



Western Rivers
CONSERVANCY

Riverlands

News from Western Rivers Conservancy

Issue 1

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The mission of Western Rivers Conservancy is to protect outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States by acquiring and protecting critical habitat. Western Rivers Conservancy is the nation's foremost specialist in the field of riparian land conservation.

A New Organization Is Born—Western Rivers Conservancy!

After operating for fourteen years as a program of River Network, Phil and Sue and their staff have created a new, independent organization to conserve outstanding Western rivers.

Western Rivers Conservancy is working to conserve high-quality river ecosystems by buying land and assembling refugia for fish and wildlife. Rivers like the Hoh in Washington, Oregon's North Umpqua, the Madison River in Montana and hundreds of other outstanding rivers need to be protected before it's too late. We believe that land acquisition, using a variety of funding sources, is the strongest, most practical approach to protecting critical habitat.

With our headquarters in Portland, OR and a beginning staff of four, WRC is taking aim at a number of regions where top-quality rivers cry out for protection.

Priority Areas For Western Rivers Conservancy.

We want to make a difference for rivers. Our strategy is to focus our efforts on regions that have a high concentration of intact stream ecosystems and biological diversity. Initially, we have selected four such regions:

- *Washington's Olympic Peninsula*, where an array of high-quality salmon streams flow out of protected headwaters in the Olympic National Park.
- *The Tillamook Basin on Oregon's north coast*, a historically rich complex of streams (the Miami, Kilchis, Wilson, Trask and Tillamook) flowing into Tillamook Bay that are under heavy pressure from logging and farming.
- *The Klamath/Siskiyou Region of southern Oregon and northern California*, from the Sixes River south to the Klamath, a region of high-quality streams and tremendous botanical diversity.
- *The northern Sierra Nevada foothills*, with streams from Battle Creek south to Butte Creek that hold the potential for restoring the Sacramento River's once-great runs of salmon and steelhead.



Western Rivers Conservancy saved the upper Chetco River in the heart of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area from massive gold mining.

The Hoh River: A New Refuge On A Great Salmon And Steelhead Stream.

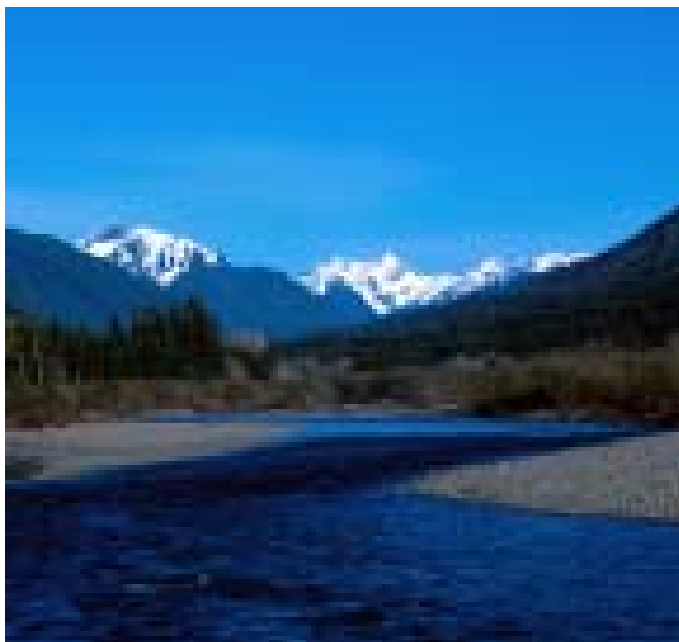
In December of 2001, Western Rivers Conservancy made its first major purchase on the Hoh River, a legendary salmon stream on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. With a loan from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, we bought 757 acres and two and a half miles of river at Schmidt Bar, where two important spawning streams, Elk and Winfield Creeks, flow into the Hoh.



Large gravel bars on Schmidt Bar are important spawning grounds for Hoh River salmon.

This purchase is the first installment in a long-term effort by Western Rivers Conservancy to purchase the entire thirty-one-mile reach of the Hoh that is still in private ownership, between Olympic National Park and the Pacific Ocean. We have three partners in this project: the Wild Salmon Center, which wants to establish an ecosystem monitoring station on the Hoh; Ecotrust, which wants to practice sustainable forestry in the Hoh watershed; and the Olympic National Forest, which will manage the river corridor.

Step two in this assemblage is now underway: in August, Western Rivers Conservancy signed an agreement to purchase a second Hoh River property from Rayonier Timber, 1,362-acre Spruce Creek Bottom, with four miles of Hoh River frontage. Again, the Packard Foundation is helping with a loan.



The Hoh's glacial headwaters are pristine and protected in Olympic National Park.

