



# Proposed Measure #9-176: Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District: FAQ

## Why is the proposed property tax increase being referred to voters now?

Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District (DSWCD) is a non-regulatory organization that promotes voluntary conservation efforts on private lands to protect and enhance local natural resources across Deschutes County. The primary natural resource challenges facing Deschutes County are water quality and quantity, forest health, wildfire risk, invasive weeds, fish and wildlife habitat, and land/soils management.

In recent years, the District has seen an increased request for services that exceed the District's ability to provide assistance. Starting in December 2023, the District conducted listening sessions with county stakeholders as well as online and mail surveys to solicit citizen input on where the District should invest its resources. Strong community requests were made for the District to increase its efforts for sustainable management of County water, working lands and open areas, increase work in rural and agriculture areas, give technical assistance to private forest/wood landowners, and extend services to urban areas.

If passed, the proposed measure would authorize an increase in property taxes which would fund core District functions, as well as additional requested services. The proposed tax rate would be an additional \$0.06 per \$1000 of assessed property value. The owner of an average assessed value home would pay \$1.19 per month or \$14.28 per year. The tax would be permanent and would raise \$2.1 million per year.

## Does Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District already receive tax support?

Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District currently receives no money from property taxes. The District is currently funded through short-term grants.

## What will happen if the proposed measure does not pass?

If the proposed measure does not pass, the specific set of projects identified below would not be completed and the proposed property tax increase would not occur.



DESCHUTES | SWCD

### For More Information:

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[deschuteswcd.org](http://deschuteswcd.org)

Or scan the  
QR Code





## If passed, what would the proposed measure fund?

If passed, the proposed levy would provide a stable funding source for the District, expanding services and conservation projects in both urban and rural areas. If passed, the levy would fund projects including:

- **Water Conservation and Drought Resilience for Farmers and Ranchers:** Boosting irrigation efficiency, piping of shared private laterals, flood to sprinkler and sprinkler to drip conversions, and irrigation water management plans.
- **Forest Health/Wildfire Risk Reduction:** Developing forest management plans with landowners, addressing risk from insects and disease, and restoring lands after wildfires to protect homes and communities.
- **Neighborhood and Urban Green Spaces:** Enhancing green spaces, supporting community gardens, and converting landscapes to drought resistant and native pollinator landscapes.

## How much would the proposed measure cost?

If passed, the permanent tax rate would be set at \$0.06 per \$1,000 assessed property value. This rate would be fixed by law and could not be raised. If the maximum amount is levied, it will cost about \$14.28 per year on a median property value assessed at \$238,000.

## How would voters know if the funds were used as proposed?

The District has an elected Board of Directors, and its meetings and records are all public. District financial reports are audited annually and available to the public.

## How would the proposed levy specifically address conservation for both rural and urban residents?

Deschutes SWCD works with rural landowners to conserve irrigation water, improve water quality from agricultural production, and enhance forest health and reduce wildfire risk. In a time of persistent drought, these actions protect our waterways throughout the County that urban residents utilize, and provides wildfire risk protection for urban cities during a catastrophic fire. Also, the District works with urban communities through education, technical and financial assistance to enhance community and school gardens, pollinator habitat, and the enhancement of native vegetation and water conservation.

## How can someone find out the assessed value of their home?

To determine the assessed value of a home, visit the Deschutes County website at [dial.deschutes.org/search/general](http://dial.deschutes.org/search/general). You can enter the address or other information to locate a property and its current assessed value.



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