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Salazar Highlights 10 River Projects in Pacific Northwest and Western States under America's Great Outdoors Initiative

River initiatives part of 51 projects Interior will leverage resources to support in every state and District of Columbia

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today identified river projects in 10 western and Pacific Northwest states to serve as models of the America's Great Outdoors River Initiative to conserve and restore key rivers across the nation, expand outdoor recreational opportunities and support jobs in local communities.

The river projects are part of a list of 51 ongoing projects that the Secretary is highlighting nationwide, one in each state and the District of Columbia. Ranging from the Elwha River Fish Passage Project in Washington, to the Colorado River Heritage Greenway Park, to Trails Project in Nevada, the projects were selected to provide examples on how communities across American can restore and reconnect with the rivers in their backyards.

"Across the country, we are working hand in hand with states, tribes, local communities and other partners to revitalize our nation's rivers and expand the opportunities for people to fish, boat, and otherwise connect with the natural world," Salazar said. "These on-going projects demonstrate how the federal family can be an effective conservation partner for community-led efforts to improve our environment and the quality of life of residents, while creating jobs in the outdoor recreation economy."

The projects identified today include:

Alaska: Kenai River - Kenai River Restoration and Protection Project

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with many federal, tribal, state and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private landowners to preserve and protect the health of the Kenai River, which is one of Alaska's premier recreation destinations for tourists and residents.

California: Sacramento River – Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project

The Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project is a partnership between Bureau of Reclamation and the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority and is the culmination of over 40 years of

efforts by various stakeholders to find a balanced solution that improves fish passage and continues to deliver irrigation water to high-value cropland that produces over \$250 million in crops per year and contributes \$1 billion annually to the regional economy.

Colorado: Dolores River – Dolores River Tamarisk Removal Project

The Bureau of Land Management is working with the Dolores River Partnership - a two-state, citizen driven partnership, to improve fish habitat, restore riparian habitat, increase stream flows, reduce wildfire risks, develop education and stewardship opportunities, and expand opportunities for youth employment.

Hawaii: He'eia River - Lower He'eia Stream Restoration Project

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other Federal agencies are working with many state and local agencies, and non-governmental organizations to restore the biological, socioeconomic, and cultural productivity of the lower He'eia watershed, which contains the highest numbers and greatest diversity of fish, marine invertebrates, and native marine algae on the island.

Idaho: Yankee Fork – Yankee Fork Rehabilitation Project

The Bureau of Reclamation along with other federal, tribal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private corporations are creating spawning habitat for Chinook salmon, as well as steelhead and other native fish, along a section of Yankee Fork that was drastically altered by mining and dredging activities.

Nevada: Colorado River – Colorado River Heritage Greenway Park and Trails

The Bureau of Reclamation and other federal, state, and local agencies, and non-governmental organizations are collaborating on river restoration and access, trails, picnic sites, shade shelters, fishing piers, equestrian facilities and other projects on a 1,191 acre public park serving the states of Nevada, Arizona and California.

Oregon: Sandy River – Sandy River Basin Restoration Project

The watershed-scale partnership of federal, state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the Bureau of Land Management, are working to expand environmental and recreational opportunities, and protect critical habitat on the Sandy River, which will benefit the one-third of Oregon's population that lives within 30 minutes of the project, and the federally-listed spring Chinook, winter Steelhead, and winter Coho.

Utah: Escalante River – Escalante River Watershed Partnership

The Bureau of Land Management, other Federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations are cooperating on recreation, riparian restoration, and species recovery projects that utilize Youth Corps and other volunteers, and will benefit 200 species of migratory birds and several rare fish along the Escalante River.

Washington: Elwha River - Elwha River Restoration

The National Park Service and other federal, tribal, state and local agencies are working to reopen more than 70 miles of pristine spawning and rearing habitat for five species of Pacific salmon on the Elwha River, with salmon populations predicted to swell from 3,000 to 400,000 – returning the Elwha River to the Pacific Northwest's most productive salmon streams.

Wyoming: North Platte River - Trappers Route Special Recreation Management Area

The Bureau of Land Management is working with state and local agencies to enhance wildlife habitat through invasive species control and reforestation, and to improve public access along the North Platte River, which offers stellar fishing, paddling, waterfowl hunting and wildlife observation opportunities.

A more detailed description of River Initiative projects highlighted by Salazar can be accessed at [LINK](#). Additional rivers projects across the nation will be announced in the coming days.

“America has 3.5 million miles of rivers and streams, and nearly every American lives within a mile of a river or stream, making them some of the nation’s most important recreational and ecological assets,” Salazar added.

As part of the America’s Great Outdoors Rivers Initiative, Interior Department agencies – including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -- will work with states and communities to advance river restoration and recreation projects with existing resources through technical support and with their administrative authorities.

“Interior agencies also partner with states and communities to leverage grants, private funding and other resources to restore rivers and connect people to recreational opportunities,” Salazar said.

From an economic standpoint, rivers support our recreation and tourism economy by providing opportunities for boating, fishing and hunting, hiking, camping, swimming, and numerous other outdoor activities. They also offer a focal point for environmental education and outreach that helps communities understand and connect with the great outdoors.

Salazar unveiled the America’s Great Outdoors Rivers Initiative in January as part of President Obama’s overall America’s Great Outdoors initiative to work with communities across the country to establish a 21st century conservation ethic, reconnect people, especially young people, to the outdoors, and promote the outdoor recreation economy.

The goals of the Rivers Initiative include protecting and restoring America’s rivers for people and wildlife and enhancing river recreation that supports jobs in tourism and outdoor recreation.

Under the initiative, for example, Salazar issued a Secretarial Order in February establishing a National Water Trails System, creating a network of designated water trails on rivers across the country that will help facilitate outdoor recreation, especially around urban areas, and provide national recognition to existing, local water trails. He designated the Chattahoochee River Water Trail, which encompasses 48 miles of river within the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Georgia, as the first National Water Trail.

In March, Salazar, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and Secretary of Commerce John Bryson signed a memorandum of understanding implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to assist state and local governments, landowners, and community groups in protecting and restoring waterways and fisheries.

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