



— Western Rivers Conservancy's —

# River Protection Fund

To conserve a river, first think in terms of “forever”

## Protecting the Great Rivers of the West

In the West, rivers are the lifelines of our diverse ecosystems, the centers of biological richness and precious treasures for our communities. As river lovers, we dream of floating a spectacular stretch of water, landing a wild steelhead, or camping with our children along a wild mountain creek. To know a river can take a lifetime, and many of us will happily spend years exploring a single stream. Whether as anglers, boaters, hikers or wildlife-watchers, we'll return to those places that revive us and restore our sense of focus, both on the river and the life it sustains. In the West, we can do this on some of the most legendary rivers of all, streams like the Madison, the Hoh, the Salmon, the John Day and the Gunnison.

But our rivers are at risk. Their headwaters may be protected as national forest or wilderness but their downstream reaches are magnets for development, urbanization, industry, agriculture, hydropower and transportation. Typically these lands are privately owned, and often they are for sale to the highest bidder. Even headwaters within national forests are sometimes riddled with privately owned mining claims and homesteads.

Western Rivers Conservancy protects rivers in the most direct and lasting way possible. We buy lands along outstanding rivers and streams for habitat protection and compatible public access. Then we work to get those lands into the hands of the best possible organization or agency to serve as their long-term stewards.



**John Day River, Oregon** *The River Protection Fund played a critical role in WRC's conservation of over 30,000 acres along the John Day and two of its most important tributaries for wild summer steelhead. We created Cottonwood Canyon State Park, secured new river access at Thirtymile Creek and opened recreational access to over 75,000 acres of public lands that were previously difficult to reach.*



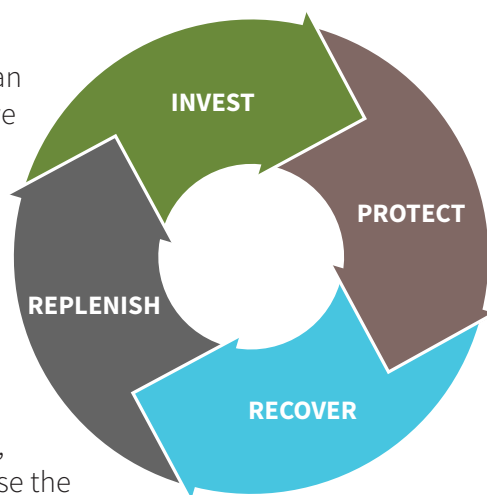
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CONSERVANCY

Typically WRC buys much more than a river corridor. We buy whole properties, including floodplains, wetlands, canyons, and forested uplands. Our job is to make the highest use of the entire property in the service of both biological diversity and public recreation.

Western Rivers Conservancy has acquired land on more than 170 rivers and streams across the West, and our practical approach to conservation is making a tremendous difference. The key to our success is our ability to act quickly in the marketplace. The River Protection Fund enables us to do just that. It allows us to seize many conservation opportunities that would otherwise be lost.

## A Revolving Fund for Land Protection

The River Protection Fund is an internal revolving fund that we use to buy key riverlands. It is not an endowment; it is a working fund, repeatedly invested and replenished. We use the fund to buy options, make down payments, or purchase land outright. When we sell land at the conclusion of a project, we replenish the fund. Because the River Protection Fund is used to protect land forever, supporters and their families have the satisfaction of permanence. Because it is a revolving fund, they also have the satisfaction of knowing their gifts will protect many properties over time.



At any given time, our ability to act is limited by our access to working capital. The River Protection Fund, which was established by a seed grant nearly two decades ago, no longer matches the scale of our opportunities. Consequently, we have set our sights on building it significantly—and this is where you can make a lasting impact on the rivers of the West.

Opportunities abound for the next use of the River Protection Fund. We are pursuing outstanding conservation opportunities on the Yampa, Methow, John Day, North Umpqua, Gunnison, Rio Grande, Scott, Gualala and Salmon rivers, to name just a few.

Thank you for considering a contribution to Western Rivers Conservancy's River Protection Fund. Your support will make a meaningful difference for our rivers and the life they support.



**Salmon River, Idaho** To protect and enhance vital Salmon River headwater streams in Idaho, WRC is relying on the River Protection Fund to conserve critical properties like Goat Falls Ranch and Cape Horn Ranch (pictured). Not only are we conserving prime rearing habitat for salmon, steelhead and bull trout, we are returning water to these streams to improve flows for fish and wildlife.



**Upper Rio Grande, Colorado** Thanks in part to the River Protection Fund, WRC has acquired and conserved thousands of acres along Colorado's upper Rio Grande and its tributaries. These efforts are protecting crucial habitat for fish and wildlife and creating new river access for hikers, anglers, boaters and others.

*Photo credits, front: Christi Bode, Dave Jensen, Steve Terrill*