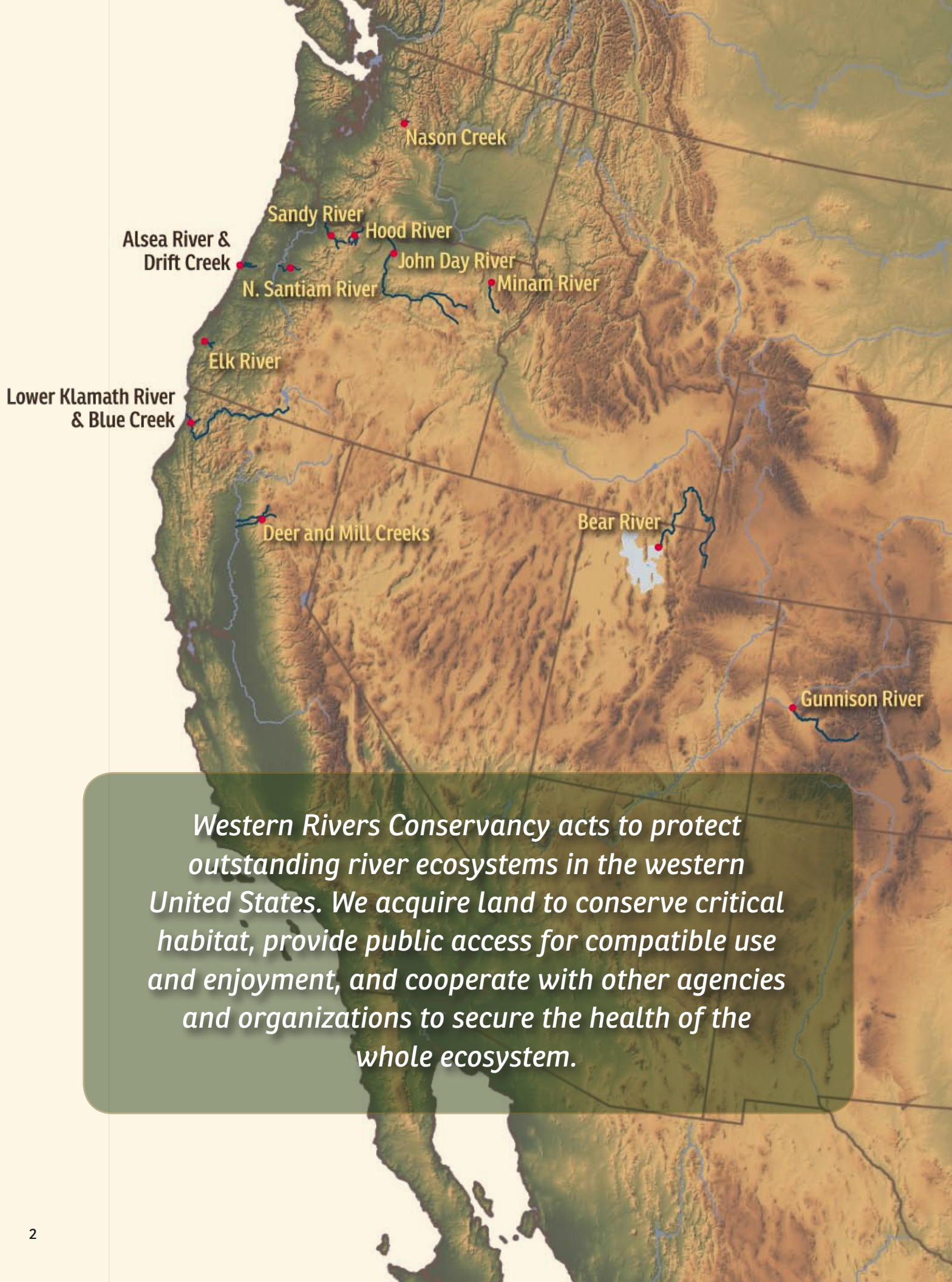




WESTERN RIVERS
CONSERVANCY

ANNUAL REPORT

2011



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.

Letter from the Chair and President

"Rivers are the lifeblood." That truth really came home to me one day while paddling on Waldo Lake in the high Cascades. I chanced upon the outlet to the North Fork Willamette River and drifted ten yards into it. Instantly I passed from the clean, sterile water of a deep lake into a moving stream that was alive with algae and plants and bugs and fry. In that moment, I "got" why we buy and protect rivers: so that they can remain rich and diverse corridors for the movement of life and energy on Planet Earth.



