



Southern Oregon University WRC Commitment Fact Sheet

SOU's Water Commitment:

The use of water is essential to operating a university campus. Southern Oregon University simply couldn't function without it. As the world pays closer attention to the growing freshwater crisis, Southern Oregon University and its students believe it's important to be responsible stewards of freshwater resources.

Thanks to their partnership with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) and the commitment of their students, Southern Oregon University has taken strides to restore 100% of our their campus water footprint, including water associated irrigation of campus grounds. Water Restoration Certificates® (WRCs) purchased from BEF will restore 80 million gallons of water per year for five consecutive years to the critically dewatered Sevenmile Creek in the Klamath River Basin of southern Oregon and northern California. All BEF WRC projects are certified by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's strict set of criteria to ensure flow is restored to the environment in locations and at a time that will have optimum environmental benefit.

About the Sevenmile Creek Project

Location: Klamath River Basin, Southern Oregon and Northern California

Start Up Date: 2012

Project Result: Over 1.2 billion gallons restored per year

Project Partner: Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Verification: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The Klamath River Basin, covering more than 12,000 square miles in southern Oregon and northern California, is considered one the most important waterfowl areas in North America. It is home to six National Wildlife Refuges and supports more than 430 species of wildlife. Extreme over allocation of water resources in the upper Klamath River Basin has resulted in inadequate stream flows and the degradation and/or loss of critical riparian and aquatic habitat.

The conflict between agricultural and ecological water needs in the basin remains one of the most significant environmental issues in the western United States. Sevenmile Creek is located upstream of the Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge and contains some of the best remaining stream habitat in the Upper Klamath Basin.

The area is home to myriad species and is designated as critical habitat for threatened bull trout, native redband rainbow trout and the sensitive Oregon spotted frog. Irrigation diversions within the

watershed have partially or completely dewatered critical streams, while return flows are often too warm or nutrient laden to provide adequate habitat for listed and threatened species.

Historical water use in this area has led to the diversion of the entire flow from the upper reaches of Sevenmile Creek, resulting in the complete dewatering of two miles of the stream and limiting fish access to some of the most critical, intact habitat in the stream system. This dewatering also prevents high quality, cold, clear water from flowing down the remaining 17 miles of Sevenmile Creek to areas located in the National Wildlife Refuge.

Since 2004, the Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust has tested the results of improving flows in Sevenmile Creek. Keeping water in the stream has improved habitat and provided a critical migratory corridor for endangered and threatened species. Through habitat monitoring, there has been a demonstrated linkage between keeping water flow in stream and improvements to fish habitat. With increased flows, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has reported dramatic increases in the occurrence of redband trout.

About Water Restoration Certificates® (WRCs)

How water becomes a BEF Water Restoration Certificate®

Dealing with a problem as critically important as our planet's freshwater crisis requires collaboration and ingenuity from a variety of dedicated parties. With this in mind, BEF's Water Restoration Certificates® (WRCs) were created through the tireless efforts of many scientists, NGOs, business people, lawyers and conservation experts. Their work and determination brought us all a new way to address the looming water crisis. Here's a short explanation of how water becomes a WRC.

Rivers and Streams Running Dry

Surprisingly, WRCs are derived from rivers and streams where there's very little water. To understand how this happens, you need to understand a little about water and water law. Currently, water laws in the western United States give water rights to property owners, allowing them to take a certain amount of water from rivers and streams each year for beneficial economic use. The downside of these laws is that in many cases rights to withdraw water exceed the total amount of water available in the stream, particularly in late summer or during periods of drought. In addition, in many states laws mandate that water rights holders must use all their allotted water or they risk forfeiting their water rights forever.

This "use it or lose it" policy in some cases encourages inefficient water use when landowners are forced to use all of their allotted water regardless of whether there may be more efficient or beneficial means to put that water to use. And with the use of water in many areas exceeding the actual amount of water in the river, many streams go completely dry or have so little water that they can't support fish, wildlife, and recreation.

Keeping Water Where It's Needed

BEF WRCs are uniquely designed to give landowners a choice in how they use their water. WRCs are a voluntary, market-based program that provides economic incentives allowing water rights holders to devise new water management solutions to restore water to critically dewatered

ecosystems. Simply put, the WRC program provides funding to support projects that allow landowners to change the way they use their water rights in order to restore vital water to dewatered rivers and streams.

This opportunity exists for two reasons: first, across many states, non-profit organizations are collaborating directly with landowners to devise new tools and smarter water management solutions. And secondly, because new, progressive water laws in select states have emerged allowing water rights holders to officially restore water to rivers and streams without forfeiting their valuable water rights. By providing funding that can restore water in-stream where it is protected and unavailable for any other use, WRCs help critically dewatered rivers and streams become healthy and flowing again.

Trust WRCs to Make a Difference

To ensure that WRCs produce real environmental benefits, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation reviews each proposed WRC project, selecting and certifying those with the greatest potential to add water where it's most critically needed. When a BEF WRC is purchased, the equivalent restored water is officially registered and available for view in an online registry. Once it has been verified that the water has been returned to the environment, the WRC is retired so it can't be sold, traded or double counted.

About BEF

At Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), we believe addressing the planet's most pressing environmental challenges requires innovation, creative problem solving and discovering a new way of doing business that values the natural resources we depend on. We are entrepreneurs for the planet. Through a full suite of innovative energy, carbon and water solutions we are helping our partners—from the farmer to the corporation—redefine how business gets done. We help our partners meaningfully balance their environmental impact, invest in clean energy and carbon reduction, educate the next generation of clean energy leaders, and effectively and sustainably restore the health of our freshwater resources.

Collectively, BEF and its partners have:

- Generated more than 5.1 million megawatt hours of clean, renewable energy through our partners' purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates. That's the equivalent of powering over 404,000 homes with clean, renewable electricity instead of atmosphere harming fossil fuels for one year.
- Kept more than 1.9 million metric tons of harmful CO₂e* from the atmosphere through our partners' purchase of Carbon Offsets. That's the equivalent of taking more than 405,000 cars off the road for one year.
- Kept a combined total of more than 4.7 million metric tons of CO₂e* from the atmosphere through our partners' combined purchases of RECs and Carbon Offsets. That's the equivalent of taking more than 991,000 cars off the road for one year.
- Restored over 7.6 billion gallons of water to critically dewatered rivers and streams throughout the nation through our partners' purchase of Water Restoration Certificates®. That's the same volume of water that would fill 11,543 Olympic sized swimming pools.

- Reached more than 400,000 students with hands-on renewable energy education through our Solar 4R Schools™ program. That includes students from more than 200 schools in 20 states nationwide.
- Have been a driving force in revitalizing 14 watershed ecosystems in 6 western states through our Model Watershed Program.

Learn more at B-E-F.org.