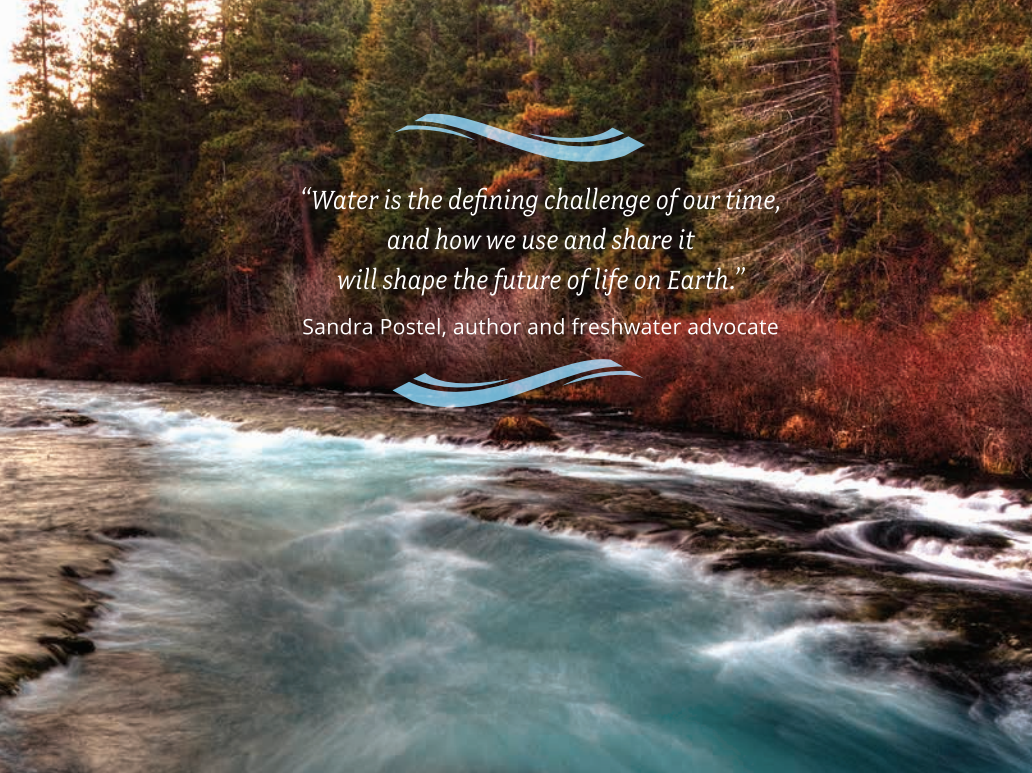




DESCHUTES RIVER  
CONSERVANCY

2025 IMPACT REPORT



“Water is the defining challenge of our time,  
and how we use and share it  
will shape the future of life on Earth.”

Sandra Postel, author and freshwater advocate

## MISSION, VISION & VALUES

### MISSION

To restore streamflow and improve water quality in the Deschutes River Basin.

### VISION

Local governments, NGOs, and basin stakeholders are implementing a collaborative water management agreement, balancing water for irrigators, municipalities, and rivers.

Streamflows are steadily meeting targets, habitat restoration efforts are in full swing, trust is high among partners, and the community is actively supporting the Deschutes River Conservancy's flow restoration strategies.

### VALUES

**Open.** Value and seek out diverse perspectives.

**Consensus-based.** Work to overcome differences and make decisions by consensus.

**Collaborative.** Deploy cooperative, non-regulatory approaches that are committed to helping all parties achieve their respective goals.

**Innovative.** Proactively seek new approaches for solving old problems.

**Non-litigious.** Do not engage in litigation.

**Adaptive.** Adapt and refine goals and strategies based on evolving information and opportunities.

**Partnership-based.** Leverage partners' strengths to complement flow restoration with the physical habitat restoration and land conservation necessary to achieve watershed-scale outcomes.

