

# RIVERLANDS

News from Western Rivers Conservancy

Issue 13

Summer 2007



*Goose Creek is a critical tributary to the Smith River, California's last major undammed river.*

## A Watershed Conserved Forever

GOOSE CREEK PROJECT MOVES TO COMPLETION

**N**o one said it would be easy! After five years of hard work by many partners, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) has secured the last critical piece of funding to conserve Goose Creek on California's North Coast. In September, we plan to convey the final phase of land to the U.S. Forest Service, putting into permanent protection 9,483 acres of the Smith River's largest tributary.

The land, which WRC has purchased from Green Diamond Resource Company in several phases since 2003, will now join the surrounding Smith River National Recreation Area, helping secure the future of California's last remaining undammed river system.

If all goes as planned, \$2.7 million from the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act will allow the U.S. Forest Service to purchase the final phase of lands from WRC. A loan from the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation of Sacramento enabled us to buy and hold the lands. In 2005-2006, the project was funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, thanks in large part to the California Congressional Delegation led by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer and Congressman Mike Thompson. Our partners California Trout and the Smith River Alliance also played key roles in securing this funding.

*Please see Goose Creek, page 2*

## With an Explosion, a New Era Dawns for the Sandy

RESTORING A FREE-FLOWING RIVER

**J**osh Kling stood beside a pile of rubble, the first chunks of Marmot Dam to be excavated from the Sandy River after a controlled explosion blasted cracks in the dam July 24. "These chunks of concrete are pieces of history," WRC's Project Manager said.

Portland General Electric is tearing down the dam – the largest ever removed in Oregon – over the next several months while an earthen coffer dam diverts water around the rubble. This fall, high water flows will wash the coffer dam away, making the river free-flowing for the first time in a century. PGE will remove the Little Sandy Dam in the summer of 2008. The removals will give salmon and steelhead an unobstructed path from the slopes of Mount Hood to the Columbia Gorge and the Pacific Ocean.

"This is an exciting step toward a complete conservation effort, from land acquisition to dam



*Explosives blast the first cracks in Marmot Dam July 24.*

removal to the creation of a new recreation area on the Sandy," said Sue Doroff, WRC's Vice President.

Western Rivers Conservancy has been acquiring land since 1999 to create a natural and recreation area covering 5,000 acres and 17 miles of the Sandy and Little Sandy Rivers. This is centered on a 1,500-acre contribution of land from PGE.

When the project is complete, Portland will be the only metropolitan area in the nation with such a wild, free-flowing river within only 25 miles. ■



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CONSERVANCY

SOMETIMES  
TO SAVE A RIVER,  
YOU HAVE TO BUY IT.

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*Simple modifications to existing levees and tide-gates will restore tidal influence to the lower Salt River (right), rejuvenating historic freshwater wetland and salt marsh habitat.*



CALIFORNIA FISH &amp; GAME



KITCHIN &amp; BURDET - LEESON/PAFOTO



ALAN D. WILSON

*Restoring the Salt River Estuary will provide nursery habitat for four salmonid species and wintering habitat for an array of birds.*

*Above: chinook fry and brown pelican.*

## WRC Buys Ranch on Salt River, Key to Estuary Restoration

Western Rivers Conservancy has conserved a key property within the estuary of the Eel River in California.

The acquisition of the 443-acre Riverside Ranch, a former dairy, will allow for the restoration of a large expanse of salt marsh, a critical habitat within the life cycle of threatened coho salmon and other anadromous fish species, as well as resident and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

Buying this property is a key step in a much larger project to restore the health of the Salt River watershed. The Salt River, which flows into the Eel River Estuary, was once a significant ocean port. Over the decades, however, the Salt River has been severely impacted by sedimentation due to natural and

### CALIFORNIA'S EEL RIVER DELTA

man-made causes. The result has been increased flooding and water quality issues.

The Salt River Watershed Restoration project is an ongoing partnership between numerous state and federal agencies including the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Army Corps of Engineers and the California Coastal Conservancy, all of whom are helping fund the acquisition and restoration of Riverside Ranch.

