



Connecting Central Oregon's Water, Land & Environment

2023

**STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT**

STINGRAY
COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

A large metal wheel of an irrigation system is shown in a field of green crops. The wheel is made of metal and has a mesh basket attached to it. The background shows a clear blue sky and rolling hills.

In the dynamic landscape of 2023, the Deschutes Basin Board of Control (DBBC) directed its communication efforts toward a dual focus: highlighting the critical need for securing additional federal funds and fostering collaboration across agriculture and environmental communities.

Against the backdrop of severe drought conditions in Central Oregon, the DBBC aimed to address the challenges faced by irrigators.

This report delves into the strategic communication initiatives undertaken during the year, underscoring the emphasis on securing funding and cultivating collaborative solutions amidst the pressing issues of water scarcity in the region.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2023, the DBBC's strategic communication plan focused on three key pillars, showcasing the impactful work of the eight irrigation districts:

1. **Quantifiable Impact and Accelerated Restoration:**

Demonstrating a commitment to tangible results, the DBBC emphasized:

- Conservation Projects: Highlighting the number of initiated projects.
- Planning and Design: Detailing ongoing and upcoming conservation projects in the planning and design phases.
- Water Returned Instream: Showcasing measurable increases in water returned instream.

2. **Environmental Enhancement and Water Protection:**

The DBBC is committed to improving the environment and increasing water supply reliability, directly contributing to enhancing the region's economy and lifestyle.

3. **Collaborative Approach:**

Distinguishing itself through collaboration, the DBBC engages with a diverse array of stakeholders, including farmers, ranchers, landowners, tribes, conservation groups, and local, state, and federal agencies.

COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

Request Letter to Bureau of Reclamation:

Advocated for funding under the Inflation Reduction Act, focusing on projects in the Deschutes River Basin aimed at durable reductions in water diversions and consumptive water use.

Press Release with Deschutes River Conservancy:

Celebrated the achievement of securing \$12.2 million in state funding dedicated to Deschutes Basin Water Conservation & Flow Restoration Projects.

Coordination with Family Farm Alliance Bend Bulletin "In My View":

Garnered positive attention through opinion piece, highlighting Central Oregon Irrigation modernization efforts as a model for the Western region.

Coordination with Family Farm Alliance Capital Press Opinion:

Showcased the success of Central Oregon Irrigation Districts' visionary efforts through a feature in Capital Press.

Natural Resources Conservation Alliance Service Letter:

Engaged with the State Conservationist and Interim Manager for NRCS Oregon, strengthening collaborative ties in natural resources conservation.

Coordination of Oregon Tour PL-566 Small Watershed Program:

Coordinated NRCS tour to showcase the PL-566 Small Watershed Program in Oregon.

Deschutes River Reauthorization:

Coordination on the DRC reauthorization communication.

Bend Bulletin, In My View, Arnold Irrigation District:

Featured opinion pieces highlighting the pioneering progress in the Deschutes Basin.

Bend Bulletin, In My View North Unit Irrigation District:

Highlighted the collaborative efforts of Deschutes irrigation districts working together for the betterment of the region.

Curtailment Communications:

Communicated curtailment measures to keep patrons and stakeholders informed and engaged.

IN THE NEWS

The DBBC and irrigation districts garnered substantial media attention, with over 50 mentions in a diverse range of news articles. These features were published in outlets such as CNN, Capital Press, Bend Bulletin, Source Weekly, Madras Pioneer Central Oregon Daily News, Central Oregonian, KTVZ, and Columbia Insight, among others. Coverage included critical issues related to drought and water conservation efforts.

\$6.6 million coming to Deschutes River projects to improve habitat

Merkley joins 3 C.O. irrigation districts, nonprofits to break ground on \$120 million in canal piping projects



Capital Press

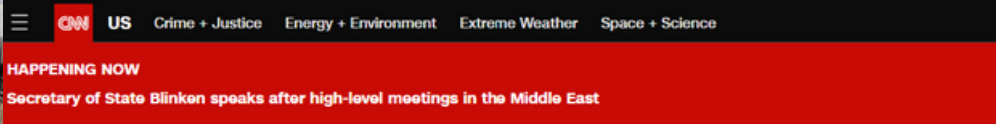
<https://www.capitalpress.com> > opinion > editorial-irrigat...

Editorial: Irrigation canals aren't suburban water features

Sep 7, 2023 — Irrigation canals exist for the exclusive purpose of delivering water to water right holders.



Michael Hanson
left to right, Michael Kirsch, (North Unit Irrigation District), Dave Moldal (Energy Trust of Oregon), Craig Horrell (Central Oregon Irrigation Control), Gary Diridoni (Natural Resources Irrigation District), U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (Springs), Bob Schuur (Arnold Irrigation District Alliance), Steve Johnson (Arnold Irrigation District) and Jim Bond (Deschutes River Conservancy) break ground on a series of upgrades on three local irrigation districts



As the West's drought eases, this area remains in the worst on record — and it's hitting farmers hard

Deschutes Basin irrigation districts prepare to curtail water due to drought

Arnold Irrigation District canal piping project underway in southeast Bend



ENVIRONMENT

'The lifelines and backbones of most rural communities': Facing threats from climate change, irrigation districts look to modernize

Some of Oregon's irrigation canals date back to the 1800s, and they're inefficient for farmers and the environment alike. But upgrades don't come cheap.