Phil Wallin
Phil Wallin
President

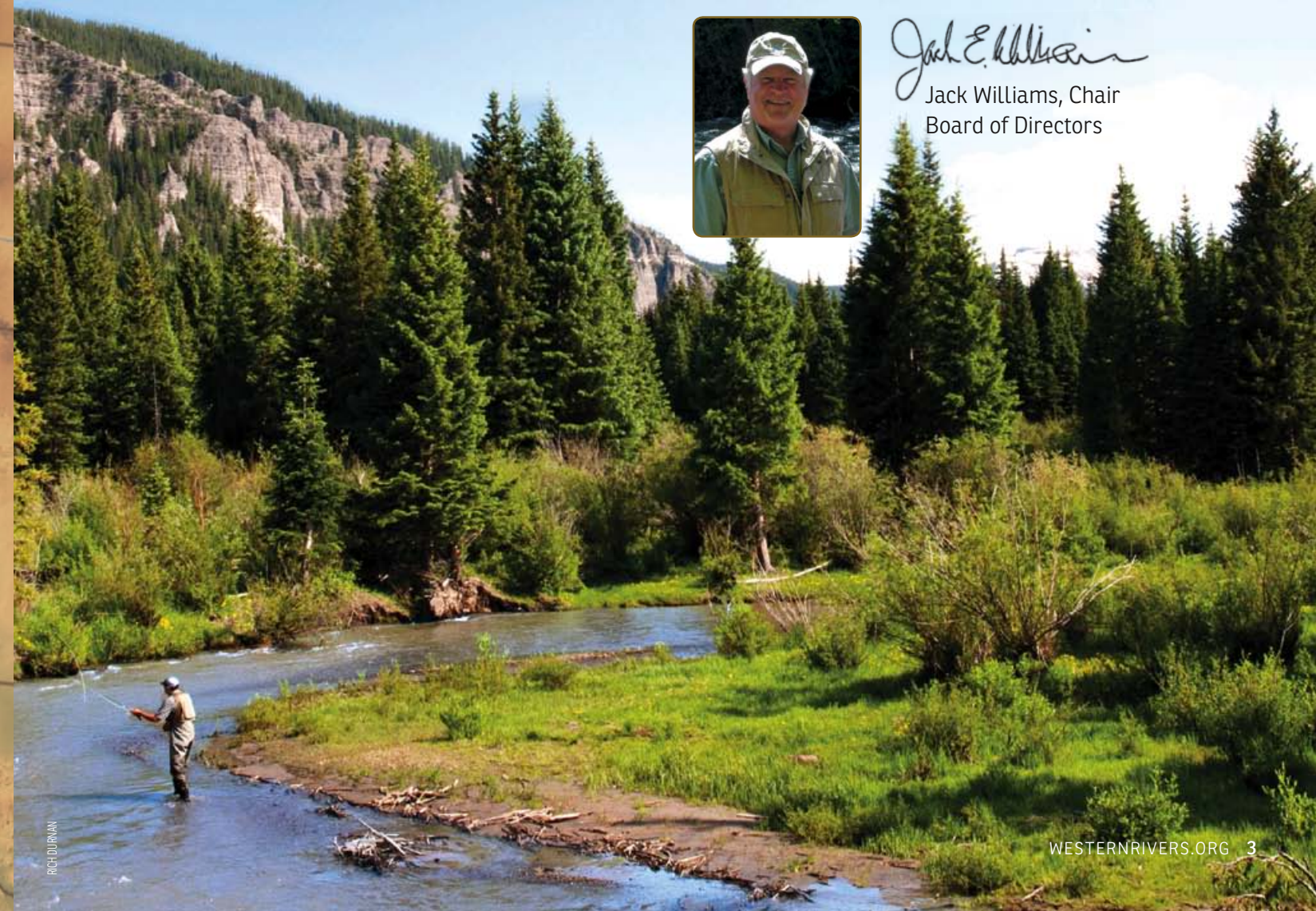
Water connects the landscape as it travels from the mountains to the valleys. At the same time that water is moving nutrients and sediment downstream, fish are going against the flow and bringing their own bodies' nutrients upstream. Ultimately, as fish swim to their spawning grounds, they become prey for a myriad of animals ranging from river otters and osprey to bears and eagles. Once the fish die, even more animals will scavenge on the remains.

Whether from the perspective of a paddler on a high Cascade lake or that of a scientist tracking fish populations, we know that the rivers we buy and protect are the lifeblood for countless species. Some of these species are threatened or endangered while others can be caught by rod and reel. Others are just there. When we buy rivers, they are protected, not just for us but for our children and grandchildren as well.

Western Rivers Conservancy is pleased to present this report on our accomplishments in the past year. We thank you for your support.



Jack Williams
Jack Williams, Chair
Board of Directors





JOHN DAY RIVER

OREGON



Remote canyons and abundant grasslands make the John Day Basin prime habitat for bighorn sheep, which were reintroduced to the property in 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A three-year effort to forever conserve and protect 16 miles and 16,000 acres of the John Day River is complete. In 2013 the former Murtha Ranch will officially open as Cottonwood Canyon State Park.



The longest undammed river west of the Continental Divide, the John Day has the healthiest run of summer steelhead in the Columbia River Basin, where they are listed as Threatened.

