

### A Letter from the Chair and President

he two of us have been shaped by a single stream—Big Chico Creek—which flows from the Ponderosa foothills of the Northern Sierra Nevada through a deep oak woodland canyon, bisects the city of Chico, CA, and empties into the Sacramento River. Ken lives in the canyon today; Phil hiked and swam the creek as a kid.

Big Chico is a wonderful example of a river that is special—to us as individuals, to the city of Chico, to salmon and salamanders and all the life forms that make up a wild river ecosystem. That is why Western Rivers Conservancy bought approximately five miles of the Big Chico Creek canyon in 2000, with grants from the Packard

Foundation, California Wildlife Conservation Board, and others, and turned it over to California State University at Chico as a teaching and research facility.

In this annual report, we highlight other special rivers where Western Rivers Conservancy bought and conserved vital lands in our 2009 fiscal year. Some are special for runs of endangered wild salmon and steelhead; some for spectacular canyons; some for the richness of native flora; and some for recreational value. Each of these streams, shown in the map at left, is a vital arterial for the flow of life and energy in the western United States.

We thank each of you for contributing, in your own way, to this past year of accomplishment by Western Rivers Conservancy: *real* results, land that you and your children can walk on, float through, and cast a line from.

We invite you to adopt Western Rivers Conservancy as your means for conserving wild rivers for all time for people and wildlife. Please visit www.westernrivers.org or call our offices at 503-241-0151 to learn more.

For our rivers,

Phillip Wallin, President

Ken Grossman, FY09 Chair



### KLAMATH RIVER

On Blue Creek, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) is creating a major new salmon sanctuary in partnership with the Yurok, California's largest tribe, which has cared for the lower Klamath River since time immemorial. Just as WRC protected an entire arm of the Smith River — Goose Creek — one watershed to the north, we are now working to protect the entire lower Blue Creek watershed, complementing its wilderness

As climate change imperils Pacific

salmonids, scientists

In 2009, we made

The first 22,000 acres acquired will be managed as a Yurok Tribal Community Forest, protecting habitat while providing a sustainable economic base. The remaining 25,000 acres, including the lower watershed of Blue Creek, will be managed as a Yurok Tribal Preserve that will protect salmon, wildlife and cultural sites. This is a critical opportunity to shift the management of the lands toward watershed protection while restoring to the Yurok a portion of their ancestral territory.

Western Rivers Conservancy and the tribe are working diligently on the next installments of the purchase. Bit by bit, the Yurok Tribe's role as steward of the lower Klamath River will grow, complementing efforts to remove dams in the upper basin.

predict that Blue Creek will remain cold even as other tributaries become increasingly warm. Blue Creek is one of the best hopes for the Klamath's populations of coho, Chinook, coastal cutthroat trout, steelhead and green sturgeon.

substantial progress on this, our largest project to date. Western Rivers Conservancy and the tribe completed purchase of the first 5,500-acre installment of a 47,000-acre property owned by Green Diamond Resource

Salmon Sanctuary & Tribal Preserve

Yurok Tribal Community Fores



The Yurok Tribal Community orest will protect Pecwan, Weitchpec and

Ke'Pel Creeks while providing an economic

Blue Creek is a vital coldwater

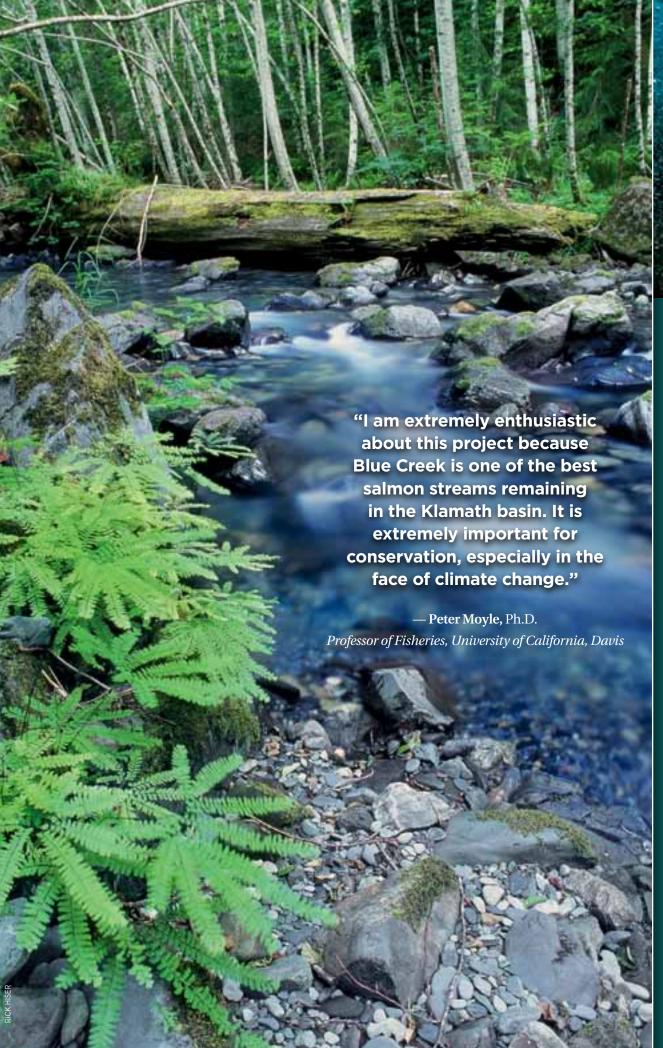
The project will restore to the

efuge for the Klamath River's salmon runs.

Yurok a portion of their ancestral lands,

including cultural and spiritual sites on

for the Yurok Tribe.





### Another Critical Tributary

South Fork Trinity River, California



While our partnership with the Yurok progresses on the lower Klamath, Western Rivers Conservancy in FY09 completed a twoyear project to protect another celebrated Klamath River tributary, the South Fork Trinity

River. California's longest Wild and Scenic River, the South Fork Trinity once hosted an abundance of steelhead, Chinook and coho salmon. Today, it supports one of only two surviving runs of native spring Chinook salmon in the entire Klamath basin.

Two years ago, Western Rivers Conservancy purchased a 170-acre private property along the river, centered on the most productive spawning reach for Chinook. We removed several buildings to begin restoring the property to a more natural state, and in FY09 conveyed the land to the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. With the threat of logging removed, trees will anchor the steep, unstable slopes and prevent erosion that can smother spawning grounds. This will help boost the survival rates of young salmon born along this crucial half-mile reach.

### "This is a rare opportunity to create a park that will aim to preserve and enhance the quality of the John Day River, the salmon runs it supports and the surrounding landscape."

— Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski

## A Park to Protect the Wild



JOHN DAY RIVER

he John Day River of central Oregon is the longest dam-free river west of the Continental Divide. It is also a national treasure, a place of grand solitude where monuments of rock tower over horseshoe river bends, and where broad vistas display hillsides dotted with sagebrush and juniper. It is home to herds of elk, deer, bighorn sheep and healthy runs of Columbia River steelhead, Chinook salmon and bull trout.

A 16-mile stretch of habitat along the lower John Day River will soon become Cottonwood Canyon State Park. In a few years, Oregon will have a new state park in this stunning landscape, encompassing 16 miles of the lower John Day River. The first step was to acquire the land. When the family-operated Murtha Ranch came on the market in 2008, Western Rivers Conservancy purchased the land – 8,114 acres along with an 8,000-acre Bureau of Land Management grazing lease.

The conservation opportunity was extraordinary: protecting a large block of sagebrush-steppe habitat, which is a landscape at risk across the West; and bolstering the John Day as the best remaining stronghold for mid-Columbia River summer

steelhead, a threatened species. The land would also provide a wild recreation experience unparalleled in Oregon.

Lease Lands

We formed a partnership with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the ideal long-term steward of the land and its many values. In FY09, Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed the first 2,403-acre portion of the land to State Parks, which plans to acquire the remaining 5,711 deeded acres over the next three years to establish Cottonwood Canyon State Park, soon to be Oregon's largest state park.

Efforts are already underway to restore and protect the lower three miles of Hay Creek located on the property. A small stream of enormous importance, Hay Creek is a rare spawning tributary for summer steelhead on the lower John Day, running cold even during the hot, dry summer.

Conservation of the property will fill a 16-mile gap in a 148-mile-long protected reach within the lower John Day Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

This is a precious window of time to help secure the health of the lower John Day while creating a public recreational treasure for future generations.



"For those like me who cherish
the Bear River Refuge, these
acquisitions will complete a
long-held vision to enhance
one of the showplaces of
the nation for birds."

— James V. Hansen
Utah Congressman, Retired

Set aside by the public in 1929 as the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, this area sees more than 200 species and millions of birds throughout the year. Upwards of

50,000 people also visit annually to witness the colorful spectacle: flocks bursting into thunderous flight and rowdy symphonies of bird songs. The tremendous array of feathered visitors that congregate at the Refuge ultimately spread out over the hemisphere.

As a premier stronghold for western birds, the Refuge is in need of further protection. Western Rivers Conservancy has several opportunities to purchase land in the Bear River delta, expanding the Refuge's sheltered habitat. In FY09, WRC bought 121 acres, the first piece of a 696-acre property that will be conserved as part of the adjacent 74,000-acre Refuge. Over several years, WRC will purchase thousands of additional acres and convey them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the Refuge. These lands include ideal habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds: wetlands, open water, grassy upland nesting areas, mudflats and sheltered marshes. Among the long list of species that will benefit are avocets, black-necked stilts, cinnamon teal, sandhill crane, tundra swan and white-faced ibis. The James V. Hansen Wildlife Education Center was recently completed, and this project will broaden the Refuge's offerings to the public.



ABOVE: The Promontory Mountains rise over the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

BELOW: Upwards of 50,000 people visit the Refuge each year.

BOTTOM: The Refuge can attract more than 65,000 black-necked stilts in the fall, more than anywhere else in the nation.









n the northern Sierra Nevada, a handful of streams hold the hope of restoring the Sacramento River's imperiled salmon runs. Among them is Deer Creek, one of few rivers in the Sierra that still support strong runs of Chinook salmon and steelhead.

"Deer Creek is one of the top three streams in the Sierra for aquatic life and a rare California river with healthy runs of both spring Chinook and steelhead."

