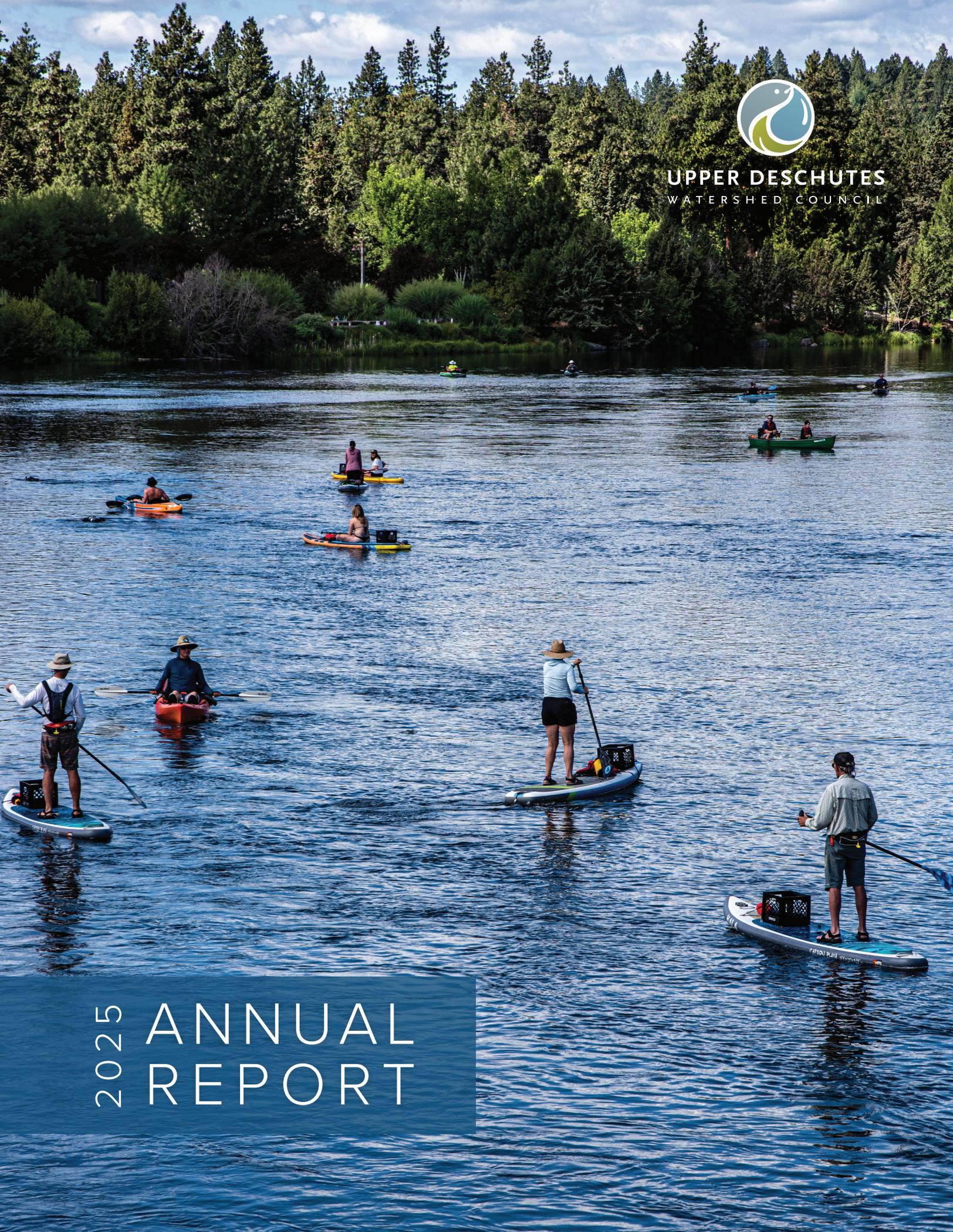




UPPER DESCHUTES  
WATERSHED COUNCIL



2025 ANNUAL  
REPORT

## GREETINGS WATERSHED SUPPORTERS!

You might mistake the photo on the front page of this annual report to be just another image of people out enjoying the Deschutes River in Central Oregon. If you could see below the surface, you would discover that these are volunteers paired with scuba divers volunteering to help clean up the river at our annual Deschutes River Cleanup. We might assume that our river will stay healthy for future generations, but the reality is we need a community that cares about the health of our rivers and water resources to sustain them.