2023 SOCIAL MEDA



Social Media Goal:

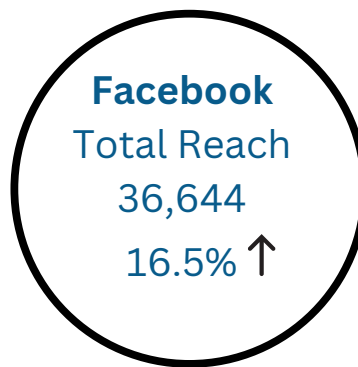
Elevate public support and confidence in the irrigation districts by raising awareness and understanding.

Followers



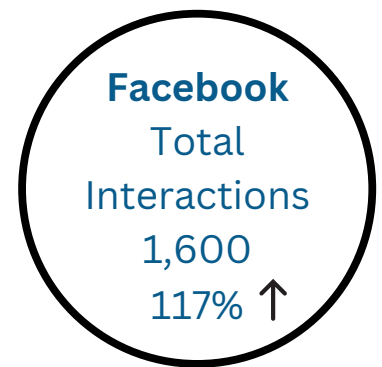
People who have opted-in to "follow" the DBBC

Reach



The number of unique users who saw the DBBC's posts

Content Interactions



The individual interactions with DBBC content

The DBBC's social media plan on Facebook focuses on generating engaging content that users will want to "like," comment on, and share. A monthly social media update calendar highlights events, promotes District activities, provides project updates, and engages with patrons and stakeholders.

