

Deschutes River Average Seasonal Flows

STREAMFLOW GOALS

Upper Deschutes WINTER FLOWS

State instream water rights based on minimum needs for fish are 300 cfs. Needs for the Oregon spotted frog range upwards of 600 cfs. Habitat Conservation Plan flow targets include 300 cfs by 2028 and 400-500 cfs by 2033.

Middle Deschutes SUMMER FLOWS

Basin partners are working towards a minimum instream flow goal of 250 cfs to support redband trout habitat, while recognizing that higher flows are needed to support ecological values.

WINTER

Flows are held back in winter to fill the reservoir to ensure enough water is available for summer irrigation.

Wickiup Reservoir

Upper Deschutes
Minimum of 100 cfs

Fish can become stranded when flows get too low. The river becomes disconnected from wetlands and limits Oregon spotted frog habitat

Tributaries and natural springs add flow to the river above Benham Falls.

Benham Falls

Bend
550 cfs

Middle Deschutes 550 cfs

Lake Billy Chinook

SUMMER

Dramatic seasonal high and low flows lead to degradation of fish habitat, river bank erosion, and, consequently, silt deposits downstream.

Wickiup Reservoir

Upper Deschutes
up to 1800 cfs

Benham Falls

Bend
1800 cfs

Irrigation diversions around Bend reduce streamflows in the Middle Deschutes.

Middle Deschutes 50-130 cfs

Low flow and increased water temperature impact fish habitat

Lake Billy Chinook

Healthy communities need healthy rivers

Why do we find ourselves in this situation? When large-scale agriculture began in Central Oregon a century ago, the Deschutes River was thought to be a nearly unlimited resource. We now know that isn't the case. But in many ways, the way we manage the river traces back to those early days – and pressure on the river grew as more people moved to the area.

The Deschutes River is the lifeblood of Central Oregon, whether you rely on the river for economic livelihood, recreation, or rejuvenation. There is enough water in the basin to meet most needs in most years, provided we use the tools available to conserve and rebalance water use.

What does cfs mean?

A cubic foot per second (cfs) shows the flow of a river is measured by quantity over time. To visualize this, it takes 24.4 cfs to fill an Olympic-sized pool in one hour.



The Deschutes River Conservancy has been bringing people together to restore streamflow and improve water quality in the Deschutes Basin since 1996.