



News Release

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Western Rivers Conservancy Appoints Nelson Mathews as President

PORTLAND, Oregon. (March 6) — Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC), which buys and conserves land across the American West, announced this week that its Board of Directors has named Nelson Mathews President of WRC. Mathews was appointed Interim President in July 2024 and, prior to that, served as Vice President and head of WRC’s lands team for five years. He brings over three decades of experience in conservation real estate, a deep love of rivers and a passion for WRC’s mission to the role. Mathews stepped into the Interim position after former President and Co-Founder Sue Doroff retired in June 2024.

“Nelson has led the Western Rivers Conservancy Lands Team, and now the organization, with vision, steadiness and his own unshakable commitment to saving the great rivers of the West,” said **WRC Board Chair Carter MacNichol**. “It’s rare to find someone who has Nelson’s ideal combination of conservation real estate expertise, leadership abilities and a personal, life-long connection to rivers. He is exactly the right person to lead WRC forward.”

Mathews first joined WRC in 2018. During his time as Vice President, he oversaw the purchase, funding and permanent conservation of lands along rivers like the Yakima and Okanogan in Washington; the Big Hole in Montana; the John Day in Oregon; McDermitt Creek in Oregon and Nevada; Tarryall Creek and the Rio Grande in Colorado; and the Little Sur, Sacramento, South Fork Kern and Estero de San Antonio at Dillon Beach in California.

Prior to joining WRC, Mathews managed the Trust for Public Land’s land and river conservation real estate efforts in California and the Pacific Northwest. During his 27-year tenure with the organization, he worked to conserve thousands of acres of land with recreational, historic and environmental significance.

Mathews is a member of the California Bar and earned his law degree from UCLA. He serves on the board of directors for the American River Touring Association (ARTA) and on the board of trustees for the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon. A lifelong fly angler, Mathews deepened his passion for rivers while working as a whitewater guide in the Sierra Foothills in the 1980s.

“Rivers have always been a profound part of my life, and I can think of nothing more meaningful than leading Western Rivers Conservancy on its mission to conserve them,” said **Mathews**. “Thanks to the great work of presidents Sue Doroff and Phil Wallin before me, I’m inheriting an incredible staff, a passionate and committed board, superb partners and an invaluable network of individual supporters across the West. Together we’re poised to have an even broader, deeper impact on the great rivers of the West.”

Mathews succeeds former President Sue Doroff, who co-founded WRC and served as President for more than a decade. During her tenure at WRC, the organization conserved hundreds of thousands of acres along streams including the Klamath (CA), Hoh (WA), John Day (OR), Yampa (CO), Salmon (ID), Madison (MT), Gunnison (CO), Sandy (OR), Eel (CA) and Illinois (OR). Mathews builds upon this legacy and carries forward WRC's highly successful model of buying and conserving riverlands for the benefit of fish, wildlife and people.

About Western Rivers Conservancy

Western Rivers Conservancy's motto is "Sometimes to save a river, you have to buy it." WRC purchases land along the West's finest rivers and streams to conserve habitat for fish and wildlife, protect key sources of cold water and create public access for all to enjoy. To ensure the lands it acquires are protected in perpetuity, WRC transfers them to long-term stewards including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, state parks and Tribal Nations. WRC has created sanctuaries for fish and wildlife and secured recreational access along 250 rivers and streams around the West. It has protected more than 440 river miles and over 225,000 acres of land in nine western states. Its approach to river conservation is effective, tangible and permanent. For more information, visit westernrivers.org.