ANNUAL REPORT





Gunnison River (p. 8)

Little Cimarron River (p. 1

Western Rivers Conservancy acts to protect outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States. We acquire land to conserve critical habitat, provide public access for compatible use and enjoyment, and cooperate with other agencies and organizations to secure the health of the whole ecosystem.

Letters from the President and Chair

Each year, our staff and Board get together on a river we love, on a stream like the Salmon, the Rogue or the North Fork Flathead. We turn off the cell phones, load the rafts and push off on a multi-day float. We eat, drink, take turns at the oars, swim, joke and replenish ourselves on the sounds and sensations of a flowing river and remote wilderness scenery.

It's on these annual trips that we realize together, once again, precisely why we do what we do. Rivers are life. This is true not just for the plants and animals that depend on them, but for us—all of us. I know that as a supporter of Western Rivers Conservancy, you also care deeply about our streams.

I am proud to say that we have some of the best, most important projects in WRC history on our plate today. Last year, some of these projects were launched, others were carried forward and some were completed, meaning the riverlands you helped us purchase are being conserved for fish, wildlife and people forever.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work we accomplished in 2012. With your support we are taking riverland acquisition to new levels and protecting even more of the great rivers of the West, streams that nouris our lives and keep our communities, our countryside and our country healthy and alive.

For our rivers



On the surface, saving a river through land acquisition is straightforward stuff: identify and purchase an important property on an outstanding river and convey it to a longterm conservation steward for permanent protection. While our results are ultimately always the same—with each project, a river is protected forever—it's the getting there that always differs. The process is anything but straightforward.

At its core, riverland acquisition requires innovation, partnership, creativity, relationship-building and trust. It requires intimate knowledge of conservation finance, carbon sequestration and new markets tax credits. It requires science, stream ecology and a passion for rivers. Most of all, it requires support from our community. Whether you've been with us for a year or two decades, you have helped place Western Rivers Conservancy at the forefront of what we do, making us the West's most effective organization when it comes to riverland conservation. We thank you for it. And we're sure that, generations from now, our children will thank you for it, too.

Warmest regards



Nan McKay Board Chair

COLORADO



PROJECT SIZE 920 acres STREAM MILES 2.5 ECOREGION Colorado Plateau KEY WILDLIFE Rocky Mountain elk, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, peregrine falcon KEY FISH Colorado pikeminnow.

humpback chub, bonytail chub, razorback sucker

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WRC opened new public access to Cross Mountain Canyon and the vast Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area. We created a 2.5-mile riverland refuge for Yampa wildlife and all four species of imperiled Colorado Basin warm-water fish.



n 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy completed a historic purchase on Colorado's Yampa River: Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch. The acquisition creates a sanctuary for four species of native warm-water fish, protects 2.5 miles of riverlands and opens new public access to the surrounding Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area. For WRC and the West, acquisition of the ranch is a milestone in terms of both access and river conservation.

The least dammed river in the



WRC's efforts on the Yampa create new access to the Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area, home to one of the continent's largest herds of Rocky Mountain elk.

Colorado Basin, the Yampa flows 250 miles from the Flat Tops Wilderness to the Green River, in Dinosaur National Monument. Along the way, it nourishes one of the finest riparian corridors in the West, including extensive cottonwood forests along the middle and lower river. The lower Yampa is home to elk, bighorn sheep, antelope, mountain lion, coyote, mule deer, beaver, peregrine falcon and numerous songbird species. It is also home to all four species of imperiled Colorado Basin warm-water fish: razorback sucker, humpback chub, bonytail chub and, tipping scales at up to 80 pounds, Colorado pikeminnow.

The 920-acre parcel lies west of Maybell, Colorado, at the entrance to a

spectacular vertical-walled gorge known as Cross Mountain Canyon. It is also strategically located on the eastern edge of the Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area, which is home to one of the largest migratory elk herds in North America. Despite being one of the country's most fabled big-game hunting grounds, the area had been effectively off limits to the public because access was strictly through private property or by boat. With WRC's purchase of Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch, it is now open to all.