2023 SOCIAL MEDA

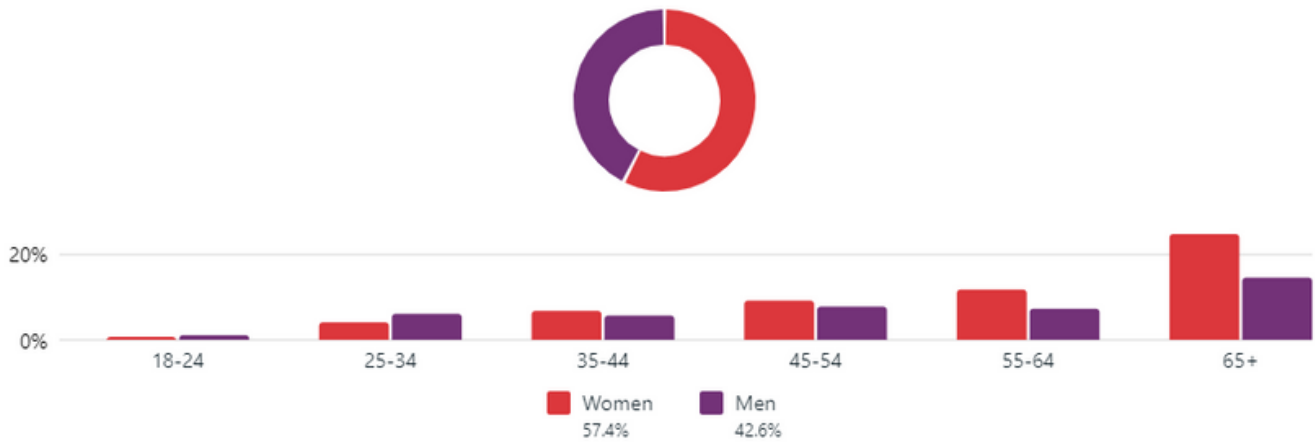
Current audience

Potential audience

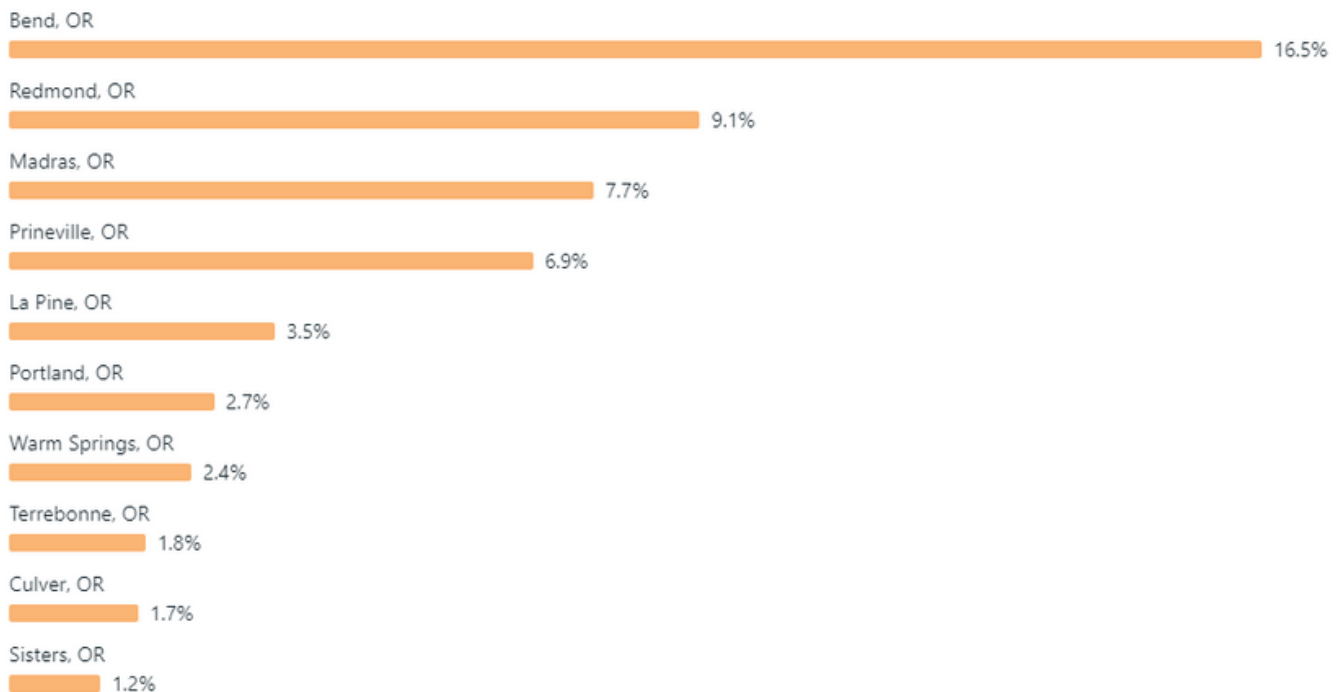
Facebook followers ⓘ

2,924

Age & gender ⓘ



Top cities



2023 SOCIAL MEDA

DBBC's Facebook reach increased 16.5% year over year.

Reach

Facebook reach ⓘ

36,644 ↑ 16.5%

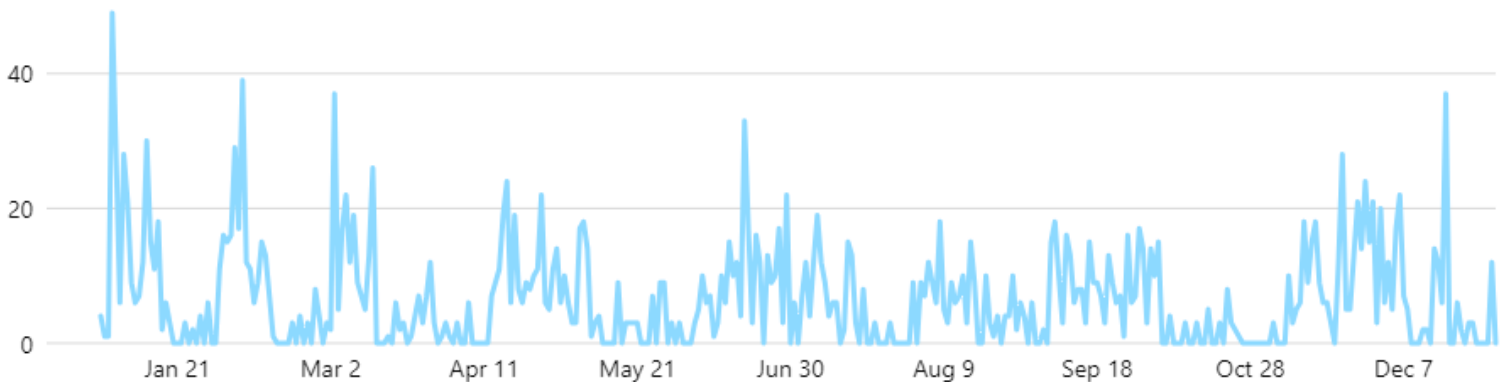


DBBC's Facebook visits increased 231.8% year over year.

Visits

Facebook visits ⓘ

2,455 ↑ 231.8%



2023 OUTREACH & EVENTS



Winter 2023: Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting: P.L. - 566 Small Watershed Program – A Report from the Field

Craig Horrell, representing the DBBC, participated as a panelist during the 2023 Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting. He shared insights on behalf of the irrigation districts to the discussion on watershed management and irrigation strategies within the context of the P.L.- 566 Small Watershed Program.

Spring 2023: OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, House Bill 3365

Craig Horrell, testified on behalf of the DBBC, in support of new legislation before the Oregon Legislative Assembly. The proposed legislation aimed to grant specific Deschutes Basin irrigation districts the temporary authority to allow changes in the place of water use or diversion points within the Deschutes Basin irrigation districts.

Spring 2023: Capitol Hill and Interior Visits

In the spring of 2023, Mike Britton, Craig Horrell, and ShanRae Hawkins represented the DBBC's interests at the federal level. Subsequently, these efforts led to the invitation of Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton and Columbia-Pacific Northwest Regional Director Jennifer Carrington, who conducted a visit to the Deschutes Basin and Crooked River on September 25.



bureau_of_reclamation

bureau_of_reclamation Last week, Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton and Columbia-Pacific Northwest Regional Director Jennifer Carrington met with key stakeholders in the Deschutes Basin and Crooked River in Oregon. Thank you to the Ochoco, North Unit, and Central Oregon Irrigation Districts for your continued partnership!

