

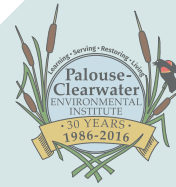
# PALOUSE PRAIRIE REMNANT

A Palouse Prairie remnant can be found on the south-facing hillside north of the Bess Hudson Interpretive Center. In spring and summer, you can see the plants easily because many of them are flowering. There is very little native Palouse Prairie left, making Palouse Prairie unique and rare to see. As seen surrounding Rose Creek, the majority of the Palouse is urban or agricultural, with very little left to its natural state. The Palouse, as it is seen these days, is a thriving agricultural region situated in southeastern Washington and a small part of Idaho. The crops benefit from a nutrient-rich soil called loess, a soil found in only a handful of places across the world, the Palouse being one of them. The natural state of the Palouse, however, is not rolling hills of crops.



The vegetation of native Palouse Prairie tends to be sparse. In winter, a hillside might look barren, with a couple trees and some dormant bunchgrasses. Some perennials of the Palouse die back to a root crown near or below the ground to wait for the next growing season. In spring and summer, these plants are suddenly visible again.

The presence of Rose Creek in this area creates a unique environment for Palouse Prairie native plants and more generic riparian species. Rose Creek flows west to join Fourmile Creek, which flows into the South Fork of the Palouse River between Albion and Colfax.



*Palouse-Clearwater*  
Environmental Institute

## ROSE CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

Shawnee Road,  
Pullman, WA 99163  
[WWW.PCEI.ORG](http://WWW.PCEI.ORG)



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## Directions!

From Pullman, head north on WA-270

Turn left on Palouse-Albion Rd; continue to Albion

Turn right on Main St in Albion; continue out of Albion onto gravel

Turn left on Shawnee Rd, and keep left at fork with Collins Rd

Continue on Shawnee Rd

Rose Creek will be on the right side of the road. Parking is available!



Remember you can volunteer with the Restoration team at Rose Creek Nature Preserve! Contact PCEI's Outreach coordinator for more information at [serving@pcei.org](mailto:serving@pcei.org).

— Bridge  
— Driveway  
 Bess Hudson Interpretive Center  
 Nature Preserve Boundary



Parking  
 Shed  
 Pullman

— Rose Creek  
— Trail

□ Aspen Grove  
□ Hawthorn Grove



North

— Shawnee Road

## HISTORY OF ROSE CREEK

Currently, less than 1% of the original Palouse meadow steppe ecosystem exists. This decline is due to the extensive agricultural activity, mostly in grain production. Aggressive alien plant species also play a role in out-competing the native meadow steppe vegetation. It is now considered one of the rarest ecosystems in the world. Rose Creek is one of the best examples of only a few remaining examples of Palouse meadow steppe. In 1984, Rose Creek was named a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service for, “[possessing] exceptional value as an illustration of the nation’s natural heritage, and [contributing] to a better understanding of man’s environment.”

Rose Creek hosts classes for professionals and students, continuing to teach people about the importance of the Palouse ecosystem while also protecting it. The Rose Creek Nature Preserve remains a stunning example of long-term care and dedication.

Originally, Rose Creek was owned by WSU professor, Dr. George Hudson, and Bess Hudson, author of *Windows on Nature*. George Hudson is known for researching hawthorn propagation. The couple donated 12 acres of land to the Nature Conservancy in 1966.



In 2008, PCEI was asked to maintain Rose Creek by the Nature Conservancy and after three years, the title of the land was transferred into PCEI’s name. In 2011, Fred Hudson donated an additional 2.4 acres. Rose Creek reached its current 22 acres in 2014 when the final 7 acres of land and the Hudson’s family home- which will be re-purposed as the Bess Hudson Interpretive Center- was bought in 2015.



## Beavers

(*Castor canadensis*)

Odds are you won't see beavers, but you can look for evidence of them. These large, nocturnal semi-aquatic rodents weigh between 30 and 60 pounds. Beavers are known for building dams, and Rose Creek has a number of dams along the waterway. Their homes, called lodges, are constructed out of mud, sticks, and larger branches. They prefer to eat the bark and small twigs off of aspen, willow, alder, and birch - which means they LOVE Rose Creek.