The Riverside Ranch has more than two miles of frontage on the Salt River, and when opened up to tidal waters, will serve to restore the normal hydrology to the estuary. ■

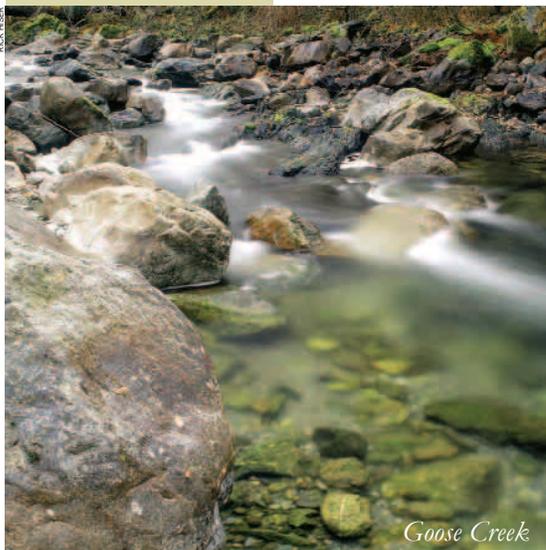
### Goose Creek, Continued

Goose Creek is a haven for wild salmon, steelhead, native trout and endangered aquatic species. It is a critical source of cold, clear water for the Smith River system.

Located in the heart of WRC's Klamath-Siskiyou priority area, the Smith River is a benchmark for a healthy river ecosystem. As the pressures of population growth and climate change mount, the Smith will be a stronghold for species survival

### The Goose Creek Project is made possible by the generous support of:

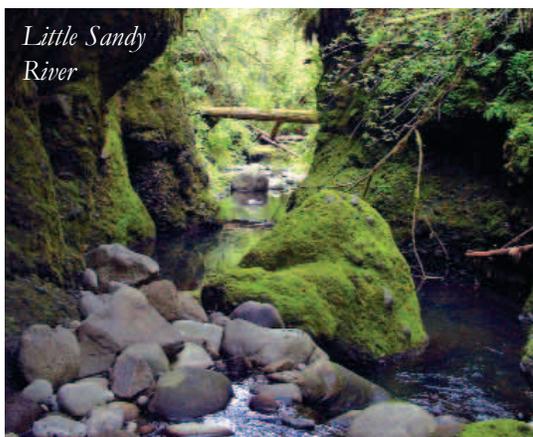
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BOCK WESS

Goose Creek

and a genetic "savings account" for restoring salmon runs in the region's rivers. ■



Little Sandy River

## Sandy Conservation Area Grows

### CREATING PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDORS

Western Rivers Conservancy is protecting another 190 acres with the purchase of two properties in the Sandy River basin. The land adds to a 5,000-acre natural area that Western Rivers Conservancy is assembling along the Sandy and Little Sandy Rivers.

WRC conveyed a 160-acre property along the Little Sandy River to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for habitat protection. With Portland General Electric's removal of the Little Sandy Dam in 2008, we have an exceptional opportunity to protect the Little Sandy's entire length just as fish passage is restored after a century of blockage. To date, WRC has acquired three miles of Little Sandy frontage, leaving only one mile of the Little Sandy's 16-mile length unprotected.

WRC also purchased 30 acres along the upper Sandy River near Wildwood. This riparian forestland contains over one-half mile of Sandy River frontage, a large wetland and an entire side channel of the Sandy.

During a large flood in November 2006, the healthy floodplain habitat on this tract absorbed an incredible amount of potentially destructive flood energy. The flood left behind new channels, sediment and woody debris that only improved the property's habitat quality.

The property will be permanently conserved to ensure that this land will continue to absorb floodwaters and provide excellent fish and wildlife habitat. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) awarded a grant to fund this acquisition, and WRC matched the funding for the purchase. ■

# Salmon for the Sandy: Conserving a Wild River in our Backyard



"Like a Fish Needs a Bicycle," by Adrienne Thalassinos Haley / Josh Kling Photo

### PUBLIC ART AND CONSERVATION PROJECT

Hundreds of people gathered July 5 in downtown Portland for Western Rivers Conservancy's debut of 33 salmon sculptures for *Salmon for the Sandy*, an art and conservation project to benefit Portland's backyard river.

