

Annual Report 2010



WESTERN RIVERS
CONSERVANCY

Western Rivers Conservancy acts to protect outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States. We acquire land to conserve critical habitat, provide public access for compatible use and enjoyment, and cooperate with other agencies and organizations to secure the health of the whole ecosystem.



DON EIDER

2010 PROJECTS



Letter from the Chair and President

More than a decade after its founding, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) has a solid track record of conservation achievements in the Pacific Northwest. We've created sanctuaries for fish, wildlife and people on many of the finest wild streams in Washington, Oregon and northern California.

Our new Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Directors in January, pledges WRC to carry its program of river conservation into the rest of the West: the magnificent states of the Rockies, the Great Basin, the Colorado Plateau and the Southwest.

Our growth into the Interior West will be gradual, using proven principles of leverage and creativity. We have made a great start on two outstanding rivers: the Gunnison in Colorado and the Bear in Utah. You can read about these two projects in the pages that follow.

We need your help to move forward, buying land and assembling sanctuaries on great wild rivers throughout the American West. We need your help to find opportunities, connect with people, meet landowners and garner the funds to accomplish our mission. As you read the story of what we are doing on rivers like the Klamath, the Alsea and the John Day, please think about how you can participate in this great effort to protect the best of what remains of our wild western rivers.

Sincerely,

Phillip Wallin, *President*

Jack Williams, *Chair*



Charting Our Course

Rio Chama, New Mexico.

CORRIS

2011-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Western Rivers Conservancy began in the Pacific Northwest, where we have built a record of success creating major sanctuaries along rivers such as Washington’s Hoh, Oregon’s Sandy and California’s Smith.

Since 2007 we have doubled the staff size and opened offices in California, Montana and eastern Washington, moving our work into the Interior West with projects along Utah’s Bear River and the Gunnison River in Colorado.

Over the next five years, we seek to expand the range of our programs to fulfill our overarching goal to conserve the great rivers of the West. “Great rivers” does not necessarily mean big rivers or famous rivers. It means healthy, natural rivers where ecological functions are still intact. These rivers are the beating hearts of ecosystems, the source of biological diversity.

In our time, it is essential that every conservation organization respond to global climate change, enabling the widest possible range of species to survive and adapt. With land acquisition as a principal strategy, Western Rivers Conservancy’s goal is to create sanctuaries on our best, most natural rivers where genetic diversity can survive and flourish.

Our 2011-2015 Strategic Plan is based on nine initiatives:

- Create **major sanctuaries** on outstanding western rivers by acquiring critical habitat lands. Where possible, conserve the whole river from source to mouth.
- **Focus** on regions that are especially rich in high-quality rivers, including cold-water tributaries where marginalized species can survive and thrive.
- **Expand** our program into the Interior West.
- Use **creativity** to achieve maximum leverage in land purchases, assembling capital from numerous sources, both private and public.
- Grow our **River Protection Fund** to \$10 million to help us seize land purchase opportunities.
- Partner with selected **corporations** with extensive land holdings, such as utilities and forestry companies.
- Forge essential partnerships with relevant **agencies** and **organizations** to secure the health of the whole river ecosystem.
- Continue our program to **monitor** the stewardship of the lands we have acquired.
- Build a **stronger organization**—Board, staff, infrastructure—to implement this ambitious plan.

With a talented team in place, combining more than 130 years of land acquisition experience, Western Rivers Conservancy is well-positioned to fulfill its mission in 11 western states.

Life Source of the Colorado Plateau

OUR VISION

Conserving desert riverlands, rare warm-water species and ancient cultural sites, and expanding recreational access to a new National Conservation Area.



GUNNISON RIVER

COLORADO

A major tributary to the Colorado River, the Gunnison is a ribbon of life flowing through desert and Rocky Mountain canyonlands.

Its upper reaches carve one of the most spectacular gorges in North America at Black Canyon. From here it flows north, slowing to a gentler gradient beneath colorful rock formations, nourishing riverside greenways

of cottonwood, and joining the Colorado River at Grand Junction. This lower stretch of the Gunnison is one of the last places where four species of Colorado basin warmwater fish still survive: Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub and bonytail chub. Rare desert flora like the Uinta hookless cactus also thrive in this largely untouched setting.