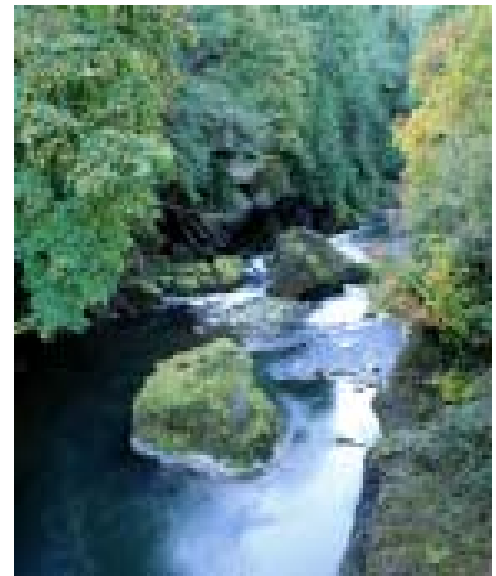
A Major Grant From The Paul G. Allen Forest Protection Foundation For The Hoh River Project.

In March of this year, the Paul G. Allen Forest Protection Foundation made a grant of \$1,100,000 to Western Rivers Conservancy to help us launch the Hoh River Project. These are funds that can be used for land purchases (especially option payments and earnest money payments), giving us the ability to seize opportunities when they arise. When we signed the agreement for the second land purchase from Rayonier Timber, for example, we utilized \$250,000 from the Paul G. Allen Forest Protection Foundation grant for the earnest money payment. Another grant, from the Bullitt Foundation, provides us with funding to do the on-the-ground staff work for the Hoh River project.

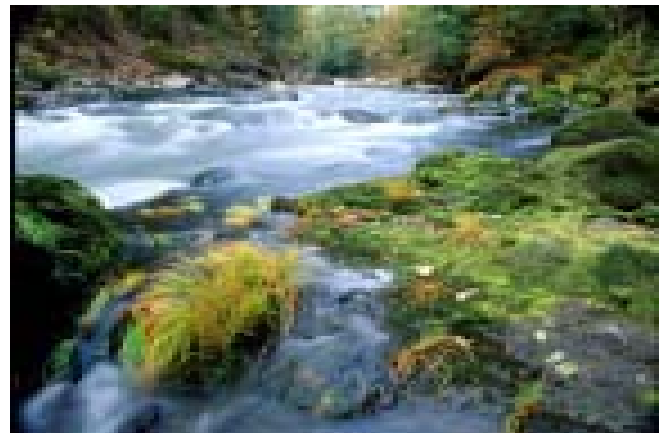
New Land Purchases On The Sandy River, Where Dam Removal Is On The Horizon.

The Sandy is another great western river, flowing from the glaciers of Mt. Hood to the Columbia near Portland. Western Rivers Conservancy has been working with Portland General Electric to remove the only dam on the Sandy and to establish an eleven-mile corridor of protected land both upstream and downstream of the dam site. This will be a refuge for wild runs of endangered salmon and steelhead, as well as terrestrial species. PGE is not only decommissioning and removing the dam, but also donating their Sandy River lands to WRC.

In May, we conveyed to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) the Koch Ranch, with two miles of river front, which we bought with loans from PGE and the Bullitt Foundation. When we bought the ranch, the County had just approved a permit for a major aggregate mine. Instead of a mining operation, the ranch will be protected habitat for elk, bear and endangered fish. On August 1, we conveyed to the BLM an additional 244 acres, including forty acres donated to us by Portland General Electric. Over the next few months, Western Rivers Conservancy will acquire Sandy River land from two more landowners and convey them all to the BLM, which will manage the area as an “Area of Critical Environmental Concern.”



PGE's Sandy River lands include Boulder Drop, a challenging class four rapid.



The 204-acre Smejkal acquisition protects nearly a mile of the Sandy's Inner Gorge.



There are two miles of salmon and steelhead spawning habitat along the Koch Ranch.



Acquisition of the historic Koch Ranch protects important winter range for the Sandy's two large elk herds.

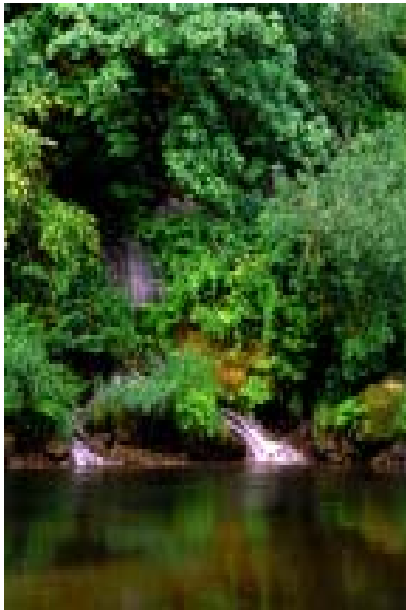
**Drift Creek And Five Mile Creek:
Conserving Oregon's Finest Coho Streams.**

On July 31, Western Rivers Conservancy closed the purchase of 1,402 acres and five miles on Drift Creek, which flows into the Alsea River Estuary on Oregon's central coast. This is classic coho salmon habitat, with miles of backwater channels meandering through tidal flats. We bought the land from Simpson Timber Company of Seattle and conveyed it to the U.S. Forest Service, which utilized the Land & Water Conservation Fund to make the purchase. This is our fourth partnership with Simpson, which previously sold us land on the Skagit River in Washington, donated land on the Willamette River, and bargain-sold Munson Creek Falls on the Oregon coast.