Access and Conservation at Cross Mountain Canyon

Because of the ranch's location, the Bureau of Land Management has wanted to acquire the property for years. To make that vision a reality, WRC worked with the BLM throughout 2012 with the goal of conveying the property to the agency for permanent stewardship. Compatible access is integral to WRC's mission, and we are thrilled about enabling the public to acquire a property that not only protects a great river, but creates new access to an invaluable natural resource. **Klamath River & Blue Creek**

Protecting One of the World's Great Salmon Runs

n Northern California's remote Redwood Coast, a stream called Blue Creek flows cold and clear from the Siskiyou Mountains. It meets the Klamath River 16 miles upstream from the Pacific, injecting the Klamath with a life-giving dose of clean, cold water. When the Klamath is stressed by low flows and warm temperatures, Blue Creek becomes the lower river's most important cold-water refuge for returning salmon and steelhead. Nearly every one of these fish holds in Blue Creek, lowering its body temperature by an average of eight degrees. Without this cool-down period, most salmon and steelhead would likely die before reaching their spawning grounds



For Klamath River Chinook salmon, Blue Creek is a cold-water lifeline that allows them to stay cool enough to survive their journey upriver to spawn. Klamath salmon runs are some of the most recoverable on the West Coast.

upstream.

To keep Blue Creek healthy and cold, Western Rivers Conservancy formed a landmark partnership with California's Yurok Tribe to help the Tribe purchase over 47,000 acres of ancestral homelands along the Klamath, including the entire lower Blue Creek watershed.

(The upper watershed is already protected by the Siskiyou Wilderness Area.) When the project is complete, a 15,000-acre salmon sanctuary will protect Blue Creek, and California's largest Native American tribe will regain a vast ancestral homeland.

To date, WRC has helped the Yurok



purchase over 22,000 acres of maturing riverland forest from Green Diamond Resource Company. The land is now the Yurok Tribal Community Forest and will be sustainably managed for clean water, fish habitat, forest health and cultural rejuvenation. Throughout 2012, WRC continued working with Green Diamond and the Yurok to facilitate purchase of the remaining 25,000 acres.

This second stage is the heart of our conservation effort on the Klamath. It will help ensure the river remains cold enough to sustain its surviving runs of anadromous fish while efforts are under way to remove upstream dams and restore the river to health. Home to coho. Chinook. steelhead. coastal cutthroat trout and green sturgeon,

restorable.



the Klamath once had the second largest runs of salmon on the entire West Coast. These runs remain some of the largest in the West, and they are by far the most

Adding to the importance of WRC's effort, the project will also protect an expansive tract of forest in one of the most biologically diverse regions on the planet. The Klamath-Siskiyou is home to a rich assemblage of rare plants and animals, and this acquisition will improve and protect habitat for rare species like Humboldt marten, northern spotted owl, California condor and marbled murrelet.



PROJECT SIZE 47,097 acres **STREAM MILES** 84 (includes tributaries) ECOREGION Klamath-Siskiyou **KEY WILDLIFE** Humboldt marten, marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, California condor **KEY FISH** coho, Chinook, steelhead,

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

green sturgeon

Throughout 2012, WRC continued its work to create a major salmon sanctuary and Tribal forest preserve on California's Klamath River. After purchasing 22,237 acres along the main-stem Klamath in 2011, WRC focused last year on acquiring an additional 24,860 acres along and around Blue Creek, a major cold-water tributary.

COLORADO



PROJECT SIZE 617 acres **STREAM MILES** 3 ECOREGION

Colorado Plateau

KEY WILDLIFE

desert bighorn sheep, golden eagle, Rocky Mountain elk, mountain lion, northern leopard frog **KEY FISH**

razorback sucker, humpback chub, Colorado pikeminnow, bonytail chub

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WRC forever protected access to the northern end of the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area by conveying a strategically located property on the Gunnison River to the Bureau of Land Management. Our efforts also prevented a gravel mine on the banks of the river.



arving away at the Colorado Plateau for more than two million years, the Gunnison River is one of the West's great geologic sculptors. The upper river flows through some of the country's deepest gorges, including the 2,800-foot-deep Black Canyon of the Gunnison. As the river winds its way down into the juniper and scrub oak forests of the Uncompany Plateau, it gradually widens and slows. Yet it continues its erosive effect on the landscape, carving surreal shapes into



WRC's work on the Gunnison River protects native warm-water fish, prevents riverside mining and increases access for boaters. anglers and other river enthusiasts

the sandstone cliffs just as it has for millennia.

