



## Facts About the McKenzie River Trust

Last Edited September 2019

**Our Vision:** The McKenzie River Trust is committed to a future in which intact, functioning ecosystems provide clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and productive natural landscapes throughout western Oregon.

**Our Mission:** The McKenzie River Trust helps people protect and care for the lands and rivers they cherish in western Oregon.

**Protecting special lands.** The McKenzie River Trust acquires property interests in land with clear public benefits to ensure that those values will be available to people for many generations.

**Restoring natural systems.** In places that have lost some of these public values to previous development of natural resources, the Trust works to reestablish the native vegetation, water cycles and other functional ecosystem elements appropriate to the area.

**Connecting people to places they care about.** The Trust provides site tours, education events, demonstration and research sites, and information about the projects it manages to encourage public support for conservation efforts throughout the region.

### Who We Are

- The McKenzie River Trust was founded in 1989 to protect special lands in the McKenzie River basin, one of the cleanest river systems in our nation. As we grew, our service area expanded south to Douglas county and west to the central Oregon coast. We work to protect clean drinking water and thriving ecosystems in the McKenzie, Long Tom, Willamette, and Siuslaw watersheds, along with many conservation partners.
- We primarily use two tools to protect land:
  - **Fee Title Acquisition:** We acquire the land outright, either through purchase or donation, and take full responsibility for its management.
  - **Conservation Easements:** A great definition from The Nature Conservancy: “A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement that limits certain types of uses or prevents development from taking place on a piece of property now and in the future, while protecting the property’s ecological or open-space values.” (<http://www.nature.org/aboutus/privatelandsconservation/conservationeasements/>) Conservation easements are tailored specifically to each landowner and their property, and the landowner continues to own their property after the easement is established.
- We have protected over 5,700 acres on 55 properties, and we are expanding.
  - Acreage is split almost equally between conservation easements and fee-title lands.
  - The land we’ve protected is more than eight times the size of Alton Baker Park.
- We have fourteen staff members, a volunteer Board of fifteen, and fifteen other professionals who serve on our Lands, Development and Campaign Committees.
- Every year, we engage volunteers who give hundreds of volunteer hours leading tours, collecting information on plants and native fish and wildlife on our properties, and helping with tree plantings, weed pulls, and other restoration work.

### *Protecting Special Lands*

## Where We Work

- Our service area extends beyond the McKenzie to eight watersheds throughout Lane County and into Douglas County. Today, we serve private landowners in the watersheds of the Umpqua, Long Tom, Siuslaw, Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette, coastal rivers and streams from Reedsport to Yachats, as well as our namesake, the McKenzie River.

## Our Protected Lands

- The McKenzie River Trust acquired our first fee title property *and* our first conservation easement in 1992.
- Our properties range in size from 13 acres (Robert's Preserve and the Smith Property) to 1,056 acres (Green Island).
- Most of our protected lands include streams and wetlands and/or are next to rivers.
  - The scientific term **riparian** describes the most prominent type of habitat found on our properties. Most simply stated, riparian zones are the natural habitat that is found along waterways. Riparian habitats, made up of plants of varying age and height, are essential parts of healthy rivers and streams.
- Some recently sighted species on our properties are: Oregon chub, Upper Willamette spring Chinook salmon, western pond turtles, red-legged frogs, Kincaid's lupine (host plant for the endangered Fender's blue butterfly), Henderson's checker-mallow, Bradshaw's lomatium, bald eagles, Virginia rails, sandhill cranes, peregrine falcons, purple martens, and western meadowlarks.

## Our Finances

- The McKenzie River Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, and as such we are designated to receive tax-deductible donations.
- We pay property taxes on all of our owned lands, contributing thousands of dollars every year to the local economy.
- In recent years, we have received grants from federal agencies such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies such as the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and private foundations such as the Meyer Memorial Trust, The Collins Foundation, and Spirit Mountain Community Fund.
  - The majority of our grant funds are restricted to land acquisition or specific project activities and do not fund our general operating costs.
- We rely on the support of people who care about the values we seek to protect to help us fund our operating costs.