The surrounding landscape is knitted together in a nearly unbroken stretch of protected lands, including the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, the Bangs Canyon Special Recreation Management Area and the Colorado National Monument. Western Rivers Conservancy is purchasing strategic properties to fill in remaining gaps in protection to help ensure the health of the river and survival of the species that depend on it. ■



Endangered razorback sucker.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Negotiated purchase of a 403-acre property that will expand the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area approximately four miles down the lower Gunnison. Under threat of gravel mining, this is the Bureau of Land Management's number one national conservation acquisition priority.
- Signed an agreement to buy 131 riverfront acres that will become part of the adjacent BLM Bangs Canyon Special Recreation Management Area.

The lower Gunnison offers an extended gentle-water boating trip.



The lower Gunnison River in the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area.

© RICH DURNAN

JEFF WIDEN



Great blue heron.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Purchased 304 acres of the former Feather and Finn Club and added 424 acres of the property to the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.
- Negotiated purchase of the 600-acre Lucky Seven Pintail Club to further expand the Refuge.



Tundra swan.



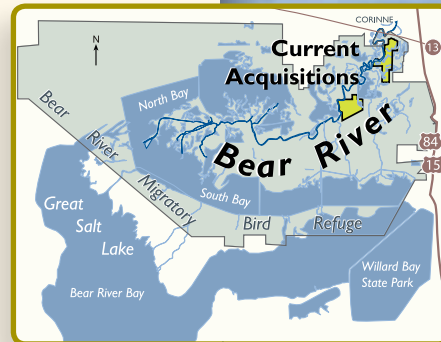
BEAR RIVER

UTAH

The Bear River carries cold water down from three Rocky Mountain states and pours into the Great Salt Lake, its largest source of fresh water. At this confluence, a vast wetland fans across the landscape beneath the panorama of the Promontory and Wasatch Mountain ranges.

Here, a thunderous assembly of millions of birds gathers each year to rest, feed and nest during long migratory journeys. The marshes at the mouth of the Bear River are one of the greatest producers of waterfowl in the nation, drawing binocular-clad visitors by the tens of thousands annually. In 1929, the area was protected under the stewardship of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. This designation signified for the nation the Refuge's great importance for more than 200 bird species that eventually disperse among a vast network of flyways across the western hemisphere.

The Refuge's incredible productivity is due to its combination of open water with sheltered marshes and grasslands, ideal for rearing young broods. Western Rivers Conservancy is protecting areas that provide just these characteristics to expand the footprint of the Bear River Refuge.



Enhancing a Critical Bird Sanctuary

OUR VISION

Preserving one of the West's premier strongholds for migratory waterfowl, expanding habitat for more than 200 species and millions of birds that navigate the Great Central Flyway between Mexico and Canada.

Open water combined with sheltered grasslands and marshes make for ideal nesting habitats within the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

Free-Flowing Salmon Streams of the Sierra Nevada

OUR VISION

Strengthening two of the last healthy steelhead and salmon runs remaining in the Sacramento River system, protecting a vulnerable corridor that bridges the Lassen National Forest and the Ishi Wilderness.



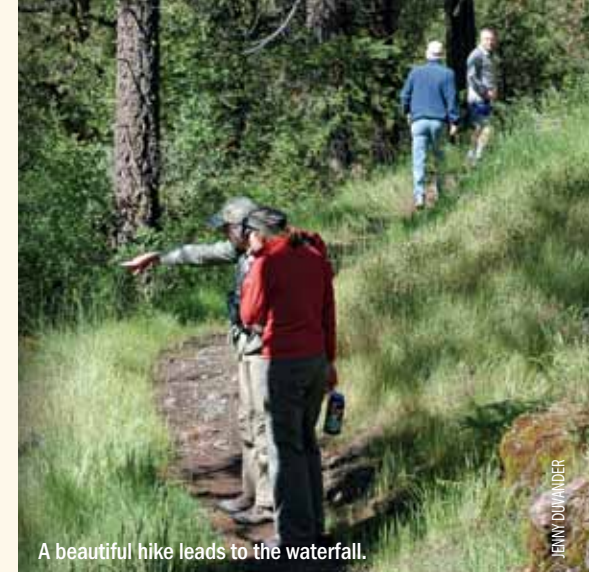
DEER & MILL CREEKS

CALIFORNIA

Tumbling from Mount Lassen's foothills, through rugged canyons, oak woodlands, and over beautiful waterfalls, Deer Creek is one of the finest streams in the Sierra Nevada.

