

HOOD RIVER WATERSHED GROUP

2019 Annual Report



Hood River
WATERSHED GROUP



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Photo: Sam Doak

2019 has been a productive year for the Hood River Watershed Group. We have:

- Secured **\$237,695** in funding for habitat restoration, water conservation, and planning projects;
- partnered with local organizations and agencies to restore **0.6 miles** of stream habitat with **380 pieces** of large wood, and to remove **two culverts** that opened up **1.3 miles** of habitat for fish;
- and worked with local irrigation districts to **conserve water** on the West and East Forks of the Hood River through distribution system upgrades.

We are grateful for the support of our Watershed Group members and local partnerships that make this work possible. Take a glimpse inside for more details on what we've been up to over the past year.

Cindy Thieman, Watershed Coordinator
& Alix Danielsen, Restoration & Outreach Project Manager

Our mission is to sustain and improve the Hood River Watershed through education, cooperation, and stewardship.

Core partners include: Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District (HRSWCD), Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs (CTWS), East Fork Irrigation District (EFID), Middle Fork Irrigation District (MFID), Farmers Irrigation District (FID), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)



Watershed 2040 Gathering:

- In May, 40 guests joined us for a discussion about Watershed 2040
- Speakers Kathryn Arendt, USFS, Blayne Eineichner, CTWS, and Les Perkins, FID spoke on the importance of fish in the Watershed, the Tribes' restoration efforts, and the importance of water conservation
- Cindy Thieman wrapped up the presentation with an overview of the goals of the Watershed 2040 plan and the next steps in the process

Thank you to all who attended.
Stay tuned for more updates!

HOOD RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Watershed Group received \$110,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to develop a Strategic Action Plan to guide our conservation work for the next 20 years. The plan - referred to as **Watershed 2040** - identifies and prioritizes restoration and management actions that will improve conditions and restore aquatic habitat for native fish species. Over the past two years, Watershed 2040 partners have met to identify long-term outcomes, develop progress monitoring tools, build financial strategies, and identify and map specific

actions they will take to achieve desired goals. High priority actions include continuing to invest in on-farm water conservation, irrigation delivery infrastructure, and fish habitat restoration. New efforts will include additional water conservation practices like irrigation water management, residential water conservation, and possibly developing a local water bank. We also hope to improve fish habitat near the mouth of the Hood River and engage a broader cross-section of the community in our work.

Watershed 2040 Goal

"By 2040, watershed conditions support viable populations of native fish and other aquatic species. Salmon, steelhead, and bull trout populations are on a trajectory towards recovery."

2019 WATERSHED GROUP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Restoration Projects



West Fork Jones Creek Habitat Restoration

This fish enhancement project was a joint effort by the Forest Service, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs (CTWS), and the Watershed Group. Restoration efforts consisted of placing approximately 380 logs along a half-mile reach of the upper West Fork Hood River and its floodplain, and improving and expanding salmonid spawning and rearing habitat within the treatment reach.

OWEB: \$72,704 CTWS: \$94,000 USFS: \$228,000

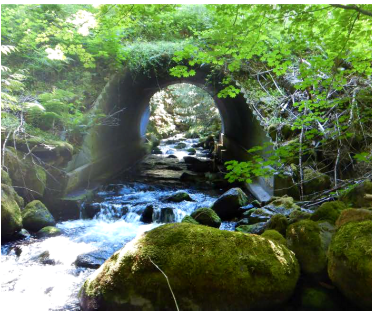


Evans Creek Hutson Drive Fish Passage Project

The County has been working with the Watershed Group and CTWS to restore fish passage on Evans Creek at Hutson Drive. After a few iterations of design and permits the project was implemented this summer. Two undersized culverts were removed, a new culvert was installed under Hutson Drive, and 400 feet of stream channel was restored to its original location. Native trees and shrubs were planted throughout the riparian area.

OWEB: \$400,000 CTWS: \$180,740 County: \$355,073

Design & Planning Projects



Bear Creek Fish Passage

The Watershed Group contracted with River Design Group to design a bridge for a fish passage project on Bear Creek, a tributary to the Middle Fork Hood River. The project will consist of removing a culvert and replacing it with a new bridge crossing to enhance fish passage and stream processes. The existing culvert limits upstream migration of threatened bull trout and winter steelhead. The next step will be to secure implementation funding.

HRWG: \$12,000 USFS: \$50,000



Neal Creek Habitat Restoration Preliminary Design

In 2018, the Watershed Group used funding from CTWS to contract with Inter-Fluve to complete an analysis of restoration opportunities along Neal Creek and develop conceptual designs for four sites. In 2019, the Watershed Group began the process of developing full designs for two of the sites, totaling 0.5 stream miles of restoration. This will include topographic surveying, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, and design drawings. The Watershed Group will pursue implementation funding in 2020.

Pacific Power Blue Sky Habitat Fund: \$27,500 CTWS: \$30,000

Eastside Lateral Pipeline Design

In partnership with East Fork Irrigation District, the Watershed Group secured supplemental funding (\$35,090, OWEB) to design the Eastside Lateral Pipeline Project and survey cultural resources. Remaining project funding for design was provided by CTWS (\$450,000).

Water Bank Feasibility Study

In April, the Watershed Group completed a Water Bank Feasibility Study that evaluated the viability of a water bank - a voluntary tool for leasing water - to increase summer stream flows for fish and provide greater irrigation water reliability for perennial crop growers during dry or drought years. Stay tuned for more details about next steps.

Dee Irrigation District Piping Project

This project will replace DID's 31,711-ft distribution system pipe with pressure pipe, build a centralized pump station, and install flow meters at all irrigation turn outs. This will save energy and leave more water in the West Fork Hood River to benefit threatened salmon and trout. The Watershed Group helped secure \$1.6 million from OWRD, \$225,587 from OWEB, and \$63,378 from the Governor's Regional Solutions Fund.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

In 2020, the Watershed Group will be working on:

- finalizing Watershed 2040, the Basin-wide Strategic Action Plan;
- implementing and supporting several habitat restoration and water conservation projects, including a large wood project on the West Fork Hood River, an innovative pollinator habitat project on Farmers Irrigation District infrastructure, the Eastside Lateral Pipeline project, and the Coe Branch Pipeline project, and;
- pursuing funding for future project implementation in 2021.

WHO WE ARE

We'd like to extend our gratitude to Megan Saunders for her 10 years of service to the Watershed Group as the Watershed Project Manager. Her contributions are countless, and she will be missed! Thank you, Megan!

Staff

Cindy Thieman, Watershed Coordinator

Alix Danielsen, Restoration & Outreach Project Manager

Operations Committee

HRWG Chair - Chuck Gehling

HRSWCD District Manager - Heather Hendrixson

Irrigation District Manager - Craig Dehart

Agriculture - Jim Wells

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs - Blayne Eineichner

At-large - Kate Conley

Recreation - Greg Short

Forestry - Sam Doak

Natural Resources - Phil Simpson



Learn more about the Watershed Group:

We have a new website! hoodriverwatershed.org

We have social media:

Instagram & Facebook @hoodriverwatershed

Monthly Watershed Group presentations take place on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 6-8pm (no meetings in August and December).

Join our mailing list for meeting reminders, volunteer opportunities, and project updates!

Thank you for your continued support for watershed planning and conservation.