Oregon's Largest and Most Wild State Park

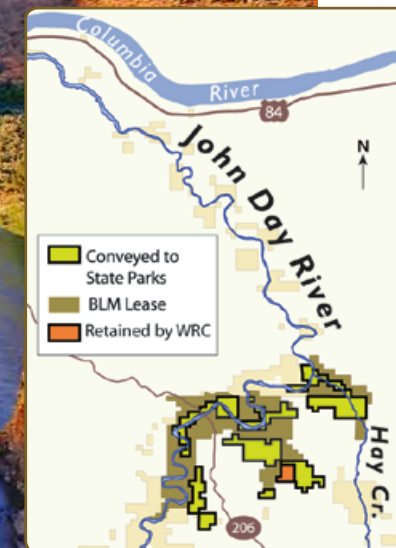
Permanently protecting 16 miles of a wild landscape along the John Day River for fish, wildlife and future generations

To the western angler, the John Day River in central Oregon means one thing: wild summer steelhead. And indeed the John Day boasts the healthiest runs of summer steelhead in the Columbia Basin. That is why, when the Murtha Ranch came on the market in 2008, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) acted quickly to purchase these 16,000 acres of deeded and leased lands along 16 miles of the lower John Day River.

But there were other reasons: Sweeping vistas. Majestic goose-necked canyons. A wild and vast landscape where bighorn sheep thrive on the canyon walls. Verdant shrub-steppe habitat alive with rare native species such as grasshopper sparrows, burrowing owls and sagebrush lizards. Silver braided river channels that host not only steelhead, but Chinook salmon, smallmouth bass and trout—bull, redband, rainbow and cutthroat. The John Day is not only the longest undammed river west of the Continental Divide, it is one of the richest and most diverse in fish and wildlife.

A vital part of this river ecosystem is Hay Creek, one of the few cold-water spawning and rearing habitats on the lower river. This spring-fed tributary, located on the property WRC acquired, runs clear and cool year-round. Restoration projects during WRC's ownership have rid Hay Creek of noxious weeds and brought back native vegetation.

Over a three-year period, WRC has conveyed the land to its long-term steward, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. In October 2011, the final piece of property was turned over, forever conserving the rich diversity of habitat offered by the land and its waterways. In 2013, this property will become Oregon's largest state park. Renamed Cottonwood Canyon State Park, it will be a place where fish and wildlife species can thrive, and where people can enjoy a wild setting like no other in Oregon.



A Salmon Sanctuary on the Mighty Klamath

Partnering with the Yurok Tribe to restore the health of their homeland

For thousands of salmon migrating up the Klamath River from the Pacific Ocean, Blue Creek means survival. One hundred percent of Chinook salmon stop in this stream, fifteen miles from the ocean, that runs cold and clear year-round. A few hours in the creek lowers their body temperature an average of eight degrees Fahrenheit, dramatically increasing their chances of spawning far upstream.

In an unprecedented partnership, Western Rivers Conservancy is helping the Yurok Tribe buy and conserve the entire lower Blue Creek watershed and a significant tract of land along the lower Klamath River. The project is WRC's largest to date. When all is said and done, 47,000 acres and 73 square miles of critical fish and wildlife habitat—ancestral lands of the Yurok—will be returned to the Tribe for permanent conservation.

The Klamath Basin, one of the most biologically rich regions on Earth, is home to a diverse assemblage of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and endemic plants. The forest along the lower Klamath is one of the only places in California where the Humboldt marten, a Species of Concern, is known to still exist. The marten, which thrives in coniferous forests with overhead cover and a complex ground structure, has been fast disappearing due to trapping.

In April 2011, WRC helped the Yurok buy 22,237 acres from Green Diamond Resource Company to create the Yurok Tribal Community Forest along the lower Klamath. WRC and the Tribe are now working together to protect 24,680 acres along lower Blue Creek and surrounding watersheds.



KLAMATH RIVER & BLUE CREEK

CALIFORNIA



Conserving the Humboldt marten's habitat is helping this Species of Concern rebound after being trapped to near extinction.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After completing the purchase of 22,237 acres along the Klamath River in April 2011, WRC is focusing on Blue Creek and purchasing an additional 24,680 acres that will complete our vision for a salmon sanctuary and tribal preserve.



Cold and clear, Blue Creek offers a crucial refuge for Chinook salmon migrating up the Klamath River.



