsh, but the east side roads are more primitive and not recommended.

