

Wilderness Fish

**A very large but certainly not comprehensive look at where to find
fish in US designated Wilderness Areas**

Volume 2:

Wilderness Areas H through P

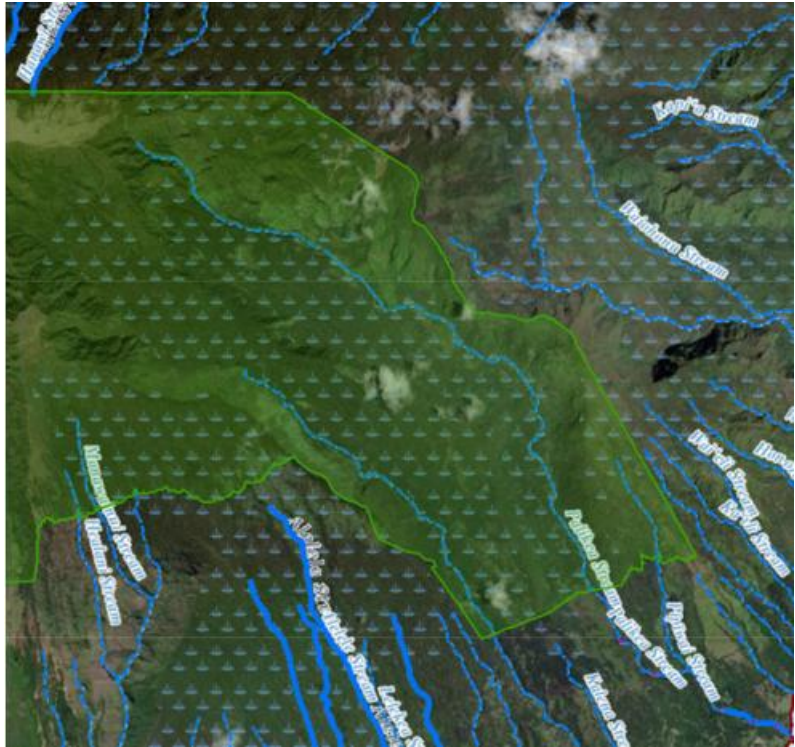


by Mapdawg



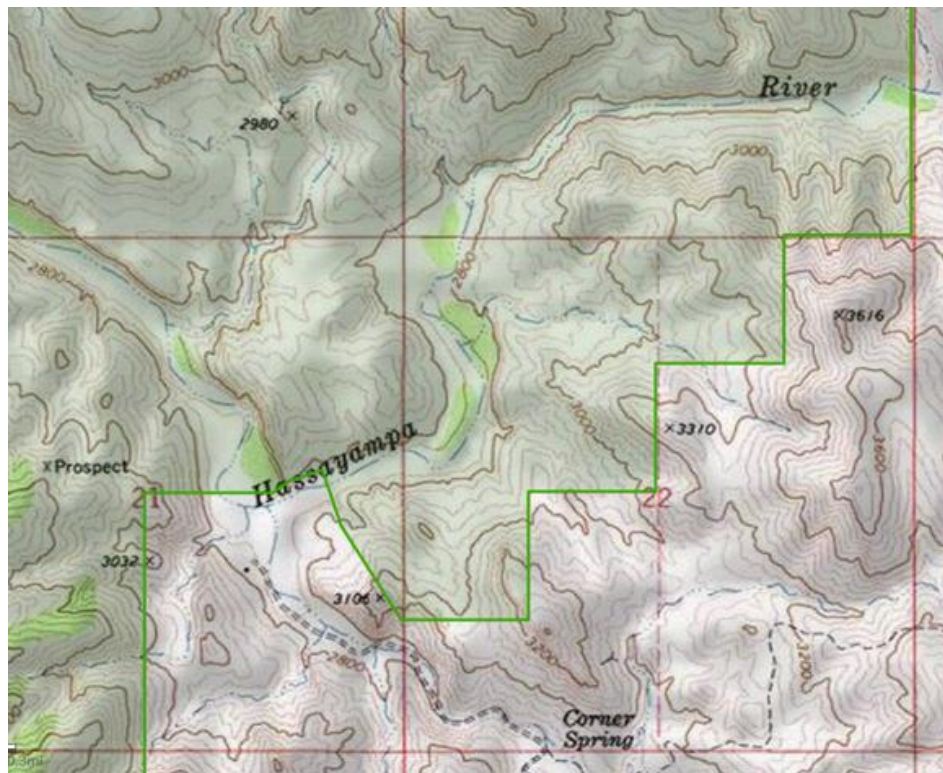
Haleakala Wilderness (HI)

Palikea Stream seems to be a fairly consistently flowing stream that could support fish. The Park Service says the Hawaiian freshwater goby, endemic to Hawaii and found in mountain streams, is abundant in the park. There are streams and a very small coastal area in the park outside the wilderness area, but chances seem good for the wilderness. Other fish appearing in the park include the endemic and amphidromous Sandwich Island sweeper; the Hawaiian Flagtail, abundant in coastal pools and stream mouths in Hawaii; and the amphidromous Nopoli rock climbing goby, all of which could be found along the coastal area, but maybe not likely in the wilderness. (NPS 2023 NPSpecies)

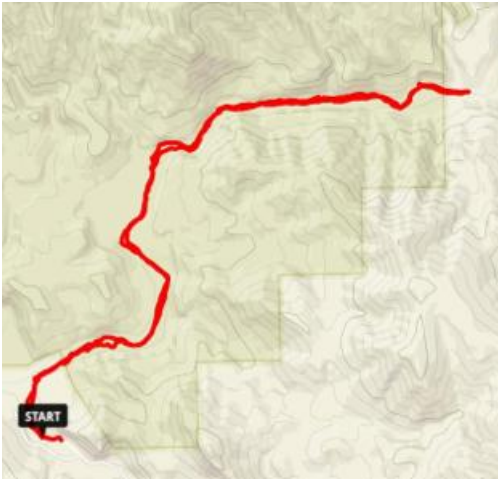


Hassayampa River Canyon Wilderness (AZ)

On November 21, 2020 I hiked upstream from the Williams Family Ranch trailhead about 2.5 miles. I first encountered flowing water 1.1 miles from trailhead, small dace appeared within the first 0.3 miles of flow, and then thousands of longfin dace in weedy channels as I went further up. Caught dace with the net and on the fly rod. (Number 35)

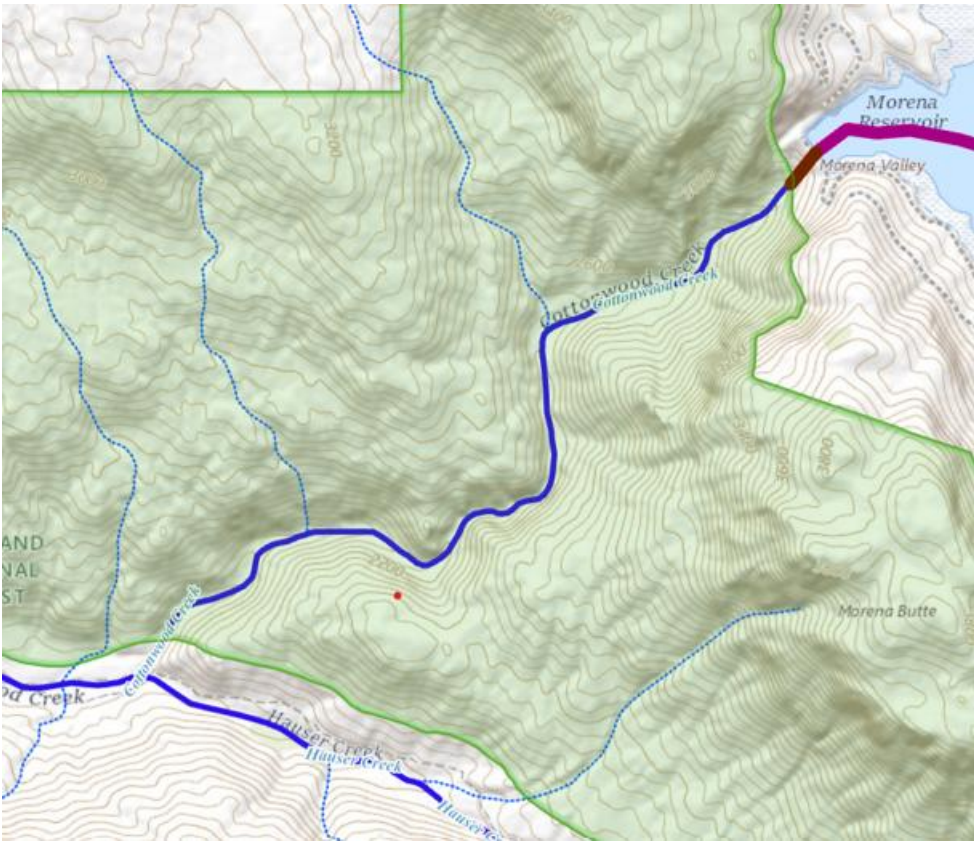


Hassayampa River Canyon Wilderness (AZ)



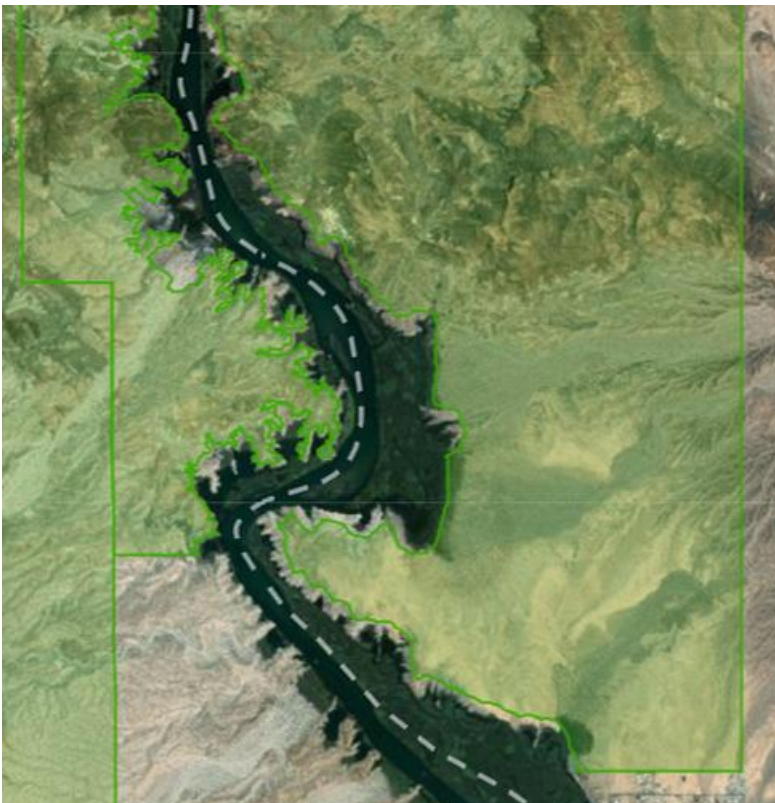
Where the river disappears...

Hauser Wilderness (CA)



The western side of the wilderness parallels the Barrett Lake shoreline, but the wilderness boundary is about 200 feet above the high water level. On the eastern end of the wilderness Cottonwood Creek flowing out of Moreno Reservoir and crossing the wilderness is allegedly perennial, it may be perennial-ish. (USGS 2021) Coastal rainbow trout are native to the Cottonwood Creek drainage. (UCal PISCES 2022)

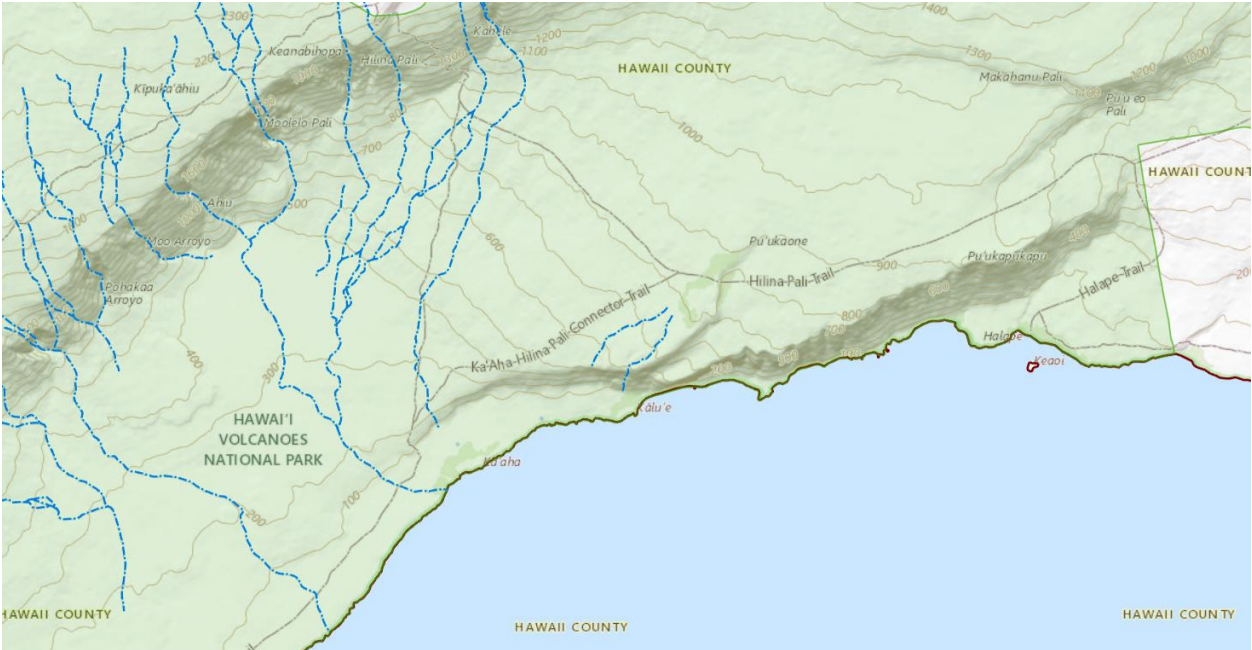
Havasu Wilderness (AZ, CA)



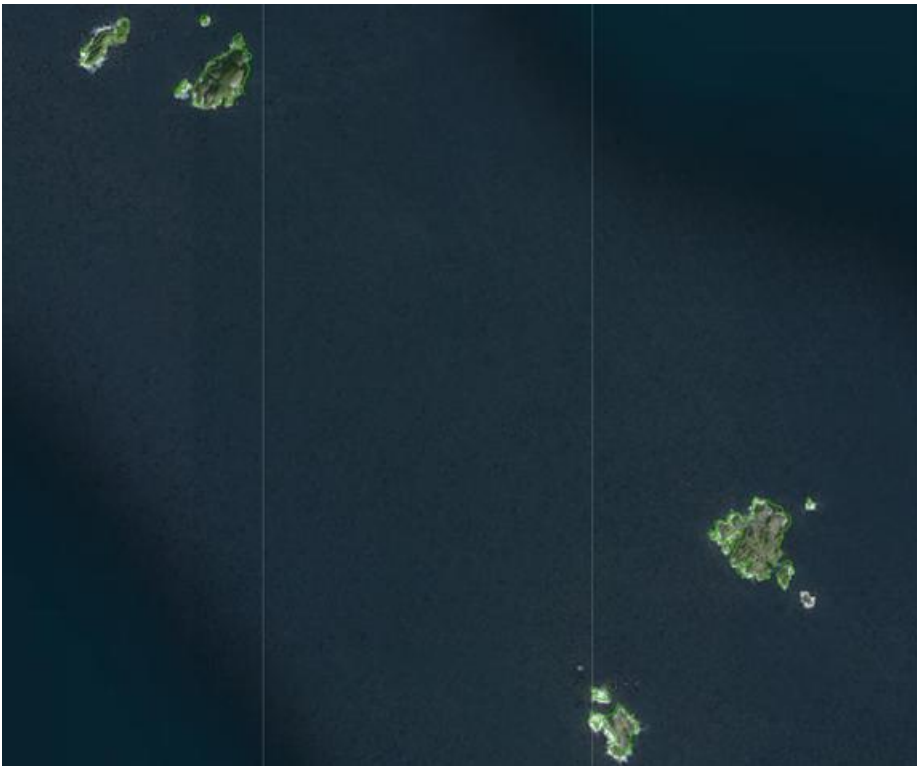
USGS NWIS shows no perennial surface water in the wilderness (USGS 2021). The Colorado River runs through the middle of the wilderness, separating the Arizona portion from the California portion. While the imagery shows the wilderness boundary well away from the water for most of the length of the river, there are a few places, especially on the west side, where the boundary seems to reach the river or cross an inlet. Of course, access to the Colorado would mean access to fish.

Hawaii Volcanoes Wilderness (HI)

There doesn't appear to be much freshwater in this wilderness, just some small possibly intermittent streams near the coast. There is some wilderness coastline. The Park Service says the Hawaiian Flagtail is common in the park, it is normally found in coastal pools and stream mouths so is likely in the coastal area. The amphidromous Sandwich Island sweeper, endemic to Hawaii, is also in the wilderness but less common. (NPS 2023 NPSpecies) There are records of morays and zebra blenny at Halape in the southeast corner of the wilderness.



Hazy Islands Wilderness (AK)



A small group of rocky islands about 11 miles west of Prince of Wales Island. Breeding birds, including a colony of Brandt's cormorants, indicate the presence of nearshore fishes. (USF&WS 1988 Alaska Maritime NWR, p. II-203) Nearshore species like sand lance and capelin are likely present in good numbers.

Headwaters Wilderness (WI)



This flat northern Wisconsin wilderness holds the headwaters of the Pine River. The Forest Service says fishing is a popular activity here, but I haven't seen anything from the Forest Service that says what you can fish for. There are nearby records in lakes of northern pike and largemouth bass, and of brook trout in streams (iNaturalist 2023), so I expect these might be present in the wilderness.

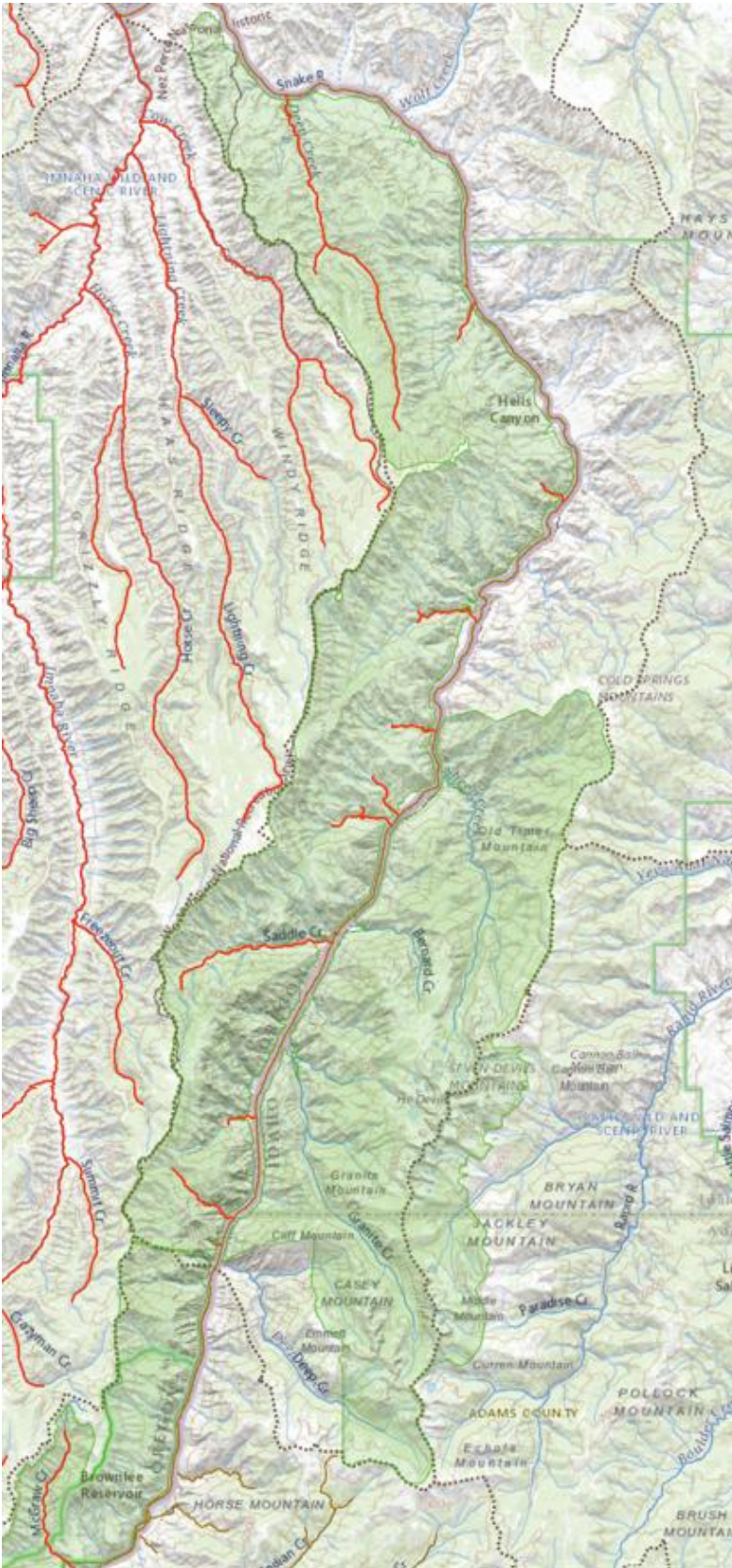


Hell Hole Bay Wilderness (SC)



There is no easy way to penetrate this wilderness, due at least in part to the fact it is submerged for half the year (which also means there are likely fish present). The thick underbrush, saturated soil, and three kinds of poisonous snake also add to the difficulty. There is a road along the west boundary which can at least get you to the edge of the wilderness. There are records of banded sunfish and golden shiner along this road. (iNaturalist 2023)

Hells Canyon Wilderness (OR, ID)



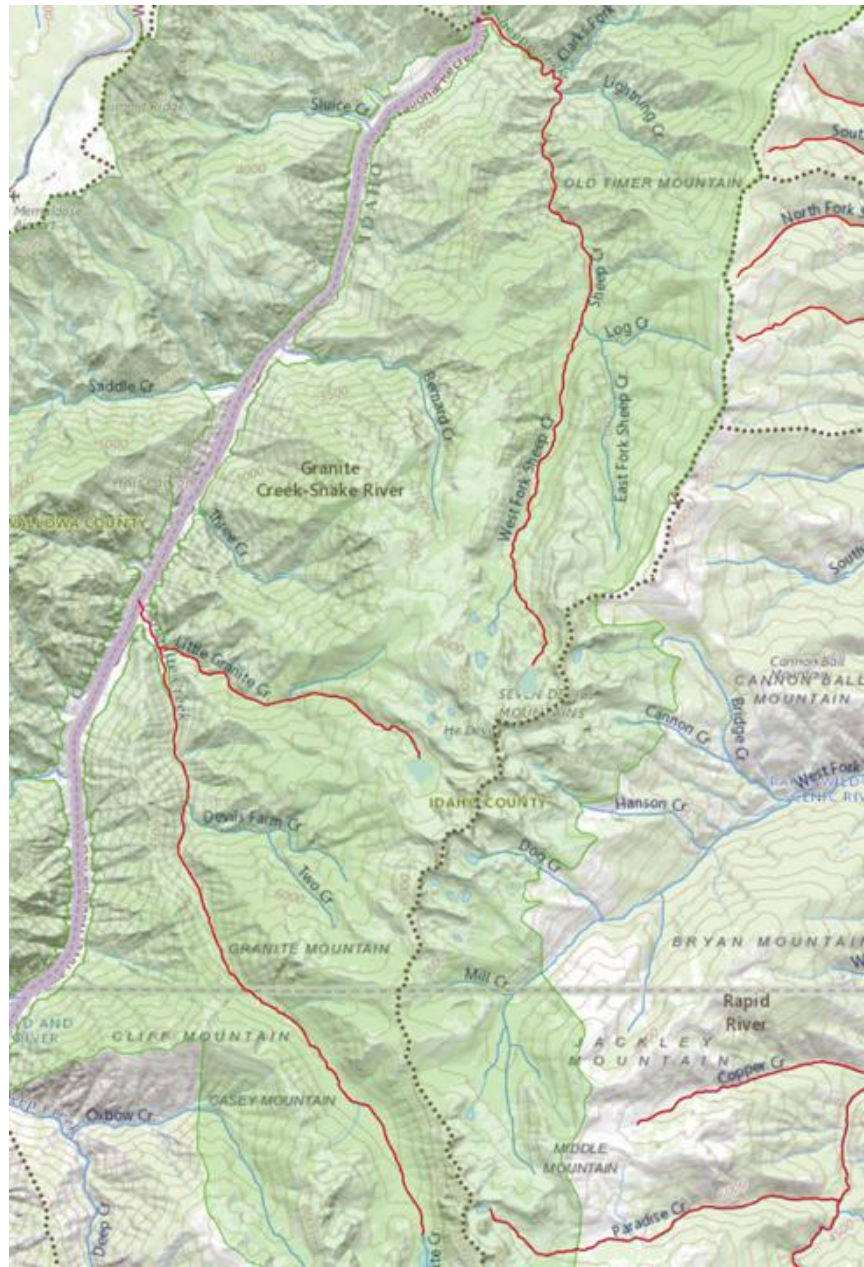
There are lots of fish in the Snake River between the eastern and western parts of the wilderness, including migrating spring and fall chinook, summer steelhead, bull trout and Pacific lamprey. There is spawning habitat for bull trout in larger tributaries within the wilderness, including Somers Creek, Salt Creek, Sheep Creek and Clarks Fork Sheep Creek, and Granite Creek. Redband trout occupy several tributaries on the Oregon side (the red lines on the sadly low resolution map to the left; StreamNet 2020)



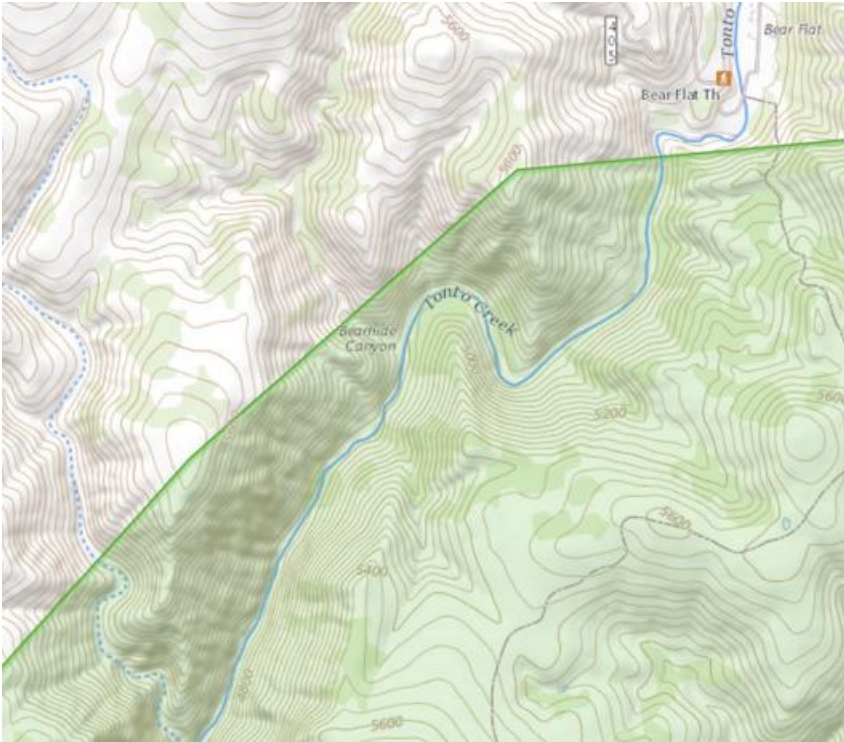
Hells Canyon Wilderness (OR, ID)

While the redbands occupy the Oregon side tributaries, westslope cutthroats live in several Idaho side tributaries (red lines on the map). It amazes me how the redbands and the cutts can segregate themselves like this. (StreamNet 2020)

There is lake fishing for cutthroats in Seven Devils Mountains, including Shelf Lake, Gem Lake, and Basin Lake (middle of the map, headwaters of West Fork Sheep Creek), featured in an American Angler article. (Jan-Feb 2009, p 70) Another article details a llama pack trip to the same lakes, plus Upper Cannon Lake, Sheep Lake and rainbow trout in Baldy Lake. Apparently these are very large, fat fish. (NWFF Nov-Dec 2012, p. 26)

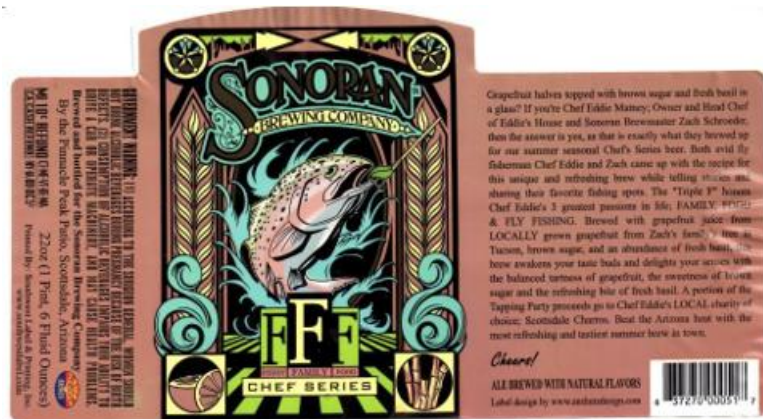


Hellsgate Wilderness (AZ)

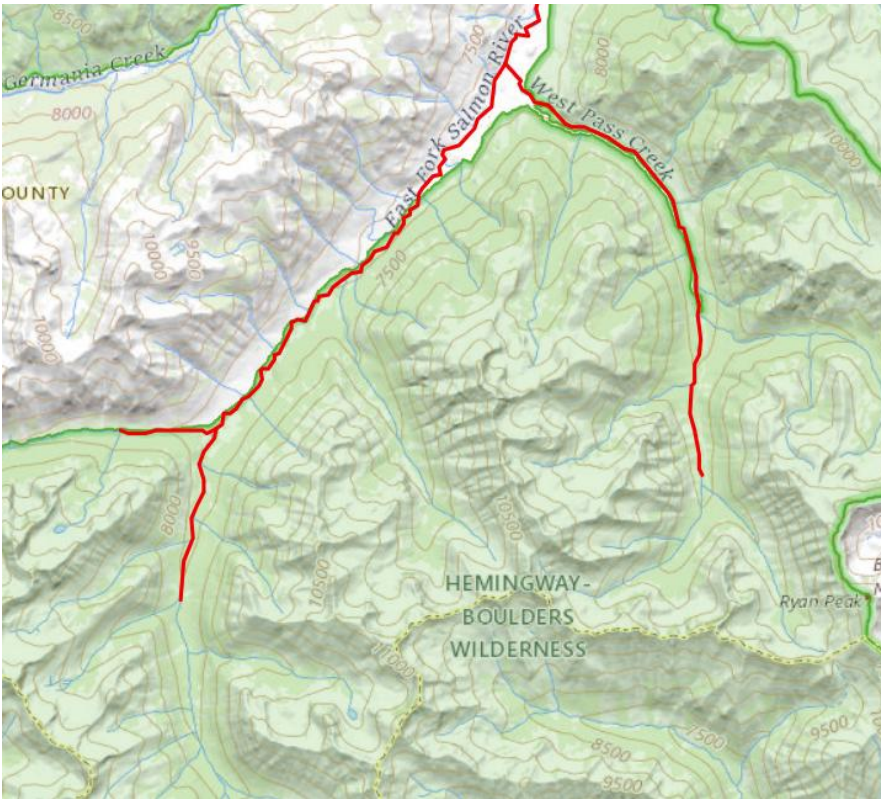


I hiked and fished Tonto Creek many times from 2006 on, mostly from Bear Flat; in 2010 Stella and I made a hellish descent down Hellsgate Trail (for the most part) from the south, we started late and got caught by the dark and spent the night on the ground on the side of a hill with tarantulas crawling around and coyotes yipping nearby. Most of my trips from Bear Flat involve rainbow trout and brown trout, including one of the bigger brown trout I've caught in Arizona. The hellish hike down Hellsgate Trail yielded some roundtail chub. (more in SWFF Mar-Apr 2009, p. 8; Number 3; and SWFF Mar-Apr 2016, p. 44))

Astute observers may note there is no streamside trail coming south out of Bear Flat, the trail is up on the ridge. This is true. If you want to go any distance downstream you have to scramble across steep, unstable slopes and crawl through a lot of thorny brush. I have sustained mild injuries. It's worth it.

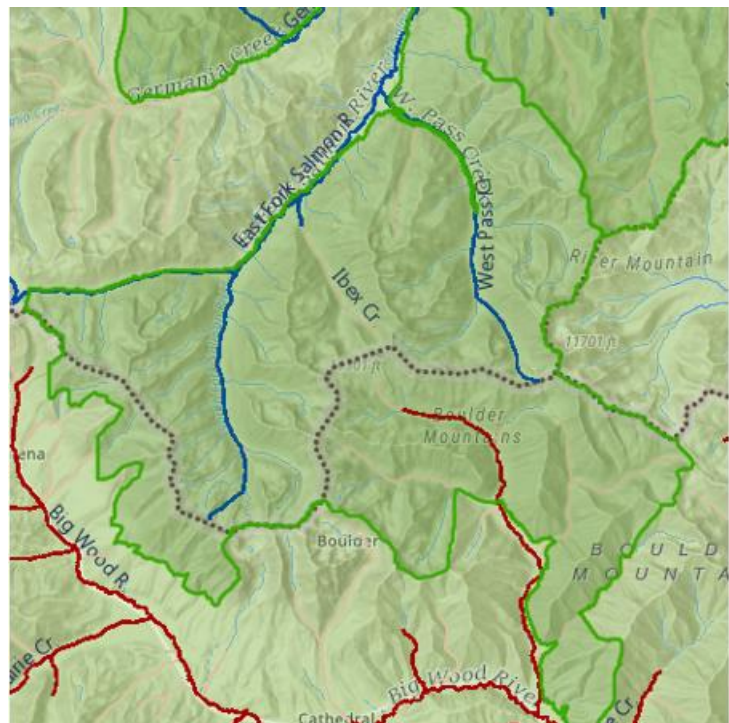


Hemingway-Boulders Wilderness (ID)



There is critical habitat for steelhead in the East Fork Salmon River and tributaries of the South Fork East Fork Salmon River and West Pass Creek. Critical habitat for bull trout is in the same streams, but extends a bit further upstream. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) East Fork Salmon River actually runs within the wilderness boundary but parallel and adjacent to a Forest Service road for several miles.

There are westslope cutthroats in West Pass Creek (picture below) and East Fork Salmon River on north slope of Boulder Mountains. Interior redband trout occupy North Fork Big Wood River on south slope of the mountains. (Mayfield)



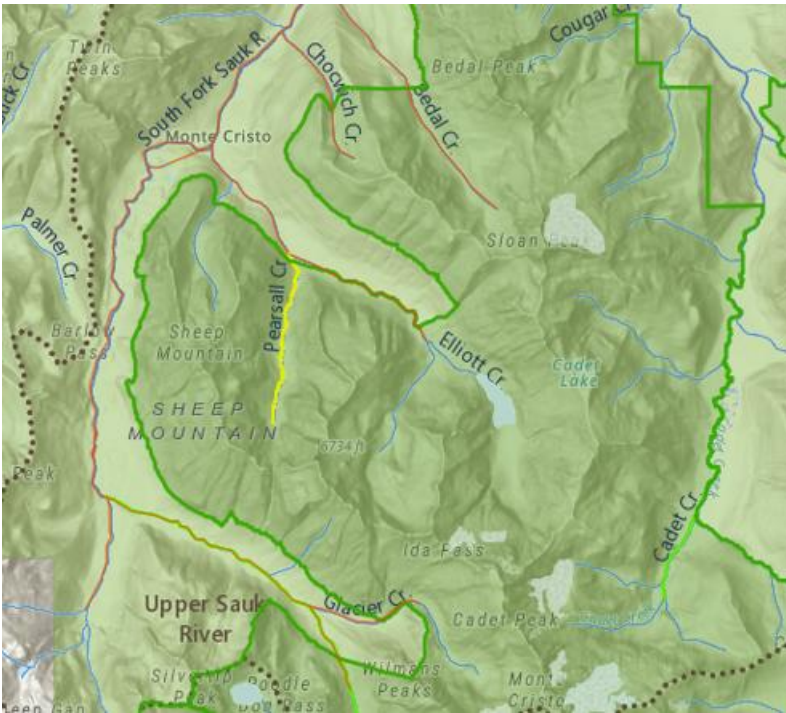
Hemingway-Boulders Wilderness (ID)



On July 15, 2021 I fished up from the downstream end into the wilderness past the cabin and springs, caught a rainbow trout and pretty much a brookie in every pool. (Number 43)



Henry M. Jackson Wilderness (WA)



The wilderness lies largely along the Cascade Range divide. Several salmon and steelhead runs approach in the Sauk River system from the north, the Skykomish system in the west and the Wenatchee on the east slope, but most stop short of the wilderness. (StreamNet 2019) There is critical habitat for bull trout in small tributaries of the South Fork Sauk River (shown on the map, ESRI, USF&WS 2016), but the chances of finding them are low.

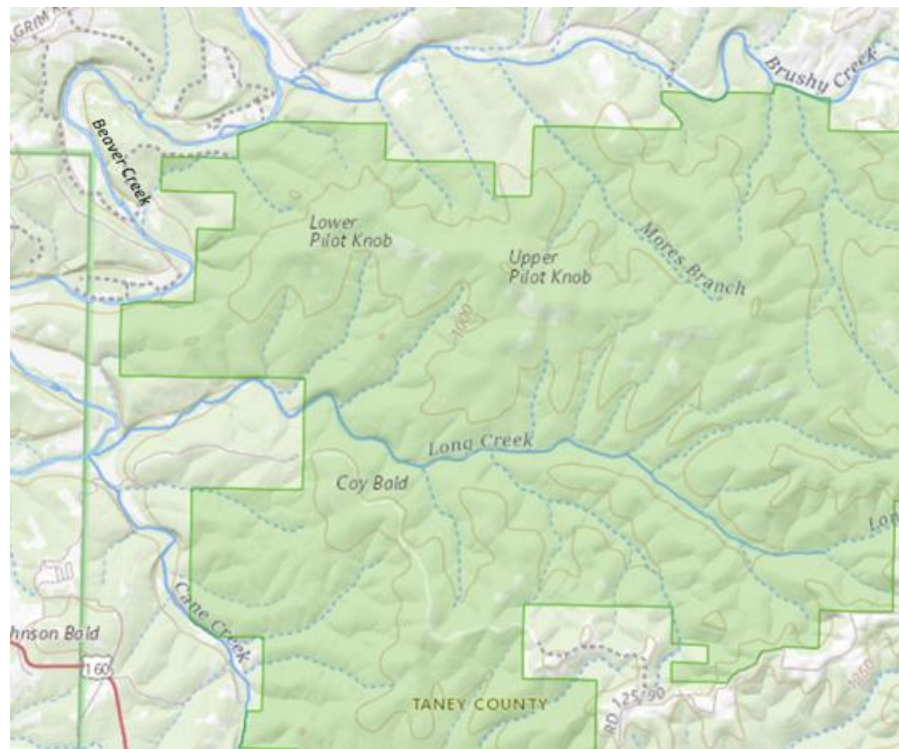
Henry M. Jackson Wilderness (WA)

The east slope tributaries flowing into the Wenatchee River hold westslope cutthroats (thin lines on the map; the thick red line is the Pacific Crest Trail). There are also some brookies and rainbows mixed in. (StreamNet 2019)



Hercules Glades Wilderness (MO)

I couldn't find any records of fish in the wilderness, but Long Creek, tributary of Beaver Creek and North Fork White River/Bull Shoals, is perennial through most of the wilderness. (USGS 2021) There are multiple records of green and longear sunfish and largemouth bass at the confluence of Long Creek and Beaver Creek less than 2 miles downstream from the wilderness, they've got to be up in the wilderness as well. (Fishbrain 2022)

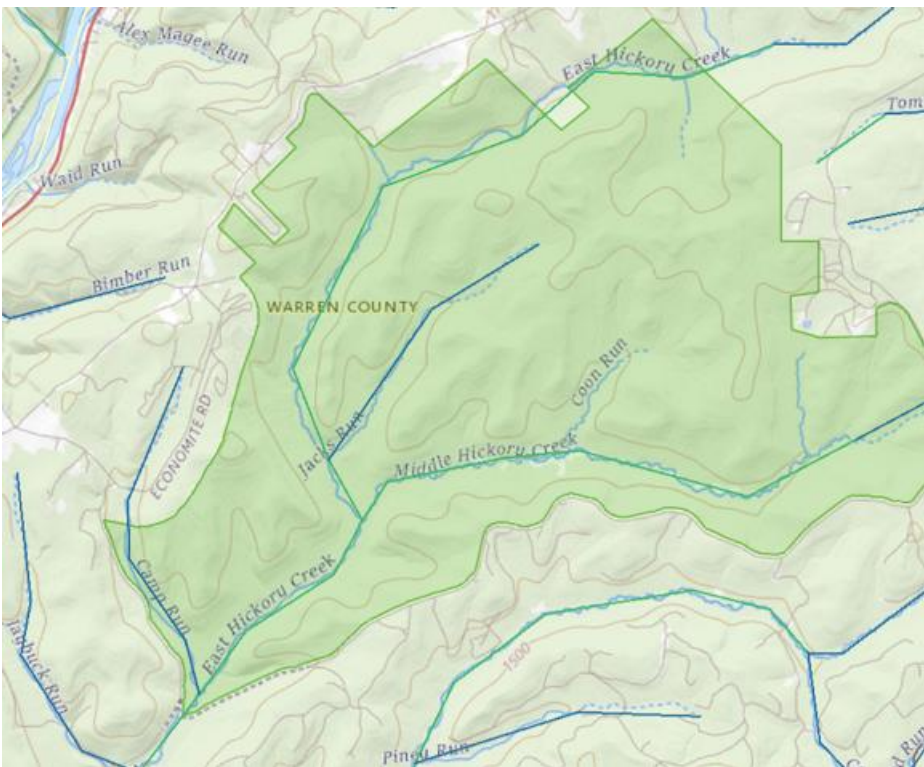


Hermosa Creek Wilderness (CO)

There are genetically pure Colorado cutthroat core conservation populations in Clear Creek and Big Bend Creek, both tributary to Hermosa Creek. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019) I was outside the wilderness but caught cutthroats from above the barrier on East Fork Hermosa Creek with Bubba summer 2010.



Hickory Creek Wilderness (PA)

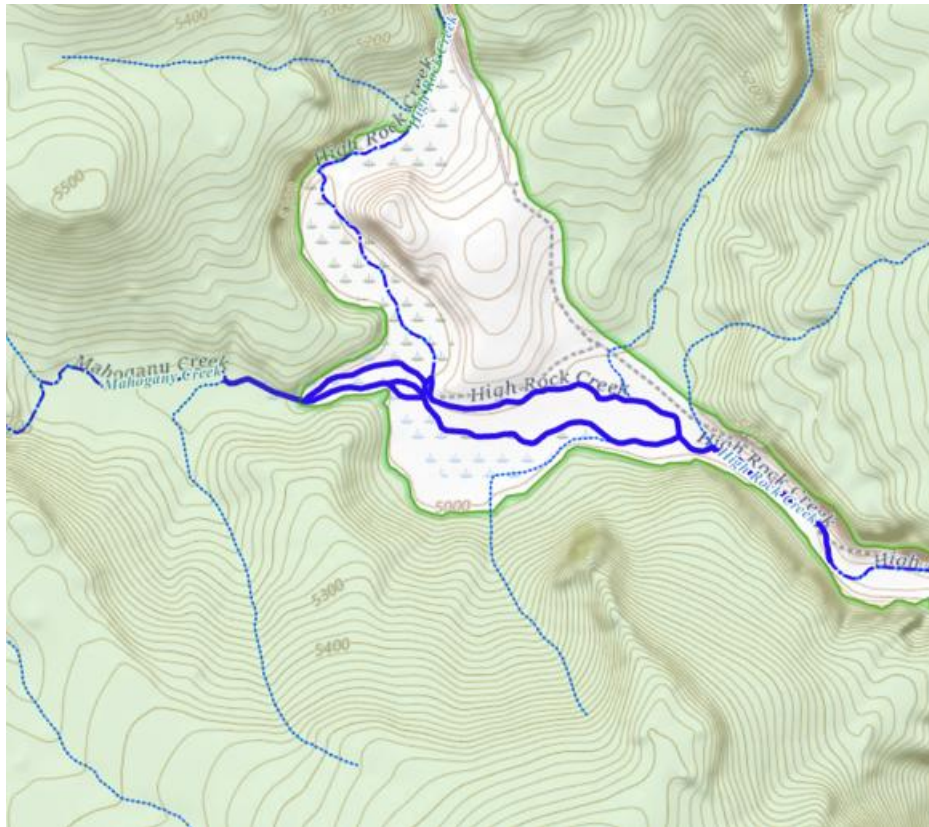


A persistent population of eastern brook trout inhabits East Hickory Creek. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

The blue lines are 70 to 90% probability of brook trout presence, the green lines are 50 to 70%. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

High Rock Canyon Wilderness (NV)

USGS does show three stretches of perennial flow in High Rock Creek, but the places where the creek strays out of the cherry-stem and into the wilderness appear to be on the east side, in the East Fork High Rock Wilderness. (USGS 2021) A group called Friends of Nevada Wilderness says there are endemic fishes in the pools of Mahogany Creek, a tributary of High Rock Creek, which is in the High Rock Wilderness. (Friends of Nevada Wildernesses, 2023)

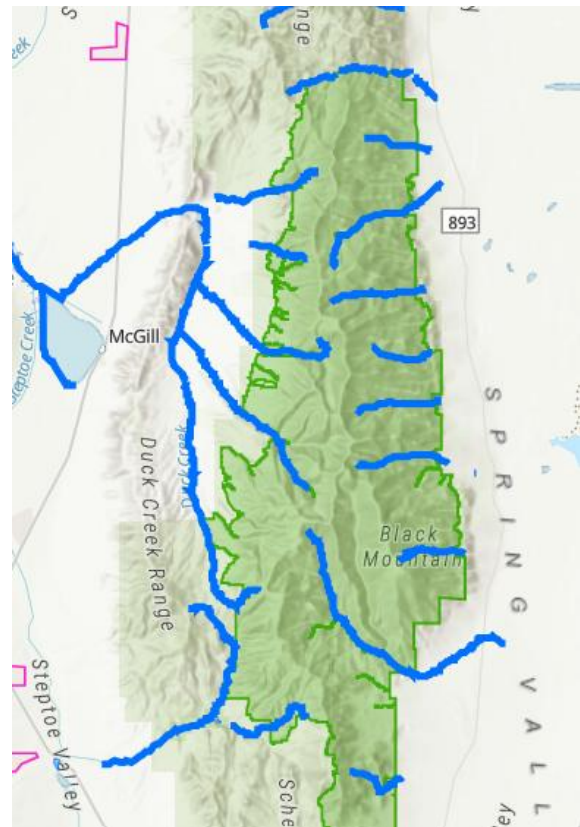


I checked it out in July 2024, hiking about half a mile upstream into the wilderness, past cows across an open meadow. The open meadow had a small stream, one or two feet wide with crystal clear water and a whole bunch of desert speckled dace. Enough to make it really easy to scoop them up with the landing net. (Number 76)



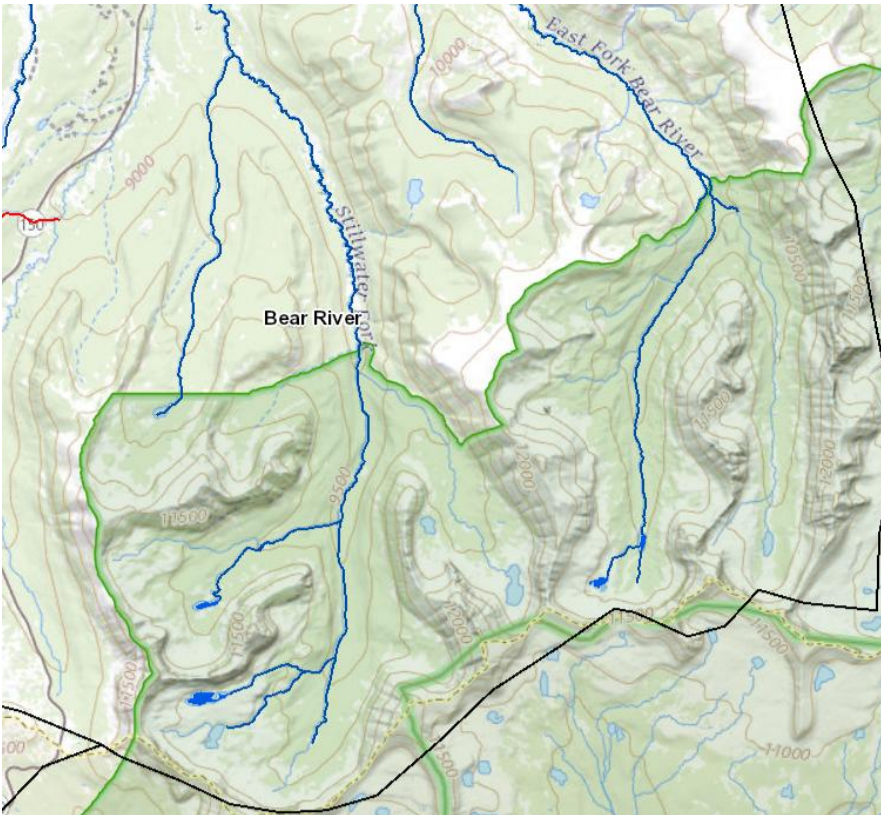
High Schells Wilderness (NV)

Brookies, browns and rainbows seem to be in pretty much every stream coming off of both sides of this ridge with elevations up over 11,500 feet. Blue lines show presence of one or more of these trout species. (Nevada DOW 2017)



In July 2021 I fished at several different spots in the wilderness adjacent to the Cleve Creek cherry-stem. Rainbows were plentiful, stream flow was good, this stream and others in this range seem to have a lot of potential. (Number 40)

High Uintas Wilderness (UT)



There are Bonneville cutthroats in headwaters of the Bear River in the northwest part of the wilderness. (TU BCT 2019)

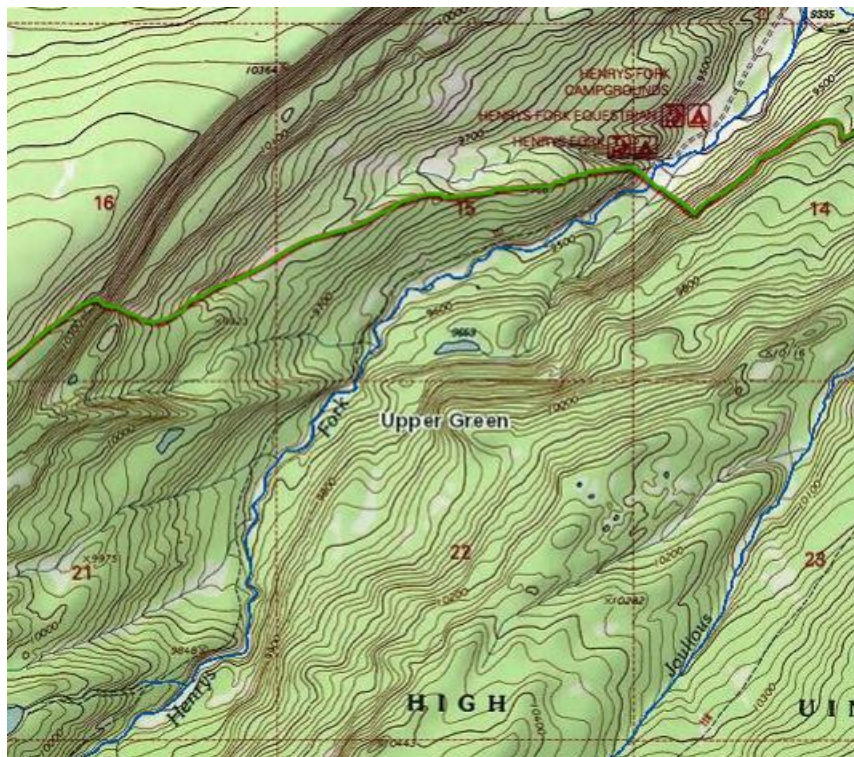
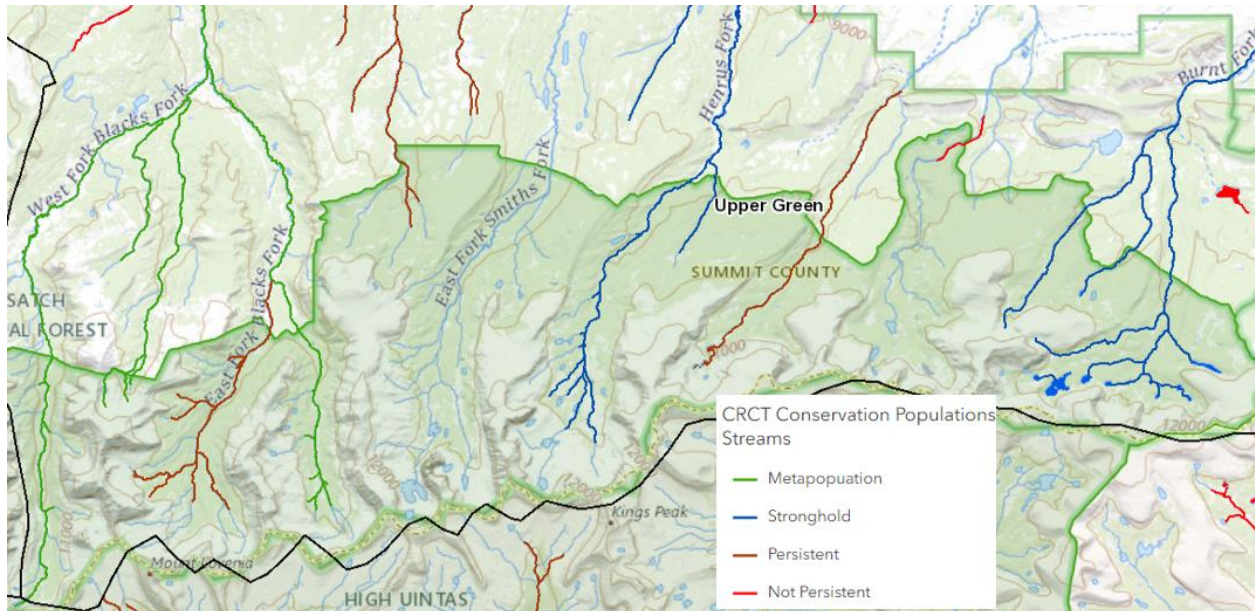
I caught several Bonneville cutthroats on July 18, 2020 in the Stillwater Fork of the Bear River. Surprised by how busy the Stillwater Fork trail was (50 cars in the parking lot and overflow), I hiked in 2 miles to the wilderness boundary and got ready to fish, only to realize my lanyard was still in the truck. Still had a good morning, with a 14-incher included, using a single stimulator with no floatant. The Stillwater Fork One-Fly. (Number 21)



High Uintas Wilderness (UT)

Colorado cutthroats occupy most of the rest of the wilderness. On the north slope of the wilderness, there is a metapopulation of Colorado cutthroats in the Black's Fork system, with a persistent unaltered population in the East Fork Black's Fork. Black's Fork tributary Smith's Fork has an unaltered persistent population in the West Fork. (TU CRCT 2019) There are large cutthroats in Red Castle Lakes at the head of E Fork Smith Fork (SWFF Sep-Oct 2013, p. 24)

Further east, Henry's Fork of the Green, including Joulous Creek, holds an almost pure stronghold population; there is a persistent population of genetically unaltered Colorado cutts in the Beaver Creek system; and there are pure stronghold populatoins in Thompson Creek and the rest of the Burnt Fork system. (TU CRCT 2019)

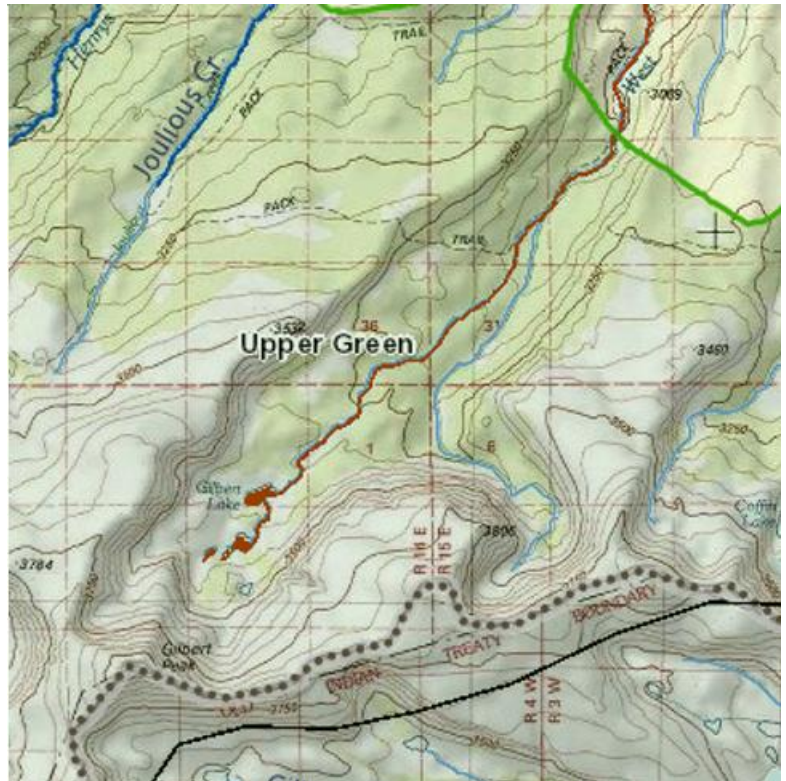


You can camp in Henry's Fork Campground at the edge of the wilderness and hike in a short distance for Colorado cutthroats and the occasional brookie. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2009, p. 12)

Lots of brookies and cutthroats in many of the 600 or so lakes in the Uintas as well. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2015, p. 47)

High Uintas Wilderness (UT)

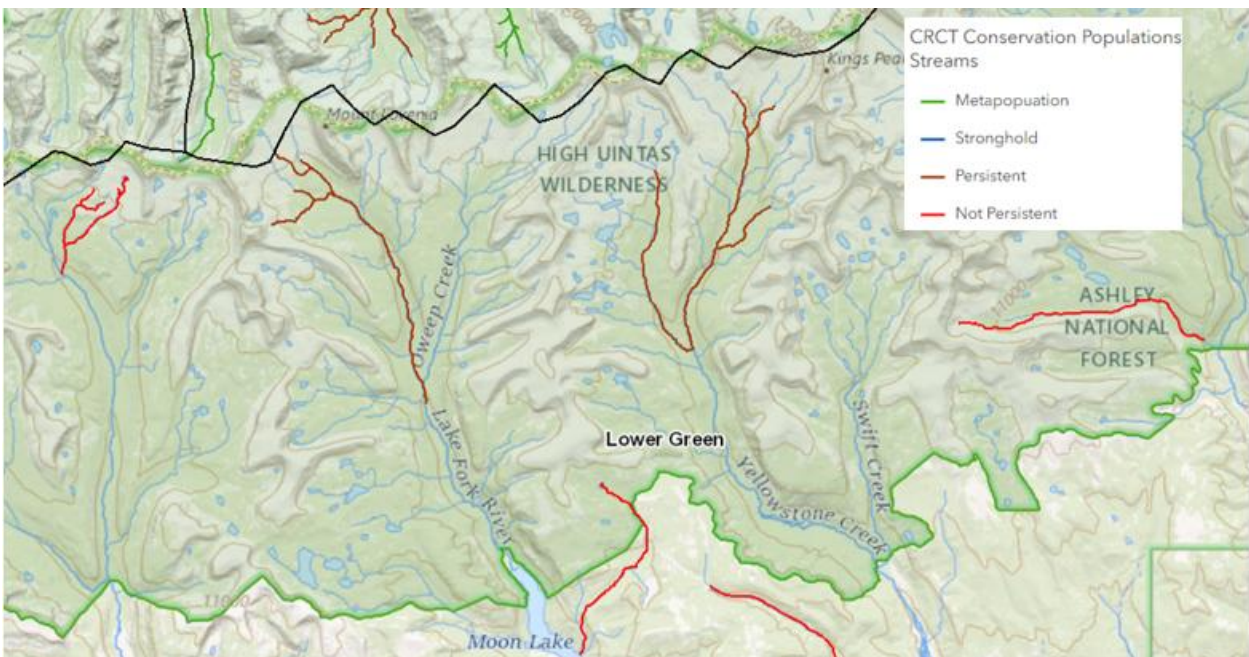
To the east of Henry's Fork headwaters, Gilbert lake sits in the shadow of Gilbert Peak at the upper end of West Fork Beaver Creek and holds brookies and cutthroats. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2011, p. 29)



On the south slope of the Uintas the Duchesne River drainage has pure populations of Colorado cutthroats in upper Rock Creek (core conservation population) flowing into the Duchesne and Krebs Creek in Uinta River drainage. Genetically altered populations occur in Lake Fork River and Garfield Creek in the Yellowstone system. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)

Small brookies and larger Colorado cutthroats are in the lower reaches of Rock Creek within the wilderness, a trail heading upstream from Stillwater Reservoir parallels the creek. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2016, p. 34)

Access the Yellowstone in the wilderness from the Swift Creek trailhead and campground, and find lots of cutthroats and brookies. Brook trout, cutthroats and rainbows are in Lake Fork River above Moon Lake. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2018, p.49)



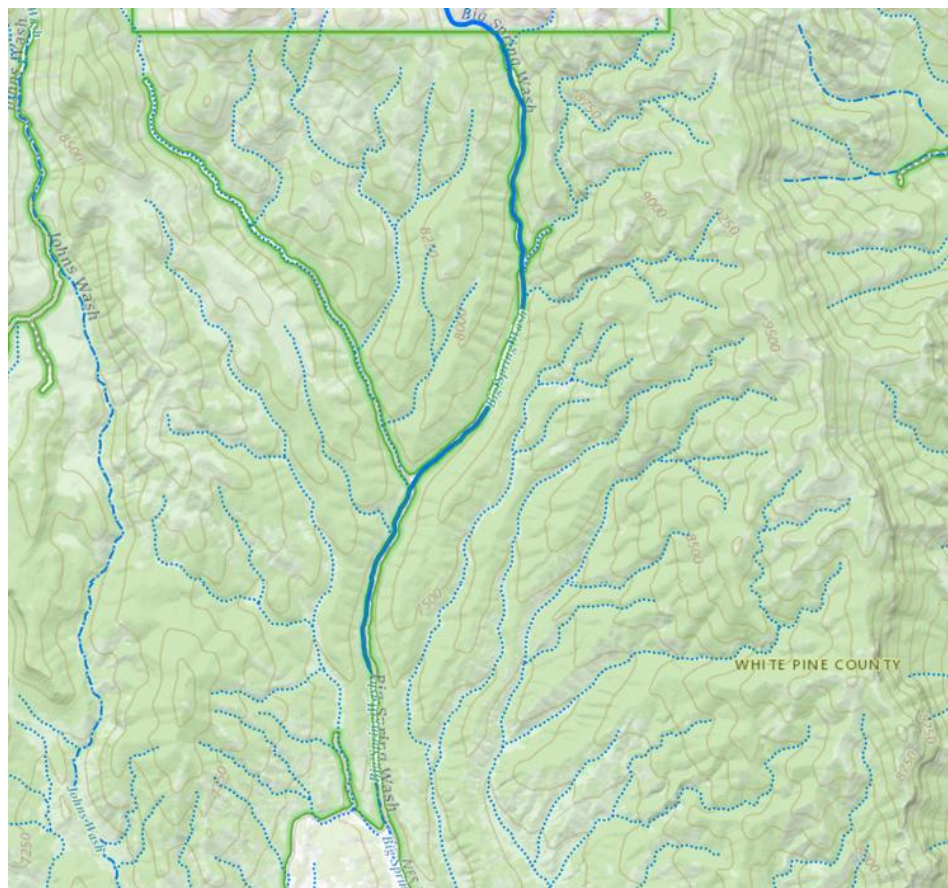
High Uintas Wilderness (UT)

Granddaddy Lakes basin in the West Fork Rock Creek drainage is easy to get to and has multiple options for cutthroats. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2019, p. 50)



Highland Ridge Wilderness (NV)

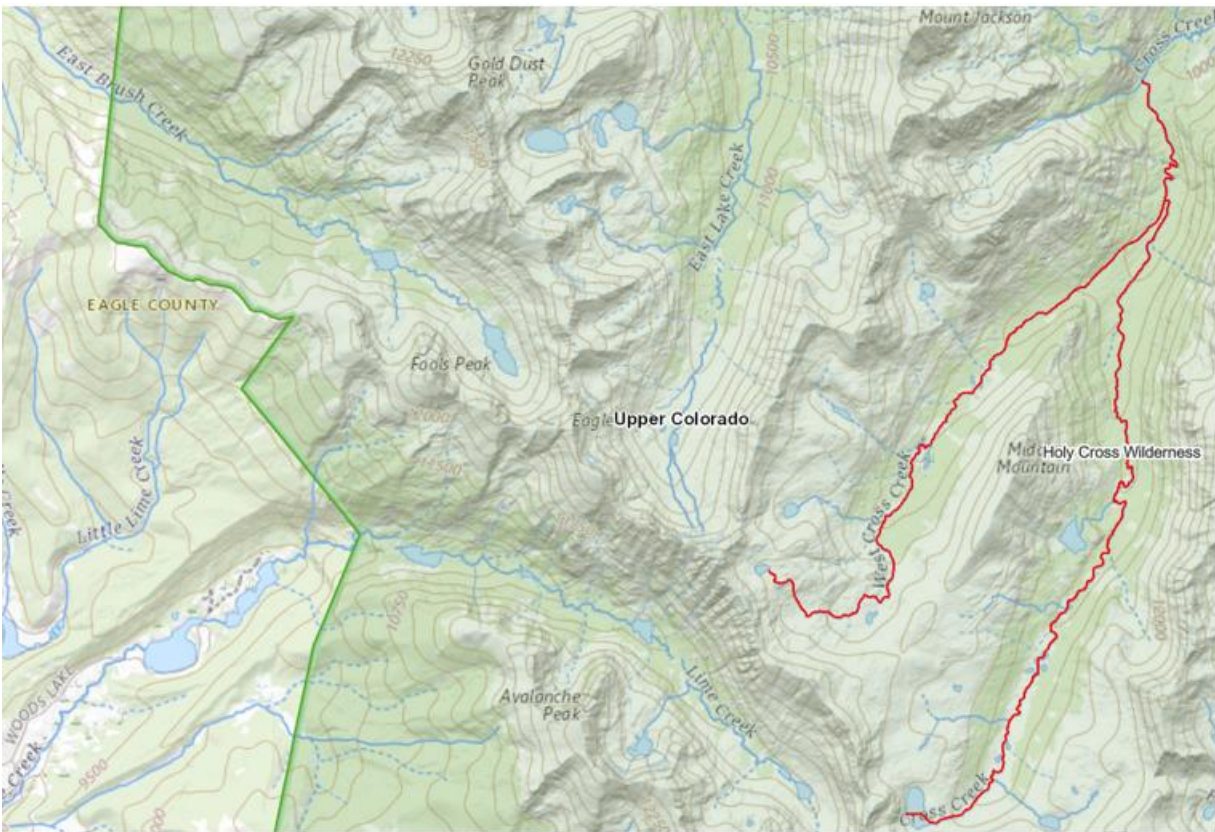
I haven't found any positive documentation of fish, but there is over 5 miles of perennial flow in Big Spring Wash (USGS 2019), the creek reaches 8400 feet of elevation at the northern wilderness boundary, and there are trout in Big Wash, the next drainage to the north of the wilderness (NDOW 2017). I've actually caught cutthroats in Snake Creek, the next creek north of Big Wash. The entire perennial reach of Big Spring parallels a cherry-stemmed road, winding in and out of the wilderness. I think this is well worth a look.



