



WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

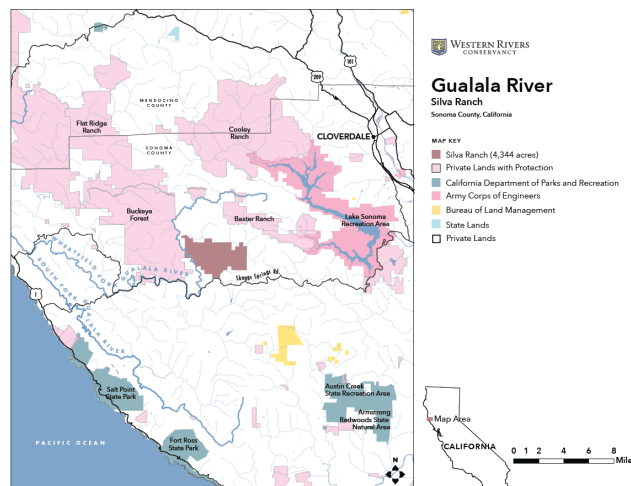
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California's Gualala River: Conserving a lifeline for California salmon and steelhead

Flowing from the rugged slopes of northern California's Coast Range, the Gualala River is an exceptional free-flowing river with three main forks: the South Fork, the North Fork and the largest of the three, the Wheatfield Fork. The river is home to threatened Northern CA Coast winter steelhead and endangered Central CA Coast coho salmon, two crucial populations of imperiled anadromous fish whose future hinges on the health of rivers like the Gualala. In 2015, WRC embarked on an effort to conserve the 4,440-acre Silva Ranch, located on the Wheatfield Fork in the river's headwaters. We successfully conserved the ranch in Dec. 2022 by partnering with California Rangeland Trust to place a conservation easement over the property. The easement protects an important reach of the Wheatfield Fork, as well as a series of headwater tributaries that provide invaluable clean, cold water to the Gualala River and crucial spawning and rearing habitat for imperiled anadromous fish.

Justin Hartwick photo



Colorado's Dolores River: Protecting a Cold-Water Savings Vault

The Dolores River is one of southwest Colorado's great scenic and recreational treasures. From its headwaters at nearly 12,000 feet in the San Miguel Mountains, to its confluence with the Colorado River near Moab, Utah, the Dolores charts a 240-mile course through some of the most stunning landscapes in the West. At the river's headwaters, between the East and West forks of the Dolores, lies a prized 157-acre property called Dunton Meadows, which WRC has committed to purchase. This subalpine meadow provides excellent habitat for birds and wildlife and captures snowmelt and rain that drain to a nearby stream called Coal Creek. The creek is a critical headwater tributary of the Dolores and offers some of the richest habitat in the entire upper river for imperiled Colorado River cutthroat trout. After acquiring Dunton Meadows, we plan to hold the property until we can secure funding through the LWCF to convey it to the San Juan National Forest for permanent protection.

Mindy Lundy Kramer photo