**Equitable.** Live the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Natasha Bellis – ENVIRONMENT  
Deschutes Land Trust

Bobby Brunoe – (CHAIR) TRIBAL  
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

Phil Fine – IRRIGATION  
North Unit Irrigation District

Steve Forrester – LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
City of Prineville

Zach Freed – ENVIRONMENT  
The Nature Conservancy

Jay Henry – (PAST CHAIR) AT LARGE

Megan Hill – HYDROELECTRIC  
Portland General Electric

Craig Horrell – (SEC./TREASURER) IRRIGATION  
Central Oregon Irrigation District

Jade Mayer – (VICE CHAIR) AT LARGE

Emelie McKain – FEDERAL  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Bill Munro – FEDERAL  
U.S. Forest Service

Angella Reinhold – STATE  
Oregon Water Resources Department

Spencer Sawaske – STATE  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Austin Smith, Jr. – TRIBAL Natural Resources  
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

David Weidinger – FEDERAL  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

## STAFF

Maggie Anderson – *Project Manager*

Jim Bond – *Program Director*

Alex Ehrens – *Program Manager*

Kate Fitzpatrick – *Executive Director*

Marisa Hossick – *Communications Director*

Gen Hubert – *Senior Program Manager*

Sarah Kelly – *Finance & Operations Director*

Jacob Kimiecik – *Program Manager*

Ben Kittell – *Development Manager*

Kris Moore – *Senior Accountant*

Lisa Seales – *Senior Program Manager*

Grant Traynor – *Project Manager*



## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### TOGETHER FOR THE RIVER

The rivers of the Deschutes Basin connect everything we love about Central Oregon: our communities, our farms, our wildlife, and our way of life. With the help of supporters like you, real progress is happening to restore balance across this landscape.

This year, your support helped move the basin closer to a future where rivers can provide for both people and nature. The DRC, working with partners across the basin, advanced projects that save water, improve efficiency, and return flows to the river. This progress means more water in streams, healthier habitat, and stronger communities built on shared purpose.

A few milestones stand out. Water conservation projects across the basin are laying the foundation to **increase flows in the Upper Deschutes River to 300 cubic feet per second by 2028**, a transformation that will restore year-round habitat for redband trout and the Oregon spotted frog. We developed and passed a Deschutes-specific state water bill — **House Bill 3806** — that advances the framework for a Deschutes Water Bank, an important step toward making voluntary water sharing more flexible and efficient across

the basin. Our **instream leasing program** kept rivers flowing and our **Raise the Deschutes** seminar series helped raise the water IQ of thousands of people.

Your investment in this work matters. Each partnership we build, every cubic foot of streamflow restored, and every conversation convened brings us closer to rivers that can sustain life in all its forms. The visible progress on our rivers depends on the quiet, consistent work behind the scenes: collaboration, innovation, and relationship-building made possible by your generosity.

Thank you for being part of this community of stewardship. Because of you, the rivers of the Deschutes Basin have a stronger, more resilient future.

KATE FITZPATRICK  
*Executive Director, Deschutes River Conservancy*

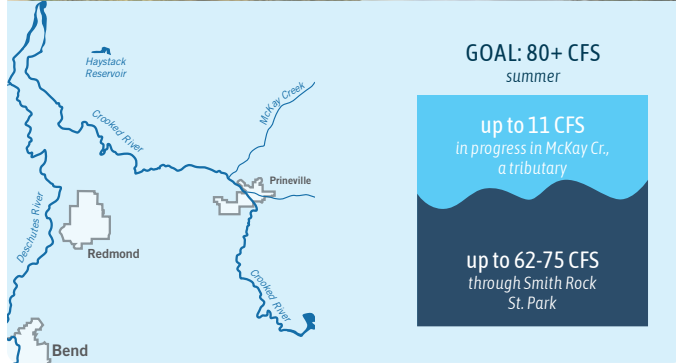
# RESTORING BALANCE IN THE DESCHUTES BASIN

Everything we do at the Deschutes River Conservancy flows from a single mission — to restore streamflow and improve water quality in the Deschutes Basin. From collaborative planning to irrigation modernization, water transactions, and community education, we're bringing partners together to create lasting balance between water for people, farms, and rivers.

