

2014 Accomplishments

Protecting and Restoring Streamflows and Rivers



Koosah Falls, McKenzie River (Photo Credit: ARKNTINA)

McKenzie River: WaterWatch convinced Oregon to change its position and deny a 22 million gallon per day water right from the McKenzie River. Development of this right would have harmed fish and set a poor precedent for other matters around the state. Now we are defending this result in the appellate courts.



Crown Point in the Columbia Gorge

Columbia River: WaterWatch advocated with conservation, faith, and tribal interests to modernize the Columbia River Treaty with Canada. Our goals are to add ecosystem function to the Treaty as a third purpose and to see the river operated more like a river, with streamflows that achieve the appropriate timing, quantity, and quality of water for fish and wildlife to thrive in the Columbia Basin. WaterWatch also prevented backsliding on Oregon programs designed to protect streamflows for migratory fish in the Columbia Basin.



N. Fork Smith River (Photo Credit: Tim Palmer)

Red Flat Nickel Mine - N. Fork Smith River Headwater Streams: As one part of a broad movement to prevent this mine, WaterWatch led the effort to stop Oregon from issuing a right to use water to conduct exploratory drilling for nickel and build a large open pit mine in the headwaters of the North Fork of the Smith, possibly the most pristine river remaining on the West Coast.



Chetco River (Photo Credit: Ken Moorish)

The Water and Growth Program: On the Chetco, Clackamas, Kilchis, McKenzie, Row, and Willamette Rivers, WaterWatch's Water and Growth Program implemented a vision to protect the streamflows needed by imperiled fish and to boost water conservation planning when cities develop new water supplies. WaterWatch negotiated with the state and cities to leave more water in the Chetco and Willamette Rivers, argued cases at the Oregon Court of Appeals on the Clackamas (where we are awaiting a decision) and on the Row River (where we won at the Court of Appeals). This program is critical to many rivers like the Clackamas, where cities have proposed to take up to 40% of the flow of the lower river in the summer; the Kilchis, where a city has proposed to dry up the entire river in the summer; and the Chetco, where the city's own studies said that full development of the water right could kill off the prized run of fall chinook salmon in the river.



WATERWATCH

PROTECTING NATURAL FLOWS IN OREGON RIVERS

2015 Projects



Free The Rogue - Remove Two Obsolete Fish Killing Dams And Make A Third Dam Fish And River Friendly: In 2015, WaterWatch will remove Fielder and Wimer Dams from Evans Creek in the Rogue Basin. These two obsolete dams are ranked as the fourth and eighth worst fish passage barriers in Oregon. Removal will reconnect up to 70 miles of high quality habitat in Evans Creek for Rogue Basin salmon and steelhead.



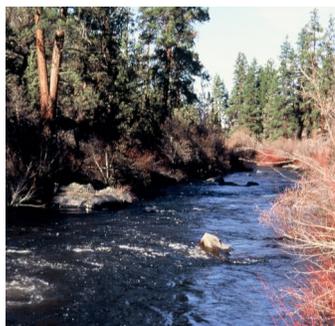
Fielder and Wimer Dams (Photo Credit: Scott Wright)

On the Rogue River, WaterWatch will complete the Gold Hill Irrigation District Diversion Dam Project. This project modifies the District's dam to save fish by eliminating passage hazards and provides the district control over its water diversion, leaving more water in the Rogue River.



Kilchis River (Photo Credit: Guido Rahr)

Save The Kilchis: A city on the Oregon Coast has proposed to use old undeveloped water rights on the Kilchis River in the summer. Full use of these rights would completely dry up the Kilchis. The Kilchis is a stronghold for chum salmon and steelhead on the coast and a river that deserves our protection. In 2015, WaterWatch will advocate to keep water in the Kilchis and to ensure that any use of these old water rights does not harm salmon and steelhead in the river.



Deschutes River (Photo Credit: Sandy Lonsdale)

Progress For Rivers And Species In The Deschutes Basin: 2015 will be will be a critical year to improve streamflows and the plight of imperiled species in the Deschutes Basin. Ongoing projects include negotiations to plan for future basin water needs, the sufficiency of proposed measures for imperiled fish and frogs listed under the Endangered Species Act, and streamflow and fish passage projects on the Crooked River. The future health of rivers and aquatic habitat in the Deschutes Basin depends on decisions that will be made in the near future.



Lower Clackamas (Photo Credit: Lisa Brown)

Win The Cases: In 2015, WaterWatch will defend court victories for the McKenzie and Row Rivers and continue to advocate for the Clackamas, Hood, and other rivers across the state. WaterWatch will make sure Oregon's rivers and streamflows have effective representation when they need it.



State of Oregon Capitol Building



Willamette River (Photo Credit: Larry Olson)

Defend The Scenic Waterways Act, Oregon Rivers And Balanced Water Policies In The 2015 Oregon Legislature: Some legislators have vowed to gut Oregon’s visionary Scenic Waterway Act in the 2015 legislative session. This landmark law protects segments of 17 rivers across Oregon, including many of the best rivers for fish and recreation. WaterWatch will work hard with its partners to ensure that the Scenic Waterway Act remains strong in the face of these attacks.

WaterWatch will also advocate for critical river protection laws and the agency budgets needed to make those laws work. From establishing new instream water rights to ensuring natural resource agency budgets are adequate and deployed in the right way for rivers, WaterWatch will make sure that the 2015 Legislature protects and restores our rivers.

2015 Marks WaterWatch’s 30th Anniversary.

WaterWatch was the first organization in the West to focus solely on the protection and restoration of streamflows. Since 1985, WaterWatch has pursued a single and clear mission: To protect and restore streamflows in Oregon’s rivers of the fish, wildlife, and the people who depend on healthy rivers. Our mission is now more critical than ever given the impacts of climate change, new development pressures on our waters, and the loss of cold water habitat for imperiled species.

WaterWatch remains the only conservation group monitoring all decisions of the Oregon Water Resources Department. This watchdogging work protects the public interest in water and increases accountability, legal compliance, and the transparency of the state’s decisions about water.

After almost thirty years, WaterWatch continues to play a unique and essential role for Oregon’s rivers. ***WaterWatch is the only organization focused solely on protecting and restoring streamflows in Oregon’s rivers for fish, wildlife, and the people who depend on healthy rivers.***

The staff and Board of Directors of WaterWatch thank you for your continuing investment in our shared passion for Oregon’s waters.