The estuary portions of the Drift Creek acquisition provide critical rearing habitat for threatened coastal coho salmon.

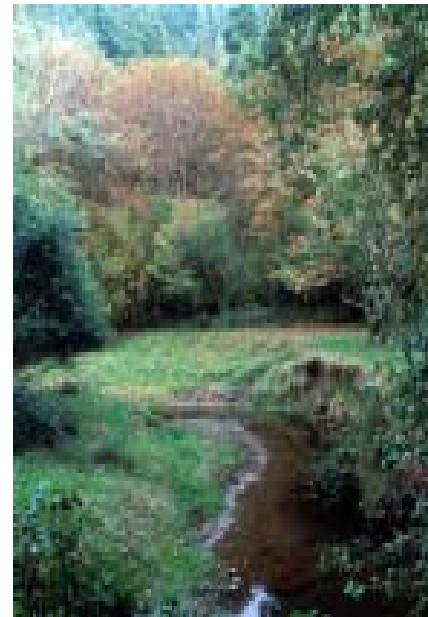
Later this year WRC will close the purchase of land on Five Mile Creek, which flows into Siltcoos Lake on the central Oregon coast. We will simultaneously buy the land from Davidson Industries and sell it to the U.S. Forest Service, which rates Five Mile Creek as the highest priority in its Pacific Northwest Streams program. We are buying five miles of the stream, which has the greatest count of coho salmon spawners per mile for any stream on the Oregon coast.



The Drift Creek acquisition is just downstream of the Drift Creek Wilderness Area, which is the largest protected stand of old growth forest on the Oregon Coast.



Although harvested in the past, the forest surrounding lower Drift Creek is regenerating rapidly.



Stream degradation due to cattle grazing and logging will be reversed along Five Mile Creek, ensuring the stream can continue to support huge numbers of coho salmon.

Protecting The Illinois National Wild & Scenic River.

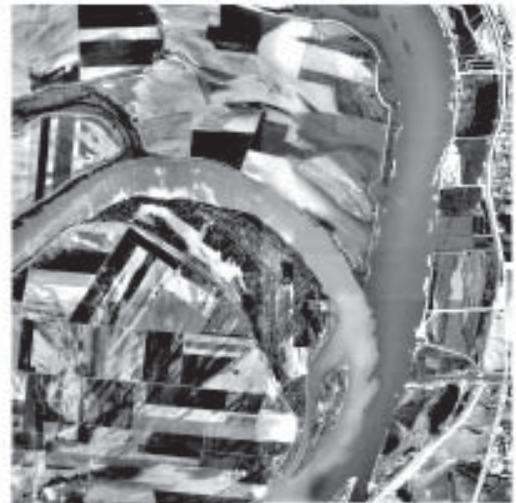
Flowing through the Kalmiopsis Wilderness in south coastal Oregon, the Illinois is one of the great rivers of the Northwest, rich in whitewater boating, salmon and steelhead, and botanical diversity. Just recently, Western Rivers Conservancy made a deal to buy the largest private land-holding on the lower Illinois Wild & Scenic River, very near its confluence with the Rogue. The purchase of 870 acres from landowner Bill Sweet will prevent second home development, logging and mining on this highly visible land at the confluence of two outstanding rivers. Ultimately, we expect to turn this land over to the Siskiyou National Forest to be managed as part of the Wild & Scenic River corridor.



The Sweet property boasts nearly a mile of Illinois River front.

Where The West Begins: The Mouth Of The Missouri.

As we approach the Lewis & Clark bicentennial, Western Rivers Conservancy is proud to play a part in commemorating the Corps of Discovery. With an interest-free loan from the Danforth Foundation we purchased 1,100 acres at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, the triangle of land where the great waters come together and where Lewis & Clark began their expedition. Later this year we will convey the land to the State of Missouri to create a new Confluence State Park, just a few miles north of St. Louis. At long last, one will be able to visit this focal point of America where the two mighty rivers join.



This aerial photo shows the property's location at the very point where two of our Nation's great rivers meet.