— Tim Palmer

Author, photographer and noted river expert

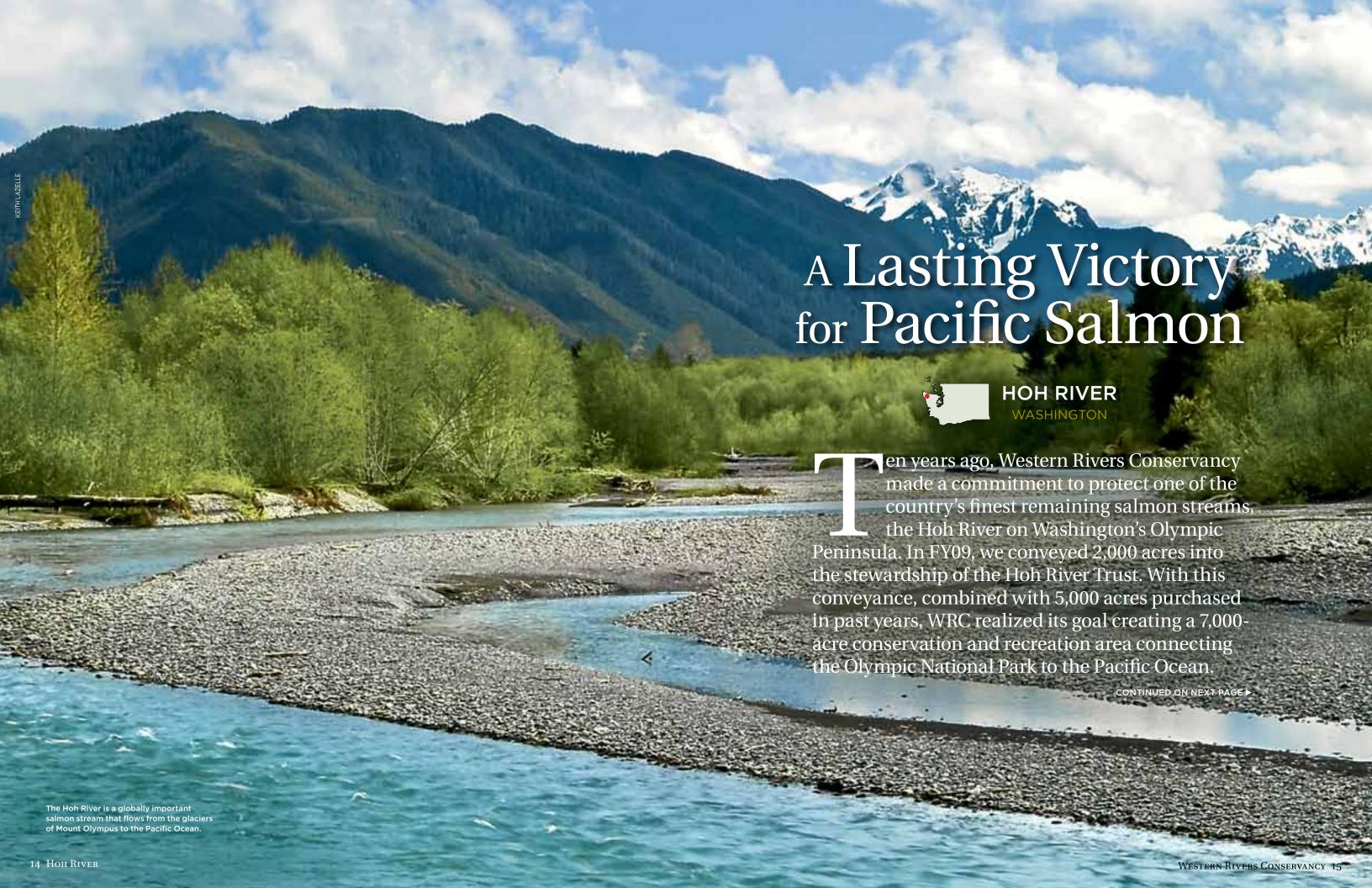


Deer Creek begins in the foothills of Mt. Lassen and flows for 50 dam-free miles to the Central Valley. Its wilderness course tumbles through a deepening volcanic canyon then winds through chaparral and blue oak groves before meeting the Sacramento River north of Chico. The upper reaches include old-growth forests and habitat for the California spotted owl, black bear and other wildlife.

Along Deer Creek's lower stretches, there are opportunities to protect and connect vital habitat. In FY09, Western Rivers Conservancy committed to buy 600 acres centered on beautiful Lower Deer Creek Falls. WRC is purchasing the land from Sierra Pacific Industries and conveying it to the Lassen National Forest, filling a gap in the protected river corridor.

The grand scenery along this stretch delights hikers and boaters alike. A trail winds through the canyon and leads to Lower Deer Creek Falls, then connects to a network of wilderness trails with all-season access. Whitewater kayakers revel in the fun drops of this reach, easily accessed from Highway 32. Land protection will provide a vital habitat link, chalking up a small but important victory for the long-term survival of Sacramento River salmon.

Western Rivers Conservancy's acquisition is centered on Lower Deer Creek Falls, with scenic trail access through the canyon.



# ☐ Project Area Conserved to Date WA State DNR

### HOH RIVER

Reaching the 7,000-acre milestone was a challenge as land ownerships shifted. WRC staff pursued these critical habitat lands with determination and patience. Along the way, we crafted with the Wild Salmon Center a new model for river stewardship, establishing the Hoh River Trust. A decade and \$11 million dollars later, and thanks to the support of Congressman Norm Dicks, one of the largest single conservation efforts in Washington was realized.