Photo 1: Ochoco Irrigation District (OID) Manager Bruce Scanlon, Commissioner Touton, OID Chairman Wade Flegel, Regional Director Jennifer Carrington at Prineville Reservoir on A.R. Bowman Dam.

Photo 2: Reclamation's CPN Liaison Kira Christensen, North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) General Manager Josh Bailey, Regional Director Carrington, Commissioner Touton, NUID Executive Manager Mike Britton, Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) District Manager Craig Horrell and Deschutes Basin Board of Control (DBBC) President at main diversion dam for NUID and COID on the Deschutes River in Bend, OR.

Photo 3: OID Board Director and Crook County Commissioner Brian Barney, OID Chairman Wade Flegel, Regional Director Jennifer Carrington, OID District Manager Bruce Scanlon, OID Operations Manager Ryan Middaugh, Commissioner Touton, OID Board Director and City of Prineville City Manager Steve Forester, and Bend Field Office Manager Greg Garnett at front of OID's pump station in Prineville, OR.

Photo 4: NUID Executive Manager Mike Britton with Commissioner Touton and NUID General Manager Josh Bailey, Looking down the main canal below the fish screen on the Deschutes River in Bend, OR.

19w

81 likes

2023 OUTREACH & EVENTS



Fall 2023: Bureau of Reclamation Tour with Commissioner Camille Touton and Columbia-Pacific Northwest Regional Director Jennifer Carrington

In a landmark event in September 2023, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton and Columbia-Pacific Northwest Regional Director Jennifer Carrington visited the Deschutes Basin and Crooked River. They met with key stakeholders in the Deschutes Basin and expressed gratitude to the Ochoco, North Unit, and Central Oregon Irrigation Districts for their ongoing partnership.

Fall 2023: Capital Hill and Interior Visits

Bruce Scanlon and Craig Horrell played key roles representing the irrigation districts during Capitol Hill and Department of Interior visits. They met with decision-makers and program officers regarding federal funding and policy direction to strategically position the irrigation district at the forefront of discussions shaping federal funding and policy decisions.

Fall 2023: Groundbreaking Ceremony for \$120M Piping Projects

Senator Jeff Merkley joined leaders from three Deschutes River Basin irrigation districts, Farmers Conservation Alliance and Energy Trust of Oregon for groundbreaking on a series of projects to modernize irrigation infrastructure.

2023 OUTREACH & EVENTS

Fall 2023: Deschutes Basin Strategic Planning

The DBBC hosted a strategic planning session in Bend on November 16, 2023. Six of eight irrigation districts participated, along with 18 Deschutes Basin stakeholders, district staff, and consultants. ShanRae Hawkins of StingRay Communications facilitated. The planning session resulted in a strategic focus on setting priorities and precisely defining goals and objectives for the year 2024.



2023: Raise the Deschutes

In 2021, the Deschutes Basin Board of Control (DBBC) played a key role in the development of the "Raise the Deschutes" campaign. Building on this initiative, the Deschutes River Conservancy has taken the campaign a step further, transforming it into the "Raise the Deschutes Seminar Series." This series is designed to enhance regional water knowledge, foster a deeper understanding of local issues, and promote awareness of the available solutions. Through this evolution, the campaign has transitioned into an educational platform, aiming to empower the community with valuable insights and information about the Deschutes River and its surrounding environment.



MEDIA COVERAGE



Central Oregon Daily: December 19, 2023

[\\$6.6 million coming to Deschutes River projects to improve habitat](#)

Central Oregon Daily: November 22, 2023

[\\$14 million coming to Central Oregon water conservation projects](#)

Central Oregon Daily: November 1, 2023

[Arnold Irrigation District canal piping project underway in southeast Bend](#)

Capital Press, October 24, 2023

[Irrigation districts celebrate piping project to replace leaky canals](#)

Central Oregon Daily: October 26, 2023

[9 Central Oregon farms, ranches win grants for promoting efficiency](#)

Central Oregon Daily: October 20, 2023

[Central Oregon irrigation districts break ground on major piping project](#)

Central Oregon Daily: October 6, 2023

[Little Did I Know: The dam history of the Deschutes River](#)

Capital Press, September 7, 2023

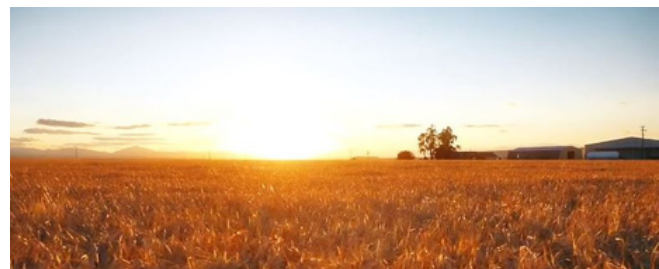
Editorial: Irrigation canals aren't suburban water features

KTVZ, September 3, 2023

[Severe drought, now in its fourth year, is increasing production costs for C.O. farmers and ranchers](#)

Bend Bulletin, September 5, 2023

[Central Oregon Irrigation District launches campaign to save water](#)



