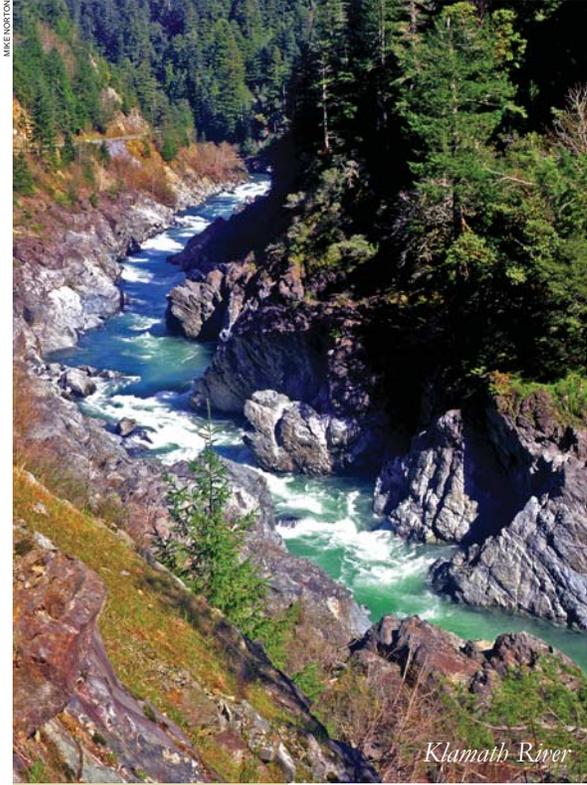


# RIVERLANDS

News from Western Rivers Conservancy

Issue 15

Summer 2008



*Klamath River*

## Landmark Partnership Launched on Lower Klamath River and Blue Creek

CREATING A SALMON SANCTUARY AND YUOK TRIBAL PARK

**T**he Klamath River is an icon of the West, once among the greatest salmon and steelhead rivers on the continent. For decades the Klamath has been beset by dams, dewatering and political turmoil.

Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) is excited to announce its part in a broad-based movement to restore the Klamath. In May, we signed an agreement to purchase and conserve 47,000 acres along the lower Klamath River and Blue Creek, a critical coldwater tributary.

This launches a landmark partnership with the Yurok, California's largest tribe, which long has sought to conserve Blue Creek as a salmon sanctuary and cultural site. Western Rivers Conservancy will purchase the land from Green Diamond Resource Company and convey it to the Yurok Tribe.

The entire lower Blue Creek watershed will become part of a 20,000-acre Yurok Tribal Park, forever protecting Blue Creek as an outstanding refuge for threatened Klamath River coho, Chinook and steelhead.

*Please see Blue Creek, page 3*



*Murtha Ranch*

## WRC to Purchase Ranch on Lower John Day

CRITICAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

**W**estern Rivers Conservancy has begun a long-term effort to conserve 16 miles of exceptional wildlands along the lower John Day River in Oregon.

In April, Western Rivers Conservancy signed an agreement to purchase the Murtha Ranch, a stunning stretch of the John Day River

celebrated for its fish and wildlife habitat.

In the entire Columbia River basin, precious few corridors remain of wild, unfragmented habitat at this scale – more than 16,000 acres in all.

The ranch includes 8,114 acres of deeded lands and an 8,000-acre Bureau of Land Management grazing lease. In September, WRC plans to take

title to the land and hold the property while a long-term management plan is developed.

The John Day is extraordinary in Oregon and the West for many reasons: It is the nation's second longest undammed river (after the Yellowstone), at 252 miles. It is also the country's longest Wild and Scenic River corridor. It has the healthiest run of wild summer steelhead in the Columbia basin, where they are listed as a Threatened species. Fall and spring Chinook and bull trout also have high-quality runs in the upper reaches of the basin.

The Murtha Ranch's landscape is breathtaking, and it can be restored to even greater beauty and biological health. Desert bighorn sheep roam the rocky canyon. In the uplands, restoring the native shrub-steppe ecosystem will enhance habitat for a

*Please see John Day, next page*



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### John Day, continued

number of rare native species, including: ground-nesting birds like the grasshopper sparrow and burrowing owl; birds of prey like the ferruginous hawk and loggerhead shrike; and reptiles like the sagebrush lizard.

