



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners (Board)

FROM: Tarik Rawlings, Associate Planner
Will Groves, Planning Manager

DATE: February 2, 2023

SUBJECT: Deschutes River Mitigation and Enhancement Committee / Appointments

The Deschutes River Mitigation & Enhancement (M & E) Committee has seven voting members appointed to three-year terms by the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners. The M & E Committee is made up of representative stakeholders, including: conservation organizations, fishery experts, members at large and COID. One (1) member (Kate Fitzpatrick, Committee Chair) with a term set to expire on February 28, 2023 has expressed a desire to be reappointed. Committee positions currently held by Craig Horrell of Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID), and William Seitz (fisheries expertise) are set to expire on February 28, 2023 and these positions require new appointments. The M & E Committee nominated Doug Watson, COID Director of Hydro Operations, and Jason Wilcox, Forest Fisheries Biologist for Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests, to fill the vacant positions designated for a COID representative and fisheries expertise, respectively.

I. BACKGROUND

In order to mitigate for its siphon hydropower project located upstream from Bill Healy Bridge in Bend, the Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) signed an agreement with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) on March 31, 1987. The agreement was a requirement of a County conditional use permit (CU-87-2). The goal of the agreement is to ensure that no net loss of fish, wildlife, habitats, or recreational opportunities result from construction and operation of the hydropower project. To help accomplish the goal of the agreement, managers created the Deschutes River M & E Program.

The program sets general priorities for habitat mitigation and enhancement activities based on location within the upper Deschutes River. These priorities have been further refined to target key fish spawning and rearing areas and adult fish holding areas. Other program goals are described in the M & E Program Plan¹. The Program is consistent with other regional and statewide plans, such as the ODFW Upper Deschutes Subbasin Fish Management Plan and the Oregon Conservation Strategy. COID is required to use a portion of the revenues generated by the power plant for enhancing river habitat and water conservation improvements in the upper Deschutes basin. The M & E Committee oversees approximately \$90,000/year of funding and reviews plans developed and submitted by ODFW. The

¹ <https://www.deschutescounty.gov/cd/page/deschutes-river-mitigation-and-enhancement-committee>

program has funded and built over 60 separate fish habitat and bank stabilization projects in the upper Deschutes River basin since 1989, in addition to several feasibility studies and monitoring projects.

II. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The following tables describe the current and proposed membership of the M&E Committee. As noted above, staff recommends the Board reappoint Kate Fitzpatrick to a three-year term (February 28, 2026), appoint Doug Watson to a three-year term (February 28, 2026), and appoint Jason Wilcox to a three-year term (February 28, 2026).

Voting Members		
Kate Fitzpatrick - Chair	Conservation Organization - Deschutes River Conservancy	<i>Reappointment requested</i>
Patrick Griffiths	Member at Large - City of Bend Utility Department Water Resources Manager	<i>Term ends: February 28, 2025</i>
Doug Watson	COID - Director of Hydro Operations	<i>Requested for appointment</i>
Ted Wise	Member at Large - ODFW	<i>Term ends: February 28, 2025</i>
Shaun Pigott	Fisheries Expertise - Trout Unlimited	<i>Term ends: February 28, 2025</i>
Jason Wilcox	Fisheries Expertise - Forest Fisheries Biologist USFS	<i>Requested for appointment</i>
Kris Knight	Conservation Organization - Upper Deschutes Watershed Council	<i>Term ends: February 28, 2025</i>

Non-voting Members	
Jackson Morgan	Department of State Lands
Sam Vanlaningham	Oregon Water Resources Department
Jason Gritzner	U.S. Forest Service
Tarik Rawlings	Deschutes County - CDD

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Member	
Jerry George	ODFW M & E Coordinator

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board reappoint Kate Fitzpatrick to a three-year term (February 28, 2026), appoint Doug Watson to a three-year term (February 28, 2026), and appoint Jason Wilcox to a three-year term (February 28, 2026). Additionally, staff recommends the Board issue letters expressing gratitude to the two (2) outgoing committee members, in line with past Board practices.