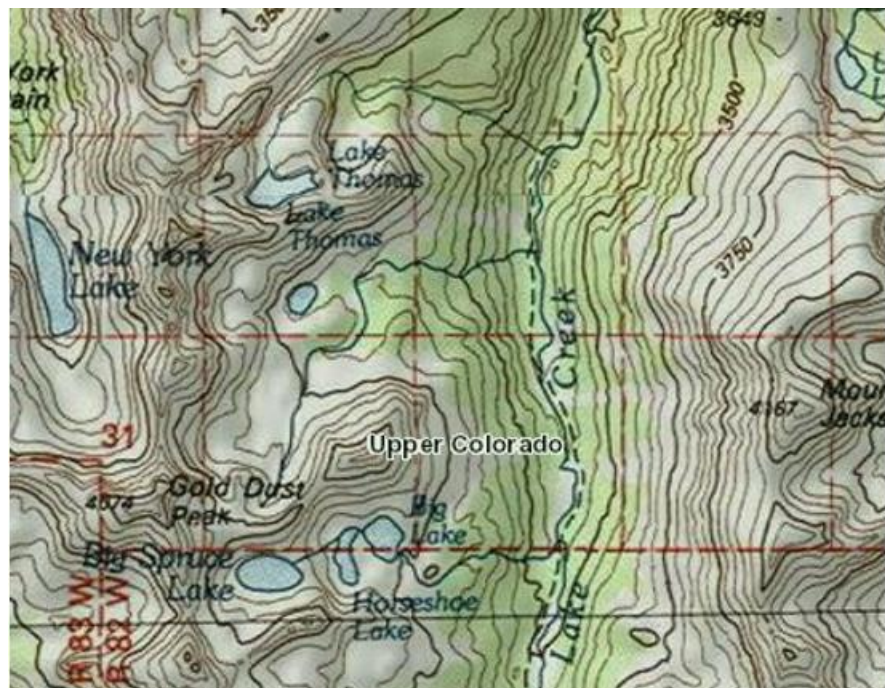
Holy Cross Wilderness (CO)

Hybridized populations of Colorado cutthroats occupy upper reaches of Cross Creek, seven miles up the trail into the wilderness (TU CRCT 2019)

East Brush Creek has a campground just outside the wilderness, a trail that parallels the creek, and large (!) brook trout, many in numerous beaver dam ponds. (SWFF May-Jun 2014, p.18)



Big Lake, Big Spruce Lake and Horseshoe Lake are 10 miles up the East Lake trail from the northern edge of the wilderness, cutthroat trout in each. (Sep-Oct 2019, p. 18)

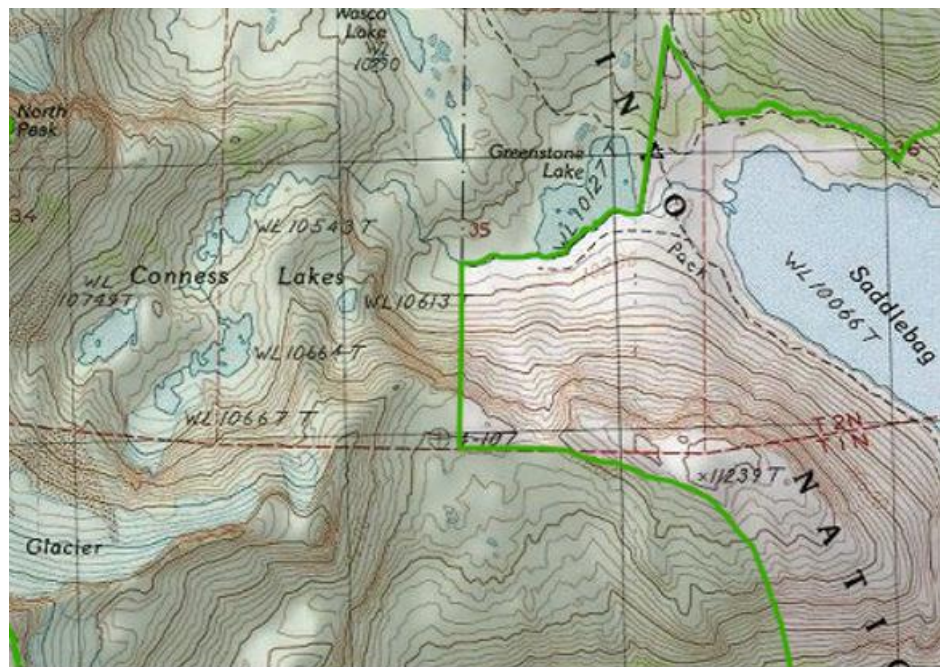


Hoover Wilderness (CA)



Virginia Lakes Resort is just outside the wilderness boundary. Part of the basin, with Blue Lake, Moat Lake, Frog Lakes and Cooney Lake, is within the wilderness, a short hike from the resort. The lakes hold frequently stocked rainbow trout, plus wild brookies and browns. Virginia Creek drains to the northeast toward East Walker River. (NWFF Mar-Apr 2018, p. 49)

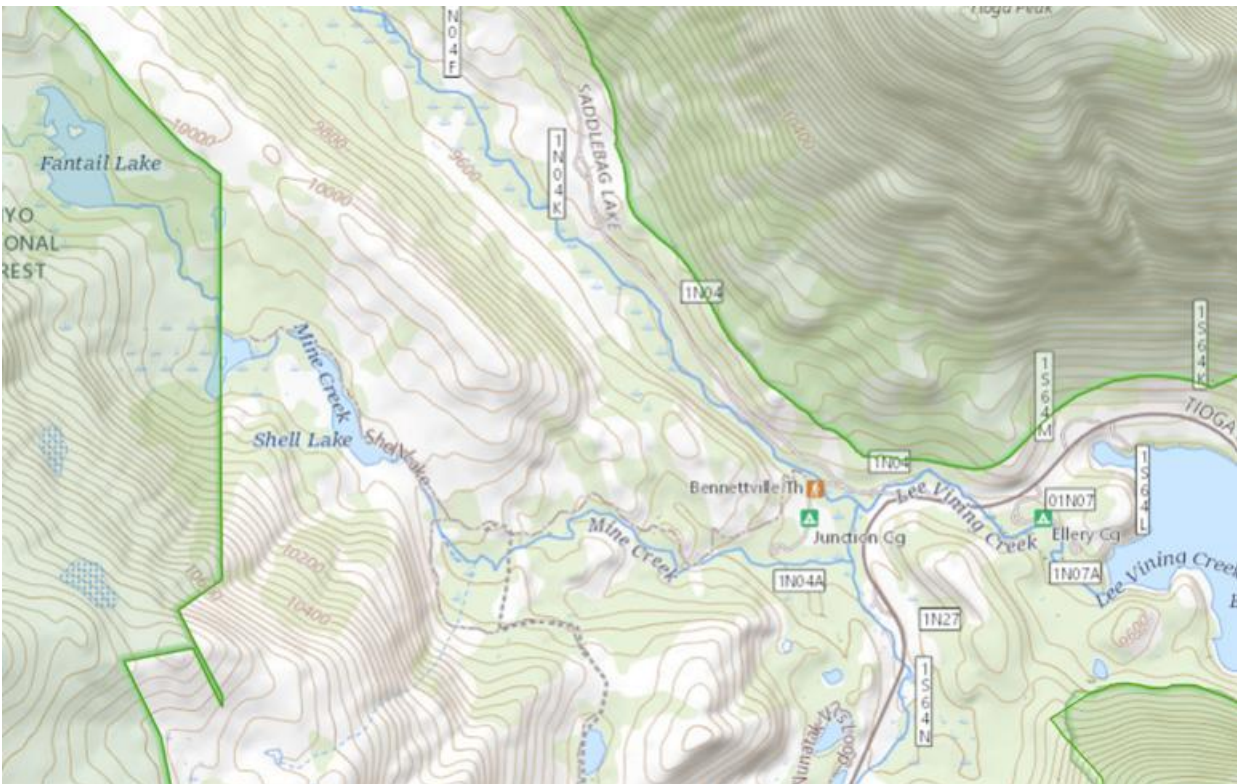
Conness Lakes and other neighboring lakes in the Twenty Lakes Basin are south of Virginia Lakes. The lakes drain through Mill Creek and Lee Vining Creek, heading toward Mono Lake. Brook trout dominate the lakes of this basin, with golden trout in some lakes (Helen L, Excelsior L, Potter L, Cascade L, Conness Lakes and O'Dell L) plus some rainbow trout and Lahontan cutthroat trout. There are also brookies and goldens in Greenstone Creek.



The trout are mostly wild, with some continued stocking of goldens and cutthroat. It's an easy hike in from the trailhead at Saddlebag Lake (NWFF Jul-Aug 2013, p.50)

Hoover Wilderness (CA)

Near the southern end of the wilderness, Mine Creek and Fantail Lake drain toward the southeast into Lee Vining Creek. Small brook trout abound. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2018, p. 24) That's the Tioga Pass Road and windy Ellery Lake in the southeast corner of the map, coming out of Yosemite National Park.

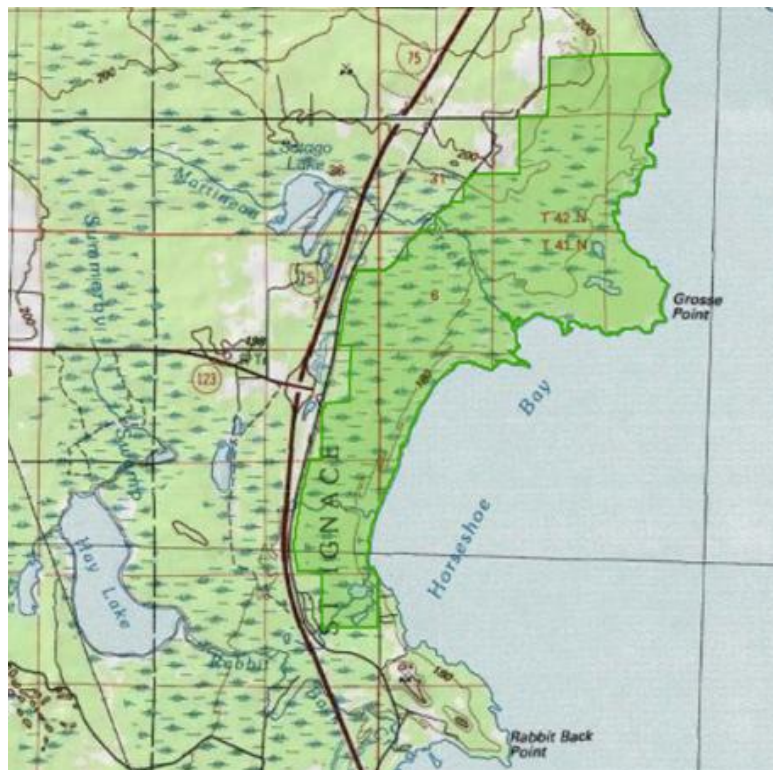


Horseshoe Bay Wilderness (MI)

There should be many fish available with coastline on Lake Huron. There is a record of common shiner along the coast. (iNaturalist 2022)

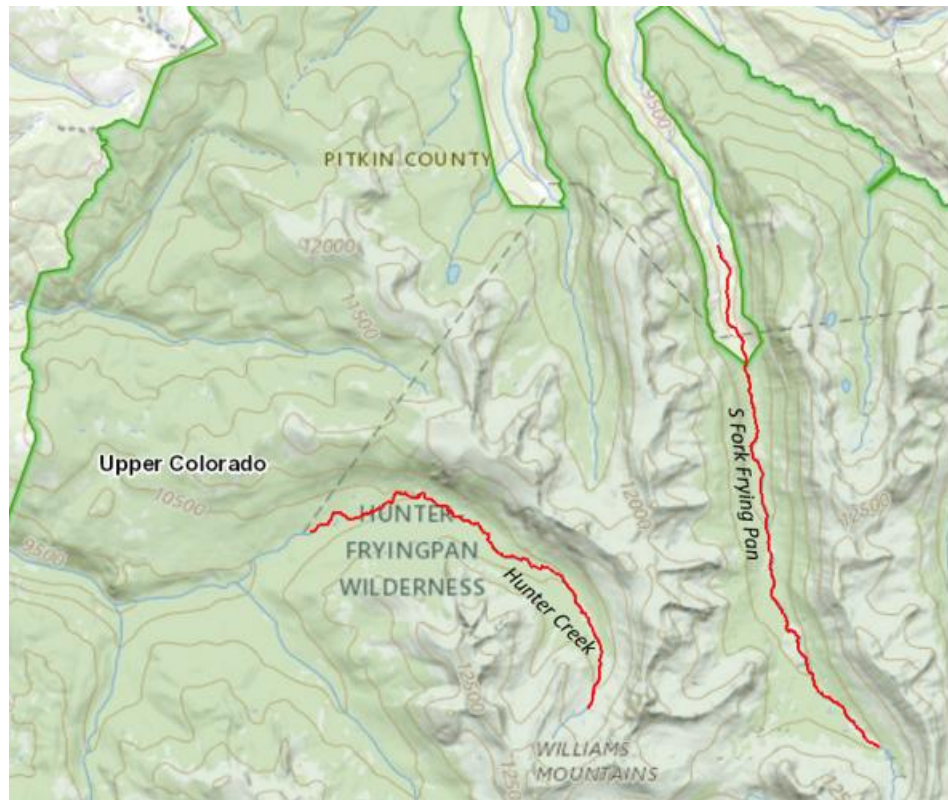


Appears to be easy access off of I-75.

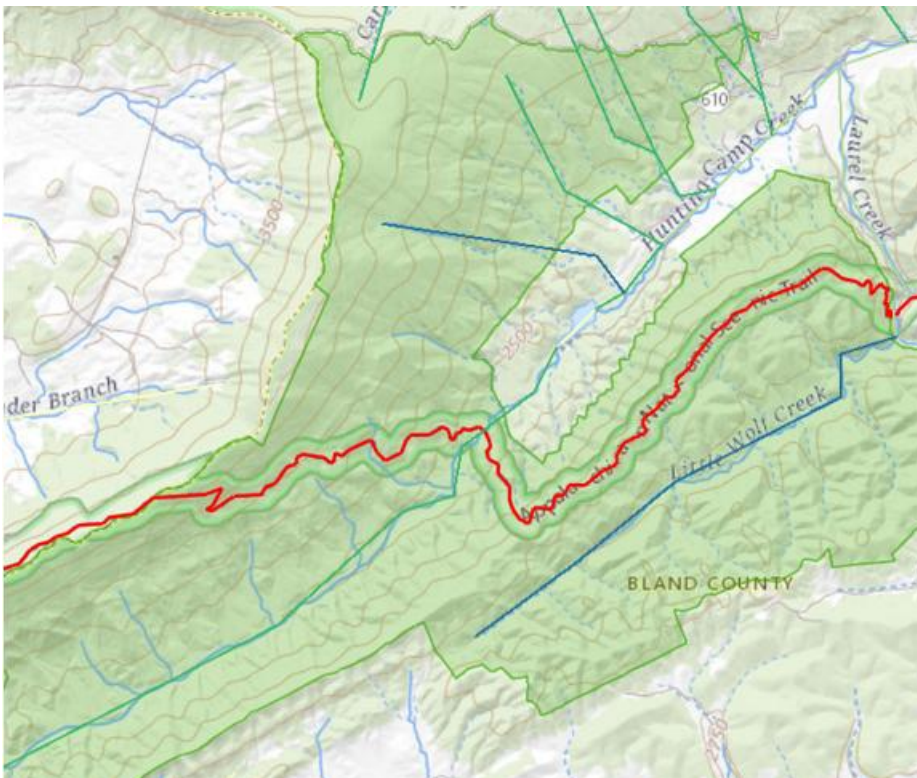


Hunter-Fryingpan Wilderness (CO)

There is a core conservation population of genetically unaltered Colorado cutthroats in Roaring Fork tributary Hunter Creek, and similar population in the South Fork Fryingpan. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



Hunting Camp Creek Wilderness (VA)



I haven't found actual records, but there is a systematic study that determines the probability of brook trout in some streams in the wilderness, including Little Wolf Creek. The blue straight line segments are 70 to 90% probability, the green ones are 50 to 70% probability. The red line is the Appalachian Trail. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

Huron Islands Wilderness (MI)

These are islands in Lake Superior (oddly enough, not Lake Huron), so they are surrounded by fish, although there appears to be no perennial surface water on the islands and the wilderness boundary ends at the waterline. It's still likely that you can stand on the shore in the wilderness and catch cisco, herring, alewife, smallmouth bass and trout and salmon.



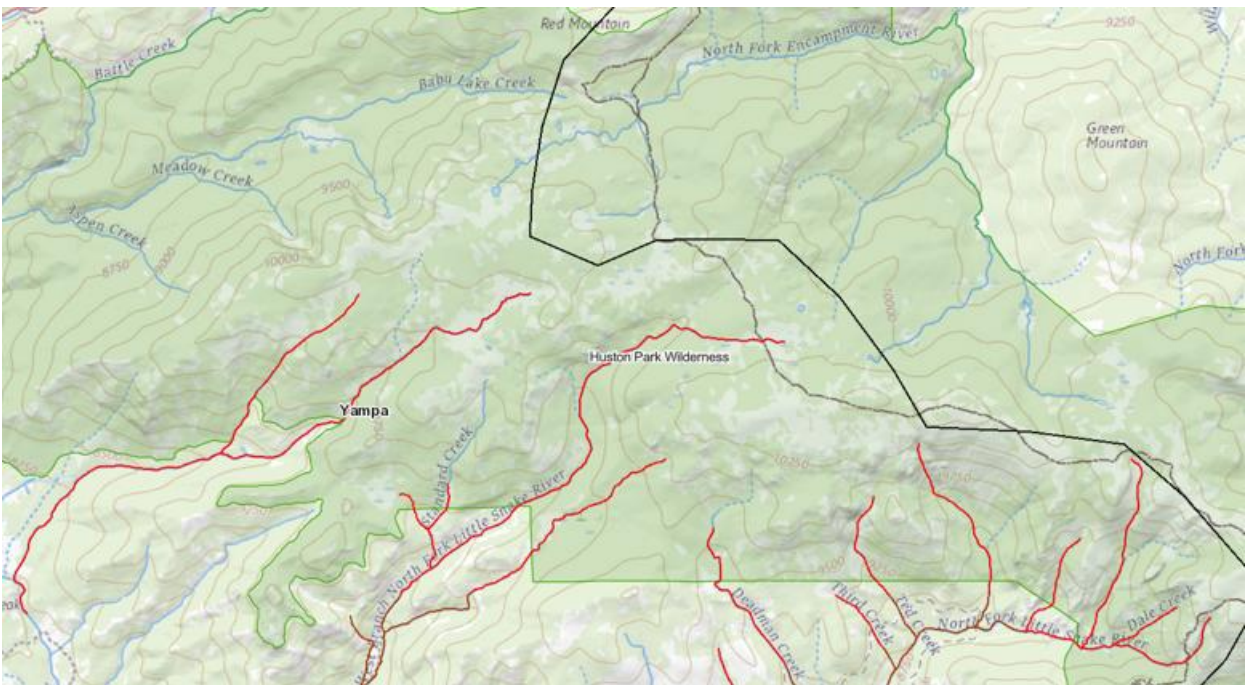
Hurricane Creek Wilderness (AR)

Hurricane Creek through the length of the wilderness is a designated wild and scenic river. The river holds smallmouth bass and sunfish. (Ozark-St Francis NF, Hurricane Creek, 1996) There are records of green sunfish, longear sunfish and creek chub just downstream from the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2023)



Huston Park Wilderness (WY)

In July 2022 I hiked in from the Baby Lake trailhead. I had planned on taking the trail to Baby Lake Creek, but stopped where the trail crosses a footbridge over Battle Creek and caught a few brookies. It's a good thing I did because I never made it all the way to Baby Lakes Creek, I got turned back by a very intense thunderstorm. (Number 52)



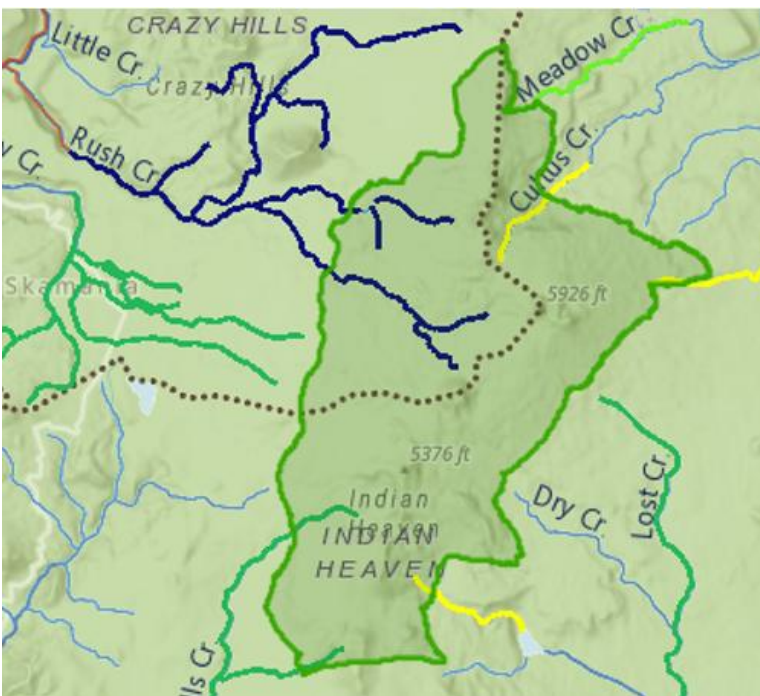
Populations of Colorado cutthroats including core conservation populations in Roaring Fork of Little Snake River, and genetically unaltered population in West Branch North Fork Little Snake River, and North Fork Little Snake River. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)

Imperial Refuge Wilderness (AZ, CA)

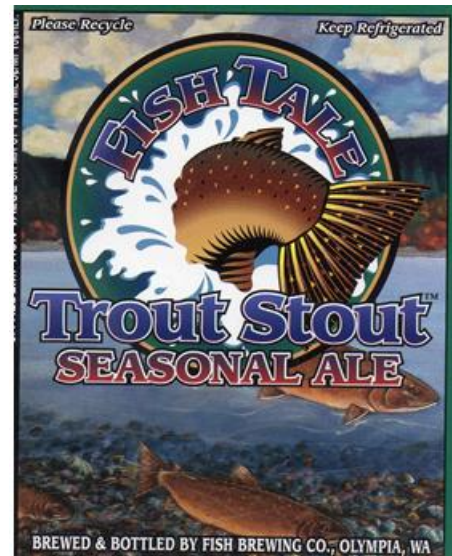


USGS NWIS shows no perennial surface water in the wilderness (USGS 2021). The Colorado River runs through the middle of the wilderness, separating the Arizona portion from the California portion. While the imagery shows the wilderness boundary well away from the water for most of the length of the river, there are a few places, especially in the southern part of the California side, where the boundary seems to reach the river or, more often, a backwater cut off from the river.

Indian Heaven Wilderness (WA)

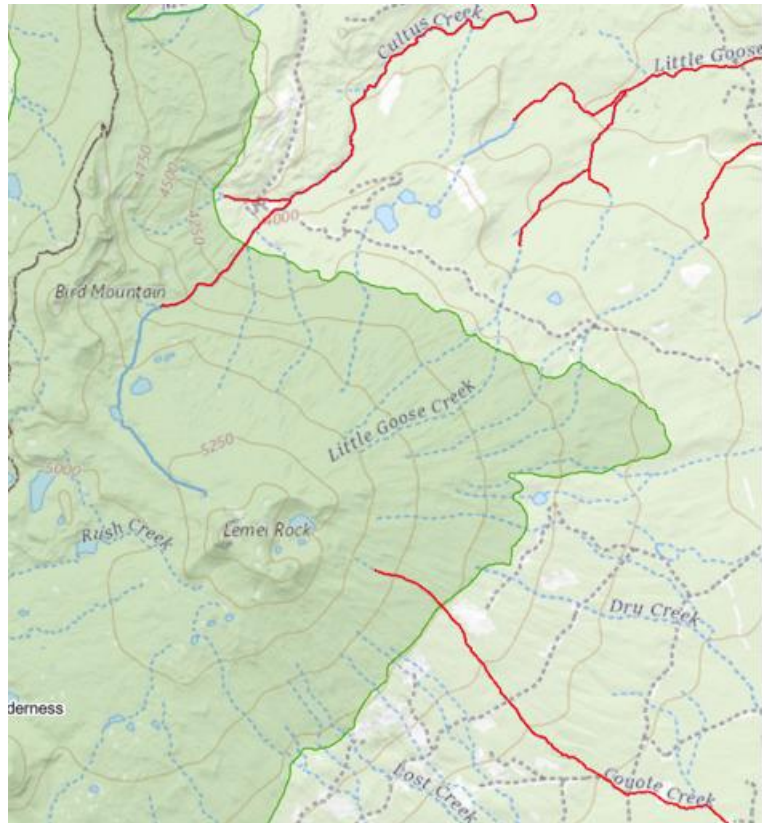


Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in Rush Creek, tributary of Lewis River. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)



Indian Heaven Wilderness (WA)

There are rainbow trout and coastal cutthroats in headwater stretches of Cultus Creek and Coyote Creek, as well as an unnamed Goose Lake headwater in the southeastern corner of the wilderness. (StreamNet 2019)

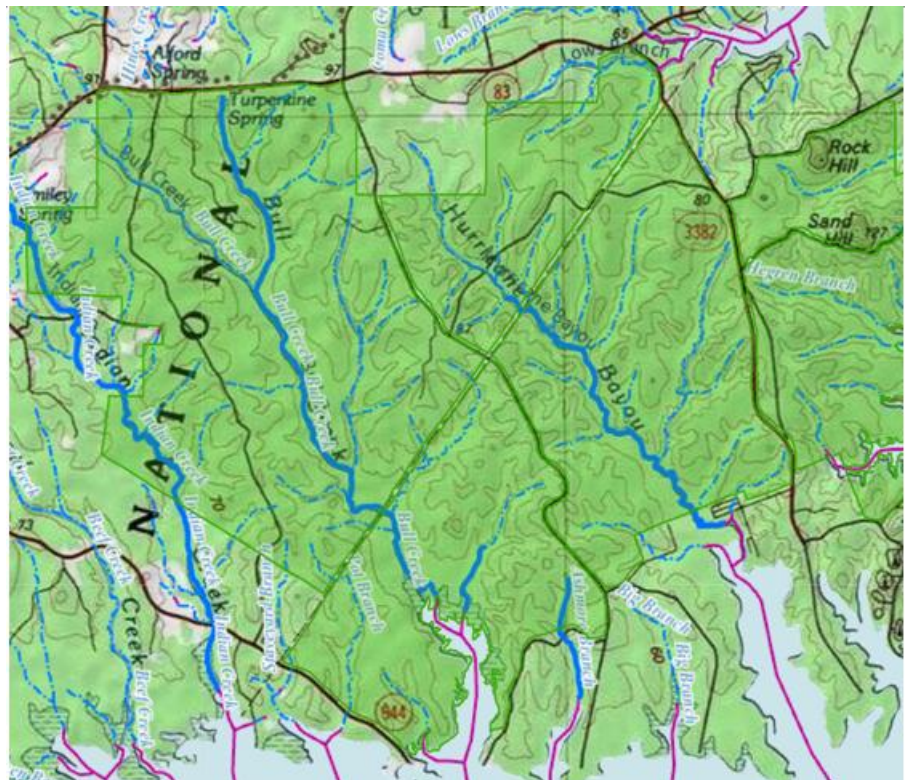


Indian Mounds Wilderness (TX)

Streams all drain east into Toledo Bend Reservoir, an impoundment of the Sabine River. Fish include yellow bullhead and creek chub. (iNaturalist 2023)



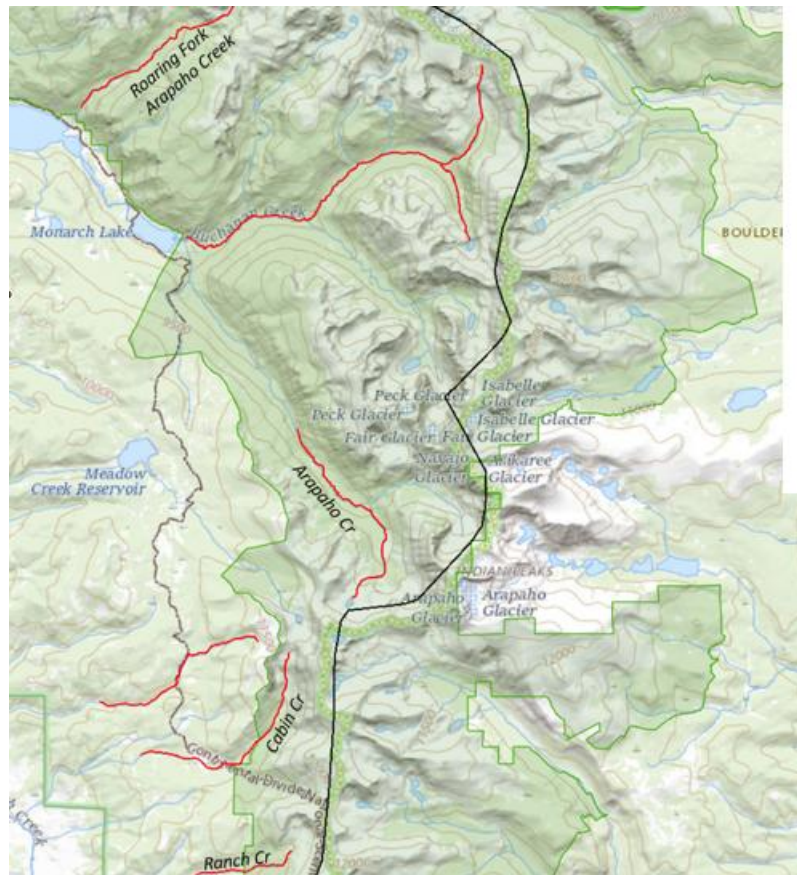
The yellow bullhead (*Ameiurus natalis*)



Indian Peaks Wilderness (CO)

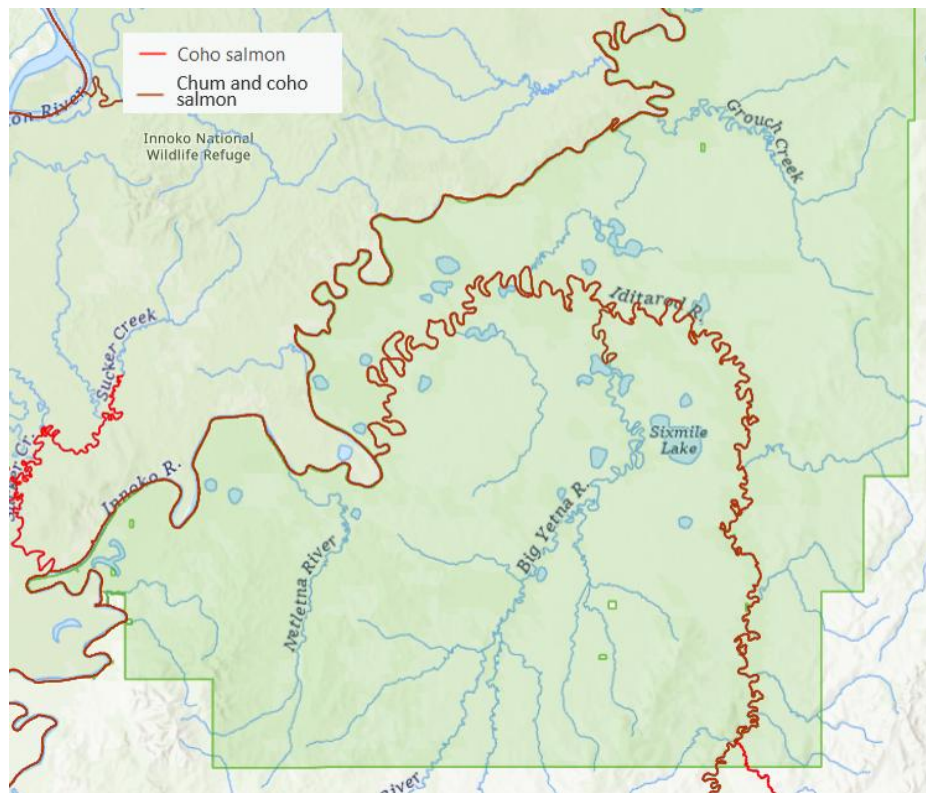
Over 15 individual lakes hold brook trout and Colorado cutthroat and at least one has alleged greenback cutthroats. (FF Apr-May 2016) Cutthroats occupy Stone and Long Lakes in the upper Buchanan Creek system, approached from Roaring Fork Arapaho trail; there are brook trout in Rainbow Lake east of the divide; and brook and brown trout in Monarch Lake on the west side (SWFF Mar-Apr 2008, p.50)

Colorado cutthroat populations occupy water above barriers in North Fork Ranch Creek, in Cabin Creek, Arapaho Creek, Buchanan Creek and Roaring Fork Arapaho Creek on the west slope of wilderness. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



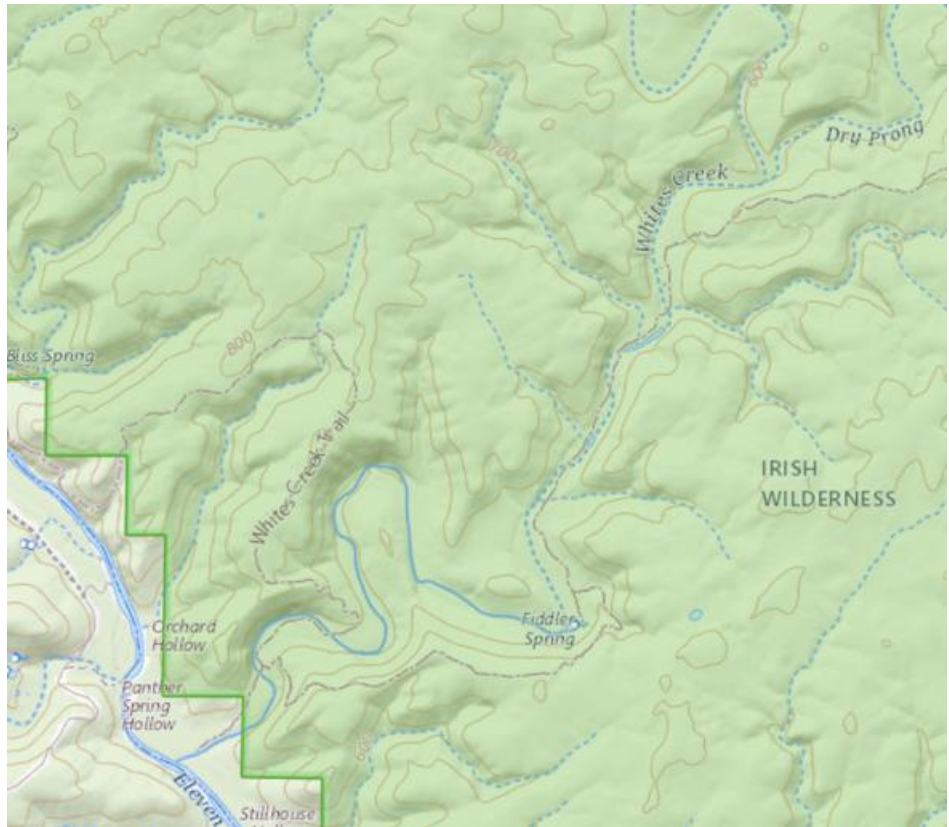
Innoko Wilderness (AK)

The Innoko River, a Yukon tributary, forms the northern and western boundary of the wilderness; it holds whitefish, sockeye and chinook salmon, and sheefish, one of the few places an angler can catch these large fish in a wilderness. Iditarod River flows through the middle of the wilderness and holds chum and coho salmon. (ADF&G 2016)

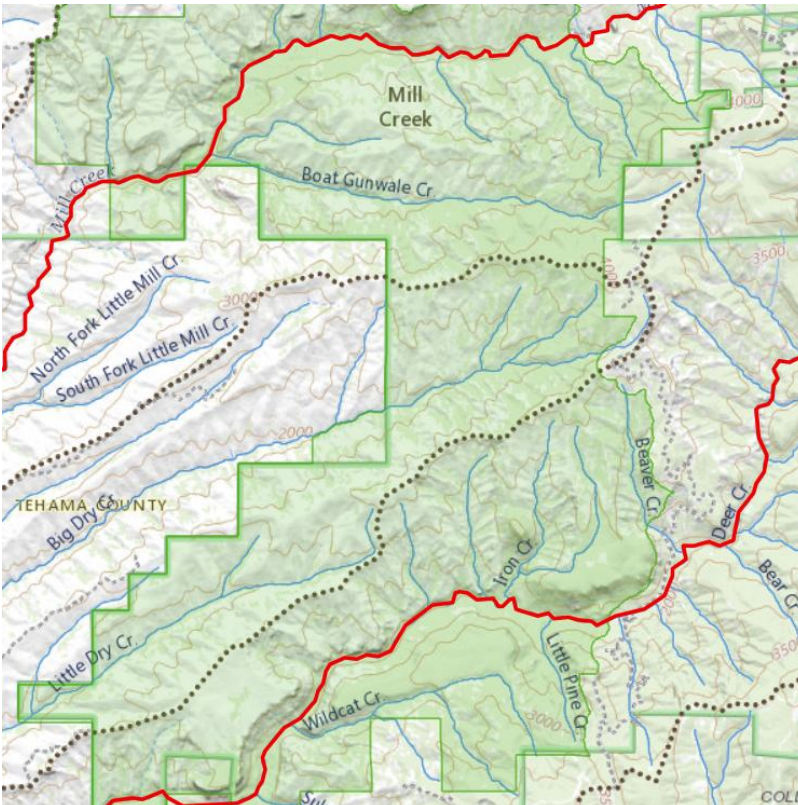


Irish Wilderness (MO)

White's Creek, tributary to the Eleven Point River, is perennial for the lower 2.5 miles in the wilderness, (USGS 2021) with multiple springs feeding the flow and good trail access. The Eleven Point River adjacent to the wilderness is stocked with rainbow trout and also has largemouths and rock bass, some of these likely make it up White's Creek the short 0.2 mile distance to the wilderness boundary. (Fishbrain 2022)



Ishi Wilderness (CA)



There is critical habitat for both steelhead and chinook salmon in Mill Creek and Deer Creek crossing the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

There are also rainbow trout in Deer Creek, with a trail following the creek through the wilderness. (NWFF Jul-Aug 2019, p. 44)

Island Bay Wilderness (FL)



Wilderness is closed to public access although easily reachable in Charlotte Harbor near Fort Myers and Cape Coral. Mostly mangrove swamp with small areas of tidal flats and upland hardwood forests. Many small fish occur in shallow bays adjacent to the refuge and wilderness. (USF&WS, Pine Island, Oct 2010)

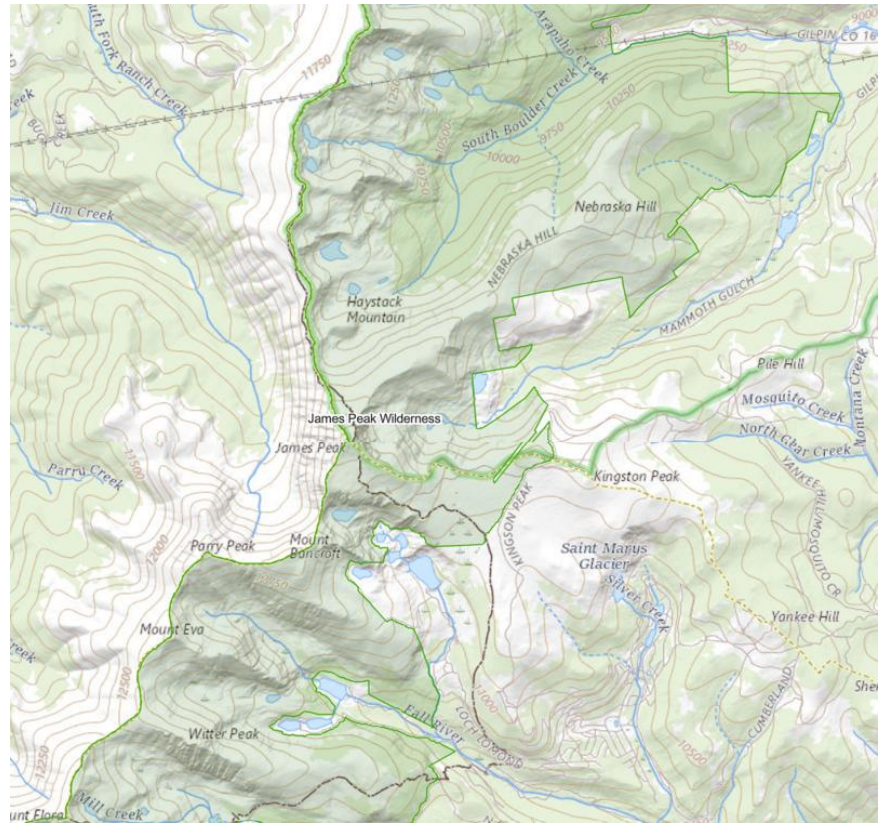
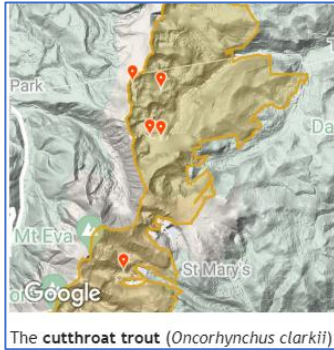
Isle Royale Wilderness (MI)

Record of yellow perch in Lake Richie. Also brook trout, northern pike and three-spine stickleback in coastal locations on main island. (iNaturalist 2022)

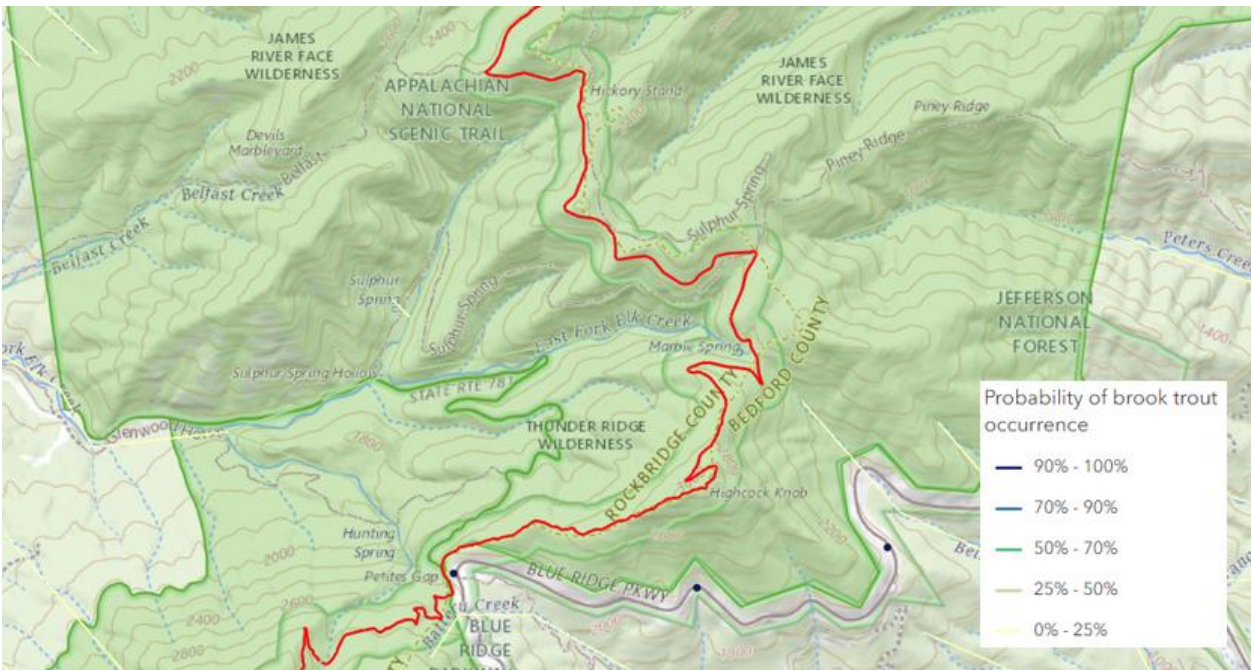


James Peak Wilderness (CO)

There are records of cutthroat trout from the South Boulder Creek drainage in the northern part of the wilderness and the Fall River drainage in the southern part of the wilderness. Fall River flows into Clear Creek and on into Denver. There are also brook trout in the South Boulder Creek drainage. (iNaturalist 2022)

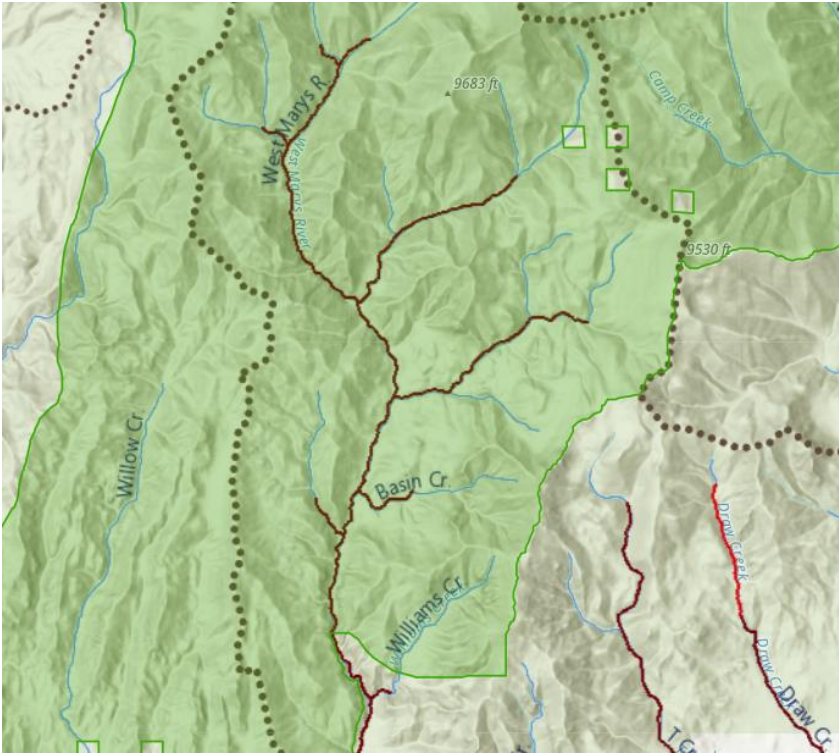


James River Face Wilderness (VA)



A persistent population of brook trout occupies the Elk Creek system running west out of the wilderness and then north to the James River. Other brook trout populations occur in Peters Creek flowing east to the James River. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) These two creeks have a 25 to 50% probability of brook trout occurrence, other streams in the wilderness all show lower probabilities. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014) Elk Creek has trail access.

Jarbridge Wilderness (NV)

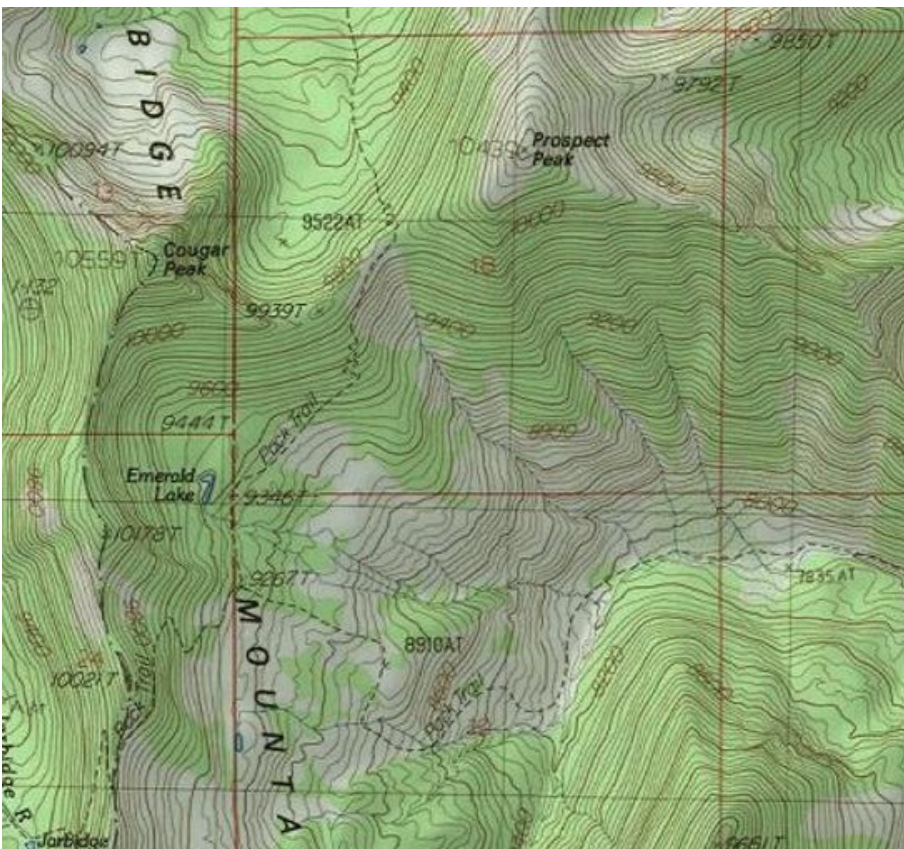
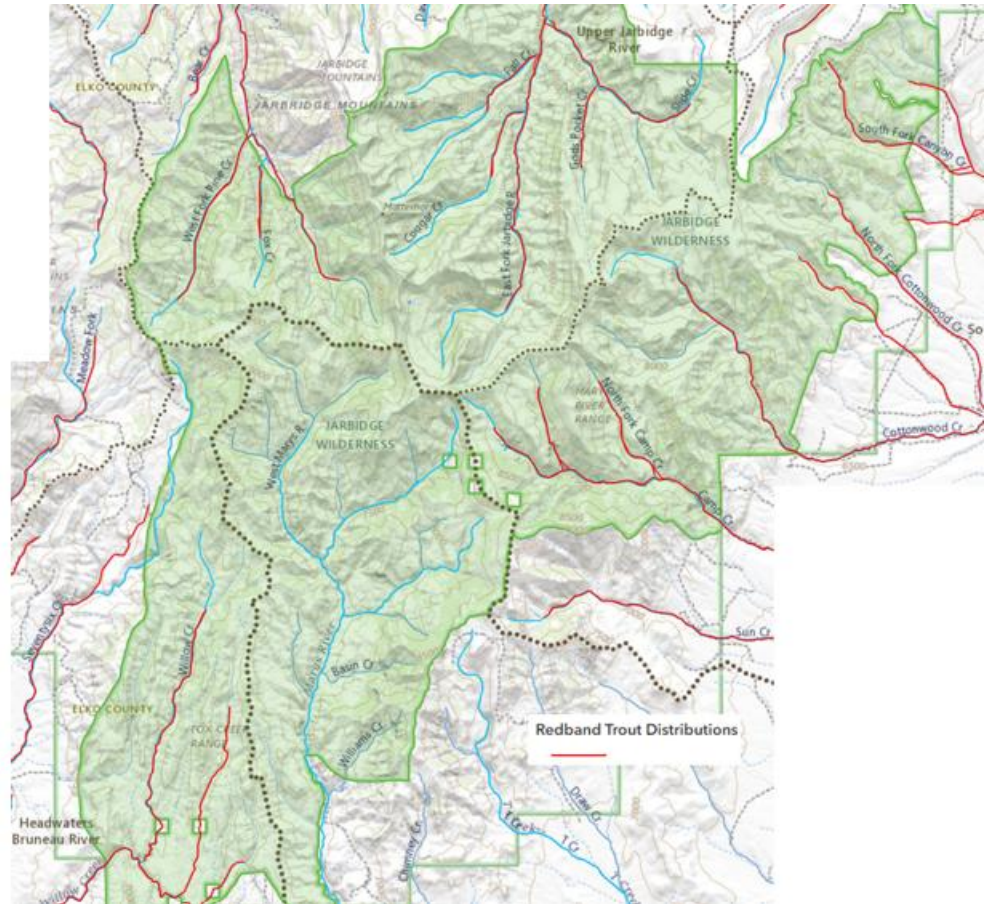


A low density, genetically pure, aboriginal population of Lahontan cutthroats occurs throughout the Mary's River system. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009; TU LCT 2020) The Mary's River is the only system in the wilderness that flows south toward the Humboldt River, hence the Lahontans. All the other streams in the wilderness are in north-flowing drainages.

On the day Ethan was born in May 2012, I hiked up Mary's River from Williams Basin. Stalked from above and caught a beautiful 17 inch Lahontan cutthroat trout. (Number 8) Of course I didn't take a picture. Oh well.

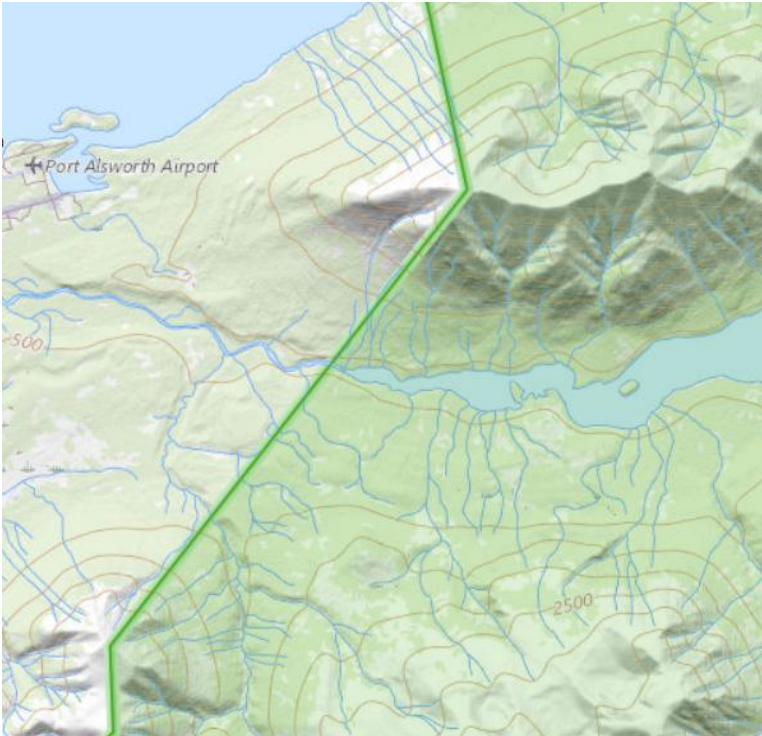
Jarbridge Wilderness (NV)

All those north-flowing drainages have redband trout. Low densities of redbands occur in Willow Creek and Seventy-six Creek tributaries of the Bruneau River; moderate density in upper Jarbridge River, low densities in West Fork Pine Creek and Fox Creek tributaries; moderate densities in East Fork Jarbridge and Slide Creek tributary, less in Fall Creek; moderate to high densities in Camp Creek and Cottonwood Creek, tributaries to Salmon Falls Creek to the east. (Mayfield)

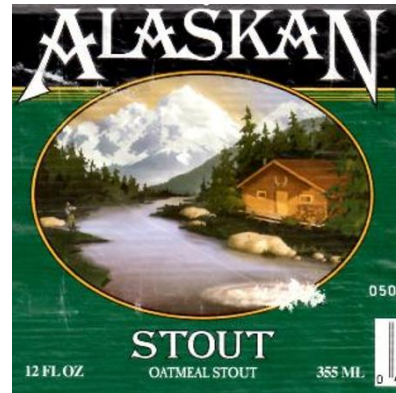


Tiny Emerald Lake high up in the East Fork Jarbridge headwaters has brook trout, and lots of trail accessibility in the area. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2011, p. 48)

Jay S. Hammond-Lake Clark Wilderness (AK)



Tanalian River at Tanalian Falls, July 2014. We got grayling on almost every cast below the falls, it was not so productive up above, although rumor has it there are arctic char at the Konrabishuna Lake outlet into the Tanalian River. (NWFF Mar-Apr 2019, 9.30; number 10)



Jay S. Hammond-Lake Clark Wilderness (AK)

Lake Clark sits at the edge of the Bristol Bay region, and west flowing rivers like the Tikakila and the Mulchatna bring some of the fabled Bristol Bay sockeye runs into the wilderness. Sockeyes also occur in some of the shorter coastal streams, as well as chum and coho salmon. Dolly Varden also reside in some of the coastal streams, and Arctic char in much the same locations where the sockeyes run. (ADFG 2023) In July 2014 my Beautiful Wife, our daughter and I caught Arctic char in Upper Tazimina Lake, just outside the wilderness, where ADF&G doesn't say they occur.