MEDIA COVERAGE



Bend Bulletin, August 26, 2023

[Higher reservoirs helping irrigation districts navigate drought](#)

Source Weekly, August 16, 2023

[Drought Ongoing, New Water Laws Incoming](#)

Central Oregon Daily, July 5, 2023

[Deschutes Basin irrigation districts prepare to curtail water due to drought](#)

Central Oregon Daily, April 13, 2023

[Streamflows rise into Ochoco and Prineville reservoirs; hope for farmers](#)

Bend Bulletin, April 13, 2023

[Central Oregon makes progress against drought, but water deficits loom](#)

Central Oregon Daily, April 24, 2023

[Deschutes River Conservancy gets \\$2.7 million for water canal improvements](#)

Central Oregon Daily, April 13, 2023

[Streamflows rise into Ochoco and Prineville reservoirs; hope for farmers](#)

Columbia Insight, March 30, 2023

[Amid Deschutes drought, farmers and frogs struggle to share water](#)

Bend Bulletin, March 29, 2023

[Jefferson County famers will get more water this year, but challenges remain in drought-hit area](#)

CNN, March 4, 2023

[As the West's drought eases, this area remains in the worst on record — and it's hitting farmers hard](#)

Central Oregon Daily, February 8, 2023

[What is a 'stock run'? Water for livestock, stock ponds to flow again](#)

Bend Bulletin: February 7, 2023

[Four years of drought taking a toll on weary Central Oregon farmers](#)

Bend Bulletin: January 17, 2023

[North Unit modernization project promises water saving for farmers, rivers](#)

OPB, January 13, 2023

[Despite rainy weather in parts of the state, Central Oregon remains in extreme drought](#)

Central Oregon Daily, January 10, 2023

[\\$28,000 in federal funds going to modernize Arnold Irrigation District](#)

Adapting to a New Era of

Water Management & Conservation



Deschutes Basin
Board of Control



Connecting Central Oregon's Water, Land & Environment

What We Do



Ensure a predictable and reliable water supply to the Deschutes Basin.



Convey
water to
7,653
patrons



Irrigate over 150,000
acres throughout the
Deschutes Basin



Contribute
annually
to fish and
wildlife habitat
conservation



Partner with
stakeholders



Create
jobs for
economic
growth

Habitat Conservation Plan



CONSERVATION MEASURES



30 years of protection

for steelhead trout, bulltrout, sockeye salmon, and Oregon spotted frogs.

Maintain winter flows in the Crooked River downstream of Bowman Dam of at least

50cfs

In 30 years, the HCP will improve winter flows from **100cfs to 400-500cfs** and summer flows down to **1200cfs from 1800cfs.**

Increase summer flows and provide habitat restoration funds

for Whychus, Ochoco, and McKay Creeks.

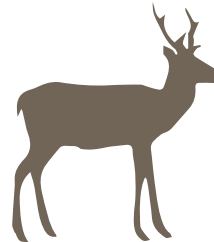


480 miles

of rivers and creeks affected by eight irrigation districts and the City of Prineville will be addressed.

Year-round habitat for Oregon spotted frogs

in Crane Prairie Reservoir, upper Deschutes River, Crescent Creek, and the Little Deschutes River.



OUR WORK

\$174,000

contributed annually by the City of Prineville and irrigation districts to fish and wildlife habitat conservation. Over **\$5.2 million** in restoration funds collected over the next 30 years.

12 years of collaboration

between irrigators, federal and state agencies, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, multiple non-governmental organizations, counties, cities, and the general public in the Deschutes Basin of Central Oregon.

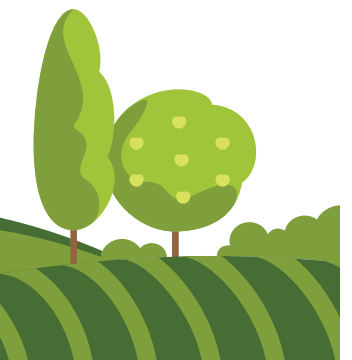


9,000+

residents are served by the City of Prineville. Providing essential services, including public safety, municipal water supply, and sewage treatment.

151,000 irrigated acres

and over 17,600 patrons are collectively served by the irrigation districts.



Creating a Positive Impact



Modernization projects throughout the irrigation districts in the Deschutes Basin will create multiple benefits for our local communities.



Conserve 165.7 million gallons of water annually.



Support 4,946 jobs through these projects.



