

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022

Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District

Mission Statement

“To provide leadership, education, motivation and assistance to the citizens of Deschutes County for responsible, efficient stewardship of our soil and water resources.”

Board meetings are open to the public and were held on the third Thursday of each month from 9 AM – 12 PM during July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

The meetings were held virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19.

See the website for locations and dates for meetings.

<https://www.deschutesswcd.org/board-meetings>



DESCHUTES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In 1939, the Oregon Legislature passed legislation to establish conservation districts in Oregon. Conservation Districts are charged with directing programs to protect local renewable natural resources in their county. The Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District was established on June 23, 1947, under the name “Midstate SCD”, which then was changed to the Deschutes SWCD on September 9, 1987.

Deschutes SWCD is a political subdivision of state government that is not a state agency, but a municipal corporation that follows the same laws that govern state agencies. The Deschutes SWCD is not a regulatory and enforcement agency nor is it an environmental activist group. We are an organization that collaborates with farmers, ranchers, forest owners, and other partners to sustain and improve our natural resources in Deschutes County through voluntary conservation. The Deschutes SWCD board members serve four-year terms and are elected in general elections every two years.

Deschutes SWCD provides onsite free technical assistance (TA) to private landowners and land managers to address natural resource concerns on their property. Resource concerns most common to Deschutes County are water quantity, water quality, forest health, invasive weeds, and fish and wildlife habitat. The Deschutes 2019 – 2024 Long Range Plan identifies natural resource needs in the county and objectives to address them. To obtain a copy of the 2019 – 2024 Long Range Plan, click [HERE](#).

Board of Directors 2021-2022:

William Kuhn, Co-Chair
Jeff Rola, Director
Leslie Clark, Treasurer
Susan Altman, Secretary
Andrew Aasen, Director
Robin Vora, Director
Gen Hubert, Co-Chair

STAFF 2021-2022:

Erin Kilcullen: District Manager
Todd Peplin: Lead Planner
Tom Bennett: Conservation Technician
Emma Zuber: Field and Office Assistant

Technical Advisors:

Theresa Debardeleben: Oregon Department of Water Quality - Watershed Specialist
Lars Santana: Natural Resource Conservation Service, District Conservationist

Partners:

Deschutes County
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
 USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
 USDA Forest Service (USFS)
 Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC)
 Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC)
 Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service
 Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
 Project Wildfire
 Upper Deschutes River Communities
 Deschutes Land Trust (DLT)
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
 Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
 Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD)
 National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
 Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)
 Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)
 Irrigation Districts (Swalley, Central Oregon, Arnold, Three Sisters, and Tumalo)

Funding Sources 2021 – 2022

- ODA Capacity Grant
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout the state receive these funds every biennium (2021-2023).
 - Perform education and outreach to the public regarding the Agricultural Water Quality Standards set by the Oregon statute.
 - Host Irrigation Water Management Workshops for local irrigators and producers.
 - Provide technical assistance to private landowners who are interested in implementing restoration projects that relate to water quality.
- NACD TA
 - Completed the NACD TA 2020 Grant and begun utilizing the NACD TA 2021 funding.
 - Provide technical assistance to partners and landowners regarding Irrigation Water Management and Forest Health/Wildfire Risk Reduction projects.
- NRCS TA (2021 – 2023)
 - Provide technical assistance to NRCS and private landowners regarding forest health improvement projects and the Joint Chiefs Project.
- NACD Urban and Community Agriculture
 - Awarded March 2021
 - DSWCD partnered with The Environmental Center to develop and present a Soil Health Workshop for local school gardens. This workshop was presented in October 2021.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