Jedediah Smith Wilderness (WY)

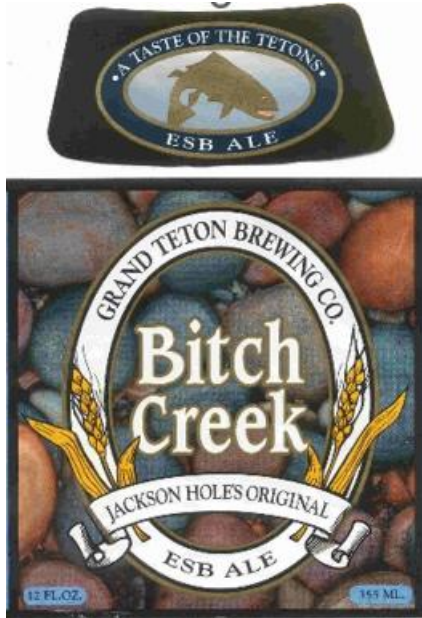


In July 2022 I caught several brook trout, some of decent size, in Moose creek. (Number 48)



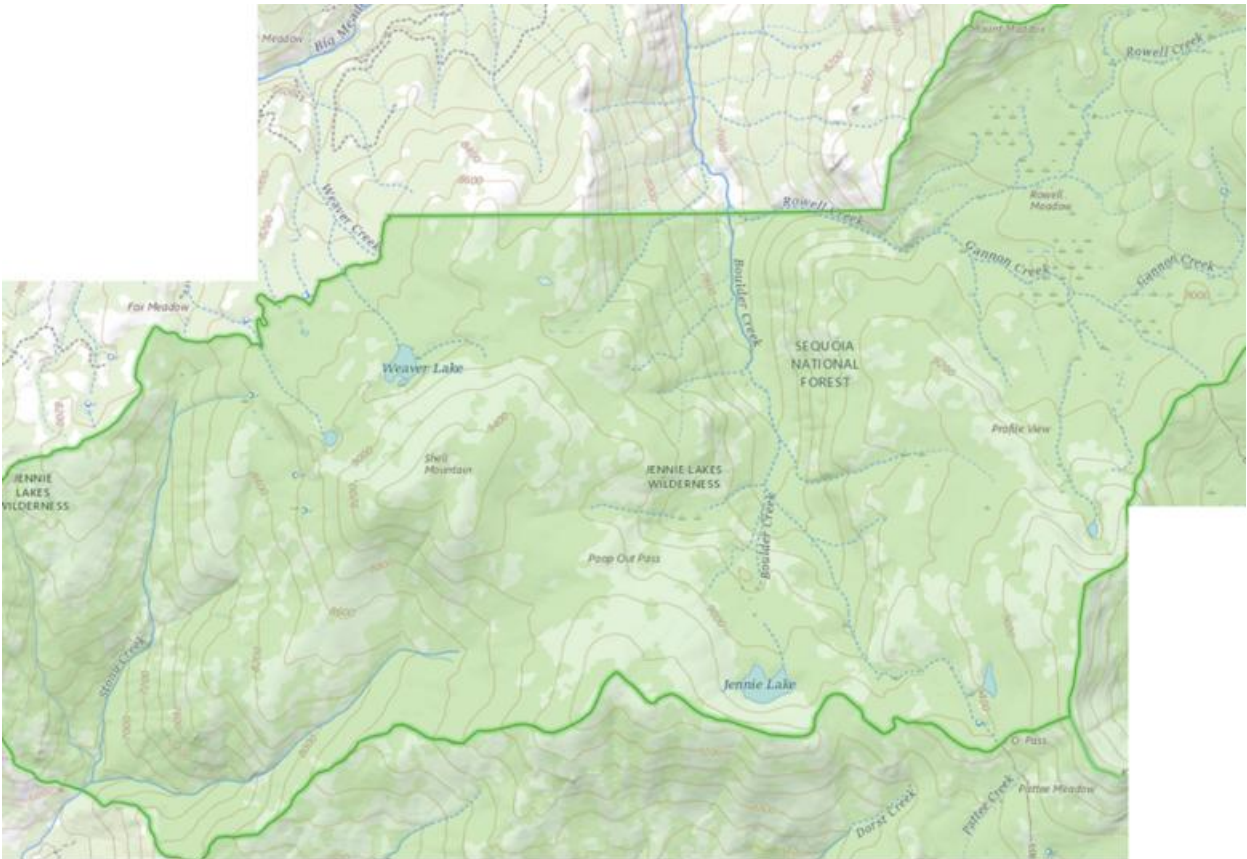
Jedediah Smith Wilderness (WY)

Yellowstone cutthroat core conservation populations in almost every stream flowing west from the Teton Mountains divide. Includes a genetically impure metapopulation in the Bitch Creek system, pure persistent populations in Badger Creek, North and South Leigh Creeks and Teton Creek, and a stronghold population in Moose Creek. (Endicott, Nelson et al 2016; TU YCT 2019)

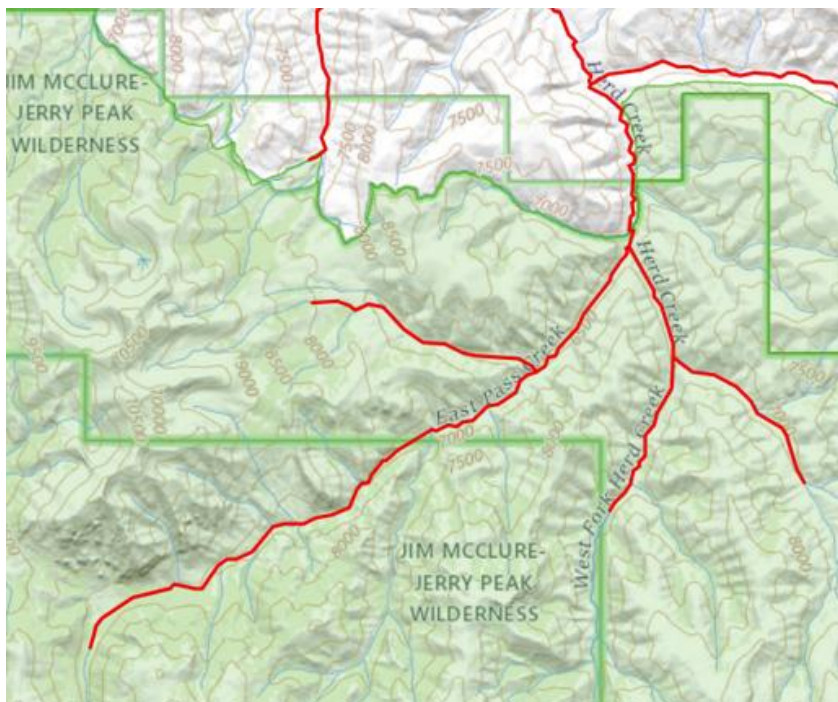


Jennie Lakes Wilderness (CA)

Stoney Creek on the west end of the wilderness has trail access and is stocked annually with rainbows. Jennie Lake has rainbows and brookies. Seville Lake, Lost Lake and Twin Lakes in the Rowell Creek drainage on the east end of the wilderness have brookies. (Schalla 2021)



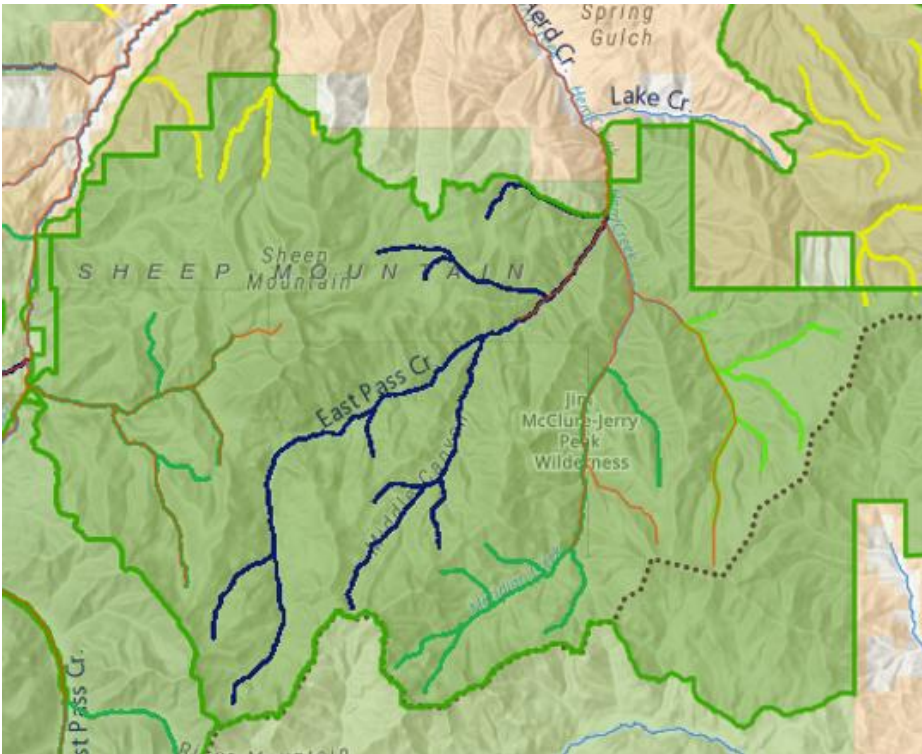
Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness (ID)



There is critical habitat for steelhead coming up through the East Fork Salmon River in the Herd Creek system. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

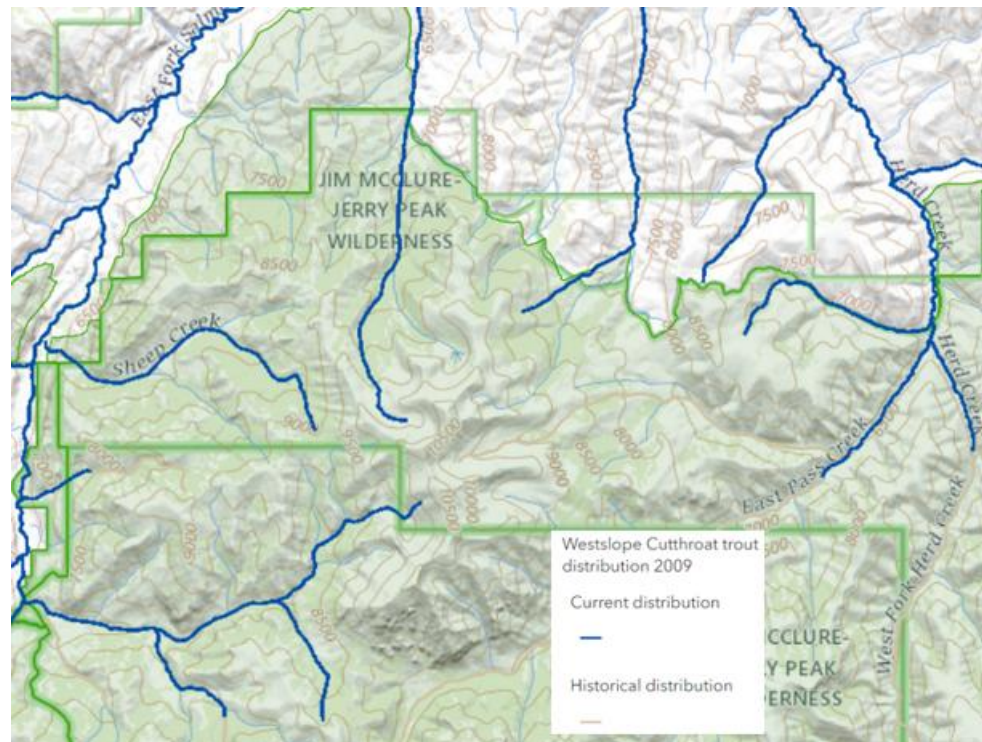


Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness (ID)



There is critical habitat for bull trout in Herd Creek, East Pass Creek and Bowery Creek systems, all tributary to East Fork Salmon River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)
Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout throughout Pass Creek system. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Westslope cutthroats occupy East Fork Salmon River tributaries across the northern part of the wilderness, including Mosquito Creek, Lake Creek, Herd Creek, East Pass Creek, Pine Creek, Sheep Creek and Bowery Creek. (Mayfield)

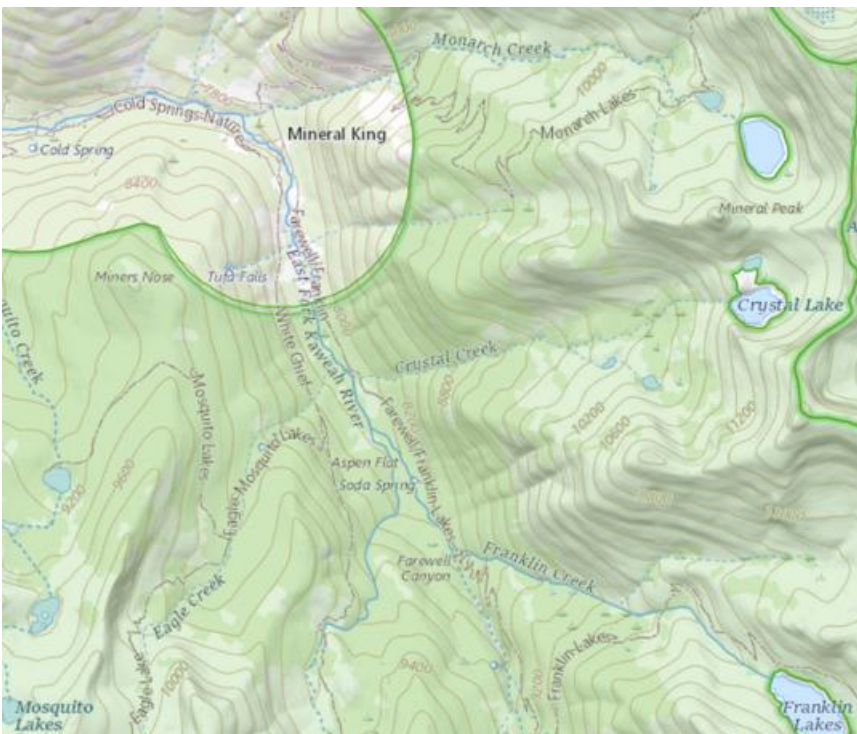


Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness (ID)

I hiked about 2.5 miles up Sheep Creek from the East Fork Salmon. Caught westslope cutthroats, mostly in the lower reaches, as well as in the East Fork outside the wilderness. (Number 42)



John Krebs Wilderness (CA)



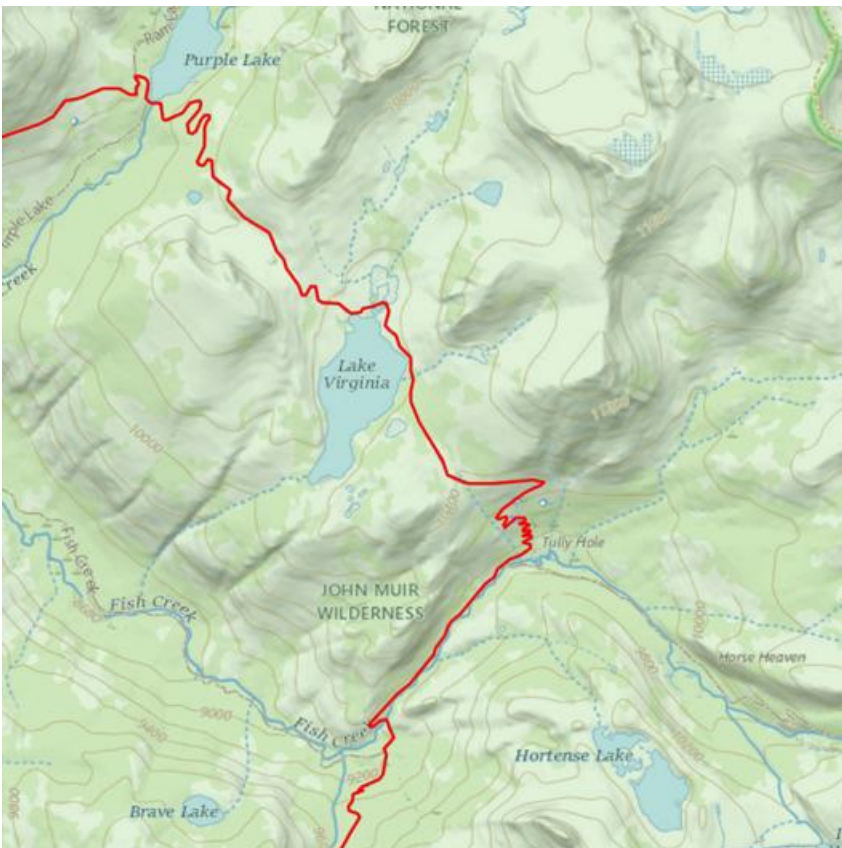
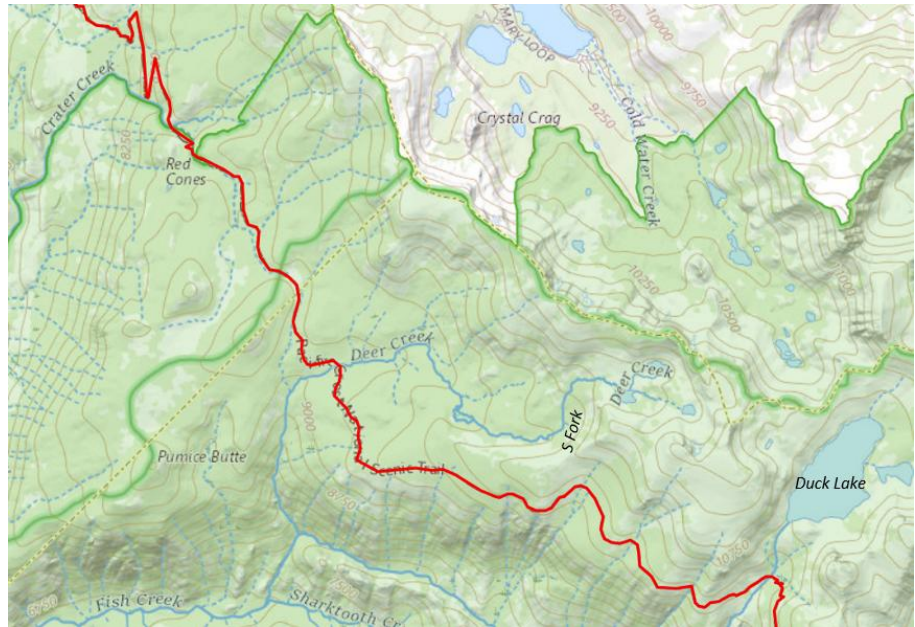
There are records of brook trout in Franklin Creek and Monarch Creek, tributaries of East Fork Kaweah River, upstream and south of Mineral King. (iNaturalist 2022)



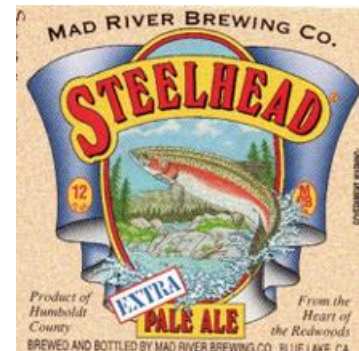
The brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

John Muir Wilderness (CA)

Along the John Muir Trail and Pacific Crest Trail (red line on the map) through the wilderness, starting from north to south, there are rainbows in Crater Creek, especially the Crater Creek Meadow area. Further down the trail the South Fork Deer Creek (but not the North Fork, also along the PCT) holds a nice population of rainbow trout and rainbow/golden hybrids, a historical legacy. Duck Lake is off the trail, but holds good sized rainbows. (Beck 2000)



Further down the PCT Purple Lake is full of rainbows and golden hybrids. Lake Virginia has large golden trout, and gave up a former state record. There is excellent fishing for brook trout in Fish Creek, a tributary of Middle Fork San Joaquin to the northwest. (Beck 2000)



John Muir Wilderness (CA)

The “Indian Lakes” hold lots of brook trout. Across Silver Pass, golden trout become the dominant species for the rest of the trail, including in Silver Pass Lake and Creek and throughout Mono Creek. (Beck 2000)



John Muir Wilderness (CA)

Southeast of Lake Thomas A. Edison (outside the wilderness) Bear Creek (below Bear Ridge) and Hilgard Branch hold goldens as well as brookies and rainbows; Bear Creek drains to South Fork San Joaquin. (Beck 2000) There is easy access to Bear Creek from the west. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2011, p. 7) Several lakes in the Bear Creek drainage also hold goldens. (SWFF May-Jun 2020, p. 38)



John Muir Wilderness (CA)

Marie Lake, Heart Lake and Sally Keyes all have golden trout. (Beck 2000) Goldens in Marie Lake are uncharacteristically large. The lake holds brookies as well. (SWFF May-Jun 2011, p. 6) Sally Keyes Lake flows south through Sally Keyes Creek, tributary to south Fork San Joaquin. Both lake and creek hold golden trout. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2012, p. 27)



John Muir Wilderness (CA)



South Fork San Joaquin from Blayne Hot Springs upstream to the southern edge of the wilderness hold brown trout and rainbow trout. Piute Creek is a right-bank tributary of the South Fork that joins just inside the wilderness boundary, it holds rainbow trout and goldens. (Beck 2000)

I hiked in to Blayne Hot Springs with Cathie and Wyndie in August 2022 and spent a couple of days fishing the South Fork San Joaquin, caught plenty of small rainbows, and a couple of nice 14" to 16" browns. (Number 55)



John Muir Wilderness (CA)

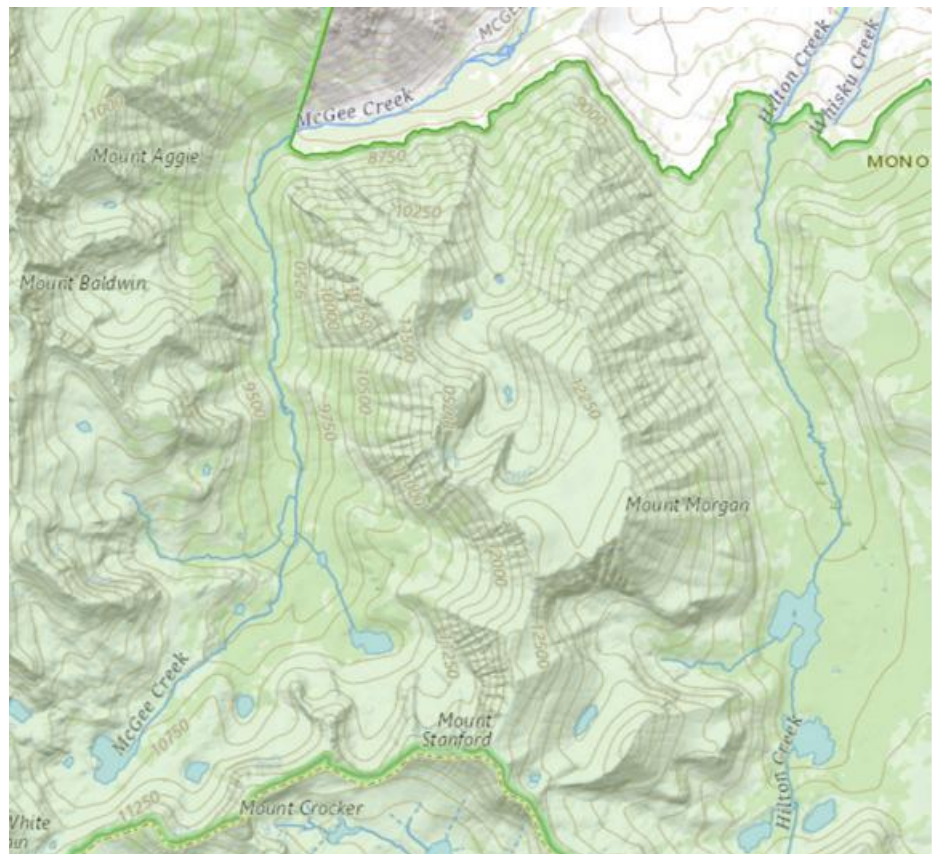
Piute Creek, tributary of South Fork San Joaquin, drains Humphreys Basin, with dozens of lakes holding golden trout. Lakes include large Desolation Lake, plus others including Mesa Lake and Tomahawk Lake. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2013, p. 40; SWFF Jul-Aug 2019, p. 44)



There are also fish that aren't accessible from the Pacific Crest and John Muir Trails, including several locations on the east side of the Sierra Crest. From north to south:

McGee Creek flows into Lake Crowley west of Rock Creek. There is good trail access, with rainbows and cutthroats running up the creek in the spring and browns in the fall. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2017, p.42)

The Hilton Creek Lakes area is accessed from Rock Creek Lake and holds self-sustaining brookies, rainbows, browns and goldens. Hilton Creek flows north into Lake Crowley. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2013)



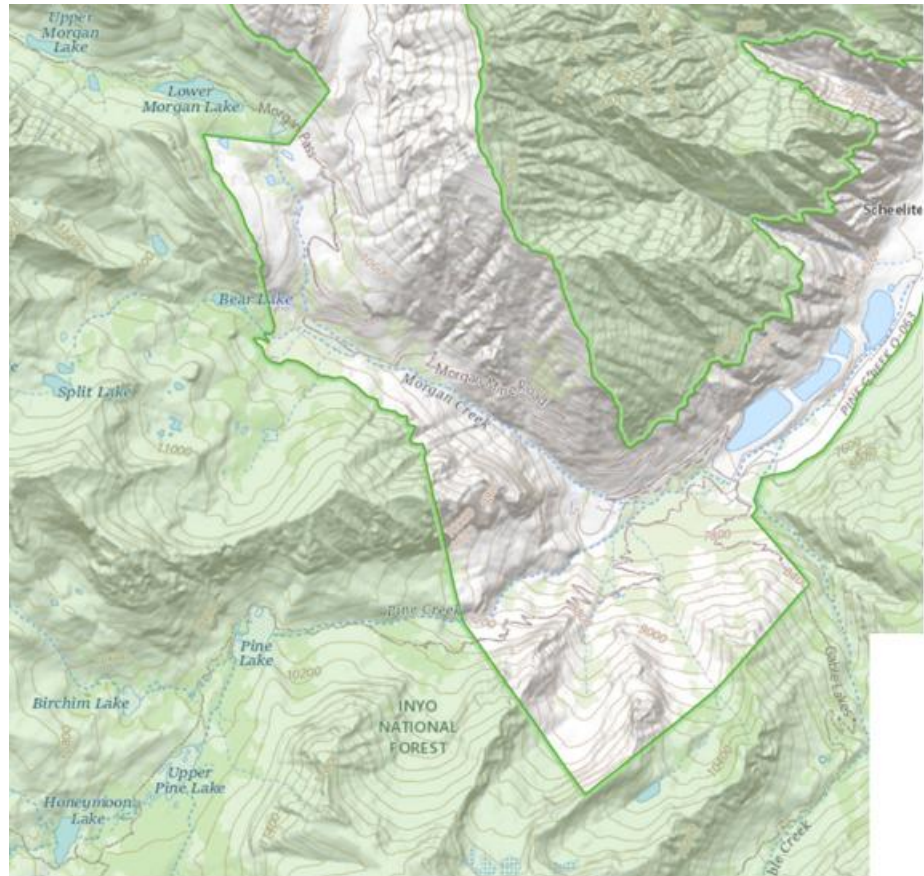
John Muir Wilderness (CA)



Little Lakes Valley is just to the south of the end of Rock Creek Road, and holds lots of small brookies and a few big browns. There are golden trout in lakes farther up the watershed. The lakes feed into Rock Creek. (SWFF May-Jun 2016. P. 34)

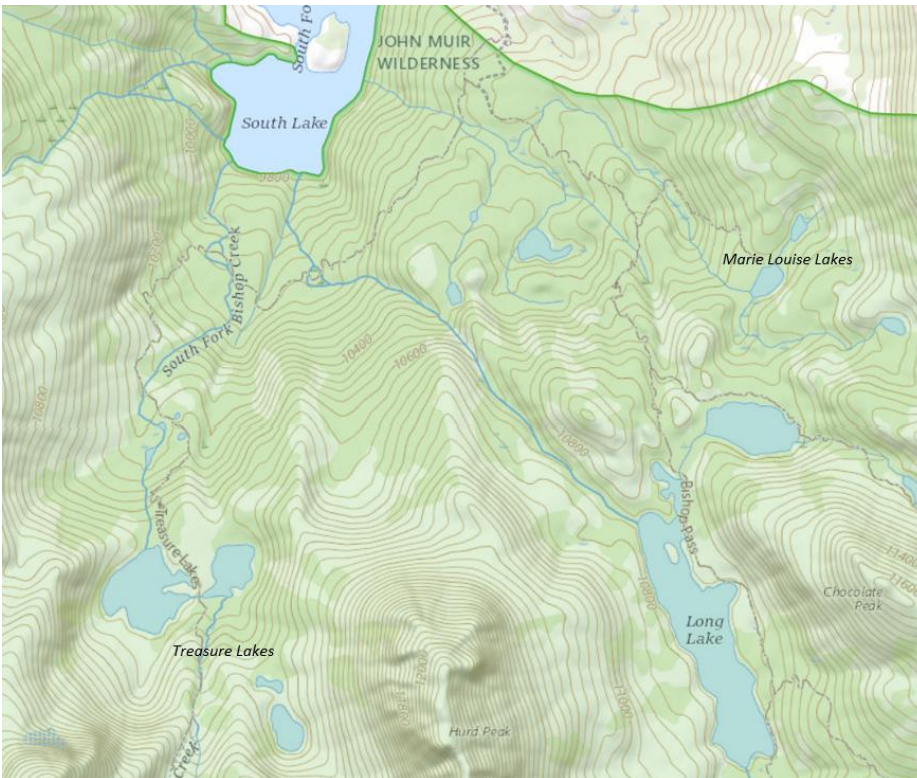
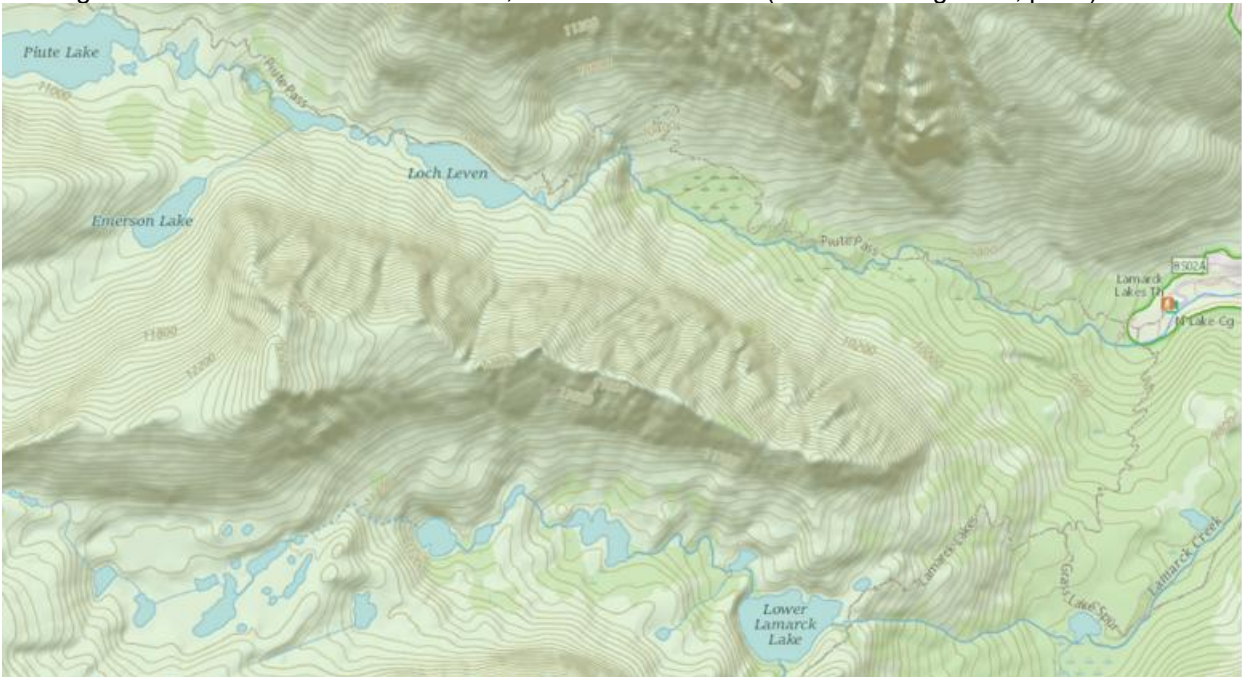
Also on the east slope, Honeymoon Lake is at the head of Pine Creek, a 5.5 mile hike southwest from the Pine Creek trailhead. Brookies and rainbows predominate. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2013, p.20)

Morgan Lakes are to the northwest of the trailhead area, a relatively easy (800 ft climb) hike, for rainbows. Nearby Finch, Split and Bear Lakes have brookies. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2017, p.22)



John Muir Wilderness (CA)

Also off the trail and on the east slope feeding North Fork of Bishop Creek, Piute Lake and Loch Leven have rainbows and brookies. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2013, p. 24) Grass Lake in the North Fork Bishop Creek drainage is a short hike into the wilderness, and has brook trout. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2019, p. 18)



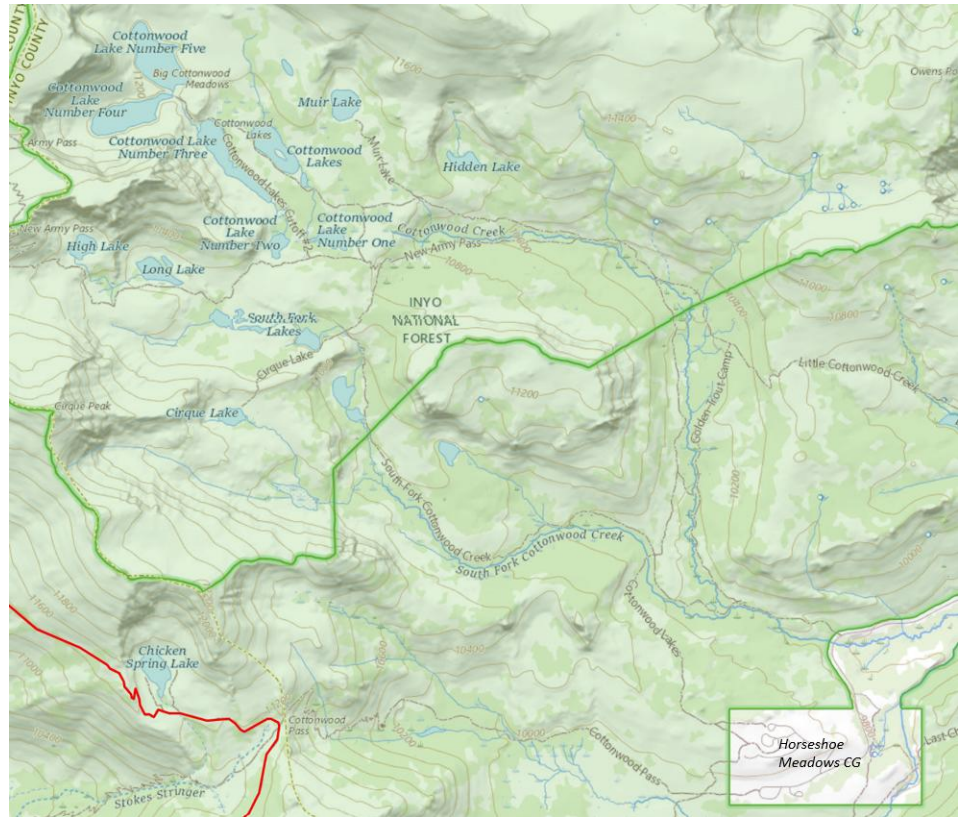
Treasure Lakes south of South Lake and feeding the South Fork of Bishop Creek (Owens River tributary) hold golden trout. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2010 p. 6)

Long Lake is on the South Fork Bishop Creek, with rainbows and brookies. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2019, p. 30)

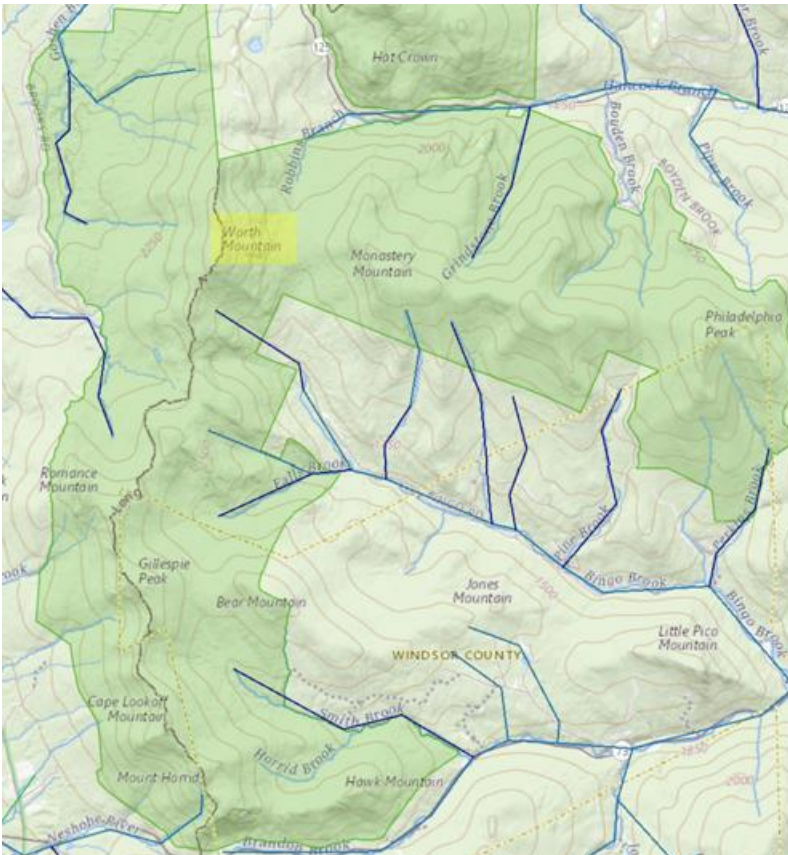
Marie Louise Lakes to the southeast of South Lake have brook trout. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2019, p.22)

John Muir Wilderness (CA)

At the far southern end of the wilderness Cottonwood Lakes, feeding into Cottonwood Creek and accessible from Horseshoe Meadows campground, is used for broodstock golden trout. (AFF Jul-Aug 2020, p. 63)

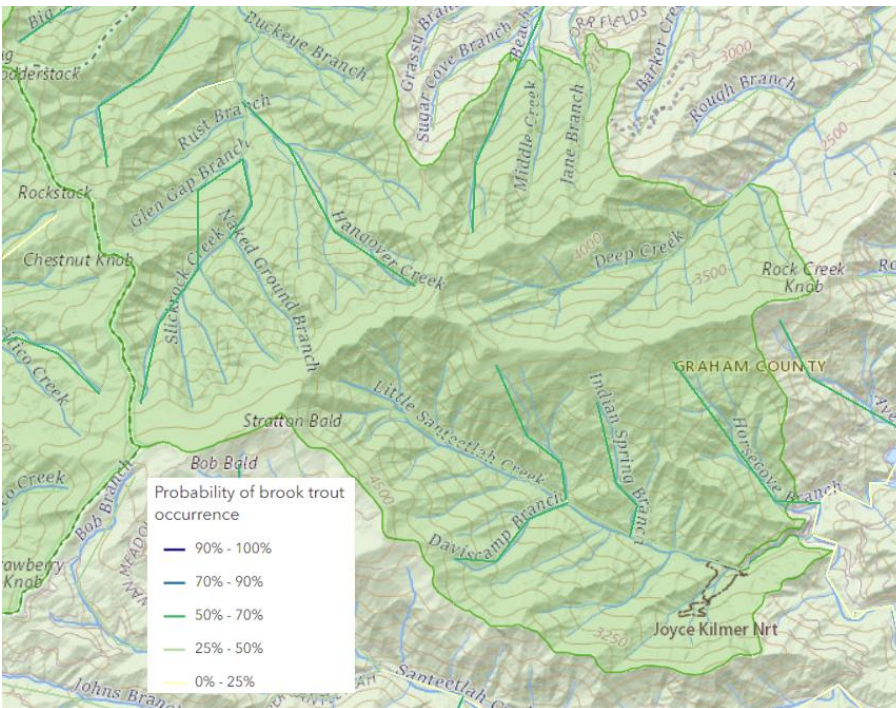


Joseph Battelle Wilderness (VT)



There are stronghold populations of brook trout, along with rainbow trout and brown trout, in the Middlebury River drainage, flowing west toward Otter Creek. White River and West Branch White River tributaries on the eastern slope of the wilderness hold a persistent population of brook trout along with browns and rainbows. The Neshobe River drainage in the southwestern part of the wilderness has a persistent population of brook trout along with rainbows. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Almost every stream in the wilderness has a very high probability of holding brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014) Check out the name of the mountain in the middle of the wilderness...

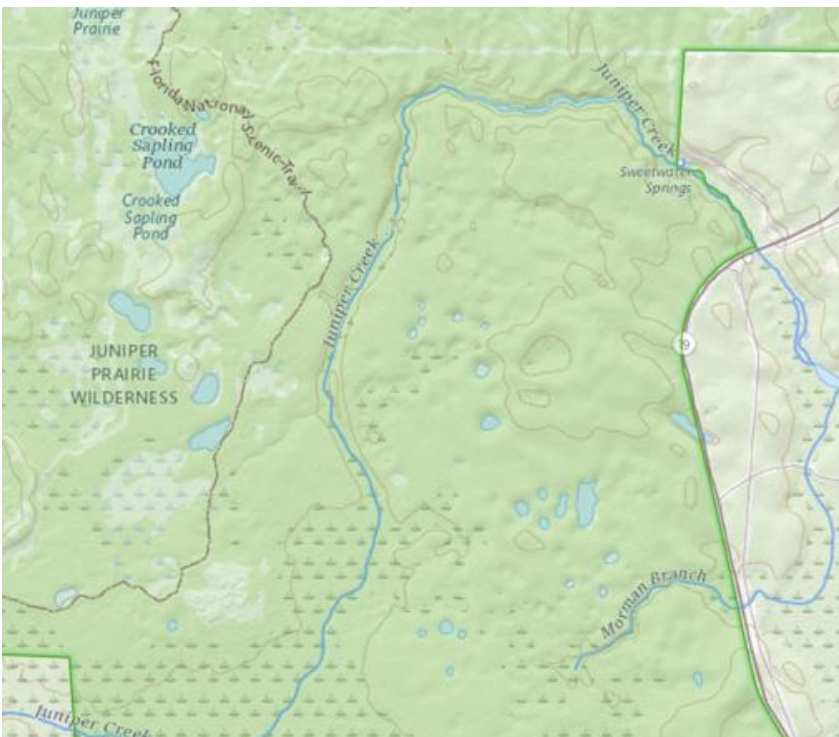
Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness (GA)



There is a redundant population of brook trout along with brown trout in Hangover Creek and the upper portion of Slickrock Creek, which flows north into the Cheoah River, which flows north into the Little Tennessee River near the southern end of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Also brook trout and rainbow trout occur in Little Santee Creek, which flows southeast toward Lake Santee, a Cheoah River impoundment outside the wilderness. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout)

Probabilities of finding brook trout in these streams and some tributaries range from 25 to 70%. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Juniper Prairie Wilderness (FL)



There are records of metallic shiner at Juniper Creek near Sweetwater Spring and at Mormon Creek along the eastern edge of the wilderness, both easily accessible from the highway. (iNaturalist 2022)



Pteronotris metallicus. the metallic shiner

Juniper Prairie Lakes hold largemouth bass and sunfish, and are accessible from the Florida National Scenic Trail. (US Forest Service, Ocala NF, 2018)

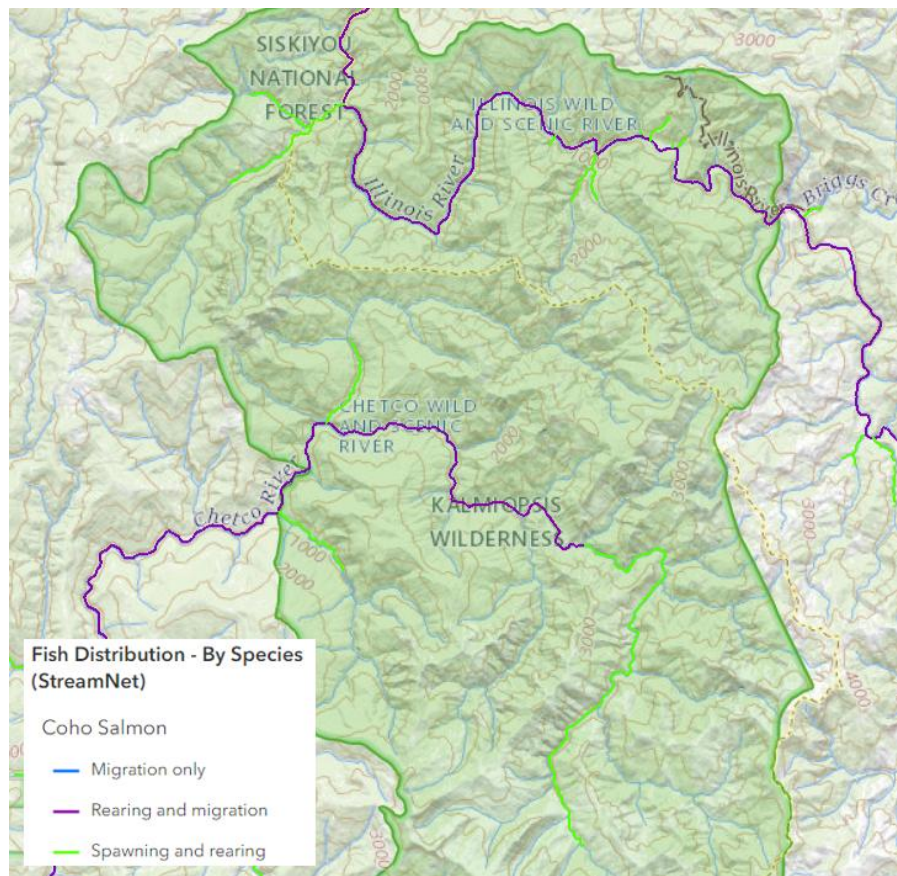
Kaiser Wilderness (CA)



There are about 20 lakes with stocked rainbow trout as well as brook trout. Access is available from the Lakeshore trailhead at Huntington Lake. There is also trail access from Kaiser Pass Road on the east end of the wilderness. (Schalla 2021)

Kalmiopsis Wilderness (OR)

Fall chinook spawn in the Illinois River throughout the wilderness. Coho salmon appear in the Illinois, the Chetco and their tributaries (shown on map). Winter steelhead occur throughout all tributaries. (StreamNet 2019)



Kalmiopsis Wilderness (OR)

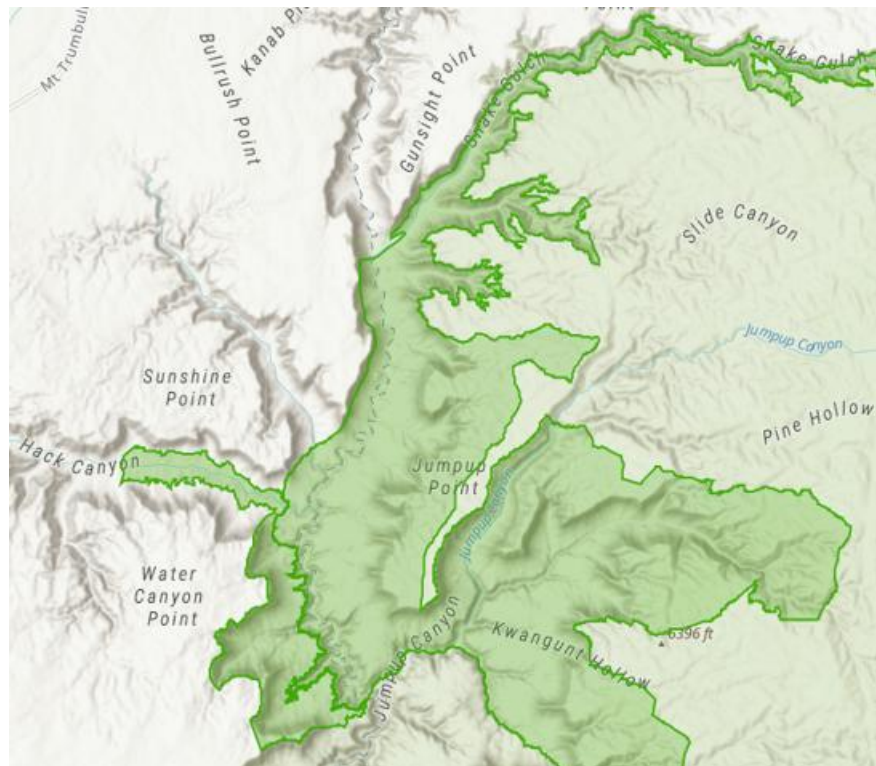


I haven't personally seen any of those big salmonids, but in August 2025 I did manage to catch a few largemouth bass (I was expecting trout!) on muddlers in Babyfoot Lake (Number 91).

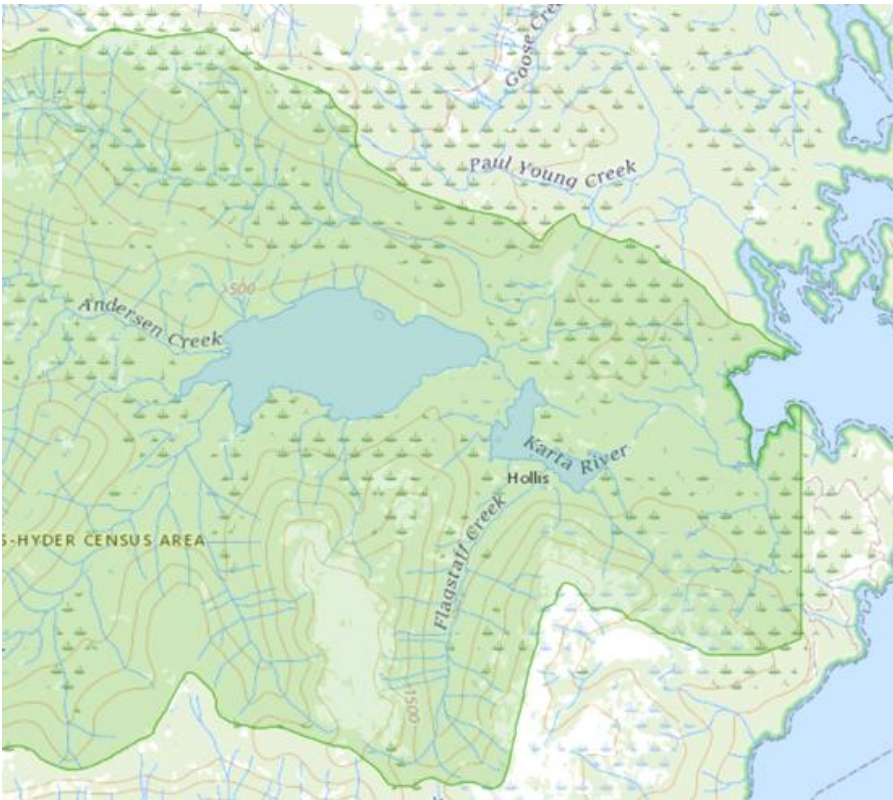


Kanab Creek Wilderness (AZ)

USGS NWIS shows perennial surface water in Kanab Creek through the length of the wilderness. (USGS 2021) The creek holds habitat for bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker, humpback chub and speckled dace.)AZ F&G Habimap 2022)



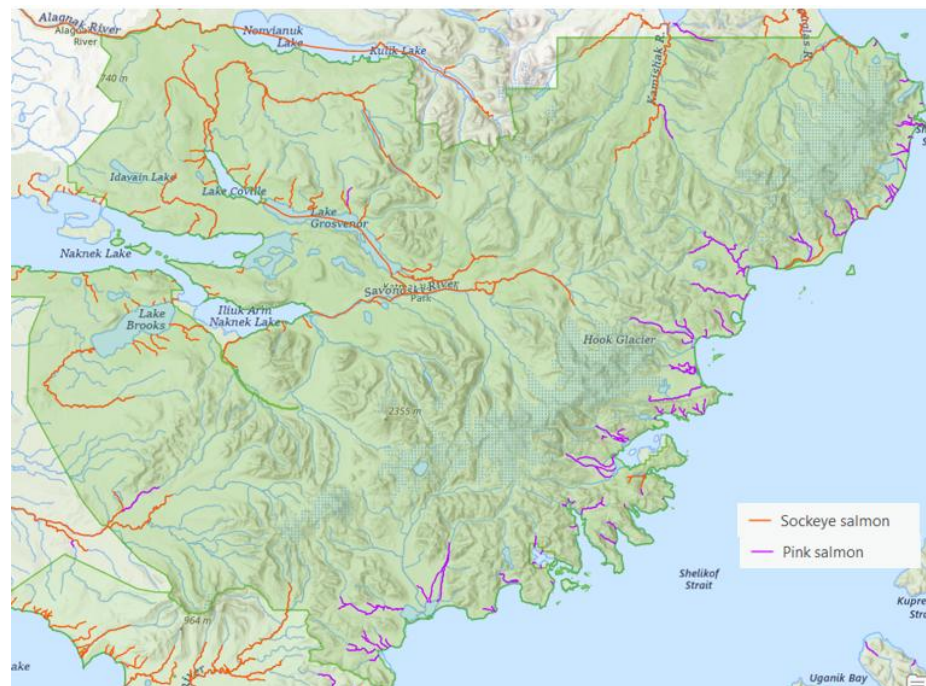
Karta River Wilderness (AK)



Karta Lake and Karta River above Karta Lake have coho, pink and sockeye salmon as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden. There are chum salmon as well in coastal reaches. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016)

Katmai Wilderness (AK)

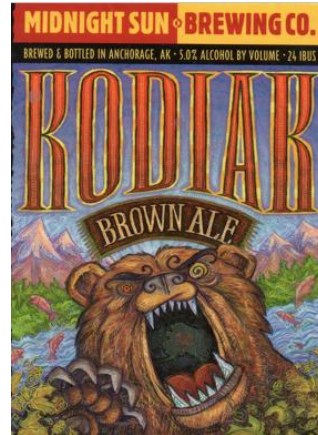
Here there be monsters. As we flew into the Katmai region in 2014 from Port Alnsworth, our guide Glen Alnsworth actually mentioned that the TV River Monsters crew once filmed in the area, particularly nearby Iliamna Lake. And it's not just fish either, we saw some monster bears in the area. As you might suspect there are plenty of sockeyes on the Bristol Bay side of the divide, with chums, pinks and some Dolly Vardens mostly on the coast side



Katmai Wilderness (AK)



Cathie, Heather and I didn't actually make it into the wilderness in 2014, but we fished the north shore of Kulik Lake opposite the wilderness. We caught lake trout and big rainbows.

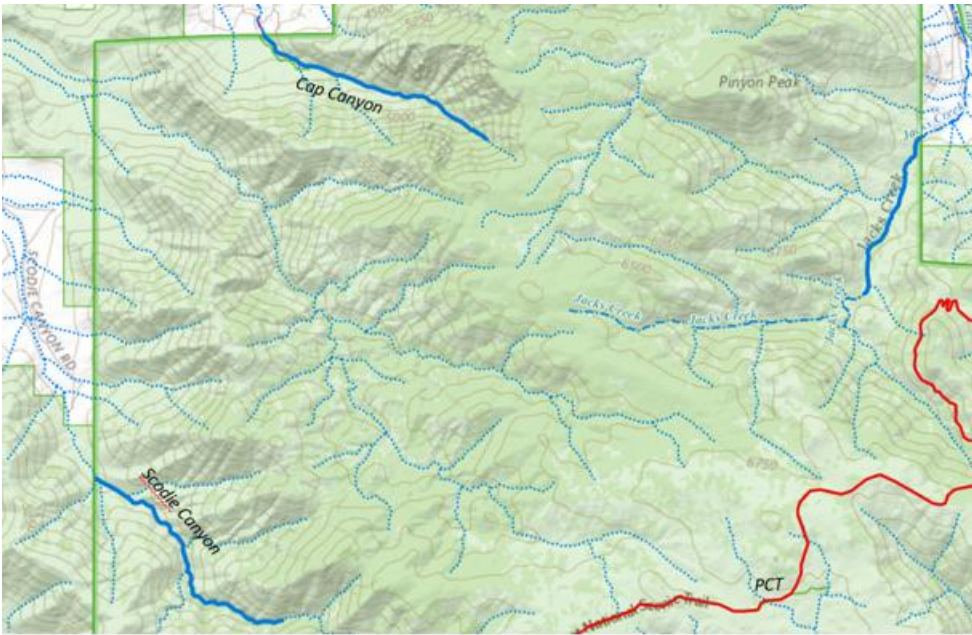


Kenai Wilderness (AK)

Fish are everywhere. In the northern unit of the wilderness, west-flowing Swanson River holds coho and sockeye salmon and Dolly Varden; north-flowing Chickaloon River system has coho, sockeye and chinook salmon; and south-flowing Moose River flows into Kenai River with coho and sockeye salmon. The large central unit of the wilderness includes north-flowing Funny and Killey Rivers with coho and chinook salmon, with pink salmon as well in the Funny River; most every tributary flowing into Tustumena Lake has sockeye salmon, with a few holding pink or coho salmon as well; Fox River and Sheep Creek in the south hold coho, pink and sockeye salmon and Dolly Varden. (ADF&G 2023)



Kiavah Wilderness (CA)

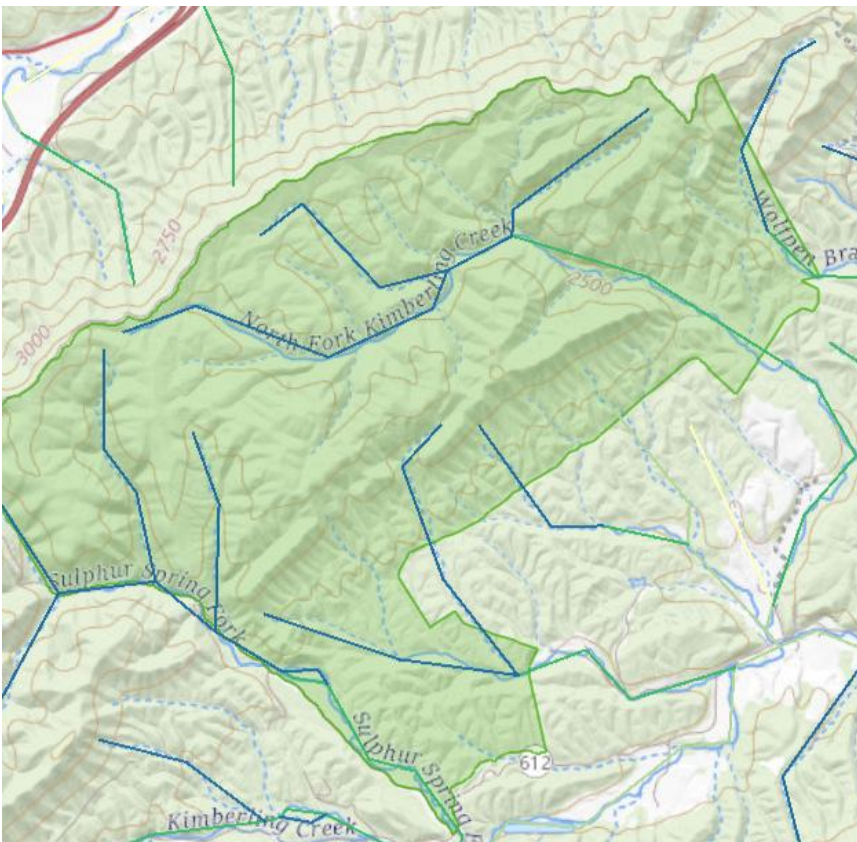


Stretches in Scodie Canyon and Cap Canyon, which drain westward to the South Fork Kern River, are perennial. Jacks Creek in the upper Canebrake Creek drainage is also perennial. (USGS 2021)

Sacramento sucker, Sacramento pikeperch, Central California roach, riffle sculpin and hardhead are native to the South

Fork Kern River/Lake Isabella drainage. Sacramento sucker are the only fish native to the upper Canebrake Creek drainage. (UCal PISCES 2022)

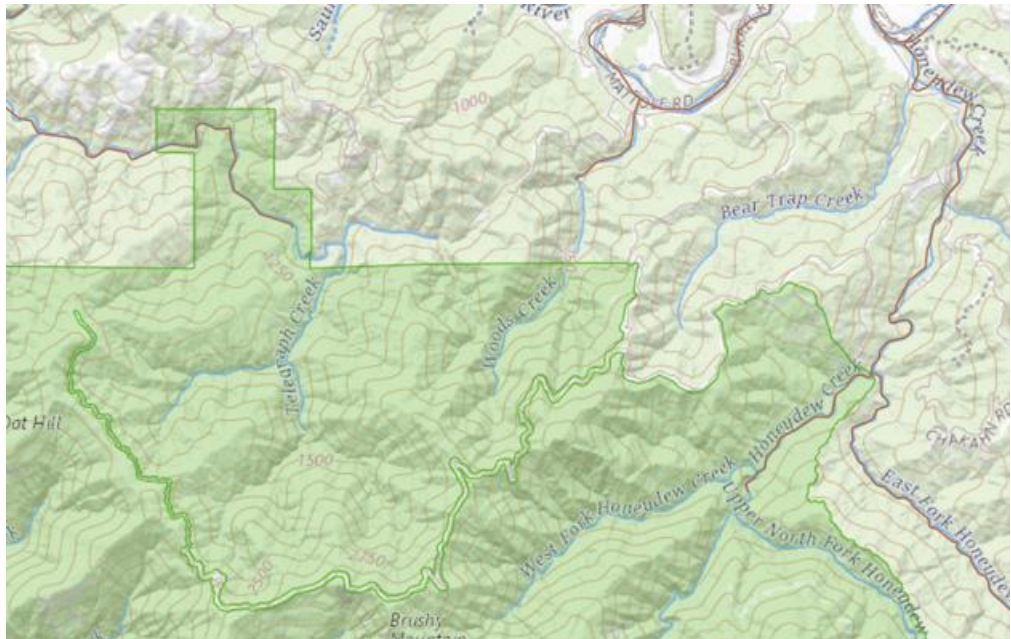
Kimberling Creek Wilderness (VA)



I haven't found actual records, but there is a systematic study that determines the probability of brook trout in some streams in the wilderness, including North Fork of Kimberling Creek across the northern part of the wilderness. The blue straight line segments are 70 to 90% probability, the green ones are 50 to 70% probability. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

King Range Wilderness (CA)

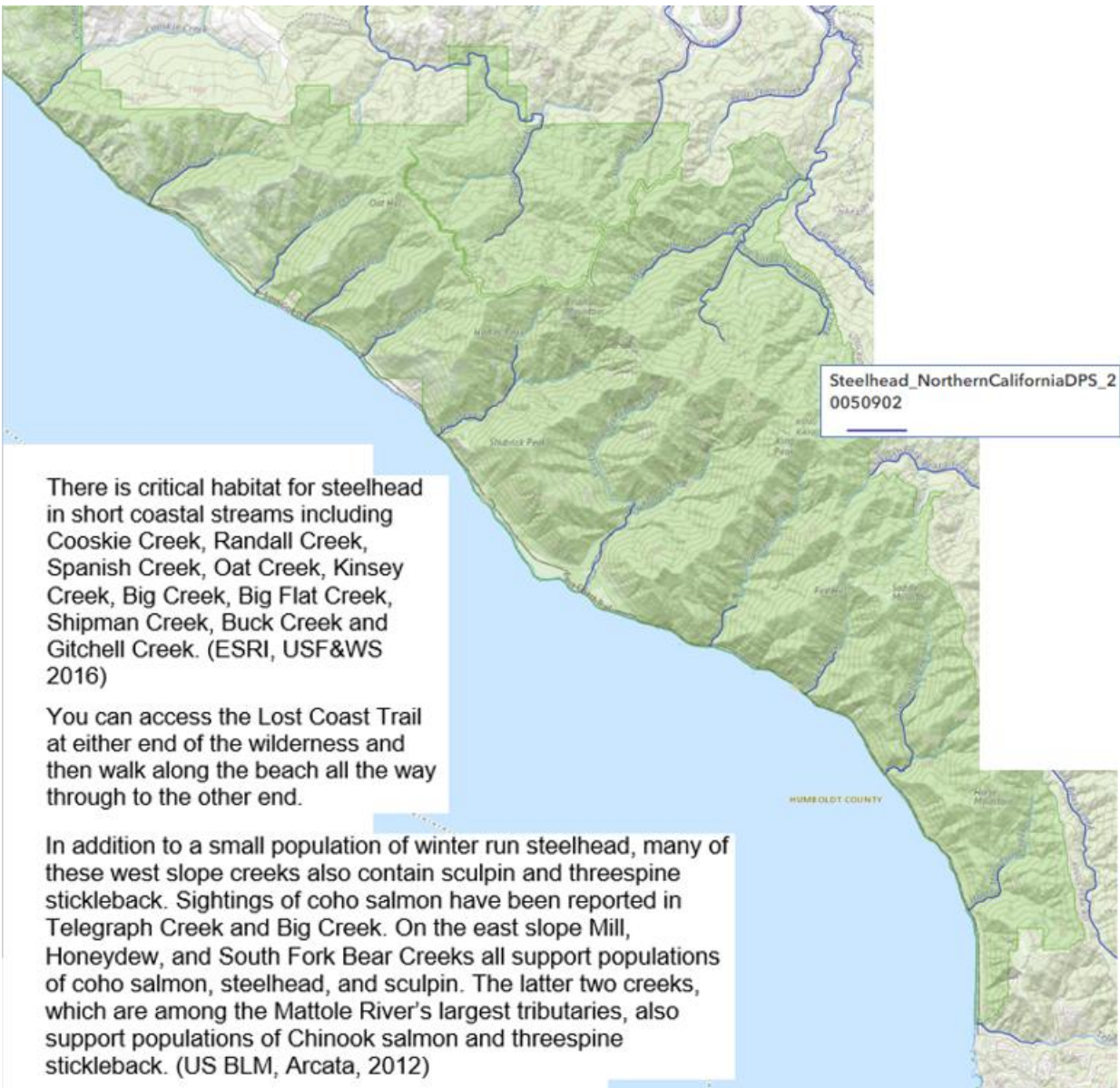
There is critical habitat for chinook salmon in upper reaches of Mattole River tributaries including Telegraph Creek (formerly Squaw Creek, if you're using a map from back when everyone was insensitive) and Honeydew Creek. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



In February 2026 I hiked in the rain down the Lost Coast Trail from the north as far as the Punta Gorda Light. I caught a couple of 4-inch rainbows (future steelhead?) in the minnow traps a hundred feet upstream from the beach in Fourmile Creek (number 102) as well as a sculpin from a pool in the upper tidal zone as the tide was going out.

