



KLAMATH WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

# Klamath Watershed Partnership

*Where people, land and water come together*

## Why so many landowners are doing watershed restoration projects

**Riparian Restoration:** The land adjacent to the river, known as the "riparian area," is critical for the ecosystem. Vegetation filters out nutrients from pasture runoff, the root systems help stabilize the stream banks and reduce excessive erosion, and woody trees and shrubs that fall in the stream provide fish with protection from predators and promote higher water tables by increasing flood plain connectivity. Improper grazing management can degrade riparian areas. Lack of shade causes stream temperatures to rise, and overland flow nutrients entering the waterway contribute to excessive algae growth. During late summer, as algae dies and decomposes, the oxygen levels decrease, negatively impacting fish health.

**Grazing Management:** The Klamath Watershed Partnership works with ranchers to find ways to restore the ecosystem, while also maintaining an economically viable grazing operations. The Partnership can provide interested landowners with a Grazing Management Plan with practical strategies to balance ecosystem needs with production interests.

**Fencing:** Often the most practical way to manage grazing is by fencing the river. The Partnership applies for funding, designs the fencing plan, secures any necessary permits and installs the fence. Partnership staff work with landowners every step of the way, and manage the project from start to finish.

**Off-stream Watering:** Cattle that are fenced from the river need alternative sources of water. The Partnership designs and installs off-stream watering systems, and if pumping is needed, installs solar pumps to save on power costs.

**Vegetation Plantings:** Grasses provide a buffer that filters nutrients out of runoff; shrubs and grasses help stabilize the banks, trap river sediment during high flows and reduce erosion; and fallen trees provide habitat for fish. Vegetation also promotes higher water tables by increasing floodplain connectivity. While grazing management protects the area so vegetation can return, planting native vegetation can speed up this process.

**Spring Restoration & Reconnection:** Springs historically have provided spawning habitat for a variety of fish, and a source of cold, clean water for the river, improving water quality. The Partnership can assist landowners who are interested in restoring and/or reconnecting springs to the river by securing funding and managing the project.

**Wetlands:** The Upper Basin used to have thousands of acres of wetlands, most of which was reclaimed for agricultural use. Now we know that wetlands make a major difference in water quality and provides late season flow as the river and lake levels decrease. They also help filter out nutrients and provide habitat for numerous birds, fish & animals. The Partnership works with landowners as well as state and federal agencies to restore wetlands around Upper Klamath Lake and Lake Ewauna, as well as the rivers and streams in the Upper Basin.

**Stream Channel Restoration:** Streams are meant to twist and turn, and in decades past we didn't recognize the consequences of straightening to reduce flood impacts. In some situations, mechanically altering the channel form can speed the restoration of the natural processes of the river. Moving levees back from the riverbanks can allow the river, at high flows, to flood the land and replenish the water table; and water that is retained in the soil is held longer in the season, enhancing late-season flows.

**Juniper Management:** While junipers are native to the Basin, fire suppression has resulted in their spreading far beyond their normal range. Reducing the number of junipers results in significant water savings, and helps restore the natural hydrology of the area.

**Irrigation Improvements:** We work with ranchers and farmers to conserve water and improve the quality of the water entering the rivers. Planting dryland crops reduces irrigation demands and more efficient irrigation systems can reduce water use, both without reducing production. Tailwater recycling systems reduce irrigation withdrawals, and tailwater areas filter runoff before it enters the river, improving water quality.

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