

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



PHOTO BY JOSEPH YCAZA



"THE RIVER  
LINKS US ALL"



# MCKENZIE

## WATERSHED COUNCIL

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## Director's Report

The McKenzie Watershed Council's work depends solely on voluntary and collaborative work with partners, and this past year has once again proven the value and strength of collaborative partnerships in the McKenzie River Watershed. We are grateful to our Board of Directors, Council Partners, staff and many community partners for their shared commitment to the river and its communities. The highlights of 2025 include the Quartz Creek Ecosystem Resilience Project, the largest floodplain reconnection project completed by local partners to date; the successful completion of the Pure Water Partners five-year wildfire recovery work; and ongoing collaborative work through the Upper Willamette Stewardship Network. We are thankful for all our partners and invite you to learn more about our work. The river links us all.



JARED WEYBRIGHT  
DIRECTOR



## Pure Water Partners

The Pure Water Partners (PWP) is a collaborative program designed to incentivize voluntary riparian restoration and conservation by landowners on the McKenzie River. The Eugene Water & Electric Board, Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District and the MWC adapted the PWP model to provide recovery support to private landowners and non-federal public land managers following the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire. Over the course of five years, the PWP worked with over 150 landowners to support riparian restoration, erosion control projects, and other watershed restoration activities.



While 2025 marked a transition period for the PWP, the program is still active and engaged with landowners throughout the McKenzie River Watershed. The program is specifically designed to assess riparian health and function, while offering options for restoration and conservation. Projects are typically grant reliant and can sometimes take 1- 2 years to be developed and implemented. The program is intentionally voluntary and takes a non-regulatory approach to encourage collaboration and participation.

The PWP's Naturescaping program seeks to incorporate the use of native plants to reduce water use, enhance habitat and protect water quality in high-use residential areas. The program incorporates Firewise techniques designed to improve a home's resilience to wildfire. The Naturescaping program operates on a fee-for-service basis with multiple built-in incentives. Visit the PWP website to learn more about Naturescaping and to sign-up for a no-cost consultation.



## Shade Credit Riparian Planting Project

In 2021, the McKenzie Watershed Council entered into a partnership with The Freshwater Trust, to implement a series of riparian restoration projects along multiple waterways within the McKenzie River watershed. These projects will provide long-term shade to help address elevated stream temperatures while improving habitat for native species. The work is funded by the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission as an effort to support compliance responsibilities while providing dual benefits such as habitat restoration.



In 2025, the MWC worked with 7 landowners on 7.5 acres along the McKenzie and Mohawk Rivers to plant 9004 native trees and shrubs, 2650 willow stakes. An additional 29.5 acres of site prep was also completed for future planting in 2026 and 2027. The MWC is proud to partner with The Freshwater Trust and MWMC on this project and grateful to the landowners who are participating in this voluntary project.





WOOD PLACEMENT IN THE DEWATERED QUARTZ CREEK FLOODPLAIN



FISH SALVAGE CREWS RELOCATING FISH FROM QUARTZ CREEK

## Middle McKenzie Restoration - Quartz Creek

During the summer of 2025, partner organizations completed “in-water work” at the Quartz Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project on the Quartz Creek tributary of the McKenzie River approximately 40 miles east of Eugene. The McKenzie Watershed Council, Eugene Water & Electric Board, McKenzie River Trust (MRT) and USDA Forest Service completed the project to “reset” the floodplain and set the stage for healthier streams, thriving wildlife, and a more resilient landscape. The project removed streamside berms that prevent the creek from moving across the floodplain, filled incised channels with excavated sediment and placed large wood throughout the floodplain. The intent is to raise the channel so the water can spread out across the entire floodplain, create diverse habitat and recharge groundwater levels. The team also built logjam structures to capture debris and slow down the water, which lets fine sediment drop out to help form islands, bars and gravel beds. Log jams are also important for creating pools and dynamic habitat for fish.

The project design specifically does not create channels or engineer habitat features. Instead, the intent is to create conditions that allow natural flows to create and maintain habitat over time. The focus on reconnecting the creek across the floodplain allows for a great deal of natural habitat formation within the project area over time.





THE NEWLY REWATERED QUARTZ CREEK FLOODPLAIN

## Middle McKenzie Restoration - Quartz Creek

“Disturbance is a really important part of ecosystems,” said Lara Colley, Quartz Creek Restoration Project Manager for the McKenzie Watershed Council. “You need disturbance to get a reset – to have a fresh start. That’s what we’re doing here: a valley reset, so the creek can decide where it needs to go and have room to move.”

The Quartz Creek Project is the latest accomplishment by a collaboration of local municipal, nonprofit and federal organizations that have implemented 9 large-scale floodplain reconnection projects throughout the McKenzie Watershed. The 2025 restoration work builds on a 2023 project that replaced an aging 49-foot span bridge with a new 119-foot span bridge across Quartz Creek. In early 2026, over 70,000 native trees and shrubs will be planted throughout the project area. In total the project restored over 170 acres along the lower 1.8 miles of Quartz Creek on lands managed by MRT and private landowners.