- Awarded through Deschutes County November 2021 with a completion date of December 2026
- Developed and ‘On-Farm Efficiency Water Conservation Investment Program’ to provide landowners with technical assistance, an Irrigation Water Management Plan, and up to \$20,000 towards upgrading their irrigation systems from flood to sprinkler.
- 15 landowners were selected to receive this funding from 32 applicants.
- 2 projects were completed in May and June 2022.
- Bureau of Reclamation – Water SMART grant
 - The District was awarded the ‘Indian Ford Watershed Group Development and Restoration Planning’ grant in March 2022
 - This project will develop a new watershed group with partners and landowners in Indian Ford Watershed and perform a full watershed assessment and 10 private land assessments and restoration plans
- ODA Strategic Implementation Area (SIA)
 - Awarded in April 2022, but delayed due to ODA staffing capacity
- SB 762
 - The District was a partner in the Central Oregon Shared Stewardship Landscape Resiliency Project (COSSLRP) and was awarded \$300,000 in February 2022
 - Provide financial assistance to private landowners with NRCS Joint Chiefs contracts to offset the high costs of projects and expedite implementation of project.
- WSARE (Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education)
 - The District partnered with OSU on the ‘Irrigation Technology and Management (ITM) Professional Development Project’ to develop an IWM course curriculum.
 - This grant was awarded in April 2022 and has a 3-year time frame

2021 – 2022 Programs and Accomplishments

Irrigation Water Management:



IRRIGATION WORKSHOP SERIES:
Adapting to Drought Conditions

Three (3) workshops will be offered throughout the irrigation season, each with a different topic. The workshop combines classroom sessions with On-Farm field application! **Workshops Are FREE!! and Registration is required**

Learn about:

- Initial inspection of irrigation systems and management preparedness
- Irrigation water scheduling, timing, moisture management
- Energy use and efficiency
- Seasonal water use and water management adaptation
- And more!!

To register and find out more about the workshops,
 Use the QR code or go to [https:// www.deschuteswcd.org/](https://www.deschuteswcd.org/)

