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## **LOCALS, PARTNERS RAISE OVER \$120,000 TO PROTECT MCCLLOUD RIVER REDBAND TROUT**

*California Trout, The Orvis Company, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and private donors pool donations to save unique local species*

**Mt. Shasta** – California Trout announced today that over \$120,000 was raised through an innovative partnership to protect the rare and beautiful McCloud River redband trout. The Orvis Company and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation each gave \$30,000 grants, and more than \$60,000 was donated by hundreds of private citizens. The private donations were generated by an Orvis campaign promoted in their catalogs and website, and through outreach by California Trout to its membership.

“It’s encouraging to see how strongly the residents in the Mount Shasta region and our customers as a whole feel about saving this unique, local species,” said James Hathaway, Communications and Conservation Manager of the Orvis Company. “There’s nothing else like it on earth, and people understand that.”

For those who enjoy outdoor recreation, the Redband trout is the mascot of the local fishing scene. A close cousin of our state fish, the California Golden trout, the redband is distinguished by a beautiful bright red band along its side. For many years, this beleaguered species has contended with an array of threats: habitat degradation caused by grazing and timber practices, competition and predation from non-native trout, and dilution of its genetic integrity due to hybridization with hatchery-reared rainbow trout. Although McCloud River redband trout continue to survive under degraded habitat conditions, their future as one of California’s remarkable native trout species remains uncertain.

In order to ensure that McCloud River redband trout persists in the future, California Trout is working with a group of resource agencies, private landowners, community members and nonprofits known as the McCloud Redband Core Group. The Core Group was established voluntarily to protect the redband’s genetic integrity, and to secure populations while respecting existing land uses, resource uses and private property rights. This conservation effort is unique in that a diverse group of stakeholders are working collaboratively and efficiently to protect and restore the redband’s native biodiversity.

The habitat conservation projects include restoration of degraded meadows and stream banks, and private landowners are voluntarily helping to improve roads and culverts on their property to reduce stream sedimentation and improve upstream fish passage. Additionally, work is underway with UC Davis and the Department of Fish and Game to conduct molecular genetic analysis which will provide key information for species restoration and management guidelines.

“For those who have grown up with the redband trout here in their back yard, there is something special about the bright flash of red that appears in the cold, clear waters that emerge from Mt Shasta’s abundant system of aquifers and springs,” said Curtis Knight of California Trout. “The recreational and economic value of these special fish cannot be described by numbers alone, but locals have proven how much they care by helping raise over \$120,000 to protect them. With the help of the matching grants, there is new hope for an irreplaceable treasure of the Shasta region.”

“Fish are key indicators of the health of aquatic ecosystems and landscapes. To protect a local species of fish is to protect the waters on which people, fish and wildlife depend. We’re dedicated to helping keep California rich with thriving rivers and streams for generations to come.”

**About California Trout:** Founded in 1971, California Trout was the first statewide conservation group to focus on securing protections for California’s unparalleled wild and native trout diversity. Working with local communities, business, partners and government agencies, California Trout employs conservation science, education, and advocacy to craft effective solutions for California’s water resources and fisheries. Among its many current initiatives, California Trout is now leading the effort to save the official state fish, which is the California golden trout.

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