Before its confluence with the Colorado River, the lower Gunnison passes through the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (DENCA),

the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Area and the Bangs Canyon Special Recreation Management Area. Scenic canyons and sandstone mesas dominate the landscape, and the area is home to desert bighorn sheep, mountain lion, black bear, river otter, bald eagle and Rocky Mountain elk. Four rare species of Colorado Basin warm-water fish, including the razorback sucker and the Colorado pikeminnow, inhabit the river. The DENCA is also rich in archeological sites, including prehistoric trails and rock

art sites. Remote and spectacular, the area offers exceptional hiking, wildlife viewing and boating opportunities. Despite the area's extraordinary natural and recreational merits, more than 16 miles of the river within the DENCA are privately owned, and some face the threat of development or gravel mining. With the goal of removing these threats forever, Western Rivers Conservancy has been working to purchase inholdings along the Gunnison

since 2008.

Gunnison River

Protecting the Gateway to a National Conservation Area

In 2012, we conveyed a strategically located property to the Bureau of Land Management, preventing a gravel mine on the banks of the Gunnison at the northern entrance of the DENCA. We consider this project a tremendous conservation accomplishment not just for Coloradans, but for fish, wildlife and anyone who ventures out to explore this remote and outstanding western river.

John Day River

Creating Oregon's Wildest State Park



Conservationist and WRC supporter Randy Labbe wades back to shore after a morning of steelhead fishing on the John Day River, inside what will soon become Cottonwood Canyon State Park.

s anyone who has floated, fished, hiked or otherwise explored the John Day River will quickly tell you, this is a special place. For boaters, the John Day is a meandering, multiday float through deep basalt canyons in the company of bighorn sheep and grasshopper sparrows, where big summer moons light up wide open skies. For anglers, it's a steelhead paradise, home to the healthiest run of wild summer fish in the Columbia Basin. For Western Rivers Conservancy, the

John Day has meant opportunity—our

chance to conserve a vast expanse of rare shrub-steppe habitat and protect 16 miles along both banks of the longest free-flowing river in the Pacific Northwest. And for Oregon, it means a new state park: Cottonwood Canyon, Oregon's largest park in a generation.

This historic conservation project began in 2008 when WRC purchased Murtha Ranch, a former cattle ranch with 16,000 acres of deeded and leased lands along the lower John Day. The land included the lower three miles of Hay Creek, a rare cold-water spawning and rearing tributary on the lower river.

By acquiring the ranch, WRC was able to ensure the long-term health of a large part of the lower John Day and an expansive sweep of native grassland. For the shrub-steppe ecosystem, which is rapidly disappearing from the West, this is a critical accomplishment.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, which will maintain the park as a wild and rugged alternative to more developed state parks, has been the perfect partner in this project. Its long-term management plan meets our vision of creating a sanctuary for fish and wildlife, where rare species like burrowing owls and sagebrush lizards can survive—and where people can escape to rejuvenate themselves in a setting that is quiet, peaceful and wild.





PROJECT SIZE 16,015 acres STREAM MILES 16 ECOREGION Columbia Plateau KEY WILDLIFE California bighorn sheep, ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl, sagebrush lizard KEY FISH steelhead, Chinook, bull trout

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Following completion of a three-year effort to conserve 16,000 acres along the John Day, WRC spent much of 2012 restoring three miles of Hay Creek and five miles along the main-stem in anticipation of the grand opening of Cottonwood Canyon State Park.

DAHO



PROJECT SIZE 1,284 acres STREAM MILES 2 ECOREGION Idaho Batholith KEY WILDLIFE mule deer, black bear, peregrine falcon, western toad KEY FISH sockeye, Chinook, steelhead, bull trout

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Committing to an important land purchase on Idaho's Salmon River, WRC took the first major step toward conserving key habitat for five ESA-listed fish, including Chinook, steelhead and bull trout. Acquisition will also protect habitat for mountain lion, black bear, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain elk.