QR Code

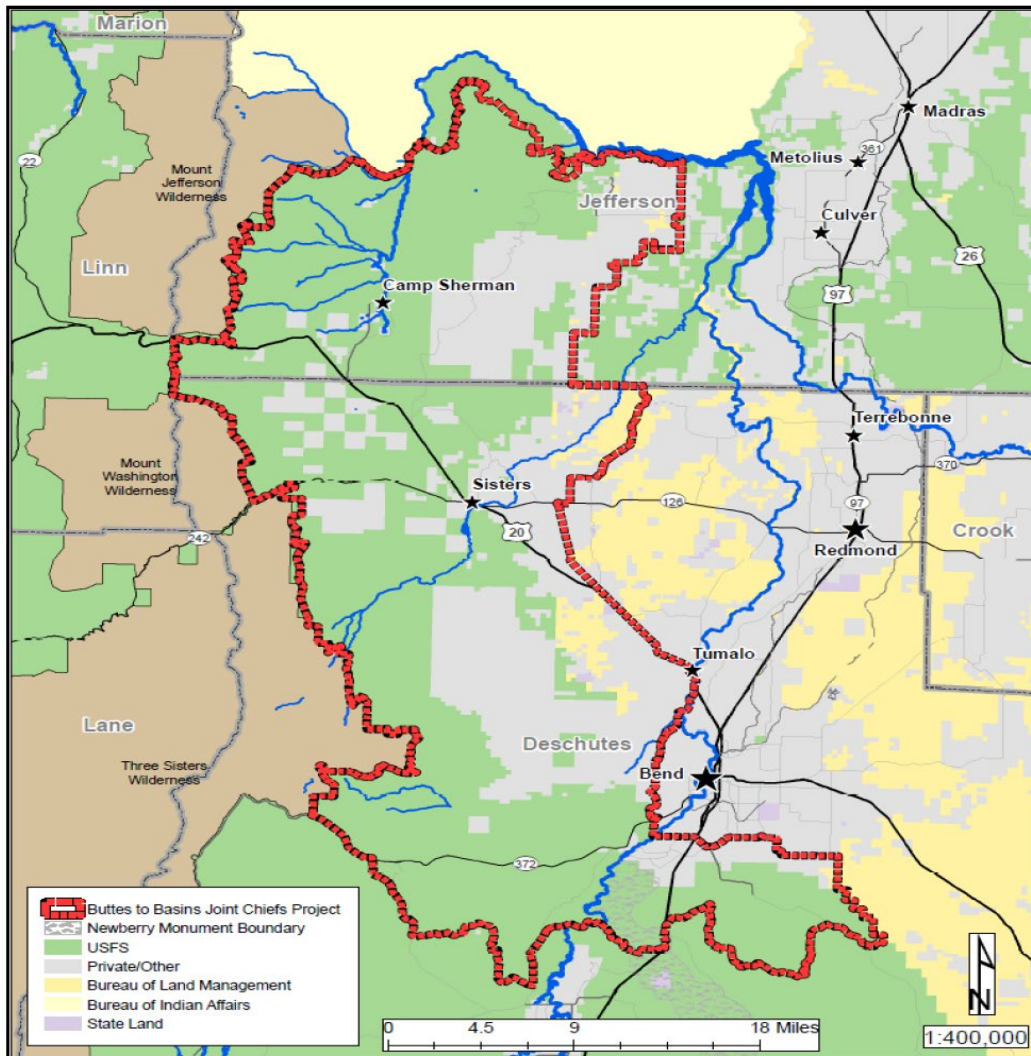





IWM Workshop Series

DSWCD held a 3-part IWM workshop series during the summer of 2022. The first workshop included a classroom session that was held on April 7, 2022 and a field session on April 9, 2022 at the Aaby property. The classroom and field sessions included presentations from DSWCD, Thompson Pump, NRCS, OSU extension, Helena Seed, OWRD, WY East, and CO Cooperative. There were 32 attendees including presenters and private landowners. The 2nd workshop series was held in July 2022 and the 3rd workshop was held in October 2022.

Forest Health



Buttes to Basins Joint Chiefs Project

DSWCD assisted NRCS in an outreach effort to large, forested landowners within this project boundary to sign up for financial assistance to perform forest health improvement projects. Staff also provided technical assistance to 6 landowners to determine practices to be completed on their property and assistance in navigating the sign-up process for the NRCS contracts.

Urban Agriculture

Improving Soil Health Through Education, Application, and Engagement with CO Youth & Schools

Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District partnered on this project with The Environmental Center, Bend Pollinator Pathways, and Kaci Rae Christopher, the author of 'The School Garden Curriculum: An Integrated K-8 Guide for Discovering Science, Ecology, and Whole-Systems Thinking'. This project collaborated with local schools on various projects:

- Developed and presented a Soil Health Workshop for local schools with or wanting a school garden. This was an in-person event and had 25 attendees. It included a 2-hour classroom presentation and an hour using the principles learned interactively in a school garden. Each participant received native pollinator plants, cover crop seeds, dinner, a gift card, and funding for the school to purchase soil health amendments. This workshop has also been recorded and available at <https://www.deschuteswcd.org/urban-agriculture-a35f465>
- This workshop was also presented at a live virtual online seminar for the Oregon Farm to School and Garden Network Annual Conference.
- Five schools received funding to perform school garden projects.
- Developed a curriculum and lesson plans for an Earth Smart Food Waste series that will be utilized in elementary schools in the coming school year.

This program was successful in developing workshops and curriculums for organizations and schools to utilize in the future. This project was a kicking off point for this strong partnership to pursue Urban Agricultural programs in the future for Central Oregon.

These pictures were taken at the in-person Soil Health Workshop that was presented in October 2021.

Top left: all attendees at this event. Top Right: DSWCD and partners on this workshop. Bottom Right:

Manure was spread across garden beds to prep



the garden for winter. Bottom Left: Each school that attended received 6 native pollinator plants for their garden.

Manure Exchange Programs

The District continues to manage the Manure Exchange Program and there are continual sign ups from landowners with available manure. During 2021 – 2022, there were a total of 40 landowners signed up to provide their available manure to others in Deschutes County.

Why Have a Pasture Exchange Program?

During the Fall of 2021, DSWCD create a pasture exchange program.