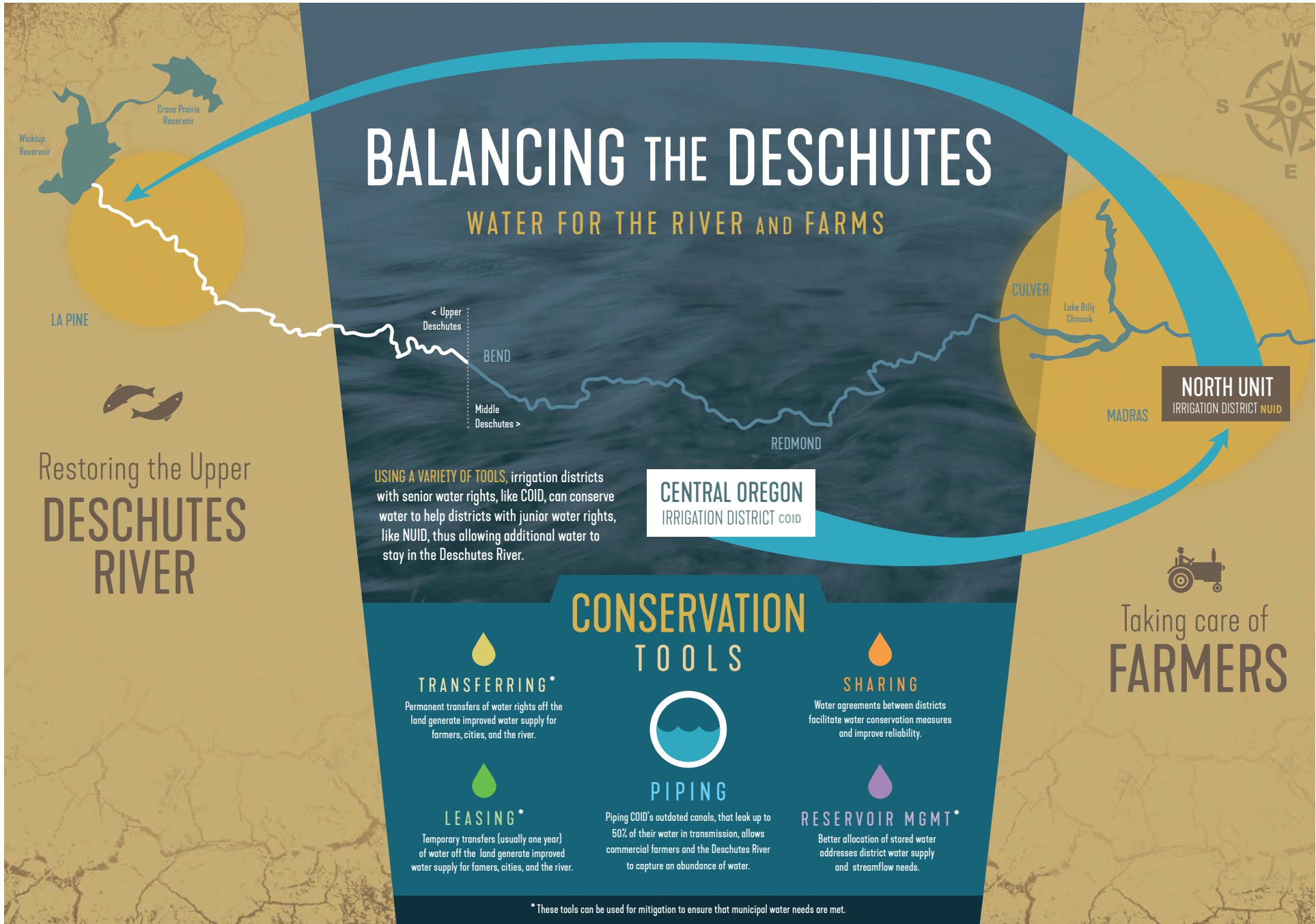
\$219.9 million in economic development for our rural communities.



Generate more than 10-15 megawatts of new hydropower using irrigation water.

BALANCING THE DESCHUTES

WATER FOR THE RIVER AND FARMS



Restoring the Upper
**DESCHUTES
RIVER**

USING A VARIETY OF TOOLS, irrigation districts with senior water rights, like COID, can conserve water to help districts with junior water rights, like NUID, thus allowing additional water to stay in the Deschutes River.

**CENTRAL OREGON
IRRIGATION DISTRICT COID**

**NORTH UNIT
IRRIGATION DISTRICT NUID**

CONSERVATION TOOLS



TRANSFERRING*

Permanent transfers of water rights off the land generate improved water supply for farmers, cities, and the river.



LEASING*

Temporary transfers (usually one year) of water off the land generate improved water supply for farmers, cities, and the river.



PIPING

Piping COID's outdated canals, that leak up to 50% of their water in transmission, allows commercial farmers and the Deschutes River to capture an abundance of water.



SHARING

Water agreements between districts facilitate water conservation measures and improve reliability.



RESERVOIR MGMT*

Better allocation of stored water addresses district water supply and streamflow needs.

Taking care of
FARMERS

* These tools can be used for mitigation to ensure that municipal water needs are met.

Key Milestones



Central Oregon irrigation districts have successfully implemented over **\$53 million** in projects, conserving over **49 cfs/12,000 AF** annually, and ensuring more water for farmers, food, and fish.