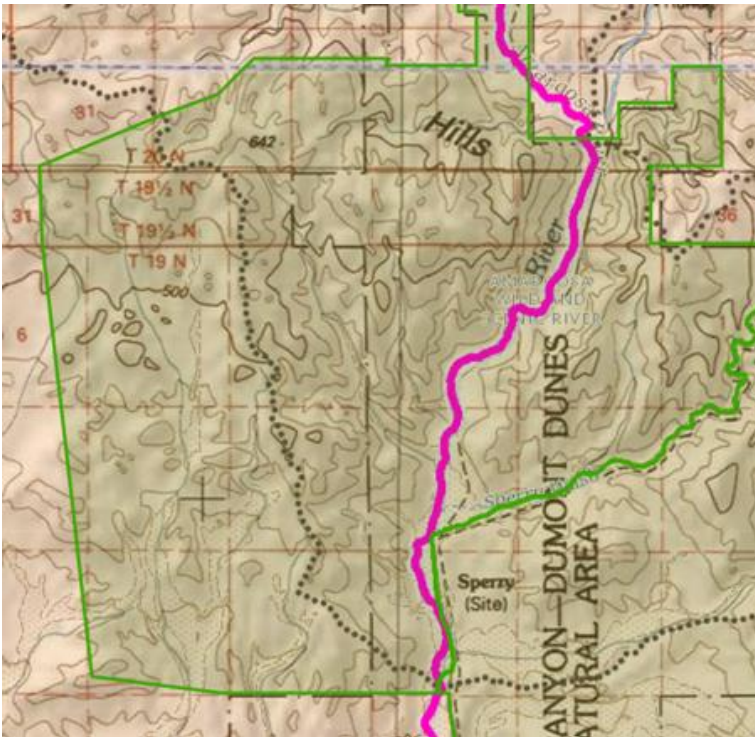


King Range Wilderness (CA)



In February 2026 I also had the opportunity to get up close and personal with about a hundred or so elephant seals. They were very loud. I kept my distance, although I think I might have been able to outrun them.

Kingston Range Wilderness (CA)

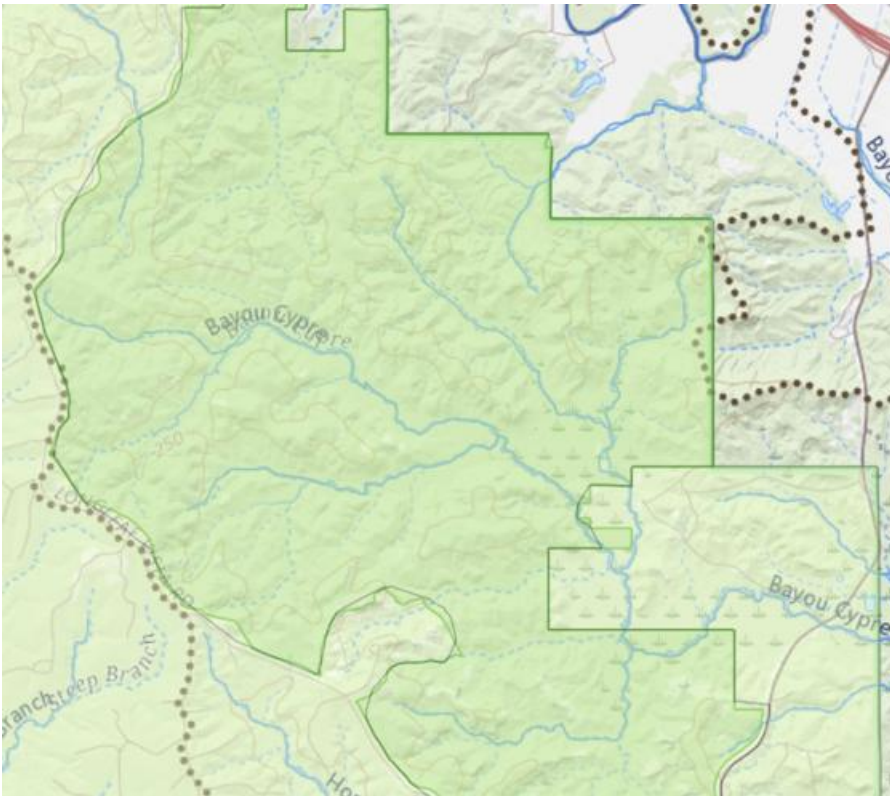


There are Amargosa pupfish in the Amargosa River “from Tecopa down through Amargosa Canyon.” (Swift et al, 1993, p. 121) A parallel trail (apparently an old road) runs the whole length through the wilderness. USGS NWIS shows Amargosa as perennial all the way across the wilderness. (USGS 2021)

I visited in March 2023 and hiked in from China Ranch near the northern edge of the wilderness. Yes, the stuff in the middle of the picture that looks like peanut butter is indeed the Amargosa River. I apparently came during a high water event (it was a wet winter and there was a lot of water in other parts of the river that are normally dry) which made it difficult to find the fish, but I haven't given up on this one.

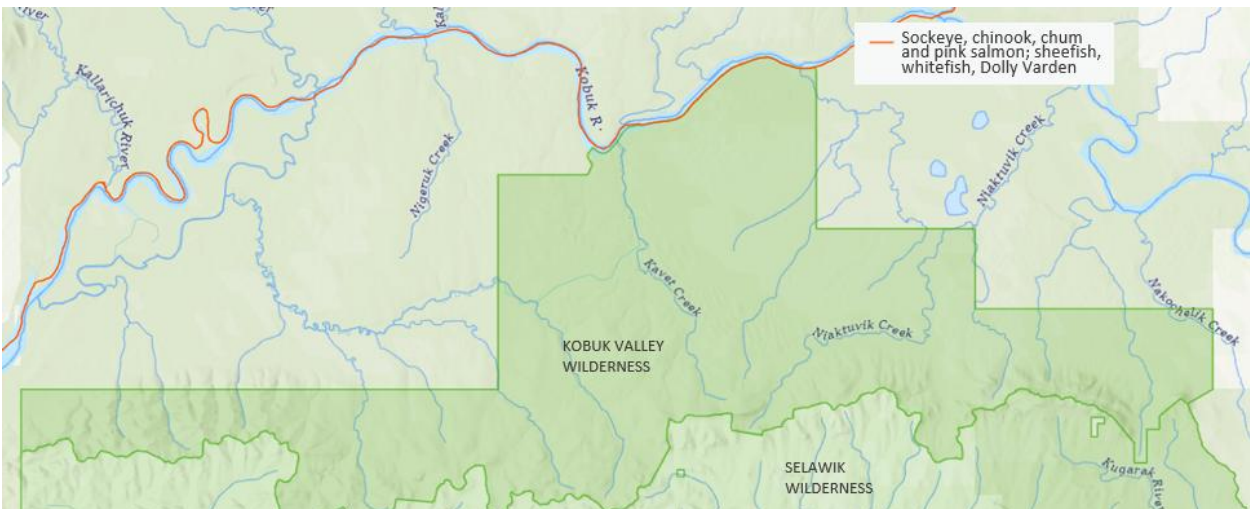


Kisatchie Hills Wilderness (LA)



With Bayou Cypre running through much of the wilderness there is good reason to expect fish. Nearby Kisatchie Creek has bass, perch, sunfish and catfish. (USDA, USFS, Kisatchie NF) Other nearby records include Mississippi silvery minnow, redspotted sunfish and American pickerel. (iNaturalist 2023)

Kobuk Valley Wilderness (AK)



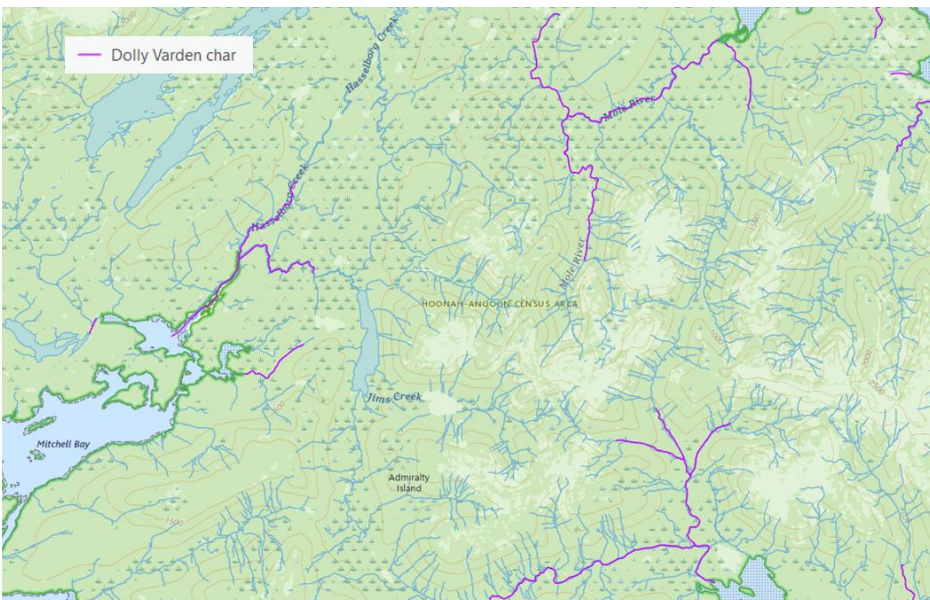
The northern half of the wilderness lies within the Kobuk Valley National Park and has several tributaries that flow into the Kobuk. Park Service data shows the presence of a multitude of fish, including pink, chum and chinook salmon; whitefish, cisco, lake trout, grayling, sheefish and others. (NPS 2023 NPSpecies) The Kobuk forms the northern boundary of a portion of the wilderness, and has chinook, sockeye, pink and chum salmon; plus sheefish, whitefish and Dolly Varden

Kootznoowoo Wilderness (AK)

Streams in the wilderness have five kinds of Pacific salmon, plus steelhead, coastal cutthroats and Dolly Varden char. (Trout Fall 2014, p. 45)

Coho seem to be the most widespread of the salmons. (ADF&G 2023)

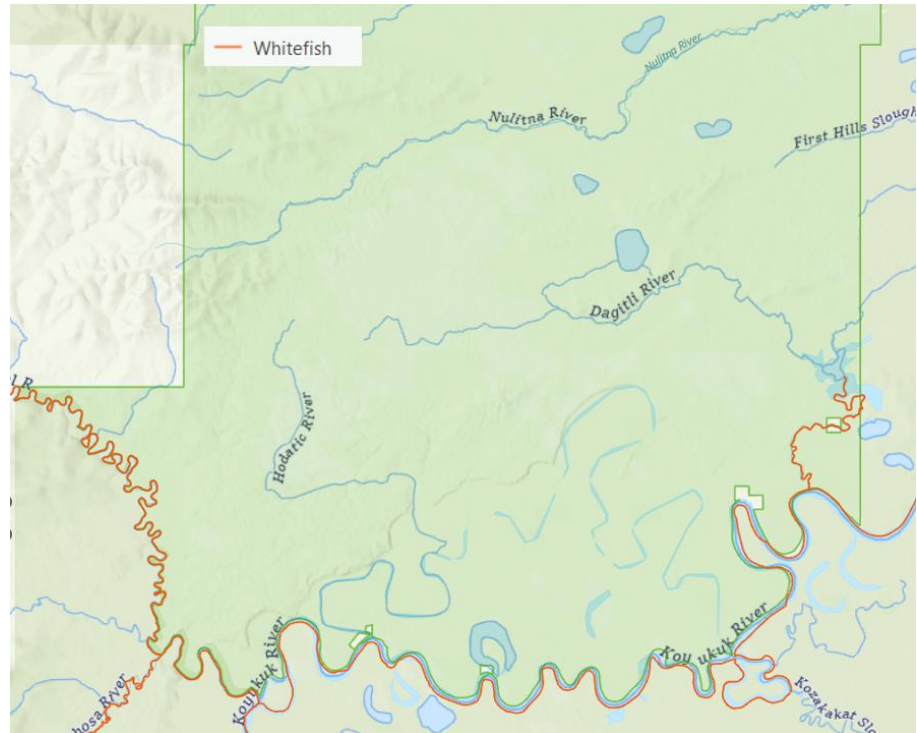
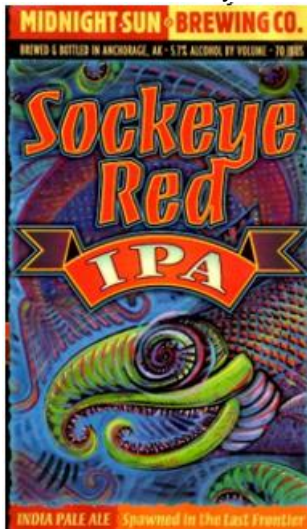
There are chum, coho, chinook and pink salmon as well as cutthroats and Dolly Varden in the Wheeler Creek drainage in the northern part of the wilderness. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016)



The same species plus steelhead occur in multiple drainages in the southern portion of the wilderness, including Mole River, Jim's Creek, Bowman Creek and others. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016)

Koyukuk Wilderness (AK)

The Koyukuk River forms much of the southern boundary of the wilderness but is not inside the boundary.



Dagiti River is a Koyukuk River tributary with anadromous whitefish present. The Koyukuk itself passes chinook, coho, chum and sockeye salmon. (ADF&G 2023) There's lots of water here, there are likely lots of grayling as well.

Kuiu Wilderness (AK)

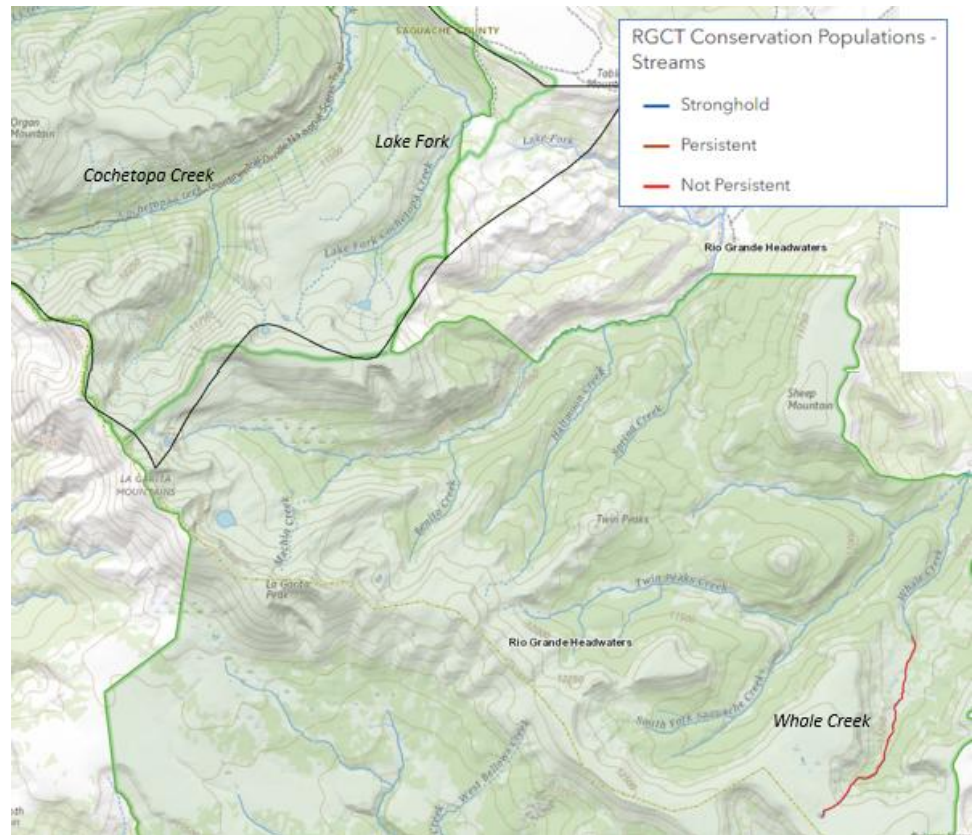
A very fish-rich environment. Coho, pink and sockeye salmon; steelhead and Dolly Varden occupy streams and lakes feeding into Port Malmesbury in the western part of the wilderness. A similar list of fish plus chum salmon occur in Bear Harbor Creek and Joan Creek feeding Bear Harbor and Affleck Canal in the south-central part of the wilderness. Coho, cutthroat, steelhead and Dolly Varden are in Kim Creek in the far eastern part of the wilderness. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016; ADFG 2023)



La Garita Wilderness (CO)

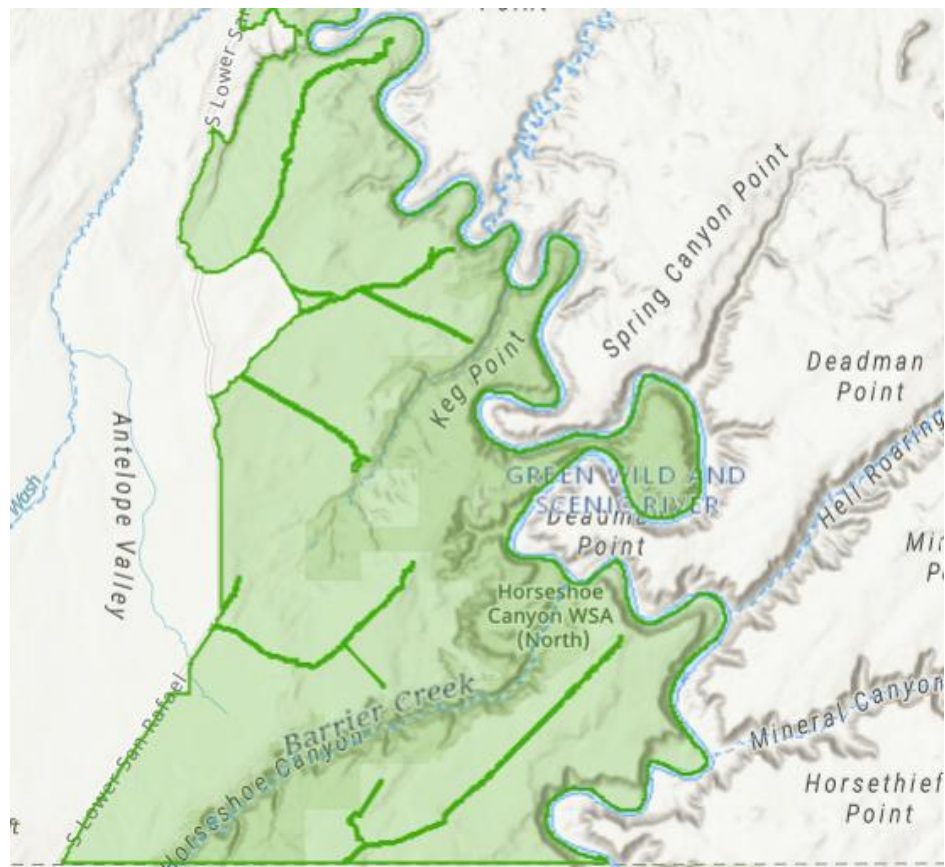
There are Rio Grande Cutthroats in Whale Creek, some sources also say they are in Lake Fork Cochetopa Creek (Bakevich et al 2019; TU RGCT 2019)

Perhaps a better bet would be to go after Cochetopa Creek brown trout and brook trout, with cutthroats more prevalent farther upstream. The Continental Divide Trail parallels the creek. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2019, p. 22)



Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness (UT)

USGS NHD shows no perennial surface water, although almost the entire eastern boundary of the wilderness lies along the Green River. (Utah AGRC 2020) There should be flannemouth sucker in the river, and there are definitely smallmouth bass upstream, although they are subject to a non-native control program.

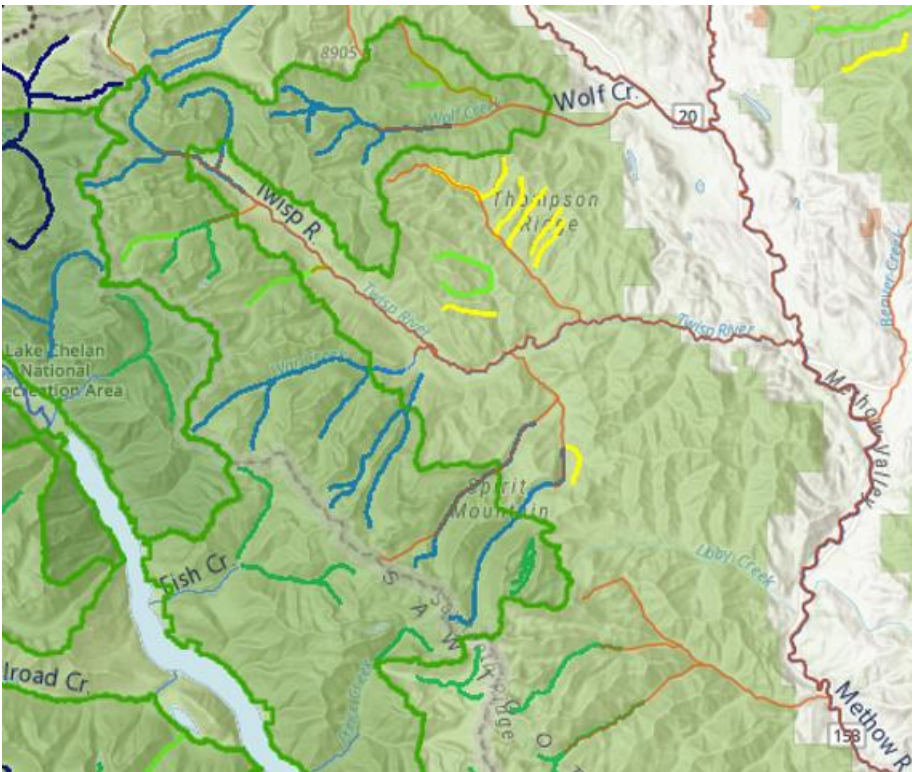


Lacassine Wilderness (LA)



The wilderness area is the southern 3300 acres of the National Wildlife Refuge. Fish species present in the refuge include catfish, bowfin, bass, bream, crappie, and gar. Rare paddlefish are occasionally in the adjacent larger waterways. (US Dept of Interior, F&WS, Lacassine NWR, Oct 2006)

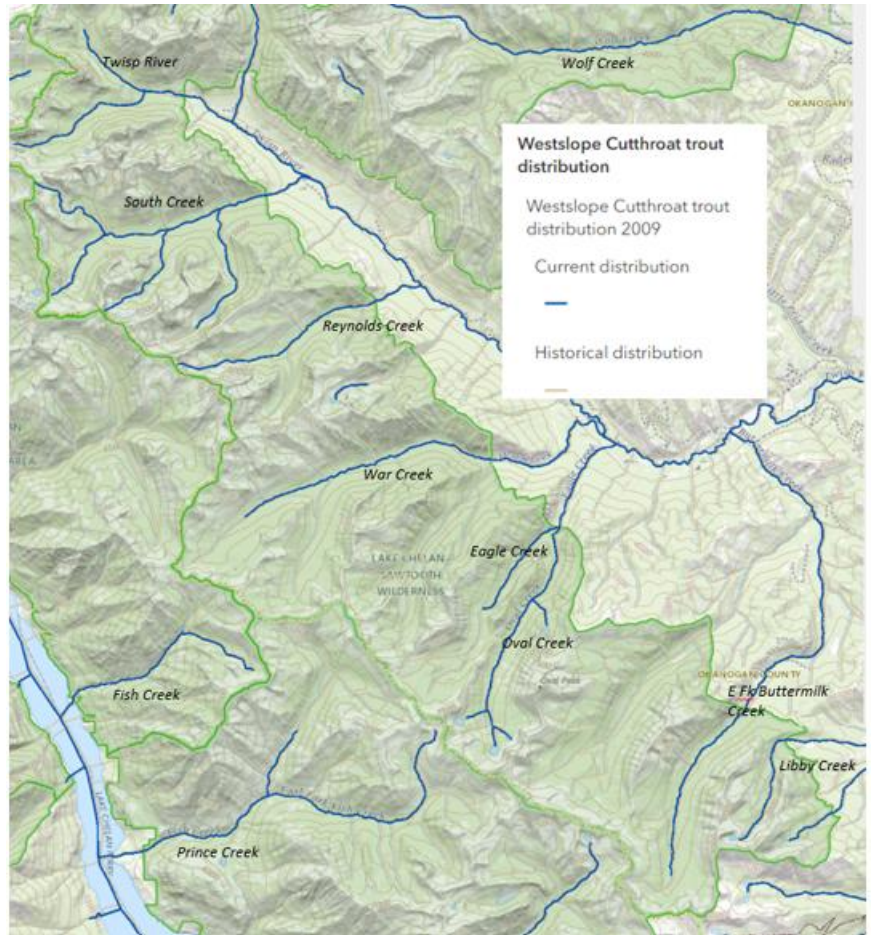
Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness (WA)



There is critical habitat for bull trout in Methow River tributaries Twisp River, Wolf Creek and West Fork Buttermilk Creek. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in these streams and their tributaries, as well as War Creek, Eagle Creek, Oval Creek and East Fork Buttermilk Creek. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness (WA)

Westslope cutthroats occupy Methow River tributaries Wolf Creek in the north and North and South Libby Creek in the extreme south; Twisp River and Twisp River tributaries South Creek, Reynolds Creek, War Creek, Eagle Creek, Oval Creek and East Fork Buttermilk Creek on the eastern slope of Sawtooth and Rainbow Ridges; and Stehekin River tributaries Prince Creek and Fish Creek on the west slope of Sawtooth Ridge. (Mayfield)



Lake Woodruff Wilderness (FL)



A very small part of the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge, the wilderness consists of islands that are mostly hardwood swamp forest. American eel and American shad are diadromous species found on the refuge. Common resident species include bluegill, largemouth bass, Florida gar, bowfin and brown bullhead. A subset of resident species such as blackbanded sunfish, eastern mosquitofish, pigmy killifish, and swamp darter is found in the blackwater (waters resembling tea, heavily stained by tannin compounds from decaying vegetation) habitats present in refuge swamp forests and some small streams. Exotic species include blue tilapia, brown hoplo and vermiculated sailfin catfish (US Dept of Interior, F&WS, Lake Woodruff, Oct 2008)

Lassen Volcanic Wilderness (CA)



Big rainbow trout occupy Snag Lake, with 3-5 mile trail access from north or south; there are also trout in Lakey Lake, Horseshoe Lake and Teal Lake. Brook trout are in Grassy Creek between Snag Lake and Horseshoe Lake. Good stream fishing exists in Kings Creek. (NWFF May-Jun 2011, p. 24)

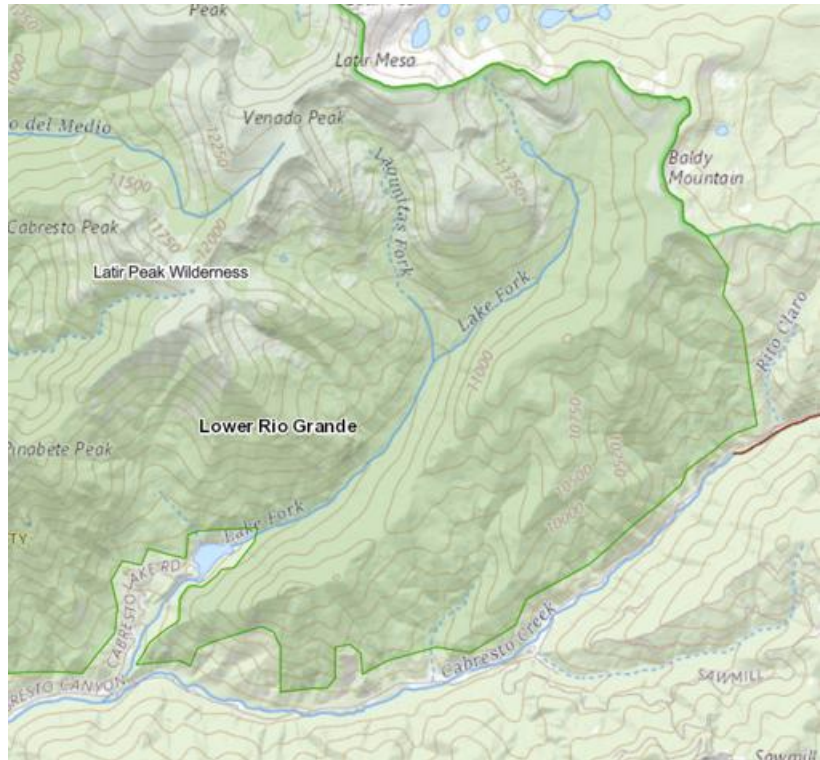


In July 2026, I hiked in to Kings Creek Falls, which several hundred other people also did that same day. I then scrambled down the slope below the falls and into the wilderness, which probably no one else did that day, or most days. The reward was a nice brook trout that was hiding under a ledge. (Number 112)



Latir Peak Wilderness (NM)

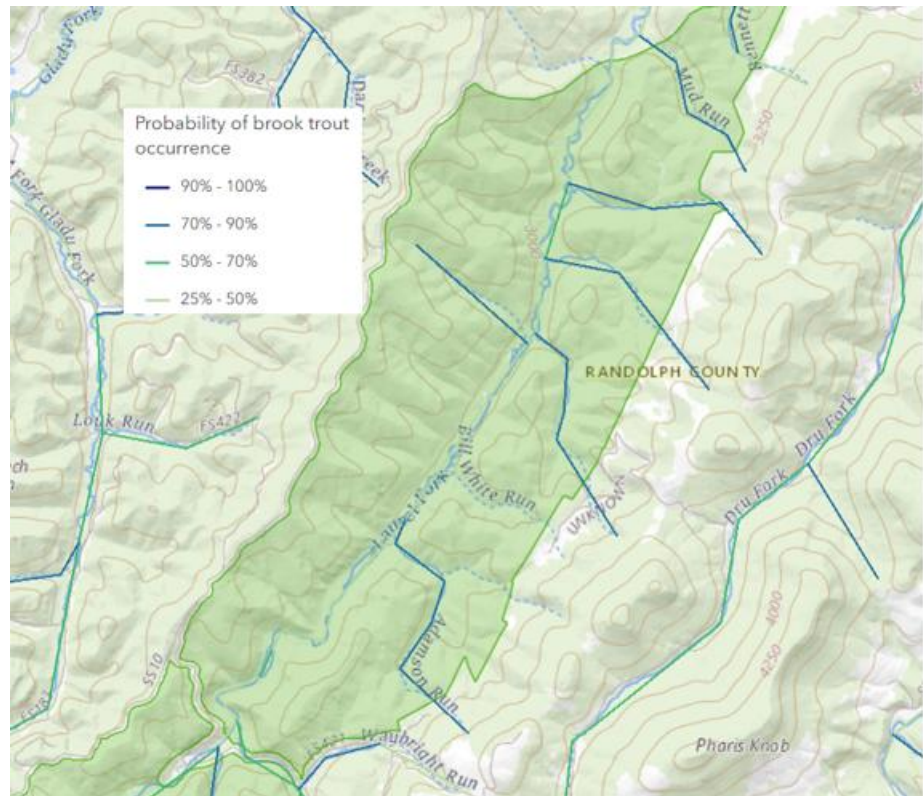
Cabresto Creek flows outside the southern edge of the wilderness and holds Rio Grande cutthroats (Mayfield 2019); I would not be surprised if some show up in the Lake Fork of Cabresto Creek inside the wilderness. There is a record of brook trout in Cabresto Lake just outside the wilderness (iNaturalist 2023), they most assuredly occur upstream in Lake Fork as well.



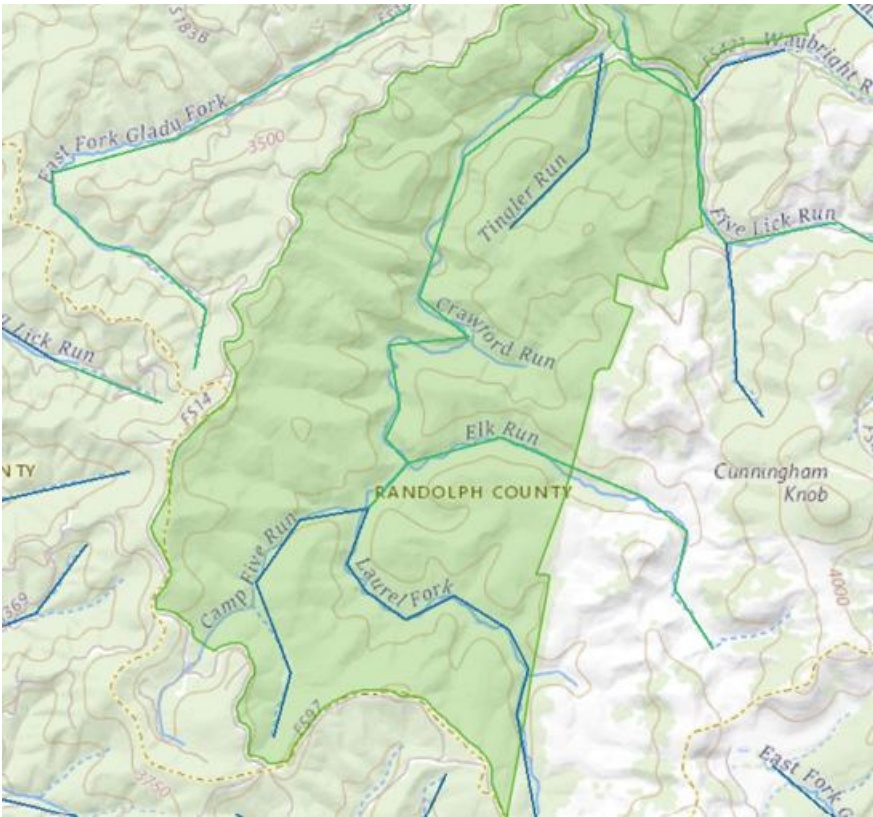
Laurel Fork North Wilderness (WV)

Laurel Fork in the Cheat River drainage is perennial through the length of the wilderness. (USGS 2022) There is a record of mottled sculpin in one of the east side tributaries of Laurel Fork. (iNaturalist 2022) There is also a trail parallel to the entire length of Laurel Creek in the wilderness.

There should be brook trout in Laurel Fork, with a high probability of their occurrence in the side tributaries. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



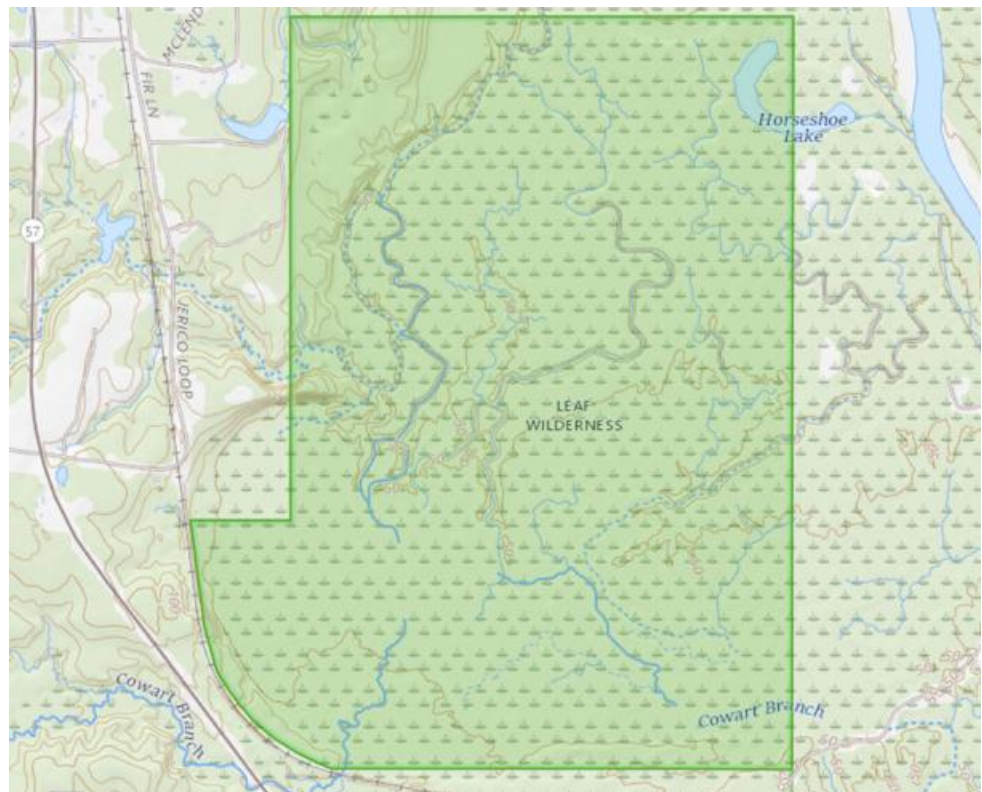
Laurel Fork South Wilderness (WV)



There is a persistent population of brook trout, along with brown trout and rainbow trout, in the headwaters of Laurel Fork. Laurel Fork is tributary to Dry Fork of Cheat River, the Cheat flows north to the Monongahela. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range; DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

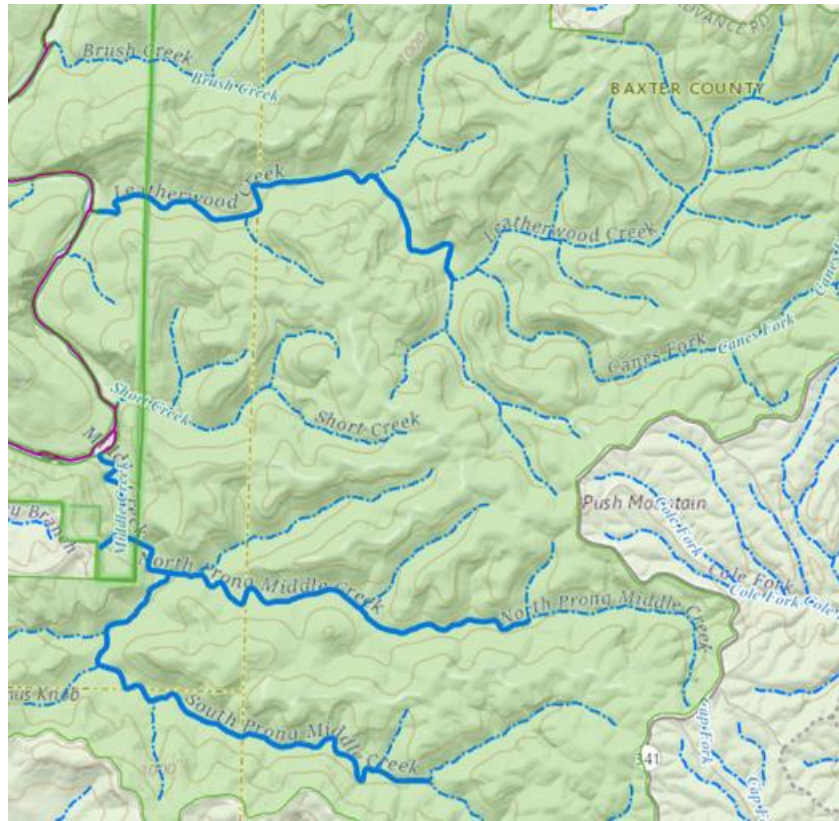
Leaf Wilderness (MS)

Almost all of the wilderness is within the floodplain of the Leaf River. Bass and panfish are common to most of the waters in the area, and are likely in Horseshoe Lake, partially within the northeast corner of the wilderness.



Leatherwood Wilderness (AR)

The lower Buffalo River flows very close to the west, and several Buffalo tributaries within the wilderness seem to have consistent flow. There is a record of whitetail shiner in one of these tributaries. There are also records of smallmouth bass and black redhorse in the river proper (iNaturalist 2023), it's a good bet some of these makes it up the tributaries.

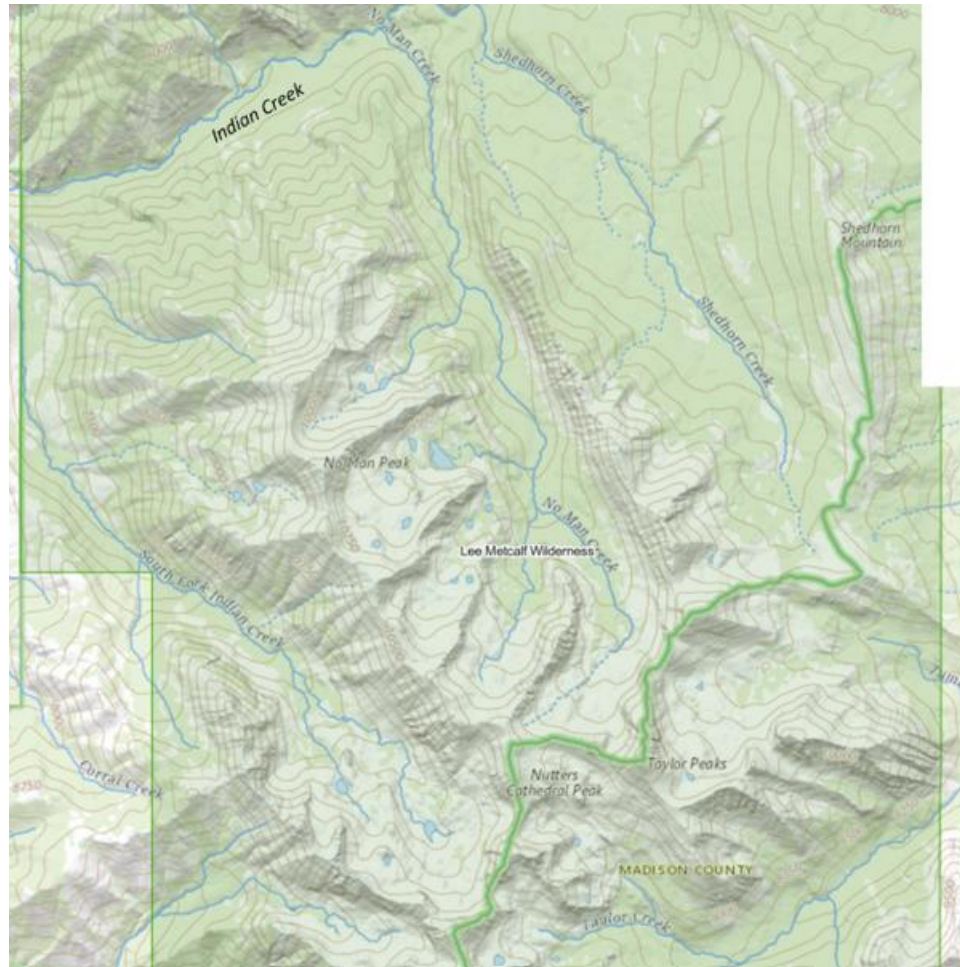


Lee Metcalf Wilderness (MT)

There are rainbow trout in Indian Creek, tributary to Madison River, on the western side of the large central unit of the wilderness.

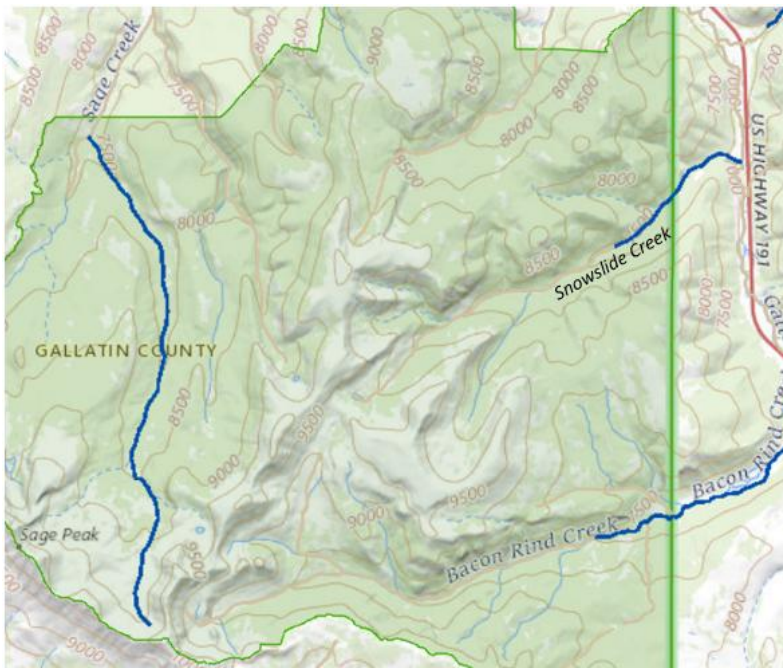
Creekside trail access exists for at least five miles into the wilderness. (NWFF Nov-Dec 2015, p. 26)

Taylor Creek, on the east slope Gallatin River side of the large central unit of the wilderness, has cutthroat, rainbows and, in the fall, migratory browns, although I'm not sure how far up into the wilderness the fish are. (NWFF Nov-Dec 2017, p.25)



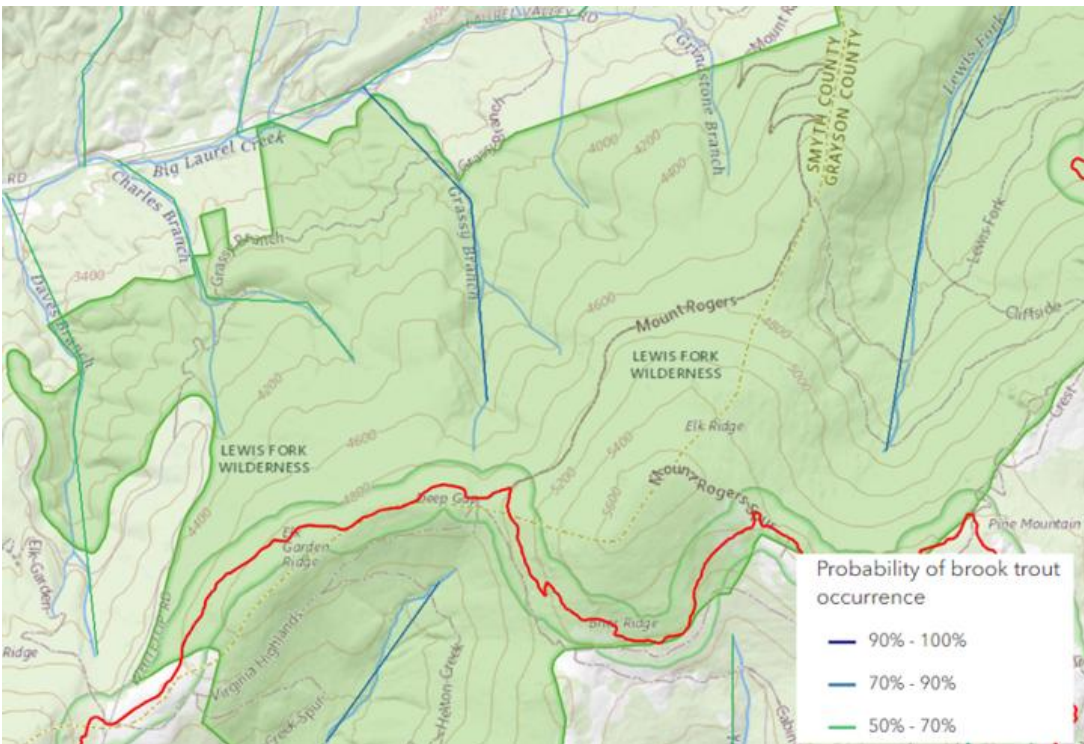
High water on Indian Creek. I made it about a half mile in mid-June 2025, way too much water. I also forgot my bearspray, so I headed back...

Lee Metcalf Wilderness (MT)



Westslope cutthroats occupy a handfull of streams, including Middle Fork and North Fork Bear Creek, South Fork Indian Creek and Papoose Creek flowing toward the Madison River on the west side of the large central unit; Cache Creek tributary to Taylor Creek draining to the Gallatin River on the east side of the large central units; and Little Sage Creek, Snowslide Creek and Bacon Rind Creek, all tributary to the Gallatin River in the small southeastern unit of the wilderness; the small southeastern unit is hown on the map. (Mayfield)

Lewis Fork Wilderness (VA)

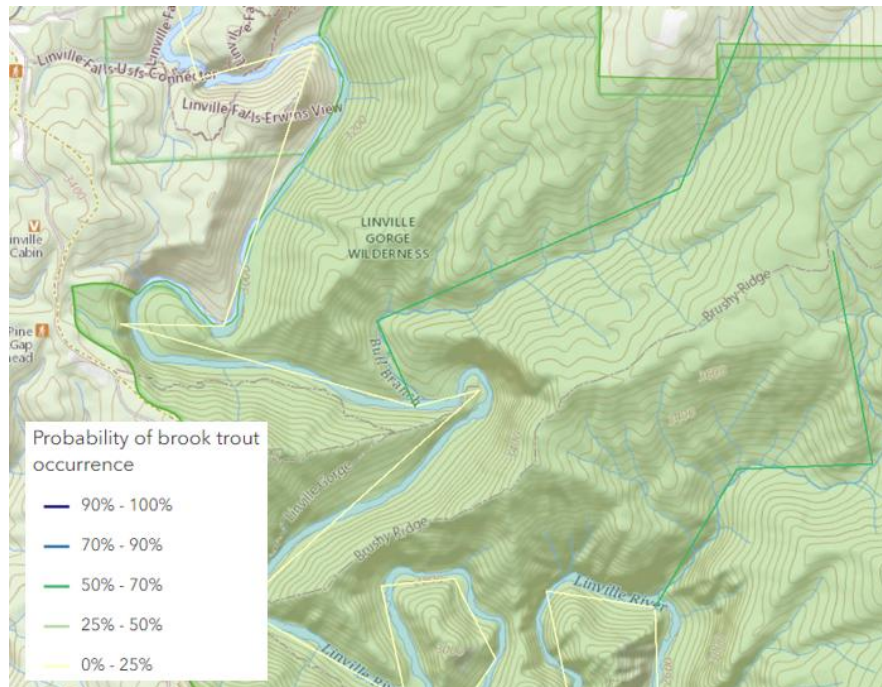


A stronghold population of brook trout occupies Lewis Fork of Fox Creek in the eastern part of the wilderness. Persistent populations of brook trout along with rainbow trout are in Helton Creek in the southwestern portion of wilderness. Fox Creek and Helton Creek both flow southeast to the New River. Other populations of brookies and rainbows are in Big Laurel Creek drainage flowing northwest out of the western portion of the wilderness toward the South Fork Holston River. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) All these stream have high probability of finding brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

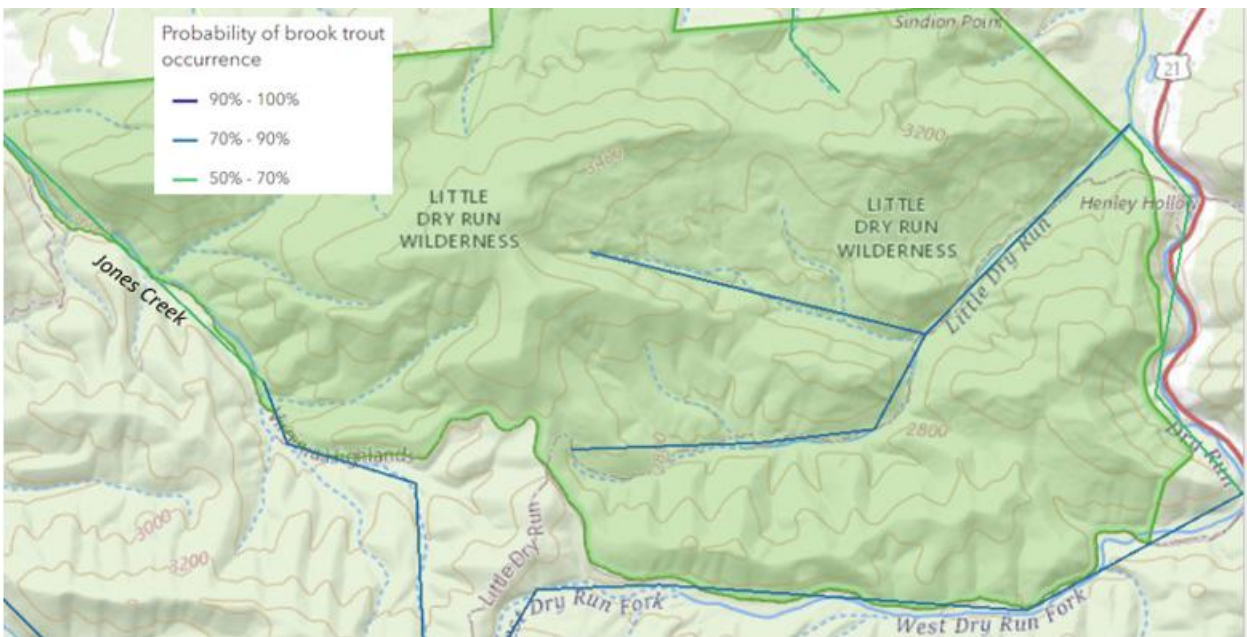
Linville Gorge Wilderness (NC)

There are brown trout in the gorge section of the Linville River downstream from Linville Falls. Trail access generally follows the river with several access points at the rim 1000 to 1400 feet above the river. (The Angler, 2020)

Brook trout might also be present, probabilities of finding them are higher in the tributaries. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



Little Dry Run Wilderness (VA)

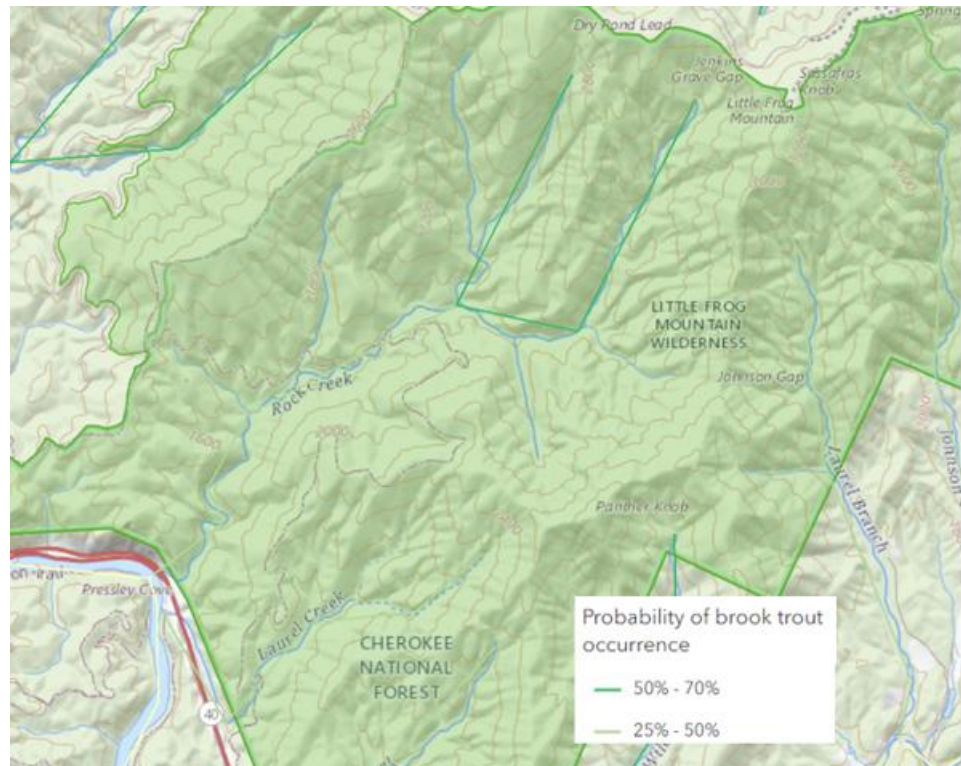


Little Dry Run in the eastern part of the wilderness and Jones Creek in the western part both flow north toward Cripple Creek, which flows east into the New River. Both streams hold a persistent population of brook trout. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

Probabilities of the presence of brook trout are generally high. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

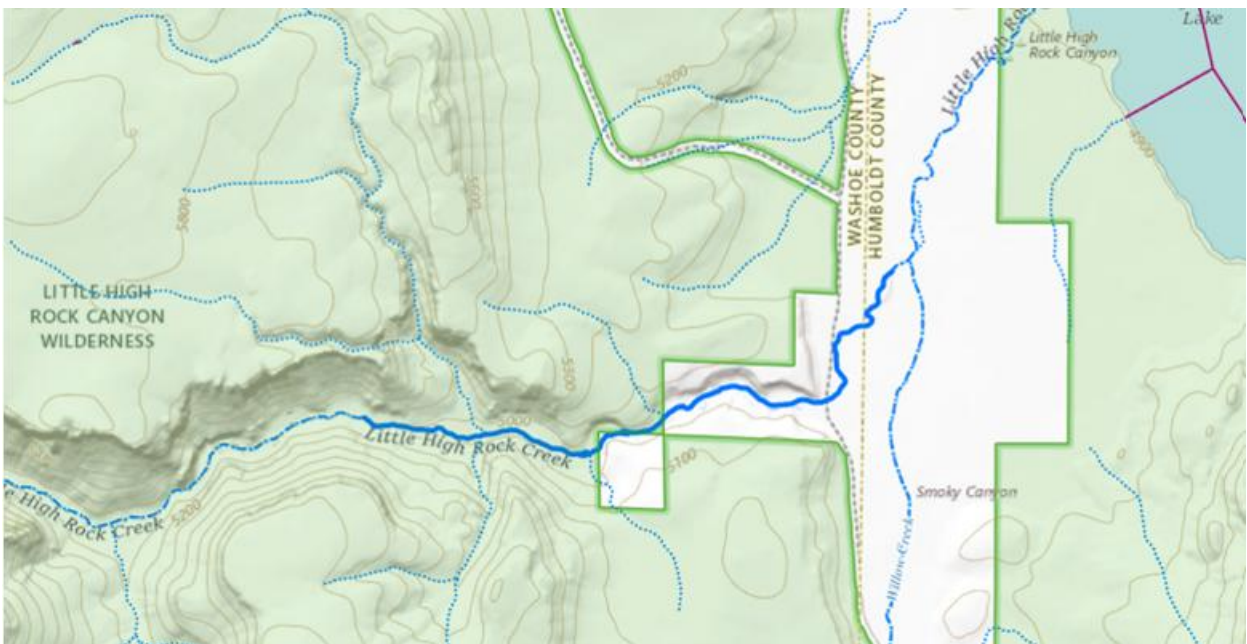
Little Frog Mountain Wilderness (TN)

The Ocoee River watershed is a fish species-rich area, with over 60 species documented. I'm guessing there are many fish, including darters, stonerollers and shiners, that make it up from the Ocoee into tributaries, including the ones in the wilderness. (North American Native Fishes 2022) Brook trout are present, but probabilities are low to moderate. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness (NV)

USGS shows a perennial stretch of Little High Rock Canyon Creek, upstream from what is now apparently a dry High Rock Lake. Aerial images seem to support this, a visit in July 2024 confirmed it. There is one recent record of a "ray-finned fish," not further identified, in this area. (iNaturalist 2023)



Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness (NV)

I explored the lower part of Little High Rock Creek in the wilderness in July 2024. I hiked in through a wet meadow, and there were places with open, surface flow. I flushed a group of barn owls at one of them. Unfortunately it was late afternoon and I wanted to get to the High Rock Canyon before the sun went down so I left before I found fish. I did get to High Rock, and I did find speckled dace there in habitat that looked a lot like Little High Rock, so I still had high hopes for Little High Rock, and planned to return.



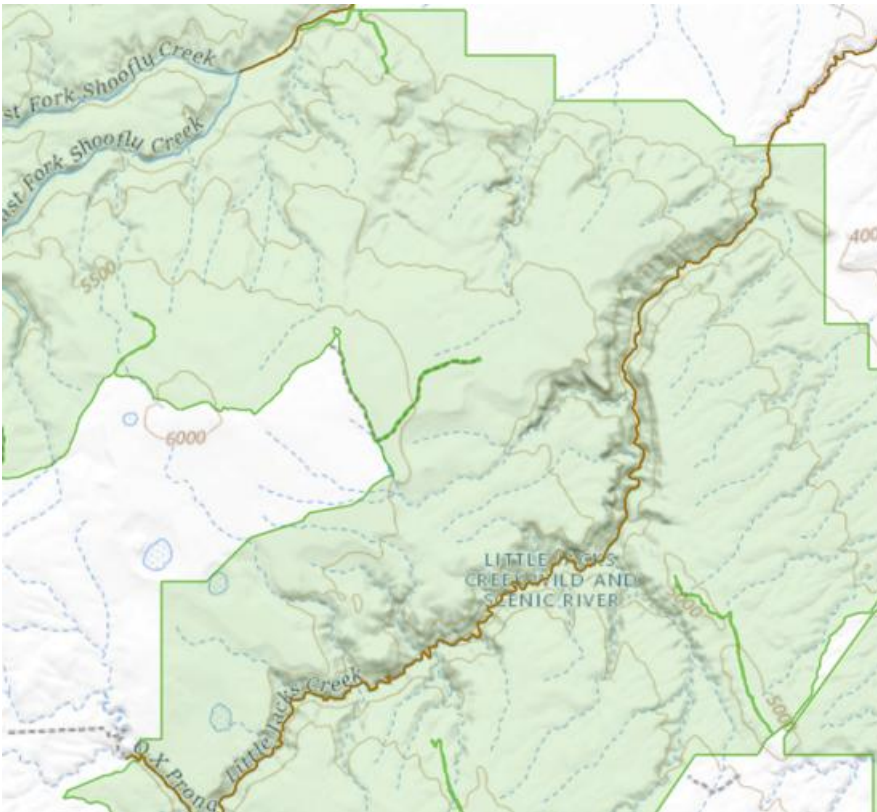
The "Little High Rock Hilton" at the mouth of the creek.



