



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: October 4, 2016

Contacts:

Josh Kling
Assistant Program Director
Western Rivers Conservancy
503-241-0151
jkling@westernrivers.org

Danny Palmerlee
Communications Director
Western Rivers Conservancy
o: 503-241-0151 c: 503-720-6686
dpalmerlee@westernrivers.org

Western Rivers Conservancy and BLM conserve reach of Sandy River tributary and expand Sandy Ridge Trail System lands

Sandy, OR – Western Rivers Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management have successfully protected 120 acres of fish and wildlife habitat along Little Joe Creek, an important salmon and steelhead bearing tributary to Oregon’s Sandy River.

Little Joe Creek flows into the Sandy immediately below the confluence of the Salmon and Sandy Rivers, north of the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness Area.

WRC purchased the property in July 2015 for its excellent habitat values and recreation potential. It transferred the land to the BLM for conservation management earlier this month.

“Conservation of the Little Joe Creek property is a key part of Western Rivers Conservancy’s larger effort to protect the Sandy River,” said WRC Project Manager, Zach Spector. “Our goal is to ensure connected, healthy habitat for Sandy River fish and wildlife and to ensure this cherished stream remains accessible to Oregon river lovers of all stripes.”

The project conserves habitat for threatened coho salmon and threatened winter steelhead, which both spawn in Little Joe Creek. It links forest and riparian habitat within Barlow Wayside Park, operated by Clackamas County, with protected BLM lands to the south. The project also adds land to the BLM’s Sandy Ridge Trail System.

“The Little Joe Creek property is a small but outstanding piece of the Sandy River basin,” said Chris Papen, BLM Field Office Manager. “We are very pleased that the BLM can now manage it for conservation and to improve the network of mountain bike trails within the Sandy Ridge Trail System.”

The Sandy Ridge Trail System opened in 2010 on former timberlands and has since become one of the most popular mountain bike destinations in the country. The International Mountain Bike Association created the park’s trails in partnership with the BLM, using progressive designs that utilized materials from decommissioned roads and that minimizes impact on the recovering forest.

“Sandy Ridge is one of the most unique mountain bike trail systems in the country. Riders of all levels come from near and far to experience it,” said Liz Camstra, IMBA’s Pacific Northwest Associate Region Director. “We are extremely excited about the trail expansion opportunities now that Western Rivers Conservancy has conveyed the lands to the BLM.”

WRC began its work on the Sandy River in 1999, when it partnered with Portland General Electric at the outset of the utility’s efforts to remove its dams on the Sandy and Little Sandy Rivers. With the dams coming out, WRC committed to conserving thousands of acres of prime riverland habitat in partnership with PGE and the BLM.

Since then, WRC has conserved over 4,500 acres along more than 17 miles of the Sandy and its tributaries, creating an unprecedented conservation and recreation corridor on an outstanding glacial river, just 25 miles from downtown Portland. Much of the land we acquired from PGE is now managed by the BLM within a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Conservation of the Little Joe Creek property was made possible through funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Created by Congress in 1965, the LWCF was a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans.

About Western Rivers Conservancy

Western Rivers Conservancy is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that protects outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States. WRC acquires lands along rivers to protect critical habitat and to create or improve public access for compatible use and enjoyment. By applying decades of experience in land acquisition, WRC is able to effectively secure the health of whole ecosystems. It has protected hundreds of miles of stream frontage on great rivers like the Yampa, Gunnison, Salmon, Hoh, Snake, Madison, Klamath and John Day. Founded in 1988, WRC is the nation’s only conservation program dedicated solely to the acquisition of riverlands. To learn more about WRC, visit www.westernrivers.org.

About the International Mountain Bike Association

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit educational association. Its mission is to create, enhance and preserve great mountain biking experiences. Since 1988, IMBA has been bringing out the best in mountain biking by encouraging low-impact riding, volunteer trail work participation, cooperation among different trail user groups, grassroots advocacy and innovative trail management solutions. IMBA represents our members, supports our chapters, and our work benefits the mountain biking community. Learn more at IMBA.com.