

Blog: Community Spotlight

Earth Day is approaching and we are highlighting a local organization that makes a difference in our environment and community. [Deschutes River Conservancy](#) (DRC) is “dedicated to restoring streamflow and improving water quality in the Deschutes River Basin.” The organization was founded in 1966 based on a deep understanding that a healthy inclusive community coincides with a healthy environment.

Did you know that nearly 90% of the streamflow from the Deschutes River in Bend is diverted through irrigation canals during the irrigation season, April through October? In the summer months, the diversions cause a reduction in streamflow. Over time, these seasonal disruptions have caused a decline in the health of the Deschutes River that causes poor water quality and degraded fish habitats.

However, we are lucky that many of the parties involved with the health of the Deschutes Basin have a history of collaboration surrounding critical water issues. By working together with diverse partners and stakeholders, DRC has made progress in restoring vital stream flows that support the surrounding environment, agriculture and community. By the year 2025, the organization envisions that Deschutes Basin flow will meet targets to support overall stream health, knowledge about these issues will have been spread throughout the community, and that a regional water management agreement will be implemented.

DRC has a few innovative programs that are helping restore our local rivers and streams:

- [Water Rights Leasing](#) – This innovative program allows landowners with irrigation rights to lease all or part of their water back to the DRC to improve streamflow in the river. Instream leasing protects water rights, provides economic benefits, and helps to restore the Deschutes River and its tributaries.
- [Water Conservation](#) – The DRC permanently conserves water through two methods: piping and lining canals to prevent evaporation and water loss, and on-farm efficiency projects.
- [Water Rights Transfers](#) – Acquire and transfer water rights for dedication to permanent instream use. Instream transfers may be for restoration or mitigation purposes, serving to meet instream flow targets and the needs of farmers, cities and other new groundwater uses.

Brooks Resources is proud to be a 2023 sponsor of the DRC’s annual fundraiser, [RiverFeast](#) taking place in May. Interested in being a part of the organization? DRC has a variety of [volunteer opportunities](#) and if you’d like to learn more, subscribe [here](#). You can also donate to their organization [here](#).

“We need joy as we need air. We need love as we need water. We need each other as we need the earth we share.” – Maya Angelou