Along the river, what was once a tall cottonwood forest can be reestablished on more than 350 acres of the Murtha Ranch's lowlands. Large trees would shade the river and benefit the entire ecosystem.

The Murtha Ranch also includes the bottom three miles of Hay Creek, a tributary that runs cold and clear year-round. Summer steelhead depend on Hay Creek to spawn and rear.

Conservation of the ranch presents a great opportunity to enhance low-impact recreation. Public access that is compatible with the conservation goals will offer a premier wildland experience for anglers, boaters, hikers and hunters.

Western Rivers Conservancy's vision is to see the 16,114 acres of deeded and leased lands restored to high-quality native habitat. Conservation of this property will also fill a gap in a 148-mile-long reach of protected land in the lower John Day Wild and Scenic River Corridor, and help complete the larger community vision for conservation activities across the entire John Day River basin. ■

*Golden eagle and desert bighorn sheep are among many creatures that make their homes in the lower John Day canyon.*

*Below: The stunning landscape of the lower John Day. ▼*



## Taking the Final Steps to Protect a Critical Wetland



*Beaver Creek and Marsh*

### WASHINGTON'S OLYMPIC PENINSULA

Sometimes it takes a decade or more to preserve cherished, wild places. In the case of Beaver Creek and Marsh, the rewards are worth the wait.

This beautiful mountain property – which includes a stream, a lake and a functioning wetland – is exceptional habitat for threatened species, and contributes to the Sol Duc River's celebrated water quality.

Congress has appropriated \$750,000 in FY08 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for Beaver Creek and Marsh. This allows Western Rivers Conservancy to convey 191 acres of the property to the surrounding Olympic National Forest.

With your support (see inset), we can secure funding to protect the last 233 acres and complete the project.

This will be a significant step toward ensuring the crystalline water quality of the Sol Duc River. Beaver Lake drains through a narrow gorge and spills over a waterfall into Beaver Creek, which soon after joins the Sol Duc.

Beaver Creek and Marsh support the rare Olympic mud minnow, land-locked sockeye salmon (kokanee) and cutthroat trout. Surrounding old-growth forests provide nesting areas for threatened marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl.

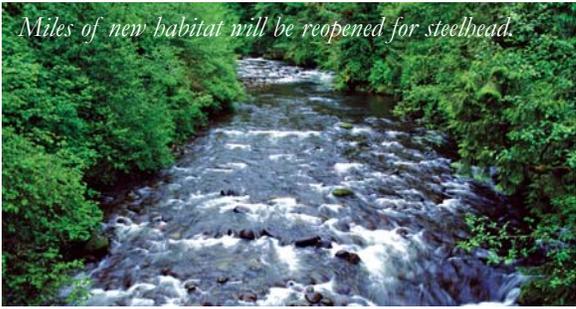
Since 1997, Western Rivers Conservancy has purchased 637 acres along Beaver Creek and Marsh from two forest products companies. This most recent phase of land joins 213 acres that WRC conveyed to the Olympic National Forest a decade ago. ■

### How you can help

Visit [westernrivers.org](http://westernrivers.org) to write a letter to the Washington State Congressional delegation, urging them to support funding for Beaver Creek.

*Your support counts!*

*Miles of new habitat will be reopened for steelhead.*



## The Little Sandy: A River Reborn!

### COUNTDOWN TO DAM REMOVAL

An extraordinary event is taking place this summer: a river will be reborn!

The Little Sandy River has been dammed and completely de-watered along its lowest two miles for nearly a century. In August, Portland General Electric (PGE) is removing the Little Sandy Dam, and the river will once again flow into the Sandy River and freely down its entire course to the Pacific Ocean.

This follows PGE's removal of Marmot Dam on the main-stem Sandy River in 2007.

Western Rivers Conservancy has been acquiring land along the Little Sandy in anticipation of the river being reborn. Conserving this land will help ensure productive habitat for the Little Sandy's recovering steelhead run.

The Little Sandy was once a blue-ribbon steelhead stream. Removal of the Little Sandy Dam not only opens the lower two miles of the stream to migrating fish, but also opens nearly eight miles of river upstream. When the salmon and steelhead return to the Sandy basin this fall and winter, this high-quality spawning habitat will be waiting for them.