While most Sierra rivers have been blocked by dams, Deer Creek, along with its sister stream to the north, Mill Creek, remains free flowing. Retaining remarkable biodiversity, Deer and Mill Creeks are among few Sacramento tributaries where threatened spring-run Chinook salmon and winter steelhead still thrive.

These top-quality Sierra streams are the keys to recovering struggling Sacramento River fish runs. Conserving their vulnerable reaches is of the utmost priority, and Western Rivers Conservancy has been working for several years to do just that. ■

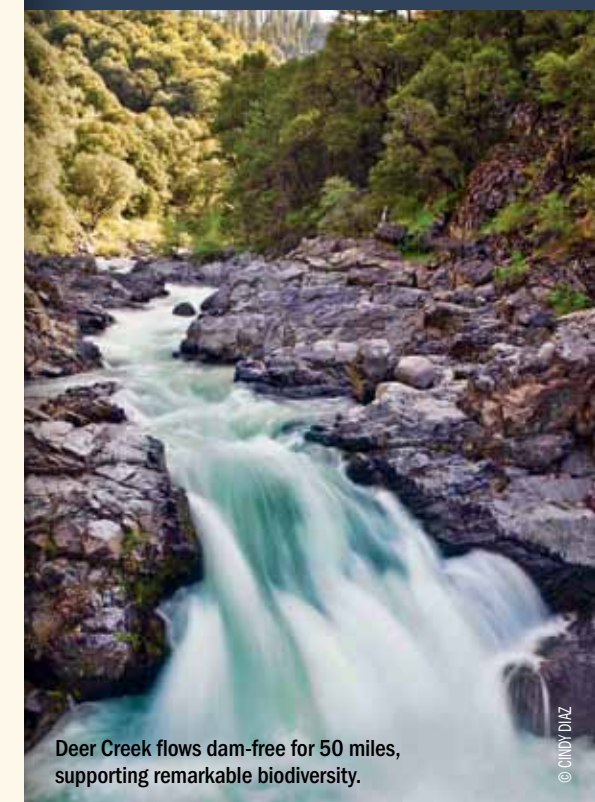


A beautiful hike leads to the waterfall.

JENNY DUVALDER

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Purchased 600 acres from Sierra Pacific Industries, including beautiful Lower Deer Creek Falls and one of the most scenic riverside hiking trails in California.



Deer Creek flows dam-free for 50 miles, supporting remarkable biodiversity.

CINDY DIAZ



CINDY DIAZ



Chinook hold in a pool in Blue Creek.

THOMAS DUNKIN

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Worked diligently to complete purchase of the first phase, which will establish a 22,237-acre Yurok Tribal Community Forest and improve the aquatic habitat of three tributaries: Pecwan, Ke'pel and Weitchpec Creeks.



Cold side streams support salmon when main-stem water temperatures rise.

© CINDY DIAZ



KLAMATH RIVER & BLUE CREEK

CALIFORNIA

The Klamath River basin is one of the most biologically rich regions on Earth, home to a diverse assemblage of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and endemic plants. Once the second largest producer of salmon on the West Coast, the Klamath River was proposed as the nation's first "salmon sanctuary" in 1895, a vision that never came to fruition. Instead, the Klamath's great fish runs were reduced over the decades by massive concrete dams, water diversions and logging that undermined water quality.

Along the lower Klamath, a healthy forest is growing to maturity to support cold side streams where fish take refuge when main-stem water temperatures spike. The Yurok Tribe, whose name means "downstream," has cared for this stretch of river since time immemorial. In a landmark partnership, Western Rivers Conservancy is working with the Yurok to purchase 47,000 acres of the Tribe's ancestral territory from Green Diamond Resource Company. The Tribe has long sought to regain this historic homeland and rejuvenate traditional cultural practices, including subsistence fishing, hunting, gathering

and basket-weaving.

This large land transaction is taking place in two phases. First, WRC and the Tribe will purchase 22,237 acres of rugged forestlands that will become the Yurok Tribal Community Forest. The Tribe's sustainable forestry management practices on these lands will enhance water quality pouring into the Klamath from three side streams: Weitchpec, Ke'pel and Pecwan Creeks.