BEAR RIVER
UTAH



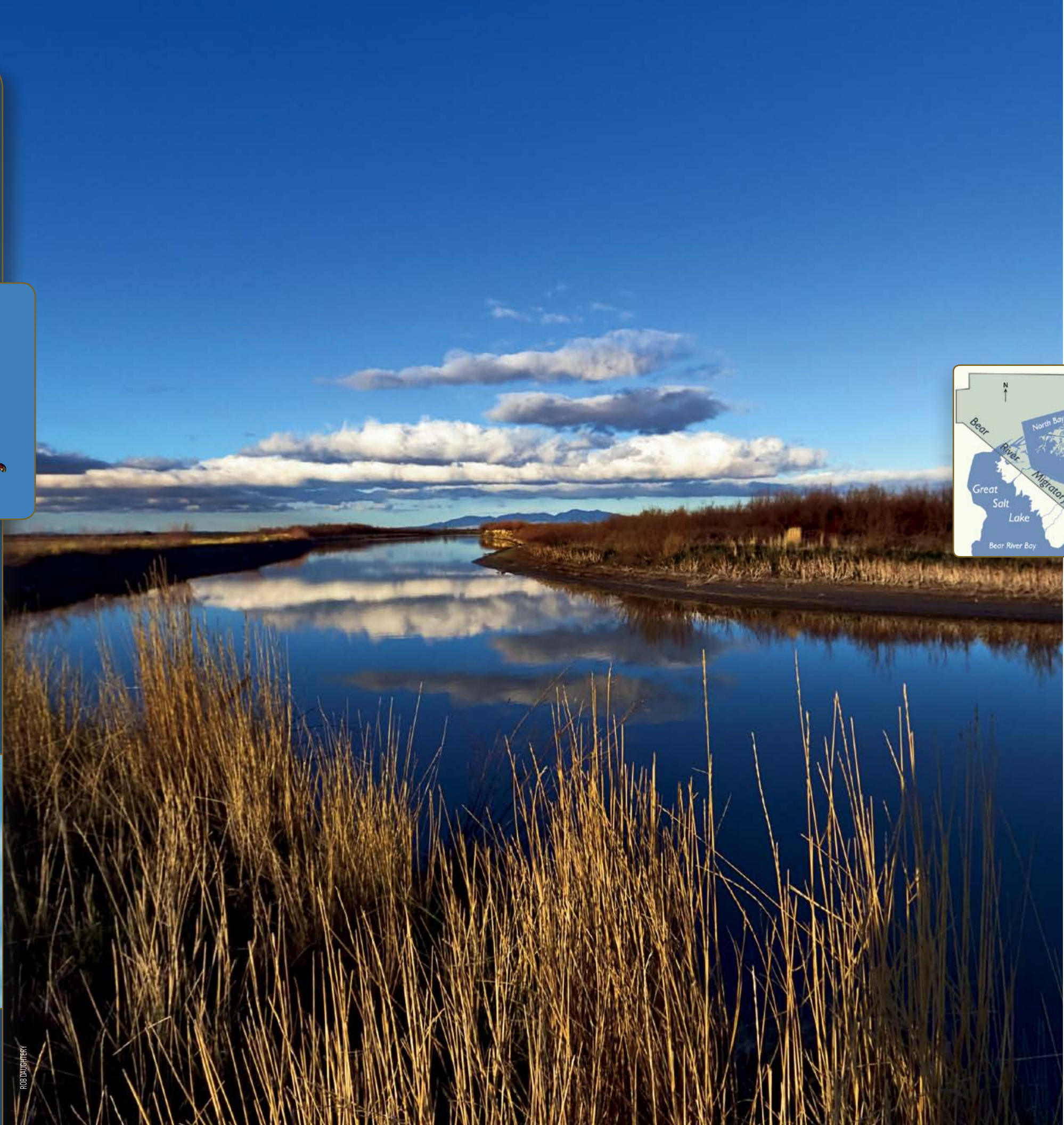
More than 50,000 American white pelicans flock to Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge annually.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Conveyed 580 acres of vital waterfowl habitat to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to expand the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. This latest transaction, the culmination of strategic acquisitions that started in 2008, expands the Refuge's diverse wetland habitat.



The Refuge's sheltered grasslands and marshes are ideal nesting habitats for millions of birds that visit each year, including the short-eared owl.



An Internationally Important Bird Refuge

Expanding the migratory stopover for millions of waterfowl that travel the Pacific Flyway each year

Every spring, the greatest show on Earth comes to the Utah desert. A thunderous assemblage of migratory birds gathers in

the freshwater marshes to rest, feed and nest where the Bear River empties into the Great Salt Lake. One of the greatest producers of waterfowl in the nation, the Bear River wetlands are a haven for more than 200 species of birds along both the Central and



Pacific Flyway between the Arctic and Mexico. Up to 50,000 American white pelicans feed and nest here, making this North America's largest breeding colony. They share the wetlands and surrounding grasslands with Wilson's phalarope, snowy plover, white-face ibis, short-eared owls, tundra swan, black-necked stilts and others. In 1929, the public set this oasis aside as the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to protect this incredible resource.

