



# News Release

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June 18, 2020

## Partnership Preserves Vital Stream Reach for Sacramento River Salmon and Steelhead

**RED BLUFF, CA**—This week, on the flanks of Mount Lassen, Western Rivers Conservancy and the Lassen National Forest (LNF) protected a crucial 1,150-acre property, and a significant branch of South Fork Antelope Creek, a rare stronghold for salmon and steelhead in the Sacramento River system.

Although there were concerns that COVID-19 might delay the project, the partners were able to complete it working remotely, adding to the sense of accomplishment and relief for both sides.

The property includes 2.5 miles of South Fork Antelope Creek and its critically important spawning and rearing habitat for spring Chinook, fall Chinook, and winter steelhead. Both the spring Chinook and winter steelhead are listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

“South Fork Antelope Creek is a top-tier nursery for wild salmon and steelhead, and this effort will help keep it that way,” said Josh Kling, Conservation Director for Western Rivers Conservancy. “Even amidst a global pandemic, we’ve notched a crucial victory for Sacramento River salmon and steelhead, not to mention the rich array of wildlife that rely on this area.”

South Fork Antelope Creek flows crystal clear from the heights of Mount Lassen to Antelope Creek, which joins the Sacramento River near Red Bluff. Antelope Creek is one of only six streams that compose the Sacramento Salmon Stronghold, a suite of healthy tributary streams that contain the best remaining spawning and rearing habitat for the Sacramento’s surviving salmon and steelhead.

Located on the western side of the LNF, the newly conserved property features old-growth ponderosa pine and incense cedar, which tower over South Fork Antelope Creek within a deep, shaded canyon. Above the canyon bottom, live oak savanna gives way to healthy grasslands that support important herds of migratory Tehama black-tailed deer and other species.

“Conserving this property was a top priority, because it contains some of the greatest biodiversity in the entire National Forest,” said Deb Bumpus, Forest Supervisor, LNF. “Now this diverse terrain is permanently protected and open for public recreational access as well as a critical reach of South Fork Antelope Creek will continue to give new life to surviving native fish runs.”

As a testament to the property’s superb habitat, OR-7, California’s first documented wolf in decades, recently spent an entire winter on the property. Combined with the Tehama Wildlife

Area downstream, the property provides a critical home for mountain lion, black bear, bald eagle, golden eagle, prairie falcon, peregrine falcon, and western pond turtle.

In addition to its benefits for fish and wildlife, the project presents the opportunity to extend a hiking trail from the Tehama Wildlife Area, which would improve access for hikers, equestrians, and kayakers to explore this rugged and scenic area.

This effort was made possible through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, with funding set aside in 2013 to conserve important landscapes within the LNF for fish and wildlife. Funded primarily by federal revenues from offshore oil and gas development, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created by Congress in 1965 as a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources, and cultural sites, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans.

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## **ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS**

**Western Rivers Conservancy** acquires lands along rivers throughout the West to conserve critical habitat and to create or improve public access for compatible use and enjoyment. By cooperating with local agencies and organizations and by applying decades of land acquisition experience, Western Rivers Conservancy secures the health of whole ecosystems. Western Rivers Conservancy has protected hundreds of miles of stream frontage on great western rivers, including the Klamath, Scott, Mojave, Rio Grande, Yampa, John Day, Gunnison, Salmon, Snake, North Umpqua, and Madison rivers. To learn more, visit [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org)

**The Lassen National Forest** in Northern California is comprised of 1.2 million acres of rugged and beautiful landscapes surrounding Mt. Lassen, within the counties of Lassen, Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Plumas, Siskiyou, and Modoc. The Forest lies at the heart of one of the most fascinating areas of California, called the Crossroads. Here the granite of the Sierra Nevada, the lava of the Cascades and the Modoc Plateau, and the sagebrush of the Great Basin meet and blend. Home to a rich diversity of plants and animals, the Lassen National Forest is a tremendous public asset that provides a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to visitors.  
[www.fs.usda.gov/main/lassen](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/lassen)

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