In the second phase, we will purchase an additional 25,000 acres to forever protect one of the most important salmon tributaries in the entire Klamath basin: Blue Creek. Celebrated for its cold, clear water, Blue Creek is the first holding area for throngs of salmon migrating up from the Pacific. Research shows that Chinook lower their body temperatures by as many as eight degrees in Blue Creek, aiding their survival.

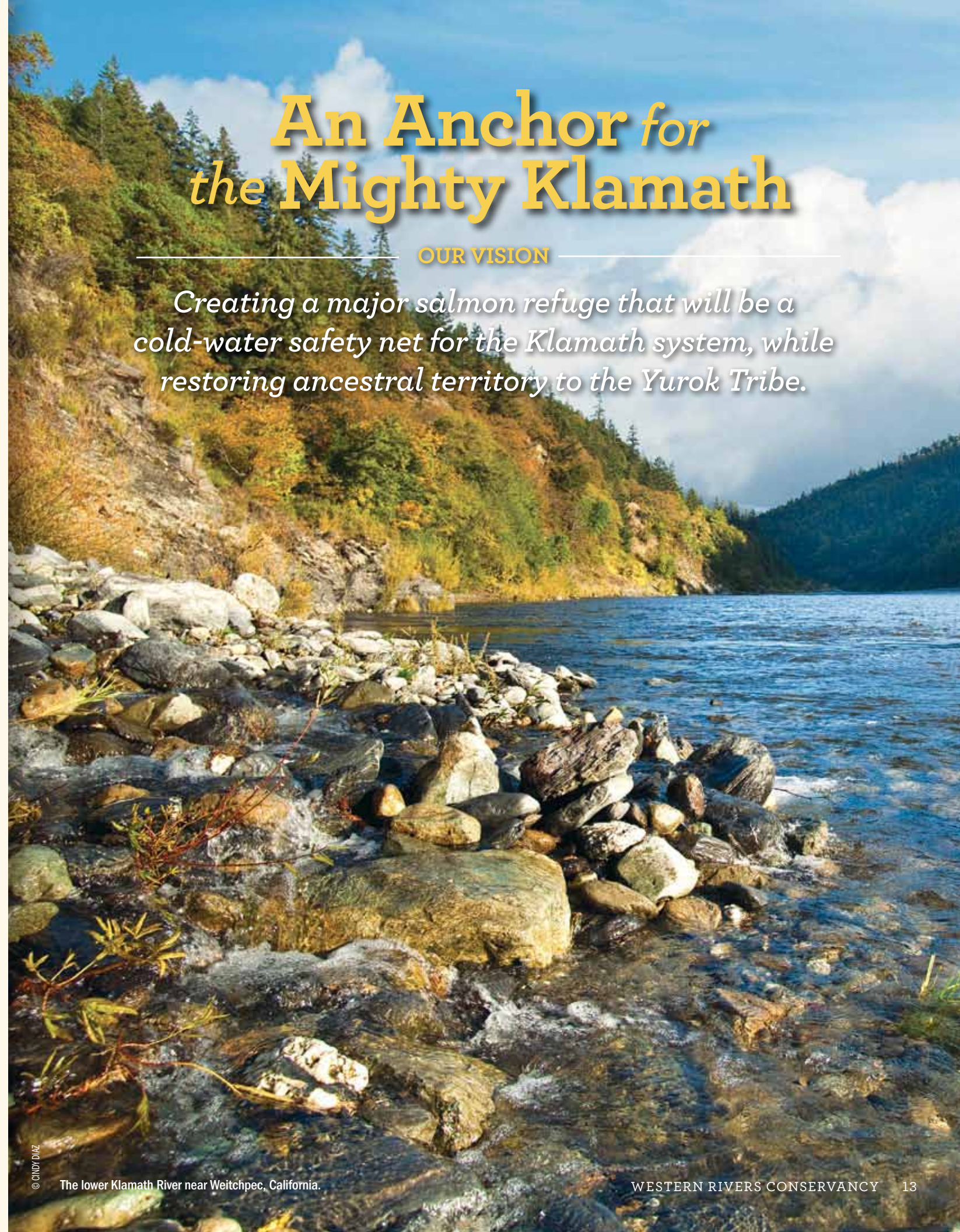
This is Western Rivers Conservancy's largest project to date, covering 73 square miles. It offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to simultaneously restore a portion of the Yurok's homeland while creating a significant salmon refuge on the Klamath.