I did return, in July 2026. I hiked in just a little farther, and as I hiked realized I didn't stick my net into the backpack. I was looking for fish, but didn't have anything to catch them with! And, of course, I found fish, speckled dace in a tiny stream about four inches deep and about two feet across. So, what to do? Good thing I was wearing my hat... (Number 108)



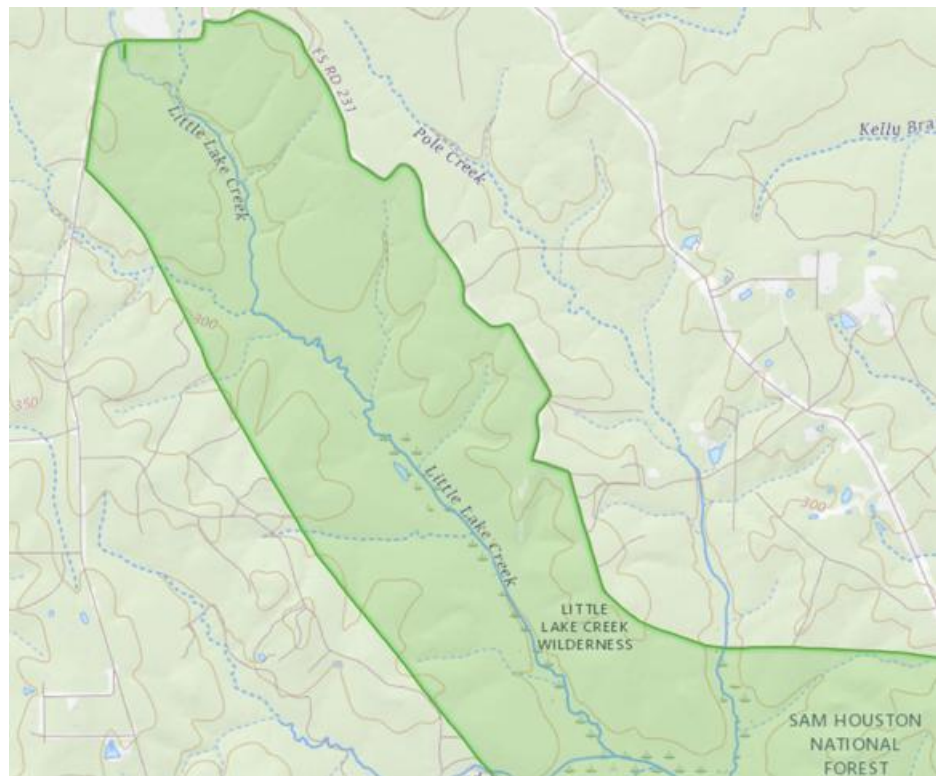
Little Jacks Creek Wilderness (ID)



High densities of redband trout occupy Little Jacks Creek, low densities are in lower portion of Shoofly Creek. (Mayfield; StreamNet 2019)

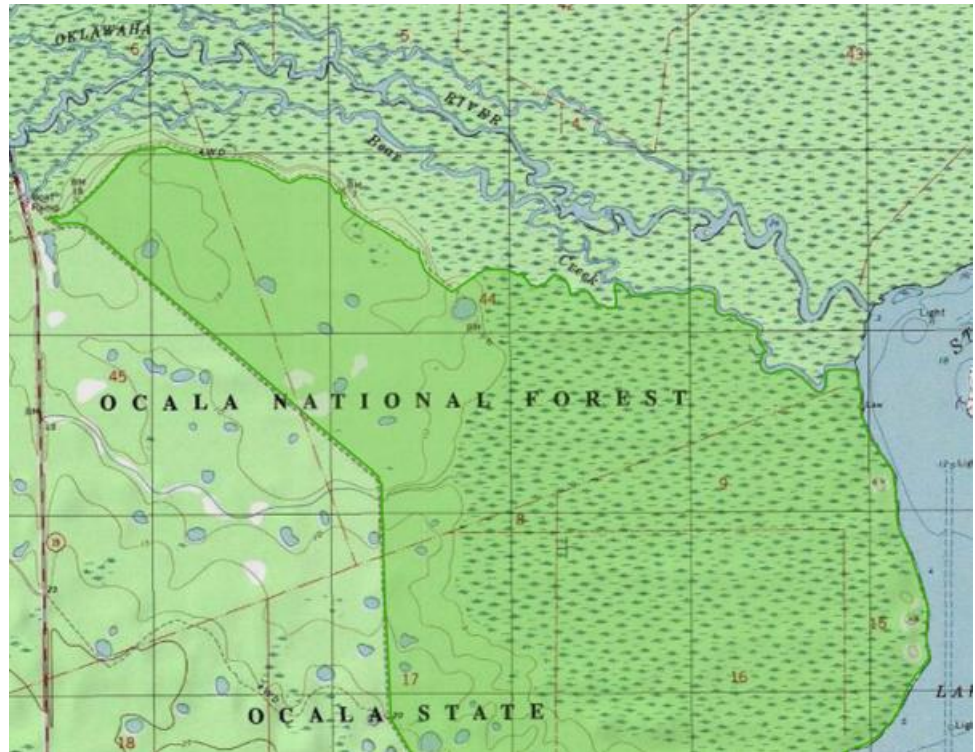
Little Lake Creek Wilderness (TX)

Little Lake Creek feeds Lake Conroe, a popular largemouth bass lake that also holds white bass and various sunfish, some of which likely make their way upstream into the wilderness. There is a record apparently within the wilderness of coppernose bluegill. (iNaturalist 2023)

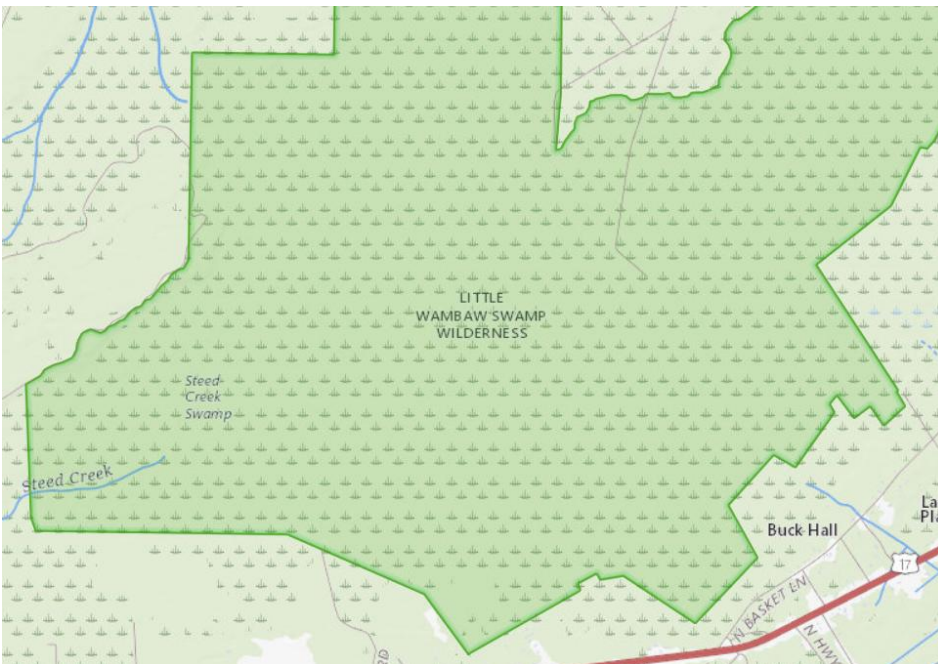


Little Lake George Wilderness (FL)

The wilderness consists primarily of a swamp adjacent to Lake George. It's a swamp in Florida, it has to have fish. There is access along the west edge by Forest Service road, and on the east side by boat. There are records of killifish and bowfin close by, near the confluence of the Oklawaha and St. Johns Rivers. (iNaturalist 2022)

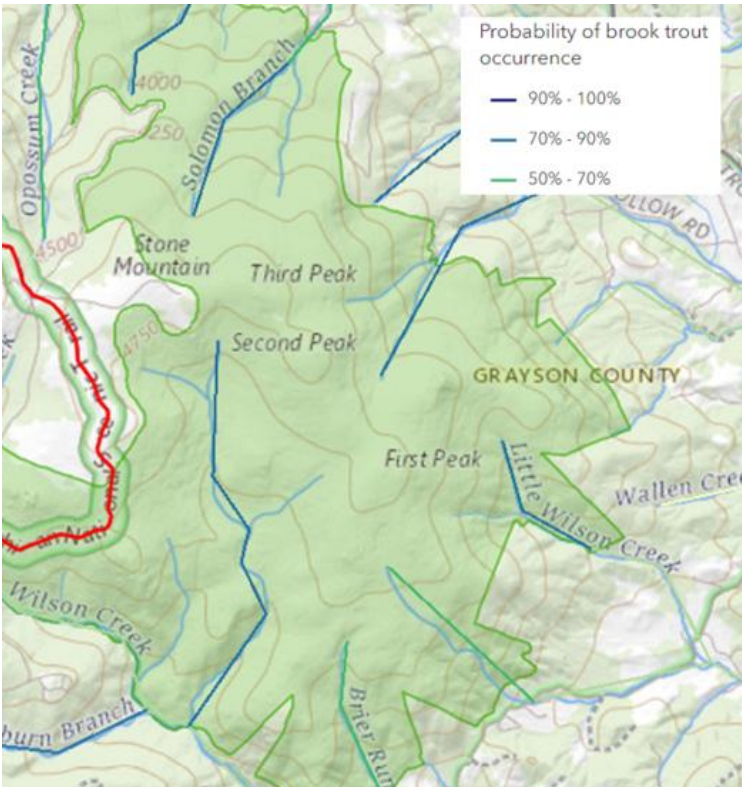


Little Wambaw Swamp Wilderness (SC)



It's a swamp, there's lots of water and likely fish to go with it. It's possible to travel within the wilderness on the remains of raised rail tramways, accessed from Buck Hall Recreation Area. These paths unavoidably get to water. Nearby records include spotted, sun and banded sunfish, and red drum. (iNaturalist 2023)

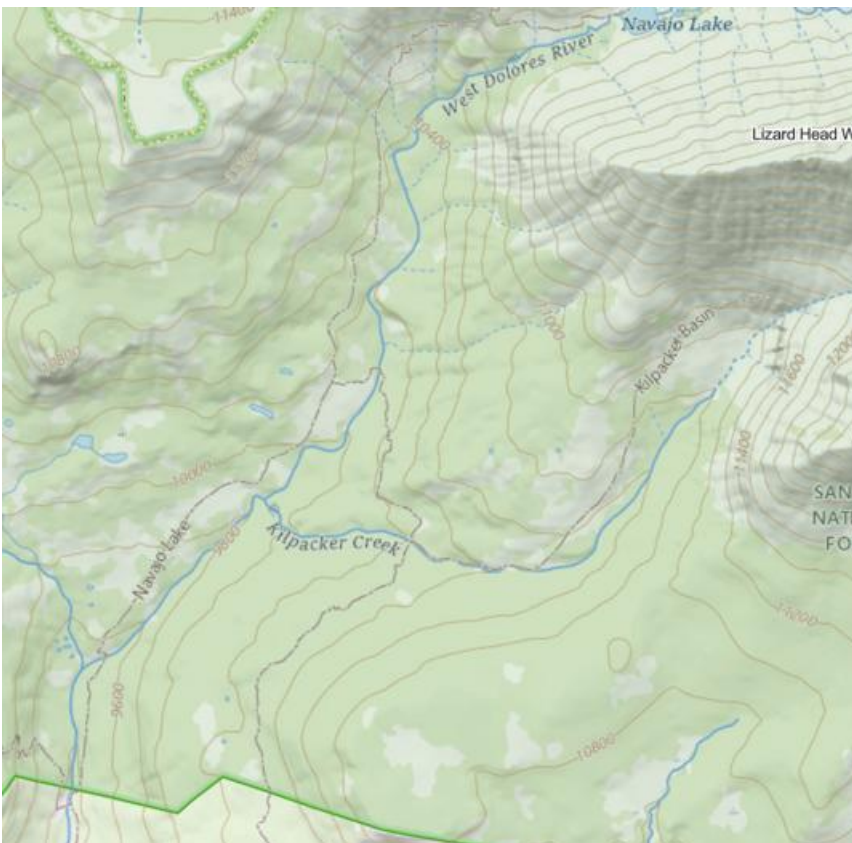
Little Wilson Creek Wilderness (VA)



A resilient stronghold population of brook trout, together with brown trout and rainbow trout, occupies tributaries flowing northward into Fox Creek, which flows southeast toward the New River. Other populations of brook trout and rainbow trout occur in Little Wilson Creek flowing south through the central portion of the wilderness toward Wilson Creek, also tributary of New River. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

The dark lines show high probabilities of brook trout in most streams. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Lizard Head Wilderness (CO)



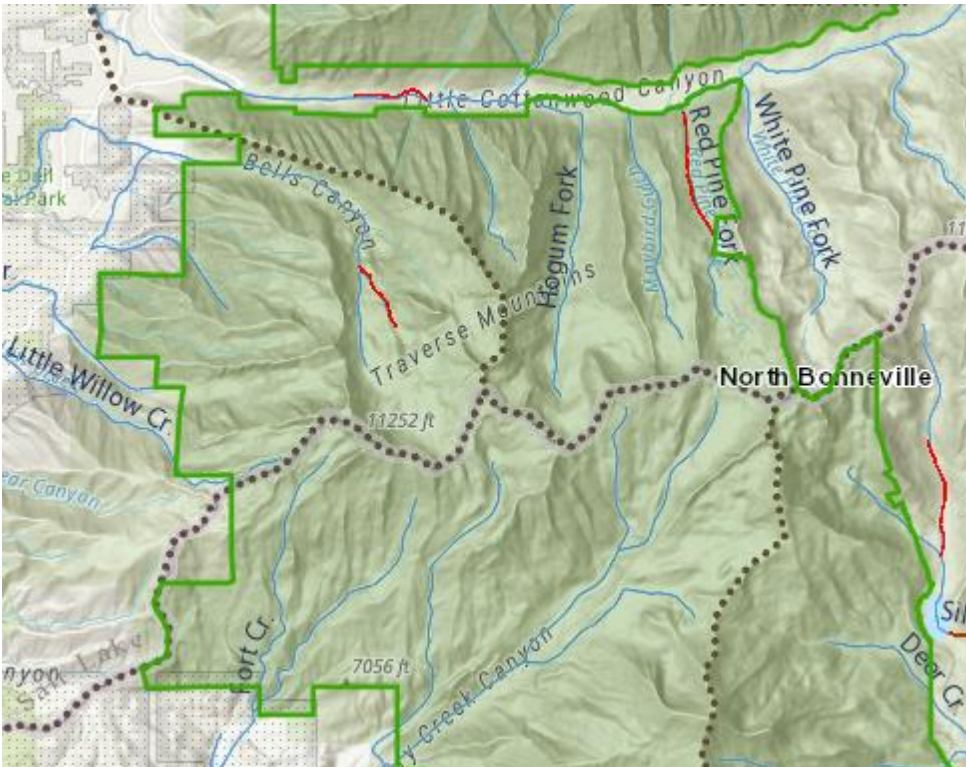
The West Dolores River has brookies, cutthroats and rainbows with the popular Navajo Lake Trail running parallel all the way to the headwaters; camping is available at Burro Bridge Campground 1 ½ miles from the boundary. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2017, p. 23)

I hiked the trail in late July 2022 as far as the footbridge crossing about half a mile into the wilderness. I caught some Colorado cutts and lots of brookies at the bridge and a few places downstream. I also had quite a few spectators from the bridge. (Number 54)

Lizard Head Wilderness (CO)



Lone Peak Wilderness (UT)



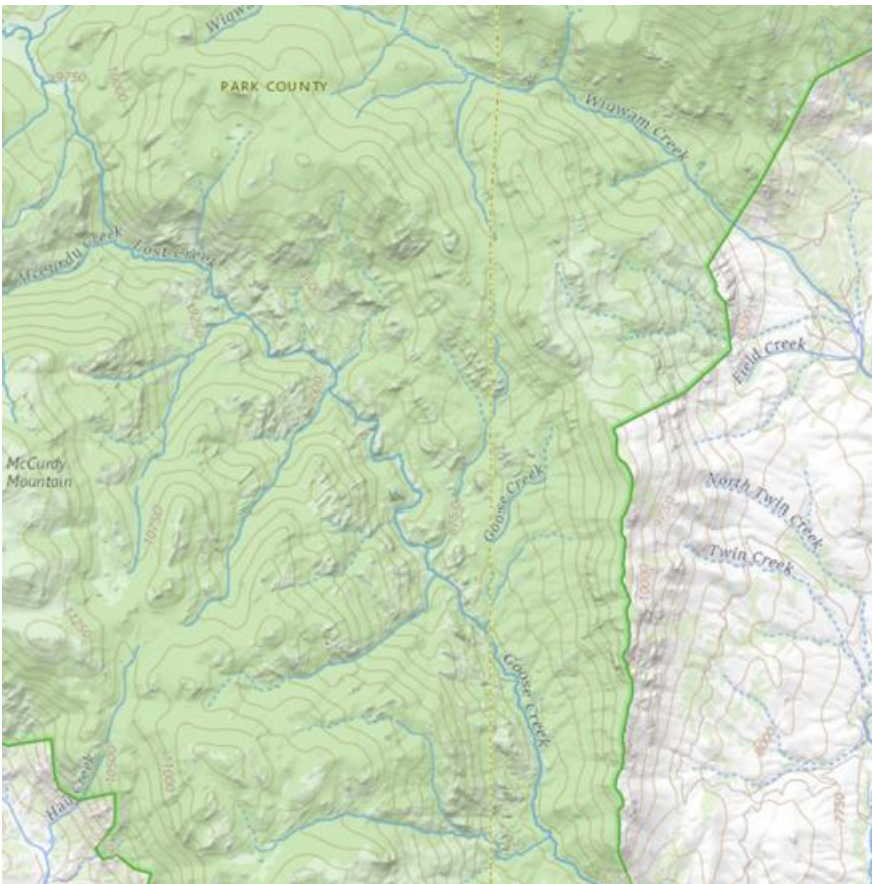
Genetically unaltered resident populations of Bonneville cutthroats occupy Bell's Canyon on the west side of the wilderness, and Red Pine Fork of Little Cottonwood Creek on the northern edge. (TU BCT, 2019)

Lone Peak Wilderness (UT)

In June 2025 Red Pine Fork looked pretty much blown out, with a pretty steep gradient as well. Little Cottonwood Creek didn't look much better.



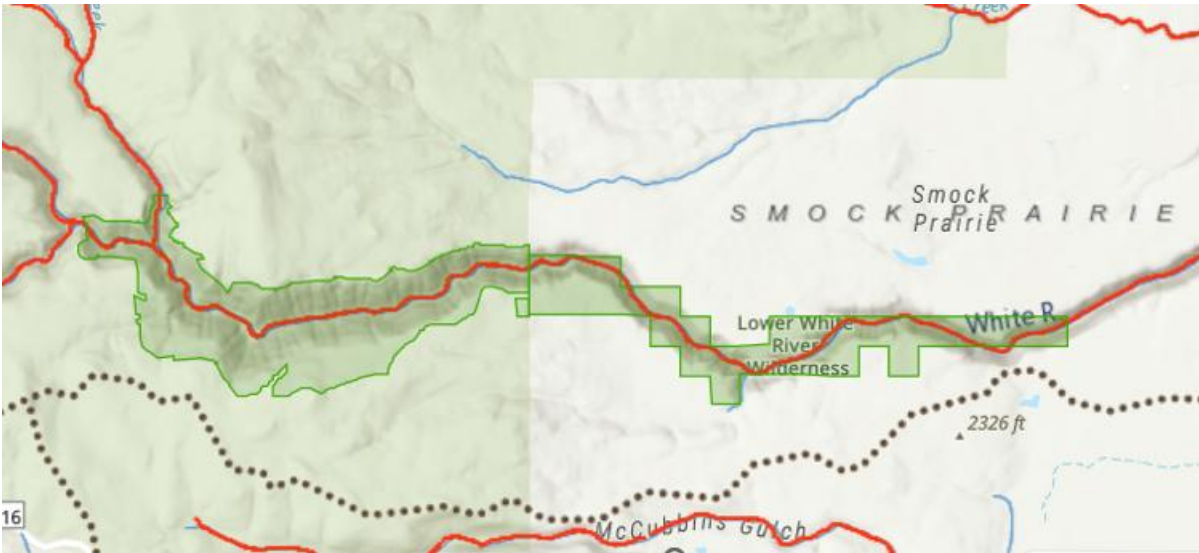
Lost Creek Wilderness (CO)



There are records of brook trout in Wigwam Creek, tributary to Lost Creek, which runs eventually into the South Platte River. (iNaturalist 2022)

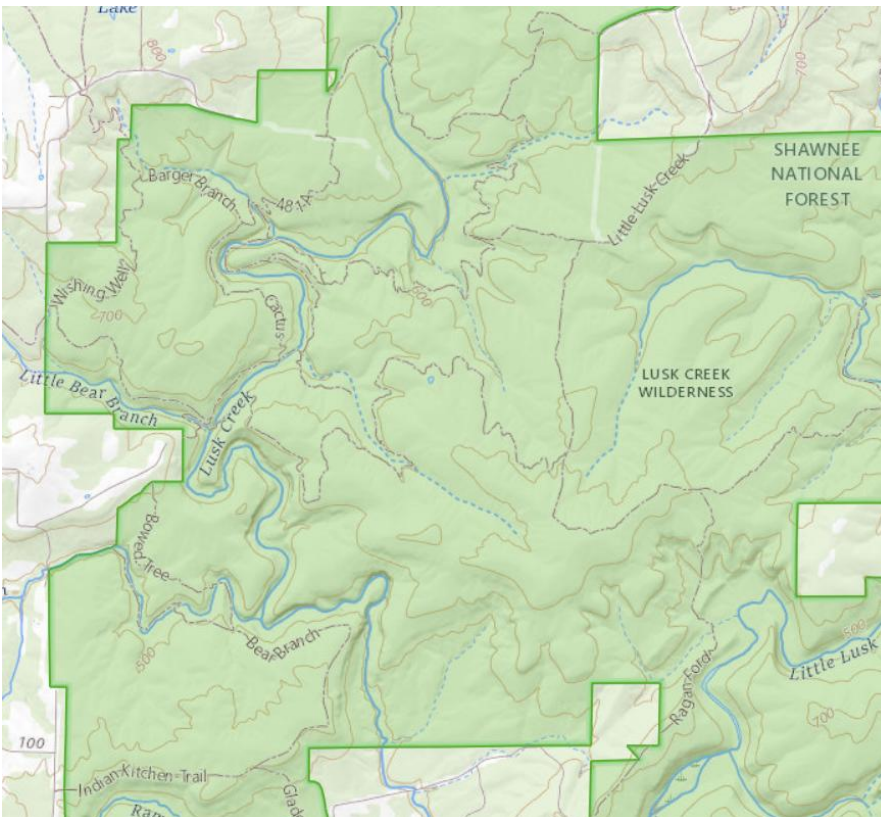


Lower White River Wilderness (OR)



There are redband trout in the White River, a Deschutes River tributary, throughout the length of the wilderness. (StreamNet 2019)

Lusk Creek Wilderness (IL)

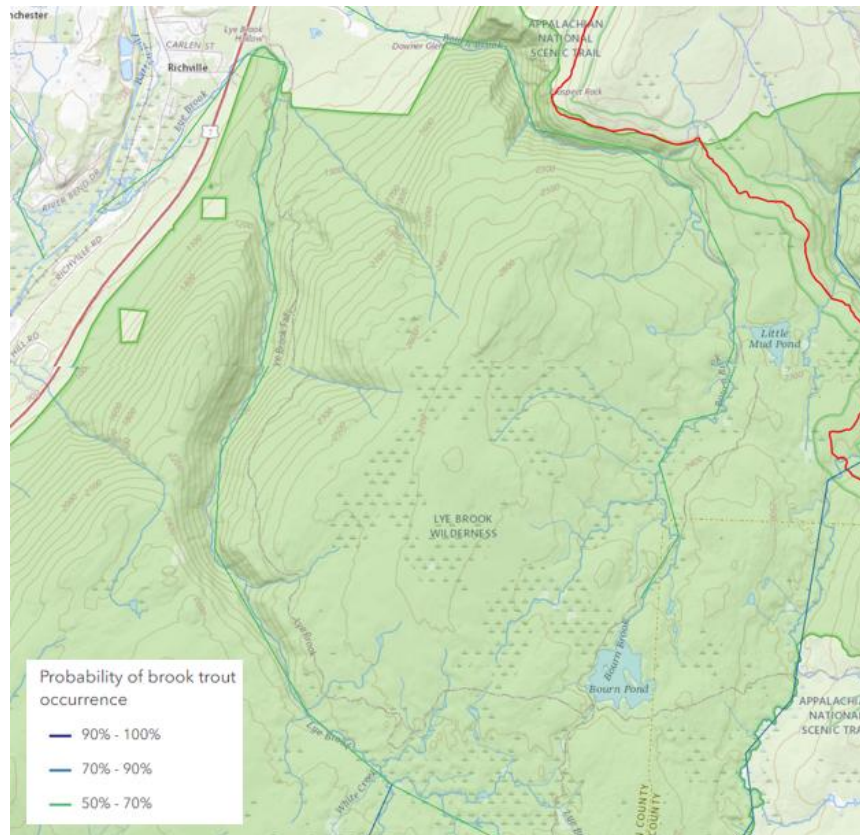


There are records of longear and green sunfish; creek chub; rainbow, bluntnose, spottail and stripetail darter; and bluntnose minnow in Lusk Creek. (iNaturalist 2022)

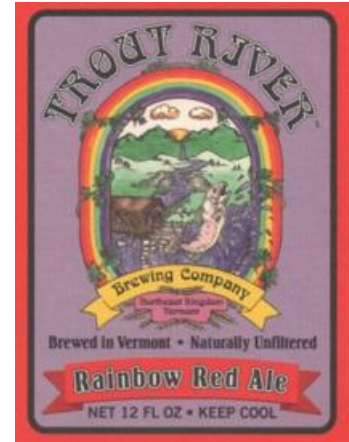


The longear sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*)

Lye Brook Wilderness (VT)



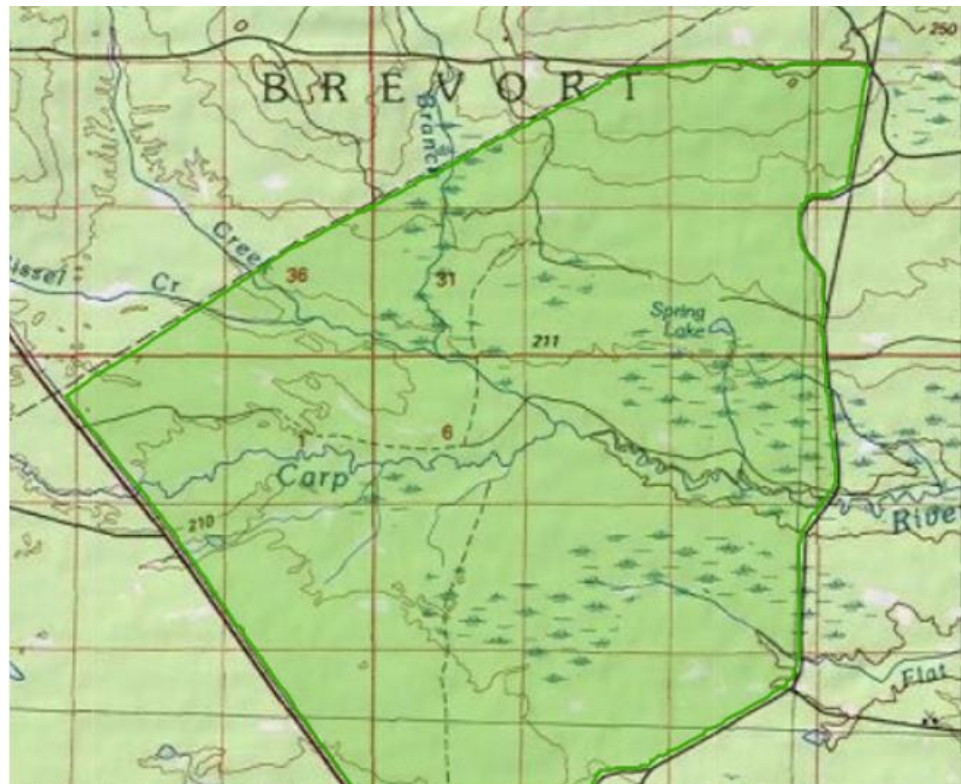
Lye Brook is a tributary of the Battenkill River, the Battenkill drainage is a secure stronghold for brook trout and also holds brown trout. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)



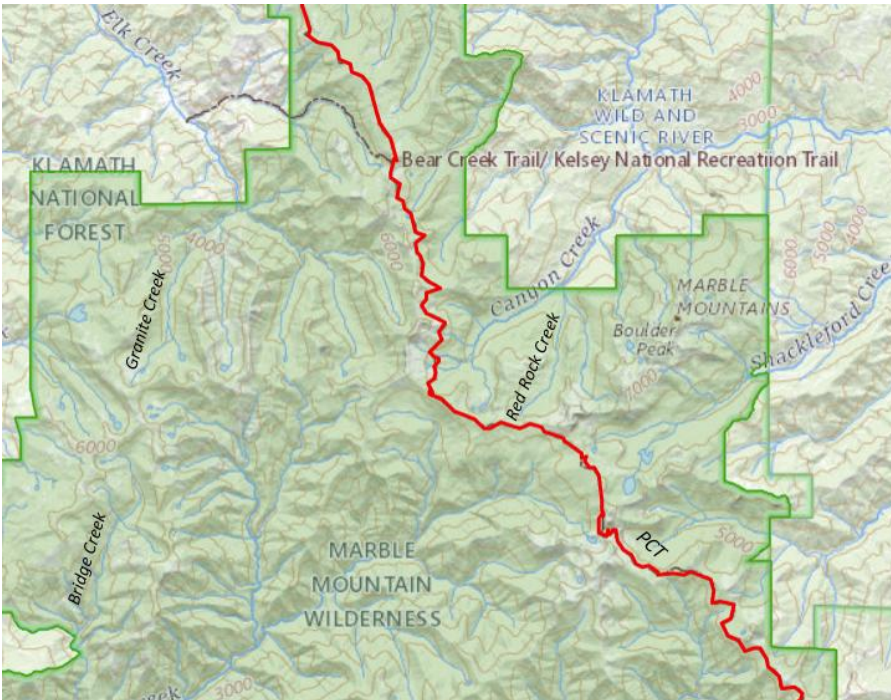
Lye Creek, Bourn Brook and Winhall River all have trail access and brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Mackinac Wilderness (MI)

The Carp River meanders through the width of the wilderness, with a trail and an old road running parallel providing access. There is a record of white sucker 4 miles upstream of the wilderness boundary. (North American Native Fishes 2022)



Marble Mountain Wilderness (CA)



Records exist of native rainbow trout in Granite Creek, a north-flowing tributary of Elk Creek and Klamath River. There are also brook trout in Shackleford Creek and Red Rock Creek in the northeast portion of the wilderness; and in Bridge Creek in the southwest part of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



The rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

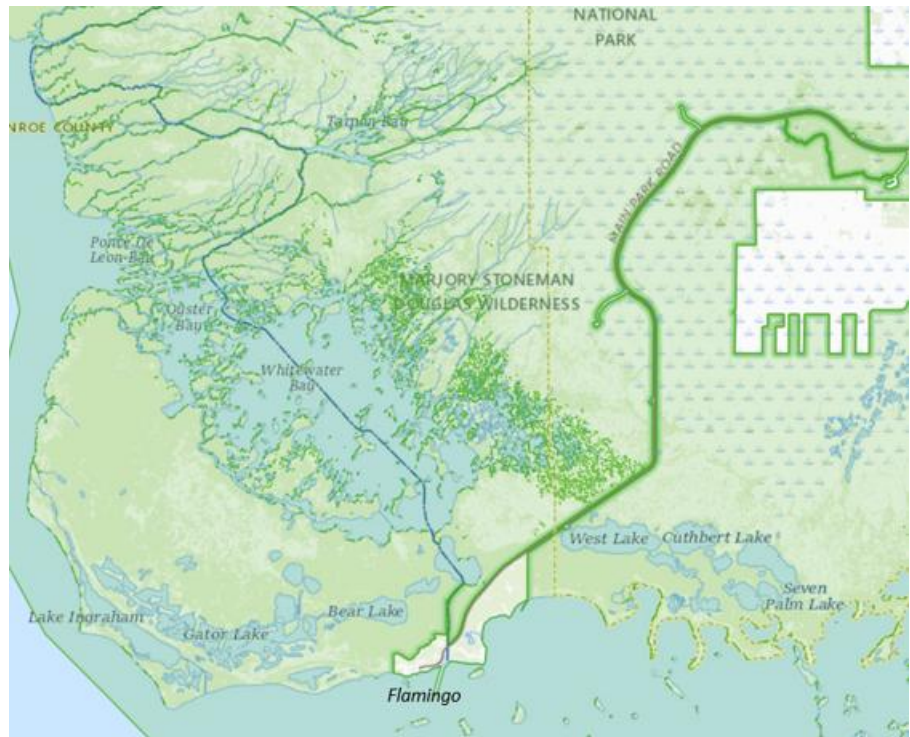


On July 4, 2025, I found a bunch of little rainbows in the North Fork Salmon River in the stretch extending about 2 miles upstream from Mule Bridge. (Number 85)

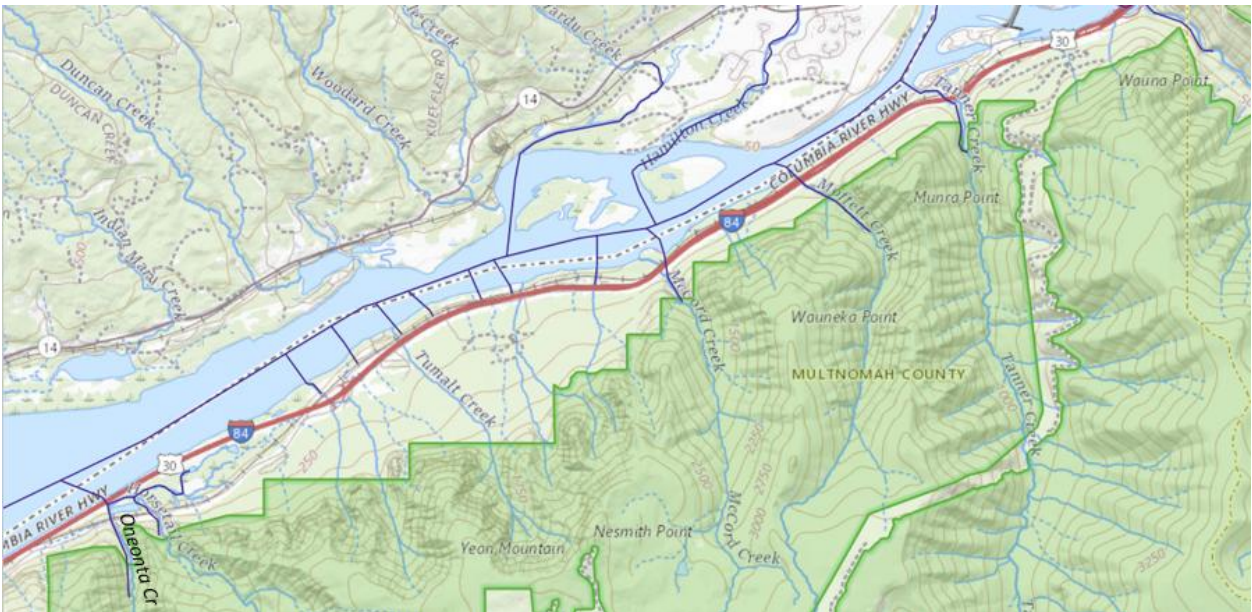


Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness (FL)

The wilderness boundary includes vast expanses of swamp and marsh, coastline, and large sections of open salt water in Florida Bay and off the west coast of the mainland. Grey snapper, red drum, tarpon, sea trout and crevalle jack among others inhabit the open water; snook, sheepshead, cichlids, needlefishes, largemouth bass, mullets, hardheaded catfish have all been recorded in and around Flamingo at the end of the road; some of the same plus Florida gar in the swamps near the park road. (iNaturalist 2022)

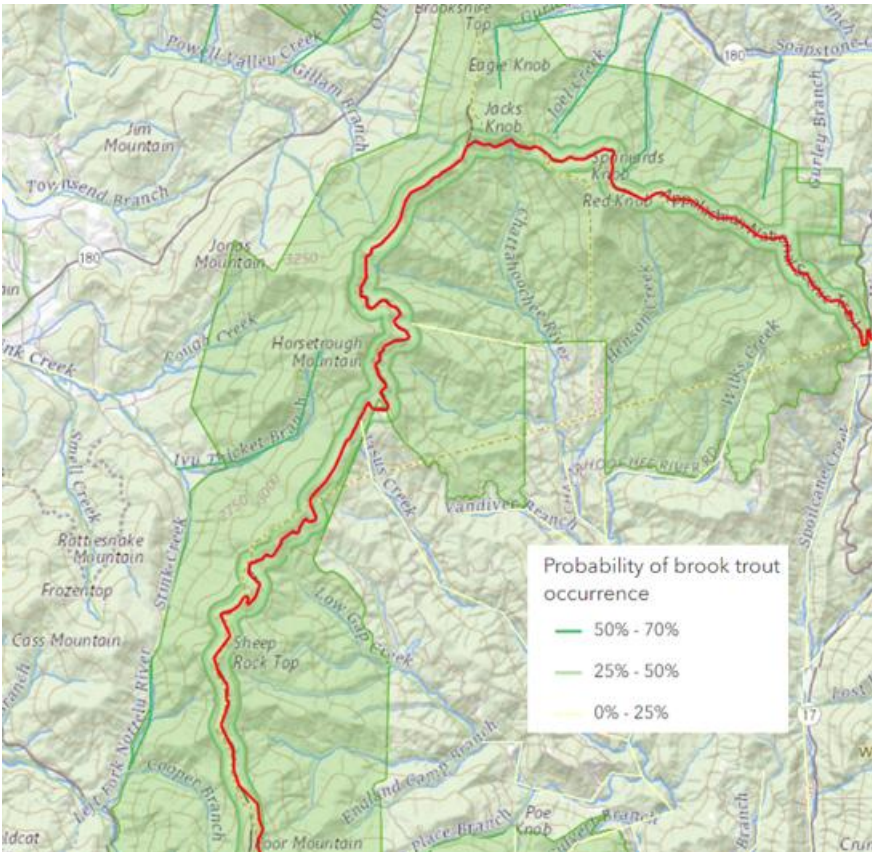


Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness (OR)



There is critical habitat for steelhead and chinook salmon (map shown) in short Columbia River tributaries, including Oneonta Creek, Horsetail Creek, McCord Creek and Moffett Creek. Critical habitat exists for coho salmon in the same streams as steelhead and chinook salmon, plus Herman Creek to the east. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016; Bonkoski & Rule, 2005) Coastal cutthroats occur well up pretty much every substantial tributary. (StreamNet 2019)

Mark Trail Wilderness (GA)

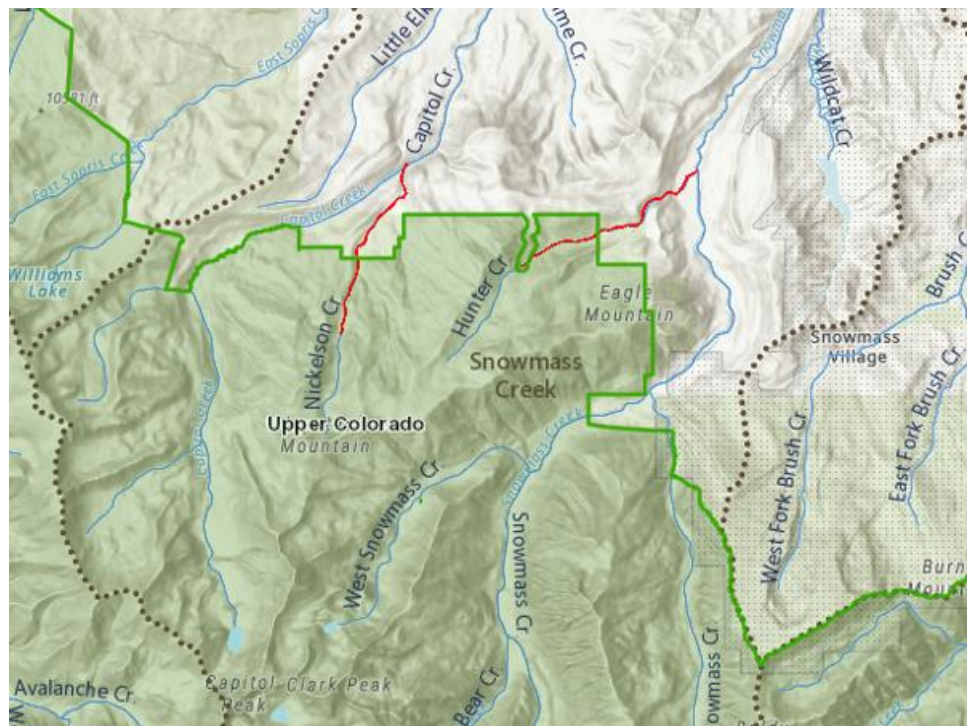


In the extreme northern part of the wilderness Soapstone Creek tributaries have populations of brook trout; Soapstone Creek is in the Hiwassee River drainage. In the north central portion of the wilderness the extreme upper reaches of the Chattahoochee River hold brook trout. In the central area Low Gap Creek, a Chattahoochee tributary, holds a redundant population of brook trout. The next stream to the south holds a population of brook trout. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout)

Probabilities aren't great here, but they are higher in the Hiwassee watershed in the north than they are in the Chattahoochee tributaries. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness (CO)

In the northern part of wilderness, upper reaches of Hunter Creek, a tributary of the Roaring Fork, has a core conservation population of Colorado cutthroat. Adjacent Nickelson Creek also has a population. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness (CO)



The Brush Creek system, tributary to the East River to the south of the wilderness, has cutthroats; Middle Fork is hikable to Twin Lakes. (SWFF May-June 2013, p. 48)

Matilija Wilderness (CA)

Resident rainbow trout reside in upper North Fork Matilija Creek. (Allen, 2015)

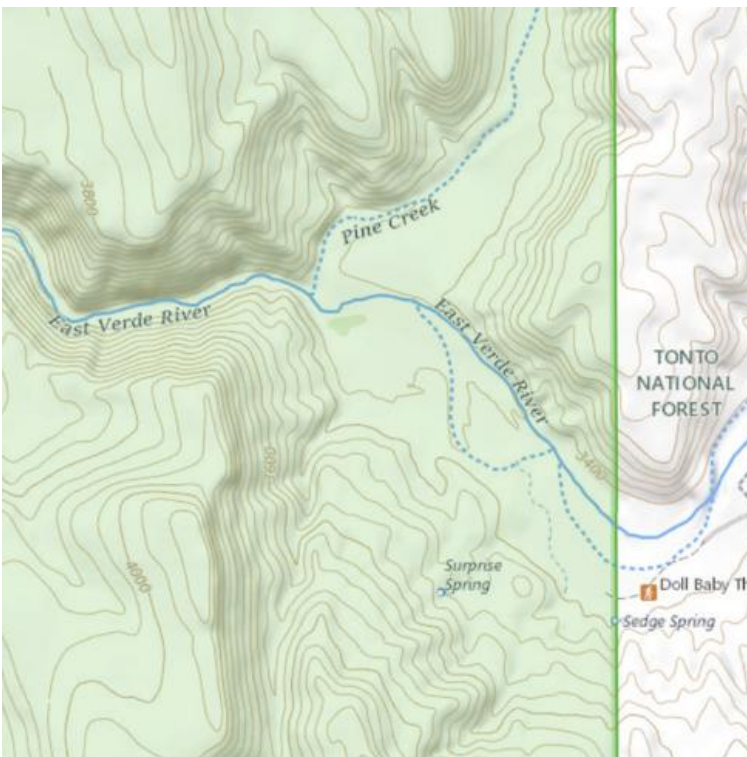


Maurelle Islands Wilderness (AK)



An archipelago, these islands have less formidable and less rocky coastlines than nearby Coronation and Warren Islands. The expected fish species are similar, including all five eastern Pacific salmon, lingcod, Pacific cod, a variety of rockfish, sculpins, greenling, halibut, ratfish, and dog sharks.

Mazatzal Wilderness (AZ)

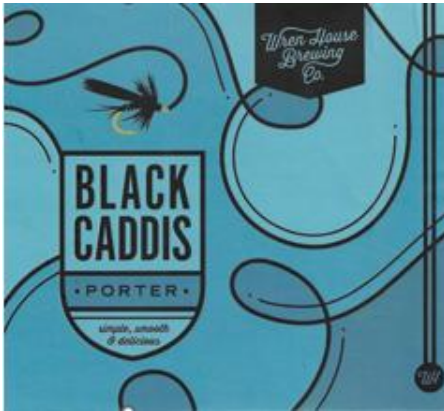


The first time I was ever in Mazatzal and actually used a fly rod (versus optimistically packing it in and then not finding any water) was fishing the East Verde down from the Doll Baby Trailhead. Nothing doing. East Verde in this stretch allegedly has ten native fish species. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2019, p. 24)



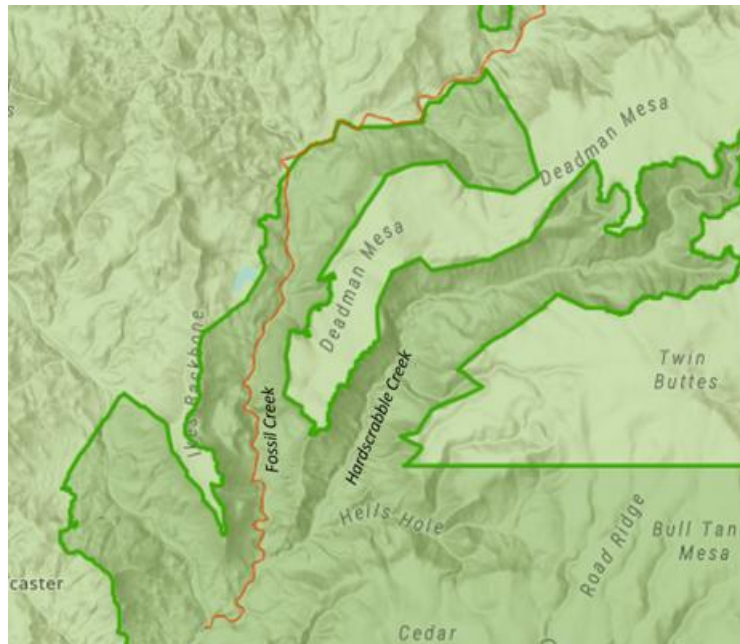
Mazatzal Wilderness (AZ)

I tried again in November 2020, when I found and netted longfin dace in East Fork Verde River about two miles downstream from the wilderness boundary. (Number 34)



There is critical habitat for loach minnow in Fossil Creek. There is also critical habitat for spikedace, in Verde River upstream from Fossil Creek confluence. I've never seen either of these. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Fossil Creek is actually a Wild and Scenic River through here, for a long time the only one so designated in Arizona.

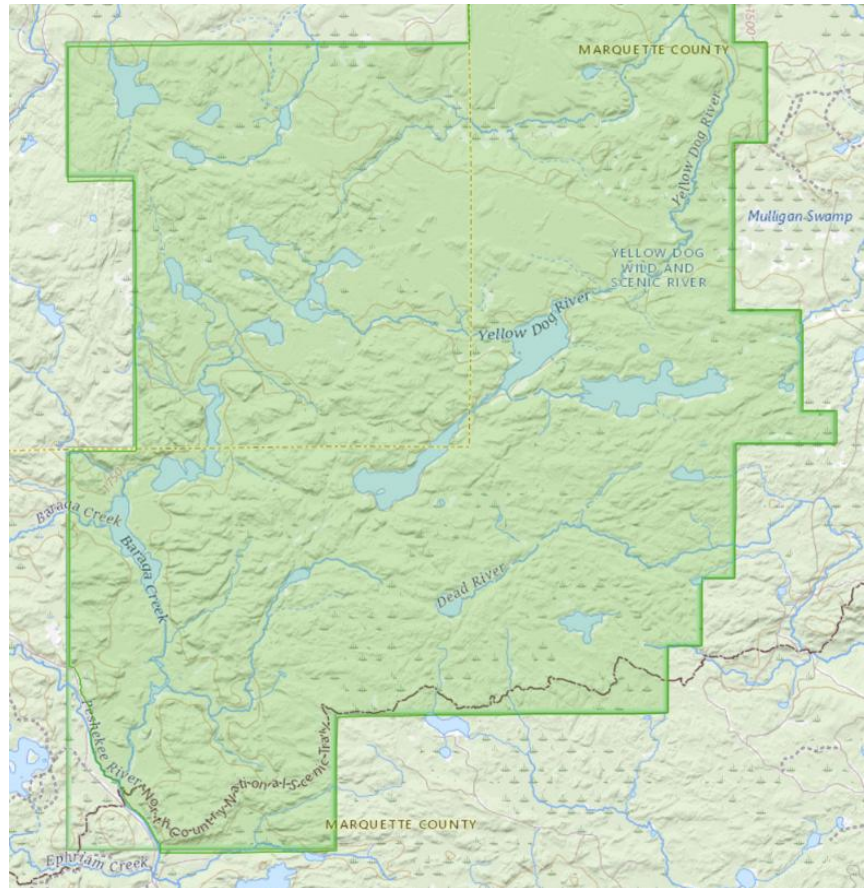
The same sections of the Verde have records of desert sucker. (iNaturalist 2022) I have caught desert suckers, in the Verde River no less, but downstream near Bartlett Lake.



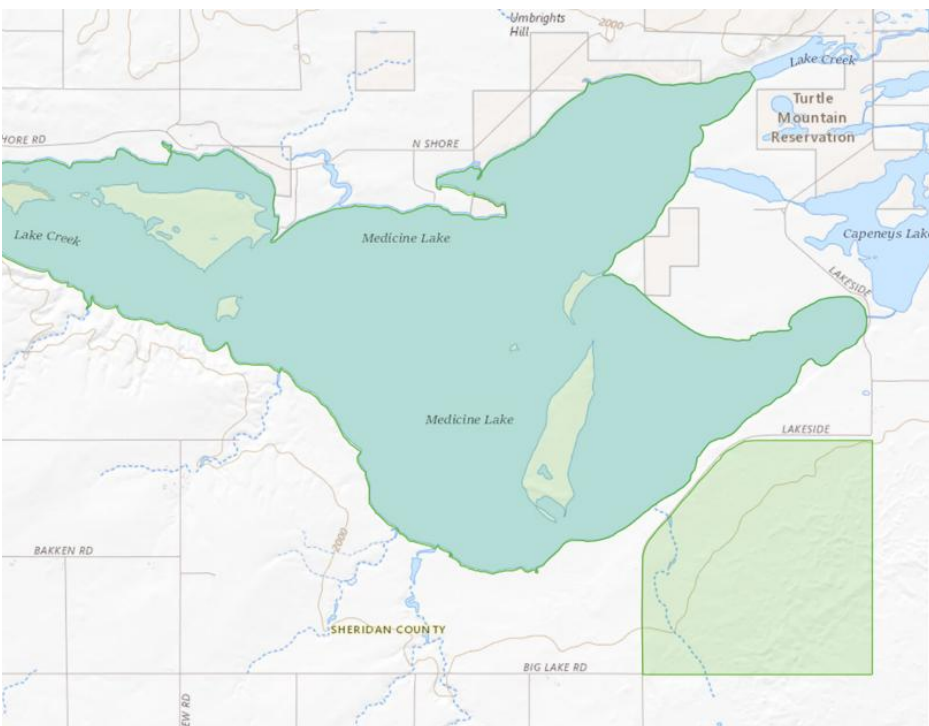
A floatable stretch of the Rio Verde flows through the western part of the wilderness and holds smallmouth bass, and can be accessed at Childs. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2010, p. 36)

McCormick Wilderness (MI)

The Yellow Dog River drains the northern part of the wilderness, flowing east toward Lake Superior; the Peshekee River drains the southern part of the wilderness, flowing south into the Michigamme and Menominee Rivers toward Lake Michigan. There is a record of Northern redbelly dace in the Peshekee about 1.2 miles upstream from where it begins to form the wilderness boundary, they likely occur in the wilderness portion of the river as well. (North American Native Fishes 2022)

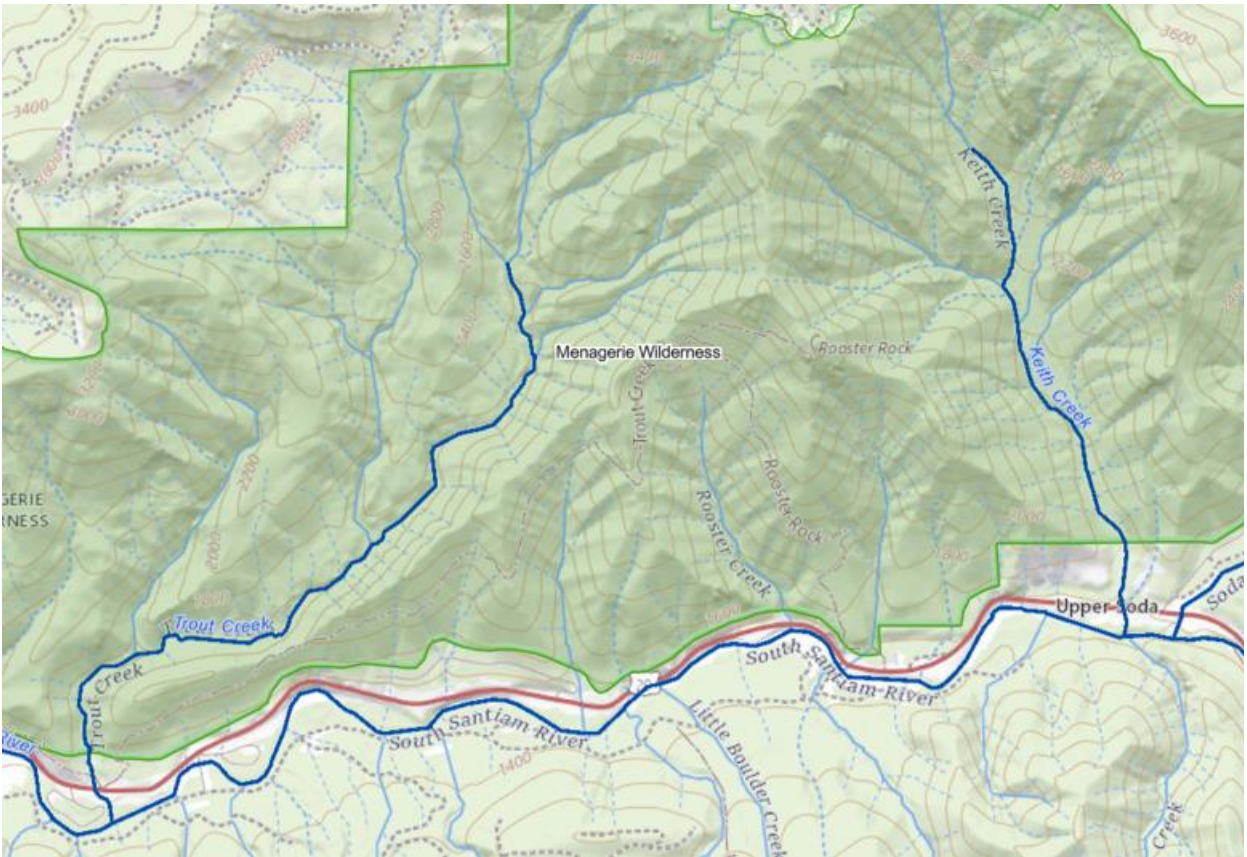


Medicine Lake Wilderness (MT)



All of Medicine Lake is within the wilderness and hosts a thriving northern pike fishery. Other fish that are numerous in the lake include carp and fathead minnow. (US F&WS Medicine Lake 2007, p. 45)

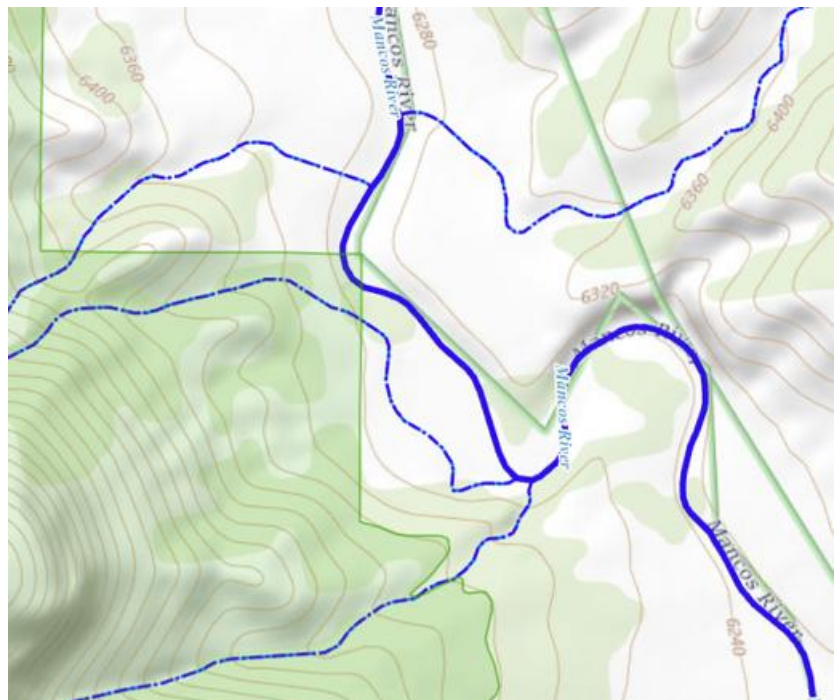
Menagerie Wilderness (OR)



Coastal cutthroat trout occur in Trout Creek and Keith Creek, tributaries of South Santiam River. (Coastal Cutthroat Interagency 2021)

Mesa Verde Wilderness (CO)

USGS NHD shows a very short piece (150 feet) of perennial Mancos River clipping a corner of the wilderness. (USGS via California OES, 2019) Aerials make it look like there's good water, I'm guessing it might support some dace and suckers. It looks like about a 2 mile walk either up or down the Mancos from the closest roads.



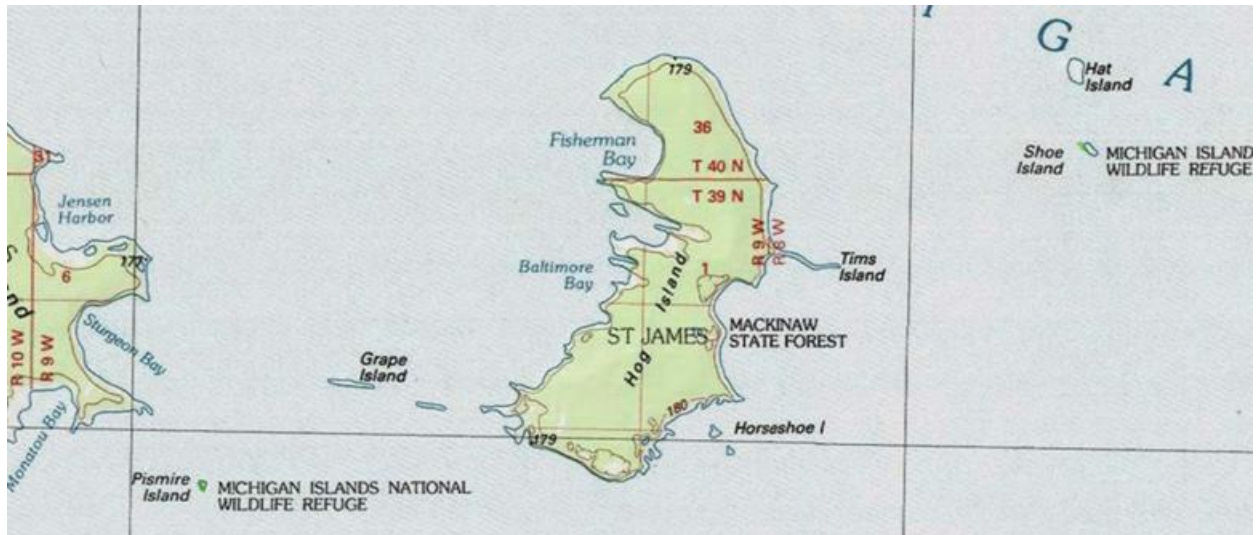
Mexican Mountain Wilderness (UT)

USGS NHD shows perennial surface water in the San Rafael River crossing the wilderness. (Utah AGRC 2020)

Bluehead suckers are abundant in the San Rafael River within and near the wilderness. (Utah DNR, 2006)



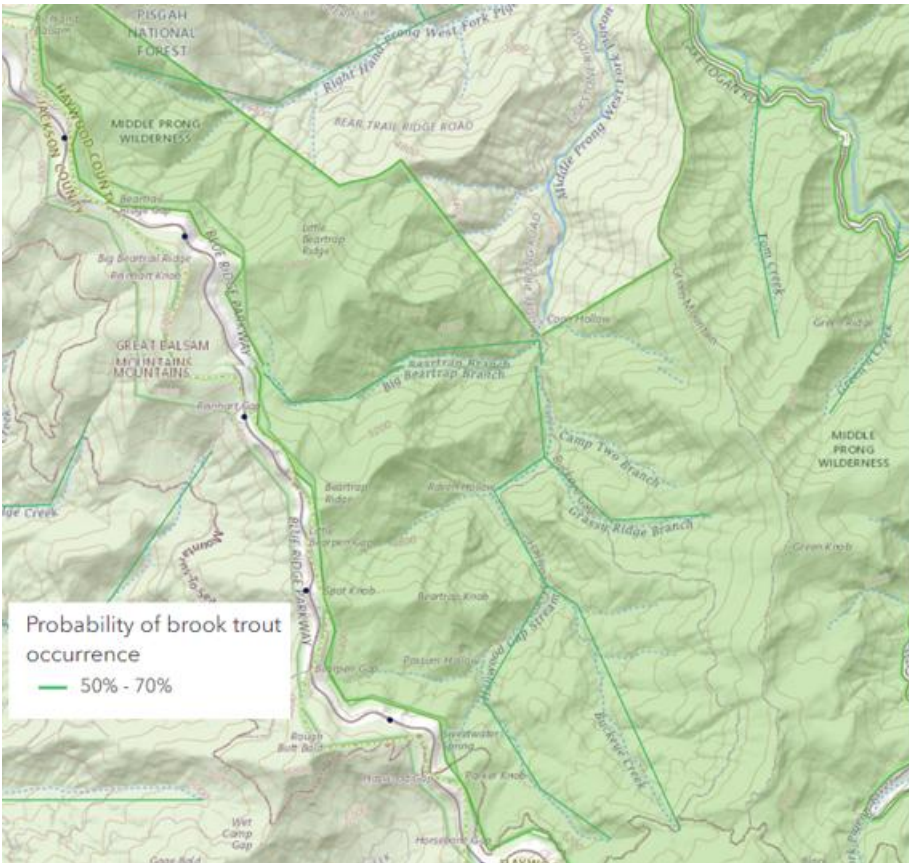
Michigan Islands Wilderness (MI)



These are islands so they are surrounded by fish, although there appears to be no perennial surface water on the islands and the wilderness boundary ends at the waterline. It's still likely that you can stand on the shore in the wilderness and catch cisco, herring, alewife, smallmouth bass and trout and salmon. Shoe Island and Pismire Island are two of the three islands in the wilderness, located in northern Lake Michigan near much large Beaver Island. The third island, Scarecrow Island, is 115 miles away in Thunder Bay on Lake Huron.



