



# LONG TOM WATERSHED COUNCIL 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



# Executive Director Message

Hello Long Tom Watershed Council Community!

My first year at the Long Tom Watershed Council has been a true joy. Rather than detailing the many accomplishments of the past year—which are thoughtfully outlined throughout this report—I want to share how this work has affected me personally.

Having worked in several nonprofit organizations and earning my degree in nonprofit management, I came into the role of Executive Director with a clear idea of what I thought it would look like: formally teaching staff about measures of success, competing intensely with partner organizations for funding, worrying over nameplates at fundraising events, and continually reinforcing the mission. While elements of that exist, this role has unfolded into something far more real and deeply fulfilling.

The staff at the Long Tom Watershed Council bring a rare combination of passion, authenticity, and collaboration to their work. They genuinely enjoy what they do, support one another, and seek guidance from each other—and I am continually inspired by them. My role, as I see it, is to remove barriers so they can continue moving this important work forward. I feel so fortunate to work alongside such thoughtful and smart people.

Our partners have been equally generous and welcoming as I learn the history of the region and the collaborative norms of watershed work in the Willamette Valley. I have been taught the value of collaboration over competition, and it has made me a stronger leader. I feel supported and seen as I share my hopes and dreams for watershed work in our community. My goal is for everyone to feel a sense of pride in their watershed—to feel excited to talk about the Council's work with friends and family, and to experience our events as welcoming spaces where all are invited to learn, engage, and belong.

The Long Tom Board of Directors is an outstanding group of people. When I served as a student board member in 2018, I was inspired to stay connected to the organization because of the people I worked alongside, and that has not changed one bit. The board is engaged, thoughtful, and deeply committed to what is best for the organization. I feel incredibly lucky to work with such a stellar group, and if reading this makes you feel even a little jealous, I encourage you to reach out and join the fun.

I am grateful for everyone I have had the pleasure to work with so far, those who built such a strong organization before me, and those I look forward to connecting with in the future. Thank you for your continued investment in the Long Tom Watershed Council.

Cheers to you all!

Warmly,

Darian Lightfoot  
Executive Director

## Rural Program - Aquatics, Uplands



*THE MONROE DAM, TO BE REMOVED IN SUMMER, 2027. CREDIT: JOE YCAZA, MCKENZIE WATERSHED COUNCIL*

2025 was a productive year for rural watershed work, with projects completed or prepared across a mix of public and privately owned sites throughout the basin.

### MONROE DAM REMOVAL

Design work is underway with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Monroe, with the Corps leading the project through its Section 1135 program. The City serves as the non-federal sponsor, while LTWC is facilitating the effort by securing funding on the City's behalf and coordinating additional resources, including technical expertise, drone imagery, and site renderings to support community understanding. LTWC also secured Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board funding to replace the City's water intake, which will be required prior to dam removal. Once complete, the project will restore fish passage to nearly 10 miles of mainstem and tributary habitat.

### LOWER LONG TOM RIVER HABITAT EVALUATION STUDY

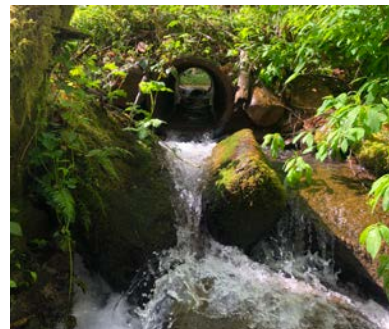
We are working with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the Corps of Engineers on a Planning Assistance to States and Tribes project, funded by the Corps, that is collecting data and completing hydraulic modeling of the lower Long Tom River from Fern Ridge Dam downstream to Monroe. There are two additional Corps low head dams in this section, upstream of the Monroe Dam, that limit fish passage to an additional 100 miles of habitat. This study will collect information that will help us develop and evaluate fish passage options at these two dams. We have funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to scope these alternatives once the Corps' study is completed.