Chinook (pictured), sockeye and steelhead migrate over 900 miles to spawn in the Salmon River.

n one of the longest anadromous journeys on earth, salmon and steelhead return to the Salmon River each year to spawn. Once they leave the Pacific, their epic swim spans more than 900 miles and eight dams, reaching elevations well over 7,000 feet. Once these fish reach the Salmon, they are home free. No other dam will impede their migration. Except for a small weir high in the river's headwaters, the Salmon River is entirely free of dams—all 425 miles of it.

Idaho's landmark river is one of the

West's great waterways. In free-flowing length alone, it surpasses nearly every other stream in the region. Because of the river's rugged isolation, it is also one of Idaho's premier outdoor destinations, attracting some 600,000 outdoor enthusiasts every year, including boaters, anglers, hunters, hikers and equestrians.

On the lower river, near the town of Grangeville, lies the Bureau of Land Management's Pine Bar Recreation Site, a popular boating access and campground on the Salmon. Surrounding this recreational area is a 1,284-acre piece of property that, in 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy committed to purchase.

Conservation of this property will protect six cold, high-gradient tributaries that flow into the Salmon River and directly influence habitat quality for five ESA-listed fish, including sockeye and Chinook salmon, steelhead and migratory bull trout. WRC's efforts will also conserve prime habitat for

Salmon River

Conserving the Longest Salmon Pathway in the West

putcrop, a hiker looks out over the remote Salmon River property that WRC committed to purchase in 2012.

mountain lion and black bear, as well as key winter range for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk and white-tailed deer.

This is WRC's first project on the Salmon River. We are excited to play a new and important role in conserving a stream that is not only one of our own favorite playgrounds, but a treasure for so many others.

Sandy River

Making History on a Celebrated Oregon River



Rafters float the Sandy River, which now flows freely from the glaciers of Mount Hood to the Columbia River, passing within 15 miles of downtown Portland.

n 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) and its partners Portland General Electric (PGE) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a landmark conservation project on Oregon's magnificent Sandy River. Today, Oregonians can take pride in a conservation and recreation corridor that spans over 17 spectacular miles along the Sandy, Little Sandy and Bull Run rivers—all within 25 miles of downtown Portland.

The Sandy River project encompasses a total of 3,984 acres and includes the last significant stand of old-growth riparian forest in the middle Sandy River Basin. Roosevelt elk, blacktailed deer, mountain lion and black bear all reside within the corridor, while coho Chinook, steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout spawn healthily in all three rivers. Conservation of these lands creates a sanctuary for fish and wildlife and an unmatched outdoor playground in Portland's backyard.

WRC's work on the Sandy began in 1999 when we partnered with PGE to restore the Sandy and Little Sandy rivers to health, an effort that included PGE's removal of two dams in 2007 and 2008. The BLM committed to protect and manage the conservation lands from the outset. For the BLM, this was an unprecedented project because of its proximity to an urban area. That very characteristic soon made it the agency's number one national priority. The opportunity to create and manage an Area of Critical Environmental Concern on the doorstep of a major metropolitan area was extraordinary. Above and below the project area, parks and wilderness safeguard much of the rest of the river, which means nearly all of the Sandy's 56 miles are now protected for fish, wildlife and public enjoyment. We are proud to have played this role in making the Sandy River wilder and freer than ever, and proud to work with PGE and the BLM to give Oregonians a riverland jewel that will be cherished for generations.



OREGON



PROJECT SIZE 3,984 acres STREAM MILES 17 ECOREGION Cascades KEY WILDLIFE Roosevelt elk, red-legged frog, willow flycatcher, northern river otter KEY FISH steelhead, coho, Chinook, coastal cutthroat trout

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On Oregon's Sandy River, WRC completed a 17-mile conservation and recreation corridor, a long-term project accomplished in partnership with Portland General Electric and the BLM, following PGE's historic removal of two dams on the Sandy and Little Sandy rivers.