For farmers, leasing their land is a way to earn some income back for the land they own. For renters, it's a safe, BIG step toward farm life without the commitment of owning land. With the average farmer age being 60, this program also offers younger people a way to connect with people in the community who have been farming most, if not all, of their life. In doing so, we can encourage the next generation of people to continue to run family farms. Pasture exchanges are often done in a word-of-mouth fashion, but that can be difficult for new farmers to get involved with the community. So, we have created a digital platform to connect people.

Another important aspect of the program is its emergency preparedness. In our current climate crisis, it is inevitable that we will endure forest fires and drought. Having access to different contacts in the community is a great way to protect your livestock if your land becomes victim to drought and/or fires, and your animals are in need of emergency relocation.

Quarter newsletter

The District developed and distributed a quarterly newsletter through MailChimp to partners and landowners. This newsletter provides updates on the current projects and programs the District is working on. Check out the most current newsletter here: <https://mailchi.mp/d70af12ad9c6/mid-year-reflections-9323357>

Rural Living Handbook

The District has updated the Deschutes County Rural Living Handbook and this will continue to be a living document and can be found at: https://www.deschuteswcd.org/rural-living-handbook#/body_file-1ec3dcea-031a-4a51-8efa-2c1aab704180

Technical Assistance for Landowners:



For the fiscal year of 2021-2022, the District held or participated in 5 events for landowners, which had participation from 84 landowners. 120 landowners were provided with brochures, fact sheets, mailings, etc. There were 140 landowners that received one on one assistance from the Deschutes SWCD (phone, email, site visit, etc.). This resulted in 30 fund applications submitted for landowner projects, 20 fund applications awarded for landowner projects, development of 15 conservation plans (550 acres) that addressed water quality and quantity issues along with management of their properties forage, animals, wildlife needs, and forest health. Technical Assistance and Conservation plans addressed the following NRCS practices:

- 449 – Irrigation Water Management
- 442 – Irrigation Sprinkler System
- 528 – Prescribe Grazing
- 590 – Nutrient management
- 666 – Forest Stand Improvement
- 430 – Irrigation water Conveyance Pipeline
- 587 – Structure for Water Control

Annual Meeting June 2022

The District held their annual meeting on June 16, 2022. It included a field tour to three project sites for the G-4 project that the District has been assisting with in partnership with COID. The G-4 lateral was 4,766 feet of open ditch that was piped. Eight patrons received their irrigation water from this lateral and all properties flood irrigated with no measuring device. DSWCD conducted several landowner meetings updating patrons on the design and receiving feedback. These meetings were critical in explaining (to the patrons) how the pressurized system would work and adjustments to be made to their on-farm delivery system and proper management. DSWCD collaborated with each patron developing farm plans and designs for their on-farm irrigation sprinkler system. DSWCD played a key role coordinating with COID, NRCS, Black Rock Consulting, and landowners in the design, implementation, and financial assistance of the G-4 pipeline and the On-Farm systems.

The first site visit was to the pump station that was installed to provide pressurized water to all landowners on the G-4 lateral and rotation and remove the rotation system. The next 2 sites were at landowner's properties that upgraded their on-farm irrigation systems from flood systems to wheel lines



for a total of 30 acres. The field tour was followed by lunch in Redmond at the COID office.



Partnerships:

Deschutes SWCD continues to improve relationships with partners through collaboration in coordinating efforts and planning projects through collaborated funding opportunities.

Partnerships continue to strengthen. Meetings have been held in person with a hybrid Zoom option available. Collaboration with Deschutes Land Trust, USFS, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, and Black Butte Ranch has amplified conservation efforts in Indian Ford Creek resulting in a Bureau of Reclamation grant award. Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) the Three Sisters Irrigation District (TSID) will provide financial support to the DSWCD to conduct IWM assistance to patrons benefiting from piping projects through the RCPP and PL-566. Discussions with

Deschutes County Forester and Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) have been positive in developing a grant for SB 762.

