

Logging, coyote, ponderosa pine bark, prairie smoke

February 5th, 2015



By Jeff Clarke





Mike Henning and his crew continue to thin the dense conifer forest near the head of North Draw. They leave ponderosa pines and large Douglas-firs. The understory will benefit from added sunlight and the trees left behind will have more room to grow. A thinned stand is also less susceptible to a crown fire.







The jig-saw puzzle bark of a ponderosa pine protects the tree from fire; as each piece catches fire, it flakes off.





Few ponderosa pine seedlings exist in the Northern Floodplain. This summer the field crew will search out the tiny trees and place a metal exclosure around them.



A mix of fruticose lichens cover an old ninebark branch.







As I crested a ridge of Whaley Draw, a coyote burst from the drainage and ran over the adjacent ridge.





I inspected his initial location and found the remains of a stripped deer leg and fresh scat.



Green watercress garnishes an otherwise drab seep.







A dried mushroom skeleton stands in the middle of an old game trail.





Some prairie smoke boasts green foliage all winter long.



A pair of pine grosbeaks pluck winter buds from a maple's red limbs.

