



WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

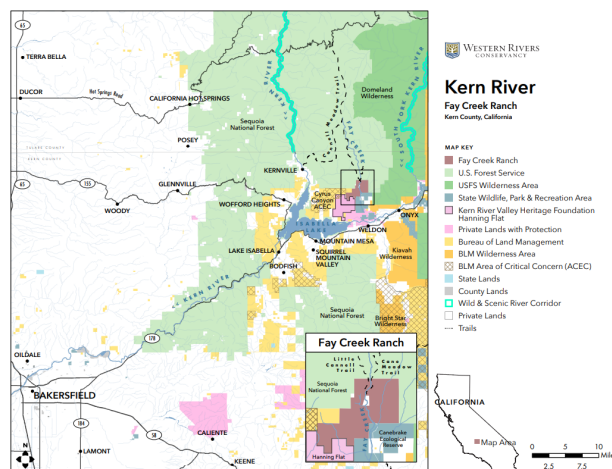
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California's South Fork Kern River: Conserving a Desert Oasis in the Kern River Valley

This summer, Western Rivers Conservancy permanently protected a 2,285-acre oasis at the foot of the Southern Sierra, complete with spring-fed creeks, native trout and a natural warm spring. We transferred half of Fay Creek Ranch to the Tübatulabal Tribe and half to the Kern River Valley Heritage Foundation, repatriating the first lands ever returned to the Tübatulabal and turning this special place over to two entities that will now steward these lands for the sake of fish, wildlife and the South Fork Kern. Fay Creek Ranch is a rare refuge within an otherwise hot, arid landscape. The property is home to several freshwater springs, a warm spring and 1.5 miles of Fay Creek itself, a tributary to the South Fork Kern. The creek is a crucial perennial cold-water stream for native trout, and its lush banks offer excellent habitat for imperiled birds like southwestern willow flycatcher and least Bell's vireo, both federally Endangered.

Kodiak Greenwood photo



Washington's Yakima River: A Game Changing Conveyance for the Yakima's Fish

Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead will soon have new spawning and rearing habitat in Washington's Yakima River. In partnership with Kittitas County, WRC permanently conserved Four Seasons Ranch, the last remaining private inholding within the Ringer Restoration Reach, a large-scale restoration site encompassing over 650 acres of floodplain habitat and nearly four miles of the Yakima River. WRC purchased the ranch this month and immediately conveyed it to Kittitas County, laying the groundwork for the county to restore floodplain habitat, diminish flood risk and improve spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead. Now that WRC has transferred Four Seasons Ranch to Kittitas County, restoration of the Ringer Reach can move forward in earnest. Berms and levees will be gradually removed, side channels will be restored, cottonwood trees will return to the landscape, and this stretch of the Yakima will once again be free to meander and shift across its natural floodplain.

Tyler Roemer photo

