Conservancy acquires property for fish habitat

"Sometimes, to save a river, you have to buy it."

Western Rivers Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced last week the conservation of 249 acres of fish and wildlife habitat along Boulder Creek, a tributary to the Wild and Scenic Salmon River in the Sandy River basin.

Western Rivers Conservancy, a nonprofit river protection organization based in Portland, purchased this sensitive timberland from Columbia County and conveyed it to the BLM for habitat protection and public recreational access. The property lies within the Wild and Scenic River corridor of the Salmon River—the primary fish-producing stream in the Sandy River basin. Boulder Creek, along with the Salmon River, was designated National Wild and Scenic Rivers as part of the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988.

"Acquiring this land is great news for the Sandy River fishery," said Sue Denoff, Western Rivers Conservancy's Executive Vice President. "Boulder Creek lies at the heart of the best salmon and steelhead habitat in the Sandy Basin, and protecting it is vital for recovering wild salmon and steelhead in the lower Columbia." Boulder Creek was named an Anchor Habitat for Intensively Threatened spring Chinook, winter steelhead and winter Coho in the 2006 Sandy River Basin Anchor Habitat and Restoration Strategy released by the Sandy River Basin Partners. The strategy was a result of a comprehensive study of the area, undertaken by a team of experts federal, state, local, and private fisheries biologist.

Located within 25 miles of more than one-third of Oregon's citizens, the Sandy River basin is a scenic and recreational treasure. Hikers, anglers, and wildlife viewers enjoy the Sandy's deep gorges, abundant whitewater, runs of wild salmon and steelhead, and the Oregon Trail tracing its northern edge. Western Rivers Conservancy has been acquiring lands within the Sandy River basin since 1999 and has preserved more than 3,000 acres, including 13 miles on the Sandy River, Little Sandy River, Salmon River and other tributaries.

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The BLM has taken title to all these lands, combining them with existing BLM holdings to create a network of wetlands, ponds, and other water bodies totaling more than 2,200 acres. The lands are home to a variety of fish species, including white bass, walleye, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass. The Conservancy plans to work with local officials to ensure the lands are protected and managed for the benefit of fish populations.

The acquisition is part of a larger effort by the Conservancy to restore and protect wetlands across the country. In recent years, the Conservancy has acquired thousands of acres of wetlands, ponds, and other water bodies. The lands are home to a variety of fish species, including white bass, walleye, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass. The Conservancy plans to work with local officials to ensure the lands are protected and managed for the benefit of fish populations.

This acquisition is an important step in the Conservancy's efforts to protect and restore wetlands across the country. The Conservancy is working with local officials to ensure the lands are protected and managed for the benefit of fish populations. The lands are home to a variety of fish species, including white bass, walleye, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass.