



# RIVERLANDS

NEWS FROM WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

Issue 32

Spring 2015

## Globally Important Sanctuary Expanded in Klamath-Siskiyou



DAVE JENSEN

*WRC is working to ensure that Blue Creek, the most important cold-water tributary to the lower Klamath River, is protected in its entirety, from its headwaters to the mouth.*

River. Blue Creek flows cold and clear from remote headwaters protected high in the Siskiyou Wilderness and has been sacred to the Yurok since time immemorial. In summer, when the Klamath River can reach temperatures in the high seventies—lethal conditions for salmon and steelhead—Blue Creek remains significantly colder. Every migrating Chinook spawner holds in Blue Creek, lowering its body temperature by about eight degrees Fahrenheit, before continuing upstream. Without the cold-water

*Continued on page 3*

### KLAMATH RIVER, CALIFORNIA

**W**estern Rivers Conservancy pushed ahead this month in our effort to create a major cold-water salmon sanctuary in the heart of the Klamath-Siskiyou, one of the earth's biodiversity hotspots. We successfully completed our third land acquisition on the Klamath River and Blue Creek, which brings us three-quarters of the way toward conserving 47,000 acres in partnership with the Yurok, California's largest Native American tribe. The acquisition adds 6,479 acres of vital forest and riverland to the Blue Creek Salmon Sanctuary, as well as extensive forestland to the recently created Yurok Tribal Community Forest.

At the heart of this project is Blue Creek, the most important cold-water tributary on the lower Klamath



DAVE JENSEN

## WRC Buys Ranch to Secure John Day River Access and Conserve Vital Tributary

### JOHN DAY RIVER, OREGON

**I**n the heart of bighorn sheep country, Western Rivers Conservancy successfully acquired a 14,148-acre ranch at the mouth of Thirtymile Creek, the most important tributary to lower John Day River. The acquisition, which includes an additional 10,530-acre grazing lease, brings new hope to the Pacific Northwest's longest free-flowing river and secures public access along a remote stretch of the John Day. The effort will also improve access to two Wilderness Study Areas that border the property above and below the confluence.

Thirtymile Creek is a vital, year-round source of cold water for the lower John Day and provides prime spawning and rearing habitat for summer steelhead. Mid-Columbia summer steelhead are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and the John Day possesses the healthiest wild populations of these imperiled fish. This makes the river critical to their recovery throughout

*Continued on page 2*



WESTERN RIVERS  
CONSERVANCY

[www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org)

*The John Day River is the longest free-flowing river west of the Continental Divide and is a cherished destination for recreationists from around the country.*



# Prized Stretch of Yampa Now Conserved and Public

## YAMPA RIVER, COLORADO

Western Rivers Conservancy has successfully completed a landmark project on the upper Yampa River, an effort hailed by local anglers, conservation groups and the agriculture community alike. This winter, we conveyed the 45-acre Hubbard's Summer Place, which spans some of the most productive trout water on the Yampa, to the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. Until now, these lands were closed

to the public. Now, the agencies can manage them for recreational access and to conserve and restore the area's outstanding fish and wildlife habitat.

The property is located 13 miles from Steamboat Springs and three miles downstream from Stagecoach Reservoir, on the banks of a classic tailwater fishery. Local anglers covet this stretch of the Yampa for its large rainbow and brown trout, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife is working to recover native mountain whitefish. The property is bordered by the Sarvis Creek Wilderness Area, Sarvis Creek State Wildlife Area, Routt National Forest and BLM lands. It supports a variety of wildlife, including Rocky Mountain elk, black bear, mountain lion, Canada lynx and dusky grouse, and possesses stands of black cottonwood, red osier dogwood and serviceberry.

WRC learned about the Hubbard property in 2011, while working with the BLM to conserve a 920-acre ranch on the lower Yampa, at the entrance of Cross Mountain Canyon. At the request of the BLM and local Yampa River conservation groups, we purchased the land in 2013. Thanks to an outpouring of support from the local community, WRC was able to secure enough funding to convey the lands to the agencies in December. Now, for the first time in memory, this stretch of the Yampa is open to all. ■

*Near Steamboat Springs, WRC conserved a prime reach of the upper Yampa River and secured public access to the river at the edge of the Sarvis Creek Wilderness Area.*



## JOHN DAY RIVER, CONTINUED

the Columbia Basin. WRC's acquisition will allow for restoration of four miles of Thirtymile Creek and conserve up to 12 miles of the John Day itself.

