



Klamath Watershed Partnership

2024 Annual Report

205 Riverside Drive, Suite C, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601



The removal of four dams on the Klamath River and the first return of chinook salmon to the Upper Basin and Spencer Creek in Oregon for the first time since 1912 made 2024 a historical year for the Upper Klamath Basin. Although the dams are gone, much work remains to improve habitat and water quality in the river, its tributaries, Lake Ewauna, in Upper Klamath Lake, and the rivers that flow into it. Along with the world's largest dam removal project has come unprecedented funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Klamath Watershed Partnership (KWP) is working with federal, state, and local agencies along with other NGOs and regional Tribal partners and Tribal entities to put this funding on the ground through various projects. Many skilled local contractors will be hired to make this work happen.

In the October 2024 board meeting KWP staff and board members discussed options for the future of our own strategic action plans in the Klamath Basin. The consensus has been that KWP serves the community best with an overall watershed focus. The various federal, state, county, and tribal objectives lead the water and fisheries decisions and we align ourselves to be conducive to more holistic collaboration. With much of the landowner perception beyond agency control, we have cautioned against the reliance on a singular action plan perspective. KWP is dedicated to finding community watershed needs and filling gaps to support all of these water conservation objectives. This cannot be stressed enough in our efforts to be a collaborator with multiple interested parties to bridge divides in philosophical differences. We focus on gaps in core programs that support overall watershed health that can be grouped by the following categories: riparian and wetland restoration, upland watershed and forest health, outreach and technical assistance, and irrigation efficiency and modernization. Our willingness to work with all parties puts us in a unique position to be a part of multiple Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) applications, multiple Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program proposals, and other multiple group efforts and collaboratives that work across partisan differences.

Our projects include collaboration with various partners and provide benefits related to fisheries, waterbirds, water quality, or forest health while accounting for the needs of individual landowners.

Mission Statement: To conserve, enhance and restore the natural resources of the Klamath Basin, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the regional economy and local communities.

This report highlights many of the 2024 accomplishments of the staff and board at Klamath Watershed Partnership. Many projects don't fit neatly into just one category since properties often have multiple types of habitats and needs to address. Well-designed projects will address multiple needs and have multiple benefits across the landscape and this holistic-minded approach is a goal for KWP when planning and implementing projects. Water, wildlife, and fire don't recognize land boundaries and the more different interested parties that can work together on a larger scale, the greater the impact these individual efforts will be.

Partners

KWP works with a wide range of partners, including but not limited to:

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Klamath Soil and Water Conservation District (KSWCD), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), The Klamath Tribes (TKT), Modoc Nation, US Forest Service (USFS), Trout Unlimited (TU), Sustainable Northwest (SNW), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT), Oregon State University Extension, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Green Diamond Resource Company (GDRC), Willamette Partnership, Wallowa Resources, Klamath County Economic Development Association, Klamath County, the City of Klamath Falls, and many private farms and ranches throughout the county.

Local Business Support KWP strives to patronize local businesses and contractors to complete projects when possible. KWP projects not only benefit the functioning of the watershed and landowners, but bring in money to be spent in the local economy. In 2024 projects we administered resulted in approximately \$1,202,943.56 spent at businesses and contractors located in the upper Klamath Basin, \$340,866.15 spent outside of the basin but regionally in neighboring counties, and \$457,077.18 outside of the region. 2024 projects also led to approximately \$107,270.89 spent on government agencies located in Klamath County helping support more local jobs. Approximately \$10,063.08 was spent on local non-government organizations and \$8,233.00 was spent at The Klamath Tribes' Sprague River Water Quality Lab. KWP now employs five full-time employees and not included in these numbers was funding spent at local gas stations for site visits. The funding support varies from year to year, but we are proud of the multiple benefits these projects provide.