*THE HISTORICAL WILLAMETTE RIVER CHANNEL TO BE RECONNECTED NEXT SUMMER. CREDIT: SWCA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS*

### SNAG BOAT BEND

After years of planning and permitting, we are very close to securing all of the necessary permits to remove a section of the Porter Embankment revetment at Snag Boat Bend, a site we have been working at in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a decade. This big project is the capstone for all the work we have done at this site on the mainstem Willamette River near Peoria. We hope to implement it in summer 2026, and once complete it will reconnect a 1.1-mile long historical channel of the Willamette that was cut off when the Porter Embankment was built in 1964. We will also install 12 log jams in the historical channel to improve habitat complexity for native fish and wildlife, including juvenile Chinook salmon, Pacific lamprey, and northwestern pond turtles. We are excited to be monitoring the effectiveness of different aspects of the project, including the effects of the project on water temperature, substrate, and flow in the historical channel.



*THE PREVIOUS CULVERT WAS UNDERSIZED AND PERCHED AT ITS OUTLET; A MIGRATION BARRIER FOR FISH & OTHER AQUATIC SPECIES*



*THIS STREAM-SIMULATION CULVERT WAS INSTALLED IN ITS PLACE TO ALLOW YEAR-ROUND PASSAGE FOR ALL NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES.*

### SERTIC

LTWC has partnered with the Sertic family for over five years on habitat restoration along the Long Tom River upstream

of the Oregon Country Fair. The project replaced a perched culvert on Tyler Creek to restore fish passage, includes fuels reduction across 25+ acres of oak and prairie habitat ahead of planned prescribed burning in 2026, and expands riparian buffers with native plantings. LTWC is also initiating design work to reconnect more than 20 acres of floodplain along lower Wilson Creek.

## GREENHILL OAK RESTORATION PHASE 2



*PLANT MONITORING AT TEXTER PROPERTY USING RELEVÉ PLOTS. SHOWING THE LANDOWNER THE DIFFERENT PLANT SPECIES. JUNE 2025.*

We are continuing the amazing restoration work across four different properties with landowners that are very receptive and eager to enhance oak and prairie habitats. We completed plant monitoring in the early summer across all four properties.

Monitoring will inform our efforts in tackling non-native and/or invasive species, inform the effectiveness of previous restoration activities (seeding, brushing, thinning, etc.) and track any listed or rare plant species.

Burn planning has been underway and we are aiming to burn two different properties in fall 2026. Some burn preparation work is underway, with the majority being planned to be completed a month before burning.

Crews have completed thinning oak woodlands at one property, releasing large legacy oaks. Piles were created and will be curing for a year to be burned in

winter 2026. Crews also completed some spraying on blackberry at these sites to mitigate its large population. EcoStudies, a partnering organization, is currently (December 2025) working on thinning to release legacy oaks at a second property.



*KARLIK OAK WOODLAND THINNING BEFORE. FALL 2025.*

*KARLIK OAK WOODLAND THINNING AFTER. FALL 2025*

## OTHER FUELS REDUCTION WORK IN COYOTE BASIN

LTWC partnered with ODF to complete 25+ acres of fuels reduction and fire mitigation on private properties in the Coyote Basin. With the help of R. Franco Restoration and Ecostudies Institute, we engaged landowners in the sub-watershed and identified key areas to release oaks, reduce ladder fuels, thin dense forest stands, and opened areas to uplift prairie species.

## FISH MONITORING IN NIGHSWANDER CREEK



*COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT THAT WAS COLLECTED IN NIGHSWANDER CREEK.*

Staff teamed up with the South Willamette District of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to operate a series of fish traps in Nighswander Creek, a tributary to Coyote Creek south of Crow. We worked with an engaged landowner to run the traps for a few weeks in early 2025. We collected a number of cutthroat trout, sculpions, redbreast shiners, threespine stickleback, roughskin newts, and red-legged frogs from the creek, which dries up in most summers.

## TEMPERATURE MONITORING IN FERGUSON AND BEAR SUB-WATERSHEDS

We continued to operate continuous temperature probes in Ferguson, Owens, Turnbow, and Bear Creek as part of an Oregon Department of Agriculture long-term monitoring project that is looking at stream temperature trends in areas with agricultural land use.

## AMAZON CREEK PESTICIDE STEWARDSHIP PARTNERSHIP

The team has completed its 15th year of pesticide monitoring in Amazon Creek. Results continue to demonstrate the enormous impacts that our urban areas have on water quality. Our current pesticides of highest concern include the herbicides Diuron (e.g. Karmex), Sulfometuron-methyl (e.g. Oust), and Dichlorprop, the fungicide Propiconazole (e.g. Banner, Maxx, Orbit), and the insecticide Imidacloprid (e.g. Gaucho, Merit).



