

Tree disease, buck and rail, tick, starlings, woodpecker

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By Jeff Clarke

We continue to build buck and rail fences around planted trees. Unfortunately, a few deer breached our exclosures and caused a little damage. We will work to develop an impenetrable exclosure.



The first wave of starlings arrived this week.
I watched them fly in and out of the cliffs.



This is stalactiform blister rust. It is a pathogen that killed several immature ponderosa pines in the Clubhouse Floodplain. Once infected, tree branches and stems may become girdled or deformed. Stalactiform rust's alternate hosts include many broadleaf plant species, but most commonly Indian paintbrush.



A downy woodpecker looks for insects in a ponderosa killed by blister rust.



Western gall rust infects the branches of several mature ponderosa pines in the Clubhouse Floodplain. Most of the galls cause branch deformities and growth loss. If a small tree has a gall form on its trunk it may die.



A pair of bald eagles pays extra attention to the nest in the clubhouse floodplain. We hope the female lays a few eggs in it soon.



Old wild rice stems continue to provide some cover for small critters throughout the winter. We will spread more wild rice seed in other areas of the pond next week.



Long ago Native Americans stripped the inner bark from this ponderosa tree for food. Some accounts say that this was only done in times of famine, others say this was a common yearly practice.



A goldeneye pair dabbles and dives in the Clubhouse Pond. I think they're the same pair that was here early last year.



The first dog tick of the season found its way to the top of my ear.



Aquatic vegetation flourishes in the new ponds up Whaley Draw.



Last fall Matt Schertz and crew placed split logs all over, hoping rodents and snakes would use them for shelter. Rodents used them this winter. Snakes will likely follow in spring.



Last week 24 horses congregated on the bench between Sheep Camp and Tongue Creek drainages. The horse herd circled in red typically resides on the Sapphire Ranch. The herd circled in yellow has been on MPG for a few years. The interaction ended without incident.

