

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



PHOTO BY BRENT ROSS



"THE RIVER  
LINKS US ALL"





# **MCKENZIE**

## **WATERSHED COUNCIL**

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FINN ROCK REACH LOGJAM



PHOTO BY DAN SCOTT



JARED WEYBRIGHT  
DIRECTOR

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We are proud to contribute to efforts to develop resilient ecosystems in the McKenzie River watershed that support local and downstream communities. We are thankful for our partners in voluntary and collaborative efforts to preserve and restore this amazing river. Thank you.







PLANTING IN THE HOLIDAY FARM FIRE FOOTPRINT



CONTRACTORS WORKING IN THE SNOW

## Pure Water Partners

The Pure Water Partners (PWP) was formed in 2014 to promote the protection and restoration of the McKenzie River through voluntary partnerships with private landowners. The program was adapted to respond to the widespread impacts of the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire. For the past three years, the Council has worked closely with the Eugene Water & Electric Board, Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District, and McKenzie River Trust to conduct watershed restoration activities on private property and non-federal public lands impacted by the wildfire.

In 2023, the PWP planted over 235,000 native trees and shrubs on 136 properties enrolled in the program. Partners are planning to install nearly 100,000 additional plants in 2024 with support from EWEB and the State of Oregon 2020 Wildfire Recovery funding. Thank you to all our contractors for making this project a success! For more information about the program go to [www.purewaterpartners.org](http://www.purewaterpartners.org).







PHOTO BY JOHN TRIMBLE

## Middle McKenzie Restoration - Finn Rock Reach

Partners within the McKenzie River watershed, including the Council, Eugene Water & Electric Board, McKenzie River Trust (MRT), and US Forest Service have a common vision to restore nearly 2,000 acres of floodplain with a 15-mile McKenzie River Reach from Ennis Creek upstream to Horse Creek. This stretch of river, which we call the “Middle McKenzie” contains large areas of public lands managed by the USFS and conservation properties held by the MRT. A series of restoration projects seek to enhance habitat and protect water quality by reconnecting the river and important tributaries like the South Fork McKenzie and Quartz Creek to their floodplains.

In 2023, the partners completed the second phase of a 150-acre project on the MRT-owned Finn Rock Reach property. This innovative and unique project created a wide range of habitats for native fish. Chinook salmon were observed spawning in the project area immediately following restoration and we expect the slow water pools and complex log jams to provide excellent rearing habitat for juvenile salmon in the coming years.





## Middle McKenzie Restoration - Quartz Creek

Quartz Creek is another important tributary in the Middle McKenzie. Land use practices over the past 100 years have dramatically simplified this creek, impacting habitat for native fish and wildlife and degrading water quality. In 2023, the Council and partners secured funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a 180-acre project on the lower 2 miles of Quartz Creek.



The restoration effort will reconnect the creek to its floodplain by removing streamside berms and adding gravel and other sediment to incised channels. Large wood will be placed throughout the project area to help slow the water and form diverse pools and other habitats. The project began in July 2023 when a contractor, R.L. Reimers, working with the Council, replaced an aging 49-foot span bridge with a new 119-foot bridge. The new bridge improves public infrastructure and enhances aquatic habitat. The floodplain restoration portion of the project is planned for 2025.





PREPARATION FOR HELICOPTER WOOD PLACEMENT IN 2024

PHASE I WOOD PLACEMENT

## Bear and Marten Creek Restoration

In 2023, the Council and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) teamed up to restore aquatic habitat in two creeks impacted by the Holiday Farm Fire.. The Bear Creek sub-watershed, approximately 5 miles east of Vida on the north side of the river, is largely public land managed by the BLM. The Marten Creek sub-watershed, located along Goodpasture Road to the southeast of Vida, is mixture of federal land managed by the BLM, private forestry, and private rural resident properties located near the confluence with the McKenzie River.

Both creeks were heavily impacted by the Holiday Farm Fire, and BLM specialists anticipate increased threats of erosion, landslides, and mass failure events within the drainage over the next 3-5 years as a result. Over the summer, contractors from Hines Cutting added over 300 wildfire impacted trees into 1.8 miles of Bear Creek and 250 trees into 1.5 miles of Marten Creek to enhance habitat conditions and protect water quality. A second project phase will use a helicopter to fly nearly 500 pieces of wood into Marten Creek in 2024.





## McKenzie River Cleanup

The Council's largest volunteer event, the McKenzie River Clean-up, returned in 2023 through traditional partnerships with the McKenzie Fly Fishers and McKenzie River Guides. Several years ago we moved the event to early October to give the river one last clean-up before the onset of winter rains. . Over 65 volunteers helped clean 47 miles of the river. The Council provides a tasty BBQ for all volunteers at Hendricks Wayside following the event. To get involved in 2024 contact the Council at [chase@mckenziawc.org](mailto:chase@mckenziawc.org).



## 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. Our 2024 meetings will alternate between locations in Springfield and Leaburg. Agendas, minutes, and past presentations are available at [www.mckenziawc.org](http://www.mckenziawc.org). To join our distribution list, contact the Council at [chase@mckenziawc.org](mailto:chase@mckenziawc.org).

Meeting topics in 2023 included Environmental Education Projects in the Upper Willamette River Basin, Decommissioning the Leaburg Hydroelectric Project, Channel Migration Zone Mapping of the McKenzie River, and Restoration at Finn Rock Reach.





## Regional Environmental Education

The McKenzie Watershed Council is proud to partner with the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council and Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council through the Upper Willamette Stewardship Network's Regional Education Program. During the last year, education staff coordinated and led 50 field trips for McKenzie Programs. These field trips provided unique, hands-on learning experiences for 1078 students. Salmon Watch is one of the most popular programs with over 30 field trips to Elijah Bristow State Park and Whittaker Creek in fall 2023. This shared effort is a great example of local watershed councils working collaboratively to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our work.



## 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 financial need. The Council developed the program as an offshoot of the PWP Holiday Farm Fire recovery work. In 2023 the program supplied 221 cords of wood to over 100 residents, while processing an additional 200 cords to be distributed in the fall. The program operates out of the McKenzie River Trust-managed Three Sisters Meadow Property in Blue River. To learn more or support the program, please visit: [www.mckenziewc.org/firewood-program](http://www.mckenziewc.org/firewood-program)





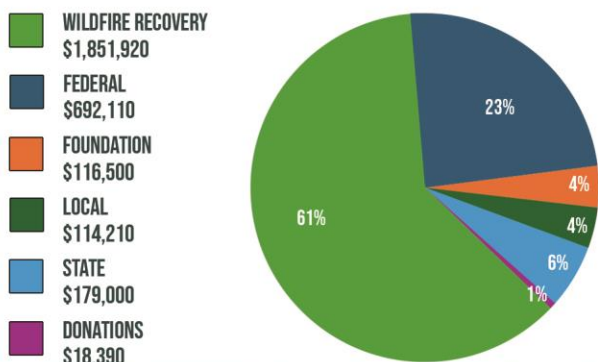
## 2023 Supporters

- 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
- Ford Family Foundation
- International Paper
- 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
- NOAA
- One Tree Planted
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- 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 Forst Service

## 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
- NW Steelheaders Association
- Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
- Rice Family Farms
- Upper Willamette SWCD
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Weyerhaeuser
- Wildish
- & 7 Resident Partners

### 2023 Funding by Source



### 2023 Expense by Category

