



DESCHUTES RIVER
CONSERVANCY

2023 IMPACT REPORT

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**DRC'S MISSION:
TO RESTORE
STREAMFLOW AND
IMPROVE WATER
QUALITY IN THE
DESCHUTES BASIN**

Photo: Arian Stevens

“All the water
that will ever be is,
right now.”

National Geographic

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

MAKE A DONATION

Empower a ripple of change by donating to the Deschutes River Conservancy, where every drop contributes to a sustainable future.



JOIN OUR RIVER COMMUNITY



Join our e-news list to keep up with what's happening in the Deschutes Basin. Scan the code or visit www.deschutesriver.org.

ATTEND AN EVENT

Stay tuned for upcoming DRC events. Visit the 'Join Us' tab on our website to make sure you don't miss a thing.



Cover Photo: Mike Putnam



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I write this letter, I am filled with pride for what the DRC has accomplished for our rivers. I am also filled with a sense of urgency to increase the pace and scale of this work to meet the challenges ahead of us.

In the face of our fourth consecutive year of severe drought, our successes to date are clear. Whychus Creek continued to flow throughout another dry summer, supporting native redband trout and reintroduced salmon and steelhead. The water flowing in the Middle Deschutes downstream from Bend is a testament to our tenure working in the basin. The Crooked River has protected base flows through Smith Rock State Park, thanks to a suite of large-scale conservation projects that benefit fish and farmers. The challenges in these reaches are ongoing, but so is our resolve to continue doing the hard work to meet instream goals and water quality targets.

Looking ahead, we face steep challenges in building on these gains, restoring the Upper Deschutes River, assuring clean and cold water to support fish and wildlife, and ensuring that farmers and growing communities have reliable water into the future. With this in mind, we've redoubled our efforts in 2023 to build drought resilience.

To meet ambitious flow restoration goals in the Upper Deschutes River, we are advancing system-wide conservation in irrigation districts, connecting large district canal piping with on-farm efficiency. The DRC's goal is to promote highly efficient irrigation systems that minimize water losses, ensure farmers utilize only what's necessary, and protect the resulting

conserved water instream. Our continued Water Bank development will make it easier to share water between irrigation districts, growing cities, and the river. Because basin-wide restoration requires cooperation among multiple partners and continued innovation, we lead planning efforts within the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative to assure that our long-term solutions are broadly supported and enduring.

Recognizing that state policy and funding are critical to our work, we engaged in the 2023 state legislative session and were rewarded with two bills that make it easier for water rights holders to lease their water instream. We also supported the passage of a comprehensive drought package that invests millions of dollars in water conservation, which will result in restored flows in the Upper Deschutes. We will continue to work with state and federal leadership on innovating water management and streamflow restoration and increasing funding for the basin.

While the right policies and funding facilitate change, this change only happens when people can understand and advocate for water. In 2023, our Raise the Deschutes Seminar Series included 12 events viewed by thousands of people. We believe that an engaged public can help accelerate the movement towards a resilient future. In 2024, we will continue to host these seminars throughout the basin.

The confluence of challenges and opportunities has created a unique moment for transformative action in the Deschutes Basin. It is a time of immense promise, and we invite you to join us in building a legacy for which future generations will thank us.

With warm regards and gratitude,

KATE FITZPATRICK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DESCHUTES RIVER CONSERVANCY'S TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT ON CENTRAL OREGON RIVERS

The DRC has improved the resiliency of Whychus Creek, the Middle Deschutes, and the Crooked River through decades of collaboration and partnership. Amid the past four years of drought, Whychus Creek flowed year-round in a reach that historically ran dry, benefiting migrating salmon and steelhead habitat. Our leasing, transfer, and conservation programs have continued to prevent the Middle Deschutes from running dry in the summer. DRC's large-scale conservation projects protect critical flows for anadromous fish in the Crooked River. Advancing our work in McKay and Trout Creek will enhance flow and habitat vital to wild steelhead. Building on nearly three decades of success, the DRC is integrating and innovating the tools needed to address basin-wide priorities such as restoring the Upper Deschutes River, tackling water quality in the Crooked River, and balancing groundwater and surface water stewardship.