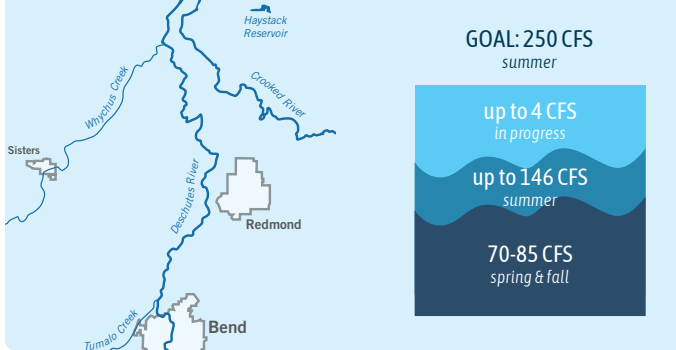
## UPPER DESCHUTES



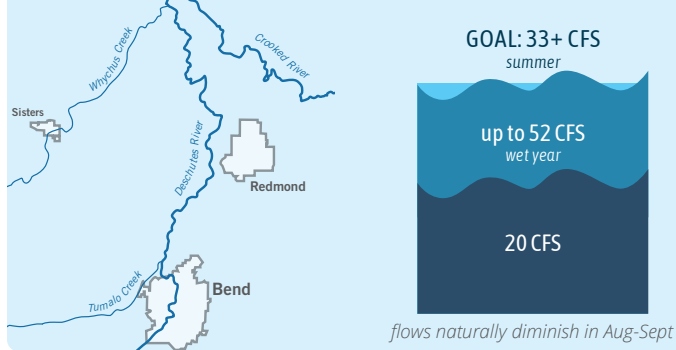
## CROOKED RIVER



## MIDDLE DESCHUTES\*



## WHYCHUS CREEK



**LEGEND**

- Light Blue = Pending/In Development
- Med. Blue = Seasonally Protected Flows
- Dark Blue = Minimum Protected Flows

\*Up to 38 cfs of cold water from Tumalo Creek bolsters flows in the Middle Deschutes in the summer between Bend and Tumalo through Tumalo Irrigation District's (TID) piping projects and instream leasing. TID has an additional 3.6 cfs in progress.

## 2025 AT A GLANCE



**20 BASIN PLANNING SESSIONS**

DRC helped to advance critical water allocation and groundwater management discussions through the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative.

**74 CFS LEASED INSTREAM**

through annual water leasing, keeping **25,141 acre-feet** instream across 10 reaches in the Deschutes Basin including 25% of the flows in the Middle Deschutes.

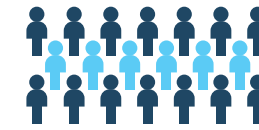
**4 NEW IRRIGATION MODERNIZATION PROJECTS** are under development — creating future opportunities for restored flows.



**350**



**CFS OF RESTORED STREAMFLOW** through DRC and partner projects in the Deschutes Basin.



**1 SHARED GOAL:**



to restore streamflow and improve water quality across the Deschutes Basin — ensuring a future where rivers, farms, and communities can thrive together.

## A COORDINATED APPROACH TO STREAMFLOW RESTORATION

Deschutes River Conservancy's programs work together to restore balance across the basin. Each builds on the next — strategic planning, modernizing infrastructure, and returning flows to our rivers through innovative agreements. This integrated approach forms a resilient framework for modern water management, helping communities adapt to climate change while restoring and protecting water in our rivers.

# COLLABORATIVE PLANNING:

## ALIGNING PARTNERS FOR BASIN-WIDE IMPACT

The Deschutes River Conservancy connects and coordinates the people and projects shaping the basin's water future. Across the region, irrigation districts, Tribes, agencies, conservation groups, and community leaders are coming together to restore flows, improve water quality, and revitalize habitat for fish and wildlife.

In 2025, these collaborative efforts included the **Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative**, which is laying the groundwork for an upper basin-wide water management plan; the **Deschutes Partnership**, preparing to restore habitat in the Upper Deschutes as flows rise through planned flow restoration; and the **Crooked River Water Quality Partnership**, advancing coordinated strategies to improve water quality in the Crooked River. Together, these initiatives unite diverse partners to translate science-based planning into on-the-ground restoration and lasting community resilience.

“Partnership is what turns ideas into action. Every success story in this basin starts with people coming to the table.”

Kate Fitzpatrick  
Executive Director



# IRRIGATION MODERNIZATION:

## UPGRADING IRRIGATION SYSTEMS IS KEY TO RESTORING FLOWS AND SUPPORTING FARMS

Modernizing irrigation is one of the most powerful ways to bring water back to rivers. Across Central Oregon, the Deschutes River Conservancy and its irrigation district partners are replacing open canals with efficient pipelines and using technology to manage water with greater precision. Each project conserves water on farms while restoring flows to the Deschutes River and its tributaries.

