



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting livability, agriculture and nature





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Thrive has been there for us.
The very dedicated staff and board
have worked hard to preserve those qualities
that make this such a special place.
Thank you Thrive, for having our back!
We're so proud to be members
of this organization!

Sue & Pat Hartford
Thrive Supporter



Dear Thrive Community:

Glancing up from my desk, I see that it's still pouring outside. It is limiting, this winter rain, but essential. Hood River County's iconic farmland, working forests, and unique wild spaces depend on fragile, precious things like this climate — and land use protections.

Volunteers with no planning experience formed the Hood River Valley Residents Committee, now Thrive Hood River, in 1977, just four years after passage of the landmark bill that created Oregon's land use system. Simple in concept, land use laws have become byzantine in practice. What were six uses at first is now some 60 uses — many unrelated to farming — that crowd the county's Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zone. Protecting this place we call home calls for visionary activists, ordinary neighbors, and generous donors; rainmakers, everyone.

Thrive Hood River, small but mighty, needs to be here now and for the next 50 years. Your ongoing donations, volunteer time, or long-term bequest make that happen.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Robuck".

Chris Robuck
Board Co-President

Dear Neighbors:

"Small but mighty" is an apt description of Thrive's impact this past year. Our projects have been diverse, from local seminars on farmland succession, to our critical role as conservationist watchdogs of HR County land use developments. We've testified at the Oregon State Legislature on farmland protection and worked towards a successful conclusion of the 20+ year-old Land Trade on the north side of Mt. Hood.

All this with one full-time employee (Tara and Brittney split the job), 13 stalwart board members and a handful of faithful volunteers. It is a lot but our mission to protect the irreplaceable wild spaces, farms and forest lands of Hood River County is more critical than ever, and we rise joyfully to the challenge.

But we cannot do this without you. We need your help to continue to protect this land and community we all love. Your year-end gift of money or volunteer time will amplify our advocacy efforts and mobilize our community. Your support will ensure that our children inherit a thriving, sustainable Hood River. Thank you for standing with us in this crucial mission. We wish you a peaceful holiday season and a new year filled with hope for the future and determination to overcome.

Warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Cornelison".

Peter Cornelison
Board Co-President



OUR MISSION

To protect Hood River's farmland, forests, wild places and the livability of its cities and rural communities.

OUR VISION

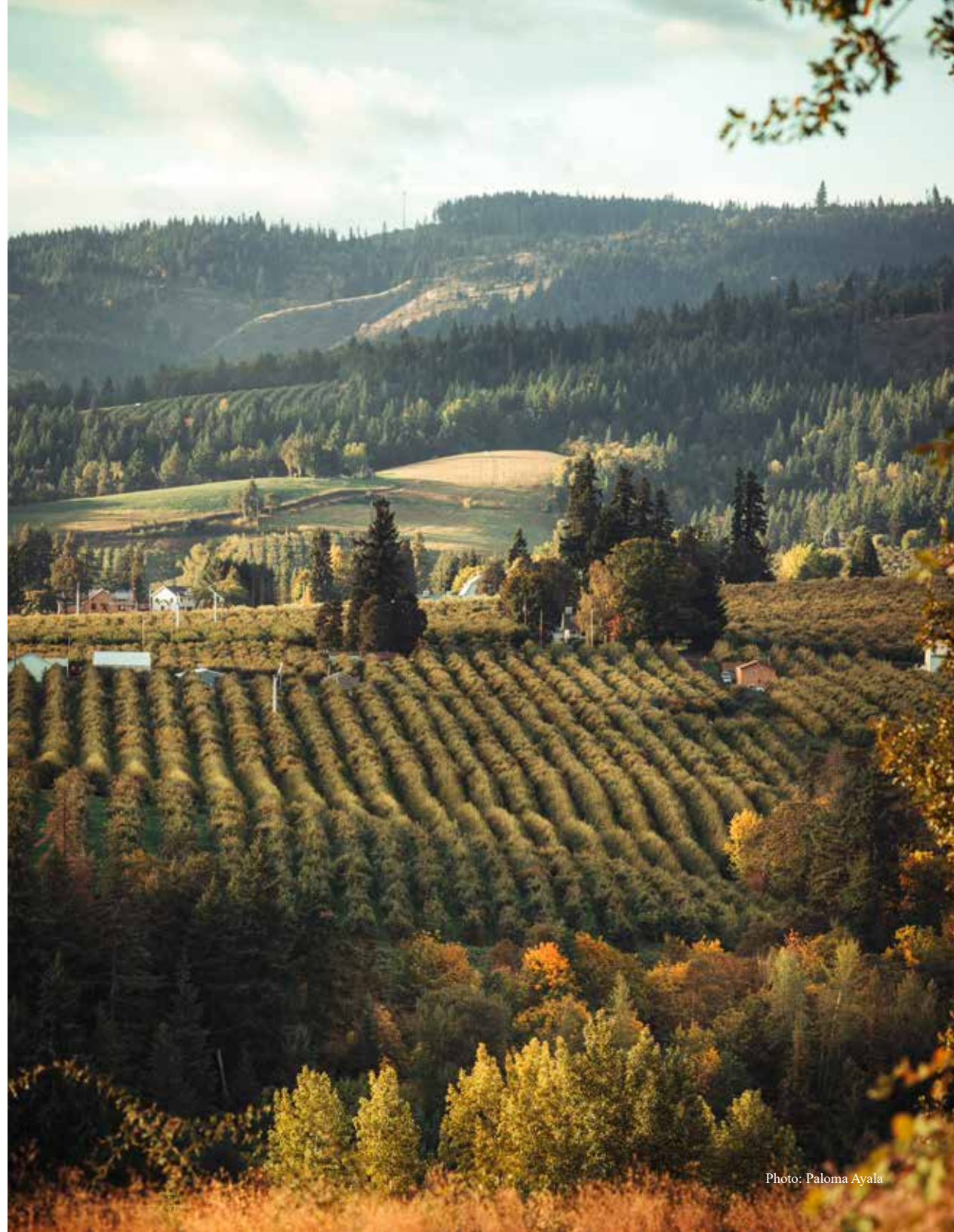
We envision a future where Hood River County's natural resources and community values are preserved and protected for generations to come.

