

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



"THE RIVER
LINKS US ALL"



MCKENZIE

WATERSHED COUNCIL

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JARED WEYBRIGHT
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Watershed health is dependent upon thriving and diverse communities. The McKenzie Watershed Council is guided by a mission to balance McKenzie River resources with human livelihood and quality of life. We are grateful to our many partners who make our work possible. Thank you!





PURE WATER PARTNERS

The Pure Water Partners (PWP), (www.purewaterpartners.org), was formed in 2014 to promote the protection and restoration of the McKenzie River through voluntary partnerships with private landowners. During a 4-year pilot program, the PWP built systems to engage landowners, develop sustainable funding models, and increase the pace of local conservation. The program went public in 2018, with over 50 landowners enrolling within the first two years.

These systems were put to the test when the Holiday Farm Fire (HFF) swept through the McKenzie Watershed in September 2020. Local partners, including the Council, Eugene Water & Electric Board, Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District, and McKenzie River Trust, relied upon the framework established through the PWP to conduct watershed recovery and restoration activities on private property impacted by the wildfire.

Since early 2021, the PWP has worked with over 300 HFF-impacted landowners and planted nearly 700,000 native trees and shrubs on 224 acres. PWP organizations, including the Council, will continue that riparian restoration effort by planting 400,000 plants on 175 acres in early 2023, bringing the total amount of native trees and shrubs planted on private and non-federal public lands since the wildfire to 1.1 million. The Council is proud to be part of this partnership and humbled at the opportunity to serve communities impacted by the Holiday Farm Fire.





RESTORATION PROJECT COMPLETION ON DEER CREEK

Deer Creek is an 8.2-mile creek in the upper McKenzie, east of the community of McKenzie Bridge. The lower 2 miles of the creek flow through a wide valley that historically allowed Deer Creek to form a braided network of channels that would move and change over time. This dynamic landscape created complex habitats supporting native fish, including Chinook salmon and rainbow trout. Over the past 100 years, land management practices confined Deer Creek to a single narrow channel and significantly altered this productive habitat. In the summer of 2022, the Council and US Forest Service completed the fourth and final phase of an 8-year project to restore lower Deer Creek. The project removed streamside berms, added gravel to degraded channels, and placed large amounts of felled trees and logs throughout the valley.

Deer Creek is once again free to roam across its lower valley, continually forming and reforming complex habitats that support native species. We would like to thank our partners, contractors, and project funders, including the USFS, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Eugene Water & Electric Board, and the Intel Corporation for making this project a success! (visit www.mckenziawc.org/deer-creek to learn more)





NORTH FORK GATE CREEK

The 30,000-acre Gate Creek watershed flows through the community of Vida, draining the foothills separating the McKenzie River from the upper Mohawk River watershed to the north. The main stem of Gate Creek splits into two branches, the North Fork Gate Creek and South Fork Gate Creek, 2.75 miles upstream from the confluence with the McKenzie River. The creek supports a small run of Chinook salmon and provides critical habitat for rainbow trout and other native fishes. In 2019, the Council partnered with the Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Weyerhaeuser to identify opportunities for in-stream restoration projects in Gate Creek benefiting native fish. While the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire altered and delayed this planning effort, the partnership identified a section of BLM land on the North Fork Gate Creek as an initial priority area. The resulting restoration project, completed in August of 2022, added large wood to a 0.6-mile of North Fork Gate Creek. The project will increase the connection with nearly 10 acres of floodplain and help create pools and store spawning gravel. The Council thanks partners BLM and EWEB, the project funder (OWEB), and the skilled contractors who made the project happen.





REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Outdoor education can be transformative for youth and help form life-long connections to place. For nearly 20 years, the Council maintained youth education programs that engaged students from Springfield, Marcola, and McKenzie School Districts in field-based projects designed to explore water quality, local ecosystems, and natural resources. In 2022, the Council joined the Middle Fork Willamette and Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Councils to develop a regional youth education program across the Upper Willamette River Basin. The regional program carries forward long-time Council education programs like Salmon Watch and WATERS, (www.mckenziwc.org/education) under the leadership of Middle Fork Willamette WC Education Coordinator Emma Garner. This partnership successfully brought back Salmon Watch in the fall of 2022 with 22 field trips to the Upper McKenzie and Whittaker Creek, engaging over 900 youth and 100 volunteers. We want to thank partners, including the BLM, McKenzie Flyfishers, EWEB, WREN, Yogi Tea, Cascade Family Fishers, Good Company, ODFW, and Twin River Charter School for making the return of Salmon Watch a success!