Stay tuned to see who swims up the Little Sandy! ■

### Blue Creek, continued

Additionally, the project will help the Yurok Tribe re-establish their homeland along the Klamath, including cultural sites along Blue Creek.

The Tribe will practice sustainable forestry on the remaining land, approximately 27,000 acres, as a much-needed economic base for their people.

Blue Creek tumbles cold and clear out of the Siskiyou Wilderness, flowing through rugged mountains to meet the Klamath River near the Pacific Ocean. When water temperatures rise in the Klamath, Blue Creek is the first coldwater tributary fish encounter as they migrate up from the sea. ■

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS PROFILE

## DARCY SAIGET

### RESTORING THE HOOD RIVER

Western Rivers Conservancy is excited to welcome Darcy Saiget (formerly Darcy Morgan), who was elected to the Board of Directors earlier this year.

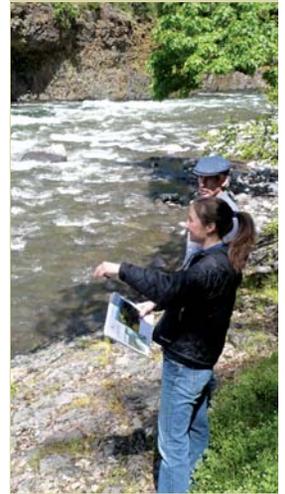
Darcy is a Fisheries Biologist for the Mt. Hood National Forest. She is actively involved in the Forest Service's basin-wide strategy to protect fish listed under the Endangered Species Act and restore habitat along critical stretches of the Hood River. On the East Fork, she is working on a project to stabilize the channel so it can better withstand torrents of glacial debris.

Darcy's close knowledge of the Hood River allows her to see where Western Rivers Conservancy's land-buying strategy can help restore the basin.

"The Hood River's riparian corridors are at risk and need to be left intact or restored," she said. "WRC has the ability to help in this regard by protecting some of these key corridors."

Darcy was born in Colorado and spent her youth in the Poudre Canyon area of the Rockies. She currently serves on the Board of the L.P. Brown Foundation in Colorado, where she is an advocate for environmental causes, child welfare and sustainable living.

Darcy lives with her husband and baby daughter in White Salmon, Washington. ■



*Darcy and Phil Wallin tour the Hood River property Western Rivers Conservancy purchased in 2006 near Punch Bowl Falls.*

*Below: Blue Creek tumbles out of the Siskiyou Mountains to supply cold, clear water to the lower Klamath River. ▼*





## WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

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

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*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.*

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## Leave a Legacy of Wild Rivers

### PLANNED GIVING

**M**aking or altering a will is a sobering experience. We don't often explicitly confront the fact of our own mortality. When the two of us had occasion to revise our wills last year, we asked ourselves: "What are the things that mean enough to us to be included as bequests when we're gone?"

That led us to a good conversation. We talked about what was of lasting importance in our lives. Family is obvious, but what then? We decided that we wanted to make a legacy gift to something of lasting value that would be of benefit to our region.

We chose to make a bequest to Western Rivers Conservancy. We thought about the unique role WRC plays in land conservation, working to ensure that the best of our great rivers in this region will stay intact, securing precious fish and wildlife habitat and providing public access and enjoyment far into the future.

Contributing to that legacy felt right. Rivers,



*Cleve and Marty Pinnix hike the Harding Icefield trail in Alaska's Kenai Fjords National Park.*

Download a brochure at [westernrivers.org/pg](http://westernrivers.org/pg)

we hope, flow free forever, places of refuge and beauty. What better use for some of our assets than to add to this priceless heritage?

Once we made our decision, the rest was easy. WRC had information available about ways to structure a gift. Our lawyer included the language in our revised wills. We're looking ahead to a long and active retirement. Now we have the added pleasure of knowing that our values will outlast our years. ■

— Cleve and Marty Pinnix, *Olympia, WA*



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Our operations are made possible by a generous group of individuals, foundations, businesses and organizations. We are grateful to each and every one of our contributors. Recent gifts of \$50 or more listed below. Thank you!

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