Riparian Restoration/Fisheries Conservation

As part of the USFWS BIL funding for restoration in the Klamath Basin, KWP has administered a grant specific to planning work in the Keno Stretch of the Klamath River. This effort started with facilitated meetings to identify key areas of interest and has expanded restoration opportunities from the Keno dam to Lake Ewauna. This work alone could keep the organization busy for a few years. Through the efforts of multiple partners, KWP has acquired almost \$4 million dollars in just the past year and a half from the USFWS to support various restoration projects specific to Lake Ewauna Wellness. The Lake Ewauna Wellness project includes the restoration of a former agricultural property along the western side of Lake Ewauna. A flow-through wetland will be created with plans for a canoe and paddleboard trail, hiking trails, and enhanced birding opportunities. Native plants have been already been installed from Veteran's Park to the Fairfield Inn Hotel with more plantings to come in future years. Meetings are also taking place to add additional recreation infrastructure to potentially add a pedestrian bridge

across the southern end of Lake Ewauna and make a complete loop around the lake. Enhanced access points and interpretive signage are also being planned. This is a very exciting project that blends ecosystem restoration and recreation near the heart of Klamath Falls and involves many project partners and multiple funders. This project will provide ecosystem benefits through enhanced habitat and recreational benefits near the core of downtown Klamath Falls. Pictured below is a rendering of the wetland including kayak/paddleboard trail, observation deck, and hiking trail.



KWP submitted a grant proposal for restoring high elevation wetlands in the Klamath Basin for the threatened Oregon Spotted Frog through OWEB monitoring funds in November of 2024. This is support for the overall Jack Creek restoration that KWP has focused on for many years. In 2023 we got some funding to install low-tech, processed based restoration (LTBPR) beaver dam analogues (BDAs) and this additional monitoring money would support the existing USFWS funds dedicated to the LTPBR work in the area. This was a long time coming as KWP had hoped for this level of investment dedicated to Jack Creek since as far back as 2012. Fifteen BDAs were installed in September. Piezometers were installed in November 2024 which will be used to evaluate the response to the BDAs using quantitative data. Pictured below is a game camera installed at the Jack Creek site that will take a picture every day to document physical changes to the floodplain and channel.



KWP completed a grant to support the state through the OWEB-funded stream classification database work that had been ongoing since 2016. The Oregon Department of Forestry used modeling as guided by the Private Forest Accord changes to the Forest Practices Act. This field-level survey work has uncovered discrepancies in modeling by identifying poor characterization of perennial and fish-bearing streams that could impact ODF, ODFW, and private landowners. Ground-truthing through this grant showed large discrepancies with the results of the model. 1,231 points were surveyed across the Upper Klamath Basin including 500 “streams” identified by the model. Two-thirds of the surveys documented a lack of a stream and most others documented seasonal flow. Without this ground-truthing, these “streams” would have to be protected as perennial streams. The work may continue through future support as deemed necessary. Pictured below is a map of survey points on the modelled “streams.”



Biochar Filtration pilot studies began in 2019 with support from Pacific Power and the USFWS to determine feasibility of using engineered biochar as a medium for absorbing phosphorous and excess nutrients in order to improve water quality at farm canals and tailwater returns that enter Upper Klamath Lake. Phosphorous levels in undeveloped areas of Klamath County are naturally high due to the eruption of Mt. Mazama, but farming and ranching are an additional source. Phosphorous contributes to the toxic algae bloom that occurs in Upper Klamath Lake most summers which is thought to be a major stressor of endangered suckers found in the lake. In the summer of 2024, after 2 separate pilot studies, we determined that the engineered biochar reduces target nutrients more effectively, more safely, and at a lower cost than other alternative products on the market. Additional funding is being sought to determine effectiveness of phosphorous removal in different farming scenarios.



