

## **Caring for McKenzie River: Clean water & clean energy**

The McKenzie River connects us across time—marking our past, sustaining our present, and shaping our future. For thousands of years, the native Molalla and Kalapuya peoples have thrived in the McKenzie's forests, mountains, and waters. Today, that same river helps power our homes and businesses and provides clean drinking water to more than 200,000 people in the Eugene area. It also supports rich ecosystems for fish, birds, insects, and other species that rely on a healthy watershed.

Since 1927, when EWEB first began drawing drinking water from the McKenzie, we have been committed to protecting and investing in the health of the watershed. That stewardship deepened over time as we built and operated three hydropower facilities along the river, including the Carmen-Smith Hydroelectric Plant.

Located just downstream from the river's headwaters, the Carmen-Smith project includes three dams, three reservoirs, and two power-generating plants. For more than 60 years, the project has generated clean, local electricity for our community.



*Top: Improved fish spawning channel Bottom: Carmen powerhouse* 

In 2019, EWEB secured a new 40-year license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to continue operating the project. As part of the licensing process, EWEB reached a comprehensive agreement with 16 partners, including fisheries and natural resource agencies, environmental organizations, tribal representatives, and recreation groups, to enhance fish and wildlife habitat and rebuild recreation facilities. Check out the diagram on page two for a list of some of these projects.

### FACING UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

In 2021, EWEB's routine monitoring activities discovered sinkholes in Trail Bridge Reservoir, immediately upstream of Trail Bridge Dam. Due to the potential serious implications of this discovery—including potential risks to the river, recreation areas, natural resources, property, and public safety—FERC directed EWEB to fully investigate the sinkholes before moving forward with the design, construction, and development of a new fish passage system at Trail Bridge Dam. Those studies were completed in late 2024, and EWEB is in the process of working with federal regulators to resume progress on designing and building the fish passage system.

#### How Does it Work?

Lakes End -

Campground

Water from the Carmen Diversion Reservoir (1) flows through a tunnel to Smith Reservoir (2), where it's stored like a giant battery. EWEB controls the flow through the Carmen Power Plant, increasing output during times of high electricity demand (3). The water then flows into Trail Bridge Reservoir, which regulates the flow to ensure a consistent release into the McKenzie River below Trail Bridge Dam (4).

### Carmen-Smith Hydropower Project

eweb.org/carmen-smith

Ice Cap Creek Day Use Area

> Ice Cap Cree Campgroun

Beaver Marsh



# Infrastructure & Habitat Improvements 2023 - 2026

Mt. Jeffersor

Clear Lake

Carmen Diversion Reservoir

Sec.

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Carmen Diversion Day Use Area –

Diversion Tunnel (underground)

- Two new hydroelectric turbines to continue clean, efficient energy generation
- Enhanced Chinook salmon spawning channel below Trail Bridge Dam
- In-stream habitat structures added for fish and other aquatic species
- Nesting habitat created along transmission lines
- Construction of permanent fish passage begins in 2026

### **Recreation Improvements**

- Ice Cap Creek Campground (open now!)
- Trail Bridge Campground & Day Use Area
- Lakes End Campground
- Smith Day Use Area

### All sites are expected to open in 2026!

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