In 2008, Western Rivers Conservancy began purchasing critical portions of the Bear's wetland complex, enhancing the Refuge for both its feathered and binocular visitors. The first acquisition, a 696-acre property, was conveyed to the USFWS in 2010. In June 2011, WRC purchased 580 additional acres on the Bear River with major support from the Stephen Bechtel Fund. In October of the same year, WRC conveyed this land to the Refuge, adding a vital piece to this vast mosaic of protected habitat. ■

A Ribbon of Life through Colorado

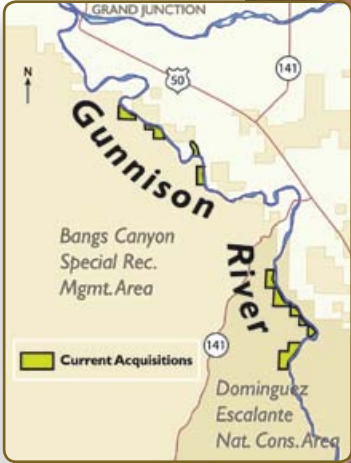
Bridging a nearly unbroken stretch of desert riverlands and habitat for rare warm-water species

Colorado's Gunnison River is a ribbon of life in a dry land. Golden eagles soar above deep gorges and make their nests on the rim. Ancient warm-water fishes, such as the razorback sucker, swim in pools shadowed by colorful rock formations and cooled by a riverside forest.

In this wild stretch of the lower Gunnison, Western Rivers Conservancy is pursuing a long-term conservation strategy in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). WRC is purchasing properties to fill gaps within and between two protected areas along the river: the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (NCA) and the Bangs Canyon Special Recreation Management Area. The goal is to ensure the health of the river and the species that depend on it.

The lower Gunnison is one of the last places where four species of Colorado Basin warm-water fish still survive: Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub and bonytail chub. The razorback sucker, one of the largest suckers in North America, dates back 3-5 million years. Once abundant in the Colorado Basin, today they are listed as Endangered. The Gunnison is also a haven for terrestrial species, including river otters, mule deer, mountain lions and many others.

In 2011, WRC bought a strategically located 403-acre property along the lower Gunnison at the northern end of the NCA. This purchase prevented the development of a gravel mine. Also this year, WRC conveyed 214 riverfront acres to the BLM in the Bangs Canyon Special Recreation Management Area. Both properties bridge gaps in a nearly unbroken stretch of protected land.



GUNNISON RIVER

COLORADO



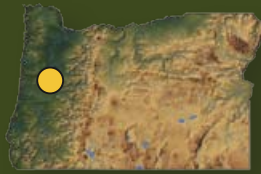
This stretch of river is one of the few places where four species of endangered Colorado basin warm-water fish survive, including the razorback sucker, above.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Prevented gravel mining in a new conservation area by purchasing 403 acres and bridging a gap in a nearly unbroken stretch of protected land from the NCA to the Colorado National Monument.



Golden eagles nest atop the Gunnison's spectacularly deep gorges.



NORTH SANTIAM RIVER

OREGON



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Committed to purchasing 338 acres along the North Santiam River, which will help ensure this largely natural river remains a haven for native wildlife and will once again become a major producer of fish.



The North Santiam provides critical habitat for a number of Threatened species, including winter steelhead, spring Chinook salmon and Oregon chub, above.



A Willamette Valley Sanctuary


Conserving one of the best remaining Willamette Valley fisheries and at-risk wildlife habitats

Oregon's great Willamette River was once a lacework of river channels and wetlands, abounding in habitat for turtles, frogs, fish, herons and other river critters. After a hundred years of diking and draining the mainstem, the best wetlands in the Willamette system are now on tributaries like the North Santiam that tumble out of the Cascades to the valley floor. The North Santiam possesses some of the best habitat in the basin for salmon, steelhead and chub, and for other species of concern like pileated woodpecker, Pacific lamprey and western pond turtle.

In 2011, Western Rivers Conservancy committed to buying a 338-acre property along this rich, largely

natural river, encompassing two miles of North Santiam frontage, seven side channels and sloughs, frontage on Dieckman Creek, and the most extensive riparian forest complex in the lower North Santiam Basin. Western pond turtle, increasingly rare in the Willamette Basin, make their home among boulders and logs in 20 acres of wetlands on the property.

Historically, the North Santiam provided nearly two-thirds of winter steelhead and approximately one-third

of spring Chinook salmon for the entire Willamette Basin. Purchasing and restoring property along the North Santiam is a critical step toward recovery of these and other listed species in the Willamette Basin. WRC believes that this first purchase is the beginning of a long-term initiative to conserve and restore habitat along the North Santiam River. 



One of two native turtle species, the western pond turtle, a Species of Concern, is becoming increasingly rare in the Willamette Basin.

A Bull Trout Stronghold Restored

Acquiring a critical inholding to support water quality and habitat restoration

Bull trout, a vital indicator for river health across the Northwest, are currently listed as Threatened in much of the region. One remaining stronghold is the Wenatchee River system of central Washington, where they spawn in the streams that flow out of the high Cascades. One such stream is Nason Creek, where numerous agencies and tribes are working to restore the natural channels and floodplains, where bull trout spawn and rear.