Along with the benefits the project will have for fish, it is a boon for recreationists. By way of a rough, private road, the ranch provides the only viable access along a remote, 70-mile stretch of the John Day, between Clarno Bridge and Cottonwood Canyon State Park. The ranch is a favorite access site for boaters and anglers who prefer a shorter three- to five-day float rather than the full 70-mile float from Clarno to Cottonwood. The ranch also lies adjacent to the Thirtymile Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and the North Pole Ridge WSA, which are prized for their bird and big game hunting.

Our purchase of the Rattray Ranch follows our recent success creating Cottonwood Canyon State Park, 45 miles downstream. That project was a partnership with Oregon State Parks and conserved



16 miles of the John Day and several miles of Hay Creek, another important tributary. Our focus now is placing the Rattray Ranch into the hands of a long-term conservation steward, most likely the BLM.

Once we have conveyed the property to a long-term steward, it will manage the lands for the sake of fish and wildlife, for compatible grazing and to ensure ongoing low-impact public access. Our vision is of a John Day River that is not only accessible, but cold and healthy for the unique and increasingly rare fish and wildlife that this free-flowing river sustains. ■

*Right: WRC's work at Thirtymile Creek, on the John Day River, will benefit Oregon's largest herd of California bighorn sheep.*

## KLAMATH RIVER, CONTINUED

refuge Blue Creek provides, the Klamath's summer- and fall-run fish would likely die before reaching their spawning beds in the upper river. In no small way, the health of the largest salmon stream in the Klamath-Siskiyou, and the survival of the region's keystone species, hinge on the health of Blue Creek. Fortunately, we have the opportunity to protect this all-important stream.

WRC's efforts on the Klamath will conserve the entire lower Blue Creek watershed and protect habitat for rare Klamath-Siskiyou wildlife like Humboldt Marten, northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. It will link important habitat within a globally significant ecoregion and return a sacred homeland to the Yurok, which have deep cultural and spiritual interests in keeping Blue Creek and the Klamath healthy.

WRC has been working on this project since 2008, and our most recent purchase puts us well into the home stretch. But there is still work to do. To date, 22,237 acres are in Yurok hands, while WRC owns 14,968 acres. WRC will own and manage these lands, as well as future acquisitions, until they can be conveyed to the Tribe. While WRC holds title to the land, the forests will be managed by the Yurok

to enhance salmon recovery, improve old-growth habitat and revitalize the Yurok economy. Once we've conveyed all the land to the Tribe, it will continue to manage it in line with our shared conservation vision.

To fund a project of this scale, WRC has pioneered new ground in conservation finance, tapping nontraditional sources such as New Markets Tax Credits and carbon offsets sales. These and other private sources have provided more than half of the \$54 million needed to purchase the land. Yet we still must raise over \$16 million to complete the project.

Once our efforts at Blue Creek are finished, the Klamath-Siskiyou will be home to one of the most important salmon sanctuaries on the West Coast. Sixteen miles upstream from the Pacific, this refuge will help ensure that salmon, steelhead and the region's remarkable wildlife have a safe haven forever. ■

*Blue Creek, which can be seen flowing into the Klamath from the left, is a vital cold-water refuge for salmon and steelhead, particularly fall-run Chinook.*