Together, these efforts are paving the way for a more reliable water future. By 2028, ongoing modernization projects are expected to restore up to **300 cubic feet per second** of winter flow to the Upper Deschutes River — improving conditions for fish, wildlife, and communities while strengthening the long-term viability of local agriculture.

### 2025 Highlights

- Expanding irrigation efficiency through federal funding that helps districts replace open canals with pipelines — saving water for farms and rivers.
- Modernizing water delivery with WaterSMART projects that upgrade irrigation ditches and control systems for greater precision and reliability.
- Ensuring that water conserved through Arnold Irrigation District's piping project — shared with North Unit farmers in summer — is permanently protected instream in winter through DRC-facilitated water transactions.
- Laying the groundwork for improved water sharing through a new multi-district agreement linking modernization, transfers, and instream dedication to improve winter flows across the basin.



Above: Open canals lose up to half their water.  
Left: Lateral canals direct water from main canals.

# WATER TRANSACTIONS: MOVING WATER WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

Restoring balance in the Deschutes Basin isn't just about saving water — it's about helping water move where it's needed most.

The Deschutes River Conservancy works with irrigation districts and landowners to design **voluntary, flexible solutions** that benefit both rivers and working lands.

Through **instream leasing, permanent transfers, and water banking**, the DRC helps water reach fish and wildlife when they need it most while improving reliability and resilience for the people who depend on it.

## 2025 Highlights

- ANNUAL WATER LEASING PROGRAM**  
 Restored up to **70 cfs** of flow across 10 reaches through DRC's Annual Water Leasing Program, with support from irrigation districts and funding partners. These leases provide seasonal habitat for native species including the Oregon spotted frog and redband trout.
- ARNOLD IRRIGATION DISTRICT TRANSFER**  
 Completed a transfer protecting **5.7 cfs (1,875 acre-feet)** instream in the Middle Deschutes River, creating new mitigation credits for municipal partners and strengthening both river health and community water security.
- MCKAY CREEK WATER RIGHTS SWITCH**  
 Breaking ground on this long-term project that will restore up to **11.2 cfs** to a key steelhead reach, improving habitat and water reliability for participating landowners.
- TROUT CREEK PARTNERSHIP**  
 Continued working with local partners to develop projects that will restore flow and improve habitat for summer steelhead in this important Deschutes tributary.

RESTORED UP TO  
**70 CFS**  
ACROSS 10 REACHES

PROTECTED  
**1,875**  
ACRE-FEET

RESTORES UP TO  
**11 CFS**  
OF FLOW

IMPROVED HABITAT FOR  
**SUMMER**  
STEELHEAD

Photo: Arian Stevens

## WATER BANKS: CREATING FLEXIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE

In 2025, the Deschutes River Conservancy spearheaded, with our partners, the development and passage of **House Bill 3806**, legislation that expands the framework for water banking in the Deschutes Basin. The bill introduces new flexibility for basin partners to manage water more efficiently—getting it where it's needed most—while positioning the Deschutes as a model for water management innovation across Oregon.

Water banks are collaborative tools that make it easier to move water where and when it's needed most. They establish a transparent, voluntary system for temporarily leasing or transferring water rights, helping rivers, farms, and communities adapt to changing conditions.

In the Deschutes Basin, a water bank can:

- Simplify and speed up voluntary water sharing.
- Create opportunities for more flexible and efficient water use.
- Balance the needs of farms, cities, & ecosystems.
- Support a more adaptive, climate-ready approach to water management.



# CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE RIVER

## INSPIRING AWARENESS AND CARE FOR THE RIVERS THAT CONNECT US

This year, people across the region showed up, tuned in, and took action for the Deschutes Basin — deepening understanding and strengthening care for the rivers that connect us all.

## During 2025

**357 PEOPLE** joined Raise the Deschutes through three in-person seminars and three guided tours, while more than **6,000** people used the online learning library to explore how water is managed and shared across the basin.

DRC staff presented to **MORE THAN 30 GROUPS** — from agencies and irrigation districts to schools and community organizations — advancing collaborative projects and sharing information about basin-wide water management and restoration.