# Urban Waters & Wildlife Program



CUSTOM MODIFIED GIBSON STEEL SAND COLLECTOR BASIN, WORKING AS A SEDIMENT DROP FOR THE NEW PLANTER INSTALLATION.

## INVESTING IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Gibson Steel Basins originally worked with LTWC back in 2015 to install a 3,300 sq ft rain garden. The project was so successful at cleaning stormwater and site runoff that Gibson contracted LTWC again for a phase 2 project. The result of this second phase of implementation is an in-ground stormwater planter that was completed in October of 2025. The planter treats stormwater runoff from their work yard and building roofs; between the two phases of installation, the LTWC's projects will filter and clean the stormwater runoff from the entire industrial work yard.

The planter integrates Gibson's own double-chambered sand collector catch basin as a method of sediment removal - this customized application also functions as a water feature in rainy weather. A pump draws water from the site's existing piped stormwater system into the sand collector, which overflows via a slit aperture into the rain garden.

Native plant species will provide habitat value and curb appeal in this planter, located near the front entrance to the office building.

### EPA III URBAN WATERS PARTNER PROJECTS

Led by LTWC, the Urban Waters Partnership (UWP) is in year three of a five-year, \$5.54M EPA grant supporting priority Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects across Eugene, Springfield, and rural communities in the Upper Willamette Watershed. Funding advances stormwater retrofits, education and outreach, pilot monitoring, long-term maintenance solutions, and expanded rural impact. In 2025, the first two partner-led implementation projects were launched with technical support from LTWC, marking a significant expansion of the partnership's geographic reach and influence.

### SPRINGFIELD FRANKLIN PLANTERS

LTWC is partnering with the City of Springfield to rehabilitate stormwater planters along the Franklin Boulevard median. The project will replace non-functional vegetation and outdated infrastructure with improved soils, updated structures, and stormwater-adapted plantings, resulting in enhanced treatment performance and easier long-term maintenance. Construction and planting are anticipated to be completed by late summer 2026.

### STEEL BASINS PLANTER MATRIX

- Planter Size: 1,125 square feet
- Area Treated: 21,363 square feet
- Privately funded for design and installation as a fee-for-service project



A BEFORE (LEFT IMAGE) AND AFTER (RIGHT IMAGE) COMPARISON OF THE GIBSON STEEL PLANTER. THE AFTER PICTURE WAS TAKEN APPROXIMATELY A MONTH AFTER INSTALLATION.

### ROSE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

EPA III funding awarded in October 2025 is supporting the integration of permeable surfaces and Green Stormwater Infrastructure in the Rose Street Neighborhood, a post-fire rural housing development. The project will improve water quality and habitat in the upper McKenzie River basin.

# Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program



*TEIP INTERNS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN A CULTURAL BURN AT CHAA-LAMALI. OCTOBER 8, 2025*

TEIP is more than a conservation program; it is a conduit for intergenerational and intercultural knowledge exchange. Through partnerships with tribes, land trusts, private landholders, government agencies, and local conservation organizations, TEIP amplifies Native voices in education and environmental stewardship.

TEIP serves as a model for government and non-government agencies who desire to build meaningful relationships with tribes and Native people. Our work calls for a new paradigm – one that moves away from agency-centered control to community-led partnerships based on respect for Indigenous knowledge and sovereignty.

TEIP is leading the way in Oregon's Upper Willamette Region in successful co-stewardship of land and conservation driven burns. For more information, please visit TEIP's website <https://www.longtom.org/community/teip/> and check out these articles...

