



FISH ON THE RUN 2026 News

Fish on the Run, Irrigation Done!

Campaign Returns for its 8th Year

This summer feels different. With climate change, reduced snowpack, and the likelihood of a longer, hotter dry season, more people are asking: What are we going to do?



In the Pacific Northwest, summer drought isn't unusual—it happens every year. We typically receive little to no rainfall during the summer months when water use is at its highest. Our primary source, the Clackamas River, depends almost entirely on winter snowpack and rainfall. When that natural storage is lower or melts earlier, river flows drop—especially in late summer.

Unlike other drinking water sources in the Portland metro area, we don't have large upstream reservoirs to draw from.

The hydroelectric system operated by Portland General Electric on the Clackamas is "run-of-river," meaning water flows through the system rather than being stored for later use. Locally, our only stored supply is limited to in-town water reservoirs and tanks.

That's why the Clackamas River Water Providers (CRWP) are once again launching the annual "Fish on the Run, Irrigation Done!" campaign now in its eighth year and encouraging all customers to participate.

This seasonal effort asks residents to significantly reduce or stop outdoor watering by the beginning of September, supporting the fall migration of Coho and Chinook salmon, both of which are threatened or endangered species. These fish rely on healthy stream flows for their journey upstream.

Why It Matters

- Less outdoor watering = more water in the Clackamas River
- Supports salmon survival and river ecosystems
- Helps mitigate impacts of drought and climate stress
- Promotes sustainable water use for people and wildlife

Whether you use a hose or an underground irrigation system, your actions can make a difference. The CRWP is offering:

- Conservation rebates
- Free landscape water audits
- Technical assistance
- Water-saving tips for inside and outside the home

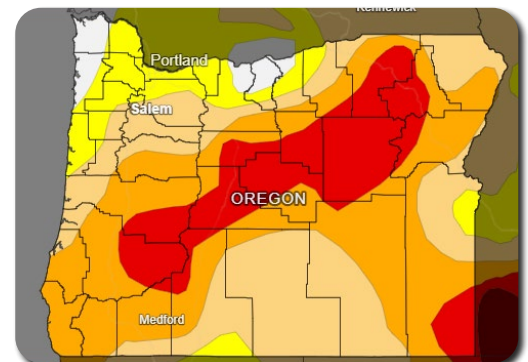
Take Action Today

- Visit the [Campaign Webpage](#)
- Take [The Pledge](#)
- Read [Conservation Articles](#)
- Encourage neighbors to join the movement

Together, let's protect our water, support salmon, and build a more resilient community. When you shut off your faucets, we stop taking water from the river.

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Drought & Dryness Categories

- D0 – Abnormally Dry
- D1 – Moderate Drought
- D2 – Severe Drought
- D3 – Extreme Drought
- D4 – Exceptional Drought
- Total Area in Drought (D1–D4)

Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA
Data Valid: 08/05/25

Water Conservation Meter

To help encourage our customers to do their best in conserving their drinking water we have developed a water conservation meter which is evaluated weekly, and notifies us of current river conditions and how much water we need to conserve.

Currently our conservation meter is RED telling us the river levels are significantly low and we all need to “Reduce or turn off outdoor watering to keep water in the river for the Coho and Fall Chinook species.”

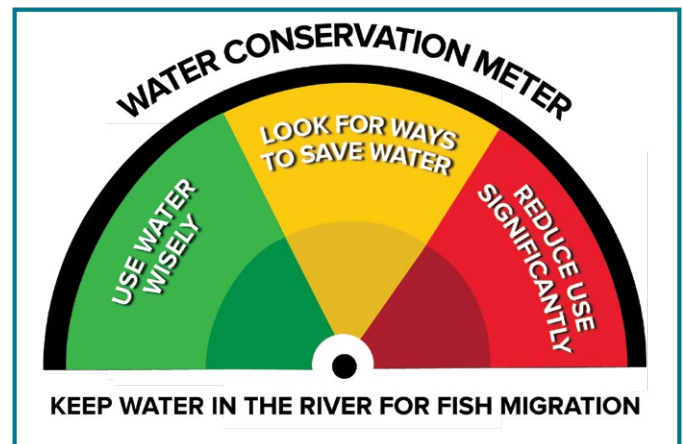
Clackamas Oregon is currently Abnormally Dry (D0), according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, and drought conditions are likely to develop over the next month. Until we get fall rains to help replenish the river, we all need to look at how to reduce our water use.

Visit our campaign web page to find tools and resources to assist you in making water use reductions and eliminations, inside and outside the home.

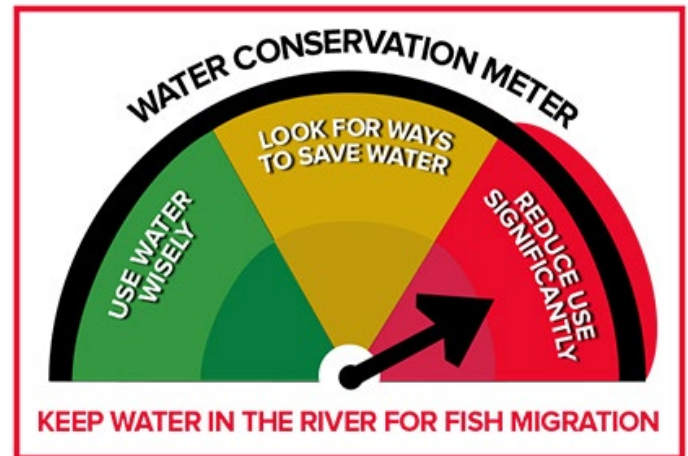
RED CONSERVATION ACTIONS:

Reduce Use Significantly

- Shut down all outdoor watering, spot water when needed
- Take your car to a commercial carwash which recycles the water
- Shut off all outdoor water features
- Do not allow water to run off driveways, sidewalks, or down the street

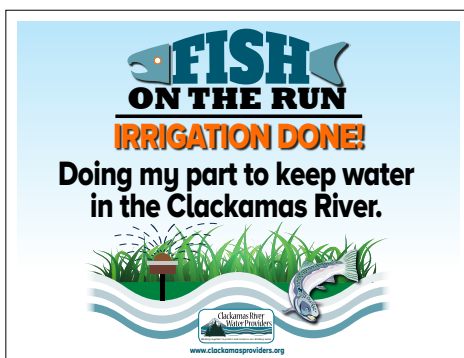


CURRENTLY, OUR CONSERVATION METER IS RED:



Take the Pledge

DO YOUR PART



Yard Sign

Take part in our “*Fish On the Run, Irrigation Done!*” pledge; and get a FREE yard sign letting neighbors know you are doing your part to keep water in the Clackamas River for fish.

I PLEDGE TO DO MY PART:

- Use the “Weekly Watering Number” to make sure my lawn and yard are getting the right amount of water but no more
- Let my lawn go dormant during the summer, which saves water, reduces run-off, and requires less mowing
- Take my car to a carwash that recycles and reuses the water
- Only water outside before 8am and after 8pm
- Make sure I stop outdoor watering by September

Visit our [website](#) to take the pledge and receive your free yard sign.



Clackamas River Fish Flow Targets

The Clackamas River is a vital natural resource, serving as a critical water source for fish habitat, drinking water, and hydroelectric power generation. Protecting native fish species particularly threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead requires careful management of river flows, especially during critical life stages like spawning and migration.

Balancing Supply and Demand

For the Clackamas River Water Providers (CRWP), maintaining fish flow targets involves a delicate balance between delivering clean drinking water to nearly 400,000 people and ensuring healthy instream flows for fish. As population growth drives higher demand, especially during the dry summer and fall months, this balance becomes increasingly challenging.

Fish flow targets are essentially prescribed flow levels needed to support different stages of the fish lifecycle. These targets may vary annually based on factors such as snowpack, rainfall, and ecological conditions but always reflect the river's role in sustaining both human and environmental needs.

Fish Flow Targets for the Clackamas River

These targets are designed to support key life stages, migration, spawning, and rearing for fish species such as Chinook and coho salmon, as well as steelhead. Fish flow targets are also closely linked to water quality and temperature. Adequate flows help keep water cool for our native fish species like bull trout as well as dilute pollutants and maintain healthy ecological conditions.

1. Summer Flow (June – September): 650 cfs

A summer target of **650 cubic feet per second (cfs)** is maintained to support juvenile fish migration during a time when natural flows are low and water use is high. Balancing this target requires careful coordination with water supply and other basin water needs.

2. Fall Flow (September – December): 800 cfs

Fall brings the return of adult salmon to spawn. The flow target increases to 800 cfs to provide the water depth, temperature, and habitat quality necessary for successful spawning and juvenile fish passage.

Implementing and Adjusting Flow Targets

Flow targets are based on monitoring data, hydrologic conditions, and fish population health. Agencies such as the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Portland General Electric (PGE) which operates dams along the river collaborate to manage flows and ensure ecological balance.