**62 VOLUNTEERS** worked with irrigation partners and DRC to rescue over **10,000 FISH** from the dewatered Lava Island side channel in the Upper Deschutes.

**357 ATTENDED**



**6,000+ ONLINE**  
USED THE **LIBRARY**

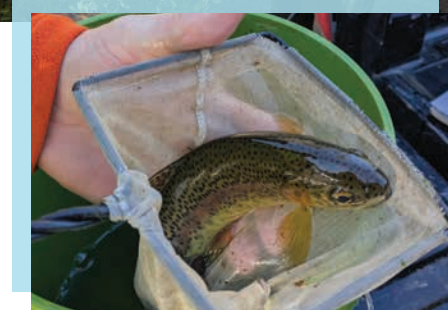


**RESCUED OVER**  
**10,000 FISH**

DESCHUTES RIVER CONSERVANCY 2025 IMPACT REPORT



Raise the Deschutes tour along the Upper Deschutes



2025 Annual Fish Rescue

Through strong relationships with media, partners, and community storytellers, the DRC continues to share clear, fact-based stories that help thousands of people across Central Oregon understand how we can care for the rivers we share.

Together, these efforts in collaborative planning, irrigation modernization, water transactions, and community education form a single, connected strategy that advances the DRC's mission to **restore streamflow and improve water quality in the rivers that define Central Oregon.**

Photo Top: Don Miller; Middle: DRC; Bottom: Brian Cripe

# BASIN HEROS

## PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Two perspectives. One shared commitment to the Deschutes Basin.

The **Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)** is a plan initiated by the irrigation districts and the City of Prineville to secure long-term federal permits for water management in the Upper Deschutes Basin.

The plan identifies conservation measures designed to improve conditions for ESA-listed species such as the **Oregon spotted frog and summer steelhead**, while supporting reliable water supplies for farms and communities.

Key conservation measures under the HCP include **increasing winter flows in the Upper Deschutes River**, implementing **habitat improvements in Whychus Creek and the Crooked River**, and **supporting ongoing monitoring and adaptive management** to guide future actions.

Two long-time partners — **Bridget Moran**, former Field Supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and **Mike Britton**, former General Manager of the North Unit Irrigation District — played key roles in shaping and implementing the plan. Mike retired this year after more than two decades of leadership at NUID, and Bridget recently stepped down from the DRC Board as she transitions to a new position within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Bridget brought a steady commitment to balancing ecological and community needs, helping define the science and strategy that guide restoration under the HCP.

Mike's leadership focused on collaboration and practical solutions that strengthen both agricultural reliability and river health within the plan's framework.

Each is being recognized for their respective contributions to the development and implementation of the **Habitat Conservation Plan**, and for their ongoing influence in shaping a more balanced Deschutes Basin.

## The HCP: Restoring Rivers and Strengthening Water Reliability

The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) sets a path for restoring flows and protecting habitat in the Upper Deschutes Basin while supporting water reliability for communities and farms.



“It’s the backbone of river restoration.”

*Bridget Moran  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



“The HCP demonstrates that irrigated agriculture and environmental conservation are not mutually exclusive.”

*Mike Britton  
North Unit Irrigation District*

# NEW VOICES FOR THE RIVER

The Deschutes River connects every part of our work.

This year, new board and staff members joined the DRC, bringing diverse experience, technical expertise, and a shared commitment to restoring balance across the basin.

Together, they strengthen the DRC's collaborative efforts to advance streamflow restoration, water management, and river health.

## Board Leadership



**Spencer Sawaske**  
STATE  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

*"The DRC brings science and relationships together. That combination is how we create lasting solutions for fish, wildlife, and people."*



**Angella Rinehold**  
STATE  
Oregon Water Resources Department

*"Partnerships are what make progress possible. I'm drawn to the DRC's commitment to working through challenges in a way that builds understanding, not division."*



**David Weidinger**  
FEDERAL  
Bureau of Reclamation

*"I value the DRC's focus on collaboration and problem-solving. It's an opportunity to connect technical work with the shared goals of the basin."*



**Austin Smith, Jr.**  
TRIBAL  
Natural Resources, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

*"Our Tribal way is that water is life. Serving on the DRC board is a way to help ensure the basin's water is cared for in a way that honors our treaty rights and sustains the river for future generations."*

