Water in the Deschutes

May 25, 2021

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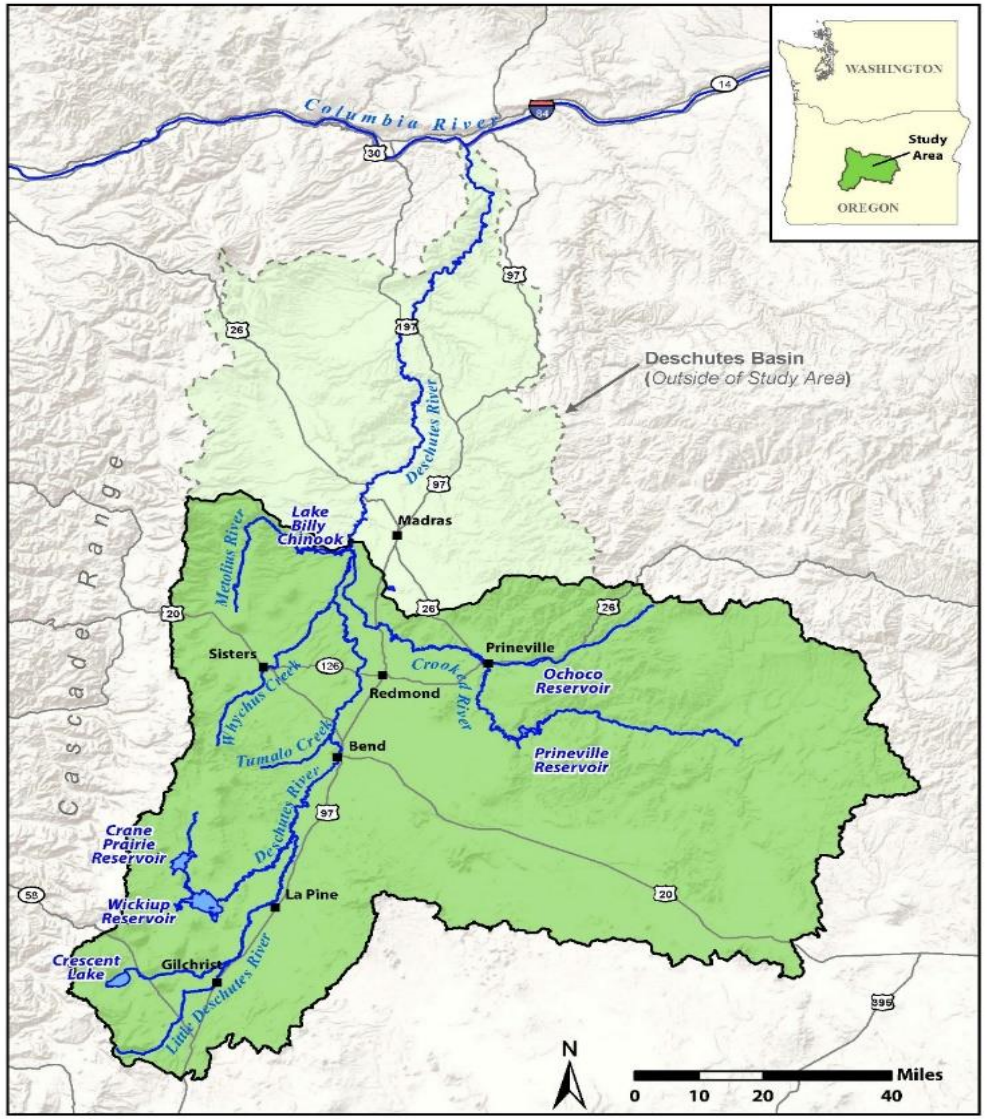
DESCHUTES RIVER CONSERVANCY

Water in the Deschutes

- Basin Context
- Success & Remaining Issues
- Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative
- Irrigation District Perspectives
- Municipal Perspective
- The path forward & state support

