

October 19, 2022

For Oregon State Parks' 100th Anniversary, Western Rivers Conservancy Gifts a New Park Feature on the John Day River

WASCO, Oregon—In celebration of Oregon State Parks' 100th anniversary, Western Rivers Conservancy created a new overlook installation above the John Day River at Cottonwood Canyon State Park. The feature, called Reflection Point, honors Jon Roush, one of West's great conservationists and an integral force behind the creation of Cottonwood Canyon State Park. The site was unveiled yesterday and is now open to the public.

Reflection Point is a composition of inscribed basalt boulders set within the sagebrush on a rise above the John Day, with sweeping views up and down the river. Basalt is the definitive rock of the John Day River basin, and the stones blend into the landscape, etched with words that encourage people to reflect on the importance of place and to become active participants in saving the landscapes that matter to them.

"Reflection point is all about inspiring people to do what they can to protect places like the John Day River," said Sue Doroff, president of Western Rivers Conservancy. "We are honored to add this feature to Cottonwood Canyon State Park as a gift to Oregon State Parks, which has been enriching the lives of Oregonians and safeguarding places like this for fish and wildlife for 100 years."

Reflection Point pays tribute to the contributions of Jon Roush, a lifetime conservationist. Roush, who lives in Portland, has dedicated nearly five decades of his life to saving some of the most beautiful and biologically important places in the West, first as executive vice president at The Nature Conservancy, then as president of the Wilderness Society, and later, as a board member of Western Rivers Conservancy. Reflection point honors Roush's work and the fact that he has made a quiet but indelible mark on some of the West's most cherished landscapes.

Visiting Reflection Point is an opportunity to celebrate the centennial of Oregon State Parks and to experience one of Oregon's newer (and second largest) state parks. WRC and the agency created Cottonwood Canyon State Park in 2013, an effort that protected 16 miles of the John Day and 16,000 acres of sagebrush-steppe within and surrounding the John Day Wild and Scenic River canyon. The park, which is just over a two-hour drive from Portland, is open year-round and includes trails along the John Day, day-use facilities, a small campground and cabins.

WRC has worked closely with Oregon State Parks since the mid-90s, when they protected floodplain properties on the Willamette River together, and later created Munson Creek Falls

State Natural Site on the Oregon Coast. After Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed Cottonwood Canyon to Oregon State Parks, the agency created one of Oregon's wildest state parks while ensuring more than 16 miles of the John Day River are permanently protected.

"State parks rely on a community of supporters to serve deep-rooted public needs for natural outdoor spaces," said Lisa Sumption, director of Oregon State Parks. "Cottonwood Canyon, and Western Rivers Conservancy and its supporters, are one the finest examples of this partnership in the state."

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ABOUT

Western Rivers Conservancy acquires lands along rivers throughout the West to conserve critical habitat and to create or improve public access for compatible use and enjoyment. By cooperating with local agencies and organizations and by applying decades of land acquisition experience, Western Rivers Conservancy secures the health of whole ecosystems. Western Rivers Conservancy has protected hundreds of miles of stream frontage on great western rivers, including the Hoh, Skagit, Rio Grande, Yampa, John Day, Gunnison, Salmon, Snake, North Umpqua, Klamath and Madison Rivers. To learn more, visit www.westernrivers.org

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department manages more than 250 state parks, protecting special places so people can enjoy great experiences in every corner of the state. Commemorating its 100th year in 2022, opportunities to visit and volunteer are available year-round. To learn more, visit stateparks.oregon.gov.

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