Sandy River Forestland Conserved for Historic Oregon Trail Project, Habitat Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 3, 2006

For more information, please contact:
Sue Doroff, Western Rivers Conservancy: 503-241-0151
Trish Hogervorst, BLM: 503-375-5657

(Sandy, Oregon) – Western Rivers Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management announced today the conservation of 78 acres of forestland in the Sandy River basin for scenic and habitat protection just east of Portland.

Western Rivers Conservancy, a nonprofit river protection organization based in Portland, recently purchased the parcel from Weyerhaeuser Company. Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed the land to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be managed as part of a proposed expansion to the existing Sandy River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a continuous conservation corridor that will span seventeen river miles in the Sandy basin.

The Sandy River is a wild, glacial river in the very backyard of Portland, with scenic, deep gorges, spectacular whitewater, runs of wild salmon and steelhead and the Oregon Trail tracing its north edge. The parcel formerly owned by Weyerhaeuser boasts important historic value, lying within the boundary of the BLM’s Sandy River - Oregon National Historic Trail (NHT) project area east of Sandy, Oregon, in Clackamas County. This 29,000-acre NHT project area includes the Barlow Road portion of the Oregon National Historic Trail. The Sandy River Corridor hosts an estimated 1 million annual visitors. As part of the conservation corridor, the 78-acre inholding will help create a habitat link between the old-growth forest reserves in the Salmon Huckleberry Wilderness area to the south and the Bull Run Watershed management Unit to the north.

In 1999, Western Rivers Conservancy, Portland General Electric (PGE) and the BLM formed a partnership to restore and conserve the Sandy and Little Sandy Rivers and expand the ACEC. Western Rivers Conservancy is assembling the land that will comprise the Sandy River conservation corridor. PGE is donating approximately 1,500 acres to the project and will remove Marmot Dam and the Little Sandy Dam in 2007-2008, opening up portions of the Sandy and Little Sandy rivers to salmon and steelhead migration. Western Rivers Conservancy’s

(more)
commitment is to acquire an additional 3,500 acres of private lands in order to assemble continuous river corridors along thirteen miles of the Sandy River and four miles of the Little Sandy.

“The Sandy River and the Oregon National Historic Trail project are important pieces of Oregon’s natural and cultural heritage. It is tremendously heartening when private industry, conservation organizations and the federal government can work together to retain the public’s access to trails, and enjoy the benefits of this wonderful area,” said Elaine Brong, BLM State Director for Oregon and Washington.

“We are proud to partner with the BLM and Weyerhaeuser Company,” said Sue Doroff, Western Rivers Conservancy’s Vice President. “The Weyerhaeuser property is an important link in the conservation corridor for habitat protection and for trail access to this breathtaking area.”

Weyerhaeuser’s Vice President of Western Timberlands, Rich Wininger, expressed gratification about the company’s role in helping to conserve the 78-acre parcel. “Weyerhaeuser supports natural resource conservation and stewardship,” Wininger said. “The Sandy is a treasure for all Oregonians to enjoy, and we are pleased that these lands will be conserved for years to come.”

The Oregon Congressional delegation, led by Senators Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden, has played an essential role in securing $10.7 million in appropriations since 2001 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the BLM to purchase 2,200 acres thus far within the Sandy River project area.

“Acquiring additional Sandy River land through the partnership of public and private entities will create exceptional new hiking, fishing and other recreational opportunities for all Oregonians,” Senator Smith said.

Senator Wyden also praised the Sandy project. “Land acquisition in the Sandy basin continues to be a funding priority in the long tradition of protecting the jewels of our state for the public to enjoy,” he said.

With the funds from the LWCF, these lands are being conveyed to the BLM to be managed to protect sensitive fish and wildlife habitat, and uphold the area as a public resource for hikers, floaters and anglers.

###

**BACKGROUND:**

**About 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 for compatible public use and enjoyment and cooperate with other agencies and organizations to secure the health of the whole ecosystem. [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org)

**About the Bureau of Land Management:** The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land — 261 million surface acres — than any other federal agency. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. [blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)

**About Weyerhaeuser Company:** Weyerhaeuser sustainably manages more than 1 million acres of forestland in Oregon. Weyerhaeuser is a tree-growing company and a manufacturer and global distributor of forest products including wood and building materials, paper, paper bags, corrugated boxes, newsprint and related products. [www.weyerhaeuser.com](http://www.weyerhaeuser.com)

**Land and Water Conservation Fund:** Created by Congress in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides funding to federal, state and local governments to purchase lands for open space and recreation purposes. The LWCF uses off-shore oil lease receipts to pay for land purchases, authorizing up to $900 million each year.