Western Rivers Conservancy is putting a safety net under this restoration program by buying and protecting a steep hillside with high gradient streams that overlook and drain into Nason Creek. Logging roads will be closed and 17 stream crossings removed to prevent a slide that would be disastrous for restoration investments downstream. Adjacent to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, the acquisition may one day benefit grizzly bears and grey wolves, both species that are reestablishing in the area. ■



Nason's cold flows and clean gravel form ideal habitat for bull trout, above.



NASON CREEK
WASHINGTON

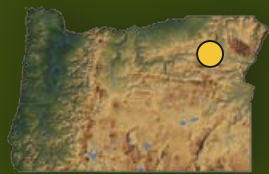


ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Committed to purchasing a 648-acre inholding within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Adjacent to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, the property has numerous tributary streams that contribute to Nason Creek's water quality.



The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest is one of the first places in Washington where grey wolves have reestablished.



MINAM RIVER
OREGON



The Minam Store provides prized river access that draws boaters from all over to enjoy the beauty of the Wallowa and Grande Ronde Rivers.

A Gateway to Northeastern Oregon's Spectacular Rivers

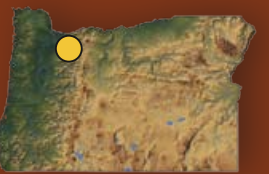
The river rat is a curious species. Drawn to the river for the adrenaline rush of a rapid, it also lusts after tranquility: viewing other wildlife, camping under a blanket of stars, sharing stories around a blazing campfire. The confluence of the Minam and Wallowa Rivers draws rafters and kayakers from all corners of the earth.

The Minam River is a jewel of northeastern Oregon. Its confluence with the Wallowa River at the historic Minam Store is an important access point for multi-day float trips on the Wallowa and Grande Ronde. Rafters look forward to the solitude and scenery of these floats that showcase steep-walled canyons and evergreen forests that give way in lower elevations to arid, rocky grasslands.

Western Rivers Conservancy will convey the Minam Store property to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for inclusion in the Minam State Recreation Area and ensure continued river access. ■

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WRC purchased two acres, and 350 feet of Wallow River frontage, including the Minam Store. Adjacent to the Minam State Recreation Area, this property rounds out the extraordinary hiking, fishing, hunting and camping opportunities in this magnificent area.



SANDY RIVER
OREGON

A Great Wild River in Portland's Backyard

Flowing 55 miles from the glaciers of Mount Hood to the Columbia River, Oregon's Sandy River is a natural wonder and the lifeblood for many fish and wildlife species. The river, and its ice-clear tributaries, cascade through rocky gorges and around oxbows, home and highway for coho salmon, Chinook salmon and winter steelhead, all Threatened species.

