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Bureau of Reclamation and Oregon Water Resources Department Release Upper Deschutes River Basin Study

BEND, Ore. – Collaborative efforts to improve and modernize water management in the Deschutes basin reached another milestone with the finalization and public release of the Bureau of Reclamation’s *Upper Deschutes River Basin Study*. The Bureau of Reclamation and the Oregon Water Resources Department jointly funded the \$1.5 million study, which builds on two decades of investigations, planning, and successful implementation of projects to address water shortages and balance the water needs of rivers, the economy, and central Oregon communities.

This water study was co-managed by the Basin Study Work Group, a diverse group of 37 water stakeholders. It differs from previous studies because it provides advanced analytical tools that assist basin stakeholders as they explore and envision how to meet seasonal water needs of rivers, farms, and cities while restoring balance to the system.

“Finding consensus around such an extensive and broad reaching study took time, compromise, and trust,” said Craig Horrell, Central Oregon Irrigation district manager and chair of the Basin Study Work Group. “We worked with many variables, including viability, cost, water supply, climate change, and water law.”

The basin study identified potential water management options for addressing water supply imbalances and evaluated the opportunities, relative costs, and challenges associated with each option. Reclamation developed and used several tools to visualize how these options could affect the river and water uses under different scenarios. The information provides an updated, refined, and shared foundation to support future water management in the upper Deschutes River basin.

“The successful conclusion of this process is a testament to the commitment to collaboration we have here in the Deschutes basin,” said Kate Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Deschutes River Conservancy and coordinator for the basin study. “We learned that we have enough water in the basin for rivers, farms, and cities as long as we manage it carefully.”

“The basin study required the continuous, engaged involvement of a wide range of stakeholders,” said Gregg Garnett, Reclamation Bend Field Office manager. “The collaboration maintained over the course of the study—along with the essential support from the State of Oregon—allowed Reclamation to leverage federal funding toward real advancements in information critical for water management in the basin.”



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Basin water partners are working in partnership with the Oregon Water Resources Department and other state agencies under the umbrella of the newly formed Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative to pursue near-term actions for a long-term, basin-wide management plan. The basin study provides information about possible approaches for water users to meet the targets in the recently completed Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan.

“Federal investments and expertise from the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey, along with the dedication of basin stakeholders, equipped us with the information, tools, and perseverance needed to tackle these complex water issues,” emphasized Tom Byler, director of the Oregon Water Resources Department. “Modernizing water management is a shared responsibility and will require sustained commitments and investments from all sectors at all scales.”

To read more about the *Upper Deschutes River Basin Study* and other materials developed to support the basin study, visit www.usbr.gov/pn/studies/deschutes or download the full report at www.usbr.gov/pn/studies/deschutes/finalstudy.pdf.

The Bureau of Reclamation is a federal agency under the U.S. Department of the Interior and is the nation’s largest wholesale water supplier and second largest producer of hydroelectric power. Our facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation opportunities, and environmental benefits. Visit our website at www.usbr.gov and follow us on Twitter [@USBR](https://twitter.com/USBR).

The Oregon Water Resources Department’s mission is to serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management through two key goals: 1) To directly address Oregon's water supply needs; 2) To restore and protect streamflows and watersheds in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's ecosystems, economy, and quality of life. Visit our website at www.oregon.gov/owrd.

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