Our farmlands and working forests continue to support Hood River County, providing food and timber, local livelihoods and important wildlife habitat.

Special wild places, including the iconic north side of Mount Hood, remain undisturbed offering places for wildlife and plants to thrive while people find moments of wonder and connection.

Our diverse communities thrive: We strive to be a place where people of many backgrounds and income levels can live, work, raise children, and age well.

We are resilient, collaborative, and connected. In the face of climate change and other threats, we come together to make thoughtful decisions that stand the test of time.



OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Land is a resource for all: Our collective health depends on how land is used. The air we breathe, the water that sustains us, and the long-term economic and food security of our communities all depend on wise use of land.

Everyone deserves a great community: We believe that a diverse community—one that includes people of different backgrounds, ages, income levels and more—is a vibrant community. We believe everyone in Hood River County deserves the opportunity for a healthy, sustainable, and enjoyable life. Our cities and towns should be designed with housing that is affordable, work, education, shopping, recreation that is accessible, and with transportation options.

Together, we can shape the future of our county: Community action is a cornerstone of Oregon’s land use program. Thrive’s power comes from people working together. We are committed to helping our community engage responsibly in land use processes. As we come together to shape the future of Hood River County, we will forge a stronger and more connected community.



THRIVE'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

OUR APPROACH

- Dedication to inclusiveness will be evident in our organizational policies and procedures.
- Create a culture that values peoples of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds that is based on our values of respect and integrity.
- Commit time and resources to recruit board members, staff, supporters, and volunteers that represent the full diversity of our community.
- Work to build trust with diverse communities and Tribal nations, expand community partnerships and support organizations that work to address disparities in our community.
- Consider equity impacts when making decisions.
- Create welcoming and inclusive communications and events.
- Listen. We will continue to learn and grow to expand our awareness of inequities and diverse experiences within the community we serve.





I support Thrive HR because it supports what I believe in: thoughtful planning to improve the quality of living in our County, and preserving the natural beauty of our environment.

Thrive does this by holding true to Oregon's land use planning system - advocating for good planning, challenging inappropriate actions, and informing the public about important planning issues.

Thrive HR cares deeply about our lives and the place we live!

