



WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

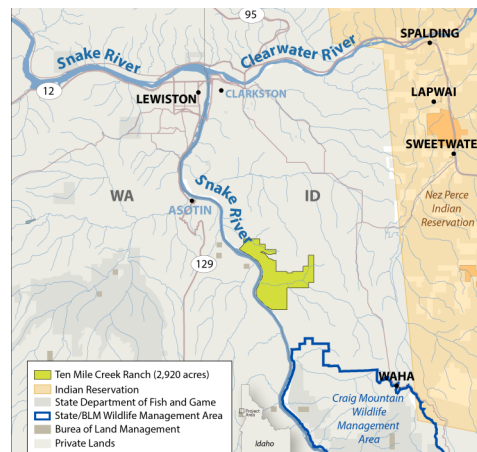
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Snake River, Idaho: Nursery Grounds Protected for Hells Canyon Bighorns

Downstream of Hells Canyon, near Lewiston, Idaho, WRC has permanently conserved the 2,920-acre Ten Mile Creek Ranch, an intact property that is critical to the survival of Idaho's northern Hells Canyon herd of Rocky Mountain bighorns. Once ubiquitous in Hells Canyon, bighorns have seen steady declines since the mid-1800s, and today the Idaho Hells Canyon herd numbers only about 150 head. That's where Ten Mile Creek Ranch comes in. With its steep breaks and rugged cliffs, the property offers sheep protection from predators and ideal lambing grounds for birthing and raising their young. To remove the potential of a 24-lot subdivision and protect this critical property, WRC purchased Ten Mile Creek Ranch in 2018. While we held the land, we worked with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to place a conservation easement on it. Once the ranch was protected, we sold the land to a private conservation buyer, who will partner with the state to keep the land forever wild and unbroken for the sake of its sheep and other wildlife.

Kirk Anderson Photo



Gunnison River, Colorado: Another Mile Protected along the Gunnison

WRC has protected another prized mile of Colorado's lower Gunnison River by adding 150 acres to the Bureau of Land Management's Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. A haven for rare desert fish, the lower Gunnison is protected along much of its length, including within the Dominguez Escalante NCA. Yet even within the boundaries of the NCA, 16 miles of the river remained undesignated and therefore vulnerable to development. To help fill that gap, WRC has been working to purchase strategic Gunnison River frontage for over a decade. Our first success came in 2012, when we conserved 400 acres at the entrance to the NCA and prevented a gravel mine on the banks of the river. A year later, we purchased 150 acres directly across the river, including another critical mile of Gunnison frontage and prime campsites for boaters. In September, we successfully added this property to the NCA, utilizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund to convey it to the BLM.

Russ Schmitzer photo

