

# HOOD RIVER WATERSHED GROUP *2023 Annual Report*



Greetings Watershed Community!

2023 was a year of acceleration for the Watershed Group. We completed a fish passage project that had been on Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's priority list for decades. We also directed the development of four large restoration projects for implementation in 2024 and 2025, which will remediate fish passage barriers and add hundreds of pieces of large wood back into our rivers and streams. Our community connections increased as well, with many new faces at our Watershed Group meetings, new business partners, and four new members joining our 9-member board. And finally, our annual budget was over \$1 million, which is a strong showing for our first full year as a nonprofit organization!

We could not have achieved these accomplishments without the strong support of our Watershed Group community and partners. Our dedicated board members have provided inspiring suggestions (like the pie auction at our Annual Celebration!) and dedicated oversight as we forged new procedures and practices. Volunteers have removed hundreds of Himalayan blackberry plants, planted dozens of native trees and shrubs, and helped nurture the new plantings with water and mulch. Finally, our partners leaned into our Focused Investment Partnership grant application to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, which culminated in an award in April 2024!

We are grateful for everyone's contributions and excited for the future!

Cindy Thieman, Executive Director  
& Alix Danielsen, Restoration & Outreach Project Manager



**\$882,662 in grant funds  
secured for restoration &  
conservation projects**



**5 miles of habitat  
opened up to native  
fish in Tony Creek**



**4 restoration project  
designs underway**

# 2023 FINANCIALS

## Revenue Sources

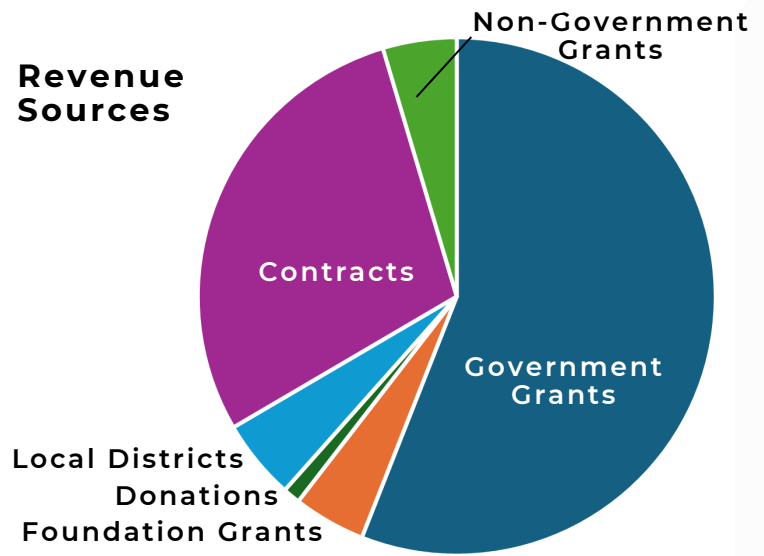
Government Grants	\$682,554
Foundation Grants	\$55,000
Individual & Business Donations	\$13,122
Local Districts	\$61,000
Service Contracts	\$351,375
Non-Government Grants	\$56,239
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	<b>\$1,219,290</b>

## Expenses by Program

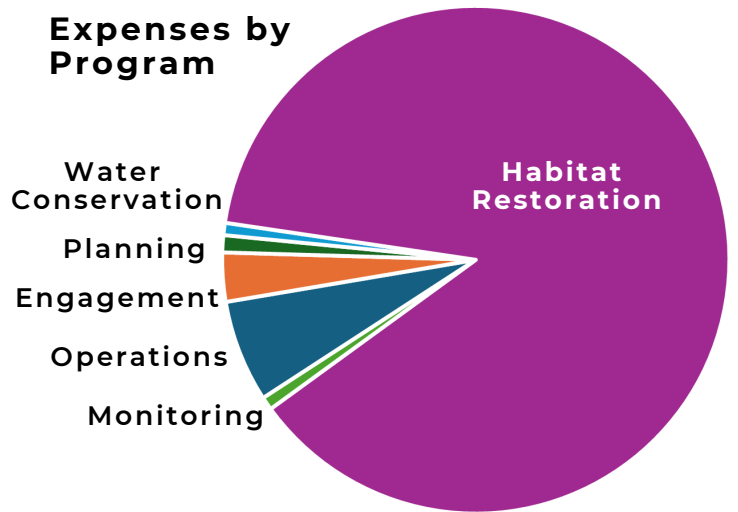
Operations	\$70,577
Community Engagement	\$33,875
Water Conservation	\$8,458
Aquatic Habitat & Fish Passage	\$950,910
Monitoring	\$9,042
Conservation Planning & Partnership	\$11,841
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	<b>\$1,084,702</b>

**Net 2023 Revenue: \$134,863**

## Revenue Sources



## Expenses by Program



## WHO WE ARE

### Staff

Cindy Thieman, Executive Director

Alix Danielsen, Restoration & Outreach Project Manager

### Board of Directors

Chuck Gehling

Les Perkins

Sam Doak

Lilian Dick

Greg Short

Chuti Fiedler

Alexis Vaivoda

Felipe Mendez

Hilary Doulos

### Core Partners

Hood River Soil & Water Conservation

District, Confederated Tribes of the

Warm Springs, East Fork Irrigation

District, Middle Fork Irrigation District,

Farmers Irrigation District, Oregon

Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S.

