



**US Army Corps
Of Engineers**

Walla Walla District & Portland District



SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

News Release

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Corps of Engineers partners with The Nature Conservancy to improve the environment

WALLA WALLA, Wash. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and The Nature Conservancy recently forged a partnership to help better protect the environment by leveraging the combined strength and expertise of each organization.

In late February, representatives from the Corps' Portland and Walla Walla districts and The Nature Conservancy signed a Memorandum of Understanding that, in short, sealed their agreement "to work toward regional cooperation and mutual solutions to ecosystem restoration challenges by working within their respective organizations."

Under the framework of the regional agreement, the partners will evaluate opportunities to expand their collaboration in the state of Oregon to seek pragmatic solutions to protect the ecological health of rivers and surrounding natural areas while continuing to provide services such as flood control and hydropower generation.

An example of one of the projects that the Corps and the Conservancy are undertaking together is the Willamette Flow Management Project. Under this project, the Conservancy is assisting the Corps in evaluating the way the six Corps dams and reservoirs along the Middle and Coast Forks of the Willamette River are operated to determine if those operations might be revised to better meet the ecological needs of the rivers.

The Conservancy sponsored an initial orientation meeting for the flow management project on Feb. 28 that was heavily attended by representatives of local cities, industry groups, technical experts and local, federal and state agencies with water management responsibilities in those basins attended.

The Walla Walla District is partnering with the Conservancy on an ecosystem restoration project on Camp Creek located near Enterprise, Ore., in the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve which the Conservancy manages. The project would restore the creek to a more natural, free-flowing condition, reestablish native riparian vegetation, and remove several small dams that restrict endangered steelhead migration.

"Clean water and healthy streamflows are critical to people, fish and wildlife alike," said Russell Hoeflich, Oregon director for The Nature Conservancy. "Our agreement with the Corps of Engineers combines the

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strengths of two great organizations, and we look forward to working with the Corps to protect and restore the vitality of Oregon's rivers, streams and wetlands today and far into the future."

The MOU follows a national agreement executed in December 2000 between the Corps and the Conservancy developed to "facilitate effective and efficient management of important biological resources within the context of the Corps's civil works and regulatory missions."

"This partnership is a key enabler for both the Corps and The Nature Conservancy to work together to restore critical habitat, restore wetlands and address other environmental challenges facing the Pacific Northwest," said Portland District Commander Col. Thomas O'Donovan.

"The Corps and the Conservancy will, no doubt, benefit by what we share and learn from each other as we continue to seek win-win solutions that help balance the needs of the environment with the needs of the region," added Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. Randy Glaeser.

Because of Endangered Species Act considerations throughout the region, the Corps and the Conservancy will continue to work cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and state departments of Fish and Wildlife to ensure that projects undertaken under this MOU are consistent with endangered species recovery plans.

The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, The Nature Conservancy and its nearly one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 14 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.

In Oregon, the Corps' Portland and Walla Walla districts help balance the region's competing needs for navigation, flood control, hydropower, fish and wildlife habitat, disaster recovery, irrigation, recreation and environmental restoration.

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