Completed Conservation Projects

COID
Phase 1 delivered **29 cfs**
conserved water to NUID

TID
18.8 cfs



Anticipated Conservation Projects

AID **40.5 cfs**
COID **127 cfs**
LPID **8.8 cfs**
NUID **31.8 cfs**
OID **17.2 cfs**
SID **6.1 cfs**
TID **1.4 cfs**

Investment

Grants & Requests for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024



Support for Deschutes Basin Irrigation Modernization Projects

Arnold Irrigation

Central Oregon Irrigation
Pilot Butte Canal Modernization
Phases 2-10

North Unit Irrigation

Tumalo Irrigation

Swalley Irrigation

Support for Improvement Ventures

Lake Billy Chinook
Feasibility Study

**North Unit
Irrigation District**
Bend Fish Screen
Replacement

**Ochoco
Irrigation District**
Title Transfer

Path of Progress



Central Oregon Irrigation

Smith Rock Way & King Way 1A (2)
Complete

Smith Rock & King Way 1B
Complete

Pilot Butte Canal Phases 2-14
Mar 28



Swalley

Rogers Way
Apr 20

MC-7
Apr 24

Elder Lateral
Apr 25



Tumalo

Tumalo Feed VB
Complete

Tumalo Feed VB
Complete

Tumalo Feed VB
Complete

Pipes Group 6A
Complete

Pipes Group 4
Mar 24

Pipes Group 6B
Mar 25

Measurement
& Monitoring
Mar 23



North Unit

31,32,34,43 Lateral Piping
Mar 29

Main Canal Automation
Mar 24

41-9/58-3-2 Lateral Piping
Apr 23

Main Canal Lining
Apr 23

Bend Diversion
Fish Screens
(Design and SHPO
complete)
Unknown



Ochoco

Group 1
McKay Switch
Mar 24

Group 2
Grimes Flat Piping
Mar 24

Group 3
IronHorse Piping
Mar 23



Arnold

Main Canal Phase 1
Mar 2024

Main Canal Phase 2
Mar 2025

Main Canal Phase 3
Mar 2026

Main Canal Phase 4
Mar 2027



Lone Pine

Mar 23





A Pivotal Moment

The time is now to help rural communities increase water reliability and restore fish and wildlife habitat, while also investing in critical infrastructure and creating opportunities for economic growth.



dbbcirrigation.com

 **Deschutes Basin
Board of Control** 
Connecting Central Oregon's Water, Land & Environment

Deschutes Basin Water Resilience

Addressing Drought & Ecosystem Health

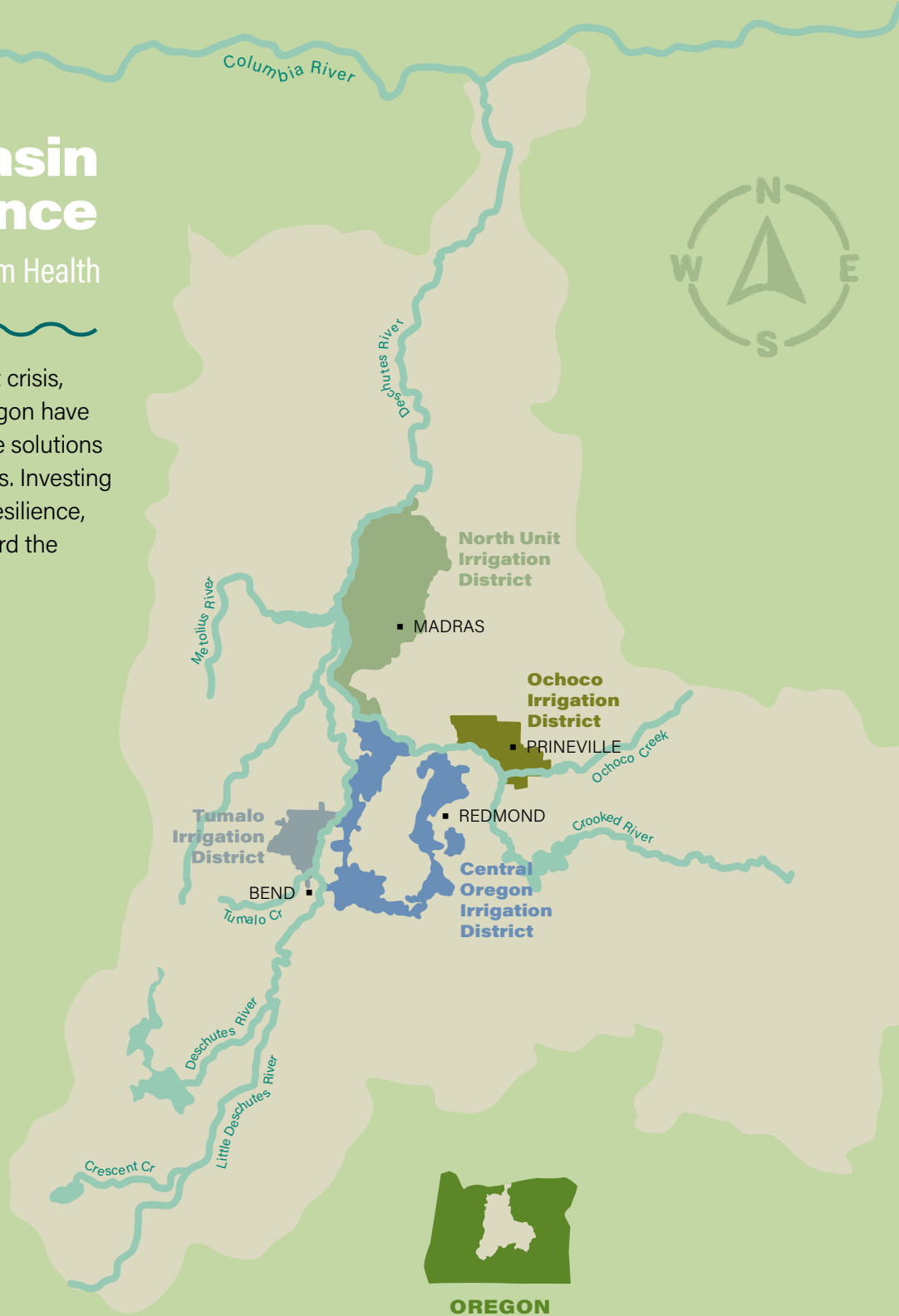
Amidst the nation's persistent drought crisis, eight irrigation districts in Central Oregon have shovel-ready projects offering tangible solutions to water scarcity and ecosystem stress. Investing in these initiatives can bolster water resilience, support local agriculture, and safeguard the environment for generations to come.