- More consistent flows
- Cooler temperatures
- Improved habitat
- Improved irrigation efficiency
- More reliable water for farmers



Today



Before

Whychus Creek



Today

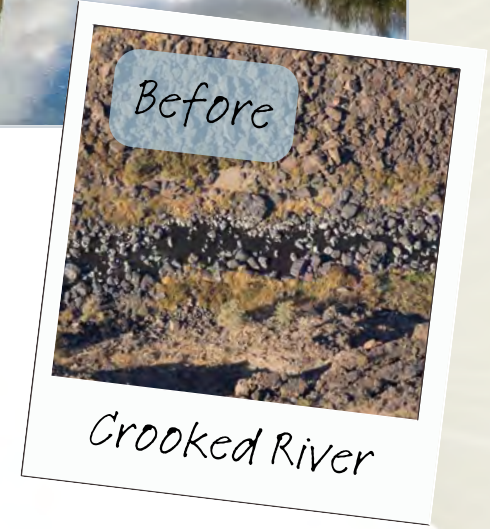


Before

Middle Deschutes



Today



Before

Crooked River

LEADING THE DESCHUTES RIVER BASIN INTO THE FUTURE

Building on our success...



...for future generations!





Photo: Smith Rock Ranch

BUILDING DROUGHT RESILIENCE

Through system-wide irrigation modernization, flows in the river get a boost and Smith Rock Ranch has been able to do more with less, producing thousands of pumpkins in 2023 during a time of extreme drought.

“Drought has put a real strain on the livelihood of not just our farm, but our entire community.”

In the sun-drenched landscape of Central Oregon, where extreme drought and a shifting climate are starkly evident, a sprawling field of bright orange pumpkins stands as an example of what is possible through innovation and determination. Matt Lisignoli and his family have been farming in Central Oregon for 25 years. Through the past three decades, the Lisignolis have grown everything from carrot seeds to pumpkins. However, like many farmers across the Western United States, they are now grappling with historic drought that threatens their livelihood.

The Lisignolis have long been aware of the preciousness of water in Central Oregon’s arid landscape, so when presented with the opportunity to use water more efficiently, they jumped at the chance. The DRC’s on-farm efficiency program piped a significant irrigation district canal* through the Lisignoli’s property, connecting to the recently piped Pilot Butte main canal. This enabled Smith Rock Ranch to upgrade its irrigation system to a high-efficiency center-pivot sprinkler system and they are now able to put every drop of water on the farm to good use.

“Upgrading our irrigation system has allowed our ranch to do more with less water.”

While the pumpkins at Smith Rock Ranch benefit from better use of water, this is only made possible through the modernization of district conveyance systems. Replacing open leaky canals with closed-piped systems can save as much as 50% of the water previously lost before reaching the crops, while also allowing farmers like the Lisignolis to take advantage of the pressurized water to irrigate their crops more efficiently.

The DRC works with local farmers as well as irrigation districts to help fund major district infrastructure projects and on-farm improvements, while also working to ensure that water saved through these projects remains instream for the benefit of the river ecosystems and all those who enjoy a healthy, thriving river.

“Our family now has the security and confidence to continuing farming in Central Oregon into the future.”



Photo: Kristine Thomas

Christian (left), Kendra, and Matt Lisignoli enjoy welcoming visitors to Smith Rock Ranch.

**Project funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Oregon Water Resource Department.*



RAISE THE DESCHUTES SEMINAR SERIES

The DRC's Raise the Deschutes Seminar Series is a resource for anyone interested in water issues in the basin. Presented by experts in the field, the seminars cover a wide range of pertinent topics—from water rights and irrigation to Tribal perspectives on water stewardship. The ability to access replays of past seminars adds an extra layer of convenience for those who miss the live sessions. Whether you're a concerned citizen, a policymaker, or a river advocate, this series offers a comprehensive and engaging look at the challenges and solutions related to water sustainability in the region.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR RAISE THE DESCHUTES?