An Anchor for the Mighty Klamath

OUR VISION

Creating a major salmon refuge that will be a cold-water safety net for the Klamath system, while restoring ancestral territory to the Yurok Tribe.



© CINDY DIAZ

The lower Klamath River near Weitchpec, California.

Rebirth of a Great Glacial Stream

OUR VISION

Establishing a series of wild fish sanctuaries along the three forks of the Hood River, helping protect one of the most biologically diverse river systems in Oregon.

The confluence of the forks of the Hood River.



HOOD RIVER

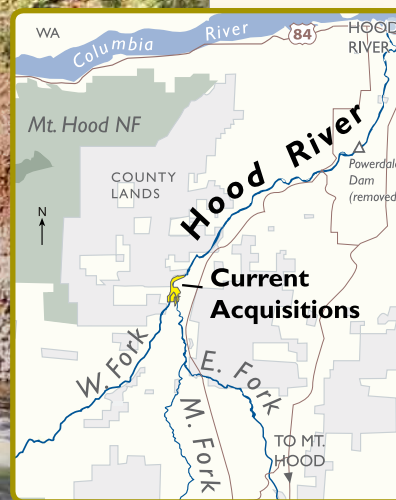
OREGON

In a valley known for its fruit orchards, the Hood River has sustained as great a diversity of fish species as any stream in Oregon. This is in large part due to its location on the cusp between the wet west side and dry east side of the Cascades, with abundant cold water flowing off of Mount Hood's north-facing glaciers. With runs of bull trout, summer and winter steelhead,

spring and fall Chinook, coho salmon, cutthroat trout and rainbow trout, the Hood River is an extremely important system for the health of Columbia River salmonids.

The Hood River is also a scenic, recreational treasure for the community. In the face of mounting development pressures, it is essential that the river be kept natural and wild. In summer 2010, a long-anticipated event signaled

a rebirth for the Hood River: PacifiCorp removed Powerdale Dam, the only main-stem impoundment, and donated several hundred acres to conservation on the lower river. Building on these accomplishments, Western Rivers Conservancy is acquiring land to extend the salmon sanctuary upstream on all three forks of the Hood River. ■



Punch Bowl Falls.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Purchased 82 acres from PacifiCorp to complete conservation of the confluence of the West and East Forks of the Hood River, including Punch Bowl Falls. WRC purchased the adjacent half of the confluence in 2006 from Longview Fibre.
- Collaborating with public agencies to establish a park and natural area from the 102-acre complex of lands we now own at the confluence.

A path leads to the beach at the confluence.



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

ODFW relocated 20 bighorn sheep to the property in November.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Began a comprehensive restoration strategy, treating hundreds of acres of noxious weeds and replanting native vegetation. Special focus was put on restoring riparian habitat on Hay Creek, a vital coldwater tributary for spawning steelhead.



RUSS SCHNITZER / SCHNITZERPHOTO.COM

The land and its waterways offer a wild and unique recreation experience.



JOHN DAY RIVER

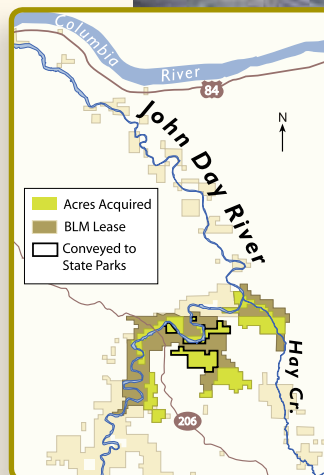
OREGON

The John Day River is the beating heart in a landscape of goose-neck canyons and braided silver channels, where jaw-dropping panoramas reveal bighorn sheep or fish rising. Among all of the rivers of the vast Columbia system, the John Day River has the healthiest remaining runs of summer steelhead. Chinook salmon, bull, redband, rainbow and cutthroat trout also thrive in its waters, which flow undammed for longer than any other river west of the Continental Divide.

Like many other disappearing shrub-steppe landscapes, the lower John Day is threatened by fragmentation.

Western Rivers Conservancy's land-buying strategy is an extremely effective way to conserve large blocks of habitat so they remain intact. In 2008, we acquired 16,000 acres of deeded and leased lands along 16 miles of the lower John Day. The land includes the lower three miles of a spring-fed tributary called Hay Creek, which runs cold and clear year-round and provides one of the last spawning and rearing habitats for steelhead on the lower river.

