



WESTERN RIVERS
CONSERVANCY

www.westernrivers.org

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.

MAIN OFFICE

71 SW Oak Street
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 241-0151

CALIFORNIA OFFICE

313 N. Main Street, Ste. C
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 823-5845

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Sue Doroff, *Vice President*
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS PROFILE

DOUG BALLINGER

CHAIR OF OUR LANDS COMMITTEE

Doug Ballinger is President of the Redwood City, California-based PageDNA, an Internet printing software company he started almost a decade ago.

A Bay Area native, Doug has explored every corner of California's wild spaces while fishing, hiking and skiing. His passion for fishing began with childhood trips to the Sierra Nevada with his father and brothers. His father-in-law later introduced him to steelhead fishing on Northwest rivers like the Deschutes and Grand Ronde. Through his travels, he has become closely familiar with many of our best western rivers.

As Chair of the Lands Committee on WRC's Board, Doug provides oversight for land acquisitions in California and throughout the

West, identifying new opportunities on rivers like the McCloud and John Day.

Doug is also on the Board of Directors of California Trout and is well acquainted with the river conservation challenges in his home state. The population explosion in California makes it ever more critical to protect the best of our remaining natural rivers. Doug feels Western Rivers Conservancy's greatest opportunities in California are on the the North Coast, where rivers like the Smith, Eel, Van Duzen and Trinity are healthy strongholds for wild fish, or on the way to recovery.

A river lover at heart, Doug is dedicated to building a legacy of healthy western streams for the next generation. ■



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Protecting Outstanding River Ecosystems in the Western United States

RIVERLANDS

News from Western Rivers Conservancy

Issue 14

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The Elk River is known for its deep green pools, huge old-growth trees and exceptional fish habitat.



Three Dollar Bridge, Madison River, Montana.

WESTERN RIVERS
CONSERVANCY

www.westernrivers.org

Critical Elk River Property Purchased

OREGON'S SOUTH COAST

Extraordinary by any standard, the Wild and Scenic Elk River is often cited as one of the finest salmon and steelhead fisheries on the West Coast. Rising from the remote Siskiyou Mountains and Coast Range of southern Oregon, the Elk flows 32 miles through deep gorges and lush old-growth forests to meet the Pacific Ocean near the town of Port Orford. Wild fall Chinook, coho, winter steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout all thrive in its waters.

Acting on a brief window of opportunity in late October, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) purchased a property along the Elk to save it from development. The 170-acre parcel is located at the confluence of the Elk River and an important tributary, Rock Creek. The Elk has the highest density of spawning coho of any stream on the Oregon Coast, and this very stretch of Rock Creek is critical to maintaining these strong coho populations. The remainder of the Rock Creek sub-basin is part of the Siskiyou National Forest and managed as the Rock Creek Roadless Area.

By protecting this property, WRC seeks to connect and enhance habitat in the adjoining landscape, which is the largest block of intact forest in the Oregon Coast Range. Here, Port Orford cedar trees reach five feet in diameter, and Douglas fir

Please see Elk River, next page

Expanding our Work into the Interior West

Our land acquisition team is growing, and so is our geographic reach. As of February, Western Rivers Conservancy will have offices in California, Oregon and Montana, positioning us to fulfill our mission in eleven western states.

Spearheading our new Helena, Montana, office is Willis Yarberry. We are thrilled to welcome Willis to the project staff as Director of the Interior West and Federal Affairs.

Willis is a talented veteran in the land conservation world. He worked for the Nature Conservancy for more than a decade, most recently as Director of Major Projects & Government

FULFILLING OUR MISSION IN ELEVEN STATES

Relations in Helena. In this position, he worked to set aside thousands of acres of open space for habitat protection and public enjoyment.

Cam Tredennick, hired in January as Senior Project Manager, is a superb addition to the land staff. Cam has 15 years experience working in land conservation law, public land management and land acquisition. Most recently, as a project director for the Nature Conservancy in San Diego, Cam protected thousands of acres of precious open space in Southern California, specializing in large, complex transactions with many partners. With his experience, Cam is launching new initiatives in California and Oregon.