KWP is working with multiple partners as a subcontractor for the newly formed Upper Klamath Basin Ag Collaborative (UKBAC) which was awarded \$6,000,000 funded by the USFWS via BIL funding. This effort starts in the Sprague River watershed with immediate tributary restoration work and plans to develop restoration opportunities and incentives to farmers and ranchers to encourage sustainable agriculture improvements throughout the upper basin. The Klamath Tribes interviewed Executive Director Bill Lehman for a more detailed description of the work anticipated. This work will continue through the 2026 calendar year at a minimum. Pass through funding from our agreement with UKBAC will complement work on Paradise, Badger, Ish Tish, and Whiskey Creeks, which is also funded through the USFWS Partners Program. BDAs, fish passage, offstream watering for livestock, riparian fencing, and on-farm improvements are all a part of this work. Pictured below are caged willows installed on Whiskey Creek in Spring of 2024 showing the effects of a BDA installed in 2023.



KWP submitted a proposal for the Bengard Ranch In-stream Restoration Feasibility through OWEB Technical Assistance funds. This grant was written with the support of staff at Willamette Partnership, and we owe a debt of gratitude for their work. This effort will support work in the often-overlooked Lost River sub-watershed, supporting landowner-driven restoration in the region. The project is to create a restoration design and plan to perform instream restoration. This will increase hydraulic head upstream which can help with sediment control, floodplain reconnection, and instream habitat creation. It can also help maintain connections between the water table and wetland vegetation. Ultimately, we seek to reduce channelization and thereby slow the flow of water, reconnect groundwater, reduce the need to irrigate, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and pilot the process to demonstrate nature-based solutions and guide future projects on the Lost River. Bengard Ranch, Willamette Partnership, KWP, Ducks Unlimited, and the USFWS Partners Program are committed to seeing the project through to completion.

KWP continued to support the protection of streams and rivers with the installation of riparian fencing and offstream stockwater wells and troughs through funding from OWEB, USFWS Partners Program, and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. In 2024, four stockwater systems were installed on the Upper Williamson River. These projects complement additional instream work and riparian plantings conducted by KWP, USFWS, and TKT across multiple properties.



The Dairy Agricultural Wetland project received USFWS Partners Program funding in August and in a quick turnaround was completed by November. The property has a 13-acre wetland with fringes that were too wet to hay. The landowners wanted to enhance this wetland and duration of inundation to provide habitat to shorebirds and migratory waterfowl since it wasn't being used for agricultural production. A water control structure was developed and rocks were placed to raise and line the path of an irrigation pivot. The landowners will skip the first and second hay cuttings where waterbirds are likely to nest to allow successful reproduction. Pictured below is the pivot path and the flooded wetland in December of 2024.



While KWP and partners are focused on restoration projects at a watershed-level scale and increased funding levels have led to more expensive projects, the OWEB small grant program is still a convenient and more flexible fit for smaller projects that can be very beneficial to landowners, while still providing ecological benefits. A small grant project in the Lost River built on a previous small grant from 2017. In that original project the Lost River was fenced to prevent cattle from watering in the Lost River. A pumphouse was installed along with piping to a trough. These landowners acquired a neighboring parcel and in 2024 it too had wildlife-friendly riparian fencing and cattle gates installed. Piping was connected to the existing pumphouse to one permanent trough and a moveable trough that will be placed in the new parcel during grazing seasons. This will allow the landowners to increase rotational grazing while preventing erosion of the Lost River and additional, harmful nutrient inputs if cattle were to water in the Lost River. Pictured below are cows using the new permanent trough.



Upland Watershed and Forest Health

KWP received a \$1.2 million dollar grant from the USFS and ODF for disaster relief on non-industrial private lands in the Bootleg fire footprint. This \$2 million dollar proposal improves safety, access, and forest health in some of the recent wildfire-affected communities that will hopefully be completed by early 2026. The current project will involve 47 landowners, clearing road hazard trees, some site preparation, about 1800 acres of reforestation, and some

herbicide spot spraying to control competition. Pictured below is road hazard clearing that ODF and KWP have been completing this winter of 24-25.