PROJECT SIZE 600 acres **STREAM MILES** 1 **ECOREGION** Sierra Nevada **KEY WILDLIFE** mountain lion, California spotted owl, black bear **KEY FISH** Chinook, steelhead, rainbow trout

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In a victory for California salmon and steelhead, WRC permanently conserved the last unprotected stretch of Deer Creek by conveying a 600-acre inholding within Lassen National Forest to the Northern California Regional Land Trust.

estern Rivers Conservancy has forever safeguarded the last unprotected stretch of Northern California's beautiful Deer Creek, chalking up a conservation victory for both salmon and people. Deer Creek, which flows from the flanks of Mount Lassen to the Sacramento River, is one of the few streams left in the Sierra Nevada that holds healthy runs of spring Chinook salmon and steelhead. The project lands encompass 600 acres centered at Lower Deer Creek Falls. The falls themselves



In addition to conserving prime salmon and steelhead habitat WRC's efforts on Deer Creek complete a popular riverside trail.

are treasured by hikers, and the area is prized by whitewater kayakers.

The upper reaches of Deer Creek flow through old-growth forests that are prime habitat for California spotted owl, black bear and other wildlife. The river tumbles through a deepening volcanic canyon, then courses through chaparral forests and groves of blue oaks before meeting the Sacramento. Along the middle stretch, where you will find Lower Deer Creek Falls, the river is easily accessible to hikers via Highway 32.

A trail winds through the canyon, leads to the falls and then connects to a network of wilderness trails. Although at 50 miles Deer Creek

is a relatively small stream, it's of great importance when it comes to salmon survival in California. The river lacks dams, is nearly void of development and has little watershed disturbance. It is one of the Sierra's top three streams in regard to healthy conditions for aquatic life. For California salmon and steelhead. Deer Creek holds one of their best

Lower Deer Creek Falls

Safeguarding a Rare Salmon and Steelhead Stream in California

Deer Creek is one of the last streams in the Sierra Nevada with healthy runs of spring Chinook and steelhead.

chances of survival.

For this reason, WRC seized the opportunity to purchase this inholding within Lassen National Forest from Sierra Pacific Industries in 2009. Last year, we conveyed the property to the Northern California Regional Land Trust with funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board. The Trust will hold the land in permanent protection for the benefit of wildlife, people and Deer Creek's salmon and steelhead.

Little Cimarron River Re-Watering a Prized Colorado Trout Stream

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COLORADO

WRC took the first steps toward reconnecting prime trout habitat on a key Gunnison River tributary, the Little Cimarron, when it purchased a former dairy farm above this Colorado stream. **C** olorado's Little Cimarron River tumbles out of the Uncompahgre Wilderness high in the Rocky Mountains. It flows for 25 miles before joining the main-stem Cimarron, which meets the Gunnison River at the spectacular Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. The Little Cimarron's upper reaches are prime trout water. The lower river, however, where it passes through the agricultural Pleasant Valley, is de-watered much of the year.

When a strategically located farm in the Pleasant Valley went into bank foreclosure, WRC, working with Colorado Water Trust (CWT), recognized a unique opportunity to put water back in the Little Cimarron. The property possesses senior water rights on a major irrigation ditch—enough water to potentially keep the Little Cimarron flowing year-round if kept in the river. In 2012, WRC stepped in and purchased the farm. We are now working in partnership with CWT and Colorado Open Lands to conserve the farmland and dedicate the farm's water as "in-stream" during the driest months of the year.



During periods of low flow, this stretch of the Little Cimarron runs dry, disconnecting trout habitat between the upper and lower river.

Our goal is to reestablish perennial flows, reconnect vital fish habitat, reduce river temperatures and allow trout to repopulate the formerly de-watered reach of the stream. For WRC this will be a another example of how strategic land acquisition can be the most effective way to conserve a river—forever. While the intervention of the second second

In 2010, the utility PacifiCorp removed Powerdale Dam on the lower river, making this spectacular stream entirely free-flowing for the first time in nearly 90 years. In the wake of this remarkable transition, Western Rivers Conservancy purchased an area of riverlands surrounding one of the finest parts of the entire Hood River system: the confluence of the East and West forks and Punch Bowl Falls.

Throughout 2012, WRC continued its work to establish a major sanctuary for fish, wildlife and people in this special location, which has been sacred to Native Americans for thousands of years. When the project is complete, Hood River County will protect both the confluence and the Falls, along with the abundance of salmon, steelhead and trout the river sustains.



Northern river otters inhabit hidden dens along the banks of the Hood River. Their range has been reduced by habitat loss.