Having a community that cares about their river has been an inspiration for me this past year. Our nonprofit organization has been adaptive and adjusting to changing conditions this year similar to a healthy river that is also regularly adapting and adjusting to changing conditions such as floods, droughts, fires and other disturbances. Nowhere was that more evident this past year than after the Alder Springs Fire and the Flat Fire that both burned along Whychus Creek which flows into the Deschutes River. One thing we have noticed is the areas

One partner described the restored area as a “ribbon of green through a sea of black”.

where Whychus Creek was restored were more resilient to the fire compared to areas that had not been restored. One partner described the restored area as a “ribbon of green through a sea of black”. It is an important reminder of the value of this restoration and another example of our community stepping up to support the health of our rivers and watersheds.

As you will read and see in the pages of this annual report, **we are continually working to adapt and improve our programs.** Our river restoration techniques involved amazing volunteers this past year helping us to “adaptively manage” our projects. Our monitoring work informs how we are doing toward reaching our goals of improving habitat for fish and aquatic life. As our communities in Central Oregon grow, we have expanded our annual River Cleanup to serve more areas and focus on popular areas enjoyed by visitors and locals. We refine our youth and adult education programs to best meet the changing needs of school districts and students, and recognize that more than ever, youth and adults in our growing communities need opportunities to learn about and connect with their rivers and streams if we expect them to care for them in the future.

We can't do this work without the support of our community and donors, and we are grateful for the many ways you have supported us and connected with us this past year. Your continued support is more important than ever and will help us adapt and adjust to changing conditions in the year ahead in support of our mission.

Kris Knight  
Executive Director



Kris Knight at the Deschutes River Cleanup  
Cover and photo above / Kelley Hamby

## MISSION

### THE UPPER DESCHUTES WATERSHED COUNCIL

seeks to protect and restore the two-million-acre Upper Deschutes River watershed through collaborative projects in habitat restoration, watershed education, and long-term monitoring.

## STAFF

Kris Knight  
*Executive Director*

Kolleen Miller  
*Education and Development Director*

Mathias Perle  
*Restoration Program Manager*

Lauren Mork  
*Monitoring Program Manager*

Casey Schuder  
*Stream Restoration Project Manager*

Michael Tauriainen  
*Monitoring Technician*

Katie Wareham  
*Education and Outreach Coordinator*

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SCAN HERE  
to watch a video  
about our work

# FLAT FIRE

A three-mile stretch of Whychus Creek proved resilient during the 2025 summer wildfire — due in-part to restoration efforts

This past year we saw wildfires impacting Central Oregon. The Flat Fire burned more than **23,000 acres** near Sisters in August and burned along **11 miles of Whychus Creek**. Thankfully, because of the amazing response and heroic efforts of firefighters, no lives were lost and many homes and neighborhoods were saved from the fire. That said, five homes were lost and numerous properties burned and our hearts go out to those who were impacted.

The fire impacted two properties along a six-mile stretch of Whychus Creek owned by the Deschutes Land Trust, known as Whychus Canyon Preserve and Rimrock Ranch. For more than a decade, a group of organizations including the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, Deschutes Land Trust, and Deschutes River Conservancy have been working together as the **Deschutes Partnership** with numerous partners and funders to restore and protect Whychus Creek. This work has involved restoring flow to the creek, removing barriers to fish, screening irrigation diversions and between 2016 and 2023, approximately three miles of Whychus Canyon Preserve and Rimrock Ranch was restored. Along this three-mile section, the creek was reconnected to the floodplain across the bottom of the valley.