## Staff Team



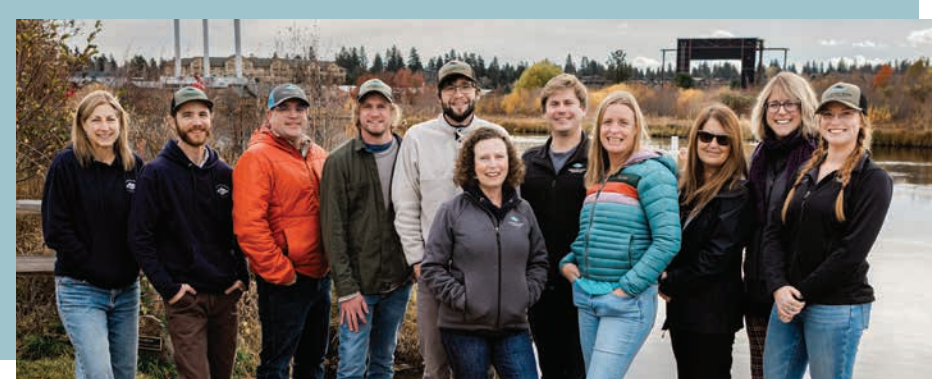
**Maggie Anderson**  
PROJECT MANAGER  
Water Quality and Monitoring



**Grant Traynor**  
PROJECT MANAGER  
Irrigation Modernization and On-Farm Efficiency

*"Every perspective strengthens our work. Collaboration is when we are able to listen to each other and work together for good outcomes: outcomes in line with the needs of water for Communities, Agriculture, Fisheries and ecological needs for the River."*

Bobby Brunoe  
DRC Board Chair



**Deschutes River Conservancy Team 2025**  
left to right: Sarah Kelly, Ben Kittell, Jim Bond, Jacob Kimiecik, Grant Traynor, Lisa Seales, Alex Ehrens, Kate Fitzpatrick, Gen Hubert, Marisa Hossick, Maggie Anderson

# TOGETHER FOR THE RIVER

## Every drop counts.

Every donation, membership, and community partnership moves us closer to a revitalized river. This is the power of community.

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Every gift—big or small—ripples downstream for a resilient water future.

- INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS**  
*Sustaining flows and advancing opportunity.*  
 Community support fuels long-term collaborative water solutions across the basin.
- INSTREAM COLLECTIVE MONTHLY MEMBERS**  
*Funding a river flowing year-round.*  
 The steady support of our monthly donors restores streamflow, funds innovation, and keeps momentum strong—all year long.

*"Our Instream Collective monthly giving makes our support feel effortless while strengthening our personal connection through regular updates and engagement."*  
 -Jeff Stephens and Laurie Langford, Instream Collective Members



Your donation = water in the river

### INSTREAM COLLECTIVE BUSINESS PARTNERS

Local businesses dedicated to stewarding a healthy river-minded community:

#### ACTIVE BUSINESS PARTNERS

Avion Water Co. • Black Rock Consulting • Brooks Resources • Car Stickers Inc. • Confluence Fly Shop • Dudley's Bookshop and Café • First Interstate Bank • Fluent Freshwater Insights • Mt. Bachelor/Sun Country Tours • PGE • Seventh Mountain Rafting • Summit Conservation Strategies • Sunriver Brewing Co • Tenfold Health • Tumalo Creek Kayak & Canoe

Interested in joining this group of community leaders? Email [development@deschutesriver.org](mailto:development@deschutesriver.org)

*"Our business is rooted in this place. Supporting our community means investing in the future of our rivers, and there is no better way than supporting the impactful work of the DRC."*  
 — Tom Beans, owner of Dudley's Bookshop Cafe and Instream Collective Business Member

### THE POWER OF COMMUNITY GIVING

You have the power to keep the river flowing. Your generosity fuels streamflow restoration, builds connection, and keeps the Deschutes alive and thriving for current and future generations.

When you give to the river, you join a community that:

- RESTORES** river flows to critical streams across the Deschutes Basin.
- INSPIRES** learning, understanding, engagement, and positive action.
- CREATES** the foundation for lasting, community-led restoration and stewardship.

Thank you for being a part of the current that carries change downstream.