Dale Hill
Thrive Supporter

OUR BRANCHES OF WORK

FARMLAND

Our Values

- Protect farmland
- Ensure ag viability
- Support a future for farming

Our Actions

- Educate & communicate
- Promote conformance
- Review applications
- Monitor existing permits

FORESTS

Our Values

- Protect commercial forests
- Support woodland resilience
- Promote diversified forestry economics

Our Actions

- Educate & communicate
- Promote conformance
- Review applications
- Monitor existing permits

WILD SPACES

Our Values

- Protect wild habitat
- Support managed recreation
- Encourage wonder and connection

Our Actions

- Land Trade
- Education & outreach
- Promoting Goal 5 and zoning overlays (forest/watershed/natural resources)
- Partnerships with other organizations
- Stewardship

LIVABILITY

Our Values

- Vibrant urban life
- Diversified urban housing options
- Prevent sprawl

Our Actions

- Advocacy & Education
- Promote mixed housing in established communities
- Endorse urban uses of urban lands (Parks!)
- Promote transportation options



THE MT. HOOD LAND TRADE ISN'T OVER — HERE'S WHY IT STILL MATTERS FOR OUR FUTURE

It may seem like a relic of the past, but the ongoing legal battle over a 20-year-old land trade still has significant implications for our community and the future of Mt. Hood. The decisions made in these cases will shape how we protect public lands, safeguard our environment, and ensure that taxpayer dollars are used fairly. It is not just about a deal from two decades ago – it's about ensuring the north side of Mt. Hood remains undeveloped and preserving the public's voice in decisions that affect us all.

There are currently two key legal cases that are moving forward.

The first is a federal case focused on the "Clean Sweep" agreement between Thrive Hood River, Mt. Hood Meadows, and the Forest Service, where improper land appraisals have stalled the 3-way deal. The appraiser, unfamiliar with Oregon's land use rules, overvalued land on the north side of Mt. Hood and undervalued developable Government Camp land, allowing Mt. Hood Meadows to benefit unequally. That lopsidedness undermined an agreement that was supposed to prevent further development on north-facing Mt. Hood, preserve 1,700 acres of wilderness in the Tilly Jane-Cloud Cap Historic District, and protect 2,000 acres of the Crystal Springs watershed.

The second is a circuit court case, where Judge John Olson presides over a lawsuit to equalize the 2002 land exchange between Mt. Hood Meadows and Hood River County. Judge Olson had sent equalization values in the original land swap back to the Hood River County Board of Commissioners for their re-review. In October, the county commissioners once



again denied Thrive Hood River and the public an opportunity to voice their concerns about a full public process and fair valuation of the land that, they discovered in the original trade, shortchanged county taxpayers more than \$1 million. Thrive Hood River and community members have consistently fought for transparency and fairness in this process, which is now in court-ordered mediation. There, Thrive has proposed a fair compromise that will secure protection for the north side of Mt. Hood.

Both cases have moved at a glacial pace, frustrating those invested in preserving our public land. It has been difficult for the community to fully understand what's happening because the legal proceedings limit what Thrive Hood River and Mt. Hood Meadows can say publicly. Still, Thrive's role is unchanged: to challenge flawed public processes and fight for a fair deal. Thrive remains open to negotiating a resolution that benefits the local community and ensures environmental protection.

Our ability to continue this fight depends on community support, especially in funding the legal efforts needed to keep these cases moving forward. This is about securing a future where Mt. Hood remains a wild place we can all enjoy, and where our community's values are upheld. The time to act is now, because the potential for a better outcome is still very much within reach.

Thrive has been given a 3-to-1 match pledge for legal defense of the land trade. Your \$500 gift will unlock \$1,000 in matching donations.

* Due to legal proceedings, Mount Hood Meadows and Thrive Hood River's ability to publicly address the community's concerns are limited.

DONATE TO THE LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

A YEAR IN REVIEW: OUR 2024 IMPACT REPORT

Land Use Applications and Enforcement

We review every planning permit submitted to the county. So far this year, that number is at 205 permit applications. During 2024, our Monitoring and Enforcement Committee submitted public comments on six of those applications. The County's decisions in three of those were consistent with Thrive's position — three more remain in process. We also sent three enforcement requests to the County, describing apparent violations of existing land use regulations or permits, all of which remain in process.

Advocacy

Thrive gave written and in-person testimony on land use issues that affect Hood River before the Oregon Legislature, the Land Conservation and Development Committee, Hood River Forest Collaborative, Oregon Board of Agriculture, and the Governor.

Housing Initiative

We have partnered with 1000 Friends of Oregon to pass a bill that could allocate state funding for infrastructure upgrades in Hood River to eliminate roadblocks for missing middle and affordable housing. Our goal is to increase the local production of this type of housing, as well as statewide.