During drought years or other critical periods, coordinated actions may include the CRWP requesting that PGE release water from Timothy Lake, or activating more aggressive water conservation measures to maintain essential fish flows.

Investing in Fish-Friendly Infrastructure

Stakeholders such as PGE and our local Watershed Council have made substantial investments in:

- Fish ladders and juvenile collection systems
- Habitat restoration projects (e.g., gravel augmentation, riparian shading)

These efforts help support fish health, even when flow levels fluctuate due to seasonal demands. Working together with our basin stakeholders on long-term planning efforts, ensures that water rights, environmental priorities, and community needs are balanced effectively.

Water Conservation: A Key Strategy

Reducing municipal water use is a central strategy for protecting instream flows. Campaigns like CRWP's "Fish On the Run, Irrigation Done!" urge customers to reduce outdoor watering by September 1st, when fall salmon and steelhead runs begin. By reducing withdrawals during sensitive periods, more water remains in the river to support fish migration and habitat.

Maintaining fish flow targets on the Clackamas River reflects a broader commitment to sustainable water management. Through conservation, infrastructure investments, and regional collaboration, the Clackamas River Water Providers strive to protect this critical watershed for both the fish that depend on it and the communities it serves.

Ways to Help You Conserve

The Clackamas River Water Providers offer conservation rebates and free landscape water audits to the following member's service areas: City of Estacada, Clackamas River Water, Sunrise Water Authority (City of Happy Valley and Damascus), City of Gladstone, Oak Lodge Water Services, and South Fork Water (Oregon City and West Linn). For more information on how to participate in these programs contact Christine at christine@clackamasproviders.org, or visit our website at www.clackamasproviders.org

CONSERVATION REBATES

We offer eight water use rebates worth up to \$510 in combined value. This includes a number of ways to save water outdoors:

- A rebate for up to \$100 for an EPA **WaterSense** Labeled Irrigation Controller, go [here](#) for a list of qualifying Water Sense labeled controllers
- Up to \$60 (or 20 nozzles at \$3 dollars each) if you change your old irrigation spray nozzles to new, more water efficient multi-stream rotating nozzles
- Up to \$25 each for hose bib timers and/or an irrigation rain switch
- Smart Home Water Monitoring Device at \$100 maximum
- Hose End Water Meter: Up to \$25 rebate.

LANDSCAPE WATER AUDITS

A landscape water audit is a way to get your irrigation system and landscape on track and running right. Our Landscape auditor will assess your lawn and garden areas, irrigation system and more. Once the audit is complete you will receive a list of recommendations on how to better manage your outdoor water use. Go [here](#) for more information.



Conservation Articles and Technical Info

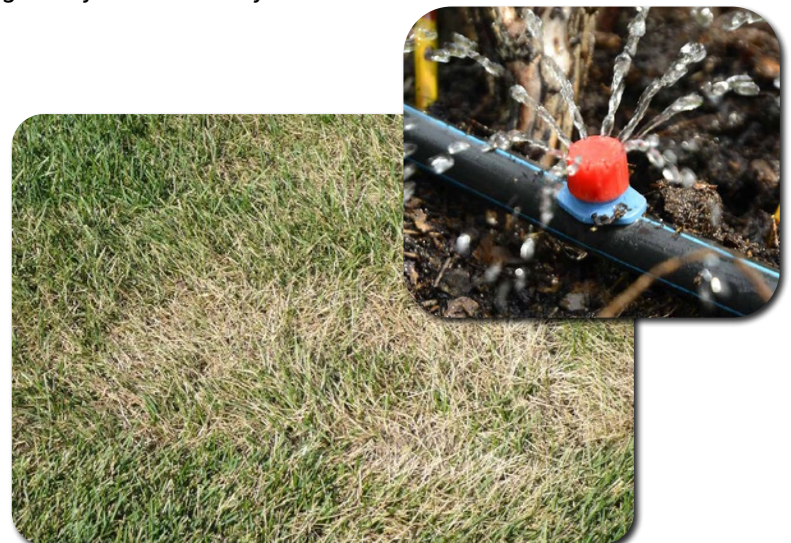
There is a lot of good information out there to help you save water. We have collected a number of articles and technical information on how to save water while using your irrigation system, and in maintaining your lawn and gardens. Visit our campaign [Conservation Articles & Technical Information](#) web page to learn more about how you can apply these strategies to your home and yard.