As our organizations work to assess the damage from the Flat Fire, we are seeing that the areas where we have worked to restore Whychus Creek and the adjacent

The areas where we worked to restore Whychus Creek and the adjacent floodplain were **more resilient to the fire** compared to areas that had not been restored.

floodplain were more resilient to the fire compared to areas that had not been restored. Along these three miles, the restored area was a ribbon of green through a sea of black serving as a fire break and an oasis for fish and wildlife. We hope there can also be a hopeful message from Whychus Canyon Preserve and Rimrock Ranch that tells us that we can restore and protect our natural systems to be more resilient and recover from impacts from wildfires.



Volunteer constructing a BDA Photo / Kelley Hamby

## FISH PASSAGE PROJECTS

UDWC received funding to launch two fish passage efforts in 2025. UDWC is facilitating an effort to complete the engineering design for a fish passage structure at Mirror Pond on the Deschutes River in Bend. In addition, UDWC is facilitating a feasibility study to understand fish passage options at a dam on the Little Deschutes River near Gilchrist, Oregon.

## RESTORATION USING NATURE'S BRILLIANT DESIGN

### Volunteers mimic beaver's work to restore habitat

We engage our community in watershed restoration by inviting students and community members to join in the work. This past summer, six different groups of students and adult volunteers helped us construct six beaver dam analogs (BDAs) and 18 pole assisted log structures (PALS) at Rimrock Ranch, a restoration project site where we have partnered with the Deschutes Land Trust to restore Whychus Creek. These BDAs and PALS act as instream tools that mimic nature's brilliant design to adaptively manage restoration project sites. The hand-built structures use native vegetation to slow down water through the restoration site, spread water across the floodplain, and help us maximize the ability to restore habitat for fish and aquatic species. We're thrilled when beavers move in and continue the work themselves.

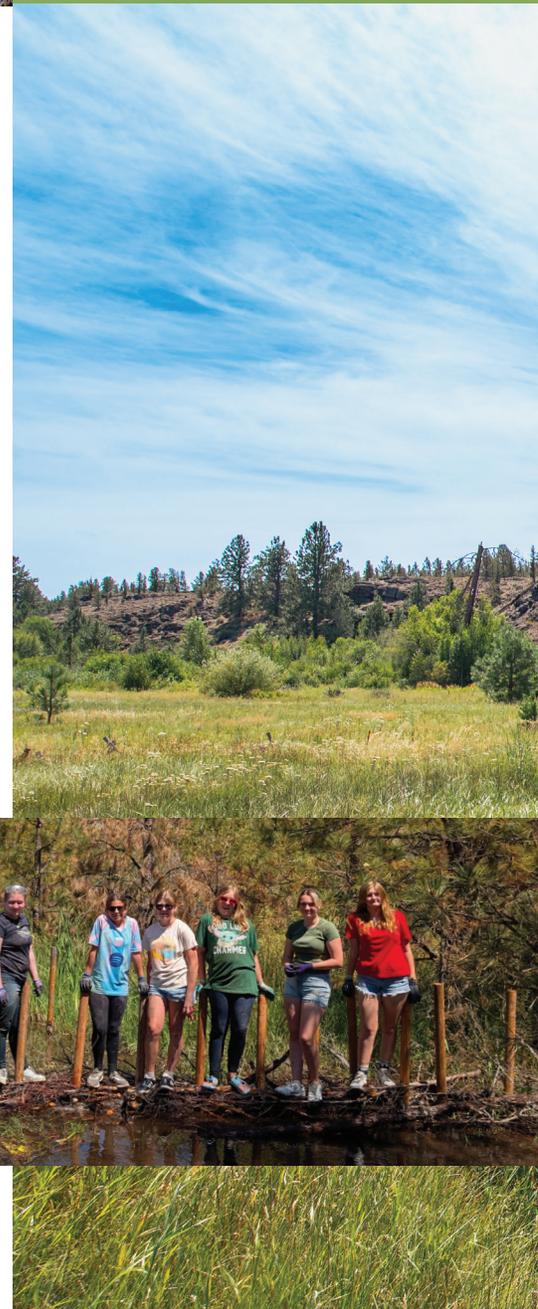
SIX GROUPS CONSTRUCTED  
**6 BDAS** AND **18 PALS**  
AT RIMROCK RANCH PRESERVE