Forest Service



*The Hood River Watershed Group* works with private landowners, community members, irrigation districts, tribes, and agencies to improve watershed health through stream and riparian habitat restoration, irrigation modernization, fish screening at water diversions, fish passage barrier removal, monitoring, and more.





## 2023 WATERSHED GROUP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### ***Tony Creek Fish Passage Project***

In the summer of 2023, the Watershed Group, in partnership and with funding from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs (CTWS) and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, restored fish passage at a diversion dam on Tony Creek that had blocked upstream passage since 1965. Tony Creek is an important clearwater tributary to the glacial Middle Fork Hood River, with populations of ESA-listed spring Chinook, winter steelhead, coho, and bull trout, as well as resident cutthroat trout. To restore fish passage, we rebuilt 300 feet of the creek below the dam, widening the channel to spread out the energy of the creek, creating backwater resting pools, and raising the channel bed so fish can pass over the dam and access five miles of cold, clearwater habitat.



### ***Neal Creek Habitat Restoration***

In 2023, the Watershed Group began designing a third phase of restoration along Neal Creek on Hood River County forest land with funding from CTWS. The project will enhance two miles of Neal Creek by returning a section of the creek to its historic channel length and adding approximately 690 pieces of large wood to the channel, resulting in the reconnection of over 20 acres of floodplain. This project builds upon Phase 1 and 2 of Neal Creek habitat restoration, which were constructed in 2021 and 2022 and restored a total of 1.25 miles of Neal Creek and its floodplain for juvenile rearing and adult holding and spawning habitat. Construction is planned for the summer of 2024.



### ***Baldwin Creek Fish Passage & Habitat Enhancement***

Baldwin Creek is a clearwater tributary to the Lower East Fork Hood River with populations of winter steelhead, coho, and resident trout. The Watershed Group worked with five private landowners on a design that will enhance 1.25 miles of instream habitat, improve passage to approximately two miles of stream, and reconnect up to 11 acres of floodplain on Baldwin Creek. Work will include replacing an undersized, perched culvert with an arched stream simulation culvert, creating a roughened channel to eliminate the passage barrier at the diversion dam, reconnecting the floodplain, and improving instream habitat with large wood structures.







## 2023 WATERSHED GROUP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### ***Lower East Fork Habitat Restoration***

The Watershed Group, in partnership with CTWS, is developing a series of habitat restoration projects along the Lower East Fork Hood River, a biologically important river for spring Chinook, winter steelhead, and coho salmon. In 2023, we initiated design work for two phases of restoration, working with 13 private landowners to enhance spawning and rearing habitat along approximately 2.5 miles of river. 2023 design work was funded by CTWS.



### ***Community Engagement***

The Watershed Group held six public presentations in 2023, with topics including freshwater mussels and environmental justice in river restoration. You can re-watch all presentations on our website. In April, we hosted an Earth Day weeding and planting work party along Indian Creek with 20 volunteers. Thank you to our volunteers and the Jubitz Family Foundation for supporting this work!



### ***Monitoring***

The Watershed Group annually monitors restoration projects to evaluate if restoration actions are having their intended effect and to improve future projects. In 2023, the Watershed Group initiated the development of a basin-wide monitoring plan for the Hood River Basin Partnership that will help the Partnership measure progress in implementing restoration, conservation, and water quality projects



In 2024, the Watershed Group will be implementing the Neal Creek Phase 3 and Baldwin Creek projects, continuing the Lower East Fork Hood River design development, conducting a feasibility and conceptual design study of the Powerdale Corridor, hiring a Watershed Technician, and hosting presentations and volunteer work parties!

***Thank you to our 2023 funders for making this work possible,  
including the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Oregon Watershed Enhancement  
Board, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, local Irrigation Districts,  
Pacific Power Blue Sky Fund, the Jubitz Family Foundation, and individual donors!***

***Learn more about the Watershed Group:***

[www.hoodriverwatershed.org](http://www.hoodriverwatershed.org)  
Instagram & Facebook: @hoodriverwatershed

Monthly Watershed Group presentations take place most months  
on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 6-7pm.

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