LET YOUR TURFGRASS GO DORMANT

Many of today's regionally adapted turfgrasses can handle a period of drought or heat. If you choose to let your turfgrass go dormant, follow these tips to help it thrive when better conditions prevail. Turfgrass has the ability to go dormant during adverse conditions. Dormancy is simply a state of reduced water usage where the turfgrass plant focuses resources on the roots.

LOW – VOLUME IRRIGATION SOLUTIONS

Low-Volume irrigation is a great way to water your plants efficiently while saving water. With a little planning the benefits to your plants, the environment, and your water bill can be substantial.



Native/Resident Fish Species of the Clackamas River



Historically, the Clackamas River and the other Portland metropolitan region tributaries supported some of the most diverse and productive fish populations in the Columbia River Basin. In 1877 Livingston Stone, employed by the US

Commission of Fisheries to explore potential fish hatchery sites throughout the Columbia River Basin, declared about the Clackamas River: Probably no tributary of the Columbia has abounded so profusely with salmon in past years as this river (the Clackamas). (US Commission of Fish and Fisheries 1877, reported in Taylor 1999)

Today the Clackamas River and other area streams still support regionally significant fish runs. However, fish populations in the area have declined from historical levels, with some fish runs diminished to the point of being listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Fish populations have declined, not only in the Clackamas River Basin and other local watersheds but throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Despite the region's dramatic growth and development, the Portland metropolitan region still supports a rich diversity of fish and wildlife habitats. Tributaries and streams within the Clackamas River watershed support some of the healthiest salmon, steelhead, Pacific lamprey and bull trout populations in the region.

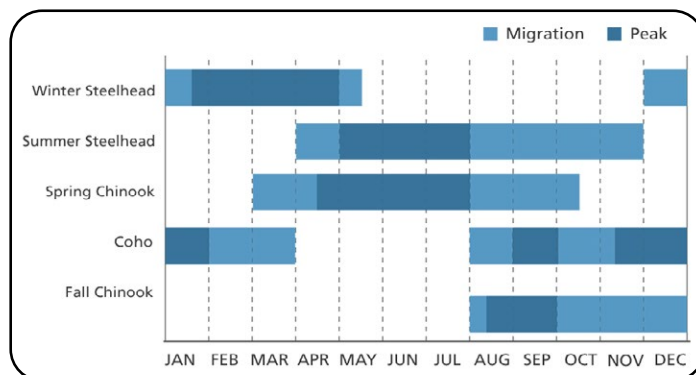
The Clackamas River Basin has the last wild late-winter coho salmon population in the Columbia Basin. The Clackamas spring Chinook

salmon and winter steelhead populations are trending in a positive direction. While these trends are positive, substantially more habitat restoration is needed to recover and sustain the environment that supports native fish and wildlife populations. The Clackamas salmon and steelhead populations are one of nine Oregon Lower Columbia independent populations.



Want to know more about what fish are in the river and when?

Check out PGE's chart on the trends and timing of fish migration on the Clackamas River [HERE](#), or check out PGE's information on Clackamas River fish counts [HERE](#).



Get Your Weekly Watering Number

Landscapes can be maintained with far less water than you think. Want to know exactly how much you should be watering each week? By using the weekly watering number, you can do just that.

The weekly watering number is based on historical data (evapotranspiration, rain fall, and other data points) from the previous week, but it is used to determine how much to water lawns and gardens during the current week. As the weather changes throughout the watering season so does the Weekly Watering Number, this allows you to give your lawn and other plants exactly what they need and not waste water.

Visit our [website](#) for more information about the **Weekly Watering Number** and start receiving your zip code specific watering number every Thursday of each week and start watering smart today!

Weekly Watering Number

Aug 4-10, 2022

Enter your zip code to get your number:

Sign up at regionalH2O.org

Stay Connected!

Subscribe to NIDIS (*National Integrated Drought Information System*) emails for the latest regional drought updates, webinars, and news. Or [SIGN-UP HERE](#) to receive drought alerts when the U.S. Drought Monitor or U.S. Drought Outlook updates for your city/zip code.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, Clackamas, Oregon is currently Abnormally Dry (D0), and drought conditions are likely to develop over the next month.

Current Drought Numbers in Clackamas County:

- 355,584 people in Clackamas County are currently affected by drought.
- 94.6% of people in Clackamas County are affected by drought.
- 64th driest June on record, over the past 132 years. Decrease of 0.34 inches from normal.
- 18th driest year to date over the past 132 years (January – June 2026) decrease of 8.84 inches from normal.



NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT
INFORMATION SYSTEM



Reduce Water Use: August & September



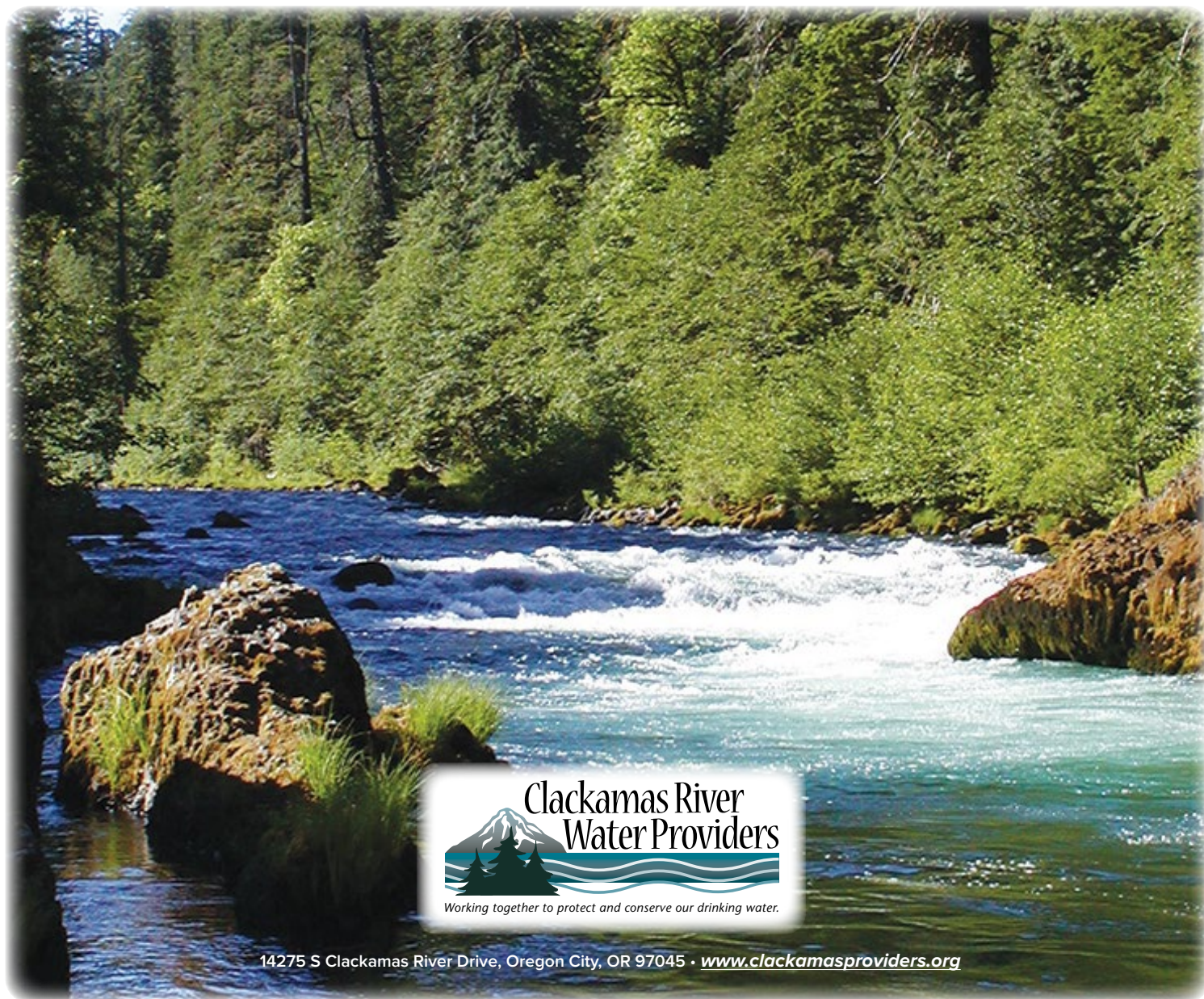
It's time to scale back and stop outdoor watering as we move from August into September. Even though it's still warm and dry, shorter days and longer nights signal that plants are past their peak growth and preparing for dormancy. They simply don't need as much water.

To significantly reduce your outdoor water consumption, gradually cut back by eliminating

one watering day each week in August. By September, you should aim to be completely done with outdoor watering. If conditions remain unusually warm and dry, you can spot water individual plants that show signs of stress.

This sensible approach to seasonal watering will save you water and help keep vital water levels in the Clackamas River for the crucial fall fish migration.

Remember, **YOU ARE KEY**, When you shut off your tap, we stop taking water from the River.



**Clackamas River
Water Providers**
Working together to protect and conserve our drinking water.

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