



October 14, 2009

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Lisa Pelly, (509) 888-0970
Melinda Kassen, (303) 440-2937, x 100
Rob Masonis, (206) 491-9016

Washington Rivers Conservancy to Join Trout Unlimited

(Wenatchee, Wash.)-- Washington Rivers Conservancy, a nonprofit conservation organization, will become part of Trout Unlimited, the two groups announced today.

WRC provides water-rights expertise for river and stream conservation projects, partnering with landowners, land trusts, state and federal agencies and tribal entities to promote voluntary, market-based solutions to instream flow issues in Washington State.

Started in 1959, Trout Unlimited is the nation's leading coldwater fisheries conservation group. Under the agreement, WRC will become the Washington branch office of TU's Western Water Project, which works to enhance streamflows to provide healthy trout and salmon habitat in six Western states: Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah, Idaho, and California. WRC will change its name to the Washington Water Project of TU.

"We are excited to become part of an organization that shares our values, mission and goals," said Lisa Pelly, director of WRC. "Like our group, TU is committed to working with diverse stakeholders to find balanced, pragmatic solutions to complex water issues in the West. This is a good fit for us, and having the support of thousands of TU members who live in the communities in which we work will increase our clout and expand our reach."

Melinda Kassen, director of TU's Western Water Project, agreed. "Washington Rivers Conservancy has an impressive track record of promoting win-win, collaborative solutions that benefit both wildlife habitat and ranch and farm operations—an approach

that aligns closely with TU's philosophy and goals. Bringing them onto our team will allow TU to hit the ground running on streamflow protection in Washington."

Rob Masonis, TU's vice president for Western Conservation, said that the acquisition of WRC is part of a larger TU strategy to restore Western rivers and streams by making sure they have enough water. "Instead of waiting until our rivers and streams reach a crisis stage, TU is working in partnership with water users to keep them healthy and resilient. It's a commonsense, cost-effective approach to conservation that we believe will pay huge dividends down the road."

The merger comes at a crucial time for Washington's water future: A host of pressures, from population growth to climate change, will challenge the state's ability to ensure sufficient water for a variety of purposes— including fish and wildlife, agriculture, and people.

"Joining forces with TU will help us bring more leverage and resources to these challenges," said Pelly. "WRC, now the TU Washington Water Project, will continue to work with our current partners to keep our rivers and streams healthy—and that will provide long-lasting economic and environmental benefits for Washington residents."

TU's Washington Water Project staff will be based in Wenatchee and will continue to be guided by a locally based advisory group.

#

Trout Unlimited is a private, nonprofit organization with more than 140,000 members who are dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. In 2009 it celebrates 50 years of coldwater conservation. Visit www.tu.org