



Farmers Conservation Alliance

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRCS-OR and Klamath Drainage District sign Watershed Plan Agreement and FONSI

The authorization of a Klamath Drainage District Watershed Plan marks a major collaborative milestone to advance irrigation modernization efforts in the Klamath Basin.

Klamath Falls, OR — April 6, 2026 —The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Klamath Drainage District (KDD) is pleased to announce the authorization of the Klamath Drainage District Watershed Plan. This planning process was supported by Farmers Conservation Alliance and other federal agencies including the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This milestone reflects years of technical planning and collaboration to support irrigation modernization efforts in the Klamath Basin under NRCS’s Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (PL-566). "Water scarcity is a harsh reality for farmers in the West," said Greg Becker, NRCS Oregon State Conservationist. "These PL-566 watershed infrastructure investments in the Klamath empower farmers to conserve water and protect their natural resources."

On January 8, 2026, NRCS Chief Aubrey Bettencourt authorized KDD’s Watershed Plan rendering the projects covered by the plan eligible for NRCS PL-566 funding. “It has been proven time and time again that when there is water on the landscape the way it naturally is supposed to be, all parties in the Klamath Basin win,” said Scott White, KDD General Manager. “This is a monumental step to bridging the district with its natural environment for the betterment of the entire basin.” The projects can now move forward into final design and construction; they include extension of the North Canal to the P-1 Lateral, a fish screen at the North Canal Diversion on the Klamath River, modifications along the North Canal to improve flow efficiency, upgrading two pump stations for operational efficiency and to reduce water discharge, and installation of flow monitoring and automated gates throughout the project area to improve water management.

FCA Executive Director Julie Davies O’Shea remarked, “This Watershed Plan is the result of thoughtful collaboration and creates a foundation for projects that will improve water reliability for farmers and ranchers, while at the same time, improve the health and habitat of the Klamath Basin watershed.” This achievement represents an important step forward for long-term water management, infrastructure reliability, and community resilience in one of Oregon’s most complex watersheds.



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About Klamath Drainage District

Klamath Drainage District (KDD) is a 27,000-acre district located in southern Oregon bordering the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge in California. KDD proactively works to improve distribution and delivery of its scarce water resources including recycling over 35,000 acre-feet annually through its recently installed recirculation pumping plants. Of this recycled water, most is reused to grow crops, but a percentage is used for growers outside of the district and used for habitat improvement and other refuge purposes. KDD is home to one of the largest concentrations of bald eagles in the lower 48 states and prides itself on its restoration activities and the tremendous wildlife viewing opportunities it provides.

About NRCS-OR

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal agency that works with farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to strengthen the long-term productivity and resiliency of working lands. Through voluntary, science-based programs and technical assistance, NRCS helps agricultural producers improve water management, enhance soil health, and address natural resource challenges while maintaining productive operations. By providing both financial and technical support, NRCS partners with local communities to ensure that conservation practices deliver lasting benefits for agriculture, natural resources, and rural economies.

About Farmers Conservation Alliance

Farmers Conservation Alliance works with irrigation communities to modernize water infrastructure for farmers and rural communities. Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA) is a nonprofit organization that partners with agricultural producers, communities, and public agencies to strengthen agricultural resiliency across working lands. FCA helps develop and implement projects that support water reliability, improve farm viability, and reduce risk in the face of drought, changing conditions, and long-term resource constraints—while also delivering meaningful conservation benefits. By combining on-the-ground collaboration with technical expertise and funding support, FCA works to turn shared priorities into durable, measurable outcomes for agriculture and the landscapes it depends on.