Drought Conditions

Central Oregon's historic multi-year drought crisis continues, with Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties in severe drought.

Despite a slight improvement in 2023, major storage reservoirs like Wickiup Reservoir in the Deschutes Basin remain critically low.

Natural river flows, the lowest on record since 1930, have been drastically reduced, affecting both agriculture and ecosystems.



Creating a Postive Impact



Increases water reliability and drought resilience



Decreases water diversion by a combined 20.55 cfs (7,337 acre-feet)



Improves habitat for Oregon spotted frog, salmon, steelhead, and other fish and wildlife



Increases instream flows in the Deschutes River

Project Highlights

The proposed projects aim to conserve water through strategic initiatives, mitigating the effects of drought and enhancing water availability for various stakeholders.



North Unit Irrigation District

Conversion of 7.75 miles of open ditch to buried pipe for enhanced water conservation and ecosystem health. Segment 1 of a multi-segment, multi-year project covering 27 miles and conserving nearly 18 cfs.



WATER SAVINGS

Estimated annual savings of 4 cfs for segment 1, equivalent to 1,428 acre-feet per irrigation.



COST

\$8.4 million, approximately \$59/acre-foot. Total project cost, all segments, \$34 million.



READINESS

Approved Watershed Plan, environmental analysis completed, construction to begin October 2023.



Central Oregon Irrigation District

Installation of a 114" pipe over 2.06 miles along King Way.



WATER SAVINGS

Estimated to conserve 11 cfs, equivalent to 3,920 acre-feet per irrigation season.



COST

\$21 million, approximately \$54/acre-foot.



READINESS

Environmental Impact Statement by May 2024, construction starting October 2024.



Ochoco Irrigation District

Conversion of 8.2 miles of open canal to buried pipe with a new pump station.



WATER SAVINGS

Estimated 3.8 cfs, amounting to 1,356 acre-feet per irrigation season.



COST

\$7-8 million, approximately \$52-59/acre-foot.



READINESS

Environmental analysis completed; immediate construction possible.



Tumalo Irrigation District

Conversion of 10.29 miles of open canals to buried pipe and installation of 82 turnouts.



WATER SAVINGS

Expected conservation of 1.75 cfs, totaling 625 acre-feet per irrigation season.



COST

\$8.44 million, around \$134/acre-foot.



READINESS

Environmental analysis completed; immediate construction possible.

Deschutes River Conservancy Reauthorization



Formed in 1996 by a coalition including the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, agricultural, and environmental stakeholders, the Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) implements innovative, results-oriented approaches to restore streamflow and improve water quality in the Deschutes Basin. Leveraging its diverse board and a strong community-based partnership approach, the DRC improves water supply reliability by enhancing flexible water management options for Central Oregon farms, fish and wildlife, and communities.

Deschutes River Conservancy's Impact To Date

The DRC converts strategic planning and effective partnership building into tangible, impactful action:



\$200M+ Public Investment in Water



350 CFS* Restored to Basin Streams

The equivalent of over 14 Olympic-sized swimming pools per hour. *CFS = cubic feet per second



Water Supply Reliability Increased

for over 150,000 acres and 7,653 irrigation patrons



100+ Miles of Irrigation Canals Piped



45+ Local and Regional Groups Engaged



Securing a Water Future

for over 280,000 Central Oregon citizens

Reauthorization

Reauthorization would enable the DRC to receive \$2M/year in direct appropriations through the Bureau of Reclamation, for ten years, to expand proven water management strategies including:

- irrigation district infrastructure improvements
- on-farm water efficiency projects
- voluntary, market-based incentive programs
- instream flow restoration

Leveraged with other private and public funding, the DRC will be well positioned to accelerate solutions that balance river restoration with community needs in the context of more extreme and frequent drought and rapidly growing communities.

"The DRC's work is crucial in shaping the water future in the Deschutes Basin. They're essential in helping to preserve our treaty Tribes' ways of life for future generations."

Bobby Brunoe
CEO, Secretary/Treasurer
of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

"The DRC champions scientific water management and streamflow restoration in the Deschutes Basin. Its reauthorization ensures continued balance of ecosystem preservation and livelihood support."

Mike Britton
Executive Manager of North Unit Irrigation District