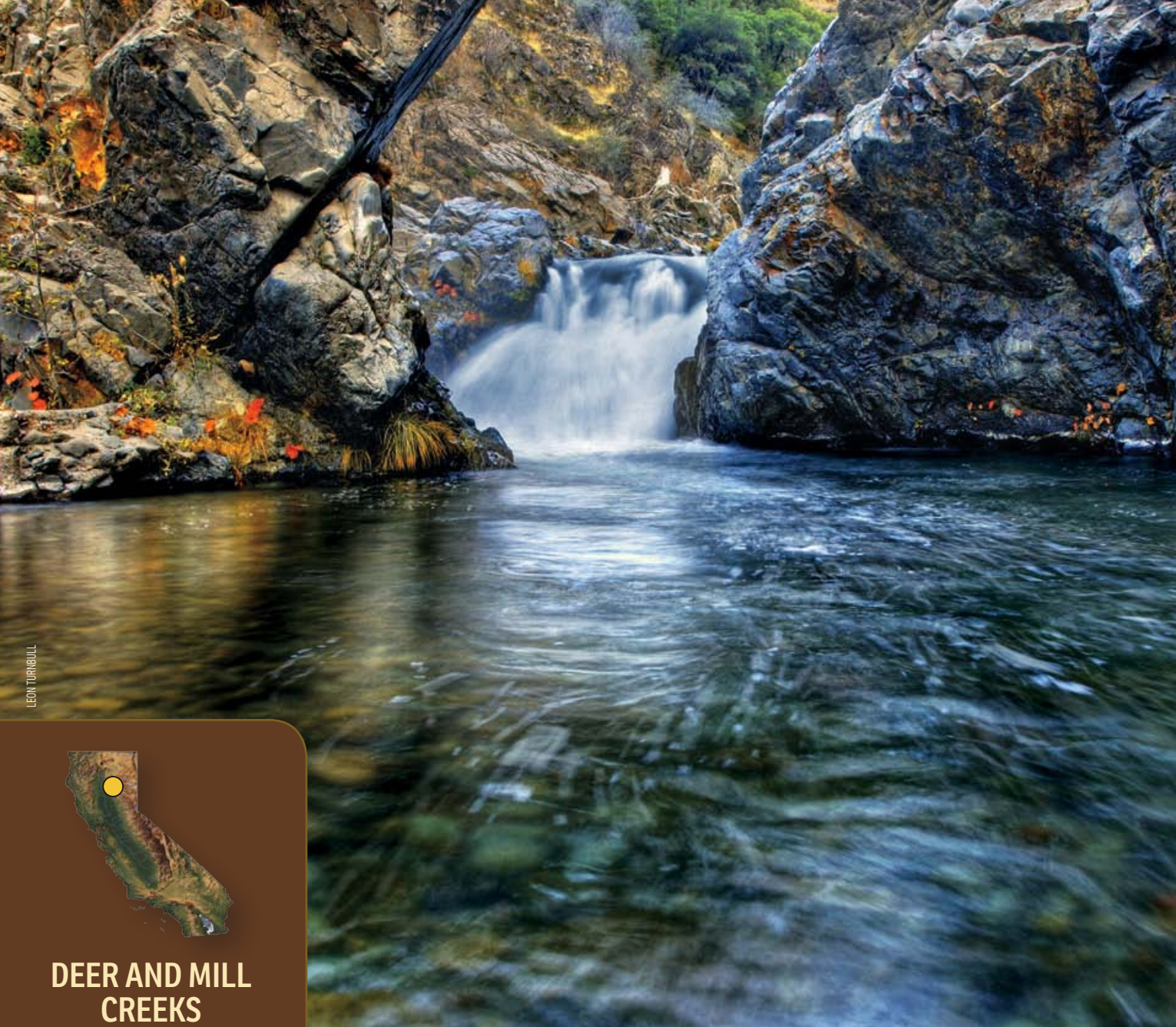
A 1999 partnership between Western Rivers Conservancy and Portland General Electric offered an historic opportunity to restore and protect this premier salmon and steelhead stream. PGE removed two dams, in 2007 and 2008, and turned its lands on the river over to WRC. By purchasing other lands on the Sandy and its tributaries, WRC is assembling a magnificent conservation and recreation corridor that will be stewarded by the Bureau of Land Management as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. ■

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2011, WRC purchased and conveyed to the BLM 245 acres along Boulder Creek. Boulder Creek is one of the most important salmon and steelhead spawning tributaries in the entire Sandy Basin.



The Sandy River and its tributaries support the natural production of coho salmon, listed as Threatened since the late-1990s.



LEON TURBULL



DEER AND MILL CREEKS

CALIFORNIA



ROB SCHELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Foothill yellow-legged frogs, above, call the cool waters of Deer and Mill Creeks home.

Hope for Wild Salmon Runs in the Northern Sierra Nevada

The hope for wild salmon runs in the Sacramento, one of the biggest rivers on the West Coast, lies in the rugged volcanic canyons of Deer and Mill Creeks. These two streams flow off the south flanks of Mount Lassen through ponderosa pine forests and some of the finest blue oak groves in California. Deer and Mill, undammed and wild, support healthy runs of wild spring Chinook salmon and steelhead, plus aquatic species like western pond turtle and foothill yellow-legged frog, as well as terrestrial species like California spotted owl, black bear, mountain lion and the biggest deer herd in California.

Western Rivers Conservancy is purchasing lands along Deer and Mill Creeks to bring into public ownership. The first acquisition in the project is centered on Deer Creek Falls where WRC bought 600 acres. Not only will this complete a continuous fish and wildlife habitat corridor between the Lassen National Forest and the Ishi Wilderness Area, but it will greatly enhance recreational access. ■



DOUG SPOON



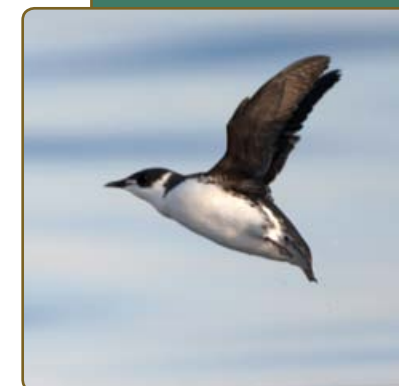
ELK RIVER

OREGON

Best Little Salmon River on the West Coast

One of the great coastal rivers of southern Oregon, the Elk flows out of groves of old-growth Douglas fir and Port Orford cedar, its headwaters protected in wilderness. Mile for mile, the Elk may be the finest wild salmon and steelhead stream on the West Coast south of Canada, featuring healthy runs of fall Chinook, coho, winter steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout.