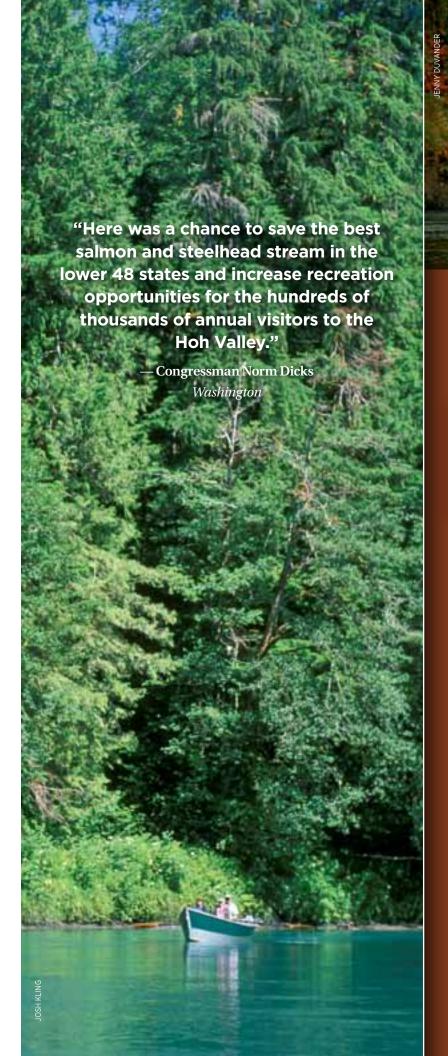
The Hoh begins high on the glaciers of Mt. Olympus and flows for 60 miles to the Pacific Ocean. It runs through some of the world's finest temperate rainforest, fed by the region's impressive rainfall. Its waters are home to all of the native species of Pacific salmon. This diversity is in large part due to the upper twothirds of the watershed being protected in Olympic National Park. However, lands along the lower 30 miles of the Hoh were managed for timber production rather than to support the river's incredible ecological values. The lands acquired protect the river along these lower 30 miles. Habitat protection at this scale helps secure the Hoh's place forever as a globally important salmon stronghold, and also has great benefits for endangered and

> threatened species like marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, bald eagle and bull trout.

Finally, outdoor enthusiasts anglers, hikers, boaters and viewers of wildlife — will realize a wealth of improved recreational access along these lands, now owned and managed by the Hoh River Trust. Over time, the once-cut forests will mature and the lush conditions well known in the Park will extend down the entire river corridor. For anyone

who has ever seen the beauty of the Hoh River, this is an accomplishment to treasure.

Our sincere thanks go to partners including the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Congressman Norm Dicks, Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Hoh River Trust, Wild Salmon Center and everyone else who worked to see this important river protected.





### Cowlitz River, Washington

Western Rivers Conservancy works to protect whole river ecosystems, and that usually means purchasing large tracts of land and assembling



multiple properties into meaningful conservation areas. However, sometimes that means buying a single, strategic tract with vital habitat. Such is the case with an acquisition along the lower Cowlitz River, a

Washington tributary to the lower Columbia River. WRC bought 17 acres with 1,000 feet of river frontage to conserve critical habitat for the Cowlitz River's remaining runs of wild salmon and steelhead.

The property is located downstream of the Cowlitz hydro projects and upstream of the developed, industrial reach. It includes a functioning river side-channel, large forested wetland and beaver pond. Mature stands of red alder, black cottonwood and willow line the banks and extend well back from the river. Fisheries biologists working on the Cowlitz/Lower Columbia Watershed Recovery Plan identify this property as a Tier One conservation priority.

Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed the property to the Capitol Land Trust as a longterm conservation steward, utilizing mitigation funding from the Cowlitz Falls Dam relicensing. Additional partners include the Lewis County Public Utility District, National Park Service and Washington Department of Ecology.



When Portland General Electric (PGE) announced in 1999 that it was removing two dams in the Sandy basin, Western Rivers Conservancy joined in the effort, committing to acquire 4,500 acres along the Sandy's unprotected middle stretch, including a 1,500-acre donation from PGE. Land acquisition, combined with dam removals, allows us to seize an unparalleled opportunity to restore and protect a premier salmon and steelhead stream.

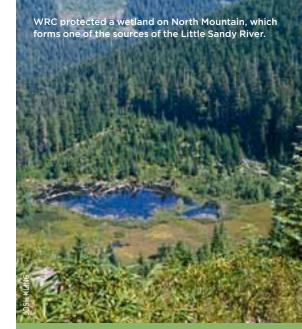
Now, a decade later, Western Rivers Conservancy has acquired 3,010 acres, nearing the finish line in our effort to create a protected natural area along 17 miles of streams in the Sandy basin. The longterm steward will be the Bureau of Land Management, which will manage the land as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. This will protect vital habitat while allowing

for public recreational access.

In FY09, we made progress on two tributaries: the Little Sandy and Salmon Rivers. Until 2008, the Little Sandy ran dry below a diversion dam. Only one year after the dam was removed, Portland Water Bureau biologists discovered coho salmon fry in the newly reborn river. Just as the coho returned, WRC completed protection of one of the

sources of the Little Sandy: 70 acres of old-growth forest and a wetland located high on North Mountain. PGE provided funding to purchase the land as part of their wetland mitigation agreement for the Clackamas River hydro project relicensing. WRC conveyed the land to the Mt. Hood National Forest.