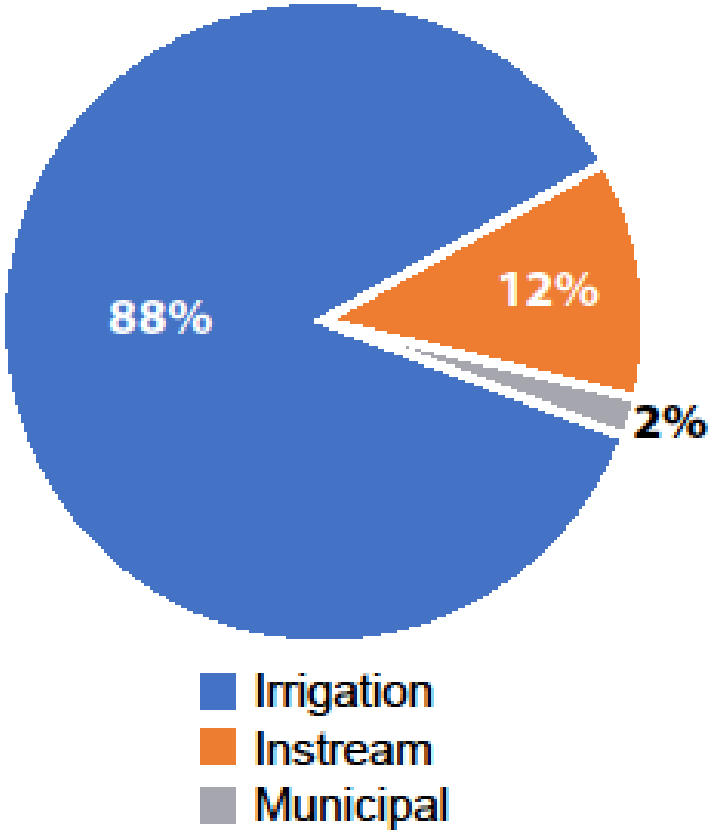
The Deschutes Basin



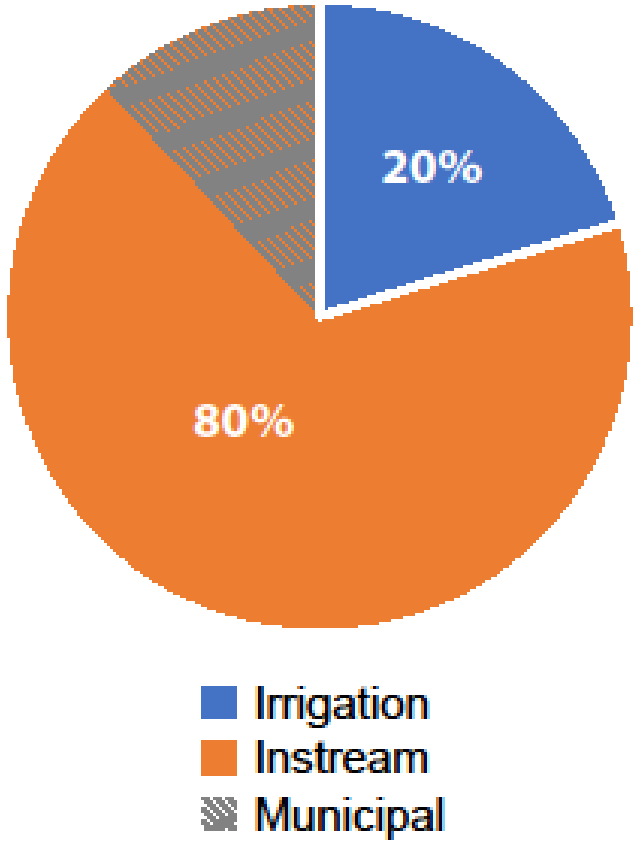
Water Use in the Upper Deschutes

- Deschutes River and its tributaries
- Agriculture: 150,000 irrigated acres; 8 districts
- Growing communities: Bend, Redmond, Prineville etc