When 170 acres of land came up for sale at the confluence of the Elk and Rock Creek, WRC jumped at the opportunity. Critical habitat for coho and marbled murrelet, both federally listed as Threatened, the property is also contiguous with old-growth forests extending from the Grassy Knob Wilderness Area. These lands included missing mineral rights, which WRC merged back into the title. Western Rivers Conservancy is currently working to convey all 170 acres to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. ■



MIKE DANZENBAKER

Conserving old-growth coastal forests is critical to the survival of the marbled murrelet, a federally-listed seabird.



DAVE EISEN



HOOD RIVER

OREGON

One of the Most Biologically Diverse Rivers Systems in Oregon



STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

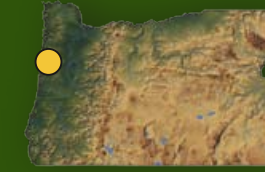
River otters dwell amongst steelhead, spring Chinook and coho salmon in the Hood River.

For centuries, Native Americans have fished at the foot of Punch Bowl Falls, where steelhead, spring Chinook, coho and sea-run cutthroat trout leap the five-foot drop to spawn in the West Fork Hood River. Just downstream from the falls the West Fork collides with the East Fork at a magical place of basalt cliffs, hemlock forest and sandy beaches to form the mainstem Hood. Among the species that call this place home are bald eagle and river otter.

In 2010, Western Rivers Conservancy purchased the 82 acres that includes the falls and the river confluence, adding it to 20 acres that we bought at auction in 2006. WRC is working in the Hood River Valley and the Mid-Columbia region to raise funds for the purchase so that Punch Bowl Falls can be protected forever as a salmon sanctuary and public park. ■



JOSH KING



ALSEA/DRIFT CREEK

OREGON

A Key to Oregon Coast Salmon Recovery

River conservation is about the whole web of life. From gravels to glaciers, from mayflies to mountain goats. That's why we were excited last year to buy the last piece of the Alsea Bay / Drift Creek restoration complex: a 287-acre forested ridge between the meandering Drift Creek and the tidewater of Alsea Bay. This sanctuary will be not only a stronghold for coho salmon and coastal sea-run cutthroat trout, but habitat for elk, bear, river otter, brown pelicans and other denizens of land, air and water.

This acquisition adds to the 1,401 acres that WRC purchased and conveyed to the Siuslaw National Forest in 2002. Since that time, the Forest Service and partners have implemented a major stream restoration project. Conveying this linchpin 287-acre property will help complete this effort. ■



PAT CLAYTON

The Alsea Bay is a stronghold for coastal sea-run cutthroat trout.



Idaho's Salmon River is one of the great rivers of the West. The wildest and cleanest of its size, it offers excellent habitat for imperiled salmon and steelhead.

DAVID JENSEN

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As of September 30, 2011

	2011	2010
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,406,127	646,685
Grants, interest and other receivables	615,475	679,139
Prepaid expenses and deposits	41,906	40,359
Investments	654,864	1,003,842
Land holdings, options, equipment and other real property	13,343,367	10,916,351
Total assets	\$16,061,739	13,286,376
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable, accrued and related expenses	94,337	117,395
Notes and interest payable	8,837,951	6,442,538
Total liabilities	8,932,288	6,559,933
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted net assets	5,679,244	5,772,461
Temporarily restricted net assets	610,241	723,146
Permanently restricted net assets	839,966	230,836
Total net assets	7,129,451	6,726,443
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 16,061,739	13,286,376

Consolidated Statement of Activities

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2011	Total 2010
Revenues:					
Contributions and grants	\$250,231	958,894	609,130	1,818,255	1,814,391
In-kind contributions	234,617			234,617	248,163
Investment return	1,806			1,806	11,334
Gain realized on sale of land	251,543			251,543	573,167
Reimbursements and fees	994,988			994,988	-
Other	54,846			54,846	128,467
Total public support and revenues	1,788,031	958,894	609,130	3,356,055	2,775,522
Net assets released from restriction	1,071,799	(1,071,799)			
Total revenues	2,859,830	(112,905)	609,130	3,356,055	2,775,522
Expenses:					
Program expenses	2,422,287			2,422,287	2,178,882
Management and general	271,772			271,772	368,412
Fundraising expenses	258,988			258,988	263,190
Total expenses	2,953,047			2,953,047	2,810,484
Change in net assets	(93,217)	(112,905)	609,130	403,008	(34,962)
Net assets at beginning of year	5,772,461	723,146	230,836	6,726,443	6,761,405
Net assets at end of year	\$ 5,679,244	610,241	839,966	7,129,451	6,726,443

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, 2010 and September 30, 2011. For a full list of supporters, visit www.westernrivers.org

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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 \$110,000 for river conservation nationwide.

WRC is excited to partner with Sierra Nevada again for *Wild Rivers* 2012!



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- Sierra Pacific Industries
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- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Yurok Tribe



Western Rivers Conservancy is protecting a vital link in the Sierra Nevada along Deer Creek, one of the region's last remaining salmon and steelhead strongholds.

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John Day River, photo by David Jensen