



WESTERN RIVERS
CONSERVANCY



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Western Rivers Conservancy Transfers a Mile of the Wild and Scenic Selway River to the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests



The property the partners conserved lies along a mile of the lower Selway River.

Photo Credit: Steve Dondero/Western Rivers Conservancy

IDAHO COUNTY, Idaho (June 10)– At the heart of a mosaic of protected lands in northern Idaho, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests have conserved the 152-acre Selway River Ranch, including one mile of the Selway River and half a mile of Elk City Creek, a minor but important Selway tributary. Conserving this property fills a gap in protection on a key reach of the lower Wild and Scenic Selway River.

“The Selway is one of the West’s ultimate wild rivers, and we are very proud we were able to work with the seller and the U.S. Forest Service to keep a prime stretch of it pristine and undeveloped,” said **Nelson Mathews, WRC President**. “This partnership delivered a real win for the Selway, its wildlife and everyone lucky enough to be able to experience this incredible river and the exceptional wilderness that only the Selway offers.”

In the Selway’s home stretch through the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, a small number of private inholdings remain along a portion of the river that is otherwise protected and public within the Wild and Scenic corridor. In 2022, WRC purchased one of the most significant of these: the Selway River Ranch. It then held the property while it worked to obtain funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to convey the ranch to the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest for permanent conservation and recreation management.

The Selway River Ranch is home to one of the finest flat, pristine meadows on the lower Selway, which makes it important for wildlife but also particularly attractive for development. Although it was partially protected by a scenic easement held by the USFS, it could have been subdivided into at least four home sites. By conserving the property, WRC and the USFS ensured the exquisite, untamed character of the lower Selway River corridor will remain permanently intact.

"Acquiring Selway River Ranch enhances multiple uses of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests by increasing public recreation access along one mile of the popular Selway Wild and Scenic River corridor for anglers, boaters, campers, hikers, and other recreationists," said **Ron Tipton, Moose Creek District Ranger**. "In addition to enhanced recreation opportunities, this acquisition supports habitat improvement for aquatic species including steelhead, Chinook salmon, and westslope cutthroat trout in Elk City Creek with partners including the Nez Perce Tribe and Trout Unlimited."

One of the original eight rivers designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, the Selway's long history of protection and remarkably untouched quality make it a haven for imperiled fish like Chinook salmon, summer steelhead, westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout. The corridor is also home to Rocky Mountain elk, bighorn sheep, Canada lynx, grizzly bear and bald eagle.

When it comes to recreation, the Selway offers one of the most remote, scenic and exciting multiday floats in the Lower 48. Underscoring just how pristine the river is, the USFS grants only one rafting permit per day. By keeping this property intact, Western Rivers Conservancy and the Nez-Perce Clearwater National Forest were able to ensure the river maintains its rare untouched character.

With the Selway River Ranch now owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the agency will be able to expand conservation management of the lower Selway River corridor. Conserving this property also paves the way for the possibility of future restoration work and the development of hiking trails along a superb stretch of the Wild and Scenic Selway.

This project was made possible by funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Pivotal support also came from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and individuals throughout the West.

Western Rivers Conservancy

Western Rivers Conservancy's motto is "Sometimes to save a river, you have to buy it." WRC purchases land along the West's finest rivers and streams to conserve habitat for fish and wildlife, protect key sources of cold water and create public access for all to enjoy. To ensure the lands it acquires are protected in perpetuity, WRC transfers them to long-term stewards including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, state parks and Tribal nations. WRC has created sanctuaries for fish and wildlife and secured recreational access along 250 rivers and streams around the West. It has protected more than 440 river miles and over

220,000 acres of land in nine western states. Its approach to river conservation is effective, tangible and permanent. More information at westernrivers.org.

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests offer a huge variety of recreational opportunities on 4 million acres of beautiful and diverse land. Four wilderness areas, two of which are the largest wilderness areas in the lower 48 states make up half of the forests. It is beloved for its excellent river recreation, including world-class fishing and multiple wild and scenic rivers. Winter sports, camping, and wildlife observation opportunities also abound throughout this North-Central Idaho forest.