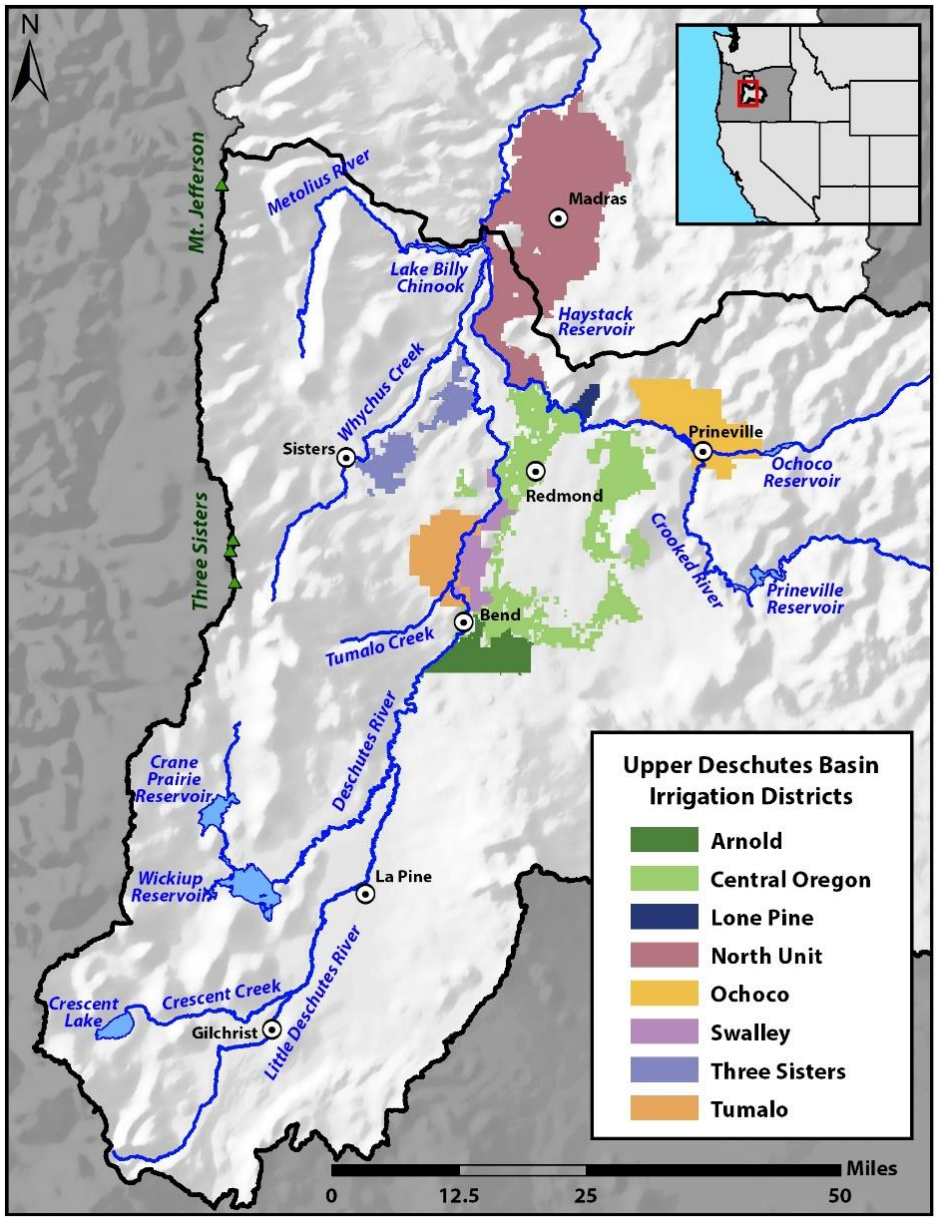
Basin Water Rights Distribution



Estimated Supply Shortfalls

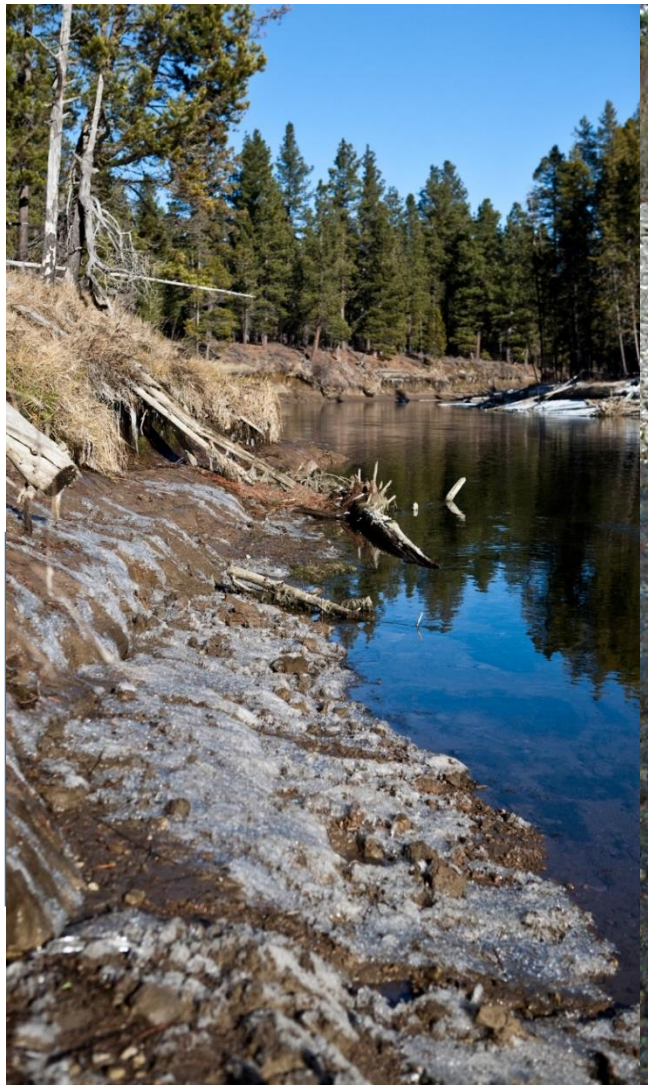


Upper Deschutes Basin



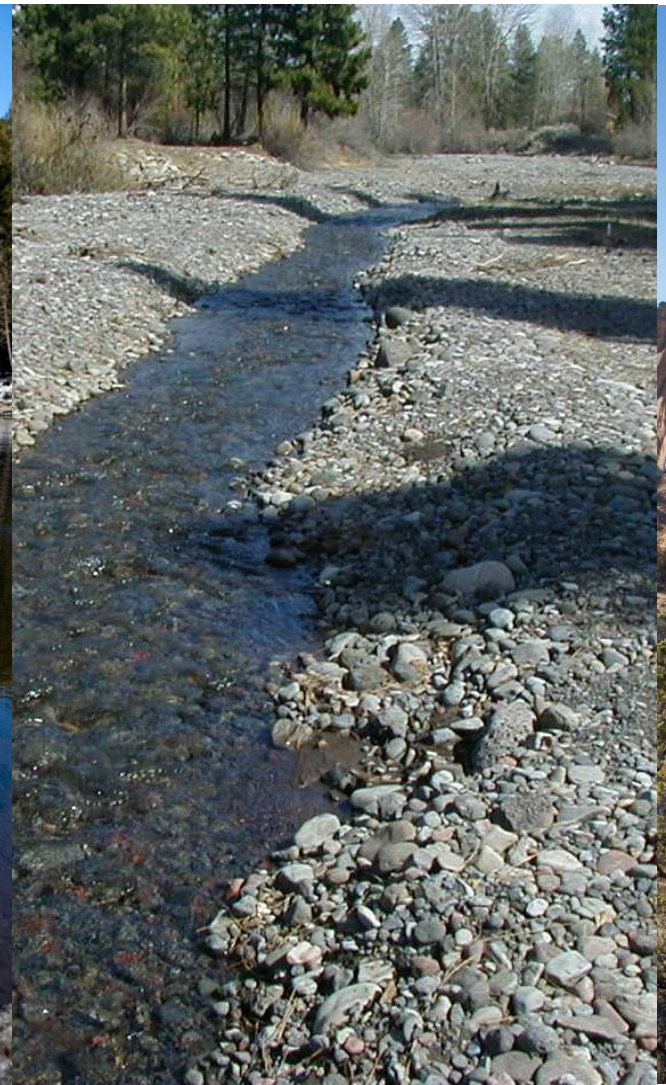
Deschutes River

98% of flows were diverted for irrigation