Work continued in 2024 on recovery in the Bootleg and 242 fire footprints with funding from OWEB and the USFWS Partners Program. In the Bootleg footprint KWP continued to work with ODF and ODFW to prioritize and hand fall trees into creeks on GDRC property. Some areas previously cut were re-entered to add additional material instream and around the stream for protection from cattle grazing. Material was also dropped around springs and seeps. There were no significant flood events, but all log jams and material continue to evolve as high water and material are transported downstream. No erosion mitigation actions other than large wood additions have been done, as large woody debris has been determined to be the most effective at covering large areas of streams at the lowest cost. In Spring of 2024, 445,504 seedlings were planted on 1,652 acres in 9 days on 19 landowners' properties in the 242 fire footprint. This included 114,000 Douglas fir and 331,504 Ponderosa pine. ODF coordinated seedling grow out at various nurseries, and KWP worked with them and GDRC to arrange freezing, storage, and shipment. KWP continues outreach to landowners for 2025 plantings and has about 200,000 seedlings available.

In the Bootleg footprint, 1,008 acres have been reforested on GDRC property focused around bull trout critical habitat streams. 160 acres were also reforested around Fivemile Creek on non-industrial private land. In conjunction with this work on Fivemile Creek, .75 miles of cattle exclusion fencing was built and a road was relocated out of a wet meadow. Pictured below is a very hard-working and efficient planting crew.



The Copperfield Fire burned 3,822 acres west of Chiloquin in 2024 with eight homes lost to the fire. Four properties previously treated by KWP in 2019/2020 were defensible and survived the fire. KWP is working with landowners and operators for salvage logging, but will need additional grant funding to cover the other landowners' tree removal and reforestation.

KWP has also been working with Chiloquin Fire and Rescue with grants from the Oregon State Fire Marshal and the USFS to conduct defensible space treatments around structures in Chiloquin and to improve the wildfire resiliency of that area. This program has been named the Chiloquin Wildfire Initiative. In 2024 a coordinator was hired, outreach materials were developed, and debris trailers were purchased (see photo below). 24 properties were assessed totaling 42.26 acres and eleven properties were completed with local contractors clearing 8.4 acres. Eight properties used the dump trailer program totaling 12 loads and approximately 80 cubic yards of debris removed. A community wildfire outreach and education trailer was designed and ordered, and should be available for school and other events later this spring.



KWP installed milkweeds on 6 properties to benefit monarch butterflies which were proposed to be listed as endangered by the USFWS in December of 2024. Numerous other pollinator plants were installed to provide a balance of pollen and nectar with different species providing bloom periods from spring to fall. Kestrel County is a local restoration implementation business started by Natasha Speer who was born in Klamath Falls and attended OIT. She and her crews worked hard in all weather conditions this fall for this project, along with others for KWP and other partners, to ensure these plants get in the ground and are protected before snow accumulates. They ended up planting in the first snowstorms of the year and we thank them for this effort. Pictured below are narrowleaf milkweed, goldenrod, and currant from a previous year's planting efforts.



Outreach and Technical Assistance

In the summer of 2024, KWP became a member of the Klamath Basin Wetland Working Group, and is providing financial support to their education program to support local high school students.

KWP receives support from Sustainable Northwest (SNW) to conduct outreach throughout the Klamath Basin. In addition to using this funding to attend the Upper Klamath Basin Producer listening sessions hosted by SNW, flexible funding like this allows us to conduct site visits with landowners and develop projects before they are funded. Outreach funding is crucial for our ability to learn about the needs of landowners and how we can work together to benefit their operations and the integrity of the watershed's ecosystems. The SNW listening sessions are an opportunity for landowners to discuss their needs in a roundtable setting with attendees present from federal, state, and local agencies as well as NGOs. The format changed from the latter discussing funding opportunities to landowners discussing needs and this has been a better approach. Pictured below is the flyer to advertise one of the events which included a beaver education workshop. The flyer also lists participating entities and sponsors.

