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## Prized Ranch on the Yakima River Will Soon be Public

**ELLENSBURG, Wash.**—This week, the Bureau of Land Management announced that it plans to acquire Yakima Canyon Ranch from Western Rivers Conservancy using recreation access funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The acquisition will conserve 812 acres along the Yakima River and provide permanent recreational access to the Big Horn boating access site and 3.5 miles of the Yakima River that flow through the ranch.

“This project is the perfect marriage of conservation and recreation,” said Sue Doroff, president of Western Rivers Conservancy. “Our partnership with BLM is helping the agency deliver its recreational access goals for the public while conserving outstanding fish and wildlife habitat along one of the West’s truly great rivers.”

Yakima Canyon Ranch lies within the scenic 27-mile Yakima River Canyon, between the towns of Ellensburg and Yakima. Yakima River Canyon State Scenic Byway, Washington’s first ever state scenic byway, runs the length of the canyon and provides access to six recreation sites along the river. The area is heavily visited by anglers, summer floaters, hikers and hunters.

“Yakima Canyon Ranch has long been an acquisition and conservation priority for the BLM,” said Kurt Pindel, BLM’s Spokane District Manager. “Thanks to the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Western Rivers Conservancy, the property is finally moving into public ownership so that people will always have access to the Yakima River at this spectacular location.”



Media photos can be found at: <https://www.westernrivers.org/yakima-canyon-ranch-image-gallery>

The ranch is comprised of three blocks of land—Bighorn, Beavertail and Umtanum—and controls critical access and launch points along the river. All three blocks are inholdings in the BLM’s Yakima Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

At the upstream end of the ranch is the private Big Horn recreation site, which controls a popular boat launch, campground and river frontage, all of which will transfer into BLM ownership for public access and conservation management within the ACEC.

The downstream end of the ranch includes roughly 15 acres at the Umtanum recreation site, which will also go to the BLM as part of the sale. This will expand the Umtanum Campground, triple the amount of Yakima River frontage within the recreation site and add stands of old-growth ponderosa pines to the site. Umtanum also provides trail access into the Wenas Wildlife Area via a footbridge over the river from the east bank; one follows Umtanum Creek and other climbs to a lookout point with stunning views of the canyon.

“Yakima Canyon Ranch is an exquisite piece of the Yakima River Canyon, and people from all over the Pacific Northwest know the property, if not by name, then because they’ve dropped a boat in at Bighorn, camped out at Umtanum, or fished the ranch’s banks with a fly rod,” said Doroff. “We are thrilled to bring this into public ownership with the BLM at long last.”

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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 Hoh, Skagit, Rio Grande, Yampa, John Day, Gunnison, Salmon, Snake, North Umpqua, Klamath and Madison Rivers. To learn more, visit [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org)

**The Bureau of Land Management** manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 western states, including Alaska, on behalf of the American people. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. To learn more, visit [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov).

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