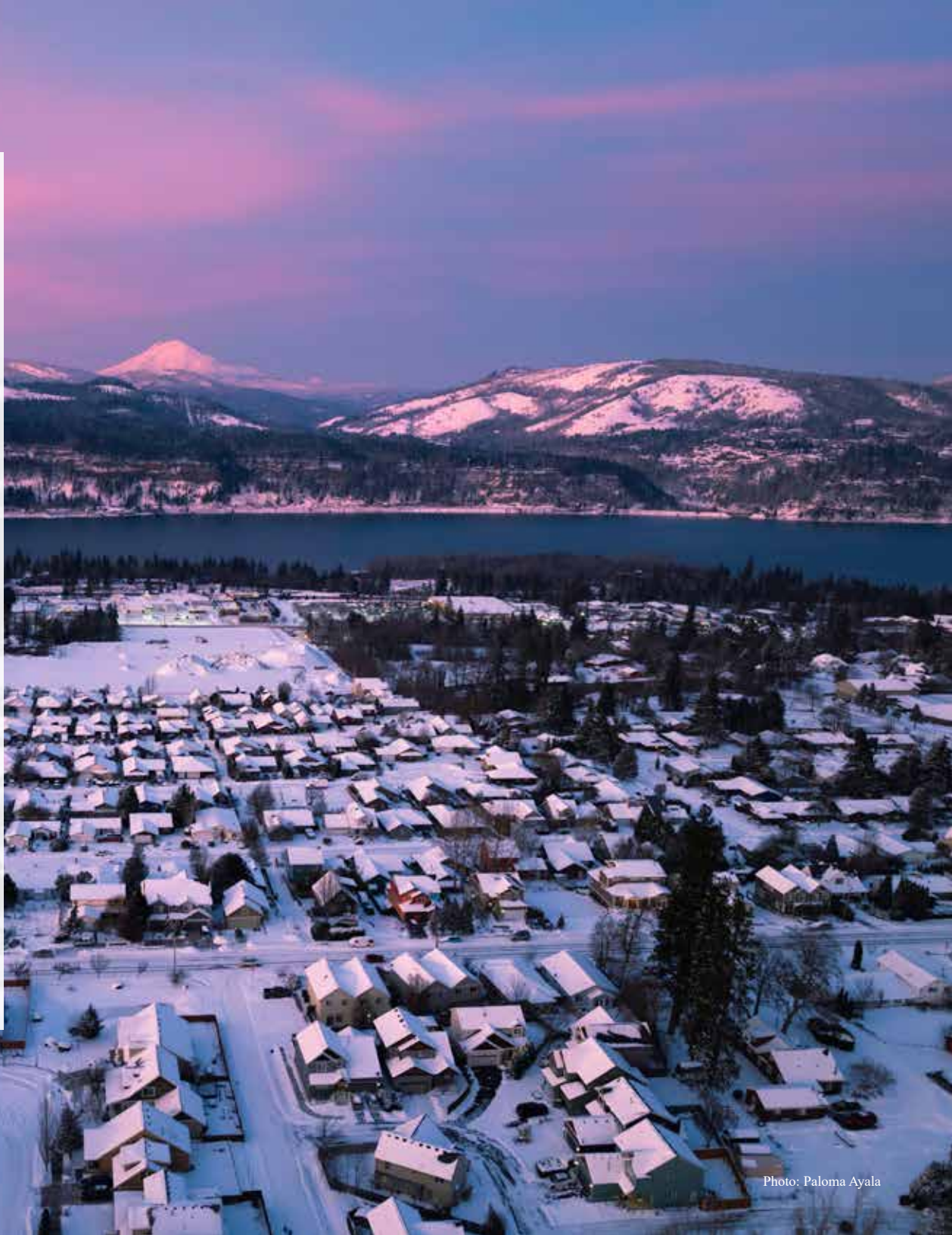
Parkdale and Odell Community Plans

In 2023, Thrive sponsored Parkdale community meetings and provided planning options. This year, we hosted a workshop to educate residents on how to effectively submit comments to Hood River County planning. Hood River County adopted the final Parkdale Unincorporated Community plan in October and Thrive is part of the revived planning process for Odell’s unincorporated community, participating in the County’s Advisory Committee for Phase 1.

Community Engagement and Information

During the year, our board, staff, and volunteers:

- Tabled at various events to connect with the community, including First Fridays, the County Fair, a Fall garden tour by bike and HR Library Reads.
- Asked candidates for the County Board of Commissioners questions about Hood River’s land use issues and published their complete responses in our newsletter and website.
- Translated Thrive’s website into Spanish along with every story in our newsletters.
- Showed “An Oregon Story: Saving our Beaches, Farmland & More”, an informative and inspiring film about the history of Oregon’s land use system and the need to support it.
- Partnered with the Oregon Agricultural Trust for a presentation providing information on farmland succession, financing and related topics.