Salmon Conservation on the Flanks of a Cascade Volcano

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Last year, WRC continued working to establish a sanctuary for fish, wildlife and people at the confluence of the East and West forks of the Hood River. Once complete, the project will forever conserve Punch Bowl Falls and key wildlife habitat on one of the Cascades' most diverse fisheries.

Alsea River & Drift Creek

Restoring the Best Coho Habitat on the Oregon Coast



WRC's acquisition above Nason Creek, a key cold-water tributary of the Wenatchee River, improves habitat for native fish and wildlife.

n 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy extended a lifeline to endangered bull trout when it purchased a 648-acre property above Nason Creek, a key coldwater tributary of Washington's Wenatchee River. The acquisition also ensures a buffer zone on the northern boundary of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, improving habitat



The first pack of gray wolves known to reinhabit Washington state was identified in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

p and down the West Coast an estuary in good health is as rare as an 80-pound Chinook. This is precisely what drove our efforts for over a decade to protect Oregon's Alsea River estuary, one of the West's most pristine estuaries and home to some of the healthiest coho salmon habitat in all of Oregon.

In 2012, we conveyed 287 acres to Siuslaw National Forest for permanent

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Bolstering hopes that coho salmon will someday thrive again on the Oregon coast, WRC conveyed a second conservation property along Drift Creek, in the Alsea River estuary, to Siuslaw National Forest.

Brown pelicans, which were only recently removed from the Endangered Species Act list, inhabit the Alsea River estuary

protection alongside a 1,402-acre property we protected in 2002. Combined, the two parcels protect Drift Creek (the major tributary at the mouth of the Alsea), along with tracts of old-growth forest, high-quality salt marsh and abundant eelgrass beds. Eelgrass provides prime rearing and feeding habitat for coho smolts and is critical to their survival in the estuary.

The project also improves recreational

access for boaters, hikers, birdwatchers and anglers, making this a win-winwin for fish, wildlife and people. Drift Creek itself supports a healthy run of fall Chinook as well as spring Chinook, winter steelhead, cutthroat trout and other species.

Nason Creek A Refuge for Native Fish and Rare Mammals

connectivity for gray wolves and grizzly bears, which are recolonizing surrounding areas. WRC conveyed the project lands to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest for permanent protection.

Because the acquisition removes the threat of logging from a steep, forested mountainside above Nason Creek, it also diminishes the threat of sediment displacement into the stream. This will not only improve spawning habitat for bull trout, but will increase the likelihood of success for restoration projects downstream. Chinook, sockeye and steelhead, all imperiled fish that depend on Nason Creek for survival, will also benefit from this project.

The purchase conserves important forest habitat for rare animals like northern spotted owls, protects a major source of cold water for the Wenatchee and preserves a beautiful view from Highway 2. In the future, it may even offer new trail routes into the sublime outdoor playground of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, which abuts the southern edge of the property.

WASHINGTO

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

With grizzlies and gray wolves reinhabiting the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, WRC added 648 acres of prime habitat above Nason Creek to the National Forest. The conservation effort also improves habitat for imperiled bull trout, Chinook, sockeye and steelhead.

North Santiam Hope for Native Fish in Oregon's Willamette Basin



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2012, WRC further boosted hopes for imperiled Chinook, steelhead and Oregon chub when it completed purchase of a family farm along two miles of the North Santiam River, once a powerhouse of salmon and steelhead production for the Willamette Basin. f there is one river in Oregon's Willamette Valley that holds hope for native fish, it's the North Santiam. This Willamette River tributary once produced two-thirds of the entire Willamette Basin's winter steelhead and a third of its spring Chinook. The North Santiam is also critical habitat for Oregon chub, a small native fish that recently teetered on the brink of extinction.

In 2012, WRC completed purchase of the 338-acre Gray farm, a unique property with two miles of main-stem and sidechannel frontage. The parcel, home to mature forests of black cottonwood, big-leaf maple and red alder, sustains the most significant tract of intact habitat along the lower river.

most intact tract of native riparian forest on the lower North Santiam River

Working with Bonneville Power Administration and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, WRC positioned the farm for transfer to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. The Tribe will serve as the property's long-term conservation steward and acquire lands that are culturally important and still sustain rich closedcanopy forests, robust fish runs and rare animals like western pond turtles and red legged frogs. The Tribe will rename the land "Chahalpam," meaning "place of the Santiam Kalapuya people."