In 2013, this property will become Oregon's largest state park in a generation, preserving the rich diversity of habitat offered by the land and its waterways. Cottonwood Canyon State Park will be a place where fish and numerous wildlife species can thrive, and where people can enjoy a wild setting like none other in Oregon. ■



RUSS SCHNITZER / SCHNITZERPHOTO.COM

The John Day is one of the great free-flowing rivers of the West.

A Landscape Whole, A River Wild

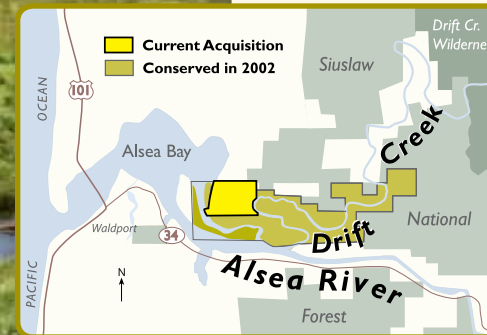
OUR VISION

Protecting sixteen miles of exceptional waters and restoring a significant block of sagebrush-steppe habitat, establishing Oregon's largest new state park in a generation.

Restoring one of Oregon's Most Important Estuaries

OUR VISION

Completing protection of seven miles of tidal channels and salt marsh, setting the stage for one of the most important coastal coho salmon restoration initiatives in the Northwest.



Channels once diked for farming have been reconnected to provide rearing habitat for salmon.

BOB KELLER



ALSEA RIVER & DRIFT CREEK

OREGON

Beside the town of Waldport, a serene, tidal wetland is the site of one of the most important coho salmon restoration efforts on the Oregon Coast. Here, the Alsea River estuary complex, which was once diked and plugged for grazing livestock, is being reconnected to provide a place for juvenile salmon to eat, grow and take shelter before they venture to sea.

The Alsea River and its lowest tributary, Drift Creek, together provide some of the most ideal conditions on the Oregon Coast not only for coho, a threatened species, but also cutthroat trout and fall and spring Chinook. Young fish thrive in calm side channels and pools with an abundance of woody debris. Alsea Bay has exceptionally large areas of salt marsh in excellent condition, with eelgrass beds that provide shelter and nursery habitat. The basin is also one of Oregon's top producers of steelhead and its estuary is designated an Important Bird Area.

Western Rivers Conservancy's efforts in this estuary span a decade. In 2002, WRC conserved 1,400 acres including the lower five miles of Drift Creek and the tidal North Channel of the Alsea River. Now we have the opportunity to complete the missing piece of the conservation puzzle by purchasing an adjoining property in the estuary.

Kayaking up Drift Creek with the incoming tide.

PETER WARBACH

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Expanding on 1,400 acres purchased in 2002, WRC negotiated to purchase the adjacent 287 acres fronting Alsea Bay, including exceptional salt marsh where young salmon rear.

Roosevelt Elk graze in the project area.

PETER WARBACH

Salt marshes on Alsea Bay provide a refuge for coho fry.

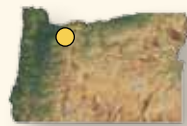
© THOMAS C. KLINE, JR.

The confluence of the Salmon and Sandy Rivers.

The Hoh River flows from the glaciers of Mount Olympus to the Pacific Ocean.

Assembling a Corridor *for* Habitat *and* Recreation

Protecting a Great Salmon Ecosystem



SANDY RIVER

OREGON

With two dams removed in 2007 and 2008, the Sandy River is an ecological and recreational treasure just outside of Portland, Oregon. Since 1999, Western Rivers Conservancy has acquired 3,060 acres along the middle reach of the Sandy and tributaries. These properties are assembled into a magnificent new natural area stewarded by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for habitat protection and public enjoyment. Land acquisition, together with Portland General Electric's dam removals, offers an unparalleled opportunity to restore and protect a premier salmon and steelhead stream.

In FY2010, WRC purchased another 70 acres in the Wild and Scenic Corridor of the Salmon River, the best fish-producing arm in the entire Sandy River system. We conveyed this tract, along with 39 acres previously acquired, to the BLM, utilizing an appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This multi-stage purchase continues, as we focus on the remaining 275 acres including frontage on Boulder Creek, which serves as Primary Anchor Habitat for anadromous fish.