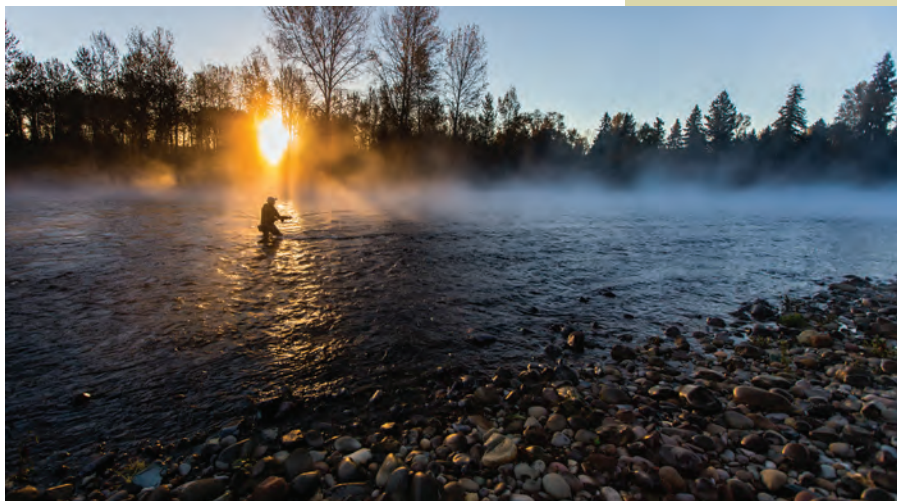
THOMAS DUNKLIN

## WRC Completes "Chahalpam" on North Santiam

### NORTH SANTIAM RIVER, OREGON

In January, Western Rivers Conservancy completed an assemblage of land that protects some of the most important fish and wildlife habitat in Oregon's Willamette River basin. The effort, which conserves 429 acres along the lower North Santiam River, prevents a gravel mine and sets the stage for one of the most significant floodplain restoration projects in the valley.

Over the course of the project, which began in 2011, WRC acquired and held two key adjacent farms, identified a long-term steward, assembled over \$5 million in funding and conveyed the lands to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. When the Tribe acquired the first property in 2013, it named the lands "Chahalpam," meaning "Place of the Santiam Kalapuya People" in Kalapuyan. We conveyed the second farm to the Tribe this January, completing the assemblage. The Tribe will now manage the area for the sake of the North Santiam's fish and wildlife,



TYLER ROEMER

especially the recovery of spring Chinook, winter steelhead, Oregon chub and Pacific lamprey.

The properties lie adjacent to a protected BLM parcel and have exceptional ecological values and restoration potential. They

*Continued on page 4*

*WRC's efforts on the North Santiam River have conserved extensive native forests, wetlands and spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead.*





## WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

### OUR MISSION

Western Rivers Conservancy protects 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 whole ecosystems.

### STAFF

Sue Doroff, *President*  
Phillip Wallin, *Vice President*  
Jim Cox, *Director of Donor Relations*  
Dieter Erdmann,  
*Interior West Program Director*  
Rob Griffith, *Corporate Counsel*  
Juliette Harding, *Director of Finance and Administration*

Josh Kling,

*Assistant Program Director*

Mat Millenbach,  
*Stewardship Director*

Danny Palmerlee,  
*Communications Director*

Rachel Roscoe,

*Communications Associate*

Zach Spector,  
*Assistant Project Manager*

Anne Tattam,

*Development Coordinator*

David Wilkins, *Development Director*

Willis Yarberry, *Director of Lands*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darcy Saiget, *Chair*  
*White Salmon, WA*

Robert Anderson, *Vice Chair*  
*Corrales, NM*

Bill Brown, *Treasurer, Seattle, WA*

Sue Doroff, *Portland, OR*

Ken Grossman, *Chico, CA*

Peter Moyle, *Davis, CA*

Jim Smith, *Denver, CO*

Liam Thornton, *Portland, OR*

Jack Williams, *Medford, OR*

Tim Wood, *Lake Oswego, OR*

### DIRECTORS EMERITI

Henry Little, *San Francisco, CA*

Nan McKay, *Seattle, WA*

Cleve Pinnix, *Olympia, WA*

Jon Roush, *Portland, OR*

Norb Wellman, *Portland, OR*

## WRC Welcomes Two New Board Members

### Jim Smith

*Dedicated Conservationist*



A resident of Colorado, Jim Smith is a long-time conservationist with deep ties to the Pacific Northwest. He is a past chair of Great Outdoors Colorado and current chair of The Nature Conservancy in Colorado. Jim has 28 years of experience in the telecommunications and directory publishing industries. A river-lover through and through, Jim spent his childhood summers on the Deschutes River, where his grandfather ran the Warm Springs hatchery. He also has strong connection to the North Umpqua, where his great-grandparents homesteaded and operated the river's first fish hatchery. Jim is an avid outdoorsman.

### Liam Thornton

*Managing Director,  
Investment & Development  
Langley Investment Properties*



Liam Thornton brings a wealth of real estate knowledge to WRC.

We came to know Liam through his support on the Hoh, John Day and Klamath Rivers, and he has since become a great friend of WRC. His business acumen and love for the outdoors will help shape WRC's path forward. Prior to Liam's role at Langley, he was a Principal at Playa Associates and Thinkwell Development, and a senior real estate investment and development executive at House of Blues, Universal Studios and Disney Development Company. Liam's new-found love of fly fishing means he's on the river more than ever.

