

Upper Deschutes River Coalition



The UDRC was created in 2003 to enable communities along the Upper Deschutes River to work together to resolve natural resource issues in this sensitive, fire-prone area. With 26 individual communities dispersed among four rivers and a rich forestland, the Coalition provides one collective voice to accomplish more than one community could achieve alone.

Our Vision: Communities and partners aware of the issues, engaged, collaborating and acting together to create and maintain a healthy, scenic, and sustainable environment where everyone is able to live with their core values.

Our Mission: To protect Upper Deschutes River communities by restoring and sustaining healthy fire-resistant forests, pure and abundant river flows and wildlife habitat.

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What Does UDRC Do?

Investing in our communities:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Planning grant \$100,000
 - 2005 funds allowed the UDRC to operate to mid-2009.
- National Forest Foundation (NFF) Watershed grant \$10,994
 - 2008 funds allowed for fund raising, supplies, signs, supplies, etc.
- Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB) \$11,722
 - 2008 funds to create UDRC brochure and conduct a major stakeholder conference on the Upper Deschutes River.
- National Fire Prevention Fuels Reduction Grant \$145,000
 - 2006 to 2009 funds used to reduce hazardous fuels on private property in the Coalition's service area.
- Western States Fuels Grant \$194,000
 - 2006 to 2009 funds used to reduce hazardous fuels on private property in the Coalition's service area.

- Project Wildfire grants no. 1 and 2 \$9,089
 - Two grants used for educational brochures, FireWise signs, the E Newsletter and fund raising programs.
- Deschutes County Educational Grants \$3,000
 - 2009-2010 grant funds used to create a new web site plus educational display boards and a new UDRC brochure.
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife & the Mitigation and Enhancement Committee funded by the Irrigation District \$5,000
 - Funds used to create a new Deschutes River Stewardship Guide to educate river front land owners on how to protect river banks, restore river banks and how to get permits and resources. The guide will be complete in early 2011.
- National Forest Foundation Grant \$10,000.
 - The 2009 grant funded two projects that were completed in 2010:
 - Tumbull Fish Habitat Restoration project costing \$5,000 in NFF grant funds added 250 dead and down trees into the river banks north of Sunriver Resort. An additional \$1,600 was donated from the Sunriver Anglers Club and the Central Oregon Flyfishers Club, plus two individual donations.
 - Benham Falls Trail Restoration costing \$5,000 in NFF funds that closed two roads leading to the Upper Deschutes River to prevent vehicles from damaging the river banks and improvements to a section of the Sunriver to Benham Falls trail.
- Deschutes County Fuels Treatment Grant \$100,000
 - A two-year grant to pickup woody material that the owners of private property in the Coalition's service area moved to the road side. In the fall of 2010, contractors picked up material in several neighborhoods using \$13,572 in grant funds. Phase two will start in late spring early summer of 2011.
- National Forest Foundation – Todd Lake Campground Restoration \$10,000
 - Todd Lake is a beautiful area and maintaining the picturesque views are a top priority. In order to protect the riparian zone and retain the pristine feel, a new fence was installed. Signs to keep people out will be approximately 18" high and will be 4" wide brown carsonite, simply stating "Area Closed for Restoration". This will provide a barrier to encourage people to stay out, yet still offer the scenic vistas
The scope of this project is twofold; first it is to protect the riparian area at the outlet of Todd Lake, the second is to provide better services for visitors.

Forests – ensure healthy, fire-resistant forests

UDRC neighborhoods are thick with lodgepole and ponderosa pine and a heavy undergrowth of bitterbrush and Manzanita. These overgrown conditions allow for high intensity, catastrophic fires that can destroy neighborhoods, wildlife habitat, river banks and the forest itself. Our goal is to reduce the risk and preserve the health of our forest

by reducing hazardous vegetation to promote a more fire-resistant forest and protect neighborhoods and wildlife.

