



## Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District

### 2024-2025 Annual Work Plan

Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District (DSWCD), functioning as an organization, local government, and special district, collaborates with various stakeholders: private landowners such as farmers, ranchers, forest owners, residents, communities, and other partners to sustain and enhance natural resources in Deschutes County. Deschutes SWCD offers technical, financial, and educational assistance to aid district residents in implementing voluntary conservation measures to tackle natural resource concerns. The primary natural resource challenges confronting Deschutes County presently are issues related to water quality and quantity, invasive weeds, fish and wildlife habitat, forest health, wildfire risk, and land/soils. Importantly, DSWCD is not involved in regulatory or enforcement activities, nor does it operate as an environmental activist group.

These resource concerns and various objectives and programs are outlined in the DSWCD Strategic Plan (2023-2028), which can be accessed through the link below.

#### [Deschutes SWCD Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#)

For purposes of the annual work plan, five sections of the Strategic Plan (Guiding Principles of the District, Vision for Deschutes County, District programs, Strategies, and Economic Development) have been compiled and narrowed down to create specific goals for the 2024 – 2025 Fiscal year that pertain to active grants and work being accomplished:

**Goal 1: Maintain partnerships and alliances with a variety of agencies and organizations at the local, regional, state, and national level.**

**Staff members will accomplish this goal throughout the fiscal year.**

**Objective: Work with partners on existing and future programs.**

#### **Program:**

1. Irrigation Water Management (IWM)
  - a. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) TA Grant – provide technical assistance to landowners for implementation of On-farm projects
  - b. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) - Smith Rock/King Way Modernization and On-farm Projects
  - c. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – On-Farm improvement projects – Flood to Sprinkler conversions
  - d. Western sustainable agriculture research and education (WSARE) –

- Implement an online live Irrigation, Technology, and Management curriculum
    - e. IWM workshop series
  - 2. Forest Health and Wildfire risk reduction
    - a. Joint Chiefs Buttes to Basins: perform additional outreach, education, monitoring, success stories, and field tours for Joint Chiefs projects
    - b. Senate Bill 762 – Pursue additional financial assistance for landowners
    - c. NRCS TA Grant – provide technical assistance to forested landowners and NRCS staff
    - d. Develop a workshop for landowners in S. County to show how to implement a forest inventory and develop a management plan on their property
  - 3. Manure Exchange Program
  - 4. Pasture Exchange Program
  - 5. Agricultural Water Quality
    - a. Capacity Grant (ODA): Identify water quality issues due to runoff from irrigation (AGWQMP)
    - b. Strategic Implementation Area in the Upper and Little Deschutes Watersheds (ODA)
  - 6. Urban Agriculture
    - a. pursue opportunities, projects, and grants with partners
  - 7. Small Grants – manage, provide administrative support, and collaborate with the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council. Develop projects and apply for small grants.
  - 8. Riparian Restoration – Watershed Health
    - a. Indian Ford Creek – Bureau of Reclamation Grant to begin to assess properties and outline restoration projects and apply for OWEB restoration grants
    - b. Apply for an OWEB TA Grant with Black Butte Ranch to develop design ideas for restoration projects on the ranch
  - 9. Renewable Energy – partner and manage the USDA REDA grant
  - 10. Pollinator Health – continue partnerships and pursue additional funding and projects
  - 11. Wildlife and Habitat restoration
    - a. Mule Deer
      - Outreach and education to landowners about habitat needs and restoration opportunities
      - Develop projects
      - Apply for habitat restoration grants
    - b. Sage Grouse
      - Outreach and education to landowners about habitat needs and restoration opportunities
      - Develop projects
      - Apply for habitat restoration grants
  - 12. Weed Management
    - a. Attend County Weed board meetings

- b. Collaborate with partners

**Goal 2: Build new alliances and partnerships with organizations to develop programs, promote stewardship and conservation activities, and enhance the District.**

**This will be an ongoing effort by all staff members and the Board of Directors for this coming fiscal year and shall continue and progress in the future.**

**Objective: District Staff and the Board of Directors will continue to maintain a presence with partners, landowners, and communities in Deschutes County.**