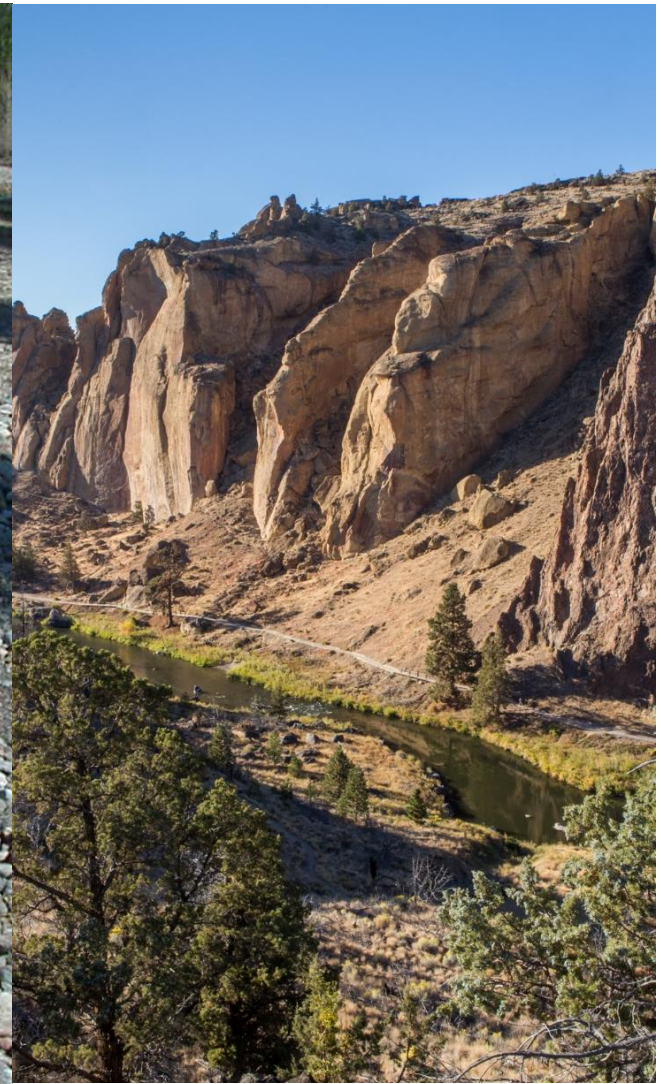
Whychus Creek

Every 2 out of 3 years, the creek would run dry



Crooked River

Extensively diverted flows would leave only a trickle of water at Smith Rock



Whychus Creek

Crooked River

Middle Deschutes River

Holistic Results

- Flow restoration & water quality benefits
- Partnerships to restore related habitat/natural storage
- Improved reliability for agriculture
- Generation of groundwater mitigation credits for cities
- Community collaborative capacity

