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Sandy River Basin restoration receives State Land Board Award

Project hailed for efforts to restore native fish habitat

Salem – The State Land Board at their April 8 meeting presented the 2013 Stream Project Award to the many organizations involved in the Sandy River Basin Habitat Restoration in the Welches, Oregon area. The project is part of a large-scale, multi-year effort to restore habitat for federally listed spring Chinook, coho salmon and winter steelhead in the Sandy River Basin.

The component completed in 2013 included restoration efforts in the Salmon River and Still Creek, a tributary to the Zigzag River in the Mt. Hood National Forest. Activities included reconnecting isolated habitats; installing 25 large-wood habitat structures; and restoring riparian vegetation and watershed processes. The activities increased side channel habitat by nearly 7,000 feet, which greatly improved adult spawning and juvenile rearing habitat for native fish.

“This project is about partnerships and a long-term vision,” said Secretary of State Kate Brown, who presented the award. “The Land Board appreciates the many volunteers, agencies and citizens dedicated to this important effort to restore fish habitat in the Sandy River Basin.” Brown noted that funding for the project came from the City of Portland, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Bureau of Land Management, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Ecotrust, NOAA Restoration Center, Carol & Velma Saling Foundation, and the Boeing Company.

The project was led by The Freshwater Trust, on behalf of the Sandy River Basin Partners, a coalition of government agencies, the local watershed council, private interests and non-profits dedicated to restoring Endangered Species Act-listed salmon and steelhead.

“This was truly a cooperative effort, and one that not only benefits native fish, but shows the magnitude of what can be accomplished when organizations and dedicated volunteers work together to restore important habitat,” said project leader Mark McCollister of The Freshwater Trust.

The State Land Board is marking their tenth year of giving awards for projects and efforts that promote responsible, sustainable stewardship of state resources or that benefit Department of State Lands-related programs. Since 2004, 25 projects have been honored, representing all regions of Oregon.

The State Land Board consists of Governor John Kitzhaber, Secretary of State Kate Brown and State Treasurer Ted Wheeler. The Department of State Lands administers diverse natural and fiscal resources. Many of the resources generate revenue for the Common School Fund, such as state-owned rangelands and timberlands, waterway leases, estates for which no will or heirs exist, and unclaimed property. Twice a year, the agency distributes fund investment earnings to support K-12 public schools. The agency also administers Oregon's Removal-Fill Law, which requires people removing or filling certain amounts of material in waters of the state to obtain a permit.

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