Thanks to funding from The Roundhouse Foundation, DRC is taking Raise the Deschutes on the road! We will be hosting seminars in communities around the basin as well as in Bend. All seminars will be recorded.

Watch past seminars by scanning here or visiting:



www.raisethe Deschutes.org

UNDERSTANDING THE TRIBES' CONNECTION TO WATER



Continuing to deepen our commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), the DRC staff and board participated in a Tribal partnership training at the Museum of Warm Springs this spring.

The Museum is an important resource to better understand the history and culture of the Wasco, Paiute, and Warm Springs peoples. Renowned for its impactful storytelling, collection of artifacts, thousands of historic photographs, and striking architecture, it served as the ideal backdrop for the training.

Led by Direlle Calica and Shirod Younker from Changing Currents, the session aimed to deepen the DRC's understanding

of the indigenous connection to water, considered the "first gift of the creator" by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. This workshop was another step for the DRC to honor and strengthen our partnership with the Tribes and to integrate this learning into our basin-wide initiatives to restore streamflow and improve water quality for all stakeholders.

By recognizing water not merely as a resource but as an element deeply connected to cultural and spiritual practices, the DRC continues to embody the principles of JEDI in our mission and partnerships.

Learn more about Changing Currents: www.changingcurrents.net

THE DRC WELCOMES NEW BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS TO OUR TEAM



The DRC welcomes Emelie McKain (left), Senior Water Advisor at the Oregon Water Resources Department, and Chandra Ferrari (right), Habitat Division Deputy Administrator at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, to the board to enhance our Deschutes River Basin initiatives.

The DRC welcomed four new staff members to the team in 2023. With added capacity, we will be able to continue to advance innovative solutions in water management.



From left to right: Jim Bond - Program Director; Ben Kittell - Development & Communications Coordinator; James O'Brian - Project Manager; Ali Engemann - Office Manager

KYLE GORMAN: RECOGNIZING A LONGTIME DESCHUTES BASIN HERO

In 2023, Kyle Gorman concluded his tenure as a board member of the Deschutes River Conservancy while simultaneously retiring from his role as the South Central Regional Manager for the Oregon Water Resources Department.

During his 22 years of service on the DRC board, Kyle lent his expertise on intricate water management issues, playing a vital role in the organization's mission to restore streamflow and improve water quality in the Deschutes Basin.

Kyle's insights were particularly valuable in shaping the DRC's approach to engaging with local irrigation districts, helping to navigate the often complex relationships between various stakeholders.

As he steps away from these roles, Kyle leaves behind a legacy of dedicated service and impactful contributions to the health and sustainability of one of Oregon's most important waterways.



"For 22 years, Kyle has been a crucial board member at the DRC. His expertise in water management and strong local partnerships have significantly furthered our mission. As he moves on, we're not just losing a board member but celebrating a lasting legacy that will continue to benefit the Deschutes Basin and its communities."

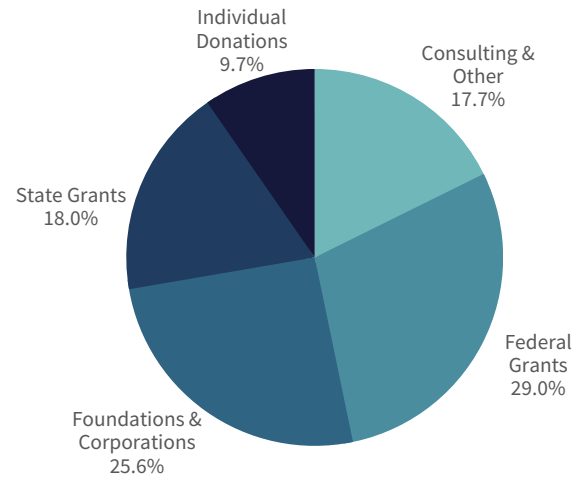
- Bobby Brunoe, DRC Board Chair and CEO & Secretary/Treasurer of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

2022 FINANCIAL REVIEW

October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022

The Deschutes River Conservancy remained financially robust in 2022, thanks to ongoing community support.