WRC also filled in a piece of the puzzle with the acquisition of 52 acres in the heart of our project area. This half mile of river frontage lies directly upstream from the former Marmot Dam site. Since the dam was removed, the river has restored its natural channel along this stretch. ■



HOH RIVER

WASHINGTON

A decade into our work on the Hoh River on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, we reached a major milestone with nearly 7,000 acres protected. This conservation corridor spans 30 miles between Olympic National Park and the Pacific Ocean, achieving the vision of large-scale protection for the finest salmon and steelhead stream in the Lower Forty-Eight. The land is managed by the Hoh River Trust, whose mission is to act as steward of these Hoh River lands while ensuring compatible public access.

In 2010, Western Rivers Conservancy conserved three properties totaling 60 acres and a mile of Hoh River frontage. These acquisitions preserve open space, floodplain forests and healthy side channels where young salmon rear. WRC conveyed the land to the Hoh River Trust, utilizing a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and with help from our grant partners at the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Special thanks to Washington Congressman Norm Dicks, who championed the project and fostered its success. ■



Mill Creek, Northern Sierra
Nevada, California.

MICHAEL CARL

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

For the fiscal years ending September 30, 2010

	2010	2009
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 646,685	1,395,525
Grants, interest and other receivables	679,139	731,140
Prepaid expenses and deposits	40,359	53,361
Investments	1,003,842	254,768
Land holdings, options, equipment and other real property	10,916,351	9,370,157
Total assets	\$ 13,286,376	11,804,951
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable, accrued and related expenses	117,395	78,232
Notes and interest payable	6,442,538	4,965,314
Total liabilities	6,559,933	5,043,546
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted net assets	5,772,461	6,264,455
Temporarily restricted net assets	723,146	316,114
Permanently restricted net assets	230,836	180,836
Total net assets	6,726,443	6,761,405
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 13,286,376	11,804,951

Consolidated Statement of Activities

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2010	Total 2009
Revenues:					
Contributions and grants	\$ 359,303	1,405,088	50,000	1,814,391	787,247
In-kind contributions	248,163			248,163	345,185
Contributions of land					136,244
Investment return	11,334			11,334	20,335
Gain realized on sale of land	573,167			573,167	142,776
Reimbursements and fees					698,495
Other	128,467			128,467	603,489
Total public support and revenues	1,320,434	1,405,088	50,000	2,775,522	2,733,771
Net assets released from restriction	998,056	(998,056)			
Total revenues	2,318,490	407,032	50,000	2,775,522	2,733,771
Expenses and Donations:					
Donations/transfers of land					2,832,489
Program expenses	2,109,478			2,109,478	2,504,357
Management and general	368,412			368,412	285,391
Fundraising expenses	332,594			332,594	311,797
Total expenses	2,810,484			2,810,484	5,934,034
Change in net assets	(491,994)	407,032	50,000	(34,962)	(3,200,263) ¹
Net assets at beginning of year	6,264,455	316,114	180,836	6,761,405	9,961,668
Net assets at end of year	\$ 5,772,461	723,146	230,836	6,726,443	6,761,405

¹ Includes the transfer of land valued at \$2,262,266. The grant revenues used to fund the acquisition of the transferred land were recognized in a previous year.
This financial information is excerpted from Western Rivers Conservancy's audited financial statements. To obtain a complete copy of the audit by the firm of Gary McGee & Co., please contact Western Rivers Conservancy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Western Rivers Conservancy greatly appreciates gifts from all of our supporters. The individuals, foundations, businesses, organizations and agencies below contributed \$100 or more between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010. For a full list of supporters, visit www.westernrivers.org

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Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
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Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Inc.
Tactics.com
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Whole Foods



Our *Wild Rivers* partnership with Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. had another successful year. Sierra Nevada donated a portion of proceeds from sales across the western states to Western Rivers Conservancy and raised more than \$90,000 for river conservation nationwide.

WRC is excited to partner with Sierra Nevada again this August for *Wild Rivers* 2011!



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California Trout
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Wild Salmon Center
Yurok Tribe



PETER MARBACH
Western Rivers Conservancy is protecting portions of Boulder Creek, which provides Primary Anchor Habitat for salmon in Oregon's Sandy River basin.



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