- The Coalition's **2013 Community Wildfire Protection Plan** identifies surrounding lands, including federal and state lands, at risk from catastrophic wildland fire. It identifies strategies for reducing hazardous wildland fire fuels while improving forest health, and improving fire protection capabilities. It also identifies actions that individuals can take to help protect themselves and their neighborhoods against the threat of wildland fires.

The purpose of the **Upper Deschutes River Coalition's Community Wildfire Protection Plan** (CWPP) is to:

- Protect lives and property from wildland fires;
- Maintain a watershed with healthy fire resistant forests providing quality fish and wildlife habitat;
- Instill a sense of responsibility among residents, visitors, conservation groups and federal, state and local agencies to take preventive actions regarding wildland fire;
- Provide guidance to federal agencies for implementing fuels reduction treatments;
- Prioritize the use of limited funds for the removal of ladder fuels in neighborhoods and surrounding lands;
- Increase public understanding of living in a fire-adapted ecosystem;
- Increase the ability of Coalition communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from wildland fires;
- Restore fire-adapted ecosystems with diverse, multi-structured forests emphasizing large ponderosa pine trees;
- Improve the fire resilience of the landscape while protecting other social, economic and ecological values;
- Promote biomass utilization and alternative energy;
- Improve carbon dioxide emission levels and carbon sequestration.

This document outlines the priorities, strategies and action plans for fuels reduction treatments in the Upper Deschutes River Coalition (Coalition) planning area. This CWPP also addresses special areas of concern and makes recommendations for reducing structural vulnerability and creating defensible spaces in seven sub regions within the planning area. It is intended to be a living vehicle for fuels reduction, education, and other projects to decrease overall risks of loss from wildland fire; updated and revisited as necessary to address its purpose.

Wildland fire is a natural and necessary component of forest ecosystems across the country. Central Oregon is no exception. Historically, wildland fires have shaped the forests valued by residents and visitors. Forests and other wildlands are now significantly altered due to fire prevention efforts, modern suppression activities and a general lack of large scale fires, resulting in overgrown forests with closed canopies and decaying fuels that burn more intensely than in the past.

In addition, the recent explosion in population has led to increased residential development into forests in the wildland urban interface (WUI). To address these issues, members of fire agencies, local businesses and organizations, and individuals collaborated to develop the Upper Deschutes River Coalition CWPP.

Although reducing the risk of catastrophic wildland fire is the primary motivation behind this plan, managing the forests and wildlands for hazardous fuels reduction and fire resilience is only one part of the larger picture. Residents and visitors desire healthy, fire-resilient forests and wildlands that provide habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty.

Rivers – promote clean & abundant river flows

Four rivers– the Big and Little Deschutes, Fall and Spring Rivers flow majestically through Coalition neighborhoods and provide important habitat for a variety of wildlife such as Brown and Rainbow trout, otters and osprey. They offer abundant recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Our goal is to keep our rivers clean and healthy to sustain this resource for shih and wildlife, and recreation.

Wildlife Habitat – enhance beneficial wildlife habitat

Healthy, fire-resistant forests and clean river flows come together to provide beneficial habitat for our community friends including elk, white tail deer, bald eagles, otters and osprey. Our goal is to bring together the diverse efforts of our neighborhood members to provide for the balanced approach to sustaining these habitats.

Our Work

- Coordinates the annual river clean up of the Upper Deschutes River, Little Deschutes River, Spring River and Fall River.
- Developed and manages the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- Obtains funds and manages the hazardous fuels reduction projects
- Assists in creating Firewise Communities
- Supports the annual noxious weed removal program
- Develops and maintains partnerships with the US Forest Service, BLM and the Oregon Department of Forestry.
- Provides educational programs for the neighborhoods.
- Supports neighborhood capacity building
- Creates partnerships with the National Forest Foundation, Project Wildfire and Deschutes County
- Developed programs like the Ponderosa seedling project.