## Thank You for Joining Us!

We'd like to thank everyone who made recent first-time gifts to WRC. For a complete list of supporters, please visit [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org).

Stan Aarsund  
Mike Abbott  
David R. Anderson and  
Heather Hanson  
Anderson  
Burtram and Ellen Anderson  
Shawn Andres  
Tom Bard  
Don Barton  
Bob and Janette Bayly  
Missy and Peter Bechen  
Charles Billings  
Robert Brady  
Gary Bricher  
Glen and Debra Bruels  
Bob Burdick  
Kathleen Burke  
Susan Carabello  
Alan Christian  
Robert Crandall  
Peggy Day  
Craig Derby  
Greg DeYoung  
Lawrence Drury  
Charles Dvorak  
Karen and Craig Eisenhauer  
David Fortunato  
Robin Fraser  
Tulani Freeman  
Lori Fritz  
Nathaniel Funk  
Jay Gilson  
Ken Goldberg  
Tessa Goldhamer  
Louise Grunewald  
Tom Guter  
Lance Gyofri  
Scott Halapert  
John Hammerstad  
Marvin and Penny Harrison  
David Heck and Gloria Wong  
Mark Hendricks  
Avi Hesterman  
and Jane Logan

Tom Hoyt  
Fei Huang  
Jerry Hulsman  
Barbara and Gary Iverson  
Mike Ivie  
William James  
Roger Jester  
Drew and Salli Johnroe  
Margaret Kelleher  
Sheila Kelly  
Mike Kilroy  
Rex Kim  
Jackson Latham  
Alexander Levine  
John Lewis  
Douglas Livermore  
Trevor Loy  
Jeff Ludlow  
Jim Lundberg  
Jamie Macbeth  
Michael Machado  
Kathy MacNaughton  
Scott Maffett  
Richard and Elizabeth  
Marantz  
Bob and Christy Marchant  
Joel Masser  
Jason Matz  
James and Carolee Maya  
Jim McGannon  
Paul Melinkovich  
Gerald and Nancy Miller  
Paul Mortimer  
and Mary Stars  
Duval Moss  
Andrew and Taree Muller  
Scott Otvos  
Zach Patton  
Dan Pick  
Stephanie and Jeffrey Prima-  
Sarantopoulos  
Kathy and Russel Rhoads  
Stephen Rogers  
Steven Rosonke

J.R. Sample  
Mary Sanders  
Eric Sanders  
Christine and David Satterlee  
Ted and Barbara Shapas  
Larry Shelburne  
James Sheldon and Jennie  
Wood Sheldon  
Bruce Shoup  
Bailey Sory  
Madeline Steele  
Mary Lou Sternitzke  
Ed and Patte Sullivan  
Stephanie Taylor  
Ryan Thompson  
Roy and Rosalind Thompson  
Kris Tita  
Dianne Tucker  
Mark Turley  
Bill Tutthill  
Libby Tyree-Taylor  
Aaron VanSchyndel  
Ronnie Varva  
Kai Welch  
Sharon and Russell Wells  
Russell Wells  
Steven and Gail Wish  
Richard Wright  
Willis Yarberry  
Todd and Linda Yorke  
Grayson Zulauf  
Dale Zulauf  
and Jonette Bronson  
Arctic Reservations  
Conservation Northwest  
Deep Creek Fly Fishers  
Fly Fishers of Davis  
LN Greenleaf Masonic Lodge  
Grizzly Peak Fly Fishers  
Hotel Condon  
The Joseph and Vera Long  
Foundation  
Washington Fly Fishing Club

## NORTH SANTIAM, CONTINUED

*Continued from page 3*

include a rich mix of bottomland forest, over 2.5 miles of North Santiam River frontage, two miles of side-channel habitat and nearly 30 acres of wetlands. Willamette Valley wetlands are one of the most endangered habitat types in Oregon, yet they are rarely managed for conservation. This project offers a unique opportunity to restore a small but important swath of this important ecosystem. It also ensures permanent protection of the largest tract of intact riparian forest along the entire lower North Santiam. ■



Dieckman Creek provides important side-channel habitat for North Santiam River salmon and steelhead.