## TEIP PUBLICATIONS AND EARNED MEDIA

['Good fire' at Chaa-lamali: Young Natives practice cultural burn - Buffalo's Fire](#)

[Building a Tender Box: A Renewal of Cultural Burning – Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology](#)

[The Valley that Burns to Bloom – Ridgeline Magazine](#)



*TEIP INTERNS AND STAFF CONDUCTING POST-BURN OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHAA-LAMALI BURN UNIT. OCTOBER 26, 2025*



*TEIP INTERNS PARTICIPATE IN IGNITION OF A CULTURAL BURN AT CHAA-LAMALI, TEIP'S OUTDOOR CLASSROOM. OCTOBER 8, 2025*



*TEIP INTERNS ASSIST COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION STAFF IN RELEASING LAMPREY IN THE LONG TOM WATERSHED. JUNE 25, 2025*

# Fire Program



PRESCRIBED FIRE WALK AND TALK AT COYOTE OAKS (AKA THE RESTO, AKA DEREK JOHNSON'S PROPERTY) WITH THE SWPBA.

## SOUTH WILLAMETTE PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION

Prescribed burn associations (PBAs) are grassroots, volunteer-based organizations focused on teaching and learning the intentional use of fire as a land management tool. By learning and burning together, PBAs empower communities to use prescribed fire while reducing implementation costs on private lands. In Oregon, nine PBAs now exist statewide, with seven forming in 2025, including the South Willamette PBA (SWPBA). Tiffany Perez has been actively involved with the SWPBA, serving as a board member and helping plan and lead prescribed burns and trainings. With LTWC assistance, the SWPBA completed two prescribed fire skills trainings, two fire gatherings, and three prescribed burns totaling 20 acres, engaging more than 90 people, 20 organizations, and 30 landowners. These efforts helped protect three structures, provided 15 fire trainee assignments, and supported the SWPBA's formal nonprofit formation, including board development, bylaws, and outreach systems.



TIFFANY PEREZ, LTWC RESTORATION & FIRE PROJECTS MANAGER, DEMONSTRATES HOW TO USE A KESTREL INSTRUMENT, A HAND-HELD DEVICE THAT IS OFTEN USED TO MONITOR WEATHER DURING PRESCRIBED BURNS.



SWPBA FIRST FALL BURN IN JUNCTION CITY. SEPTEMBER 23, 2025



## BURN LEADERSHIP

**Certified Burn Manager (CBM) Certification:** LTWC is working to have in-house burn leadership on projects within ODF protection areas. Tiffany Perez completed the CBM training in April 2025 and completed 1 of 3 assignments that will go toward obtaining certification.

**Burned with:** 4 different PBAs in Oregon and 20 different local partner organizations.

**Helped implement burning:** helped burn 113 acres across 8 different sites.

## RIVERS TO RIDGES (R2R) BURN GROUP

LTWC is grateful to be part of a growing local and regional fire community, including participation in the Rivers to Ridges Ecological Burn group. This collaborative includes Tribal, federal, state, and local government representatives, along with nonprofit partners, who meet monthly for networking, resource sharing, and coordinated efforts such as air quality permitting and fire skills trainings. These collective efforts increase public support for cultural and prescribed fire, strengthen partner relationships, and foster collaboration over competition. For the past two years, LTWC's Sara Worl has facilitated the group and will be transitioning this role to Tiffany Perez and other partners moving forward.

## COLLABORATIVE BURNING

A great measure of success in a fire community is the ability to collaborate and assist each other during prescribed burns. While burning together, you learn your fellow partner's skillsets, you navigate stressful situations together and, most importantly, you build trust with one another.

**Permitting:** learned and navigated LRAPA and ODF permitting processes for ecological burning. Helped 4 organizations submit burn units for an LRAPA permit.

**Burn planning:** wrote 3 burn plans and assisted with writing/planning for an additional 2. Coordinated burn preparation, permitting, logistical and operational planning for ODFW's Coyote Creek South property. We were unable to burn this property this year due to their drawn out administrative processes, but we learned a lot during planning and plan to burn in 2026.