**Program:**

1. Partner with NRCS and organizations to assist landowners with on-farm improvement projects and forest health projects.
2. Manure Exchange Programs – work to develop more instruction for livestock producers and gardeners and enhance marketing of the Program.
3. Pasture Exchange Program – maintain the program and better establish an equitable balance between those interested in pasture and those interested in leasing.
4. Wildlife Habitat Restoration Projects – Eastern Deschutes County for the Greater Sage Grouse, Tumalo Winter Mule Deer Range, Upper Deschutes, and Little Deschutes riparian restoration
5. Engage with landowners and provide technical assistance and restoration assistance within the Indian Ford watershed.
6. Partner with ODA on the OWEB Strategic Implementation Area Grant that was awarded to provide agriculture producers technical assistance with water quality and riparian improvement projects.
7. Continue to promote the importance of pollinator habitat through education, outreach, and planting opportunities.
8. Collaborate with ODA to collect baseline data to show what percentage of streamside areas on agriculture lands provide the riparian functions of shade, stabilizing streambanks, and filtering overland flows, based on site capability.
9. Collaborate with ODA to designate irrigated lands that have surface runoff and potential Water Quality issues.
10. Urban Agriculture – expand projects to involve the urban community through food security, community engagement, and conservation initiatives.
11. Weed Management – partner with ODA and other organizations to develop weed management plans.

**Goal 3: Promote soil and water conservation through an education, public information, and outreach program.**

**This will be performed by staff members and the Board of Directors throughout the fiscal year.**

**Objective: Market Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District.**

**Program:**

1. Work with a website design and marketing company to rebrand the District and website.
2. Maintain website by providing updates on projects, events, annual reports, and annual work plans.
3. Maintain and market the District through social media outlets.
4. Develop outreach opportunities with groups that align with the DSWCD mission in Deschutes County.
5. Develop fundraising opportunities.
6. Update Rural Living Handbook.
7. Use District quantifiable metrics to market what has been accomplished throughout the year.
8. Develop and email a quarterly newsletter.
9. Develop success stories of completed projects and market these on the website and social media.
10. Attending local events to market the District and connect with landowners.

**Objective: Advance public understanding of DSWCD's purpose and activities, and promote conservation participation among rural and urban landowners, educational and community groups, partners, working groups and District constituents.**

**Program:**

1. Hold Irrigation Water Management Workshops for rural and urban landowners.
2. Network with local groups to develop relationships for participation in future conservation programs.
3. Assist with educational natural resource programs in Deschutes County.
4. Develop a strategic plan and new conservation programs with the District Enhancement Committee and partner organizations.

**Goal 4: Maintain and enhance legal accountability, fiscal responsibility, and district operations.**

**This will be an ongoing effort by staff and board members for this coming fiscal year and shall continue and progress in the future.**

**Objective: Board and staff shall continuously improve their professional education and knowledge of the conservation business.**

**Program:**

1. Review District policies annually.
2. Staff and Board members attend annual conferences and training courses.
3. Provide and discuss recommendations of conservation issues occurring in the county and how these issues relate to the district's mission.

**Objective: Obtain a reliable source of funding to ensure continuity of operations.**

**Program:**

1. Staff will work to maintain current grant funding as well as find new funding opportunities, whether via grants or through outreach efforts.
2. Increase the Districts capacity with additional Full-time staff members.
3. Discuss, research, and develop opportunities and strategies with the District Enhancement Committee to obtain a reliable source of funding for the District.

**Objective: Maintain integrity and positive working relationships with all partners, staff, and board members.**

**Program:**

1. Plan field trips to observe current projects.
2. Send one staff member and one or two board members to the SDAO, OACD, and OCEAN Annual Conferences.
3. Continue to maintain a presence of the District's progress to partners and constituents in the County.
4. Cultivate and enhance relationships and collaborations with partner organizations, County Commissioners, City Council, and other key leaders in pursuing a permanent tax rate.

**Objective: Continually evaluate and strengthen the Deschutes SWCD through the management of programs and projects to accomplish Deschutes County vision and mission by achieving measurable outcomes.**

**Program:**

1. Collaborate to expand our partners and working relationships.
2. Exemplify our achievements to the public to show continuing conservation efforts.
3. Maintain and update the Districts Strategic Plan.
4. Evaluate and update annual work plan as needed.
5. Work toward managing the Deschutes SWCD financial affairs consistent with General Accepted Accounting Principles and ODA Requirements.
6. Conduct annual financial audit or review in a timely manner.
7. Provide a copy of the annual budget and annual work plan to ODA for review and to ensure full technical, administrative, and financial support.
8. Continue monthly meetings of the District Enhancement Committee
9. Conduct an annual meeting where the public is invited through a public notice published in the Bulletin. The annual work plan and budget will be presented at this time.