Middle Prong Wilderness (NC)



Redundant populations of brook trout reside in Middle Prong West Fork Pigeon River. Other populations of brook trout are in Toms Creek in the northeastern part of the wilderness and in Right-hand Prong West Fork Pigeon River in the northwestern part of the wilderness. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout)

Most of the streams have a moderate probability of the occurrence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Middle Santiam Wilderness (OR)



Coastal cutthroat trout occur in Middle Santiam River and tributaries Jude Creek and Donaca Creek. (StreamNet 2019)

Middle Wild Horse Mesa Wilderness (UT)

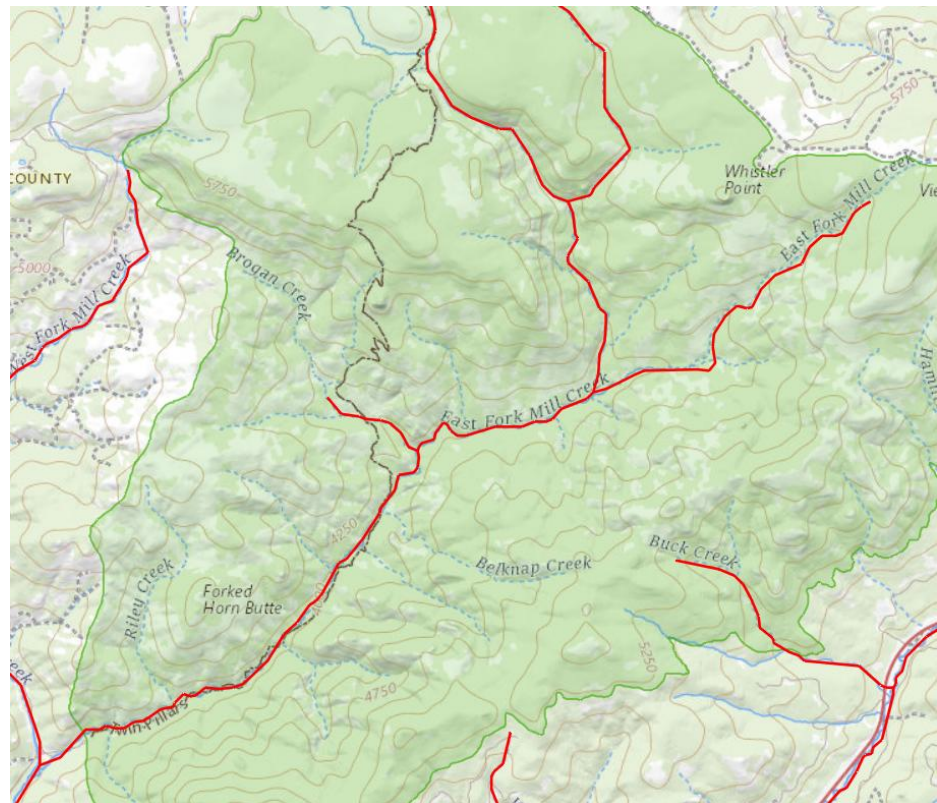


USGS NHD shows perennial flow in Muddy Creek flowing across the wilderness. Connected with many miles and tributaries of perennial flow upstream, this stretch should have fish. Muddy Creek is tributary to Fremont River and Dirty Devil River. (Utah AGRC 2020)

Flannelmouth suckers are rare but present just upstream of the wilderness. (Utah DNR, 2006)

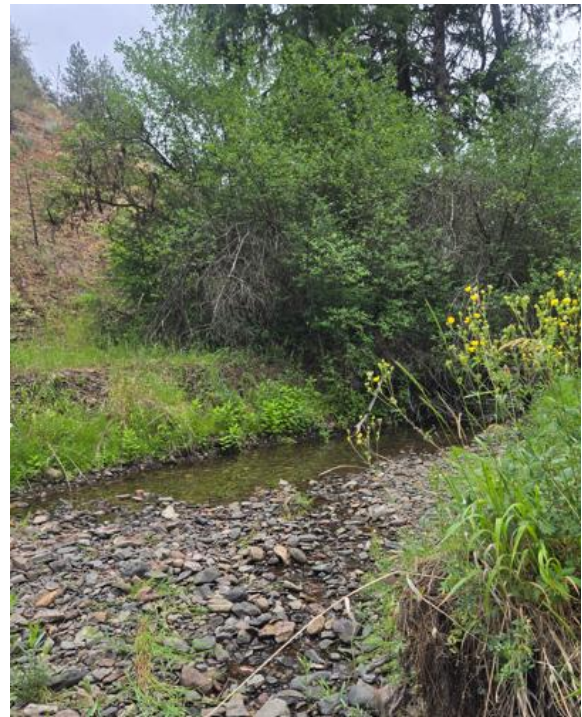
Mill Creek Wilderness (OR)

Mill Creek and tributaries, including Desolation Canyon, hold 99% genetically pure populations of redband trout of unknown density. The very upper reaches of some Marks Creek tributaries on the eastern slope of the ridge that parallels the eastern wilderness boundary also hold redband trout. (Mayfield)

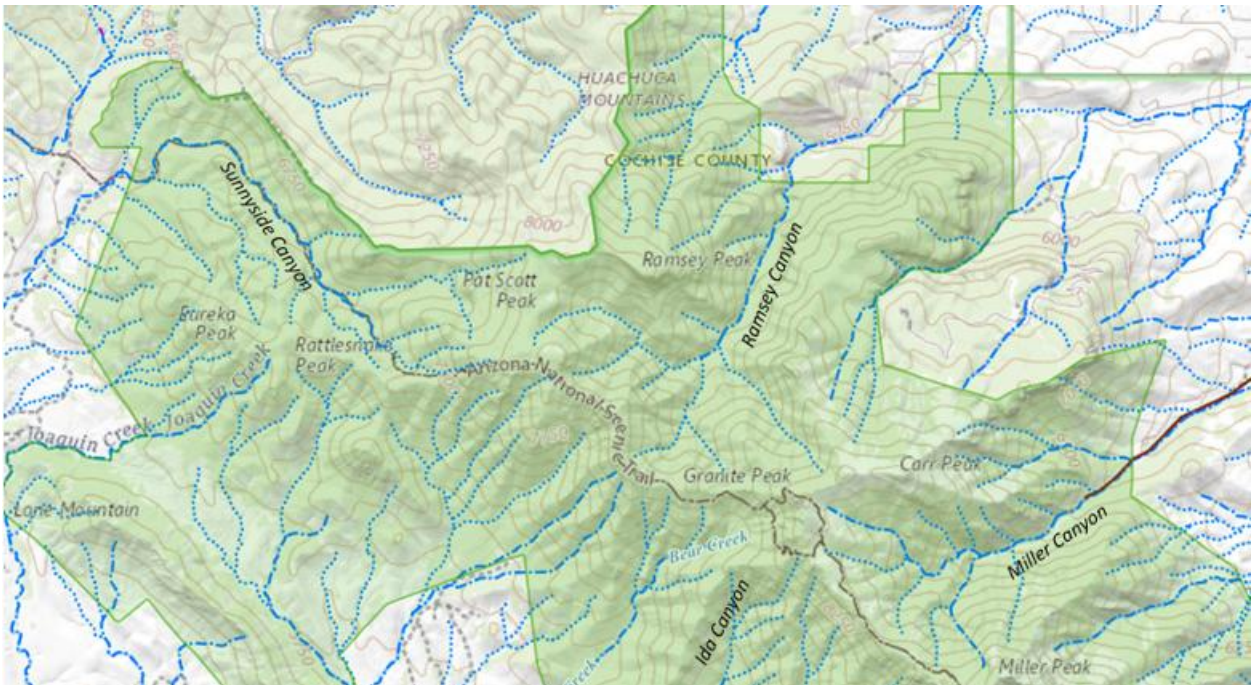


Mill Creek Wilderness (OR)

On June 28, 2026, I caught rainbows in the East Fork of Mill Creek, hiking up the creek from the Twin Pillars Trailhead (Number 106). Grabbed a few speckled dace in the minnow trap as well. Two weeks later, on July 15, the Rowe Creek Complex Fire started, which ended up burning 374,000 acres including the entire Mill Creek Wilderness. Timing is everything. Of course, right at the same time the Grasshopper Fire swallowed up the entire Badger Creek Wilderness and ruined my plans for later in the summer...



Miller Peak Wilderness (AZ)



The only perennial water is very short stretches of Miller Creek and Ramsey Canyon where each leaves the wilderness, although there are longer stretches of intermittent flow that apparently support fish in these and at least two other canyons. (USGS 2021)

Miller Peak Wilderness (AZ)

Sunnyside Canyon in the northwest corner of the wilderness has the widest variety, including desert pupfish, desert sucker, Gila chub and Gila topminnow. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022) Miller, Ramsey and Sunnyside all have desert sucker and longfin dace. The longfin dace are also apparently in Ida Canyon, draining south off of Granite Peak, the same peak where Miller and Ramsey head. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022)



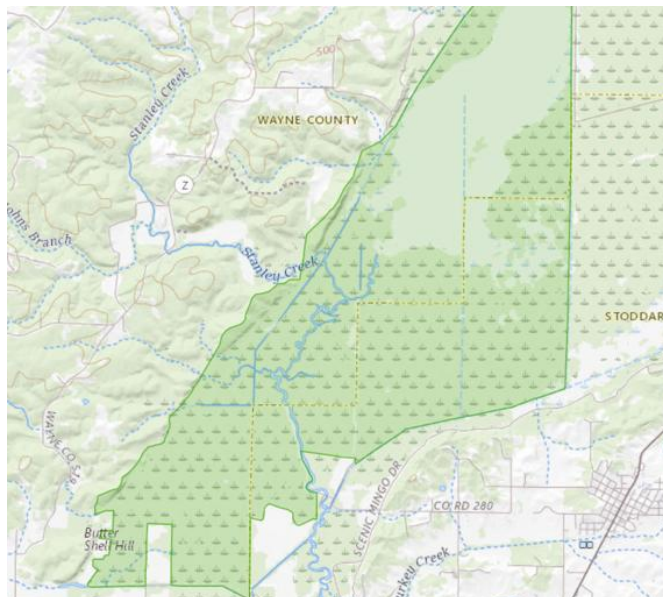
I tried Sunnyside Canyon in July 2024. Not much water except for some small (1 or 2 feet wide kind of small) pools at below the springs. I did not find fish there. Maybe I have to double down on Ramsay Canyon...

OK, the picture doesn't show any of the creeks, but I really love the picture!



Mingo Wilderness (MO)

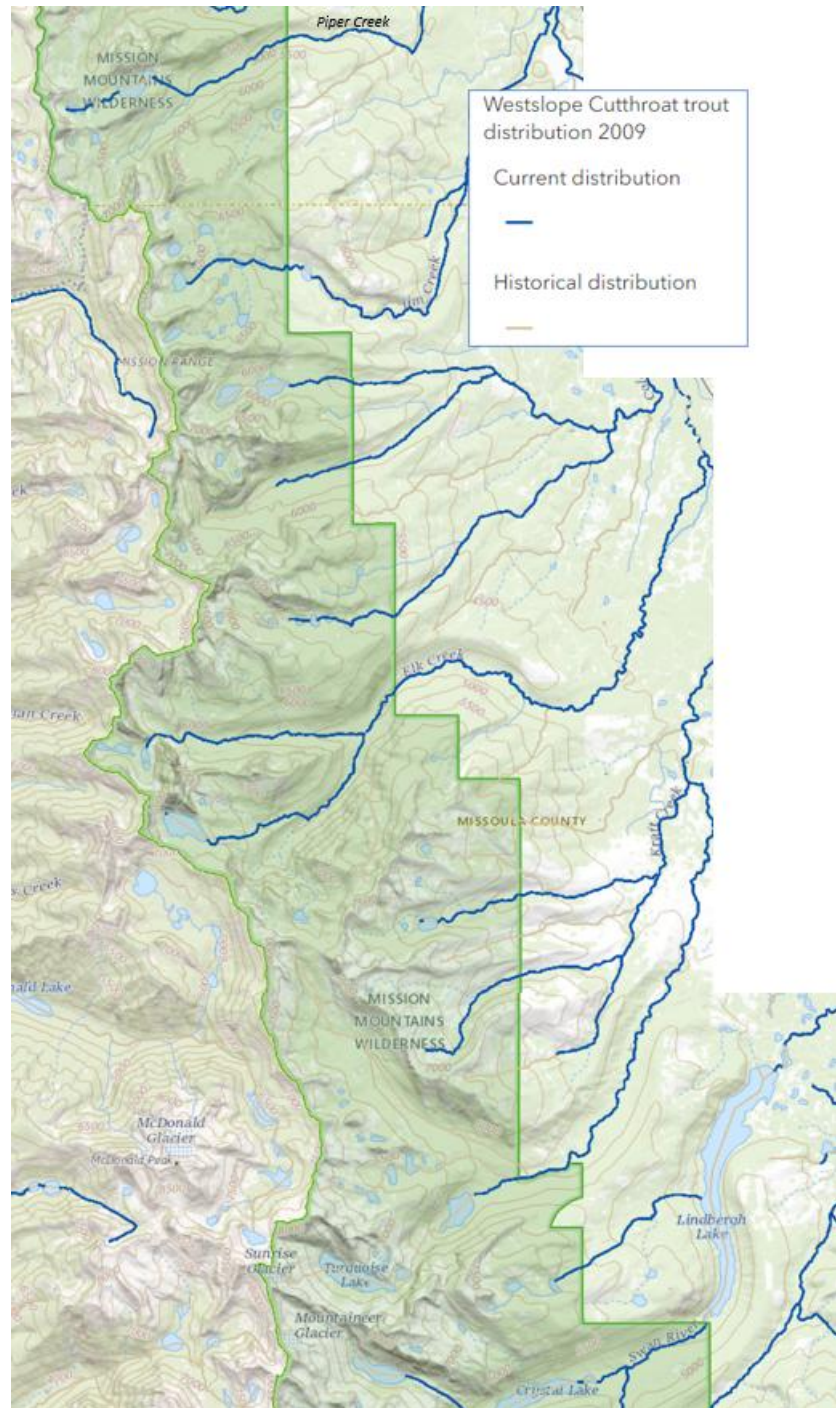
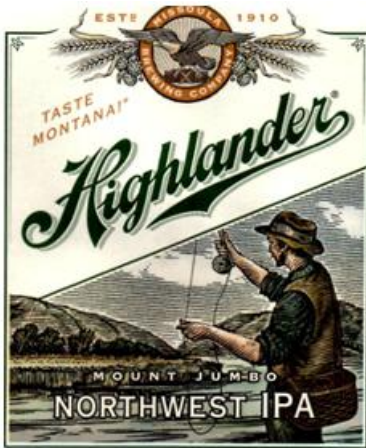
The bulk of the wilderness is wetland forest or marsh, with Mingo Creek, a St. Francis River tributary, running through the center. At least 46 species of fish including channel catfish, white crappie, spotted bass, and green sunfish occur in the ponds and ditches of the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, of which the wilderness is a part. (USF&WS Mingo, 2007) Records in the wilderness include black-spotted topminnow, warmouth, chain pickerel, black bullhead, black crappie, golden shiner and others. (iNaturalist 2023)



Mission Mountains Wilderness (MT)

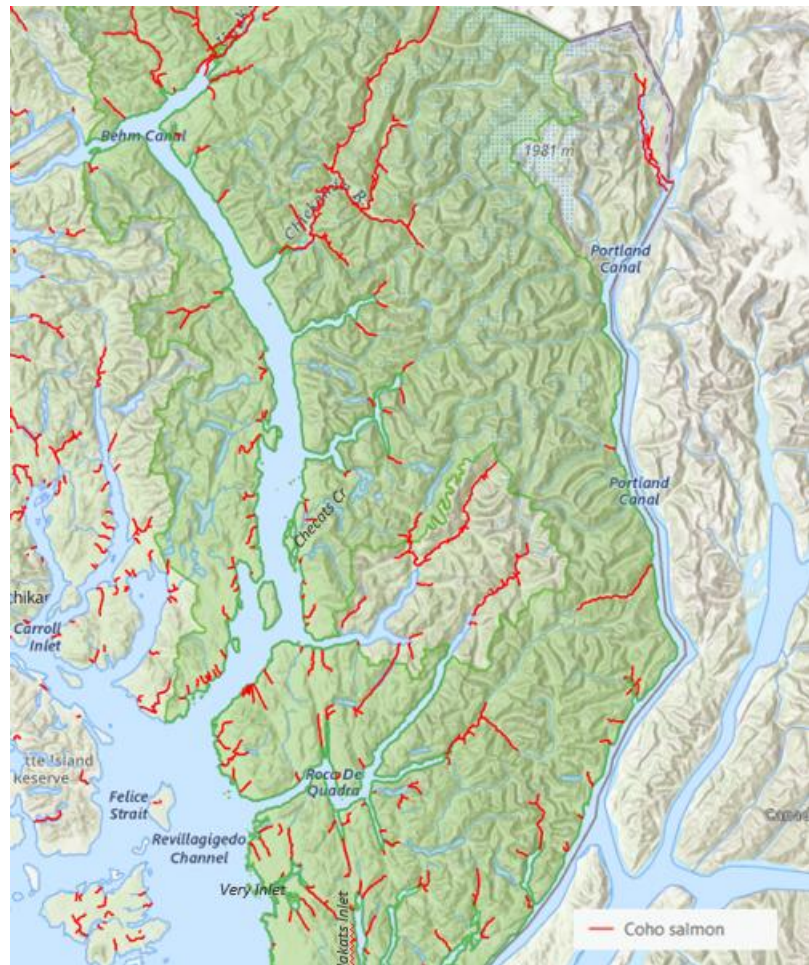
There is critical habitat for bull trout in the Swan River and several tributaries, including Elk Creek, Cold Creek, Jim Creek and Piper Creek. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Most streams flowing east into the Swan River (which is most streams in the wilderness) have westslope cutthroats. (Mayfield)



Misty Fjords Wilderness (AK)

Checats Creek on the east side of Behm Canal has coho, chum, pink and sockeye salmon, plus cutthroat and steelhead trout and Dolly Varden. Coho, cutthroat and Dolly Varden are in the streams feeding Very Inlet on the west coast, the coastal reaches also have pinks and chum. Nakat Creek at the southern end of the wilderness has coho, cutthroat, steelhead and Dolly Varden in the upper reach, and pinks and chum lower down. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016)



In the northern part of the wilderness, the Unuk River, “among the most productive salmon rivers in the state,” is threatened by trans-national mining operations upstream in BC. (Trout Winter 2015, p. 50)

Mokelumne Wilderness (CA)

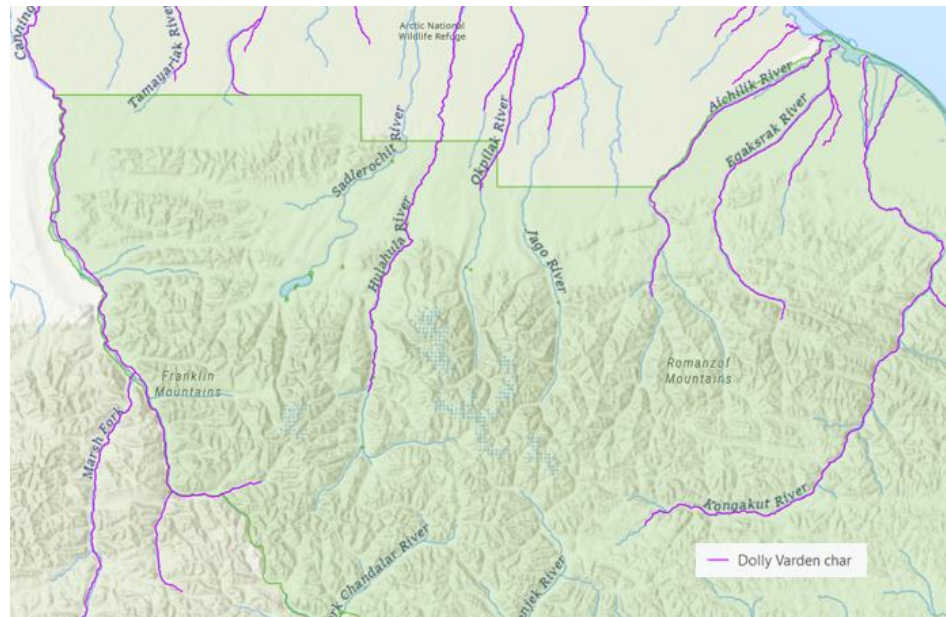
Winnemucca Lake at the north side of the wilderness holds brook trout, a 1.2-mile hike in from the trailhead. The lake outlets to Woods Creek, a tributary of Silver Fork American River. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2020, p. 20)

Several other lakes, including Emigrant, Round Top and Fourth of July Lake, hold mostly brookies with a few rainbows, browns and Lahontan cuts scattered in. (Schalla 2021)



Mollie Beatty Wilderness (AK)

The Canning River and Kongakut River flowing north into the Arctic Ocean hold chum salmon in the lower reaches, with Dolly Varden further upstream.



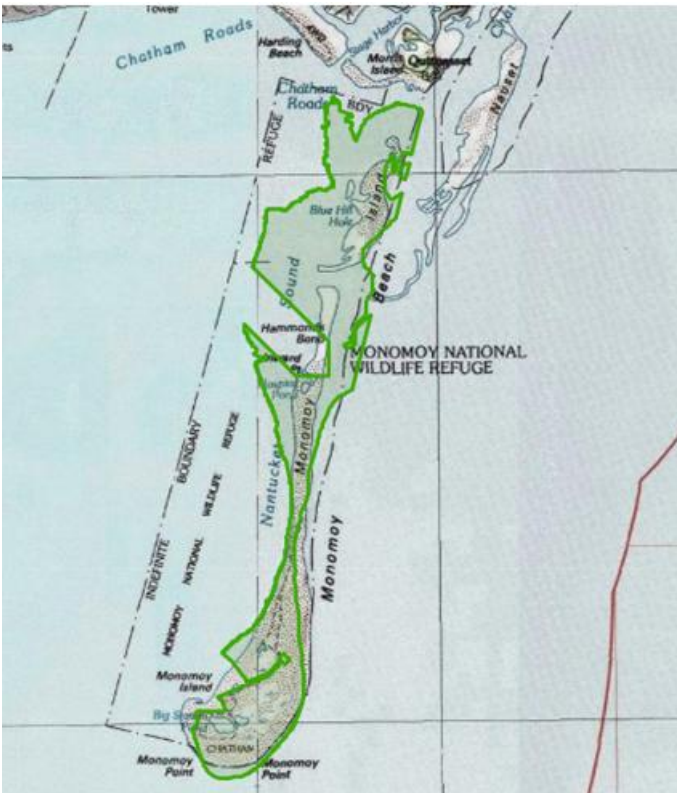
Other north-flowing rivers, including the Hulahula River, Aichilik River and Egakrak River hold Dolly Varden. (ADF&G 2023) This wilderness is too far north for other salmon species besides the chums.

Monarch Wilderness (CA)

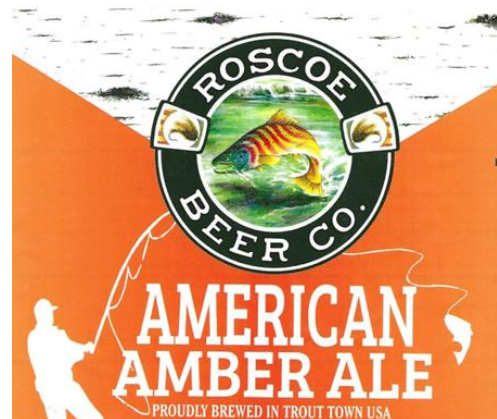
The entire reach of the Middle Fork Kings River through the wilderness is a designated wild and scenic river. It has a lightly fished but productive fishery for rainbow, brown and brook trout, and also holds Sacramento squawfish and Sacramento sucker. (USDA, US Forest Service, Sierra & Sequoia National Forests, 1988)



Monomoy Wilderness (MA)

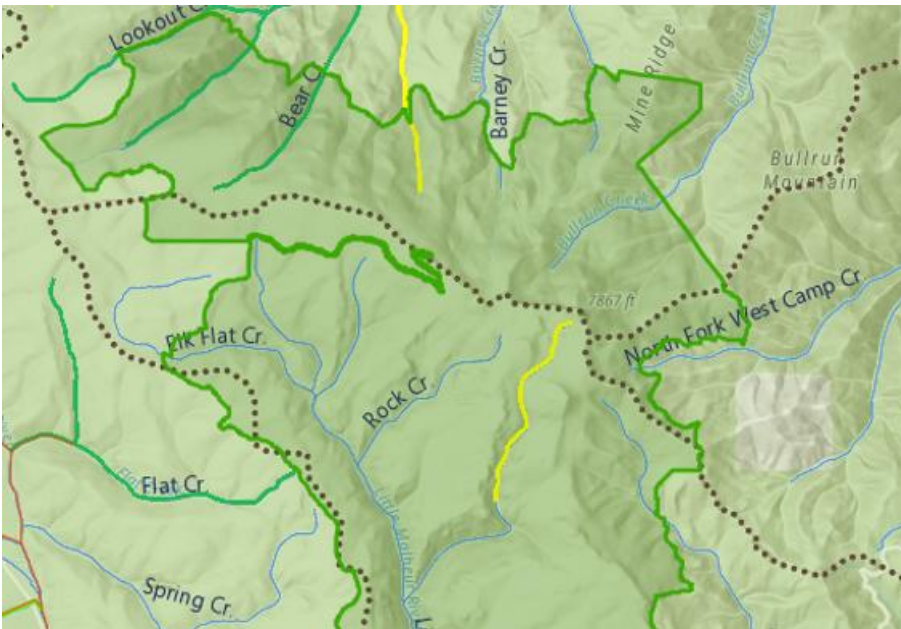
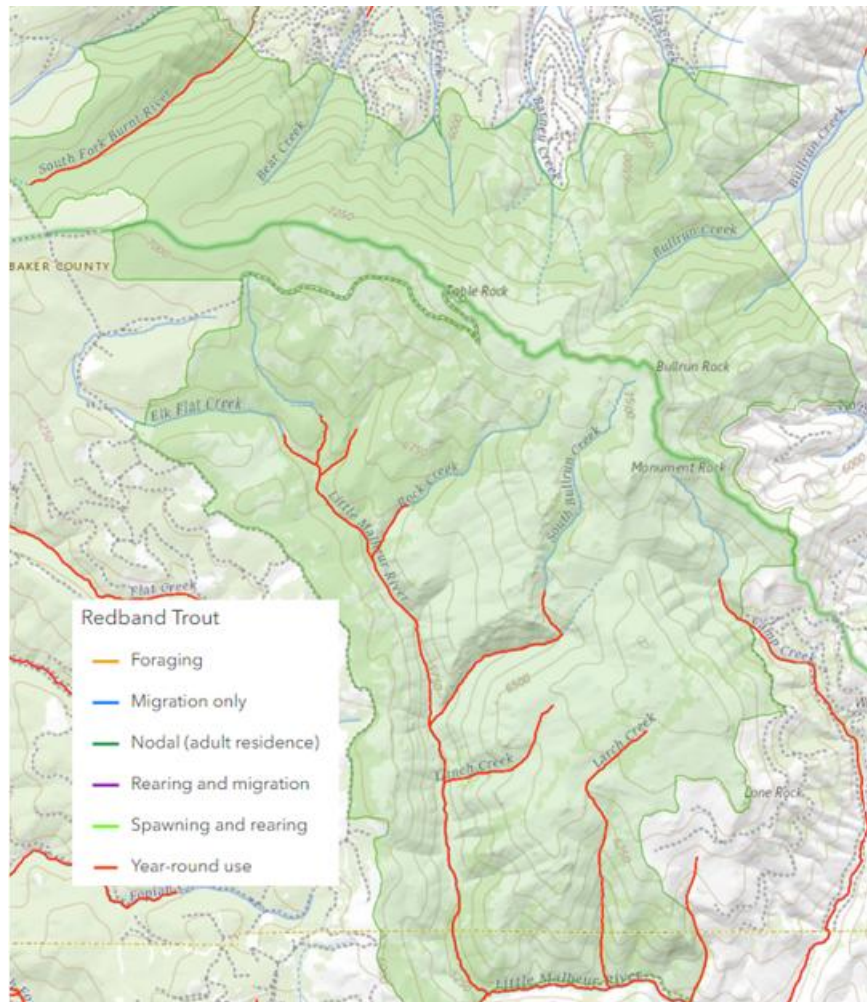


The wilderness includes open water and eelgrass shoals, tidal flats, salt and fresh marshes and ponds. Big Station and Little Station Ponds at the south end of the spit likely have American eels and mosquitofish. Sand lance, bluefish and striped bass are common in near shore habitats. Bonito and false albacore can also be caught from shore. (USF&WS 2016 Monomoy, p. 3-69, 3-81)



Monument Rock Wilderness (OR)

A moderate density population of redband trout occurs in Little Malheur River and its tributaries in the southern part of the wilderness. A population of redbands occupies South Fork Burnt River crossing the northwestern corner of the wilderness. (Mayfield)

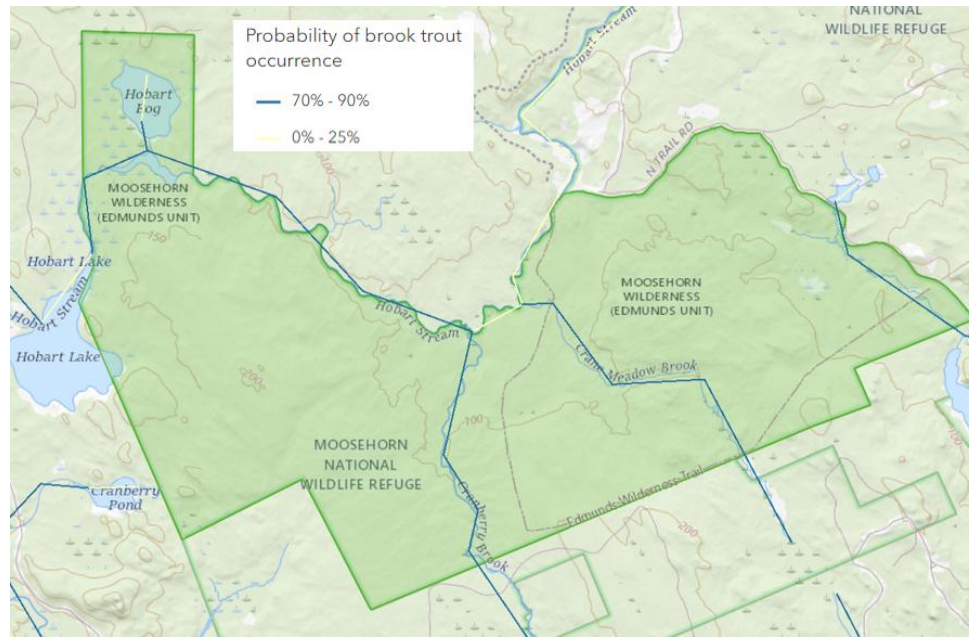


Climate Shield predictive model shows low to moderate probability of bull trout in north-flowing tributaries of South Fork Burnt River and in south-flowing tributary of Little Malheur River. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

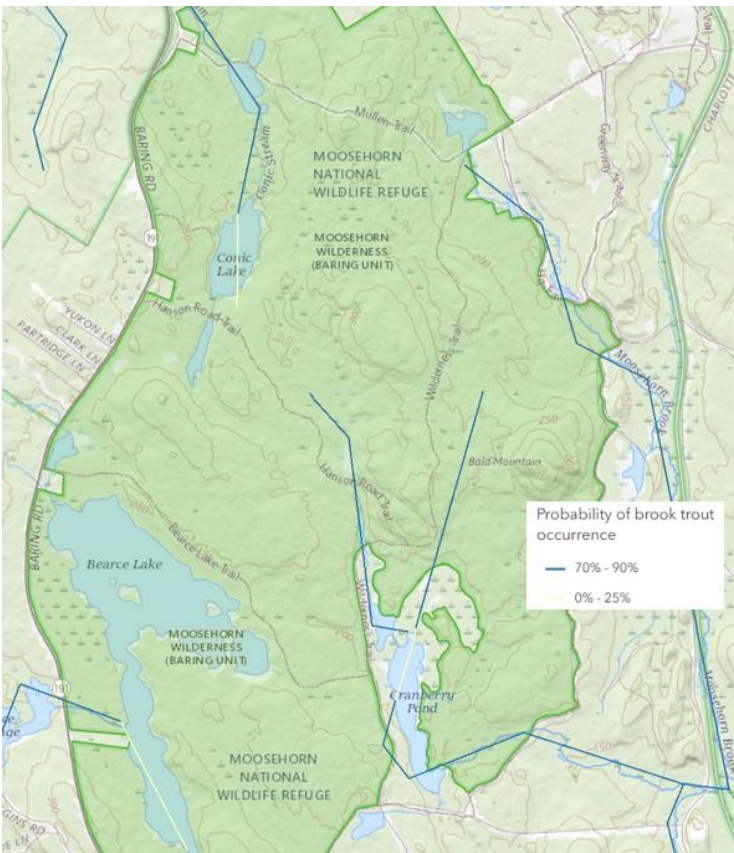
Moosehorn Wilderness (ME)

A persistent population of lake migratory brook trout is present in Hobart Stream. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Hobart Stream flows to the northeast about 4 miles to salt water in Cobscook Bay.

All streams have a high probability of presence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



Moosehorn (Baring Unit) Wilderness (ME)

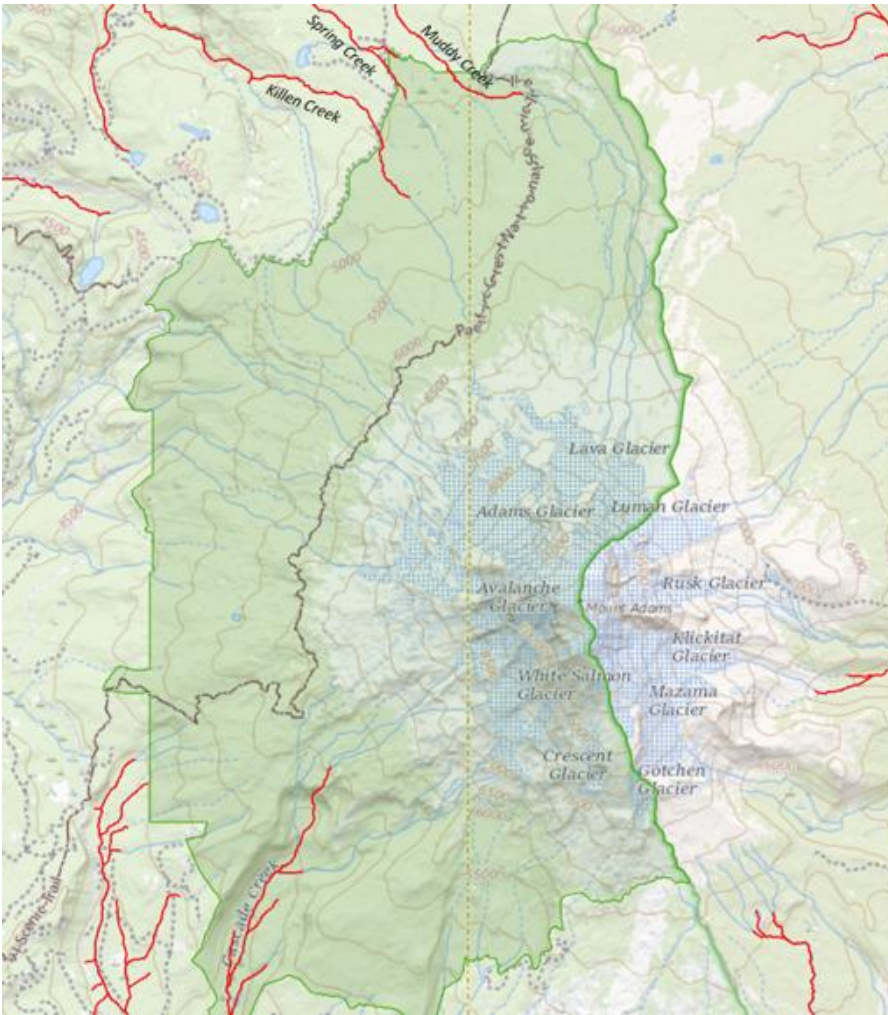


A persistent population of lake migratory brook trout resides in Bearce Lake. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

Pretty much all streams have a very high probability of presence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



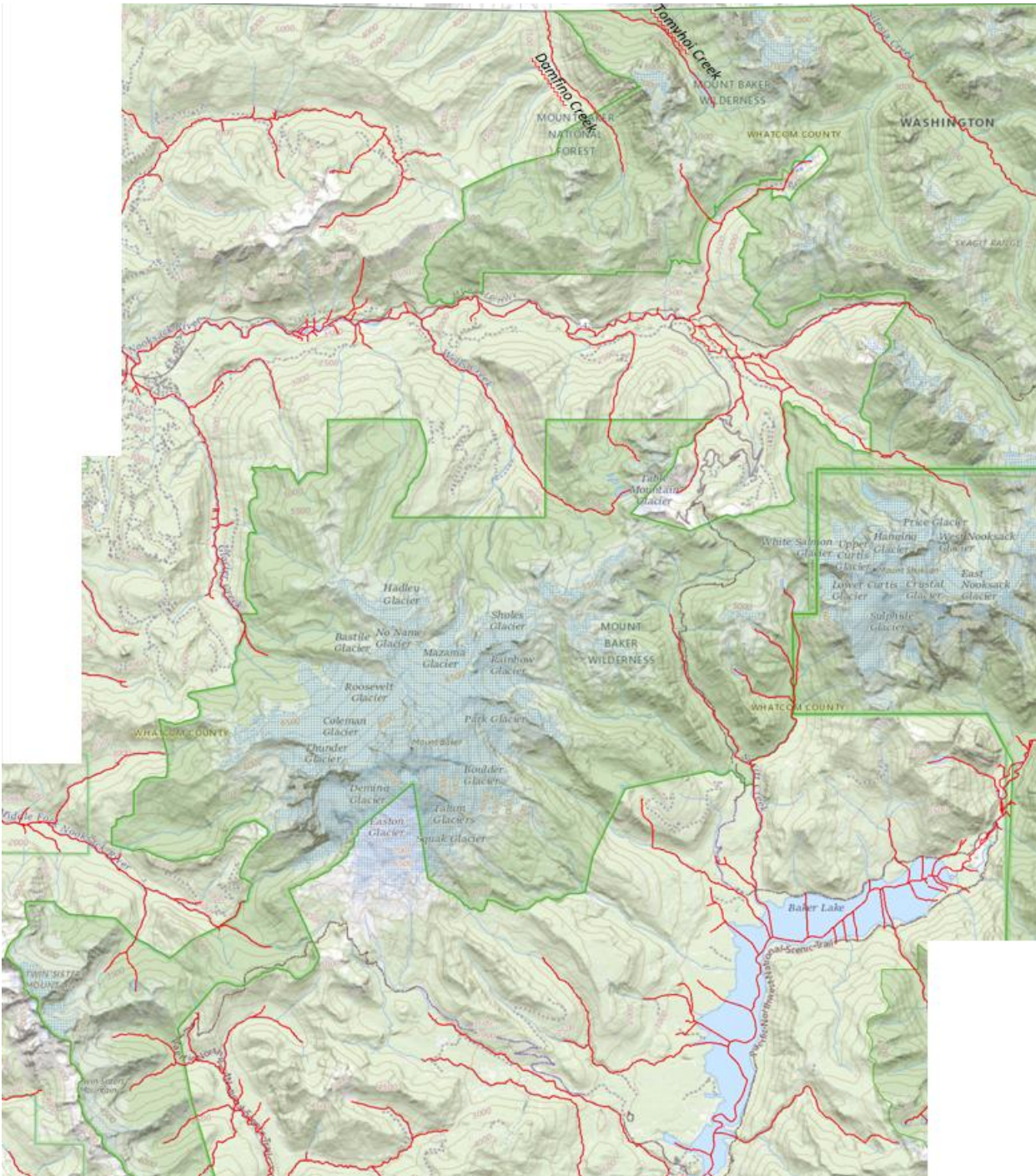
Mount Adams Wilderness (WA)



As is often the case with glacier-fed streams on steep-sided composite volcanos, there aren't many fish in upper stream reaches, and some streams may be entirely fishless. There are brook trout in Muddy Fork, Spring Creek and Killen Creek, all tributary to the Cispus River; westslope cutthroats occur as well in Killen Creek. In the south, White Salmon River tributary Cascade Creek has resident rainbows and coastal cutthroats. (StreamNet 2019)

Although StreamNet doesn't suggest presence of bull trout, the Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in Muddy Fork and Killen Creek; upper Lewis River system, including Mutton Creek; Morrison Creek system, tributary of the White Salmon River; and upper headwaters of the White Salmon River. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Mount Baker Wilderness (WA)

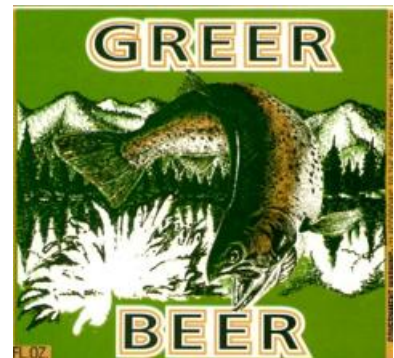
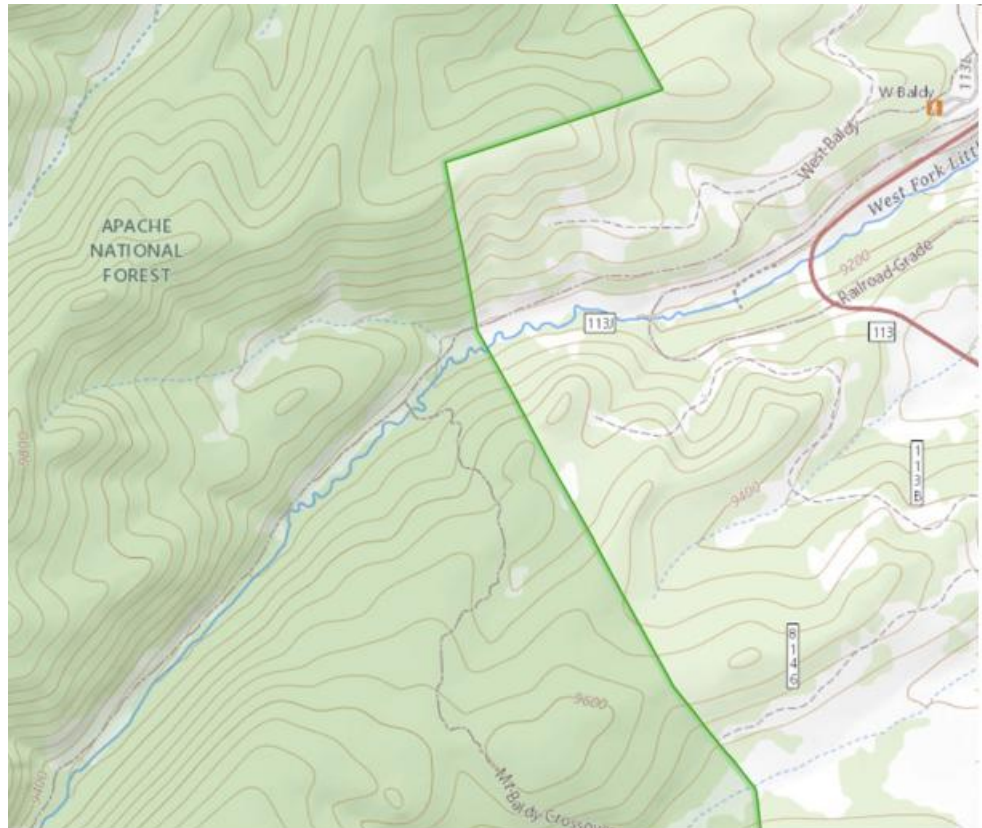


Migratory bull trout occur in Damfino Creek and Silesia Creek flowing north into Canada; Glacier Creek; Middle Fork Nooksack River; and some of the short, unnamed tributaries flowing east into the South Fork Nooksack in the extreme southern portion of the wilderness. Most of these streams and the others highlighted on the map have rainbow trout, coastal cutthroats, or both. (StreamNet 2019)

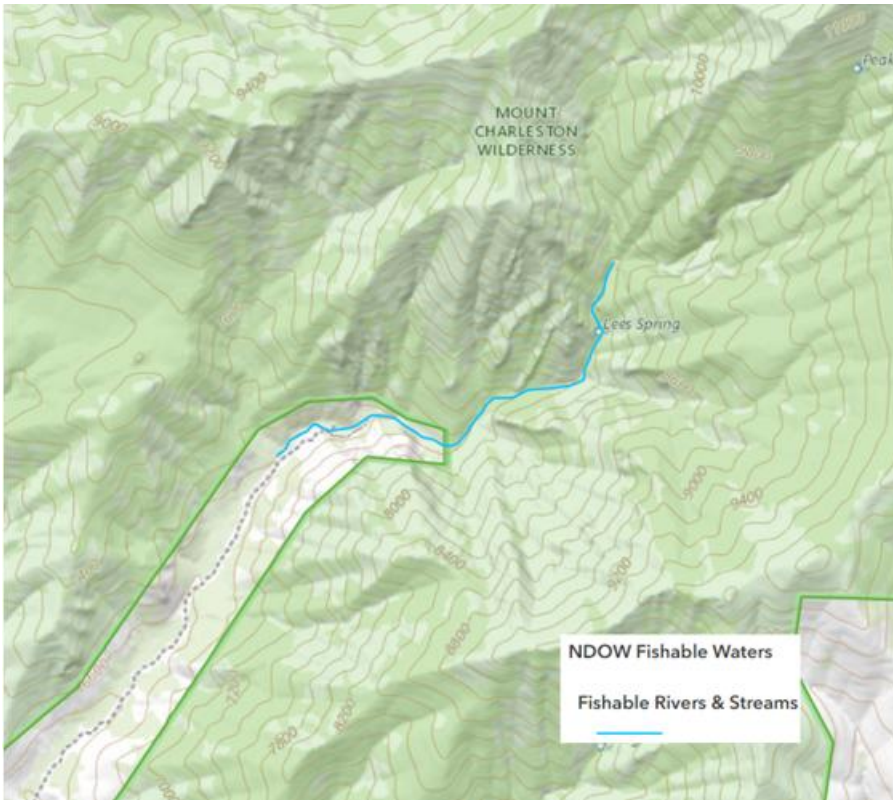
There is critical habitat for bull trout in Middle Fork and South Fork Nooksack River in southern part of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows a high probability of bull trout in Middle Fork Nooksack River and in North Fork Nooksack River tributaries flowing off the north slope of Mount Baker in the northern portion of the wilderness. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Mount Baldy Wilderness (AZ)

This is one of my early ones. I fished the West Fork Little Colorado with Bubba for the first time in 2006. I've now caught Apache trout several times, the picture is from 2012. In 2017 Cathie and I rode our bikes to the trailhead from Winn Campground and fished. (Number 9)



Mount Charleston Wilderness (NV)



At one time, at least, there was an introduced population of Lahontan cutthroat trout in Carpenter Canyon. (US Forest Service et al 2008 Spring Mountains, p. 20)

Nevada DOW claims they are still there. (Nevada DOW 2017) After a trip in March 2023 where my ability to get into the wilderness was impeded by snow, I tried again with Cathie in July 2023. We drove as far up as we could (a rough ride, she got out and walked through the hairiest part), hiked another 0.75 miles to the wilderness, then fought brush to get to the bottom of the canyon.

I found lots of fish, easy to see in crystal clear water. Didn't catch any the first evening, but the following morning I finally caught a nice Lahontan cutt, well worth the effort (Number 67).



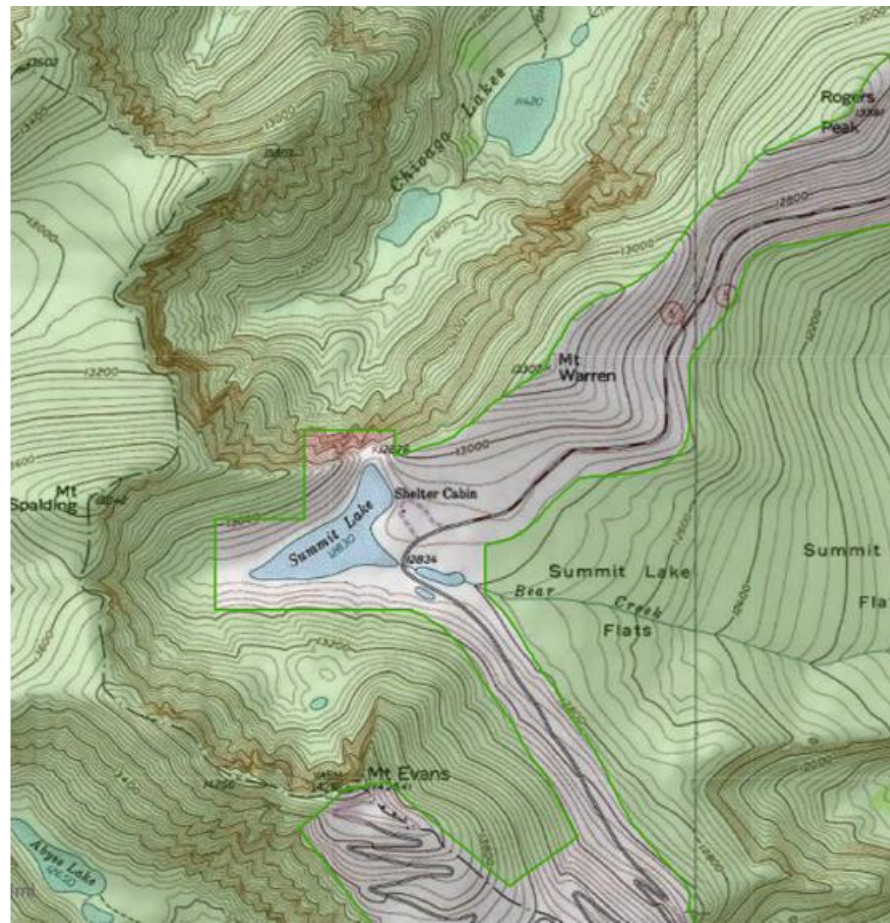
Mount Evans Wilderness (CO)

There are record of cutthroat trout in Chicago Lake, which drains north through Chicago Creek to Clear Creek and eventually to the South Platte. Also brook trout in Scott Gomer Creek in southwestern corner of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



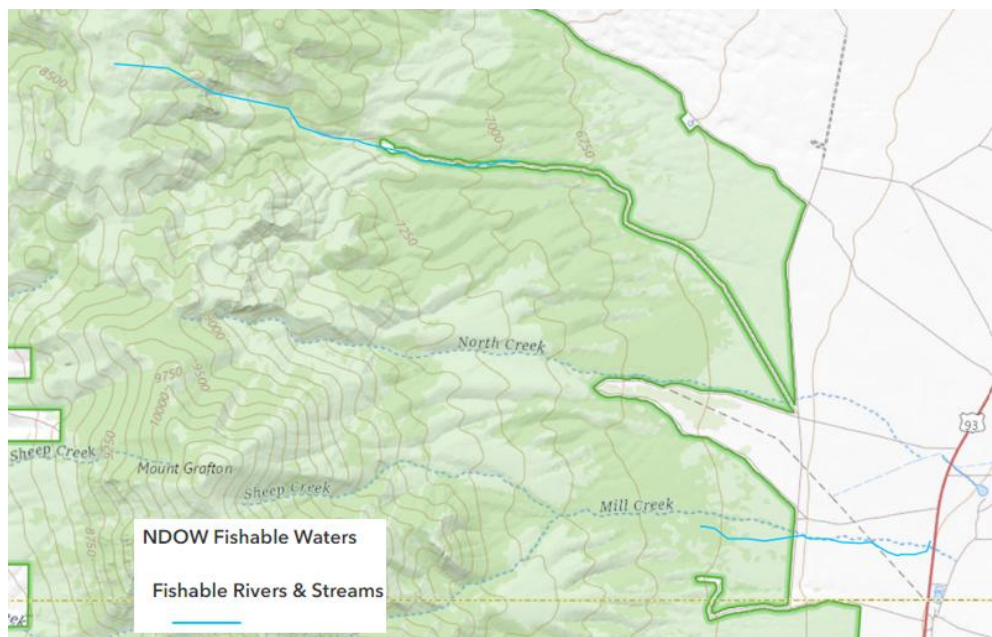
The cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii*)

Cathie and I drove to the top of Mt Evans in 2017 with Heather and her friend Mackenzie. We stood on the summit, got some great pictures, and didn't even bring a fly rod. What was I thinking?



Mount Grafton Wilderness (NV)

Brookies predominate and rainbow trout are also present in both North Creek and Mill Creek on the eastern slope of the Schell Creek Range. (Nevada DOW 2017) Based on my visit in July 2017, I don't think Mill Creek is fishable as far downstream as the NDOW map indicates, but maybe I was there at the wrong time.

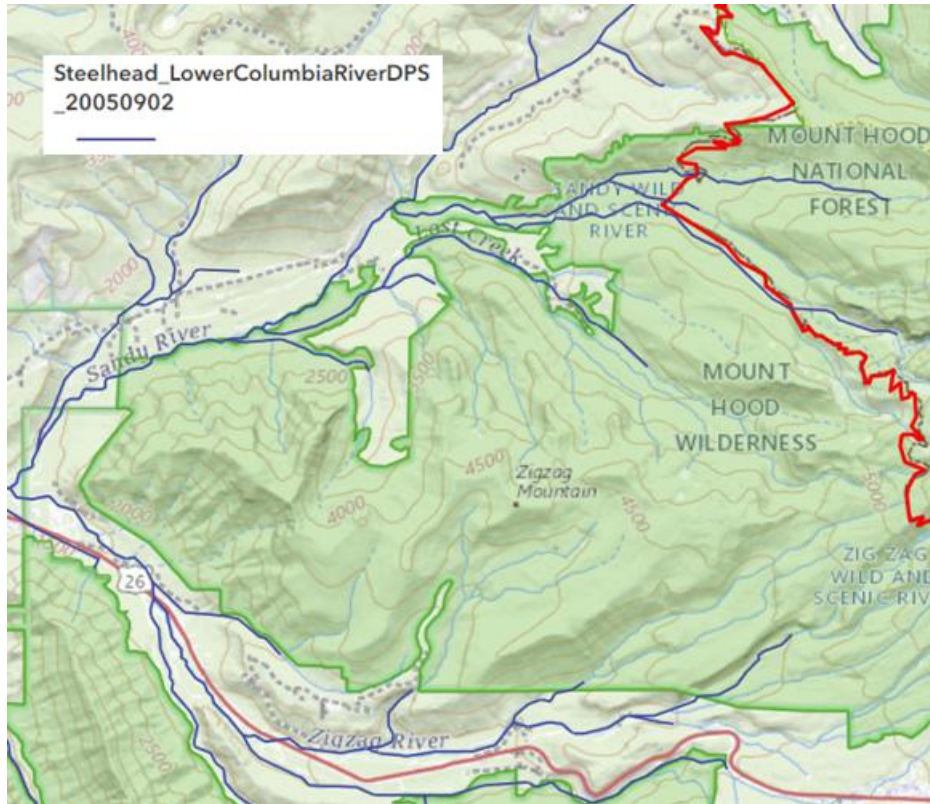


Mount Grafton Wilderness (NV)

The stream I did find in 2017 looked encouraging. I walked about a mile of it just upstream from the wilderness boundary. The stream was narrow, only a couple of feet in some places, but had a consistent flow of cold, clear water. I saw a couple of fish dart away but couldn't catch anything. Definitely worth a return trip.



Mount Hood Wilderness (OR)

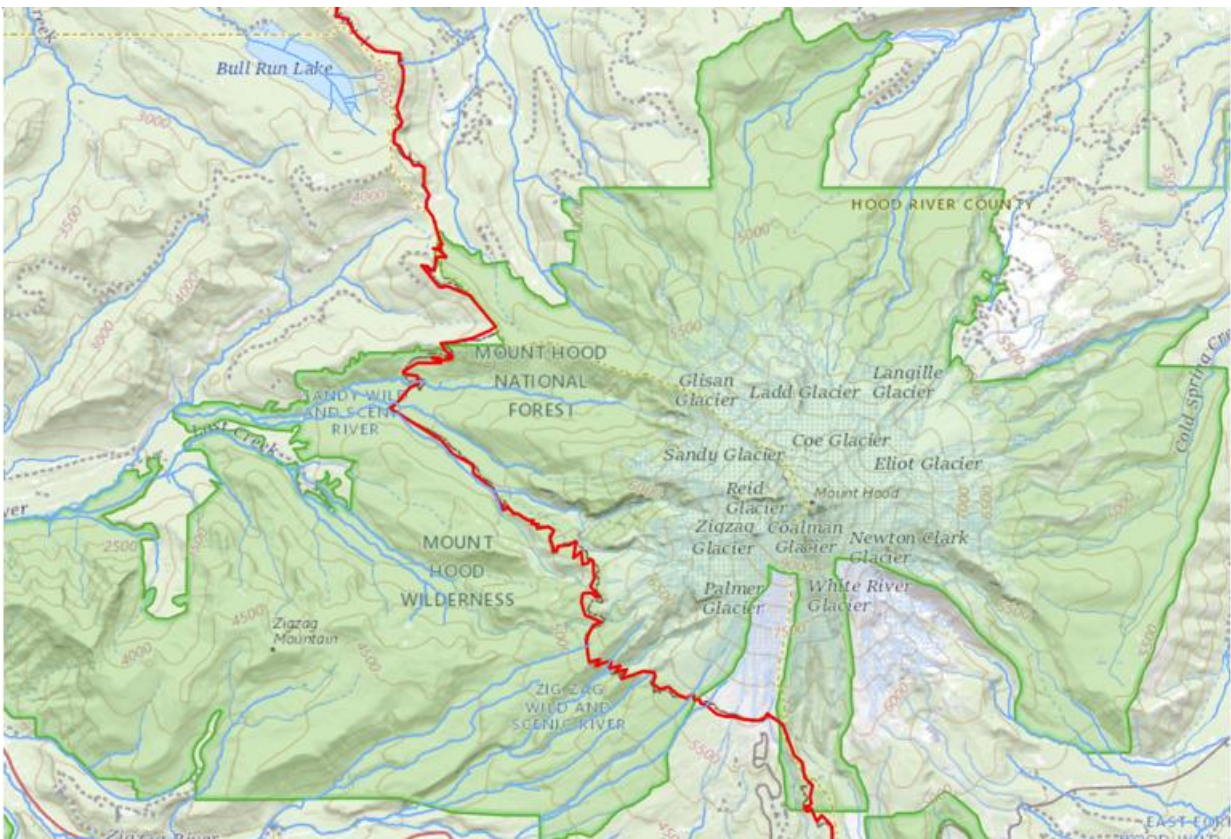
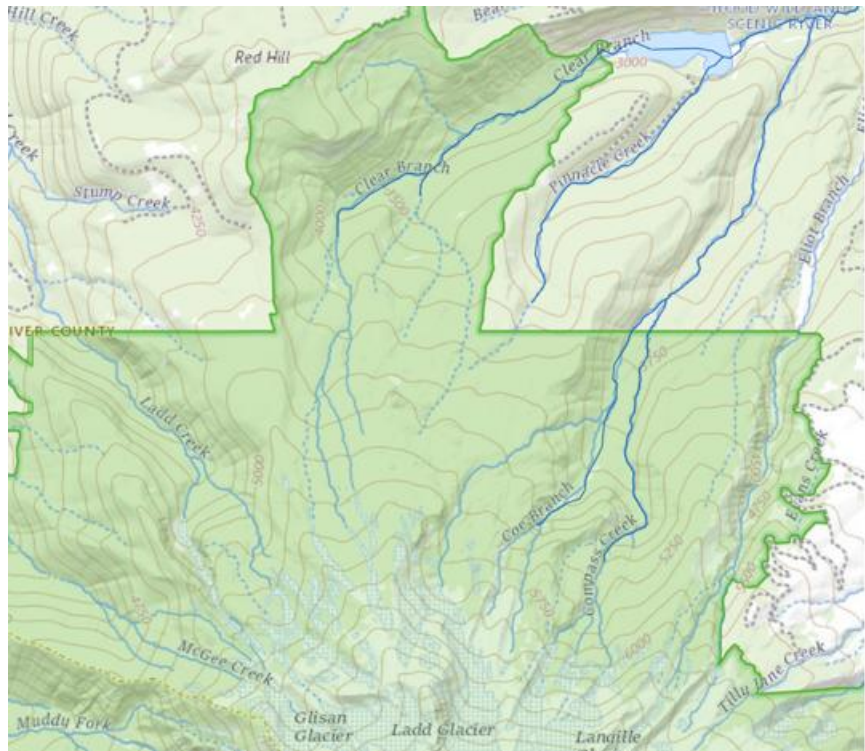
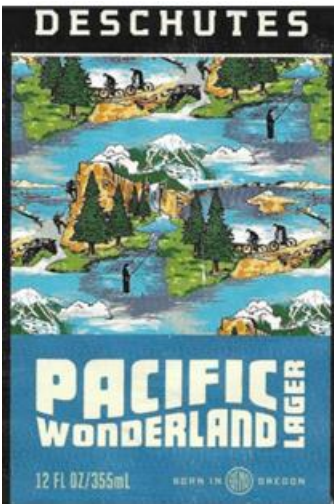


There is critical habitat for steelhead in the Zigzag River and tributary in southern part of wilderness, Sandy River and tributaries in northwestern portion of the wilderness, and East Fork Hood River tributaries in the eastern portion of the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Critical habitat for coho salmon occurs in largely the same streams. Sandy River and Lost Creek are also critical habitat for chinook. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

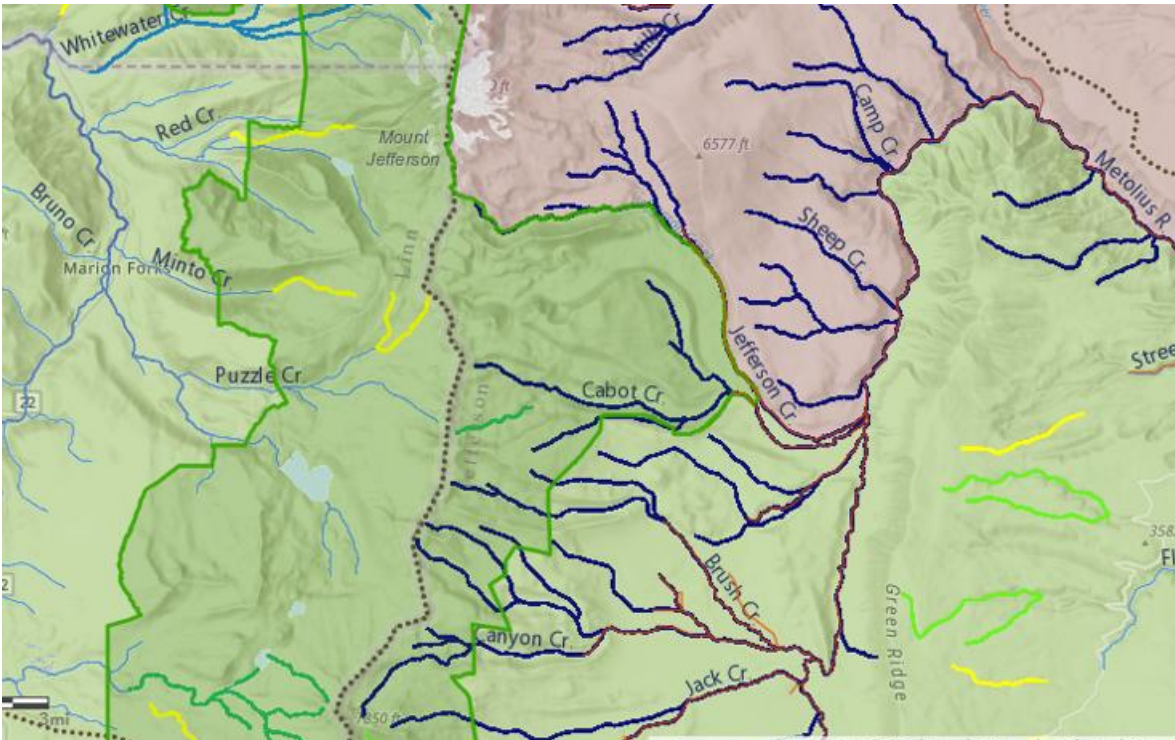
Mount Hood Wilderness (OR)

There is critical habitat for bull trout in north flowing tributaries to Middle Fork Hood River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



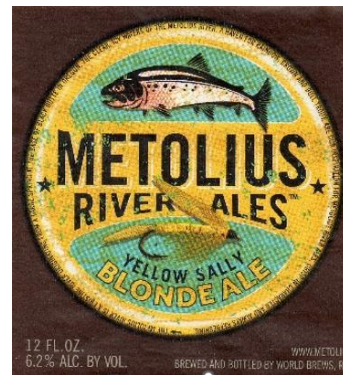
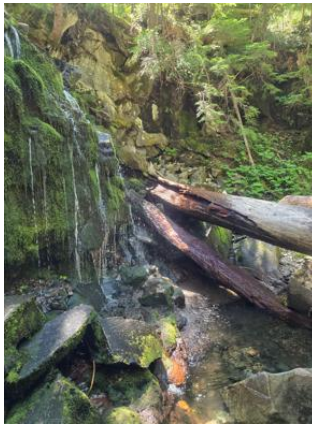
Coastal cutthroats occupy pretty much every stream in the wilderness, and apparently make it far upstream in most of them. (StreamNet 2019)

Mount Jefferson Wilderness (OR)

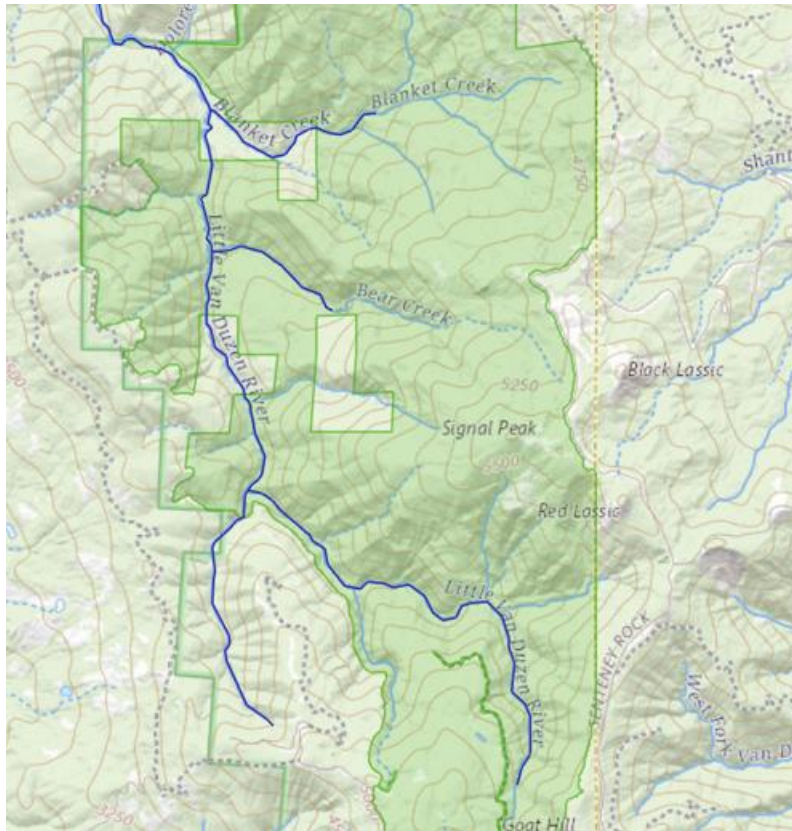


Climate Shield predictive model shows a high probability of bull trout in multiple Metolius River tributaries on the east slope of the mountains, as well as moderate probabilities in the North Santiam River system and the Whitewater Creek system, tributary to the North Santiam, on the west side of the wilderness. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

In July, 2026, I hiked in to a very cool little waterfall on the North Fork Santiam River where the Big Meadows Trail crosses the river. I caught some little rainbows in the pool below the falls (Number 115), the first in what would soon become a Santiam River triple play: North Fork, Middle Fork, and a tributary just above the South Fork, in three different wildernesses, over the span of three weeks (two in one day).