MCKENZIE RIVER CLEANUP

The Council's largest volunteer event, the McKenzie River Clean-up, returned in 2022 through a traditional partnership with the McKenzie Fly Fishers and a new collaboration with Willamette River Keepers. In 2022 we moved the event to October to align with the Great Willamette Clean-up and other clean-ups happening downriver. Nearly 75 volunteers floated the river and hiked land-based routes to pick up trash and debris. We were delighted to serve up a BBQ for volunteers at Lane County's Hendricks Wayside Park on the McKenzie River once the work was complete. The Clean-up is a family-friendly event open to the public and organized groups. Contact the Council at chase@mckenziawc.org to learn how to get involved in 2023!



MCKENZIE FIREWOOD PROGRAM

The McKenzie Firewood Program is a free firewood program for individuals affected by the Holiday Farm Fire and McKenzie community members in need. The Council developed the program as an offshoot of the PWP forest fuel reduction work with private landowners. The program has been successful, with over 300 cords of wood distributed to over 100 McKenzie Valley residents in 2022. In order to better serve the community, the program moved to the McKenzie River Trust managed Three Sisters Meadow property in Blue River in late 2022. To learn more or support the program, please visit www.mckenziawc.org/firewood-program





PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public education and engagement are at the core of the Council's work. Our monthly meetings are one of the ways that we bring information to our partners and the public. Meetings occur on the second Thursday of the month, typically starting at 5:00 p.m. We were pleased to resume in-person meetings in the fall of 2022 and plan to maintain a mixture of in-person and virtual meetings in 2023. Our 2023 meetings will alternate between locations in Springfield and Leaburg. To join our distribution list or view previous agendas, minutes, and presentations, visit www.mckenziawc.org.

Meeting topics in 2022 included Restoration Monitoring Results from the Deer Creek Floodplain Restoration Project; Assessing Vegetation Recovery Following Floodplain Restoration; the emerging Urban Waters and Wildlife Program; results from the McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group's 2021 Community Needs Assessment; and an ongoing Oregon State University research project looking at fire history in the Pacific Northwest over the past 500 years



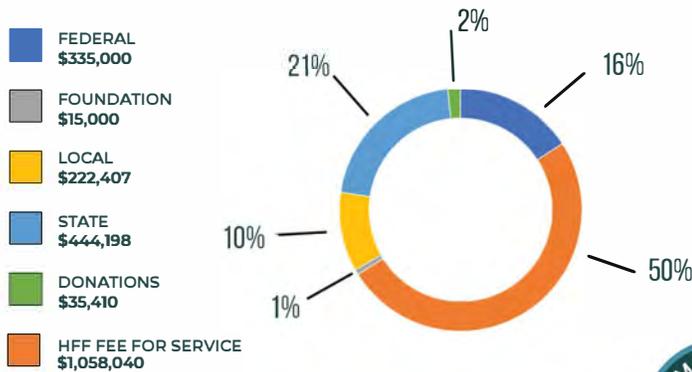
2022 SUPPORTERS

- Bonneville Environmental Foundation
- Brinks Land Improvement
- Bureau of Land Management
- Cascade Pacific RC&D
- Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- City of Springfield
- City of Eugene
- Eugene Water & Electric Board
- International Paper
- Lane Education Service District
- Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission
- McKenzie Disposal
- McKenzie Fly Fishers
- McKenzie Masters
- McKenzie River Trust
- McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- One Tree Planted
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Roundhouse Foundation
- Springfield Public Schools
- Springfield Utility Board
- The Freshwater Trust
- University of Oregon
- Upper Willamette SWCD
- Upper Willamette Stewardship Network
- US Forest Service
- Weyerhaeuser
- Wildish
- Willamette Riverkeepers
- & Many Individual Donors

MCKENZIE WATERSHED COUNCIL PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management
- City of Springfield
- City of Eugene
- Eugene Water & Electric Board
- HJ Andrews Experimental Forest
- International Paper
- Lane County
- McKenzie Fly Fishers
- McKenzie River Guides Association
- McKenzie River Ranger District (USFS)
- McKenzie River Trust
- McKenzie Schools
- Mohawk Watershed Partnership
- NW Steelheaders Association
- Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
- Rice Family Farms
- Upper Willamette SWCD
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Weyerhaeuser
- Wildish
- 8 Resident Partners

2022 FUNDING SOURCE



2022 EXPENSE BY CATEGORY