Board And Staff Of The New Organization

The field staff of Western Rivers Conservancy have been doing this work for many years. Phil Wallin, President of WRC, has decades of experience buying land for conservation, most recently as founder of the River Conservancy program at River Network. Our Vice-President, Sue Doroff, worked with Phil at the River Conservancy for ten years before co-founding Western Rivers Conservancy. Josh Kling came to the River Conservancy in 1999 and joined us in the move to Western Rivers Conservancy. Hannah Davidson joined us recently as our Director of Administration.

We have begun to recruit a Board of Directors for the new organization. The founding Directors are: Jim Lichatowich, fisheries biologist and author of the seminal book *Salmon Without Rivers*; Phil Wallin, President of Western Rivers Conservancy; and Norbert Wellman, dedicated angler, founder of the brokerage firm Ferguson & Wellman, trustee of the Oregon State University Foundation.

Over the next few years, we anticipate opening WRC offices in California, the Northern Rockies and the Four Corners region to carry out our program of river conservation in those parts of the West.

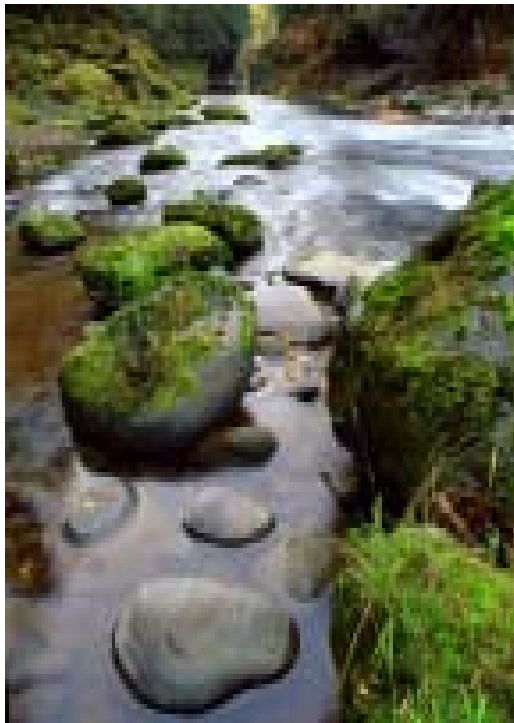
River Achievement Award Goes To WRC's President.

At the 2002 National River Rally in Asheville, NC, author Tim Palmer presented the second annual James R. Compton River Achievement Award to Phil Wallin. The award, named for the revered patron of river protection in this country, recognized Phil's work in river conservation over the past twenty years, first in protecting New Mexico's Rio Chama, then in founding and building River Network, then in creating Western Rivers Conservancy.

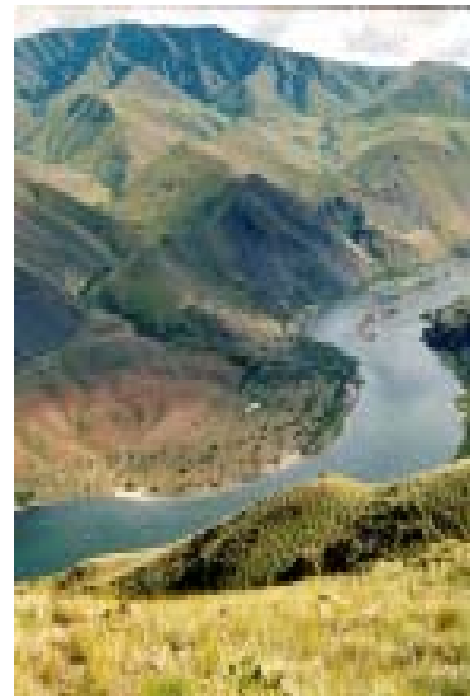
Gifts And Grants Help WRC Get Started.

Getting started is never easy, especially when your mission is to buy land on outstanding rivers for preservation. This is a capital-intensive venture. We have to be able to compete with for-profit companies and put money on the table.

Western Rivers Conservancy has been fortunate to receive seed-funding from a number of donors. We have already mentioned the Paul G. Allen Forest Protection Foundation and the Bullitt Foundation. Other benefactors have been Dan Lufkin



Western Rivers Conservancy is committed to purchasing and protecting lands along western rivers, including Oregon's Sandy River.



Stunning Cache Creek Ranch on the Snake River was Phil Wallin's first riverland purchase.

and the Sharp Foundation, Jim Compton and the Compton Foundation, Dave Johnson and the Johnson Family Foundation, Norb Wellman and Si Foote. We are grateful to these folks for giving us this opportunity to save Western rivers.

Help Support Us.

Western Rivers Conservancy has made a commitment to create significant new refugia along outstanding Western rivers. We need your commitment as well! Please consider giving to Western Rivers Conservancy so that we can accelerate our efforts in river conservation. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to our office in Portland. There are also many other ways to support Western Rivers Conservancy. Please visit our website or call Hannah Davidson, Director of Administration (503-241-0151 x10), for more information.

Thank you for your interest and support!