Mount Lassic Wilderness (CA)



Critical habitat for steelhead exists in the Little Van Duzen River, tributary to Van Duzen River in the Eel River system. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

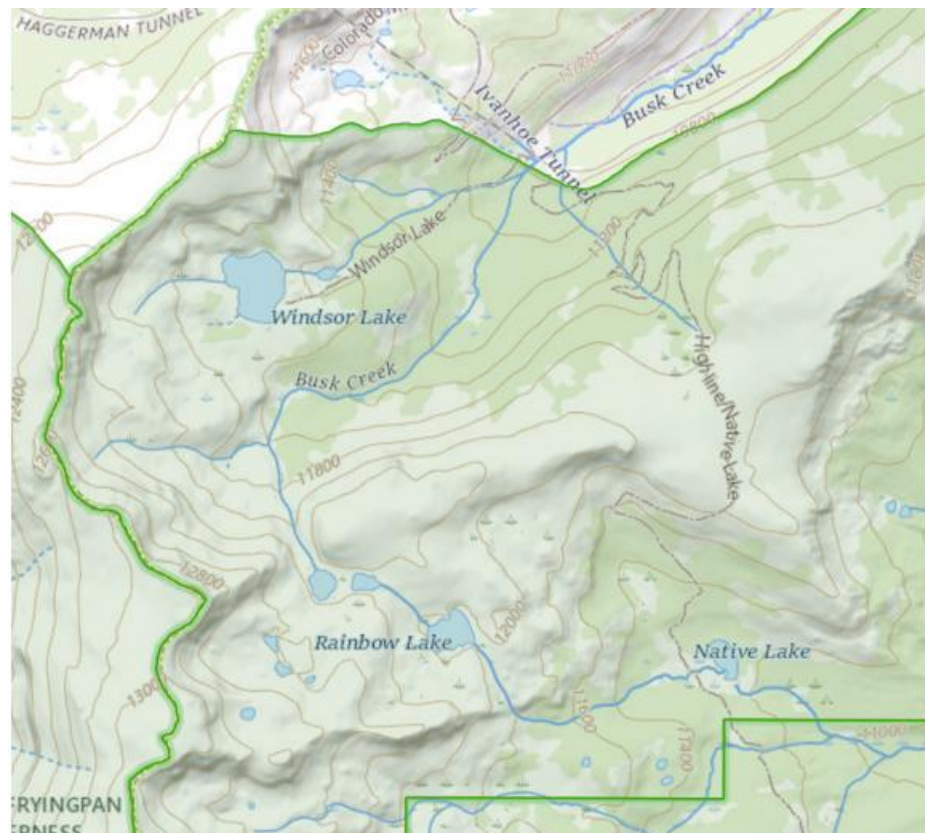


Mount Massive Wilderness (CO)

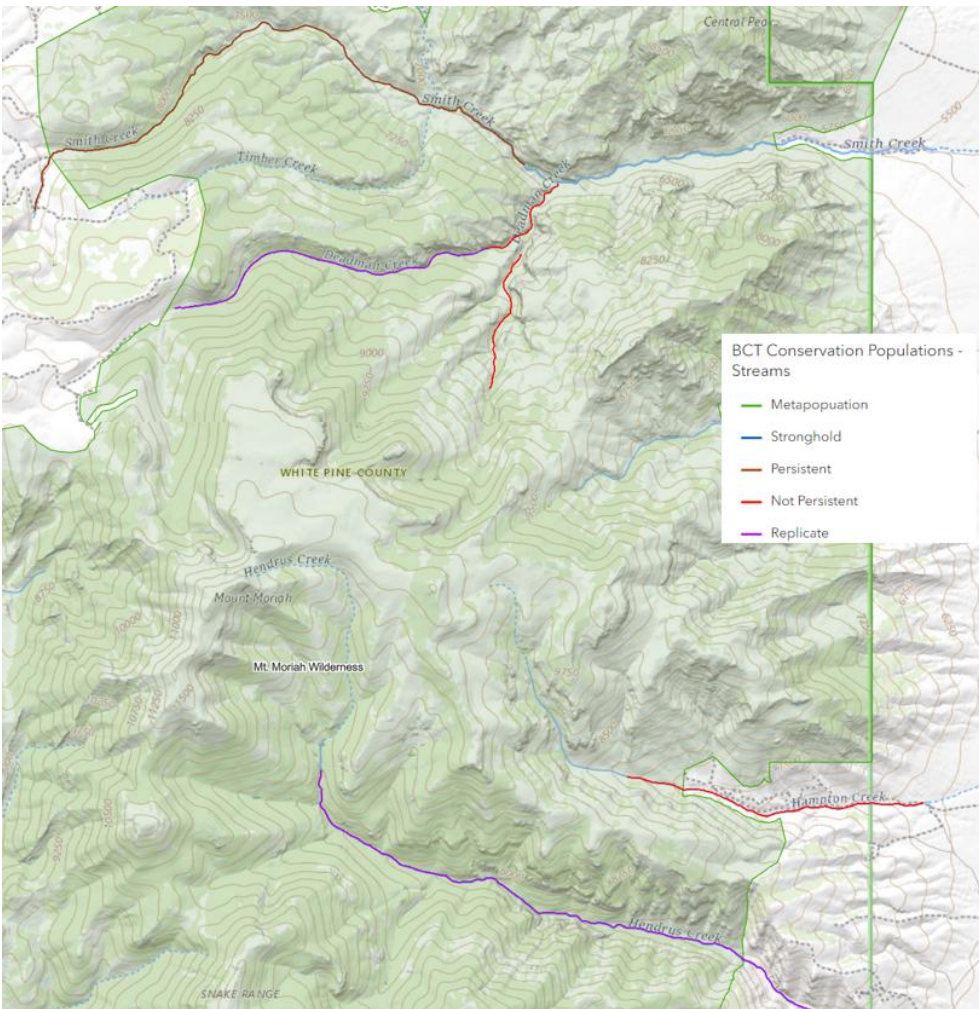
Cutthroat trout occupy the Windsor Lake outflow in the northwestern portion of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



It would make sense that the cutthroats are in the stream and other lakes in the area as well.



Mount Moriah Wilderness (NV)



Resident, genetically unaltered populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout are in the Smith Creek system, including Deadman's Creek; Hampton Creek and Hendry's Creek, all eastward flowing streams emptying out into the Snake Valley. (TU BCT 2019; Nevada Dept of Wildlife et al 2006)

In July 2021 I think I covered the entire portion of Hampton Creek that shows as holding cutthroats and found none. The stream seemed to have decent flow, just no visible fish. I chose Hampton over other options not because it looked more promising, it doesn't. I chose Hampton because I could get there. With more advanced navigation tools at my disposal I might go for one of the other creeks next time.



Mount Naomi Wilderness (UT)



There are records of brown and rainbow trout in South Fork Summit Creek. (Fishbrain 2022)



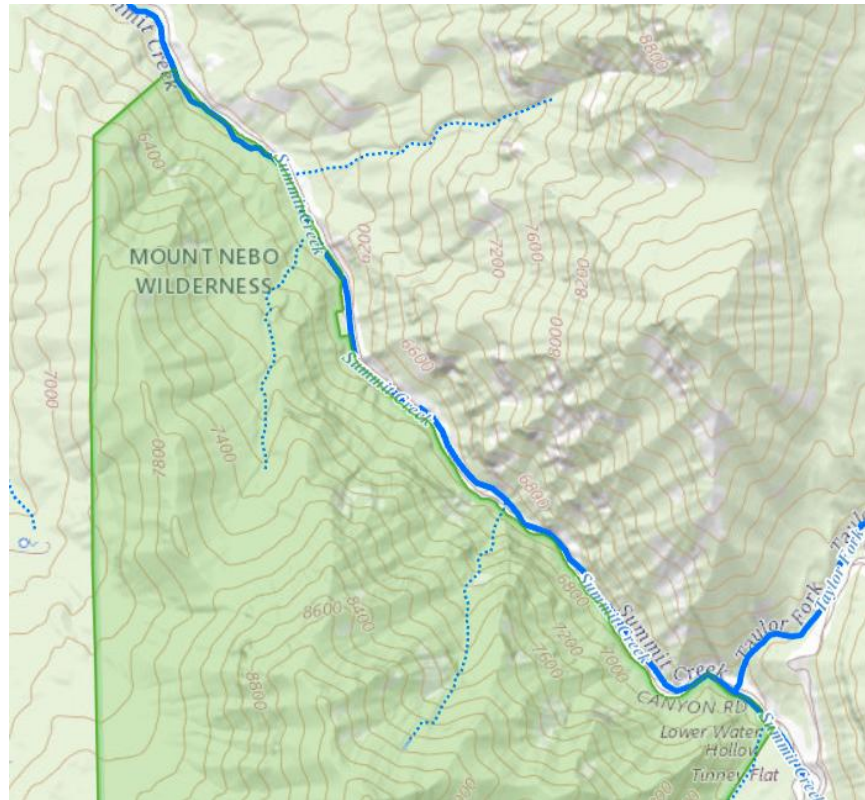
Cathie and I hiked up Summit Creek past where the South Fork enters in August 2024. Summit Creek itself runs in and out of the wilderness, but it was easy to find places where it was in and catch rainbow trout. One of these places was right where the South Fork enters. (Number 80)



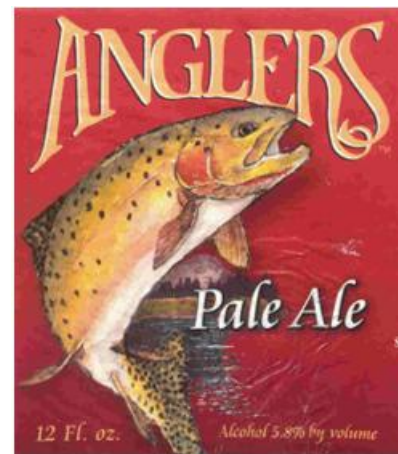
On our way out we met a man at the trailhead who conducts Lakota Sioux spiritual ceremonies. He comes to hike to his place on the mountain and meditate every day. You don't meet a lot of people in wildernesses, but sometimes you can manage to meet some fascinating people!

Mount Nebo Wilderness (UT)

There are records of rainbow trout in Taylor Fork of Summit Creek, which lies outside the wilderness, but downstream from the fork Summit Creek runs in and out of the northeast edge of the wilderness. There is also a record of rainbow trout in Gardner Creek which runs in and out of the southwestern edge of the wilderness. (Fishbrain 2022) Both streams show as perennial flow, (USGS 2021) although it's hard to see water on the imagery.



Salt Creek is stocked with rainbow trout, some may make it into Left Fork Salt Creek within the wilderness. (Utah DWR 2022)



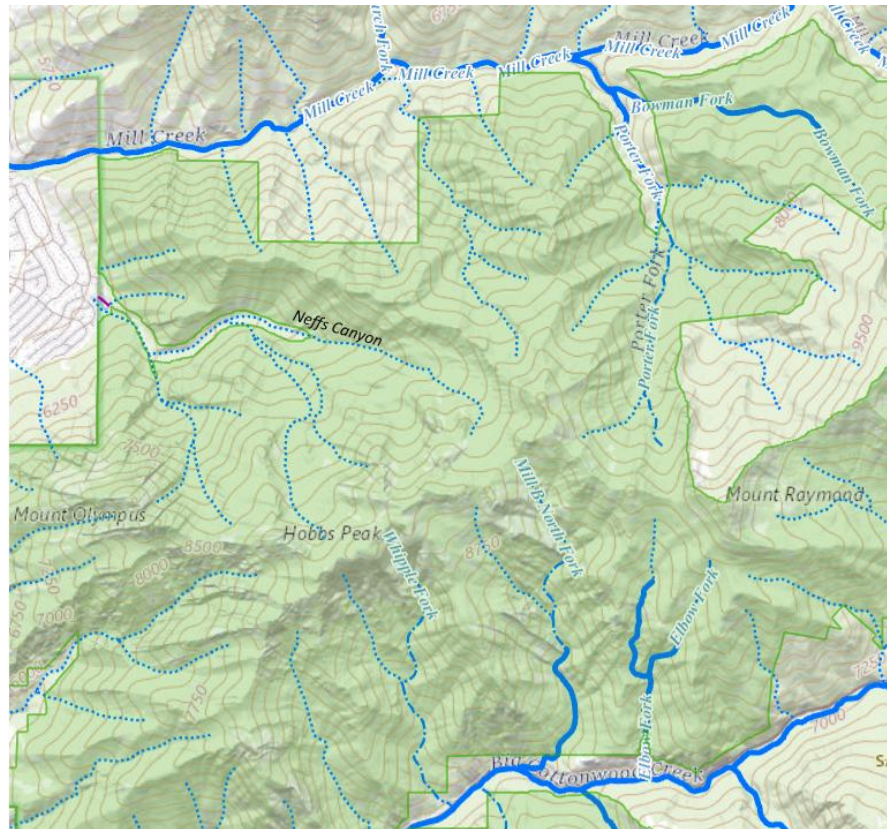
Mount Nebo Wilderness (UT)

I managed to confirm the presence of rainbows in the Left Fork in August 2024. These were solid, healthy, fighting fish, likely wild offspring of some of those stockers. (Number 81)



Mount Olympus Wilderness (UT)

There are multiple records of brown trout from Hidden Falls, on Mill B North Fork at the southern edge of the wilderness. There are also records of Bonneville cutthroat trout and rainbow trout from the upper end of Neff Canyon in the northwestern part of the wilderness. The best opportunity might be Bonneville cutthroats in Bowman Creek and Bowman Spring in the northern part of the wilderness, where the stream flows seem more consistent. (Fishbrain 2022)

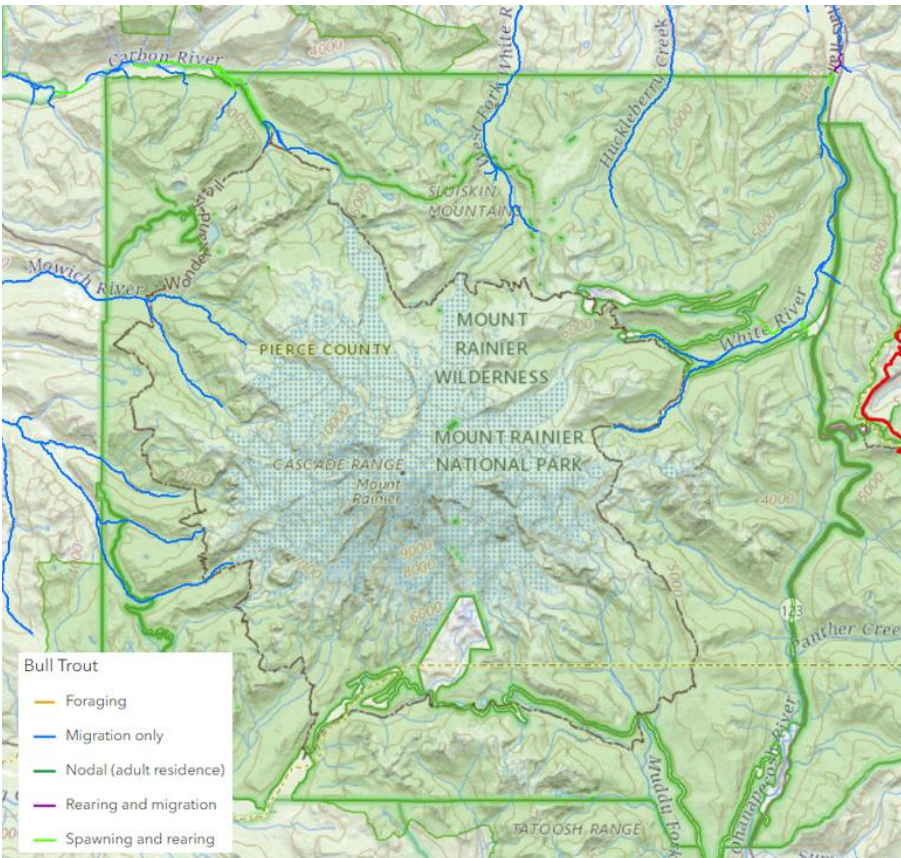


Mount Olympus Wilderness (UT)



Mill B North Fork in June 2025, it sure looks like there should be fish here, but I did not find them.

Mount Rainier Wilderness (WA)



There is critical habitat for bull trout in Puyallup River and Puyallup tributaries Mowich River and Carbon River on west side of wilderness; and in White River and West Fork White River in northern part of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Migratory bull trout inhabit the major streams in the Puyallup and White River drainages. Rainbow trout occupy the major streams that bull trout don't reside in, south flowing tributaries of the Cowlitz River in the southeastern part of the wilderness. (StreamNet 2019)

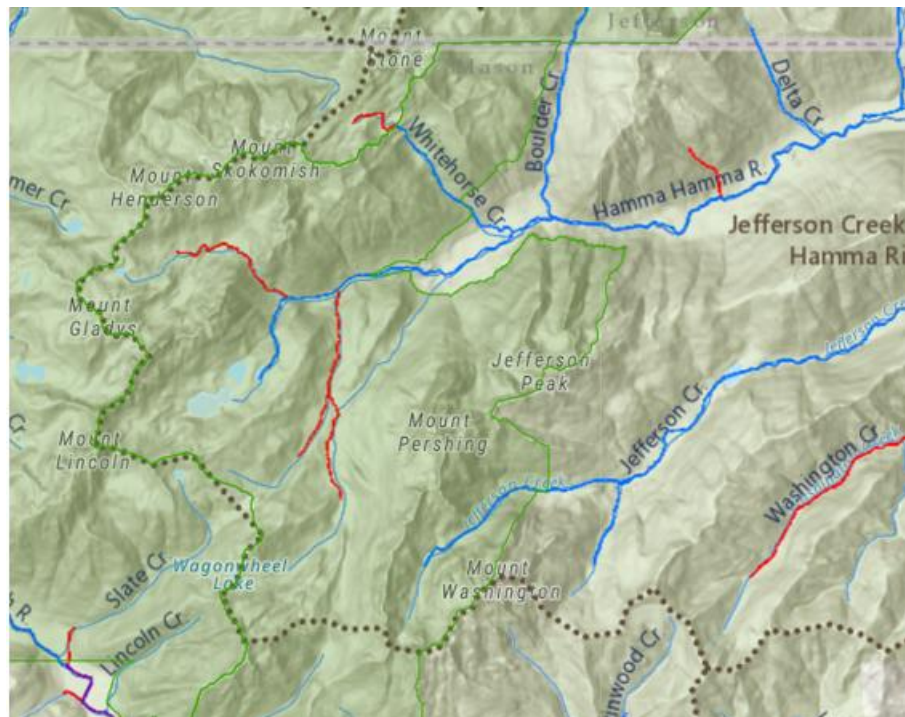
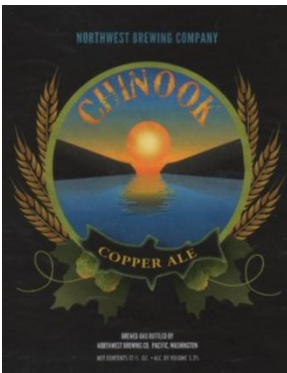
Mount Rose Wilderness (NV)

A restored population of Lahontan cutthroats barely extends into the northern part of the wilderness above suburban Reno. The dark blue lines are historical Lahontan range, most of which now support brookies, browns and rainbows. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009, p. 23; TU LCT 2020)

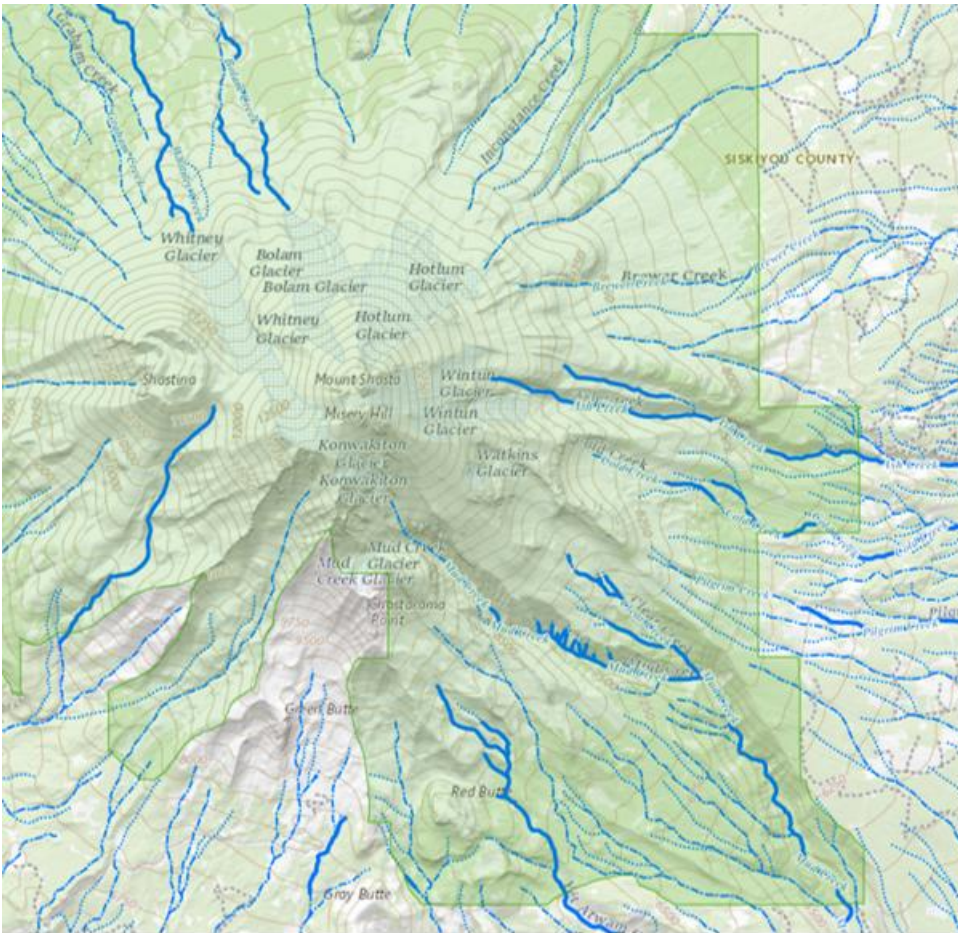


Mount Skokomish Wilderness (WA)

There are rainbow trout in Hamma Hamma River, Whitehorse Creek and Jefferson Creek (blue on the map), with coastal cutthroat trout in the same stretches as well as higher up in tributaries (red on map). (StreamNet 2019)

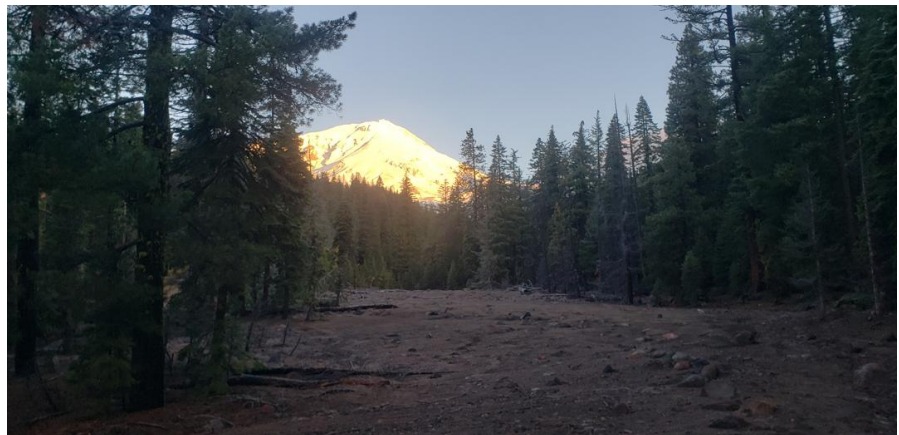


Mount Shasta Wilderness (CA)

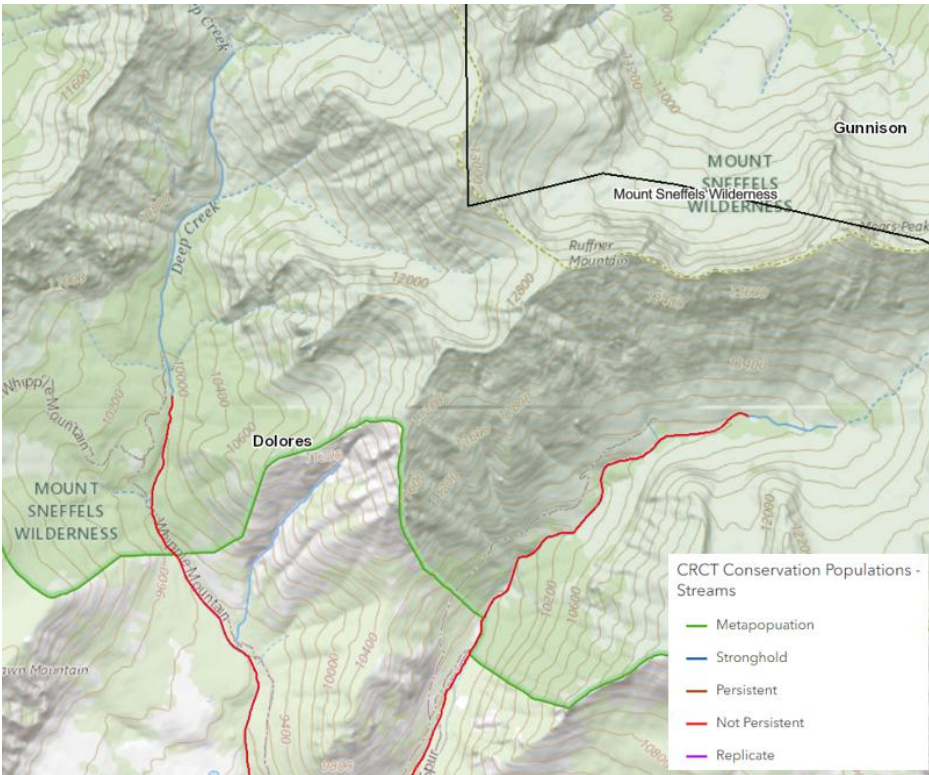


Squaw Valley Creek (now Yet Atwam Creek for political correctness purposes), Mud Creek and Ash Creek all have sufficient lengths of perennial flow within the wilderness and connection to the McCloud River system downstream to support fish populations. (USGS 2021) Coastal rainbow trout are native to each of these streamsheds. (UCal PISCES 2022)

In October 2025 I checked out Mud Creek. It was pretty, easy to access, and had spectacular views up to the mountain, but I didn't find fish.



Mount Sneffels Wilderness (CO)



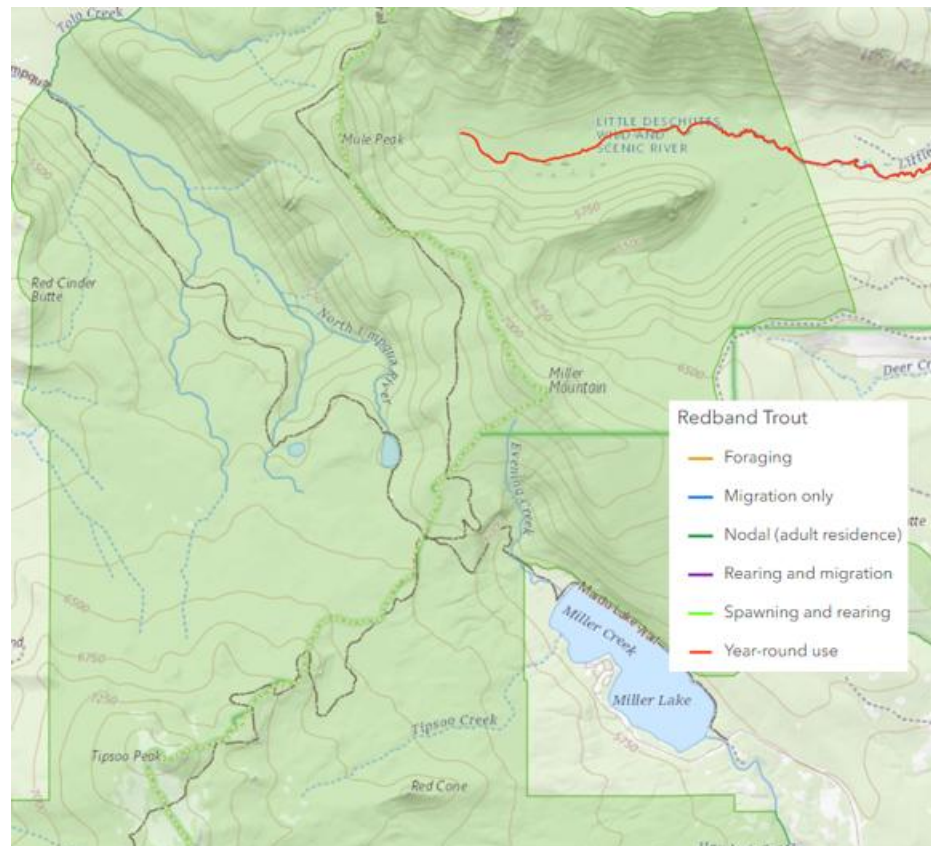
There is a core conservation population of Colorado cutthroats in Deep Creek. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



Mount Thielsen Wilderness (OR)

Redband trout occupy the headwaters of the Little Deschutes River in the northeastern corner of the wilderness. (StreamNet 2019)

There is surprisingly few game fish in the rest of the wilderness, which includes the headwaters of the North Umpqua. The steelhead and salmon don't make it past Toketee Falls about 24 miles downstream, and the coastal cutthroats stop about three miles short of the wilderness in the North Umpqua. (StreamNet 2019)



Mount Thielsen Wilderness (OR)

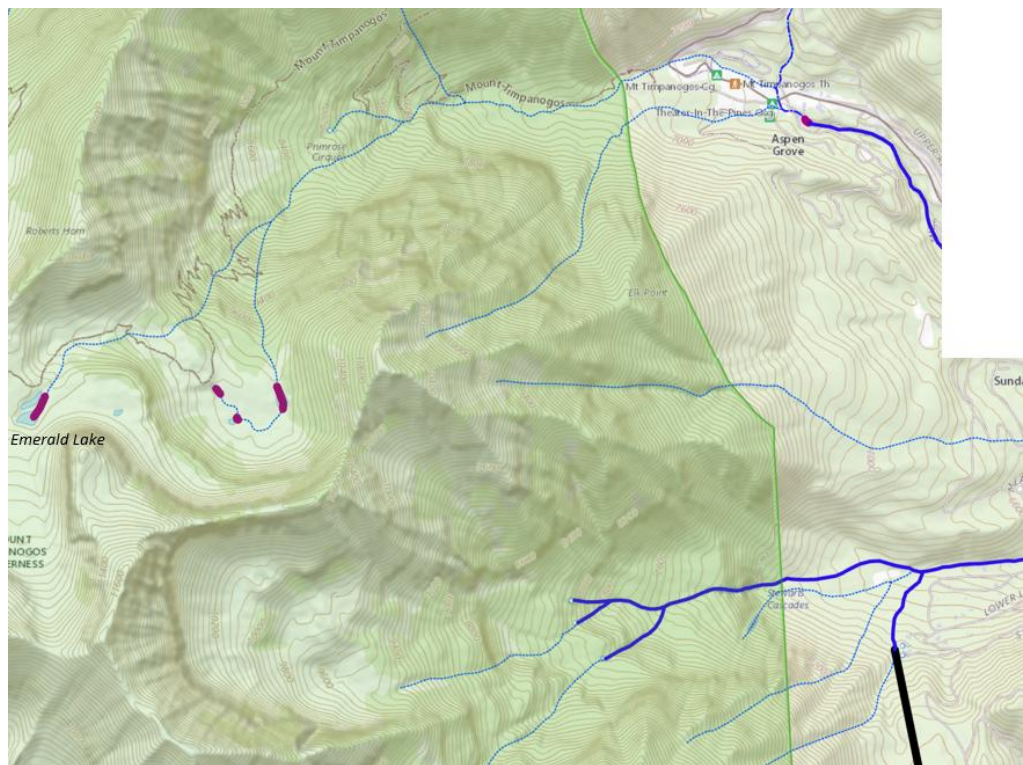


In September 2025 I tried the North Umpqua in the wilderness. It looked great, but I only interested a couple of fish with a fly. I did scoop a very, very small trout with the net. (Number 94)

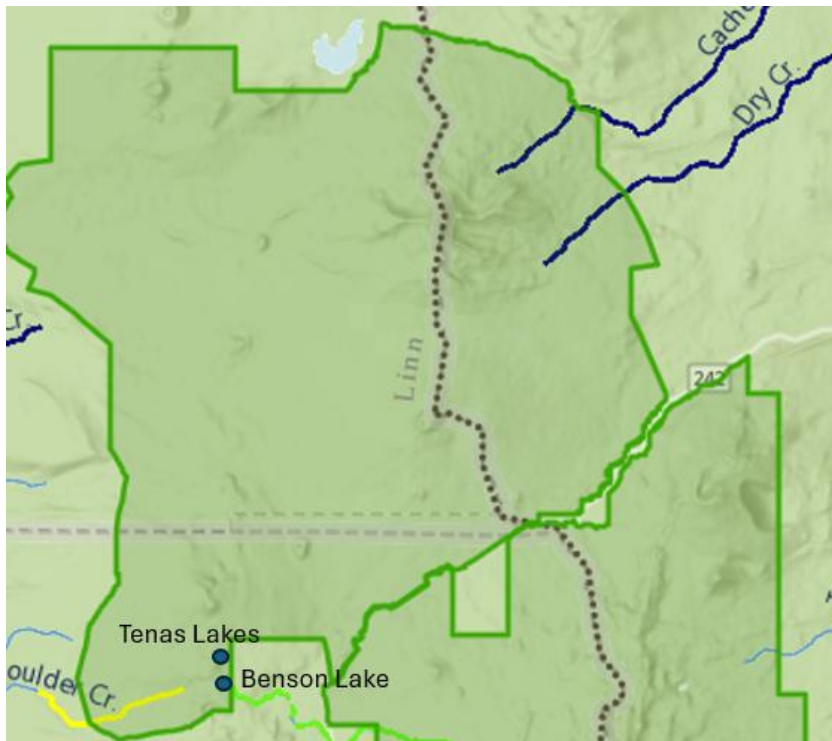


Mount Timpanogos Wilderness (UT)

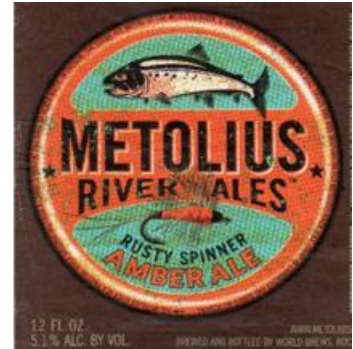
There are records of rainbow trout in Emerald Lake and the Stewart Cascades above the Sundance Ski Resort. (Fishbrain 2022)



Mount Washington Wilderness (OR)



Climate Shield predictive model shows a high probability of bull trout in Cache Creek and Dry Creek, tributary to the Metolius River. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

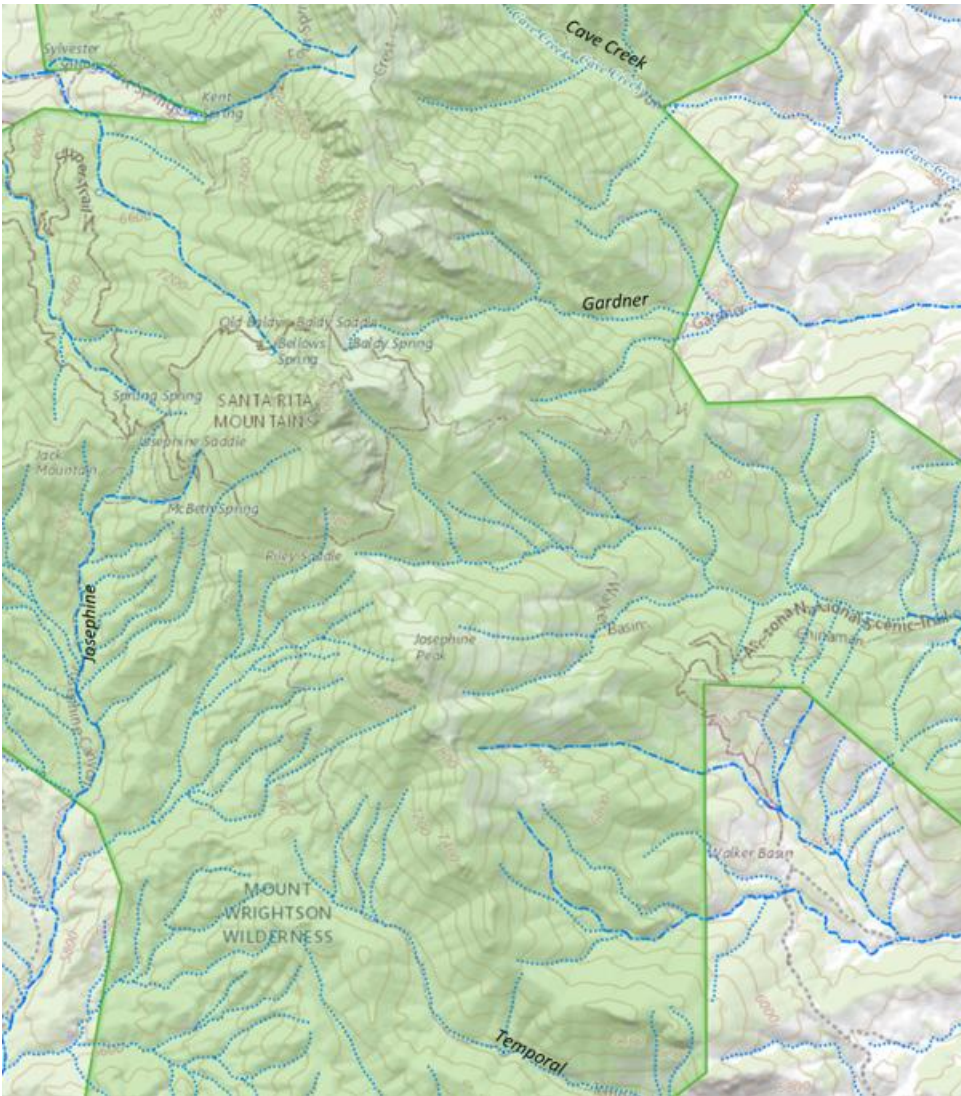


StreamNet doesn't show any game fish making it upstream to the wilderness, although coastal cuts make it close on some of the west slope streams. (StreamNet 2019)

I visited in July 2026. I got there late one day and tried Benson Lake, but came up empty. Lots of little fish in the shallows, but I couldn't manage to net any. The next day I moved up the trail to Tenas Lakes, and caught a really nice rainbow in the middle of the lake. (Number 116)



Mount Wrightson Wilderness (AZ)



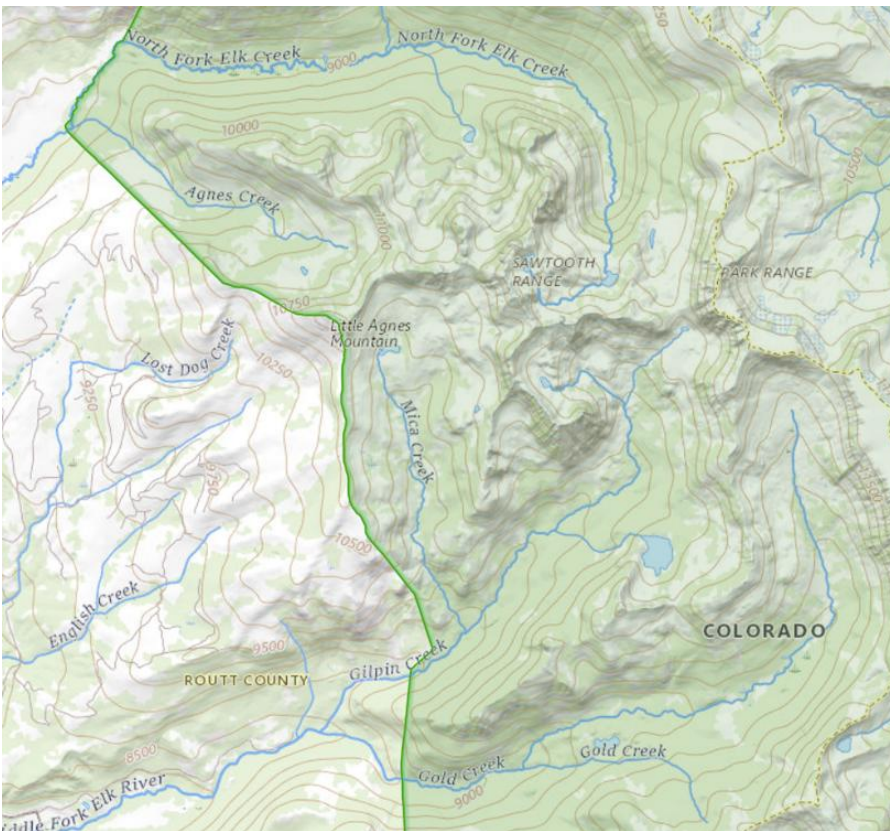
There is not much in the way of perennial water here, but there appears to be sufficient water in intermittent stretches of the headwaters of Temporal Gulch, Gardner Canyon, Cave Creek and Josephine Canyon to support fish. (USGS 2021)

All four canyons supposedly hold longfin dace (map on right) and Gila topminnow. Temporal Gulch and Josephine Canyon hold desert sucker and Sonora sucker. Gardner Canyon and Cave Creek hold Gila chub. Temporal Gulch supposedly has desert pupfish, as well as speckled dace. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022)



Mount Zirkel Wilderness (CO)

It sounds like the trails you can access from Steamboat Springs and vicinity can get a lot of use; in July 2022 I came in at the north end through Wyoming instead, and had all the solitude I could have wanted. I hiked in from the Encampment trailhead and fished along the West Fork Trail, catching brookies. One was very good size, it cleared the water twice (a brookie no less!) and beached itself before he got away. (Number 51)

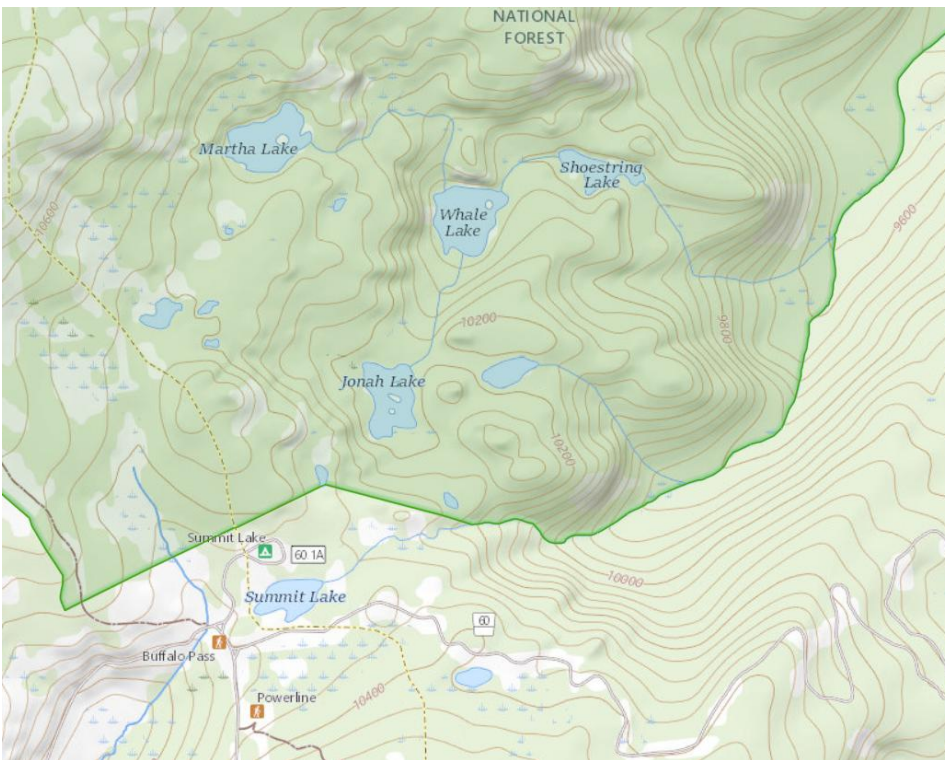


There are Colorado cutthroats in North Fork Elk River. Middle Fork Elk River tributaries Gold Creek, Gilpin Creek and Mica Creek have more brookies than cutthroats, and lots of hiker and runner activity. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2013, p. 43)

Mount Zirkel Wilderness (CO)

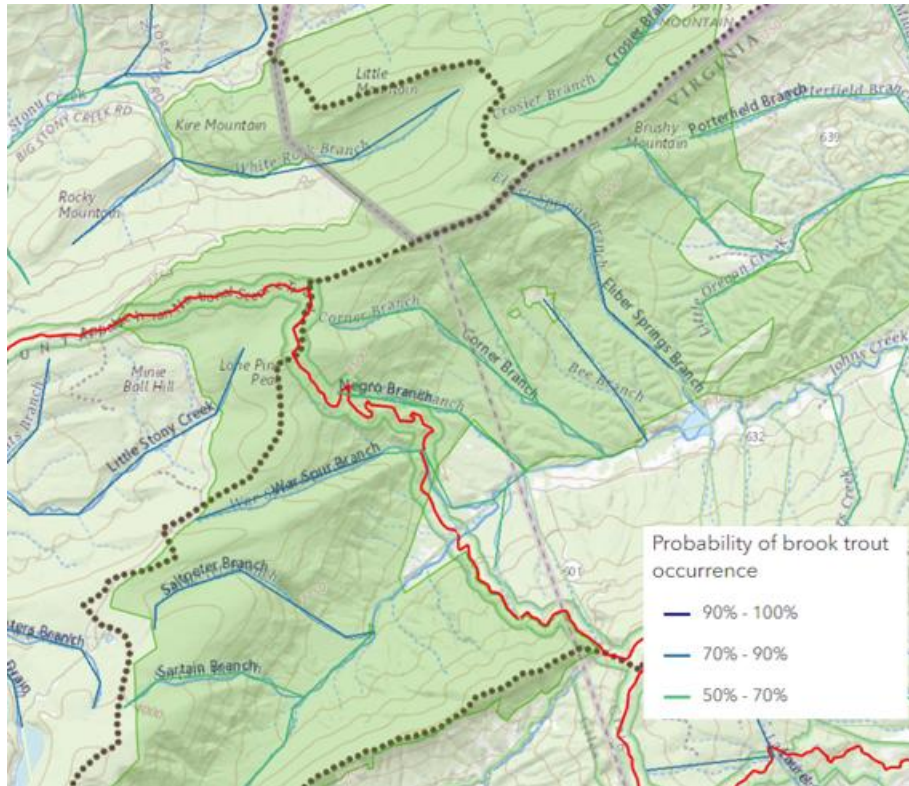


In the south, Mirror Lake and Rosa Lake in the Mad Creek drainage, tributary to the Elk River, are accessed from the Luna Lake trail. The lakes occasionally have stocked cutthroats and apparently always have little brookies. (Trout Spring 2019, p. 38)



Jonah Lake at the very southern end of the wilderness drains into Chedsey Creek, a North Platte headwater. The lake is cutthroat only, a rare non-brookie lake. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2019, p. 18)

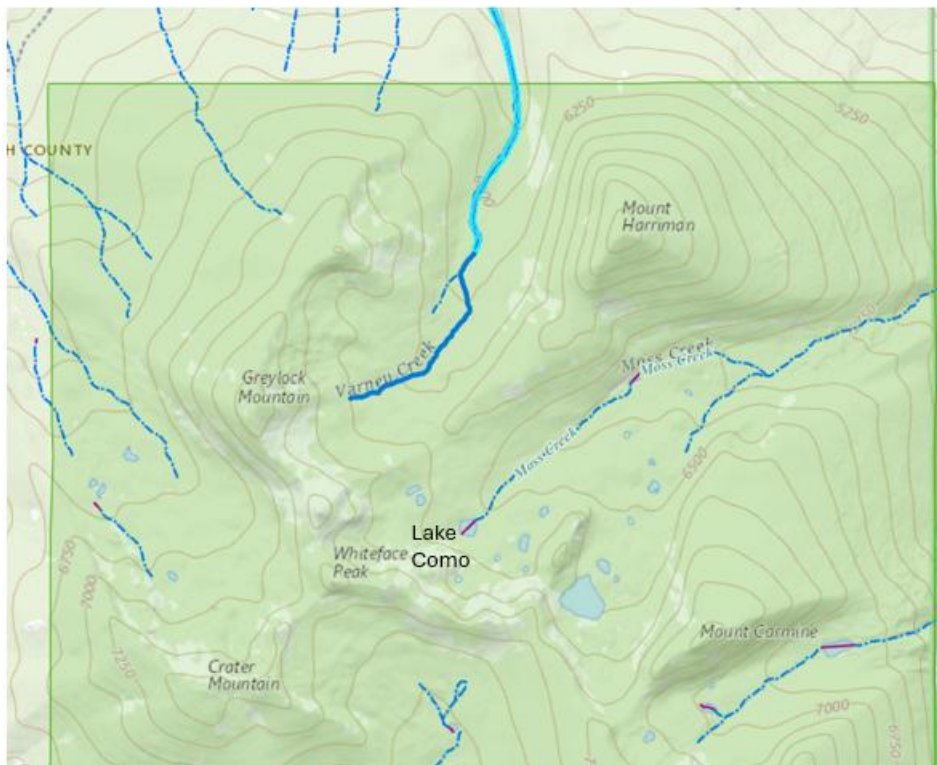
Mountain Lake Wilderness (VA, WV)



A stronghold population of brook trout coexists with rainbows in the northwestern part of the wilderness, flowing west toward Big Stony Creek which flows west into the New River. A persistent population of brook trout occurs in the headwater tributaries of Johns Creek, flowing eastward from the southern part of the wilderness into Craig Creek which flows eastward into James River. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

Most streams have a moderate to high probability of the occurrence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Mountain Lakes Wilderness (OR)



Varney Creek in the northern part of the wilderness holds redband trout. (shown on map; StreamNet 2019) In late June 2025 I found very little water, lots of brush, and no fish in Varney Creek.

Climate Shield predictive model shows low to moderate probability of bull trout in Varney Creek and two other streams in the northwestern part of wilderness. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

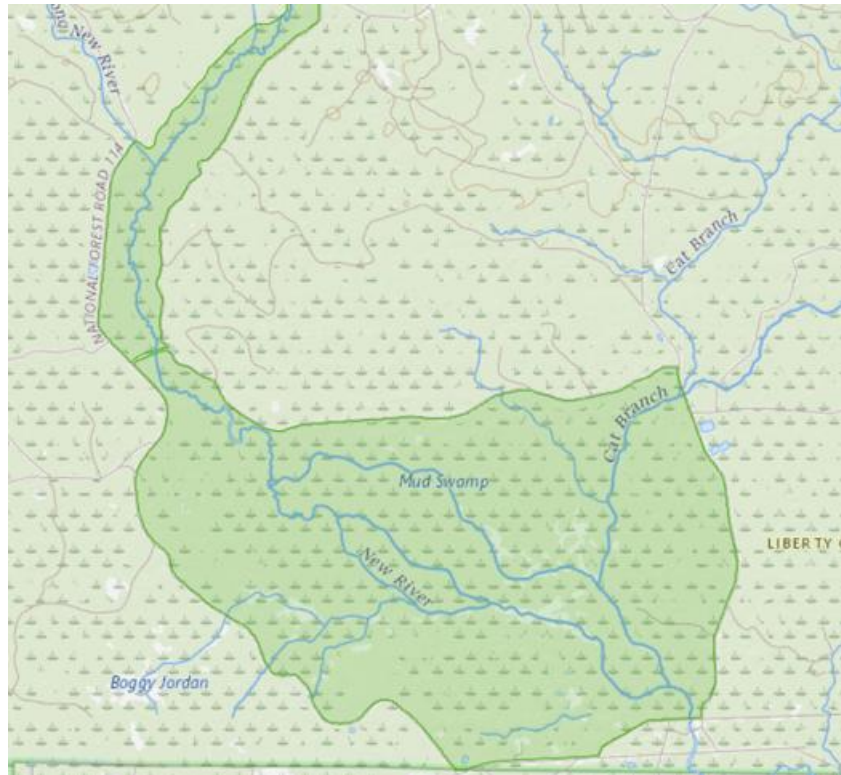
Mountain Lakes Wilderness (OR)

I struck out two days in a row in June 2025 on Varny Creek, but I kept hiking up into the mountain until I struck it rich in beautiful Lake Como. I caught beautiful, 10- to 12-inch rainbows on about every fourth cast (number 83). They were aggressive, chasing elk hair caddis on the surface in clear water, so I could see them coming. Lots of fun!



Mud Swamp/New River Wilderness (FL)

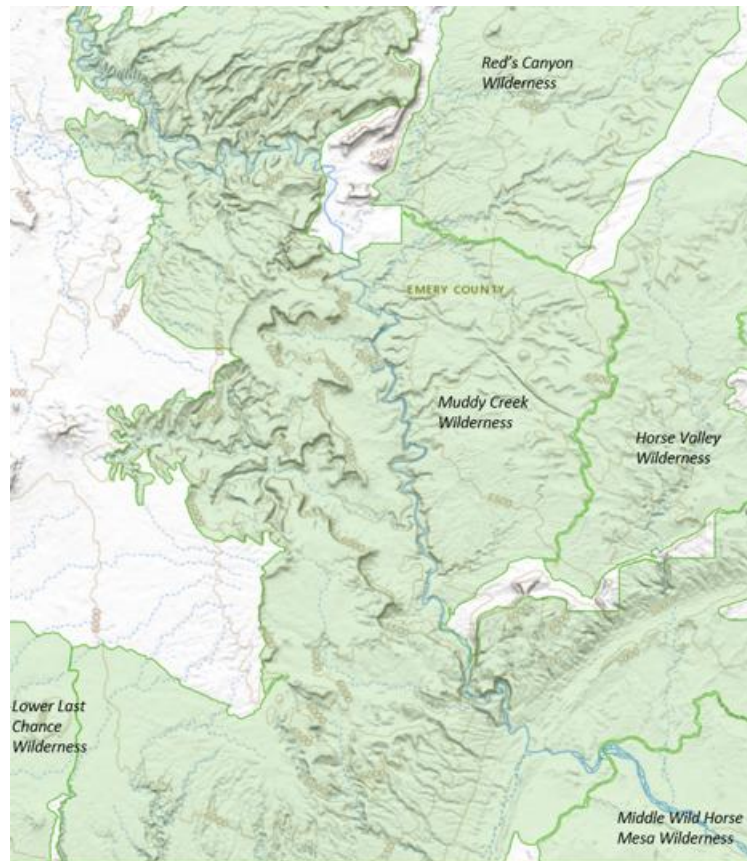
The New River runs the length of the wilderness, with road access from each end, although the river is braided, difficult to follow and subject to low water conditions in between. It's a swamp in Florida, it's got fish. Records include banded topminnow, black-banded darter, brook silverside and banded sunfish. All these records seem to be near the two put-ins. (North American Native Fishes 2022)



Muddy Creek Wilderness (UT)

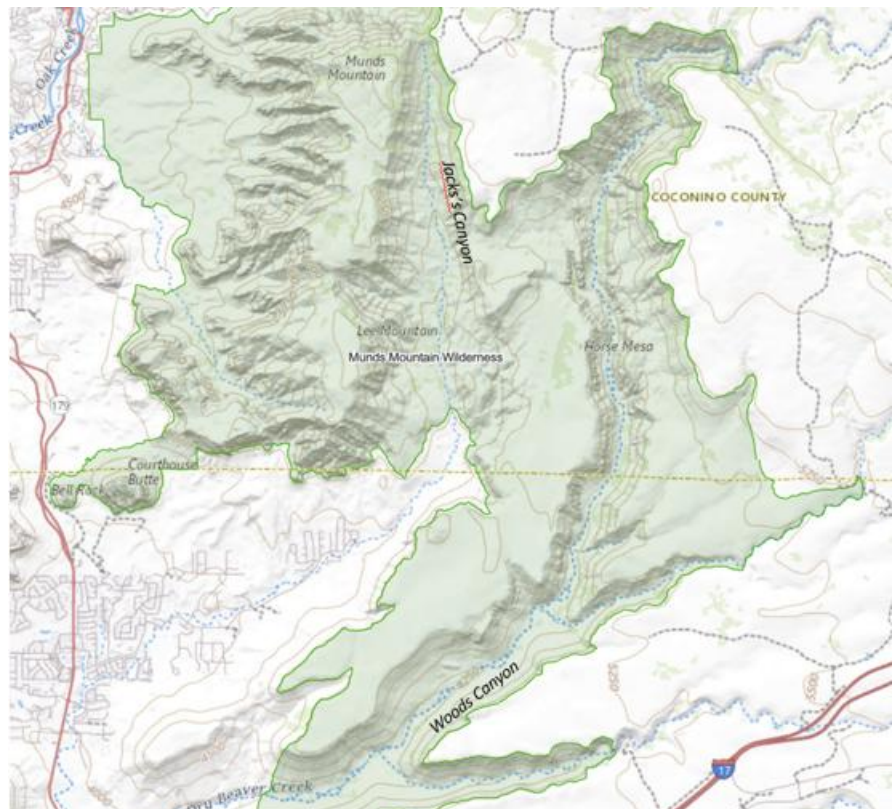
USGS NHD shows perennial flow in a long stretch of Muddy Creek flowing all the way across the wilderness. (Utah AGRC 2020)

Flannelmouth suckers are rare but present at the bend where Muddy Creek turns from an eastward to a southward flow. (Utah DNR, 2006)



Munds Mountain Wilderness (AZ)

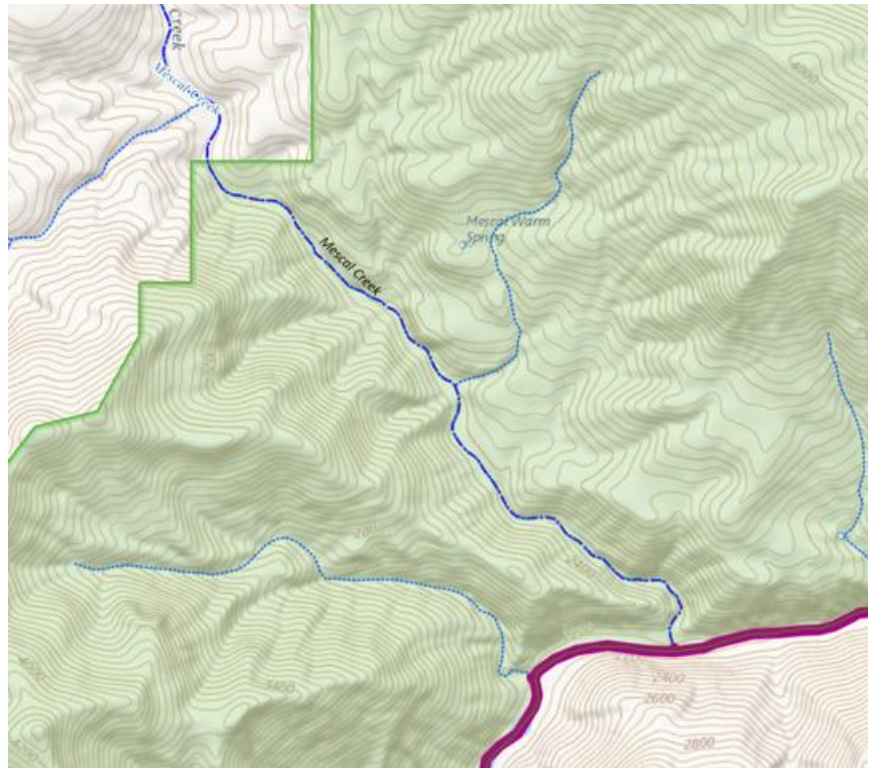
USGS NWIS shows intermittent flows in Jack's Canyon and Woods Canyon. (USGS 2021)
These intermittent flows are apparently enough to support desert sucker, Gila chub, longfin dace, roundtail chub, Sonora sucker and speckled dace. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022)



Needle's Eye Wilderness (AZ)

USGS NWIS shows no perennial surface water in the wilderness, but the Gila River forms the eastern boundary. (USGS 2021)

Mescal Creek across the wilderness is habitat for Gila topminnow, desert sucker, longfin dace, Sonora sucker and roundtail chub. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022).