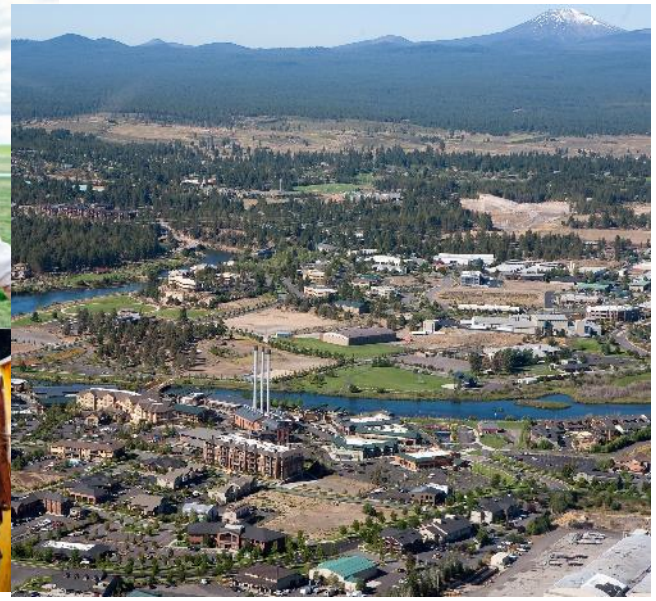
Key Issues Remain

- Upper Deschutes River Flow Restoration
- Time-critical ESA issues, Oregon spotted frog, Mid-Columbia steelhead and risk to agricultural interests
- Ongoing need for reliable groundwater mitigation for municipal water providers

THE UPPER DESCHUTES BASIN STUDY

Water for agriculture, rivers & cities

- Identified shortages & solutions
- State of the art modeling



Deschutes Basin

WATER COLLABORATIVE

Water for Agriculture, Rivers and Communities

- Accelerate project implementation to meet water needs
- Develop a comprehensive basin water plan
- Leverage funding & policy support

CENTRAL OREGON Irrigation DISTRICT Since 1918

DBBC

Connecting Central Oregon's Water, Land & Environment

- Habitat Conservation Plan Implementation
- Value of Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative

- Perspective of a junior irrigation district
- Impacts of severe drought

CENTRAL OREGON CITIES ORGANIZATION

Bend
Culver
La Pine
Madras
Maupin
Metolius
Prineville
Redmond
Sisters

- **COCO** - 9 cities, combined population of approx. 150,000. Established in 1998 to promote common interests – water supply and management is key!
- **Mitigation Program Since 2002** - state scenic waterways, instream water rights, hydrologic connection and USGS study.
- **The Perfect Storm and Honeymoon** - strong economy, urbanization and irrigation district collaboration led to plentiful groundwater mitigation.
- **Rough Seas Ahead** - mitigation program cap (almost met) and 2029 sunset, district water supply insecurity, concerns about program efficacy.
- **The Path Forward** - collaboration and support for all 3 legs of the stool, state support (funding, leadership, tools), certainty and efficiency for water provider planning.

What is Groundwater Mitigation?

- For wells that are drilled in the Deschutes Basin Groundwater Study Area, the groundwater permit applicant has to offset the impact of the new water use by returning surface water to the Deschutes River or a tributary.
- In order to receive a groundwater permit, the groundwater applicant can satisfy this need by implementing a project or acquiring groundwater mitigation credits.

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Past Legislative Support

- 1995 Session - *Water Mitigation Standards/In-Stream Flows (SB 1033)*
- 2001 Session - *Water Mitigation Bank/Conservation Efforts (HB 2184)*
- 2003 Session - *Surface to Groundwater Transfers (HB 3215 via SB 820)*
  Temporary Leasing of Agriculture Rights to Municipalities (HB 3217 via SB 820)
- 2005 Session - *Restoration of the Deschutes Basin Conservation and Mitigation Program (HB 3494). Interim report required in 2009 session*
- 2013 Session - *Extension of the program through 2028*
- 2021 Session - *Deschutes Basin, Complex Basin Coordinator*

The Path Forward

Accelerated Implementation

A Regional Approach

Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative

State support will be critical

- Continued support for basin planning
- Basin-specific policy staff capacity
- Funding for implementation