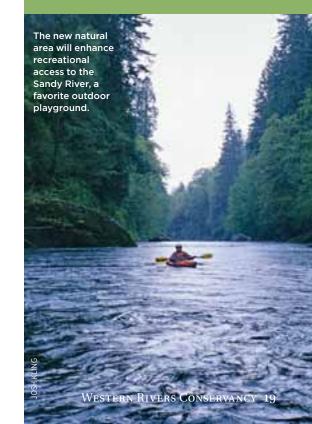
In addition, WRC is purchasing 352 acres in the Wild and Scenic corridor of the Salmon River. The Sandy River fishery relies on the Salmon River and its tributary Boulder Creek as anchor habitat for salmon and steelhead, and this acquisition will protect frontage on both of those streams. In 2009, we conveyed 39 acres, the first portion of the property, to the Bureau of Land Management, utilizing an appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

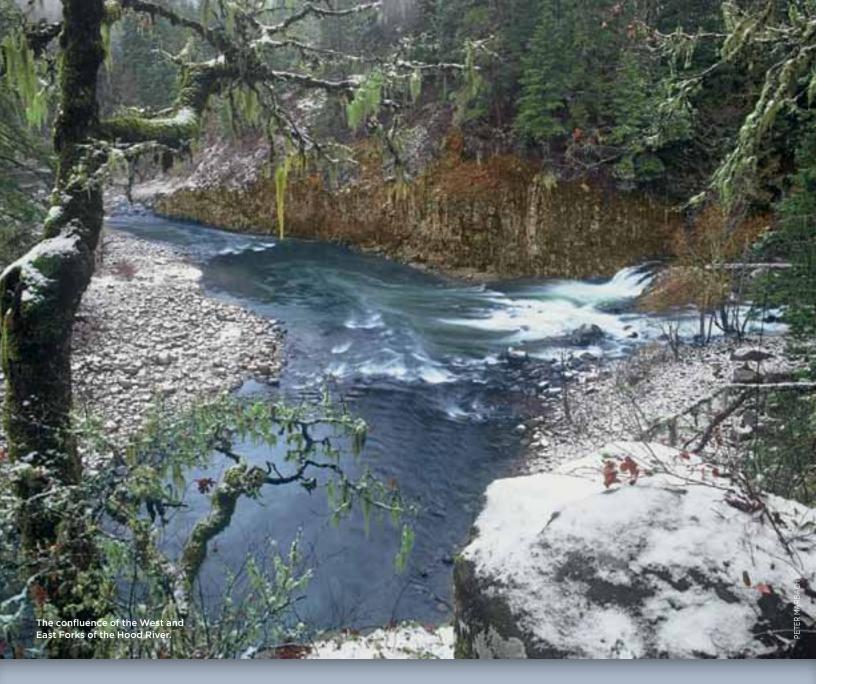


"This is a shining example of a partnership to conserve habitat for endangered salmon while providing new recreational access to a wild river so close to a major urban area."

— Ed Shepard, State Director for Oregon and Washington

Bureau of Land Management





### Additional Projects

### Hood River, Oregon

Western Rivers Conservancy is working to establish a major sanctuary for fish, wildlife and people on all three forks of the Hood River, in conjunction with the upcoming removal of Powerdale Dam in 2010. We launched this effort in 2006 with the purchase of 20 acres at the confluence of the East and the West Forks of the Hood River. In FY09, Western Rivers Conservancy committed to purchase the adjacent 82 acres, including a sandy beach at the confluence and Punch Bowl Falls, a beautiful cascade surrounded by cliffs of columnar basalt. This scenic riverscape will soon become a community treasure, protecting two river miles of rich, complex habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead.

### Beaver Creek and Marsh, Washington

A decade-long effort on the Olympic Peninsula has come to fruition. A long list of threatened species will benefit from preservation of Beaver Creek, Lake and Marsh – a beautiful wetland system surrounded by old-growth forest habitat. In FY09, WRC conveyed 420 acres, which we purchased back in 2006, to become part of the adjacent Olympic National Forest. This provides protection for the entire lake and marsh, including critical habitat for threatened marbled murrelet and Olympic mud minnow, as well as bald eagles, trumpeter swans, harlequin ducks and other waterfowl, herons, otter, beaver, and numerous reptiles and amphibians. This project began in 1998, when Western Rivers Conservancy purchased 213 acres of Beaver Marsh. Taken together, these acquisitions help preserve the exceptional water quality of Beaver Creek, which provides cold, clear flows to the Sol Duc River.