## Regional Education

Connecting youth to their local watersheds is a core mission of the McKenzie Watershed Council. We work with our Upper Willamette Stewardship Network (UWSN) partners to engage middle and high school across ten different school districts in the Upper Willamette River Basin. The Network's Regional Education Program is housed at the Middle Fork Willamette Water Council office, and the MWC and other local watershed councils work collaboratively to support MFWWC led watershed-based youth education.

In 2025 the program lead over 100 field trips to see salmon spawning in the wild, participate in active watershed restoration projects and conduct a range of water quality and habitat monitoring activities. Students planted over 7,000 native trees



SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL WELL PROGRAM STUDENTS

## McKenzie Natural Resources Scholarship

In 2023, the McKenzie Watershed Council partnered with Stuart Perlmeter and Anne Todd designed to support high school graduates in obtaining an undergraduate degree in natural resource-related fields. Stuart and Anne are retired teachers and have a long history of working with community partners like the MWC to create unique field-based learning opportunities for local youth.

The 4-year scholarship prioritizes students with financial barriers to attend college and was open to graduates from Springfield, Thurston, Mohawk, and McKenzie Cottage Grove High Schools in 2025. The MWC awarded two scholarships to graduates from Thurston HS and Springfield HS in 2025. We are excited to offer the scholarship again in 2026 and to expand the eligibility to Oakridge, Lowell, Pleasant Hill, and Creswell school districts. To learn more about the scholarship or donate to support it please visit the MWC website.



## Upper Willamette Stewardship Network

The Upper Willamette Stewardship Network (UWSN) is a partnership among the 4 local watershed councils (Coast Fork Willamette River, Middle Fork Willamette River, McKenzie River, and Long Tom River), Friends of Buford Park, McKenzie River Trust, and the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District. The UWSN was developed in 2018 to increase the scope and pace of watershed conservation in the Upper Willamette region. Since that time local partners have developed several collaborative programs and focused on adding shared capacity to increase the scale and pace of local restoration.

## UWSN Tribal Collaboration

In 2023, the McKenzie Watershed Council hired a Tribal Liaison to work on behalf of the UWSN and help lead engagement efforts with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and local Indigenous community members. The Tribal Liaison is supported by a group of UWSN staff and leaders known as the UWSN Tribal Partnerships and Decolonization Forum, whose purpose is to coordinate and guide efforts to increase understanding, knowledge, and commitment to engagement with local Tribes and Indigenous People. In partnership with Live Oak Consulting, the Forum hosted a Network-wide Tribal Sovereignty training to increase understanding of sovereignty, current threats, and best practices for staff working with the UWSN Tribal Liaison and engaging with Tribal nations. The Forum also held its annual Field Module, featuring Indigenous knowledge holders, scholars, and stewards, who provided examples of how to weave together Western and Indigenous knowledges in land and water stewardship.

The UWSN also relies on a Native Advisory Council, made up of local Indigenous peoples, regardless of Tribal affiliation. The NAC serves as advisors to the Tribal Liaison and Network partners. In 2025, the UWSN Tribal Liaison and UWSN Director presented UWSN's Commitment Statement to Tribal Partnerships and Decolonization to all Network staff and plans to introduce it to Network leadership in 2026. This Commitment Statement provides a framework for the Network's vision, values, and shared commitments to Native engagement and decolonization.



## McKenzie River Cleanup

The Council's largest volunteer event, the McKenzie River Clean-up, continued in 2025 through partnerships with the McKenzie Fly Fishers, Helfrich McKenzie Outfitters, McKenzie River Guides, and support from McKenzie Disposal. Several years ago we moved the event to the fall to give the river one last clean-up before the onset of winter rains. Over 85 people helped clean 47 miles of the river and the Council provided a tasty BBQ for all volunteers at Hendricks Wayside following the event. To get involved in 2026 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 2026 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 2025 included Coho populations in the Upper Willamette, the EWEB State of the Watershed Report, Rebuilding Community Together After the Holiday Farm Fire, and presentations from HJ Andrews researchers.



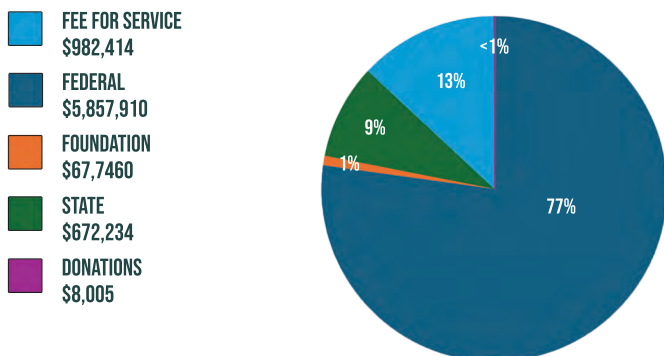
## 2025 Supporters

- Bonneville Environmental Foundation
- Bureau of Land Management
- Cascade Pacific RC&D
- Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- City of Springfield
- City of Eugene
- Eugene Water & Electric Board
- FEMA
- Helfrich McKenzie Rafting
- International Paper
- Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission
- McKenzie Disposal
- McKenzie Fly Fishers
- McKenzie River Trust
- McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- NOAA
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon State University
- 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 Environmental Protection Agency
- US Forest Service
- Private Donors

## 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
- & 6 Resident Partners

### 2025 Funding by Source



### 2025 Expense by Category

