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**COLUMBIA LAND TRUST AND SALTCHUK RESOURCES JOIN TO
CONSERVE IMPORTANT COLUMBIA RIVER HABITAT**

Land trust will conserve, restore three islands, floodplains

VANCOUVER, Wash. – Columbia Land Trust has signed a 50-year lease with Seattle-based Saltchuk Resources and its subsidiary Foss Maritime, to protect three Columbia River islands and adjacent floodplains that are important habitat for various species of salmon, migratory birds and other wildlife.

The lands, totaling approximately 700 acres in both Washington and Oregon, stretch for about 100 miles along the Columbia from the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area to the mouth of the river at Astoria, Oregon. They include Ryan, Walker and Sandy islands.

Under terms of the lease, Columbia Land Trust will pay a nominal fee of \$1 per year to Saltchuk for all rights to conserve and restore the islands and floodplains over the next 50 years.

The long-term lease is a new arrangement for the Land Trust, which typically acquires property through purchases or donations, said Cherie Kearney, Land Trust conservation director. “The lease is a creative way to work with landowners to accomplish conservation. It is a perfect and unique fit for these lands. While we don’t need to own them, we want to keep the door open to develop wildlife management plans and restoration projects in the future.” she said.

“We want to find a way to actively care for land in the communities where we operate,” said Saltchuk chairman Michael Garvey. “Foss Maritime is committed to preserving riverbeds and other sensitive lands it owns, and the Land Trust brings us expertise in Columbia River Basin habitat restoration.”

Nate Dreon Saltchuk’s real estate director negotiated terms of the lease for Saltchuk. “Columbia Land Trust has a track record of successfully conserving difficult tidelands and river properties,” he said. “It’s why we sought them out to create this partnership.”

The islands and adjacent floodplains Saltchuk is leasing to the Land Trust contain sensitive habitat for a number of species, including Columbian white-tailed deer, salmon and waterfowl, said Kearney. “We’re very interested in preserving that type of high-quality habitat and, in some cases, restoring it,” she said. “Islands and Columbia River floodplain and estuaries are conservation priorities for Columbia Land Trust.”

Kearney credited leaders at Saltchuk for the company’s commitment to preserving fish and wildlife and river habitat. “It is inspiring to work with corporations like Saltchuk that are creative and open-minded about finding ways to conserve land,” she said.

The next step for the Land Trust is to evaluate the land, said Ian Sinks, Land Trust stewardship director. He said the land contains “incredibly rich habitat” with a diversity of wildlife and is an important part of the preservation of water quality in the Columbia River estuary.

The Columbia River project is one of several conservation efforts undertaken by Saltchuk in the Pacific Northwest, Dreon said. It is the company’s first collaboration with Columbia Land Trust.

Saltchuk Resources is a family holding company based in Seattle. Saltchuk owned companies have conserved more than 2,700 acres of lands in the Northwest. Foss Maritime provides shipping, towing and other marine transportation services along the West Coast. Columbia Land Trust is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to land conservation. They have conserved more than 6,000 acres in the Columbia River region in Oregon and Washington.

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