### Elk River, Oregon

The Elk is one of Oregon's finest remaining coastal rivers, with old-growth headwaters, outstanding water quality and a superb native fishery. In 2007, Western Rivers Conservancy responded to an opportunity to purchase 170 acres along the Elk River and Rock Creek, a vital coho spawning tributary. Rock Creek is a crystal-clear stream protected in its upper reaches as a roadless area, but in need of protection near its confluence. The property also includes frontage on the Elk River.

In FY09, we worked to place the land into permanent conservation stewardship with the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. The land is adjacent to a large block of wild habitat and could one day be an extension of the Grassy Knob Wilderness Area

### Eel River Estuary, California

In 2007, Western Rivers Conservancy acquired 440 acres in the estuary at the confluence of the Eel and Salt Rivers. The property, a former dairy farm, will return to its historic state as a tidally washed wetland, rejuvenating habitat for more than 30 species of fish that use the estuary as a feeding, spawning and nursery area. Numerous shorebirds will also benefit from revived nesting habitat.

In FY09, we moved forward on efforts with the California Department of Fish and Game to place the land in permanent conservation stewardship. The heavily-silted Salt River has been identified as one of the most restorable tidal marshlands in California. Recovering such habitat within the Eel River Delta is a very important step toward recovering what once was one of the region's strongest fisheries.

### Redwood Creek Estuary, California

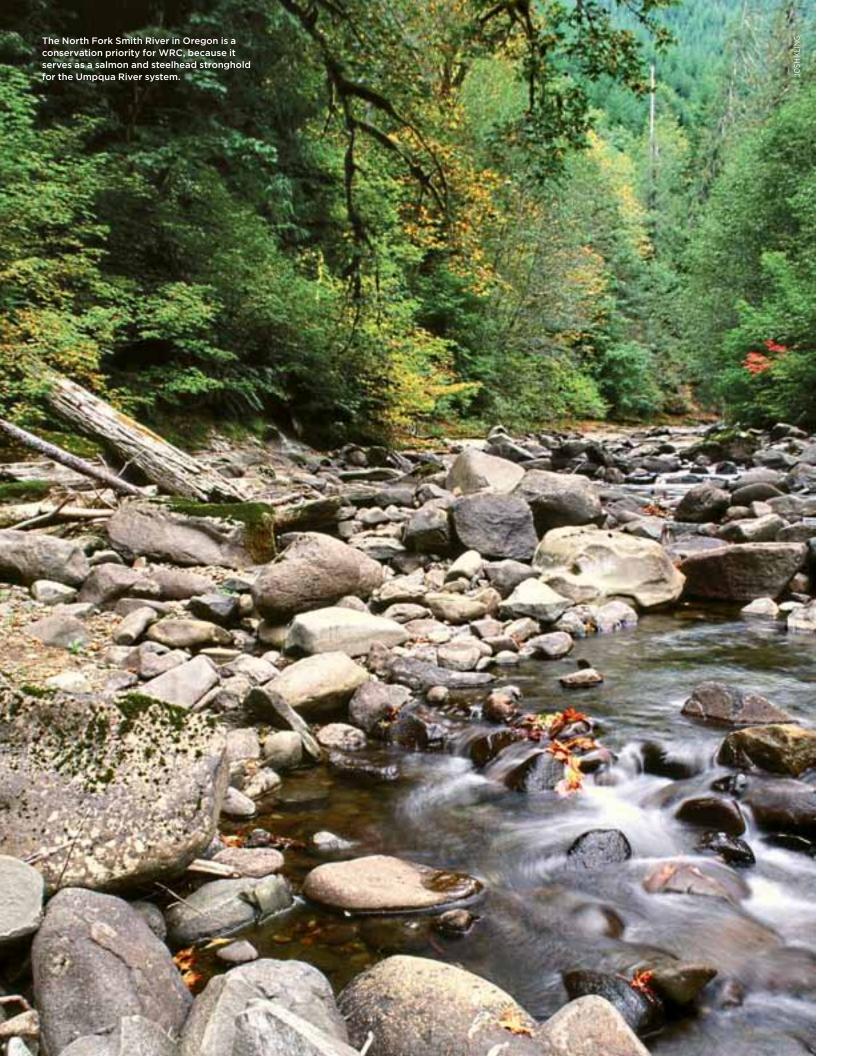
On California's North Coast, Western Rivers Conservancy purchased a property in the estuary of Redwood Creek to help restore what historically was healthy and complex habitat for coho salmon. In 2009, we placed the property into the long-term stewardship of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. We are working with partners to protect nearby estuarine lands to allow for the eventual removal of levees on lower Redwood Creek, advancing one of the top priority restoration projects on California's North Coast.











### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

For the fiscal years ending September 30

	2009	2008	
Assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	1,395,525	1,304,518	
Grants, interest and other receivables	731,140	177,640	
Prepaid expenses	53,361	42,591	
Investments	254,768	1,428,541	
Land holdings, options, equipment and other real property	9,370,157	15,847,124	
Total assets	11,804,951	18,800,414	
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable, accrued and related expenses	78,232	280,924	
Notes and interest payable	4,965,314	8,126,466	
Funds held on behalf of others	-	431,356	
Total liabilities	5,043,546	8,838,746	
Net assets:			
Unrestricted assets	6,264,455	8,935,858	
Temporarily restricted assets	316,114	844,974	
Permanently restricted assets	180,836	180,836	
Total net assets	6,761,405	9,961,668	
Total liabilities and net assets	11,804,951	18,800,414	

### Consolidated Statement of Activities

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2009	Total 2008
Revenue:					
Contributions of land, net	136,244			136,244	956,903
Contributions and grants	215,081	572,166		787,247	1,041,210
In-kind contributions	345,185			345,185	67,541
Interest and other revenue	623,824			623,824	173,408
Change in fair market value of land	142,776			142,776	224,756
Reimbursements and fees	698,495			698,495	-
Total public support and revenues	2,161,605	572,166		2,733,771	2,463,818
N	1101000	(1101000)			
Net assets released from restriction	1,101,026	(1,101,206)			
Total revenues	3,262,631	(528,860)		2,733,771	2,463,818
Expenses and donations:					
Donations/transfers of land	2,832,489			2,832,489	3,800
Program expenses	2,504,357			2,504,357	2,344,614
Management and general	285,391			285,391	247,110
Fundraising expenses	311,797			311,797	210,325
Total Expenses	5,934,034			5,934,034	2,805,849
Change in net assets	(2,671,403) <sup>1</sup>	(528,860)		(3,200,263)	(342,031)
Net assets at beginning of year	8,935,858	844,974	180,836	9,961,668	10,303,699
Net assets at end of year	6,264,455	316,114	180,836	6,761,405	9,961,668

This financial information is excerpted from Western Rivers Conservancy's audited financial statements. To obtain a complete copy of the audit by the firm of Gary McGee & Co., please contact Western Rivers Conservancy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Includes the transfer of land valued at \$2,262,266. The grant revenues used to fund the acquisition of the transferred land were recognized in a previous year.

### **Acknowledgments**

Western Rivers Conservancy greatly appreciates gifts from all of our supporters. The individuals, foundations, businesses, organizations and agencies below contributed \$100 or more between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009. For a full list of supporters, please visit www.westernrivers.org

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Our sincere thanks

go to Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., which donated to Western Rivers Conservancy a portion of proceeds from sales across the country in May 2009.

Sierra Nevada is an environmentally responsible company that makes great craft beer. WRC is excited to partner with Sierra Nevada again this August for Wild Rivers 2010!

WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY 25

24 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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Humboldt Bay Recreation & Conservation District

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District

Longview Fibre

National Marine Fisheries Service

Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Inc.

Northcoast Regional Land Trust

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Oregon State Weed Board

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Oregon Youth Conservation Corps

PacifiCorp

David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Portland General Electric

Portland Water Bureau

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Resources Legacy Fund

Sandy River Basin Partners

Sandy River Basin Watershed Council

Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation District

Sierra Pacific Industries

South Coast Watersheds Council

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service

Washington Department of Natural Resources

Wild Salmon Center

Yurok Tribe