- Conducted a litter patrol program on three designated sections of Hood River County roads. As a result, we collected and properly disposed of more than 80 large bags of trash.

Summer Active Transportation Program

This summer, Thrive Hood River introduced "Get Fit and Thrive", a local campaign that celebrates active transportation. By kickstarting opportunities to walk, bike, skate and scoot, we had loads of fun and championed a healthy and engaged community. Throughout July, August and September, we hosted two events each month.



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Our elected leaders, our businesses, and most of our institutions are incentivized to act for the short term—to think in two-year, four-year, or quarter cycles. What institutions do we have to think and plan for the long-term? What institution thinks about what Hood River Valley we will leave to our children and grandchildren. That is the critical gap that Thrive fills, and the reason we still have the Hood River Valley today.

Nico Salter

Former Thrive Hood River Executive Director

CHALLENGES HOOD RIVER COUNTY FACES

Population Growth

Increasing population leads to higher demand for housing, infrastructure, and services, often putting pressure on rural and urban areas.

Urbanization

Expansion of urban areas can lead to the loss of agricultural land and natural habitats. Managing this balance is a key challenge.

Environmental Concerns

Climate change impacts, such as wildfires and rising sea levels, affect land use planning and require adaptation strategies.

Economic Development

The need for job creation and economic growth can conflict with land conservation efforts, particularly in industries like logging, agriculture, and tourism.

Threats to Agriculture

Urban expansion, climate change, and competition for land can threaten Oregon's agricultural viability. As agricultural land is converted to development or faces environmental stresses, maintaining local farming operations and food security becomes increasingly challenging.



Rising Housing Prices

Increased demand for housing, coupled with limited supply, has led to significant price hikes. This affects affordability, particularly for low- and middle-income households.

Limited Supply of Missing Middle Housing

The absence of housing options like duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings makes it difficult for diverse households to find suitable and affordable living arrangements.

Development Costs

High construction costs and regulatory hurdles make it challenging for developers to build affordable housing, contributing to the shortage of missing middle options.

Regulatory Challenges

Balancing state and local regulations with private property rights can create conflicts in land use planning.

Community Values

Different communities may have varying priorities, leading to conflicts over land use decisions, particularly in terms of development versus conservation.



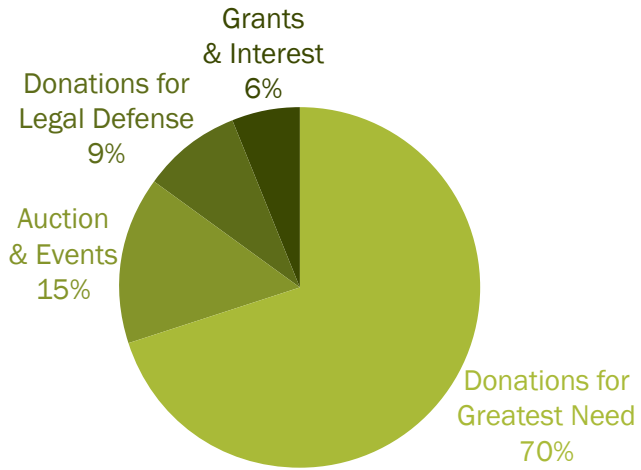
FUTURE GOALS

- In our programmatic work, we will focus our energy on farmland protection, the Mt. Hood land trade, and supporting housing affordability efforts. We see these as urgent issues and opportunities for Hood River County today.
- Communications, messaging, and fundraising will receive increased attention for the next several years so we can position Thrive to accomplish even more in years to come.
- We will put time and energy into building our staff and board, and to maintaining an excellent organizational culture that attracts the time, talent and passion we need to succeed!

