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Columbia River Estuary— Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site nomination accepted

October 2009—The [Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network](#) (WHSRN) has designated the Columbia River Estuary as a Site of Regional Importance for shorebirds.

WHSRN is a voluntary, non-regulatory approach to protecting shorebirds at all stages of their annual migratory life cycle. Launched in 1984, WHSRN is committed to sustaining healthy populations of shorebirds by protecting key habitats throughout the Americas.



Western sandpipers. Photo by Ron LeValley

The Columbia River Estuary site ranges from approximately river mile 60 to the mouth of the river in Washington and Oregon. More than 20,000 shorebirds use the area each year, including black-bellied plover, semipalmated plover, killdeer, greater yellowlegs, spotted sandpiper, whimbrel, marbled godwit, ruddy turnstone, red knot, sanderling, western sandpiper, least sandpiper, dunlin, short-billed dowitcher, and red-necked phalarope.

Site includes a mix of public and private land

Landowner participation in the network is voluntary. Participating lands include:

- Lewis and Clark and Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuges
- Cape Disappointment and Fort Columbia State Parks in Washington
- State-owned tidelands and shorelines in Washington (Department of Natural Resources)
- Lands owned by Columbia Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy of Oregon
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Johns River Wildlife Area/Chinook Unit
- Private timber lands owned by Hancock Forest Management.

Good news for PCJV partners working in the Columbia River Estuary

WHSRN designation enhances opportunities to involve more landowners who wish to protect shorebird habitat. In addition, the designation brings with it a number of benefits for PCJV partners currently managing land for the benefit of these birds, including:

- WHSRN sites receive international recognition as major vital habitat for migratory shorebirds. Several grant-making agencies give preference to sites so recognized.
- Project development assistance is provided by WHSRN to conduct research, monitoring, land management improvements, training, public outreach or educational activities.
- Networking activities between sites are provided by WHSRN, including personnel exchanges, training, newsletters, festivals, tourism, and strategic planning.

Partners

The following groups and individuals assisted with the nomination.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Migratory Birds and Habitat Programs
- Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington Parks and Recreation Commission
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Columbia Land Trust
- Hancock Forest Management
- The Nature Conservancy of Oregon
- Pacific Coast Joint Venture
- Audubon Society of Portland
- Audubon Society of Washington
- Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership
- Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce
- Mike Patterson