**Upper Klamath Basin
Producer Listening Session
and Beaver Education Workshop**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2024
10AM-12PM
Sprague River Community Center
23536 Sprague River Rd, Sprague River, OR 97639

AGENDA
10:00-11:00 - Listening Session
Share your operational needs and goals with program representatives who can listen, provide information and support

11:00-12:00 - Beaver Education Workshop
Program representatives and local landowners will provide information on the benefits of beaver-based restoration techniques and how to coexist with beavers.

Please RSVP to stay for a BBQ sandwich lunch spread from Wubba's BBQ Shack!
Kelley Delpit: kdelpit@sustainablenorthwest.org 661-747-8562

PARTICIPATING ENTITIES INCLUDE:

ENERGY TRUST OF OREGON
INTERMOUNTAIN WEST JOINT VENTURE
KLAMATH FARM SERVICES AGENCY
KLAMATH LAKE FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
KLAMATH NRCS
KLAMATH SWCD
KLAMATH WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP
LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES INITIATIVE
MACY'S FLYING SERVICE
OREGON AGRICULTURAL TRUST
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
OSU RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD
SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST
TROUT UNLIMITED
UPPER BASIN AG COLLABORATIVE
USFWS PARTNERS PROGRAM
WILLAMETTE PARTNERSHIP



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Sponsored by:



KWP hosted an educational booth at three events in 2024 including the Sky Lakes Health Fair, World Migratory Bird Day in Veteran’s Park, and Public Lands Day at the new visitor center at the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Children and some adults were able to “toss out” pollution into a wetland via a bean bag game. They also learned about fish and bird adaptations before getting art supplies to fashion a fish or build a bird where they could use their imagination to create a new species or one that they learned about when looking at adaptations. Our booth at World Migratory Bird Day is pictured below.



KWP also partnered with Henley middle school and other presenters for a two-day, hands-on learning field trip hosted by Lakeside Farms which is home to a wetland restoration that benefits agriculture, migratory birds, and endangered suckers. Students learned about birds from the local chapter of the Audubon Society, indigenous history from The Klamath Tribes, and how a pond on the property is being used in partnership with TKT and the USFWS hatchery programs to rear suckers. One of the owners of the property, Karl Wenner, and another farmer discussed the benefits of wetlands and the unique plants found within them, while KWP taught the students how the wetlands were designed to capture phosphorous and other nutrients that are increased by conventional farming practices. This benefits water quality in Upper Klamath Lake. Finally, the students learned about the importance of bees on the farm from Lorena Corzatt, a local beekeeper with extensive knowledge of both European honeybees and native bees. Jeff is shown below in a picture where he can't help but use his hands when teaching before utilizing the middle schoolers competitive nature to compete in a game where they "tossed out" phosphorous into the wetland where plants uptake the nutrient through their roots using a bean bag game to mimic the process. Photo taken by the Klamath County School District.



Irrigation Efficiency and Modernization Program

KWP is working with multiple partners as a subcontractor in the Klamath Project for the Klamath Drainage District's effort dubbed "Replumbing the Klamath for People, Fish, and Wildlife: A Nature-Based Solution for Drought and Desertification in Lower Klamath Lake." This effort is supported by USFWS BIL funding that originally started facilitated meetings through KWP planning in the Keno Stretch of the Klamath River. This work will continue through the 2028 calendar year.

Summary Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2024

Klamath Watershed Partnership currently administers approximately \$10 million in grant funding.

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	\$ 801,702.77
Accounts Receivable	\$ 640,361.41
Other Current Assets	\$ 5,670.23
Total Current Assets	<u>\$1,447,734.41</u>
Fixed Assets	\$ 6,376.78
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$1,454,111.19</u>

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ 73,193.08
Grant Advance	\$181,326.69
Payroll Liabilities	\$ 68,983.99
Total Current Liabilities	\$323,503.76
Total Liabilities	<u>\$323,506.76</u>
Equity	<u>\$1,130,607.43</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>\$1,454,114.19</u>

