



Western Rivers Conservancy Will Auction Salmon Sculptures to Benefit the Sandy River

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For More information, contact:

Erik Peterson, Metropolitan Group
(503) 223-3299 or epeterson@metgroup.com

PORTLAND, Ore. – A colorful group of 32 large salmon sculptures will be auctioned Oct. 24 at the Portland Art Museum to benefit the Sandy River, just as the river is about to become completely free-flowing following the removal of the Marmot Dam.

Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) is organizing the auction to culminate eight years of conservation efforts on the Sandy, Portland's backyard river treasure. More than 250 people are expected to attend the *Salmon for the Sandy* event, celebrating the free-flowing river and the Conservancy's protection of a 5,000-acre wild river corridor along the Sandy River.

"This is an opportunity for art lovers and river lovers alike to celebrate for a good cause," said Sue Doroff, WRC vice president. "The sculptures are generating excitement around the new natural resource and recreation area that we're preserving right in Portland's backyard, and the Sandy flowing freely for the first time in a century. No other city in the nation will have such a wild river, undammed, within 25 miles."

The 32 fiberglass salmon to be auctioned have been painted, decorated and gilded by local artists. Event proceeds will benefit the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council, the long-term steward of the basin.

In July, Portland General Electric (PGE) began deconstructing Marmot Dam, the largest dam ever to be removed in Oregon. Little Sandy Dam will be removed in 2008. Removal of the dams will give Sandy River salmon and steelhead an unobstructed path from the slopes of Mount Hood to the Columbia Gorge and onward to the Pacific Ocean, opening up more than 100 miles of new stream habitat for fish.

In conjunction with dam removal efforts, Western Rivers Conservancy has been working since 1999 to buy land on the Sandy and Little Sandy rivers to create a 5,000-acre natural resource and recreation area centered on a 1,500-acre land donation from PGE. This 17-mile stretch of riverlands— which includes rare old-growth forests, as well as wetlands and hiking trails— will become part of a larger 9,000-acre area that the Bureau of Land Management will manage for habitat protection and public recreational access. The Sandy River Basin Watershed Council will continue to be an active steward of the river, spearheading volunteer and education projects to restore the watershed.

"This project is an exciting confluence of art and conservation," said John Esler, acting director of PGE's Hydro Licensing Department, which is coordinating the dam removal project. "*Salmon for the Sandy* is a fun and engaging way to look forward to improved habitat and increased recreational opportunities in the basin."

There are still seats available for the gala and auction on Oct. 24. Reservations are \$125 each or \$1,000 for a table of eight, and can be purchased by calling 503-241-0151 or visiting www.westernrivers.org.

About Western Rivers Conservancy

Western Rivers Conservancy protects outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States. It acquires land to conserve critical habitat, provides public access for compatible use and enjoyment, and cooperates with other agencies and organizations to secure the health of whole ecosystems. www.westernrivers.org

About the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council

The Sandy River Basin Watershed Council acts as steward of the Sandy watershed. Each year, the Council leads hundreds of volunteers to plant trees, remove invasive plants and distribute tons of adult salmon carcasses that nourish the aquatic ecosystem. The Council works in partnership with private landowners to improve salmon habitat on their land. For information about the Council and volunteer activities, call (503) 668-1646.

About Portland General Electric

Headquartered in Portland, **Portland General Electric** is a fully integrated electric utility that serves more than 796,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in Oregon. Visit PGE on the web at www.PortlandGeneral.com/fish.

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