DESCHUTES RIVER
CONSERVANCY

Annual Water Leasing Program – 2026

Do you have water rights that you are not using or are thinking about not using? Would you like to protect your water right and help improve summer flows in Whychus Creek?

The Deschutes River Conservancy and Three Sisters Irrigation District are partnering to offer their annual water leasing program again in 2026. Each year of a lease counts as a year of beneficial use, thereby preserving the validity of your water right. You may lease all or part of your irrigation rights. In 2025, Three Sisters Irrigation District and its patrons contributed 641.55 acres and up to 9.311 cubic feet per second instream. 5,396.39 acres and 74.01 cfs were leased basin-wide, resulting in additional flows to Whychus Creek, Tumalo Creek, Trout Creek, Ochoco Creek, and the Crooked and Deschutes Rivers.

The options available to you include:

- 1 year instream lease
    - Water rights are leased for one irrigation season instream

Payment for leases each year is contingent on grant funding which has been secured in 2026. Leases with unaddressed weed issues, leases with public entities, and leases committed after the March 1 deadline are not paid.

Increase in lease payments.
In 2020, the DRC and the District initiated a lease incentive program. This incentive program was expanded in 2021. The base lease payment is $10 per acre-foot of measured lease water for up to 450 acres of leasing. If patrons commit to lease a total of 450-499 acres instream by March 1, the payment increases to $15 per acre-foot of measured lease water. If patrons commit to lease a total of more than 500 acres instream by March 1, then the payment will increase to $20.00 per acre-foot of measured lease water.

For more information or to sign up, please contact TSID (541-903-4050, office@tsidweb.org) or Alex at the DRC (541-382-4077, ext 115, alex@deschutesriver.org) **before March 1, 2026**. Earlier notification is encouraged to allow time to prepare the documents. Please note: You are still responsible for paying your annual district assessments.

Farm Deferral
Instream leasing is a beneficial use that protects your water right from forfeiture and allows for compensation for this instream use. Effective starting July 1, 2024 land may not be disqualified from special assessment if the owner has an active instream lease for water rights appurtenant to those farmlands – and the lands are being used according to accepted farming practices (HB-2971, ORS 308A.743(1.c.)&(2.b.)). Manage your noxious weeds that may impact neighboring farmlands, keep an updated farm plan and a record of your instream leasing. This is not intended to be legal advice, please check with your county assessor office if you have additional questions about your special deferral status and instream leasing.

Weeds
The DRC assumes participants in the Leasing Program will continue to exercise agricultural best management practices on lands enrolled in the Program, particularly with respect to the control of noxious and/or nuisance weeds. Failure to control weeds on leased acres may result in exclusion from Program compensation.

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About the Deschutes River Conservancy
The Deschutes River Conservancy implements voluntary, market-based approaches to water management. It is a non-profit organization that facilitates a wide range of transactions and discussions between agriculture, industry and municipal interests to increase streamflow and water quality in the Deschutes Basin.

For additional lease info: Alex Ehrens at 541-382-4077, ext. 115 / alex@deschutesriver.org
More information on the Deschutes River Conservancy: www.deschutesriver.org