Department of Fish and Wildlife and Think Wild's Beaverworks program to install BDAs at La Pine State Park this fall to improve habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog. By getting involved, students and volunteers are helping native fish, amphibians & other aquatic species by getting their hands dirty and their feet muddy while learning about restoration projects and restoring our local rivers and streams to a healthier, more natural, and more resilient ecosystem.

We also partnered with La Pine State Park, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon



Group of students building a BDA Photo / UDWC



## MONITORING EFFORTS

Results show our restoration efforts are improving the health of our rivers

Our work monitoring the upper Deschutes watershed helps us understand how the work of our watershed council and our partners is improving habitat for fish and aquatic life in our rivers. We monitor things like water temperature, vegetation along the river and other physical and biological criteria. When possible, we also involve volunteers in this work. For two days in August, 19 teams of volunteers collected 19 samples of macroinvertebrates (insects in the river)

along 25 miles of Whychus Creek. These samples were taken in areas that have been restored and also in areas that have not been restored, which helps us understand the value of our restoration efforts (more macroinvertebrates and a greater diversity of macroinvertebrates indicate a healthy river). Results are showing that our restoration efforts are working and improving the health of our rivers.

What's new with our monitoring work? In 2026, we hope to raise funds to develop a stream temperature forecasting system for Whychus Creek that can notify water managers when stream temperatures are becoming too warm for fish and aquatic life. We plan to work with partners to implement a system where water use can be reduced during those times to continue to improve the health of Whychus Creek.

**19** TEAMS COLLECTED SAMPLES OF  
**MACROINVERTEBRATES** (INSECTS)  
 ALONG **25** MILES OF WHYCHUS CREEK



*Sampling for macroinvertebrates in Whychus Creek*  
 Photos / Kelley Hamby



## YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Connecting students to the natural world

Our youth education program connects kids to rivers. We take them out of the classroom and into our watershed to breathe fresh Central Oregon air and wade in the waters of our rivers and streams. Spending time outside inspires kids to want to learn about water and mountains and fish and bugs. Time outside inspires all of us to learn more and do more to protect and care for our rivers, our mountains, and our home.

Students explore how **water connects our community** – from homes and streets to rivers and wetlands.

Our education program creates powerful learning experiences that connect students to our local environment through hands-on exploration, cultural storytelling, and real-world education in the field. Students explore how water connects our community – from homes and streets to rivers and wetlands. Beginning at the headwaters of the Deschutes River, our students learn about the various paths our water takes. Students journey to our local water source and learn how biodiversity breathes life into healthy, resilient watersheds and strong, interconnected communities.



Students learning about Whychus Creek Photo Top / Kelley Hamby  
 Students discovering aquatic insects Photo Top Middle / UDWC  
 2nd grader testing water quality Photo Bottom Middle / Martin Sunberg  
 Student sketching by the creek Photo Bottom / Kelley Hamby

## DESCHUTES RIVER CLEANUP

The Deschutes River Cleanup connects our community

Together, with paddlers, divers, local businesses, civic leaders, children, and families, we mobilized hundreds of volunteers to actively steward the Deschutes River. As an empowered watershed community, we removed more than 1,500 pounds of debris and invasive vegetation, demonstrating the powerful and effective force of community action.



## WATERSHED SPEAKER SERIES

Thoughtful education inspires citizens to take informed action

Our watershed speaker series in partnership with Central Oregon Community College seeks to create a more informed community. We invite participants to learn about the Metolius River, the Deschutes River, and Whychus Creek. Speaker series participants discover the world of geology, hydrology, climate change, water management and other watershed topics so they become inspired to take informed action in their own lives.