A steelhead angler fishes through the North Santiam conservation property, which protects two miles of river frontage.

lowing through dense old-growth forests of Douglas fir and Port Orford cedar, southern Oregon's Elk River is home to one of the finest fisheries on the West Coast. Each year, healthy runs of coho, fall Chinook, winter steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout return to the Elk's shady emerald waters to spawn. Coho densities on the Elk are some of the highest in all of Oregon, making this a stream of utmost importance to the survival of this imperiled species. Oregon coho are listed as Threatened on the Endangered Species Act.

In 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy successfully conveyed a 170-acre property on the Elk to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. Protection of this property, which lies at the confluence of the Elk River and Rock Creek, forever conserves some of the most important coho spawning habitat in the entire Elk system.



The Elk River support the West Coast.

The Elk River basin is also home to a wealth of other wildlife, including blacktailed deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, red-legged frog, northern river otter, bald eagle and marbled murrelet, a rare and imperiled seabird which nests in old-growth forest along the West Coast. **Elk River**

Conserving a Treasured Fishery on Oregon's Coast

The Elk River supports one of the healthiest runs of coho salmon on

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In southern Oregon, WRC forever protected a stretch of the Elk River at the confluence of Rock Creek, a key salmon-bearing tributary of the Elk, one of the West Coast's great salmon streams. Protection came with WRC's successful conveyance of 170 acres to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.



Marbled godwits, whose wingspans can reach nearly three feet, are one of many shorebirds that inhabit California's Eel River estuary.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2012, WRC gave a permanent boost to longterm conservation efforts on California's Eel River estuary when it conveyed a former dairy farm on a key tributary to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. n 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy completed a special project that we hope will inject new life into one of the most important estuaries on the California coast, the Eel River estuary. The Eel is California's third largest river, and its mouth once formed a mosaic of tidal flats, sloughs, marshes and seasonal wetlands on the state's remote North Coast.

Part of the Eel River estuary is formed by the Salt River, which flows into the Eel from the south. Upstream from the confluence, on the Salt River, WRC conveyed a former dairy farm to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The project turns 440 acres of potentially outstanding fish and waterfowl habitat over to the agency for long-term restoration and protection. CDFW has identified the property as possibly the most beneficial restoration project within the entire watershed. With transfer of the lands to CDFW, the agency will continue restoration efforts which it began soon after WRC purchased the property in 2006.



WRC's conservation efforts in the Eel River estuary will help restore 440 acres of tidal wetlands.

CDFW will breach levies and disable tide gates that have choked much of the life out of this important estuary. It will rejuvenate habitat for more than 30 species of fish, including salmon and cutthroat trout, and reestablish feeding and nesting sites for shorebirds like western yellow-billed cuckoo and marbled godwit.



R ising from a glacial cirque at 7,700 feet in Oregon's Wallowa Mountains, the Minam River flows 51 miles through remote, rugged country before joining the Wallowa River, a major tributary of the Grande Ronde. The Minam's entire length, from its headwaters in the Eagle Cap Wilderness to the Wallowa, is an Oregon State Scenic Waterway. All but its lower eight miles are also a federally designated Wild and Scenic River.

Each year, thousands of people make their way to the Minam. Hikers, anglers, hunters and backpackers wander up the Minam River Trail, and kayakers and rafters from all over head to their favorite put-ins. For decades, a primary access point for this outdoor playground has been the historic Minam Store, located at the confluence of the Minam and Wallowa Rivers.

In 2012, Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed two acres and 350 feet of Wallowa River frontage, including the Minam Store, to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to ensure the Minam Store property remains forever open to the public. Like the Minam River itself, the store is widely loved and equally deserving of protection. It is now part of the 605-acre Minam State Recreation Area.



Thousands of boaters, anglers and hikers visit the Minam River every year to enjoy its rugged beauty.

Preserving a Piece of Minam River History

OREGON

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WRC expanded the Minam State Recreation Area and guaranteed permanent boating and fishing access at the confluence of the Minam and Wallowa Rivers when it conveyed a small but important property on the banks of the Minam to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.



Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As of September 30, 2012

Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents Grants, interest and other receivables Prepaid expenses and deposits Investments Land holdings, options, equipment and other real property Total assets

Liabilities:

Accounts payable, accrued and related expenses Notes and interest payable Total liabilities

Net Assets:

Unrestricted net assets Temporarily restricted net assets Permanently restricted net assets Total net assets Total liabilities and net assets

Consolidated Statement of Activities

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012

| | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Permanently Restricted | Total 2012 | Total 2011 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Revenues: | | Restricted | Restricted | 2012 | 2011 |
| Contributions and grants | \$355,281 | 1,309,893 | 308,500 | 1,973,674 | 1,818,255 |
| In-kind contributions | 43,725 | | | 43,725 | 234,617 |
| Investment return | 4,918 | | | 4,918 | 1,806 |
| Gain realized on sale of land | 1,941,700 | | | 1,941,700 | 251,543 |
| Reimbursements and fees | | | | - | 994,988 |
| Other | 85,774 | | | 85,774 | 54,846 |
| Total public support and revenues | 2,431,398 | 1,309,893 | 308,500 | 4,049,791 | 3,356,055 |
| | | | | | |
| Net assets released from restriction | 1,157,291 | (1,157,291) | | | |
| Total revenues | 3,588,689 | 152,602 | 308,500 | 4,049,791 | 3,356,055 |
| Expenses: | | | | | |
| Donations of land | 2,140,000 | | | 2,140,000 | - |
| Program expenses | 2,537,858 | | | 2,537,858 | 2,422,287 |
| Management and general | 381,706 | | | 381,706 | 271,772 |
| Fundraising expenses | 326,260 | | | 326,260 | 258,988 |
| Total expenses | 5,385,824 | | | 5,385,824 | 2,953,047 |
| Change in net assets | (1,797,135) | 152,602 | 308,500 | (1,336,033) | 403,008 |
| Net assets at beginning of year | 5,679,244 | 610,241 | 839,966 | 7,129,451 | 6,726,443 |
| Net assets at end of year | \$ 3,882,109 | 762,843 | 1,148,466 | 5,793,418 | 7,129,451 |

| | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Permanently Restricted | Total 2012 | Total 2011 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Revenues: | | Restricted | Restricted | 2012 | 2011 |
| Contributions and grants | \$355,281 | 1,309,893 | 308,500 | 1,973,674 | 1,818,255 |
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| Reimbursements and fees | | | | - | 994,988 |
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| Total public support and revenues | 2,431,398 | 1,309,893 | 308,500 | 4,049,791 | 3,356,055 |
| | | | | | |
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| Total revenues | 3,588,689 | 152,602 | 308,500 | 4,049,791 | 3,356,055 |
| Expenses: | | | | | |
| Donations of land | 2,140,000 | | | 2,140,000 | - |
| Program expenses | 2,537,858 | | | 2,537,858 | 2,422,287 |
| Management and general | 381,706 | | | 381,706 | 271,772 |
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| Net assets at end of year | \$ 3,882,109 | 762,843 | 1,148,466 | 5,793,418 | 7,129,451 |

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.

| 2012 | 2011 |
|--------------|------------|
| \$2,689,717 | 1,406,127 |
| 778,422 | 615,475 |
| 24,889 | 41,906 |
| 756,867 | 654,864 |
| 6,949,211 | 13,343,367 |
| 11,199,106 | 16,061,739 |
| | |
| | |
| 285,742 | 94,337 |
| 5,119,946 | 8,837,951 |
| 5,405,688 | 8,932,288 |
| | |
| | |
| 3,882,109 | 5,679,244 |
| 762,843 | 610,241 |
| 1,148,466 | 839,966 |
| 5,793,418 | 7,129,451 |
| \$11,199,106 | 16,061,739 |

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, 2011 and September 30, 2012. For a full list of supporters, visit www.westernrivers.org.

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Angler, conservationist and WRC supporter Lisa Hansen holds a native steelhead before safely releasing it back into the John Day River.

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Our Wild Rivers partnership with Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. had another successful year. Sierra Nevada donated a portion of proceeds from sales across the western states to Western Rivers Conservancy and raised more than \$130,000 for river conservation nationwide.

> WRC is excited to partner with Sierra Nevada again for *Wild Rivers* 2013!



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