**Prescribed fire trainings:** helped teach about weather monitoring and burn planning at 2 fire trainings



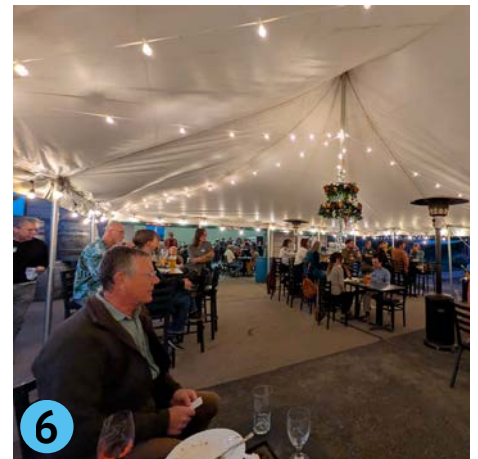
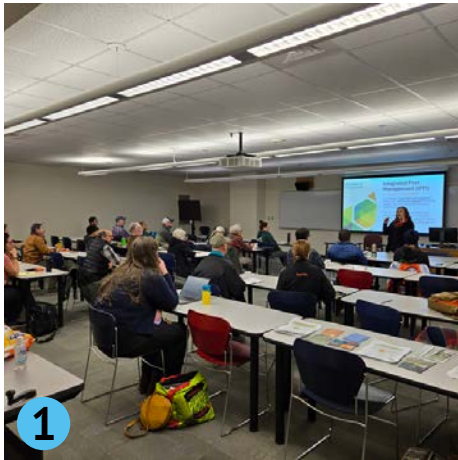
NATIVE OAKS RIDGE PRESCRIBED BURN. OCTOBER 7, 2025.

# Events & Community

LTWC's work is strengthened by an engaged and generous community. Over the past year, neighbors, volunteers, landowners, and partners participated in workshops and field events like the **Integrated Pest Management Workshop** (1), the **Amazon Creek Cleanup** (2), the **Lamprey Release** (3), the **Snag Boat Bend Project Tour** (5), and the **Beavers & the Long Tom** beaver habitat workshop (8), where attendees learned about living in harmony with this keystone species.

We also celebrated cultural and community traditions through the **Annual Celebration** (6), a well-attended gathering with awards, music, and stories of watershed stewardship, as well as community-centered events like the **Camas Bake** (4) and the **Chaa-lami Cultural Burn** (7), which honor Indigenous foodways and ecological fire practices.

These events foster knowledge sharing, deepen connections between people and place, and support LTWC's mission—strengthened further this year by the addition of the **Village School's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Class 2025-26 sponsorship** (9) and five new team members who bring fresh energy and expertise to our restoration, outreach, and partnership work. Community participation, volunteer time, and generous donations at these gatherings continue to make our watershed work possible.

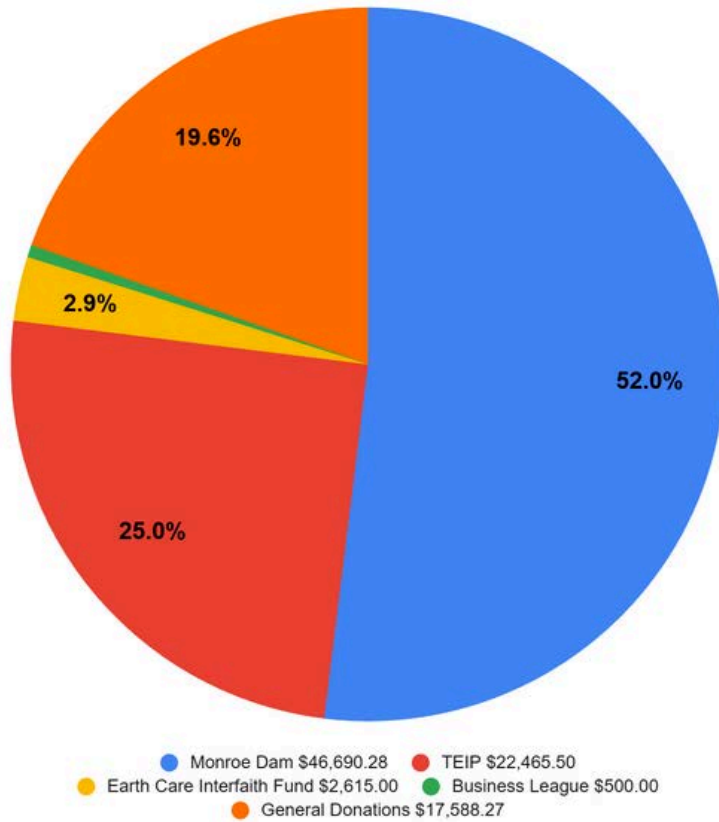


**Thank you to our donors, partners, volunteers, and supporters for investing in healthy rivers, resilient landscapes, and connected communities!**