REVENUE BY SOURCE

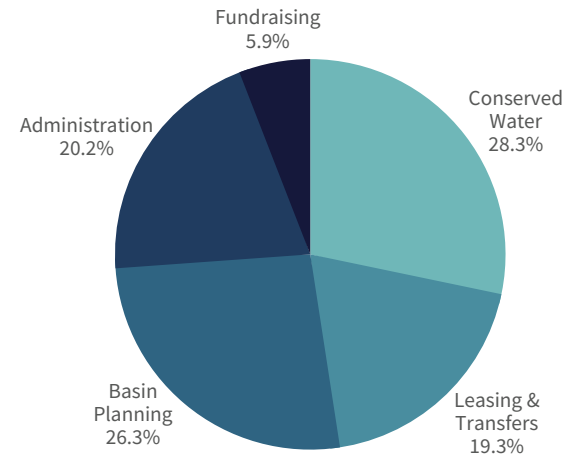


Revenue

Foundations & Corporations	\$470,944
Individual Donations	\$177,871
Consulting & Other	\$325,987
Federal Grants	\$535,409
State Grants	\$332,661

Total Revenue **\$1,842,872**

EXPENSES



Expenses

Leasing & Transfers	\$350,171
Basin Planning	\$477,319
Administration	\$367,282
Conserved Water	\$513,269
Fundraising	\$107,343

Total Expenses **\$1,815,384**



Photo: Joshua Langlais

REMEMBERING BILL SMITH (1941-2022)

The board and staff of the Deschutes River Conservancy acknowledge and honor our former board member and pivotal figure on our finance and audit committee; we will deeply miss Bill's business acumen, unwavering dedication, sense of humor, and love for life—all of which have profoundly shaped our mission and left an indelible mark on our community.



JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF RIVER SUPPORTERS!

When you contribute to the DRC, you're not just making a donation—you're laying the groundwork for collaboration and innovation that address today's most critical water challenges. Moreover, you'll join the vibrant DRC community, gaining access to programs, tours, and events crafted just for our supporters.

WAYS TO GIVE

- One time
- Monthly
- Employer Match



Mail to:
Deschutes River Conservancy
700 NW Hill Street, Suite 1
Bend, Oregon 97703

www.deschutesriver.org/how-to-help/donate

IN MEMORY OF BRIAN JARVIS

When Brian Jarvis passed away in July, the family of this much-loved local sonographer and fisherman requested donations to the DRC in lieu of flowers. The collective demonstration of support has been inspiring. We are grateful to Brian's family for naming the DRC as the recipient of this tribute, and to each of these donors for honoring Brian's memory with a donation. These gifts help restore the river Brian loved. Thank you.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
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Photo: Jarvis Family

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

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 Krista Knoernschild, in honor of Mark Murzin
 Liisa Maki, in memory of my beautiful nephew Drew Kroepin
 and in honor of his birthday today 5/13/1988.
 I miss you so much.
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THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR ANONYMOUS AND IN-KIND DONORS.

WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR WORK!

This list includes gifts made to DRC October 1, 2021-September 30, 2023. Every effort is made to be accurate. Please bring any errors or omissions to the attention of rebekah@deschutesriver.org.

* Denotes 5+ years consecutive giving or monthly donor



DESCHUTES RIVER
CONSERVANCY

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Bend, Oregon 97703

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riverfeast
DINNER & AUCTION

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May 4, 2024

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back to the Unitarian Universalist
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**Join us in support of a
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*More information
and sponsorship
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