Also adding expertise to our Portland team is

Please see Expanding our Mission, page 3



Rafters float through the Smith River National Recreation Area.



Goose Creek is a haven for native trout and salmon and a critical contributor to the water quality of the Smith River.

Goose Creek Protected in National Recreation Area

At last, the largest tributary to California's only major undammed river, the Smith, is forever protected.

In February, Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed the final phase of lands along Goose Creek to the U.S. Forest Service to be part of the Smith River National Recreation Area, a protected wild fishery and scenic area in the heart of one of the largest Wild and Scenic river systems in the nation.

This brings to completion our largest project to date – 9,500 acres conserved in perpetuity as a

GREAT NEWS FOR CALIFORNIA RIVERS

haven for California's healthiest runs of native steelhead, salmon and trout.

This accomplishment would not have been possible without the support of California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer and Congressman Mike Thompson.

California Trout and the Smith River Alliance also provided essential support to secure federal funding for Goose Creek. ■



Cutthroat trout on the Smith River.



With its fishery, wildness, water quality, old-growth forests and scenery, the Elk River is in a class by itself on the West Coast.

Elk River, continued

grow even bigger. Nearby areas of matchless habitat include the Grassy Knob Wilderness Area adjacent to the property, the proposed Copper Salmon Wilderness Area and the Iron Mountain Botanical Area at the Elk's headwaters, where rare plants grow in distinctive, nutrient-poor soils.

With the land purchased, WRC aims to convey the Rock Creek property to the Siskiyou National Forest to be managed for fish and wildlife habitat protection and low-impact recreation. ■

Sandy River Flows Freely Once Again



Within just a day after the coffer dam breached, the Sandy was forming new fish habitat below the former Marmot Dam site.

A WILD RIVER REBORN

On Friday October 19, heavy rains washed away the earthen coffer dam on the Sandy River, removing the last barrier to a wild, free-flowing river. The Sandy was resilient. Within a day, the river was digesting hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of sediment that were behind Marmot Dam, and new fish habitat was forming above and below the former dam site.

Portland General Electric's removal of Marmot Dam, and the Little Sandy Dam this coming year, make way for a 5,000-acre natural resource and recreation area that Western Rivers Conservancy is creating with PGE and the Bureau of Land Management. This will protect habitat along 17 miles of the Sandy and Little Sandy Rivers and create an outdoor sanctuary and playground like no other near a major city in the entire country. ■

AUCTION MULTIPLIES SANDY RIVER SUPPORT

On October 24, bidders raised their paddles, took home some spectacular salmon sculptures and joined a growing group of supporters for Portland's backyard river, the Sandy.

The *Salmon for the Sandy* Gala and Auction celebrated a momentous event: Just days



prior, the coffer dam was breached on the Sandy, making the river free-flowing for the first time in a century.

"We were overwhelmed by the tremendous support for the Sandy," said Sue Doroff, WRC's Vice President. "This was a great celebration for the dam removal and for the future health of the river."

Net proceeds for the auction go to the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council's education and restoration activities.

Thanks to everyone who helped make *Salmon for the Sandy* a success! ■



PGE's John Esler serves as emcee of the auction.

Left: "Paradox" by Peter Donahower.



Artist Mimi Matsuda stands with Lynn Loacker and the sculpture "Family."

More auction photos at www.westernrivers.org

Expanding our Mission, Continued

Alan Christensen, hired in November as Senior Project Manager. Alan recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service, where he was Assistant Director for Natural Resources in Oregon and Washington. With his strong natural resource background, Alan is identifying new conservation opportunities on rivers in eastern Oregon and Washington.

During Alan's accomplished career with the Forest Service, he held positions throughout the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountains. Alan was responsible for programs in wildlife, fisheries, watershed, soils, botany and range that influenced



Left: Alan Christensen, Cam Tredennick and Willis Yarberry.

over 24 million acres. He also extends our reach into the Interior West, having served as a founding staff member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

With a talented team in place, WRC is poised to save endangered river landscapes throughout the West. ■