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Nearly a Mile of Forested Lower Sacramento River Frontage Conserved by Western Rivers Conservancy and Bureau of Land Management

Conveyance adds 288 acres of mature riparian forest and outstanding recreation lands to BLM holdings near Jelly's Ferry Road, upstream of Red Bluff



The Jelly's Ferry parcel lies within the BLM's Sacramento River Bend Area of Critical Environmental Concern, upstream of Red Bluff. Photo credit: Teddy Miller/Western Rivers Conservancy

RED BLUFF, Calif. (December 10, 2024) — Western Rivers Conservancy conveyed 288 acres of Sacramento River frontage to the Bureau of Land Management yesterday, conserving rare stands of mature cottonwood, oak and sycamore forests along nearly a mile of the river, just upstream of Jelly's Ferry Bridge.

Conservation of the Jelly's Ferry parcel will allow the BLM to restore riparian and side-channel habitats that will benefit Chinook salmon, green sturgeon, winter steelhead and Pacific lamprey. Western monarch butterflies, which rely on abundant milkweed found on the property, as well as Swainson's hawk and yellow-billed cuckoo, all stand to benefit from the efforts.

WRC's conveyance of the property to the BLM will also open significant new access to the Sacramento River in an area that is popular among anglers, hunters, hikers, boaters, birdwatchers and others.

“This project was an incredible opportunity to protect a stretch of the Sacramento River that still bears a resemblance to the wild, free-flowing river it once was,” said Nelson Mathews, WRC’s Interim President. “Protecting the last of these forests is a win for salmon and steelhead, for wildlife, and for the countless people who venture out here to enjoy this stretch of the river. We applaud the vision of the Bureau of Land Management to acquire and restore this property, the latest success in its decades-long effort to conserve this stretch of the Sacramento River and open it for all to enjoy.”

The Jelly’s Ferry parcel is on the east bank of the Sacramento River, adjacent to the BLM-managed Oak Slough Trailhead and surrounded by the 20,000-acre Sacramento River Bend Area of Critical Environmental Concern and Extensive Recreation Management Area, also managed by the agency.

Now that the BLM has taken the property into public ownership, it will begin work on a management plan that will prioritize restoration activities while preparing the property for public access. The BLM will engage with all interested members of the public to explore options for access and use.

“We are excited about the potential this property has for public access and conservation,” said BLM Northern California District Manager Dereck Wilson. “We look forward to hearing ideas about how this property will complement our current public land management in the Sacramento River Bend.”

The parcel lies within a 56-mile corridor of largely intact habitat between Redding and Red Bluff and will play an important role in broader recovery efforts for anadromous fish in the Sacramento River. Bald eagle, osprey, ringtail cat, pollinators and black-tailed deer from the East Tehama Deer Herd will also benefit from riparian forest restoration on the property.

The BLM has already conducted extensive off-channel habitat restoration just north of the property, including rehabilitation of a large historic slough and other habitats throughout the floodplain. Restoring riparian habitat and native vegetation among existing old-growth forests will help reconnect vital ecological linkages and reestablish habitat for juvenile anadromous fish, neotropical migratory songbirds and a wealth of other wildlife.

Conveyance of the Jelly’s Ferry parcel to the BLM was made possible by funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. LWCF is America’s most important federal conservation and recreation program and has protected wildlife habitat and open space, and improved outdoor recreation opportunities, in nearly every state and every county in the U.S.

About 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 225,000 acres of land in nine western states. Its approach to river conservation is effective, tangible and permanent. More information can be found at westernrivers.org.

About the Bureau of Land Management

The BLM manages approximately 245 million acres of public land in the nation, primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.