

The Power of Collaboration in the Deschutes Basin

Building on a rich history of collaboration in the Deschutes Basin, a partnership with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) leveraged funding from a wide range of sources to modernize aging irrigation infrastructure at a basin-scale. These modernization efforts have simultaneously improved water supplies for agriculture while restoring streamflow to the Deschutes River and its tributaries, helping to address decades-long environmental and agricultural challenges.



The organizations that are involved with this project include: Deschutes Basin Board of Control, Central Oregon Irrigation District, Swalley Irrigation District, Ochoco Irrigation District, Tumalo Irrigation District, North Unit Irrigation District, Lone Pine Irrigation District, Arnold Irrigation District, Deschutes River Conservancy, City of Prineville, Farmers Conservation Alliance

Funding partners include: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Portland General Electric, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

KEY PROJECT STATS



Modernize 120 miles of canals

119

Save 119 cfs of water



Improve water supply reliability for 16,300 acres

290

Restore streamflow to 290 miles of river

PROJECT SUMMARY

In Oregon's Deschutes Basin, community members have long recognized the potential to collaboratively improve irrigation infrastructure to achieve their shared goals. In 2020, when the US Fish and Wildlife Service approved a voluntary Habitat Conservation Plan intended to protect the Oregon spotted frog, steelhead trout, and other species, community members had already created the foundation for collaboration across a wide range of interests.

Avoiding harm to these species requires irrigation districts to maintain stream flows and reservoir levels developed through a voluntary Habitat Conservation Plan. To meet these new requirements while continuing to deliver irrigation water, the community partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program to designate \$175 million to modernize irrigation infrastructure across the basin. NRCS has supported five completed and two in-process planning documents needed to enable on-the-ground projects. To date, this support has catalyzed investments in modernizing infrastructure in five irrigation districts.

KEY PROJECT BENEFIT

Modernized irrigation infrastructure helps irrigation districts to restore stream flow in the Deschutes River and its tributaries, maintain reservoir levels for the Oregon spotted frog, and provide water for irrigation across Central Oregon that will, when complete, modernize 120 miles of canals, save 119 cfs of water, improve water supply reliability for 16,300 acres, and restore streamflow to 290 miles of river.

WACC MEMBERS



Laying pipe in Tumalo Irrigation District, February 2020. Photo credit FCA.



Central Oregon Irrigation District: Construction of Smith Rock Pipeline. Photo credit FCA.