# Fiscal Year 2025 Financials

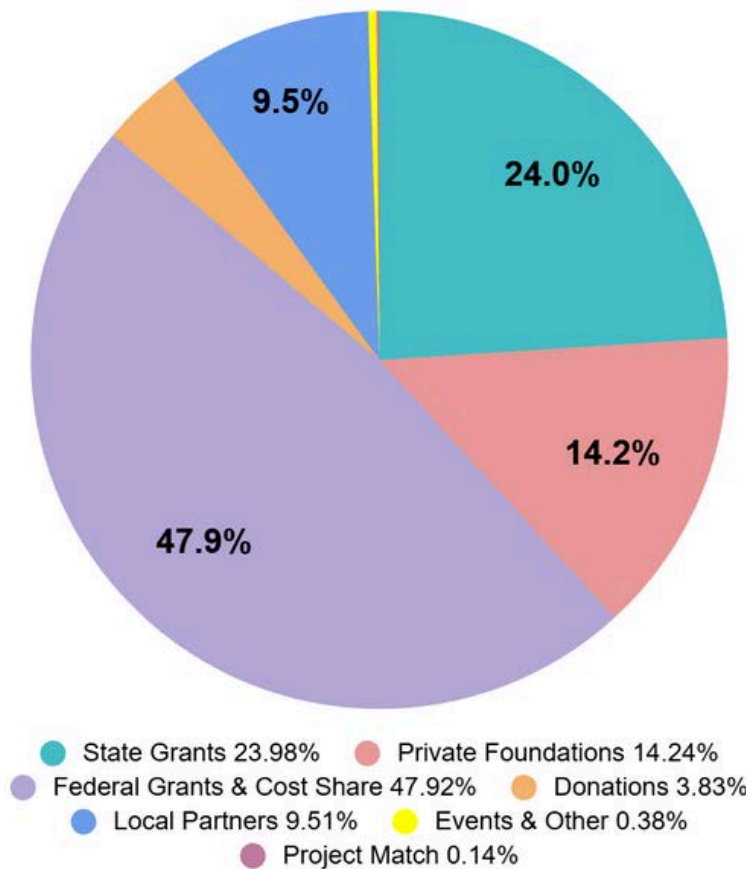
## DONATIONS BY TYPE \$89,859

JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025

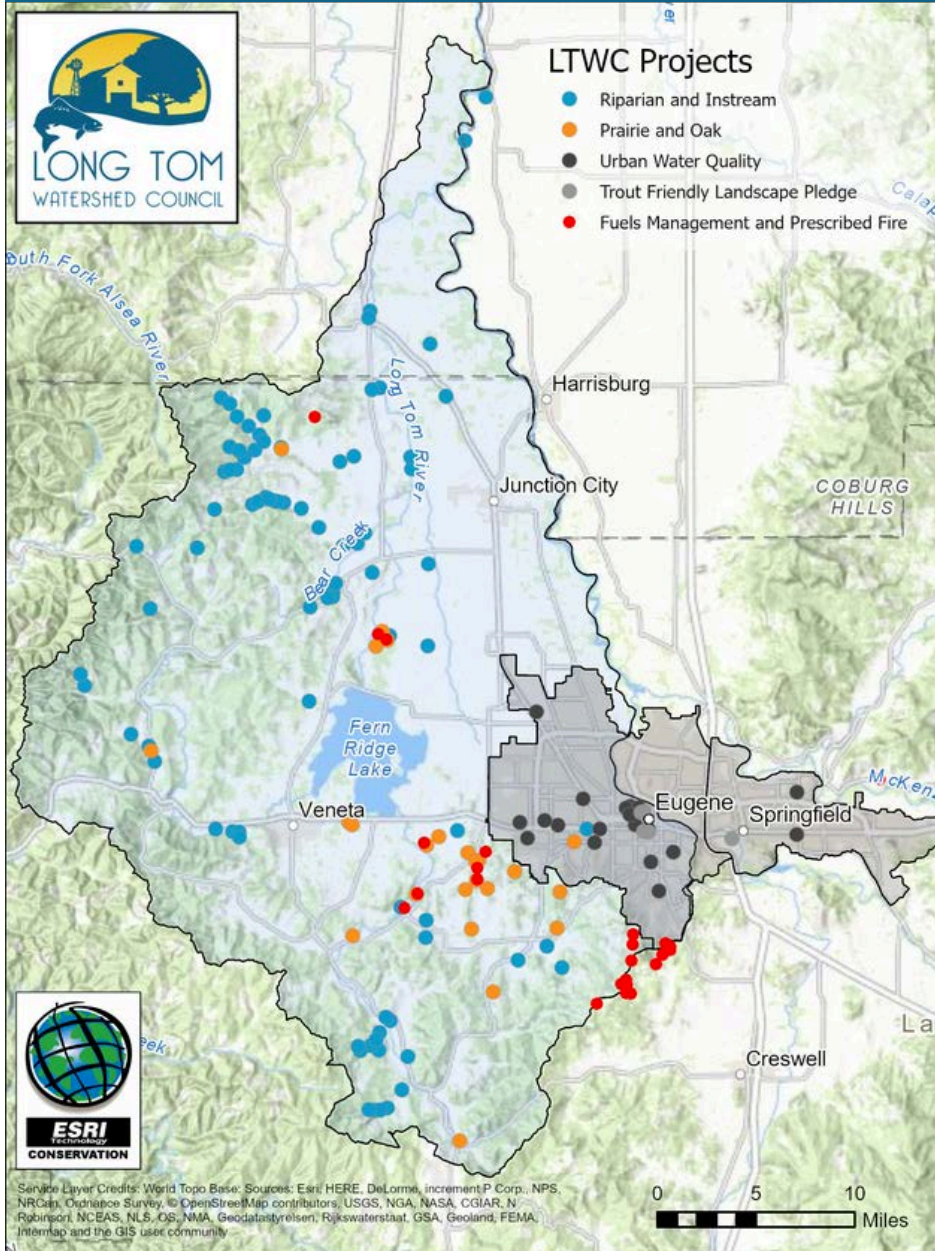


## FUNDING SOURCES \$2,545,072

JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025



# WATERSHED MAP & PROJECTS 2025



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**KURT KOEHLER** – CHAIR  
**JOHN DECK** – VICE-CHAIR  
**JESSICA “JJ JONES** – TREASURER  
**CONNIE PEABODY** – SECRETARY  
**ERIK BURKE, JESSE CARY-HOBBS,  
 SCOTT DETMER, TAYLOR EVANS,  
 PAT MCDOWELL, JABRILA VIA, AND  
 PAULINA WHITEHAT**

## STAFF

**KYT BERGSTROM**  
 FINANCE MANAGER

**RACHEL CUSHMAN**  
 TEIP MANAGER

**MIRANDA HAWKES**  
 UWWP LANDSCAPE DESIGNER &  
 STORMWATER SPECIALIST

**JED KAUL**  
 DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

**AMBER LAMET**  
 URBAN WATERS & WILDLIFE  
 MANAGER

**DARIAN LIGHTFOOT**  
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STASIE MAXWELL**  
 TEIP COORDINATOR

**ALEJANDRO MEJIA**  
 RESTORATION PROJECT MANAGER

**SYDNEY NILAN**  
 UWSN PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**TIFFANY PEREZ**  
 RESTORATION & FIRE PROJECTS  
 MANAGER

**AMANDA REINHOLTZ**  
 HABITAT & WATER QUALITY  
 SPECIALIST

**CHRIS STILLMAN**  
 UWWP SPECIALIST & LANDSCAPE  
 ARCHITECT

**MARISA WOOD**  
 OPERATIONS MANAGER

**SARA WORL**  
 RESTORATION PROJECT MANAGER

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Long Tom Watershed Council serves to improve water quality and watershed condition in the Long Tom River basin and surrounding drainages through education and collaboration among all interests, using the collective wisdom and voluntary action of our community members.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Long Tom Watershed lies within the traditional homelands of the Tribes and Bands of the Kalapuyan peoples. Following treaties in the 1850s, the Kalapuya people were dispossessed of and forcibly removed from their Indigenous homeland by the United States government. Today, many descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. We acknowledge that we are on occupied lands, and express our respect for Kalapuya and all Tribal Nations of Oregon, and the important contributions they continue to make to their communities, including to the stewardship of this watershed.