Partnership among the 5 irrigation districts in Deschutes county continues to strengthen. The Deschutes SWCD regularly attends all irrigation district meetings. An on-farm group has been established and includes: DSWCD, DRC, COID, and NRCS. This partnership is working to identify on-farm improvements with landowners that coincide with the irrigation districts modernization projects. This not only provides awareness to the Deschutes SWCD on water quality and quantity issues but also provides an informational bridge to NRCS to find opportunities to strengthen their EQIP program. This group also partnered to receive \$1.45 million total in ARPA funds to implement water savings projects.

The District Board is expanding their partnership by finding ways to collaborate with County Commissioners on conservation activities in Deschutes County. The District attends and supports Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative (DBWC) meetings and committee meetings. A partnership with OSU Extension has been valuable regarding the DSWCD IWM program. The DSWCD relies on OSU for consultation and peer review on technical materials and development of the program. The partnership with NRCS continues to strengthen with DSWCD providing outreach in promoting various Farm Bill programs. DSWCD presented at the NRCS Local Working Group meeting in February.

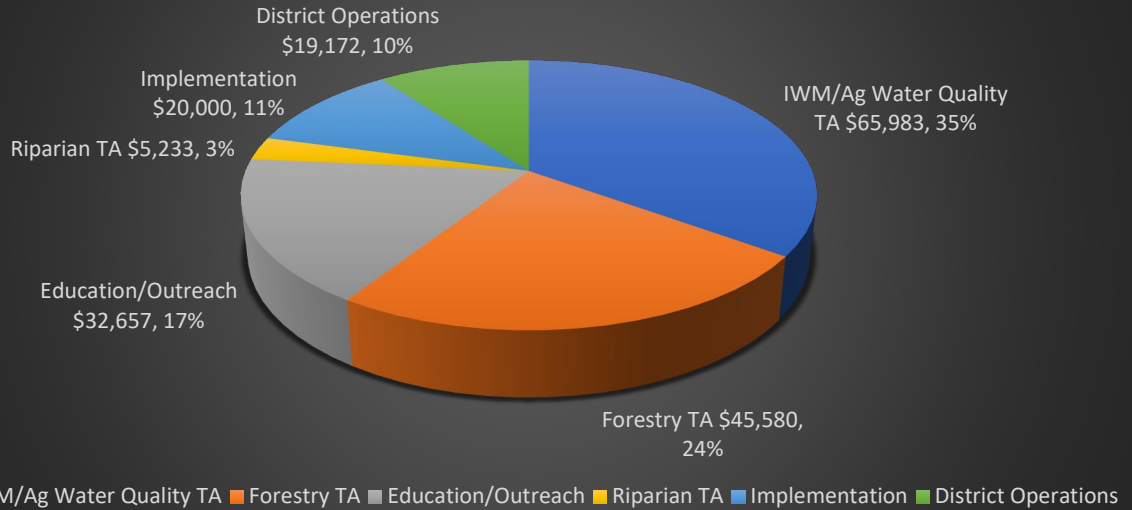
The District has been involved in the local Shared Stewardship group. This group has collaborated with the SB 762 application, where central Oregon received \$6 million for organizations to implement forest health and wildfire risk reduction projects. This group meets regularly and has held 2 field trips. Also, District staff continues to attend and participate in the County Project Wildfire monthly meetings.

Employment:

DSWCD hired Emma Zuber as an Intern in September 2021 and she was hired as a part-time Field and Office Assistant in January 2022. The intern's primary duty was to assist the District manager in administrative tasks and projects. Tasks included website design, marketing, social media outlets, outreach, education to landowners to address natural resource concerns, grant writing, grant management support, and conducting field investigations and assessments of private irrigation delivery systems, on-farm irrigation water management, forest health, riparian restoration, and urban agriculture, and helping in whatever capacity is necessary to complete tasks identified in the District and NRCS annual work plans.

2021-2022 DSWCD Income and Expenditures

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 Expenses, \$188,625



July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 Income, \$564,882