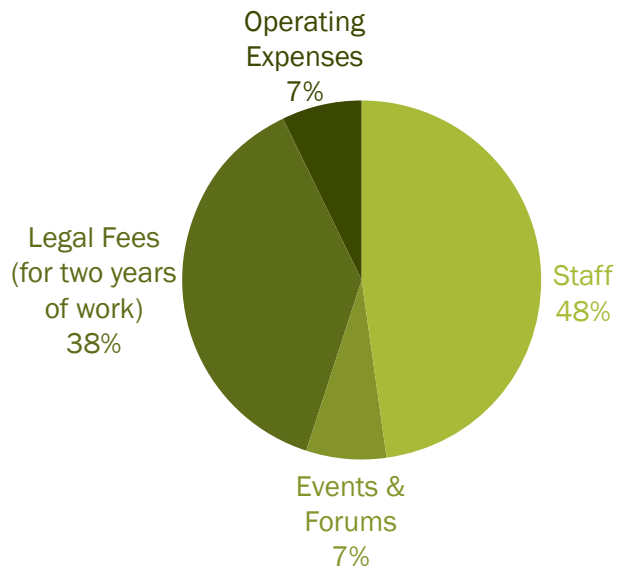


FINANCES FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Revenue



Expenses



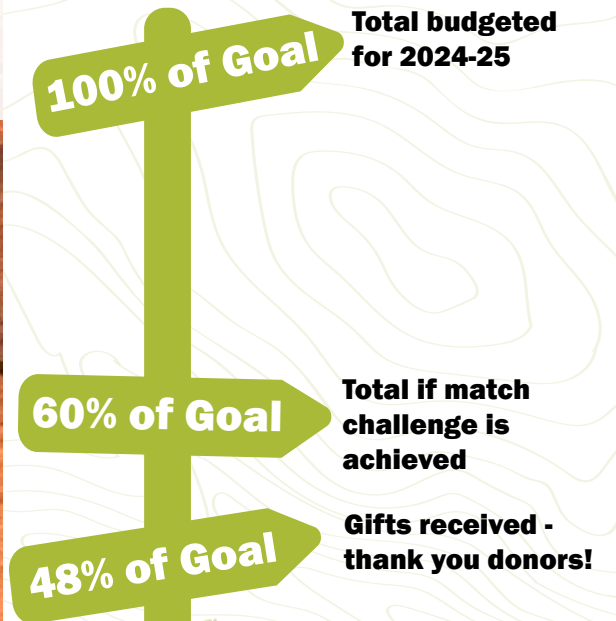
LEVERAGING RESOURCES

So many people have generously given time and other resources to support Thrive's mission. You may find yourself in this list!

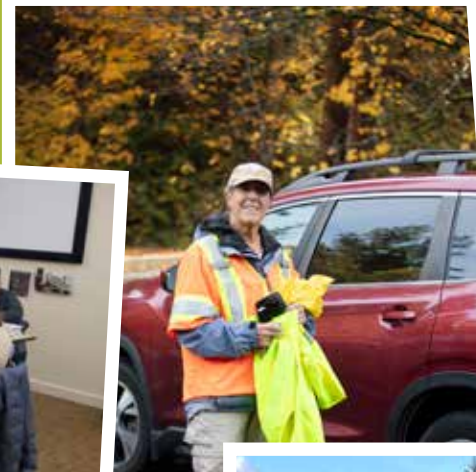
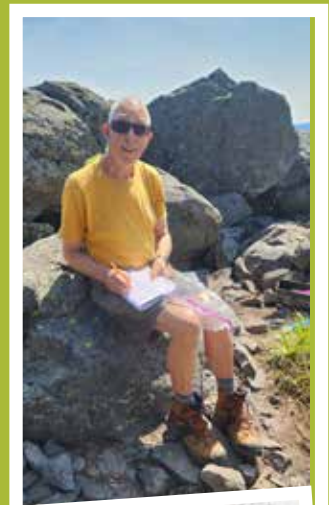
1. Donors gave goods and services valued at nearly \$15,000 for the annual H is for Harvest auction.
2. Supporters have given untold hours volunteering at Thrive events.
3. Board members donated approximately 3,500 hours to Thrive's work.
4. Approximately \$105,000 has been donated over the last two years in free or reduced rate attorney fees.

MOVING THE LAND TRADE FORWARD

Thrive has received a 3-to-1 match donation for the Legal Defense Fund. Here are the financial milestones that will keep the Land Trade mediation and court cases moving forward.



A heartfelt
THANK YOU to our incredible
volunteer superheroes!
YOU'RE OUR MVPs.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Cornelison
Co-President

Chris Robuck
Co-President and Treasurer

Lach Litwer
Vice President

Carrie Thomas
Secretary

Ron Cohen
Board Member

Scott Franke
Board Member

John Mills
Board Member

Mike McCarthy
Board Member

Kendall Cook
Board Member

Heather Odden
Board Member

OraLee Branch
Board Member

www.thrivehoodriver.org

Last but not least...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Not a member yet?

Thrive Hood River is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
founded in 1977.

Our mission is to protect Hood River's farmland,
forests, wild places and the livability of its cities and rural communities.

BECOME A SUPPORTER TODAY. DONATE TO OUR WORK.

Follow along