WRC President Phil Wallin served as emcee for the concert celebration at Jamison Square Park.

"Western Rivers Conservancy is presenting these salmon sculptures to celebrate the Sandy River being free-flowing for the first time in a century and the protection of this wild river right in Portland's backyard," Wallin told the crowd.

To the tunes of blues guitarist Norman Sylvester, attendees admired the sculptures placed around the park in Portland's Pearl District: Eighteen four-foot-long salmon and fifteen two-foot-long salmon. Each was decorated by a Northwest artist.

The public can visit the sculptures through October at locations around Portland and the region, such as REI, the Oregon Zoo and Timberline Lodge. Locations and a passport contest are at [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org).

The sculptures will be auctioned October 24 at the Portland Art Museum. Attendees can take home a beautiful salmon sculpture, with net auction proceeds benefitting the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council.

For reservations, call 503-241-0151 or email [dwilkins@westernrivers.org](mailto:dwilkins@westernrivers.org) ■

### Gala & Auction: October 24

Celebrate the Sandy River flowing free for the first time in a century and take home a beautiful salmon sculpture. To RSVP, call 503-241-0151 or visit [westernrivers.org](http://westernrivers.org)



### Visit the Salmon

The sculptures are displayed around Portland and the region through October 3. For a passport contest and list of locations, visit [westernrivers.org](http://westernrivers.org)

### Thanks to Our Sponsors:

Bureau of Land Management, Julie & Rocky Dixon, Katy Durant & Gordon Sondland, Ferguson Wellman Capital Management, Inc., Harder Mechanical Contractors, Inc., Hoyt Street Properties, Jack & Lynn Loacker, Metro, OHSU, PGE, Portland Water Bureau, REI, Russell Development, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Timberline Lodge, Union Bank of California, U.S. Forest Service



"Family" by Mimi Matsuda  
Above: "Subtle Swimmer" by Janet Erwin Brinkman photography



## 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

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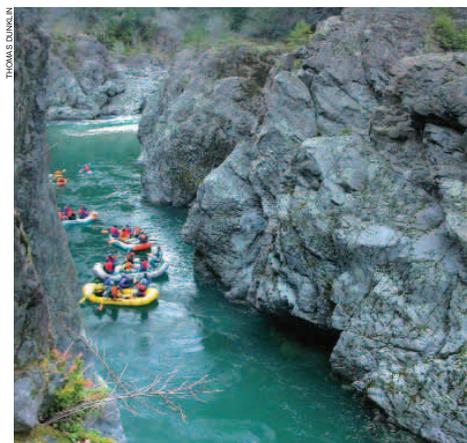
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### Put Your IRA to Work for River Conservation

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 is a great way to help Western Rivers Conservancy protect the West's most outstanding rivers for fish, wildlife and people. If you are age 70-and-a-half or older, you have until December 31, 2007, to make a **tax-free charitable gift** to WRC from your individual retirement account.

Please contact your tax advisor or Development Director David Wilkins for more information.



## GIVE THE WORLD THE GIFT OF RIVERS!

Support the Work of Western Rivers Conservancy

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

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## Mat Millenbach Joins Staff

### OUR STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

We are pleased to welcome Mat Millenbach to the Western Rivers Conservancy staff. As Stewardship Director, Mat assesses the long-term results of our land acquisition projects and develops new opportunities for WRC to carry out its mission.

Mat has an accomplished career as a public lands manager and conservationist. He worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior for 30 years, rising to become the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Land Management in Washington, D.C., and serving as BLM State Director for Montana and Utah, among other positions. Most recently, Mat worked for four years at The Conservation Fund as a field representative in the western United States. He teaches three courses a year at the BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

Mat serves on the Boards of Directors of the Yellowstone Association and the Public Lands Foundation. He and his wife, Linda, live in Portland. They are avid hikers, birders and travelers, and have three grown children and two grandchildren. ■

You may send tax-deductible donations to Western Rivers Conservancy's Portland office or visit [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org) to contribute online. For more information, please call David Wilkins, Development Director, at (503) 241-0151.