Help keep our rivers flowing

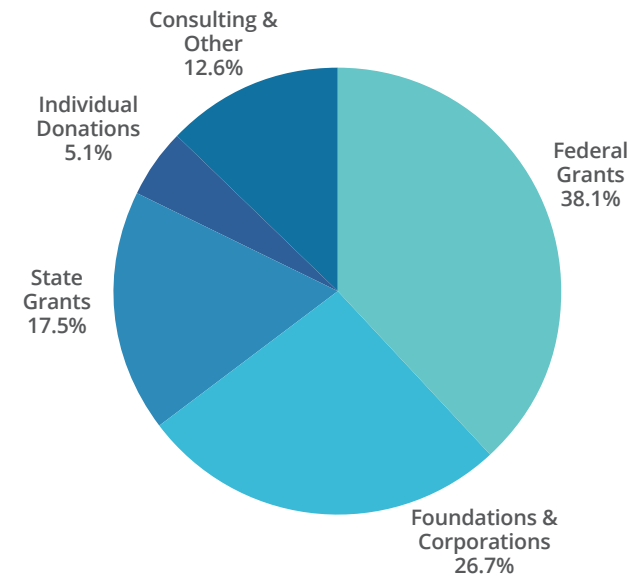


# 2024 FINANCIAL REVIEW

October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024

The Deschutes River Conservancy remained financially strong in 2024, sustained by the continued generosity and investment from our community.

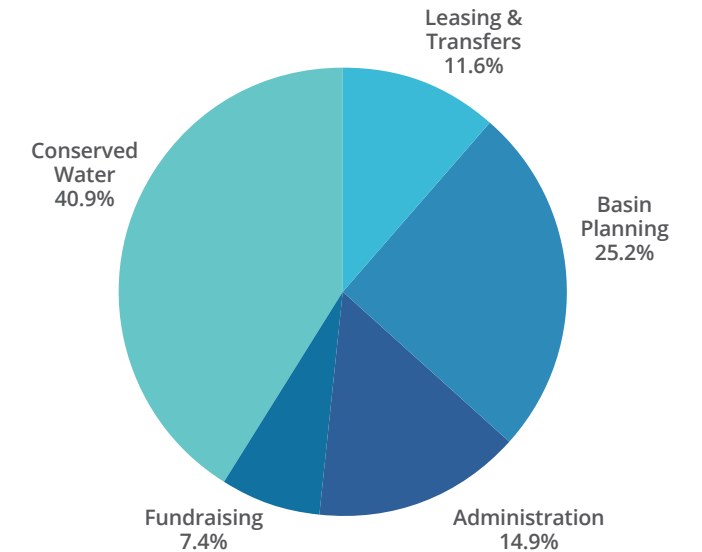
### REVENUE BY SOURCE



#### REVENUE

Federal Grants	\$1,354,335
Foundations & Corporations	\$949,041
State Grants	\$621,099
Individual Donations	\$182,204
Consulting & Other	\$448,584
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,555,263</b>

### EXPENSES



#### EXPENSES

Leasing & Transfers	\$354,718
Basin Planning	\$768,909
Administration	\$455,226
Fundraising	\$226,039
Conserved Water	\$1,250,328
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,055,220</b>

## THANK YOU!

While grants drive much of our 'on-the-ground' restoration, the foundation of this work lies in the unseen effort—the hours spent building trusted partnerships, collaborating across diverse stakeholders, advancing common sense water policy, and engaging our community. **This essential, behind-the-scenes work makes streamflow restoration possible, and it is sustained by the generosity of people like you.**



135

New Donors



798

Total Gifts



\$522

Average Gift



DESCHUTES RIVER  
CONSERVANCY

805 SW Industrial Way, Suite 5  
Bend, Oregon 97702



## GET INVOLVED

Help us create a more resilient water future for the Deschutes Basin.

### DONATE

**SUPPORT** our mission to restore streamflow and improve water quality in our local rivers and streams.



### JOIN

Join our **E-NEWS** list to keep up with what's happening in the Deschutes Basin. Scan the code or visit **DESCHUTESRIVER.ORG**



### ATTEND

Stay tuned for upcoming DRC events. Visit the **'EVENTS'** page on our website to make sure you don't miss a thing.