## Great Horned Owls

(*Bubo virginianus*)

A large owl (20-22 inches in length) that is most active just before dark. These owls are easily identified by their tufts of feathers on their heads which give them the appearance of horns. They eat rodents, birds, reptiles, fish, and large insects. A family of owls lives near the Bess Hudson Interpretive Center.



## Ring-necked Pheasants

(*Phasianus colchicus*)

This non-native game bird can be a surprise with its noisy take-off. Males are brightly colored and iridescent while females are brown with a similar pattern. Both have a distinctive, long, pointed tail. These birds favor fields, marshlands, and brushy areas.



## Dark-eyed Junco

(*Junco hyemalis*)

This large sparrow with a dark hood is distinguished most easily by its white outer tail feathers. These birds are one of the most abundant forest birds of North America.



## Stinging Nettle (left)

(*Urtica dioica*)

This perennial grows 2-6 feet tall in woods and thickets. Its leaves are ovate, coarsely toothed, and hairy on both sides, and the flowers are greenish with no petals. Hairs on the stinging nettle serve as needles that can inject chemicals when touched. These chemicals can cause paresthesia, or that "pins-and-needles" sensation.



## Spalding's Catchfly (right)

(*Silene spaldingii*)

This rare plant is found at only 117 sites, the majority of which are found in Eastern Washington. It has thick, sticky hairs found on its stems and leaves which catch insects and dust. It has been listed as threatened since October 2001.



## Palouse Thistle (left)

(*Cirsium brevifolium*)

This perennial thistle is native to the Palouse, different from Canada or Bull thistle, both of which are common weeds in the Palouse. The Palouse thistle tends not to grow as tall as its invasive relatives.



## Idaho Fescue (right)

(*Festuca idahoensis*)

This perennial bunchgrass grows 1-3 feet tall and is blue-green or green in color. It can be somewhat resistant to fire.



## Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse (below left)

(*Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus*)

Listed as threatened, this grouse is a subspecies of the Sharp-tailed Grouse. They have plumage with a base of grayish-brown, white and black markings with a white wedge-shaped tail. Males' tails are longer and they have a purple throat patch and yellow comb over the eye. Other types of grouse you may see include the Sharp-tailed Grouse and the Sage Grouse. They startle easily and you may find yourself surprised by a sudden and loud liftoff.



## Black-billed Magpie

(*Pica hudsonia*)

A large, slender, black and white bird (18-19 inches long) with a long tail (9-12 inches). A large magpie nest can be seen in the hawthorn grove near the parking lot, at the first bend in the trail.

## Red-tailed Hawk (right)

(*Buteo jamaicensis*)

These hawks prefer open areas (like prairies) with high perches to watch for prey. They are highly adaptable and therefore prevalent in various types of ecosystems. Look for them in trees or circling at great heights. They are easily recognizable by their white and red tails.



## Coyote (below)

(*Canis latrans*)

Color and texture of the coyote can vary geographically as there are 19 subspecies. Coyotes are smaller than the grey wolf with a thinner frame, face, and muzzle. Their tracks can be distinguished from those of dogs by their more elongated, less rounded shape. Look for coyotes on surrounding hills of Rose Creek or listen for their calls.



## Black Hawthorn (right)

(*Crataegus douglasii*)

This large deciduous shrub/tree that can grow 3-30 feet tall. Its thorns can be an inch long and occur at nodes on the branches. Its branches are reddish-brown when young but age to gray, and the flowers are white, and the fruit is black, small, and apple-like.



## Cow Parsnip (below)

(*Heracleum maximum*)

Cow Parsnip is the only *Heracleum* genus plant native to North America. It is a biennial with large, lobed leaves and tall (5-8 feet) flower stalks in the second year. Cow parsnip can be seen all over Rose Creek in late spring and early summer.



## Quaking Aspen (above)

(*Populus tremuloides*)

The quaking aspen is a small tree growing up to ~80 feet tall with smooth, whitish/cream bark that turns blackish and rough with injury and age. Its leaves are deciduous, broad, and almost round with fine teeth, and the flowers are catkins that appear in April or May. It prefers growing along streams, in moist benches, and mountainsides.



## Blanket Flower (left)

(*Gaillardia*)

This flowering member of the sunflower family has many varieties that bloom in the summer. In the winter, blanket flower looks like just a mat of leaves.