## INTERNSHIPS

Inspiring future conservation leaders

We provide internships as steps on a path for future watershed leaders to take on their educational journey. Rylin Duster and Madison Palmer joined us on their educational journey last spring as they gained insight into the

methodology and practice of experiential environmental education. Kendall Walton also joined us as our first Andrew Dutterer Memorial Intern which is a summer internship that we offer each year to a local college student in memory of our friend and colleague, Andrew Dutterer. Funding for this internship is provided by the friends and family of Andrew Dutterer.

*Deschutes River Cleanup 2025 Photo Top / Kelley Hamby  
Tour at North Canal Dam Fish Ladder Photo Middle / UDWC  
Andrew Dutterer Memorial Intern, Kendall Walton Photo  
Bottom / Kelley Hamby*



# 2025 Supporters\* *Thank You!*

## \$25,000 AND UP

Anonymous  
Bill and Leslie Cornog  
Kellee Taylor  
Tumalo Creek

## \$10,000 AND UP

David & Nancy Hall  
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## \$5,000 AND UP

Cris Converse  
Daniel & Ellen Freudenheim  
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## \$2,000 AND UP

Bend Parks & Recreation District  
City of Bend  
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Community Foundation  
Mt. Bachelor/Play Forever Fund  
Peter Cohen & Gloria Chenoweth Qorvo  
Rotary Club of Greater Bend  
Rutherford Giving Fund  
Sage & Lynne Dorsey  
Visit Bend

## \$1,000 AND UP

American Online Giving Foundation  
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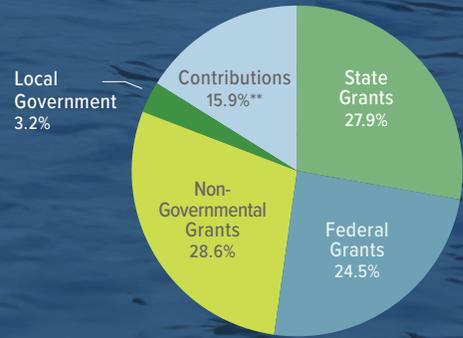
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City of Bend  
Deschutes County  
Deschutes River Conservancy  
Gray Family Foundation  
Nature Connect of Central Oregon  
Oregon Community Foundation  
Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
Pelton Round Butte Fund  
Portland General Electric  
The Roundhouse Foundation  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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## IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

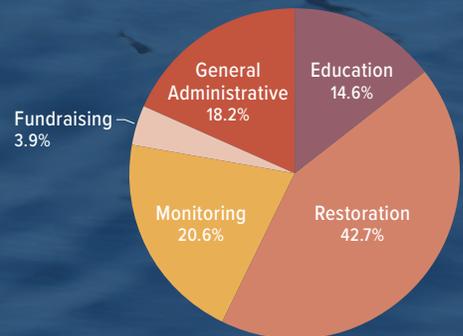
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Deschutes Brewery  
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Sunriver Brewing Company  
Sunriver Owners Association  
Sunriver Resort  
Think Wild/Beaver Works  
Tumalo Creek  
Tumalo State Park  
Tye Krueger  
Wheel Fun Rentals

# 2025 Financials 7/1/24 – 6/30/25

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



## REVENUE

State	\$344,649
Federal	\$302,300
Non-Governmental Grants	\$353,133
Local Government	\$39,306
Contributions**	\$196,498

**Total Revenue \$1,235,885**

## EXPENSES

Education	\$181,359
Restoration	\$530,110
Monitoring	\$255,407
Fundraising	\$48,902
General/Administrative	\$225,575

**Total Expenses \$1,241,353**

**Net Income (Loss) (\$5,468)**

\*\*A significant portion of funding for our education programming comes from individual contributions and community support.

\*Donors listed are from November 16, 2024 to November 15, 2025.



**UPPER DESCHUTES**  
WATERSHED COUNCIL

## CONNECT WITH US

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## DONATE TODAY!