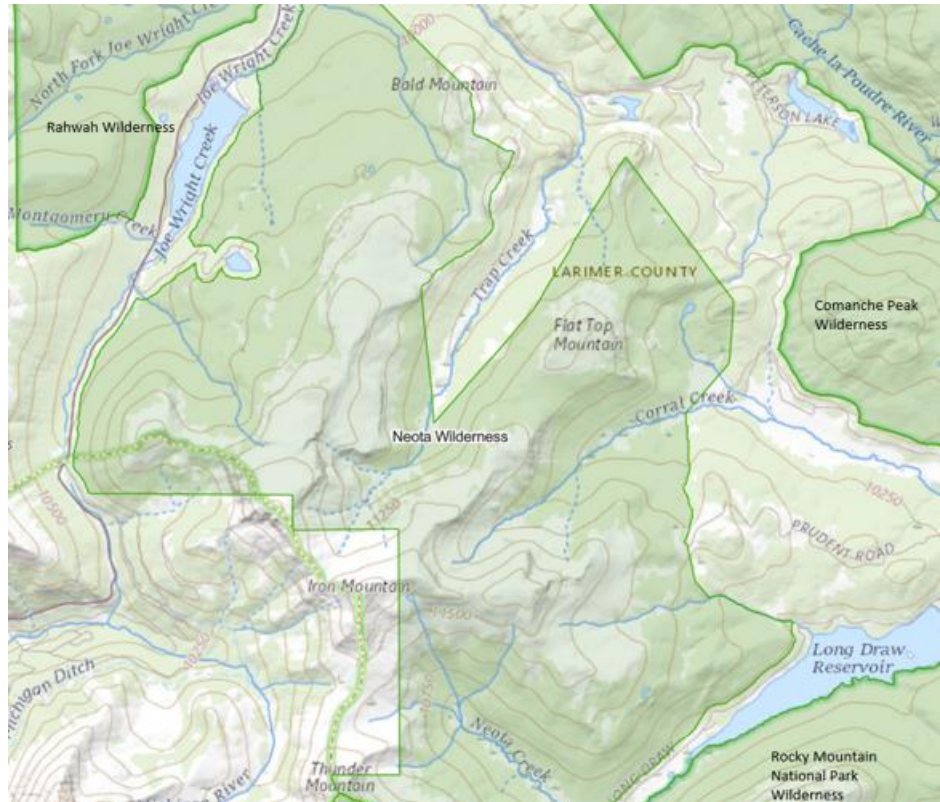


In June 2024 I hiked downstream along the north bank of the Gila into the wilderness. Flow was high, over 1000 cfs, and water was murky. I tried the fly rod, I set out traps, I explored the edges with the landing net, I even tried the cast net; I got nothing. As I was getting ready to leave I dumped the bait out of one of the traps near a weed bed, and these little guys appeared to save the day (Number 75).



Neota Wilderness (CO)

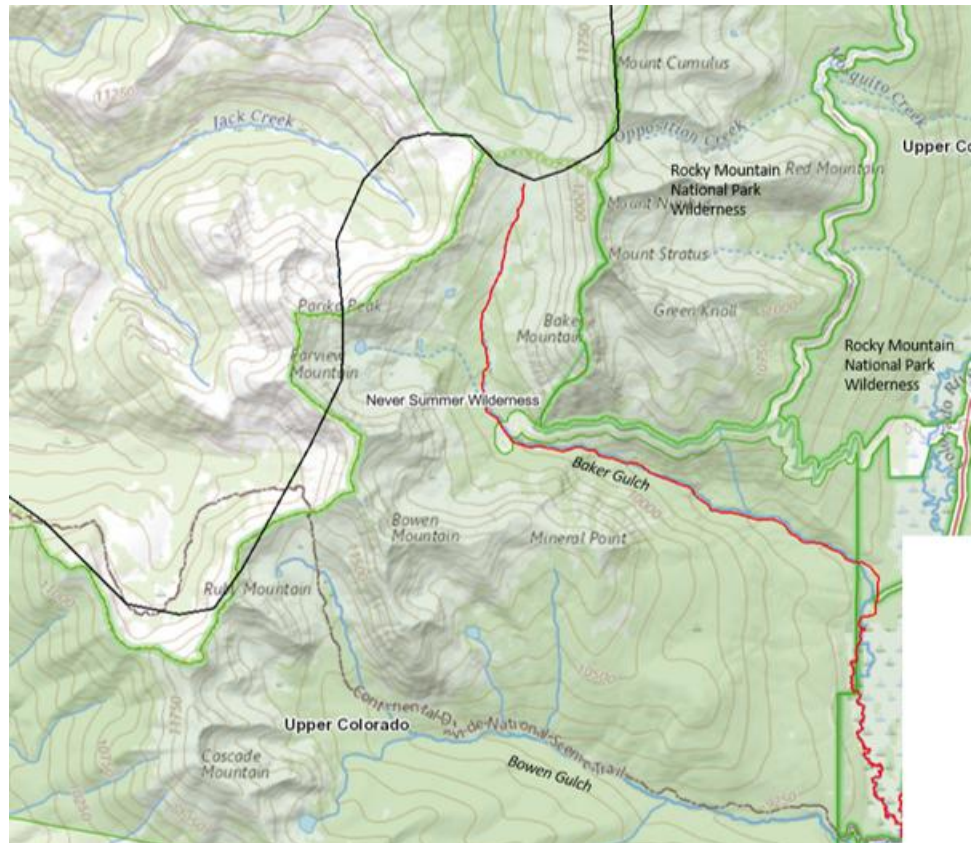
There are several records of Arctic grayling in Joe Wright Reservoir, just above where Joe Wright Creek forms a portion of the wilderness boundary. There are also records of brook trout and rainbows farther downstream in the Cache La Poudre drainage; the whole wilderness is in the upper end of the Cache La Poudre drainage (iNaturalist 2023).



Never Summer Wilderness (CO)

There are Colorado cutthroats above the barrier in Baker Gulch. (Hirsch et al 2013)

There is also a record of cutthroats in the Bowen Gulch drainage, which seems to be a relatively large stream. (iNaturalist 2023)



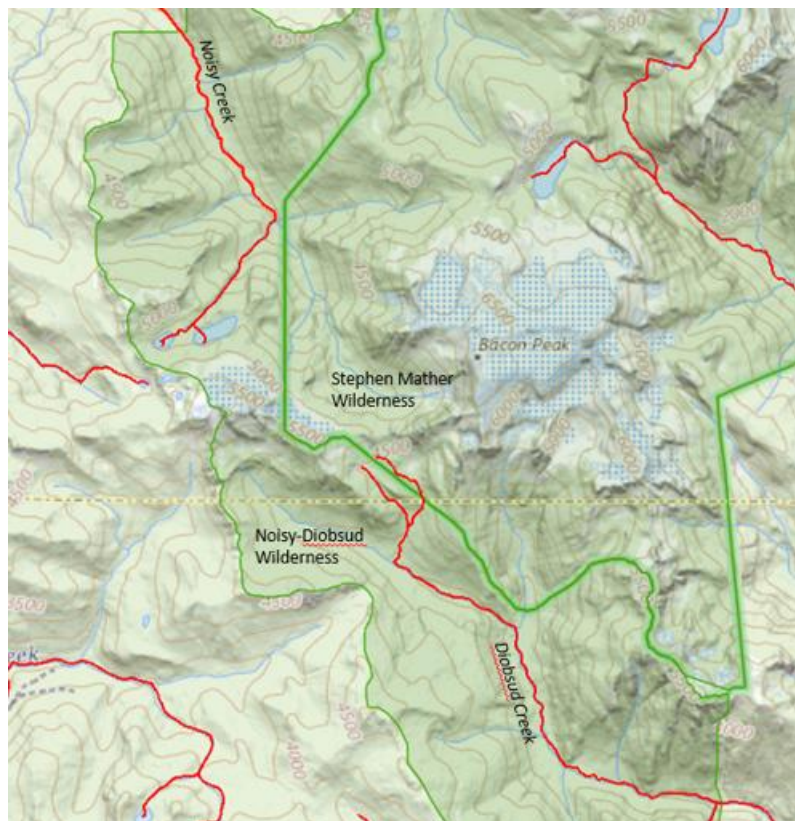
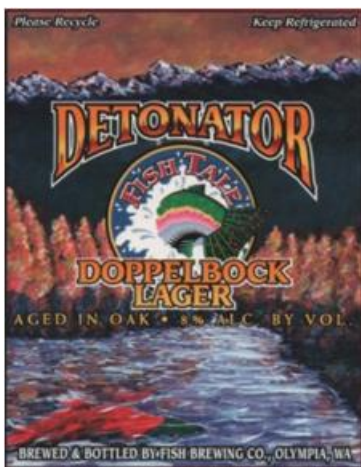
Noatak Wilderness (AK)



Noatak River runs the length of the wilderness from east to west. Chum, pink and sockeye salmon are present throughout, as well as Dolly Varden. Major right-bank tributaries are full of Dolly Varden. Avgun River and Kelly River on the western end of the wilderness also have chinook salmon. (ADF&G 2016)

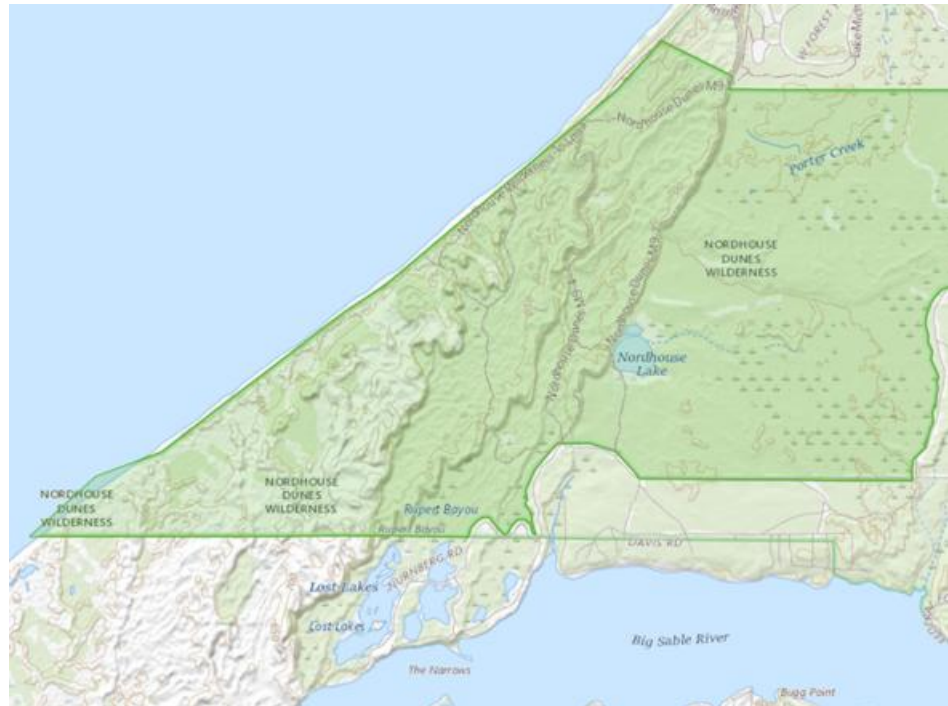
Noisy-Diobsud Wilderness (WA)

The wilderness contains two drainages: Noisy Creek flowing north toward Baker Lake and Baker River, a Skagit tributary; and Diobsud Creek flowing south toward the main Skagit River. There are rainbow trout in Noisy Creek, and coastal cutthroat trout (shown on map) in both Noisy Creek and Diobsud Creek. (StreamNet 2019)

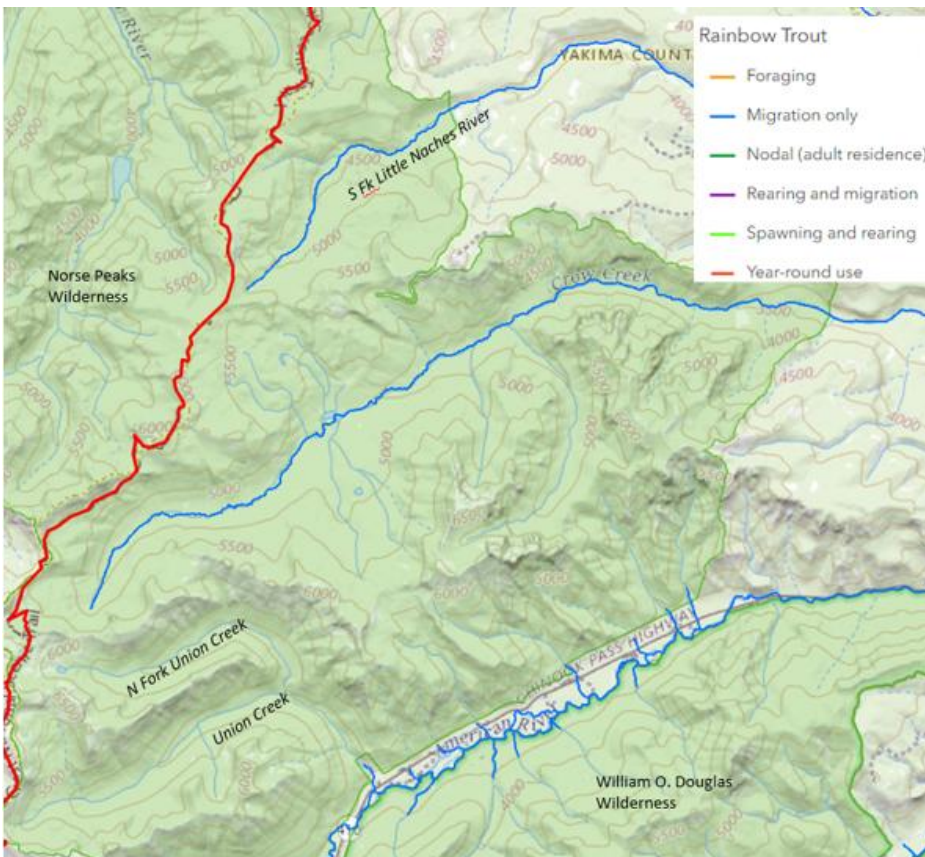


Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness (MI)

The wilderness includes 3.5 miles of Lake Michigan beach, so it's likely you can catch inshore species like cisco, herring, smallmouth bass and trout. There is a record of Chinook salmon on the southern end of the beach in the wilderness. There are also records of alewives just off the beach, and on beaches within a mile north and south of the wilderness. (North American Native Fishes, 2022)



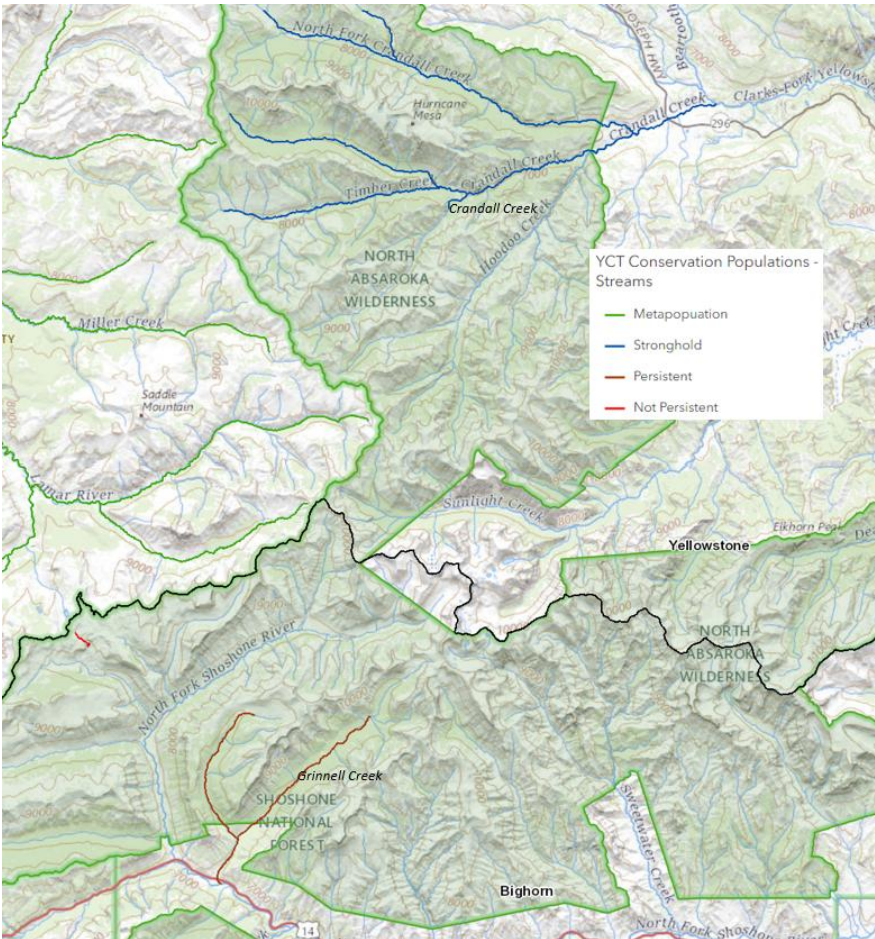
Norse Peak Wilderness (WA)



The fish are largely in streams flowing east in the Naches River system. Rainbow trout inhabit most of the length of South Fork Little Naches River, Crow Creek, and American River's shorter tributaries. Bull trout also occur in S Fk Little Naches and lower stretches of Crow Creek. Westslope cutthroats are in the full length of S Fk Little Naches, Crow Creek and N Fk Union Creek, while brookies appear throughout both S Fk Little Naches and Crow Creek. (StreamNet 2019)

There is critical habitat for steelhead in Crow Creek. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

North Absaroka Wilderness (WY)



There is a genetically pure, persistent population of Yellowstone cutthroats in the Grinnell Creek system, with cutts also present in other left bank tributaries of North Fork Shoshone River. A genetically mixed Yellowstone cutthroat stronghold population resides in the Crandall Creek system. (Endicott, Nelson et al 2016; TU YCT 2019) Both Crandall and Grinnell appear to have good trail access from nearby highways.

There is a core conservation population of YCT in Dead Indian Creek. (Endicott, Nelson et al 2016)

North Black Rock Range Wilderness (NV)



Coleman Creek has a genetically pure restored population Lahontan cutthroats, less than 50 per mile. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009, p. 23; TU LCT 2020)

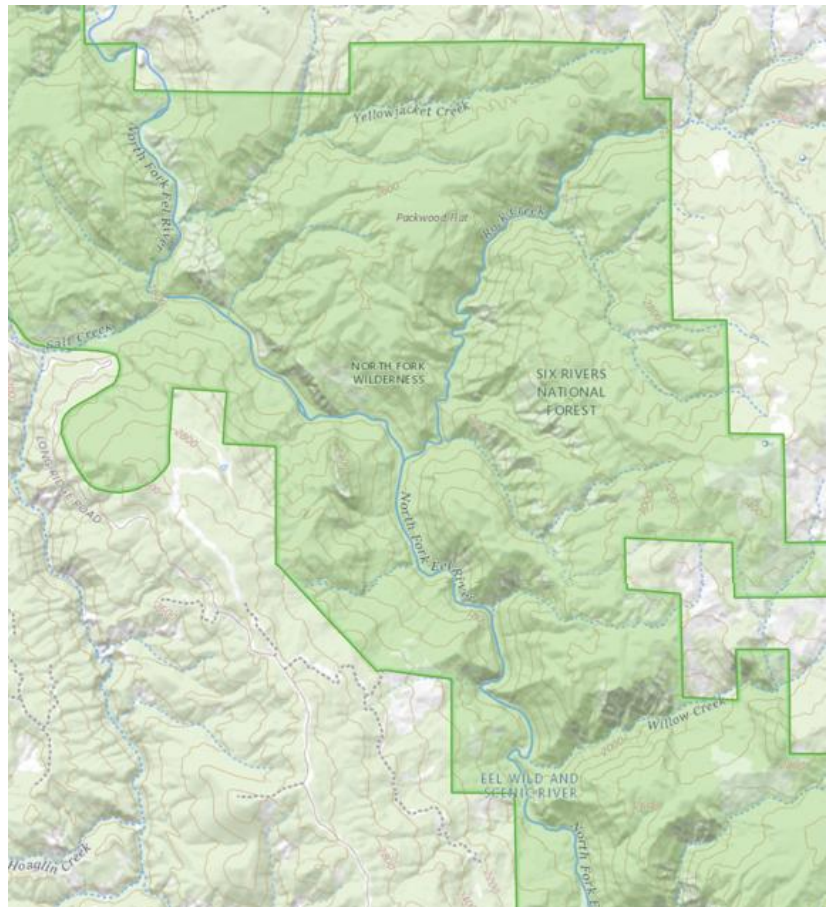
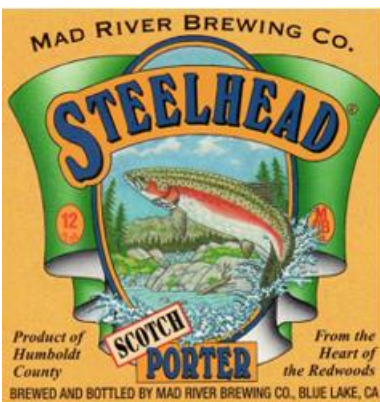
North Black Rock Range Wilderness (NV)

In July 2024 I hiked about 2.5 miles from the western boundary up Soldier Creek and Colman Creek, to just shy of where the canyon walls close in on Colman Creek. I was hoping to find cutthroats, although I was below the stretch where the map says I should find them. I should have listened to the map. No fish, although the creek was flowing well and looked very nice. I have to come back and get up into the canyon.



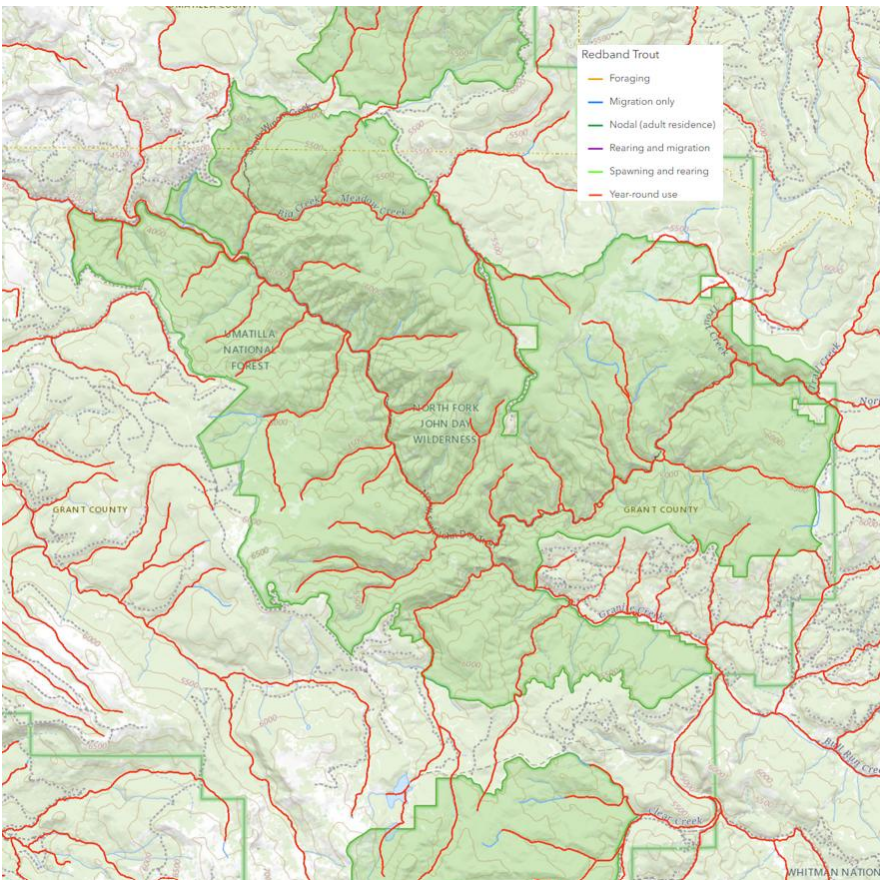
North Fork Wilderness (CA)

The upper North Fork Eel River watershed, which is essentially the wilderness reach of the North Fork and its tributaries, is native territory for coastal rainbow trout, Southern Oregon-Northern California Coast coho salmon, North California Coast summer and winter steelhead, Humboldt sucker and Pacific lamprey. (UCal Davis, PISCES 2022)



North Fork John Day Wilderness (OR)

Although Stream Net does not show it, westslope cutthroats occur in West Fork Clear Creek and Lake Creek, both north-flowing tributaries of Granite Creek, which flows into North Fork John Day River. (Mayfield)



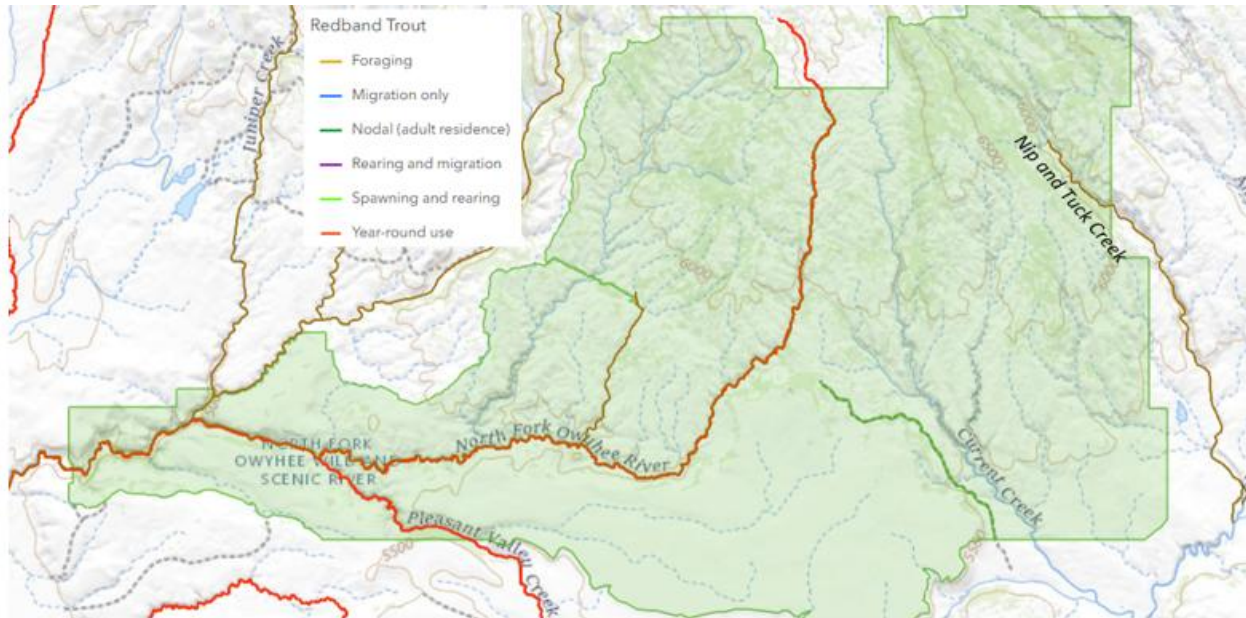
Pretty much every stream in the wilderness holds redband trout, and most also have summer steelhead. (StreamNet 2019, shown on map) Critical habitat exists for steelhead in North Fork John Day River and tributaries, including most every stream in the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

North Fork John Day Wilderness (OR)

In July 2024 I headed to the downstream end of the North Fork, but had to ad lib because of road closures due to some massive forest fires. I ended up at the upstream end of the North Fork as it enters the main unit of the wilderness, and spent the night at the North Fork John Day campground, right next to the “road closed” sign. I got up in the morning and found reddsides all over the river. (Number 78)



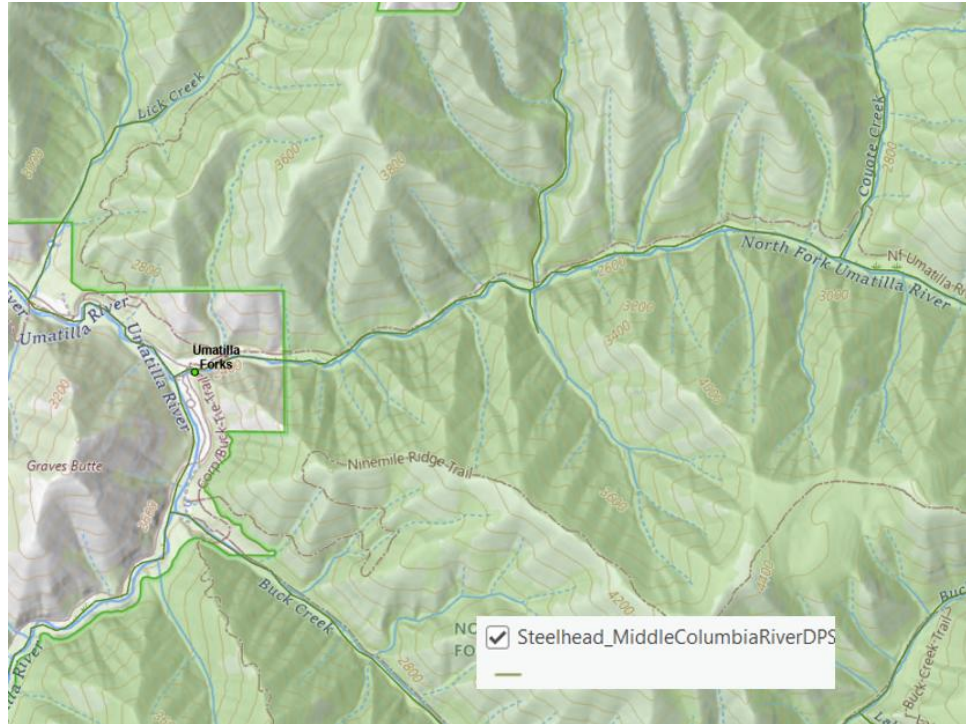
North Fork Owyhee Wilderness (ID)



Low densities of redband trout occur in North Fork Owyhee River flowing west through the wilderness, and in Nip and Tuck Creek, tributary to Deep Creek, flowing south through eastern portion of wilderness. (Mayfield)

North Fork Umatilla Wilderness (OR)

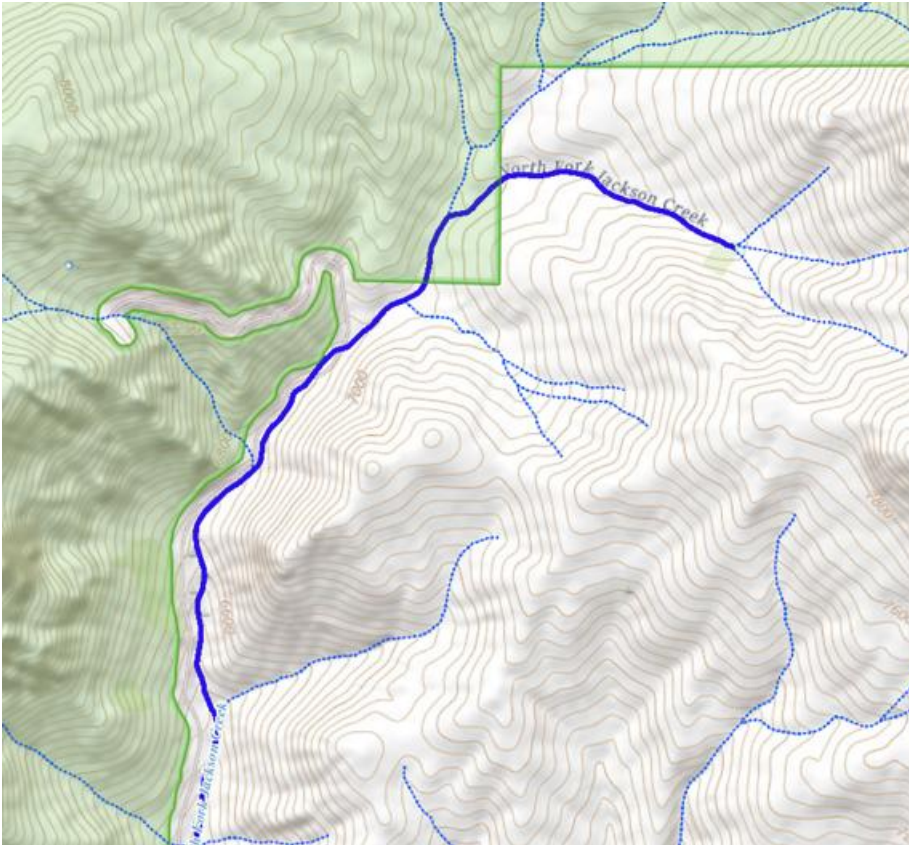
All the major streams of the north Fork system have steelhead habitat, which means they'll likely hold smaller trout as well. The main stem North Fork also has good trail access. (NMFS West Coast Region GIS)



In late June 2026 I caught a rainbow on my first cast in the North Fork Umatilla near the Umatilla Forks Trailhead, just inside the point where the river flows out of the wilderness. (Number 105)



North Jackson Mountains Wilderness (NV)

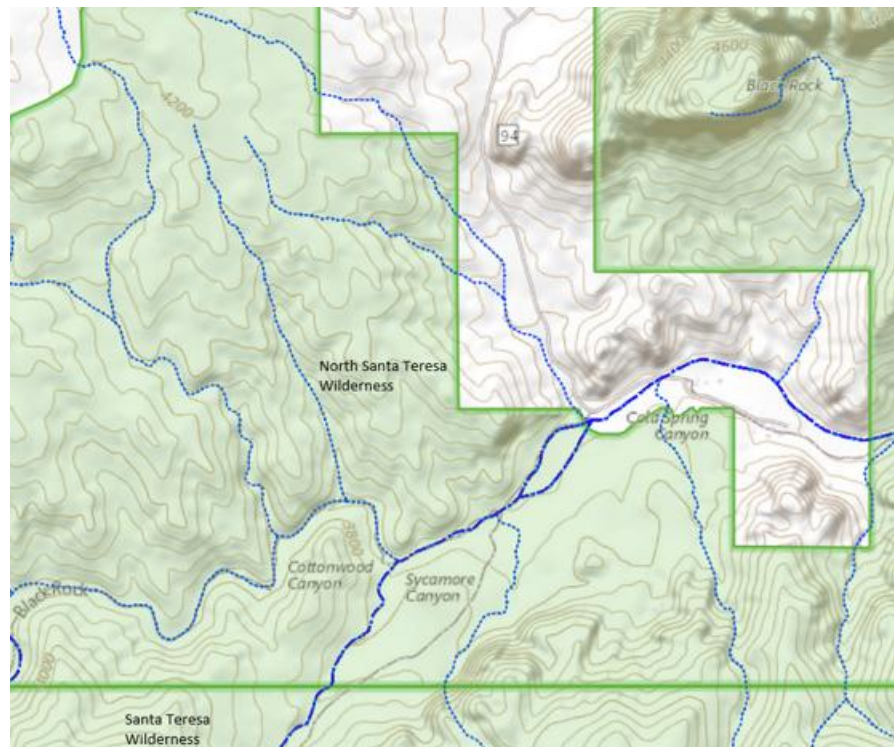


North Fork Jackson Creek barely crosses into the wilderness, and holds Lahontan cutthroats. (US Dept of Interior 2003, p. 3-32)

The map shows perennial flow per USGS.

North Santa Teresa Wilderness (AZ)

Black Rock Canyon shows as intermittent flow, but the aeriels look promising. (USGS 2021) There is supposedly both longfin dace and speckled dace through the canyon. (AZF&G Habimap 2022)



North Santa Teresa Wilderness (AZ)



In June 2023 I hiked the 1.75-mile length of stream bed in Black Rock Canyon from the Black Rock Ranch upstream to the boundary with the Santa Teresa Wilderness. Flow was intermittent, nothing on the surface in some places, but there was at least a mile of good, continuous surface flow toward the upstream side. I found no fish, though, just tadpoles and bugs. I'm really having doubts about this wilderness having any fish.

Nunivak Wilderness (AK)

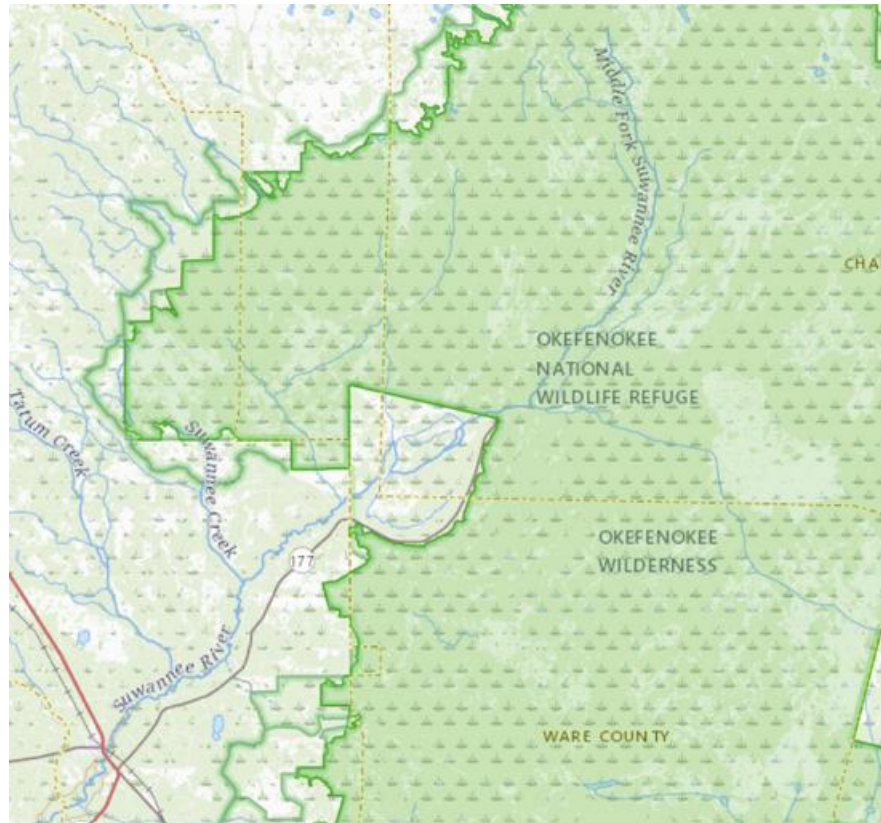


The wilderness is the southern half of a large island in the Bering Sea and includes in-shore water up to 1.4 miles out from the coastline. The coastal waters will include many near shore fishes, including capelin and sandlance. (USF&WS 1988 Alaska Maritime NWR)

Many of the streams on the island host runs of coho and chum salmon, as well as populations of Arctic char. (ADFG 2023)

Okefenokee Wilderness (GA)

Bowfin and flier are dominant in the eastern portion of the swamp where the wilderness is primarily located, representing over 88 percent of all fishes in one collection. Warmouth and chain pickerel are also persistent and stable. Species of special concern include black-banded sunfish, mud sunfish and banded topminnow. (USF&WS Okefenokee, Oct 2006)



Bubba and I canoed here in 2003, but sadly this was before the quest started so we didn't really focus on catching fishes, we spent far more time looking for alligators, which we saw plenty of.



I returned in November 2025 and paddled about 2.5 miles up the Suwannee Canal and into the Pink Canoe Trail from the east entrance. This time I was focused on fish. I didn't catch anything with the fly rod, but manage to scoop up boatloads of killifish and topminnows (it takes a lot of killifish to make a boatload) and a few fliers. (Number 99)

Lined Topminnow



Okefenokee Wilderness (GA)

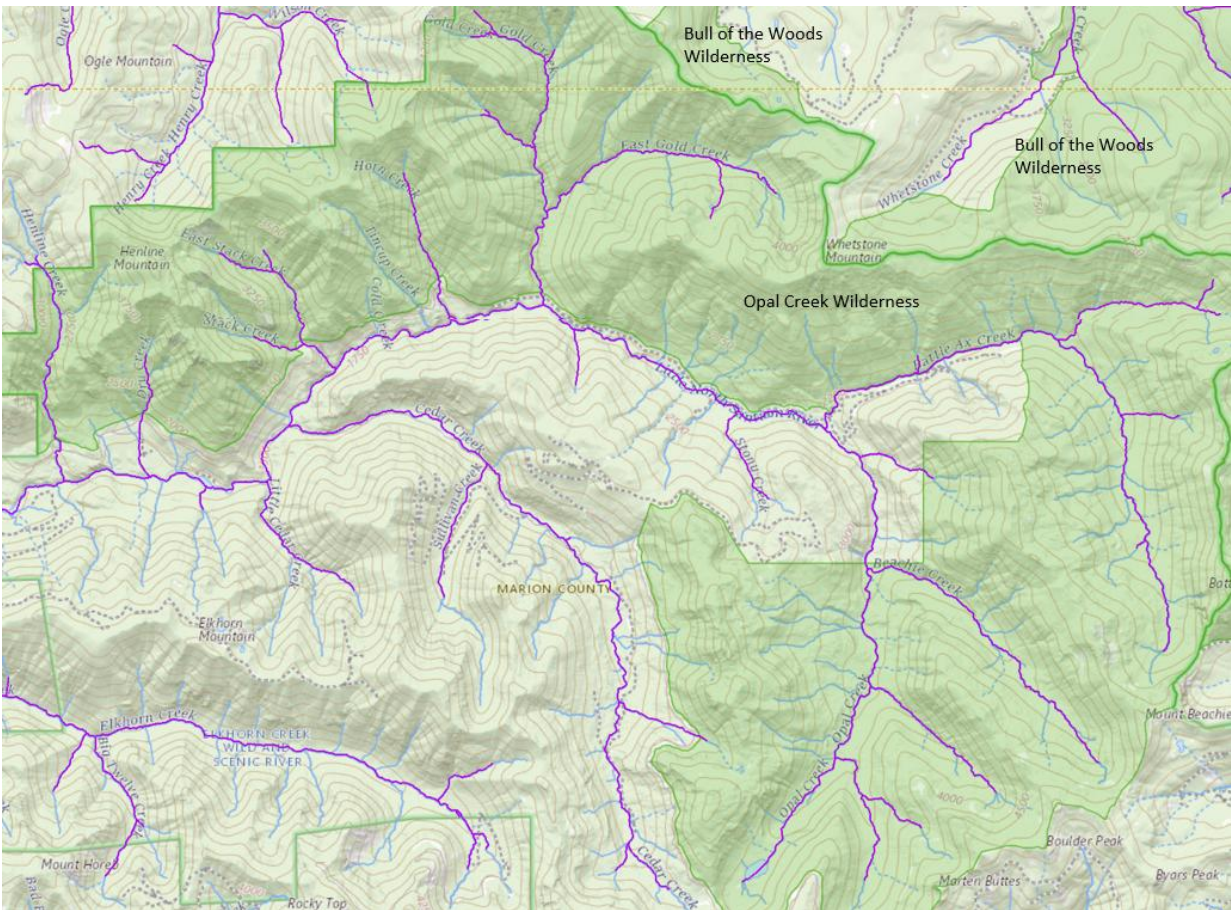
Flier



Lined Topminnow



Opal Creek Wilderness (OR)



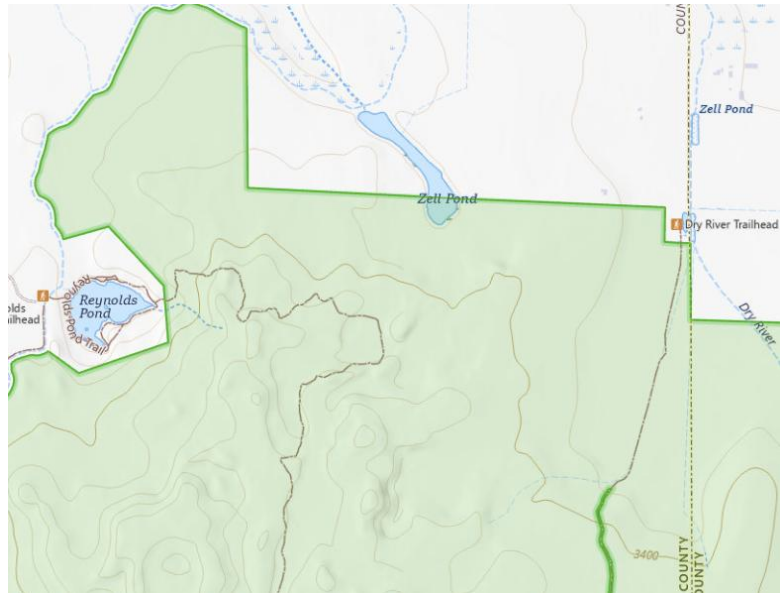
Coastal cutthroat trout are the dominant fish here, occupying tributaries of North Santiam River, including Opal Creek, Battle Ax Creek, Gold Creek, and Henline Creek. Very few other gamefish are present. (StreamNet 2019)

I visited in July 2025, but almost the entire wilderness was closed to access because of the 2020 Beachie Fire. I climbed from Elk Lake over the Beachie Summit and down the Battle Ax Creek Trail for a couple of miles. Creeks were pretty, but small and very concealed by brush. I'm guessing there were trout in there, but I didn't get any.



Oregon Badlands Wilderness (OR)

Back from the dead! This wilderness was on the “No Fish List,” primarily due to the lack of perennial surface water showing on the US hydrography dataset. Closer examination of the aerals, however, told me that Zell Pond crossed (barely) into the northeast corner of the wilderness. I got there in July 2026, and after hiking in from the discouragingly named Dry River Trailhead, I found the wilderness boundary conveniently marked by a fence that extended across the southern end of the pond, and also found fish on the wilderness side of the fence. Still not quite sure what they were; baby yellow perch, maybe? (Number 113)



Oregon Islands Wilderness (OR)

Most coastal wilderness areas end at the waterline, and those that also lack interior streams or surface water can be challenging to find fish in. This one, however, consists largely of ocean water lapping up against and washing over literally hundreds of rocks and small islands all up and down the Oregon Coast. Finding fish is easy. Any inshore species common in Oregon can be found in the Oregon Islands Wilderness. Some frequently observed species include various sculpins and rockfish, cabezon, greenling, flounders and several surf perches. (iNaturalist 2022)

Cannon Beach with its famous singing sands is just one of the places where you can wade into the wilderness. Cathie and I came close in 2012. We weren't actually in the wilderness, even though we could see it, but it's still a great excuse to get a picture of my stunningly beautiful wife into the book...



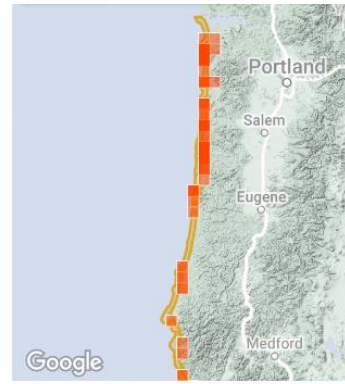
In July 2025 I walked (without getting my feet wet) to one of the rocks that's in the wilderness at Whaleshead Beach near Brookings. I managed to scoop up some tidepool sculpins (Number 86) in a pool hollowed out at the base of the rock. Lots of other fish and plenty of other cool tidepool critters in this stretch of beach were very accessible during a negative low tide.



Oregon Islands Wilderness (OR)



In December 2025 I walked (again not getting my feet wet) onto Strawberry Hill, and pulled this monster of a sculpin from some tidal pool grass.



The tidepool sculpin (*Oligocottus maculosus*)

Organ Pipe Cactus Wilderness (AZ)



The *only* critical habitat for desert pupfish is in Quitobaquito Spring. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



Organ Pipe Cactus Wilderness (AZ)

I found hundreds, if not thousands, of these little guys, mostly swarming in small clusters in shallow water at the edges of the spring pool in June 2024. I'm not going to say whether I physically caught any because that might incriminate me on several counts of violating the Endangered Species Act (Number 74).

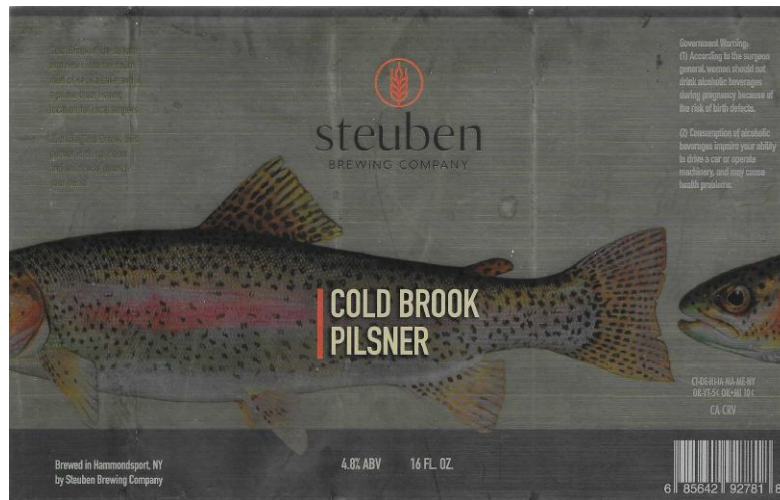


Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness (NY)

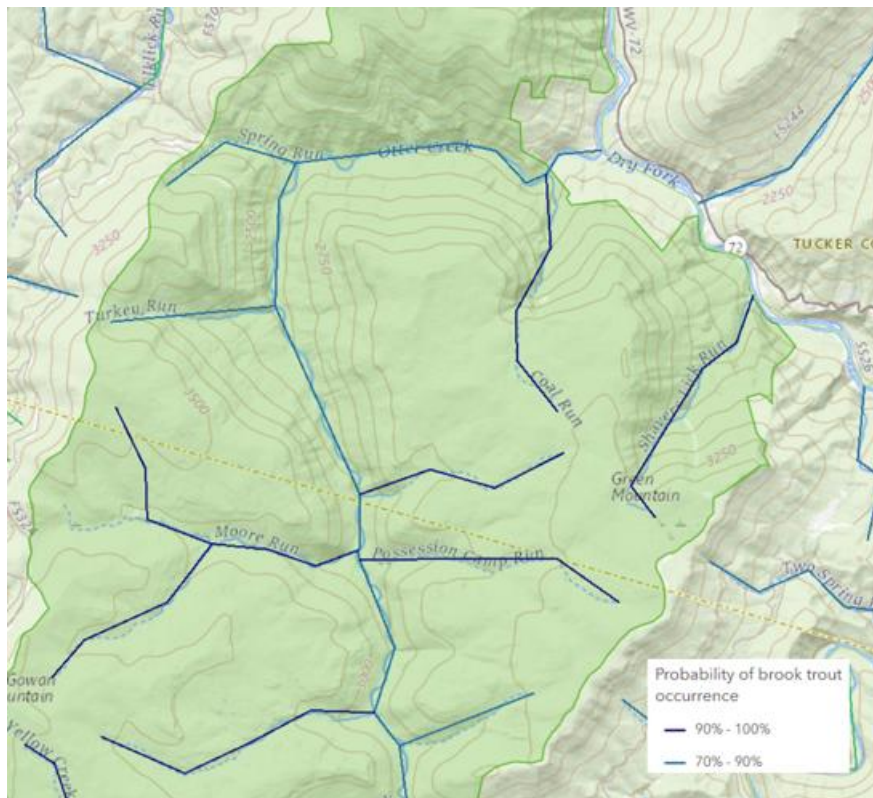


Surf fishing for striped bass, bluefish, and fluke are popular, although the beach may not be in the wilderness, at least not all the time. (National Park Service, Fire Island 2022). Looks like possibilities on the bay side are definitely in the wilderness. East end appears easily accessible by car.

Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness (NY)



Otter Creek Wilderness (WV)

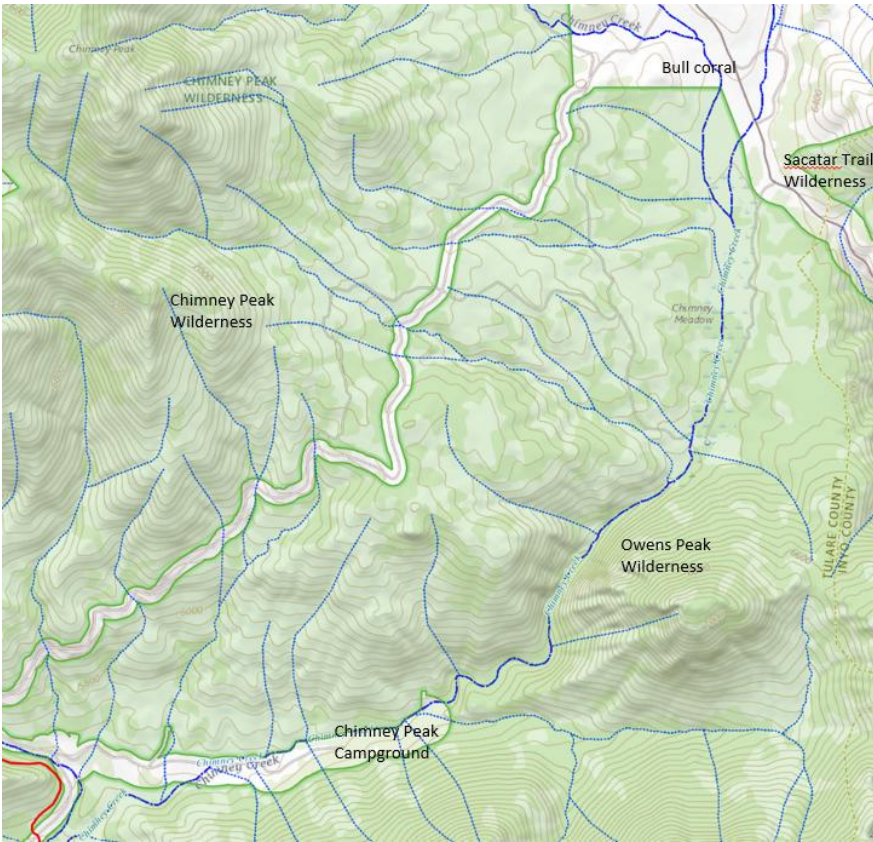


Otter Creek, a tributary of the Black Fork Cheat River, runs the length of the wilderness with parallel trail access for the lower 3 miles. There is a record of brook trout in one of the many Otter Creek tributaries, (iNaturalist 2022) the predictive model says it likely occurs in many more as well.



There is also a record of mottled sculpin in Otter Creek. (iNaturalist 2022)

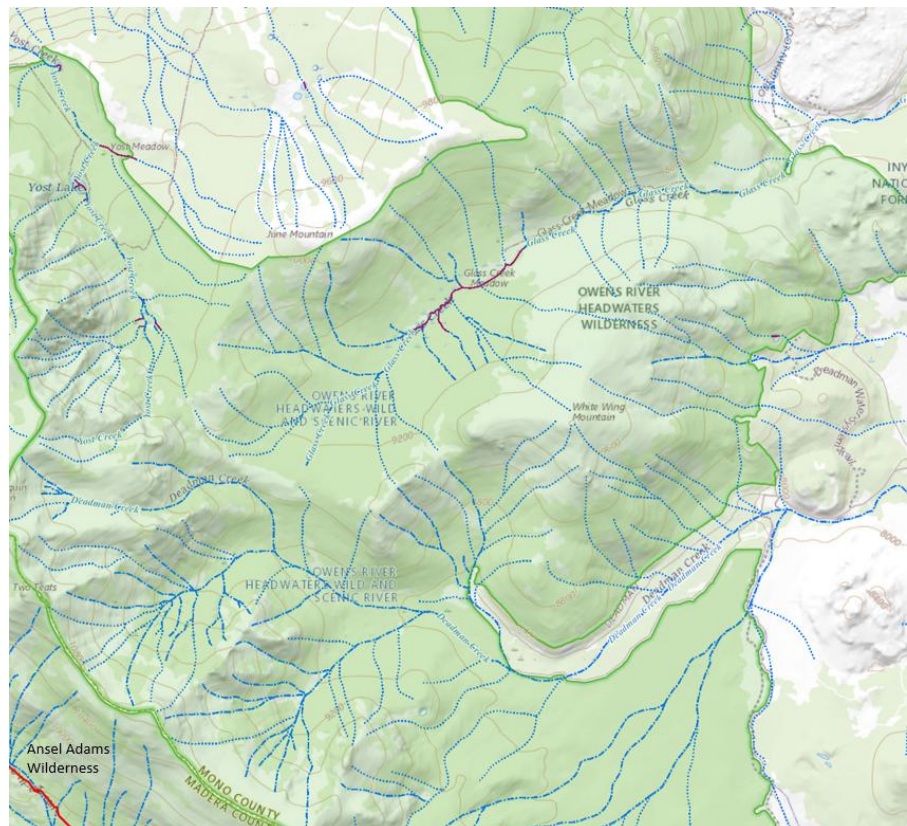
Owens Peak Wilderness (CA)



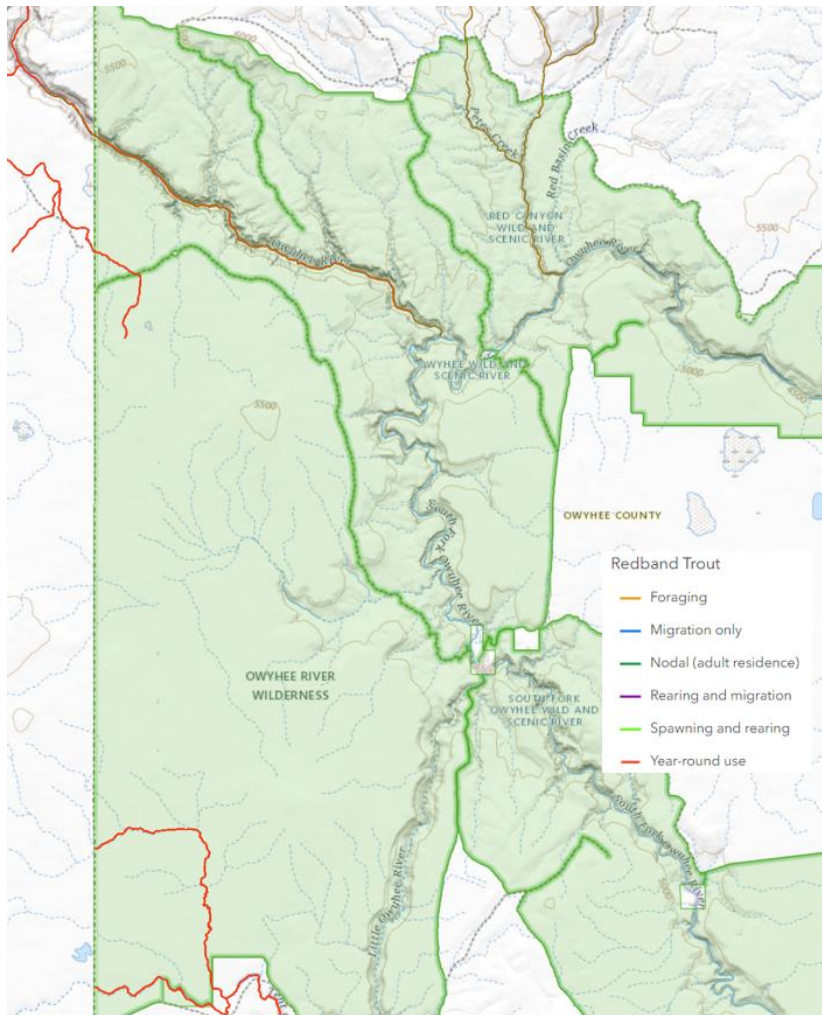
I checked out Chimney Creek in October 2020; there was about 1-2 cfs in portions of the creek above Chimney Creek campground, but I saw no evidence of fish. I also hiked in from upstream of the wilderness, there appears to be a small stockpond in line with the creek. At the time of my visit the pond appeared to be guarded well by a large bull with his harem, I decided it wasn't worth the risk. There are nine springs in Short Canyon, only one has flow (Zdon site 360) at 2 gpm; USGS NWIS shows Short Canyon as intermittent, but does show perennial flow in Spanish Needle Creek in addition to Chimney Creek. (USGS 2021)

Owens River Headwaters Wilderness (CA)

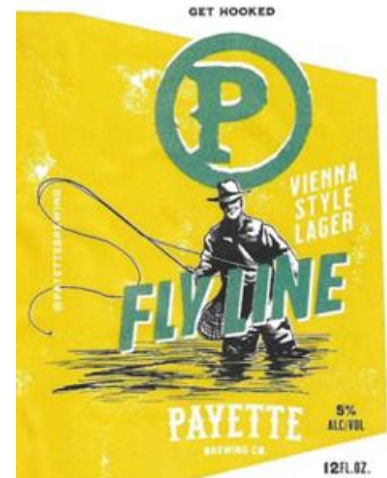
There are records of brook trout in Glass Creek and Deadman Creek, the two streams that merge east of the wilderness to form Owens River. (iNaturalist 2022)



Owyhee River Wilderness (ID)

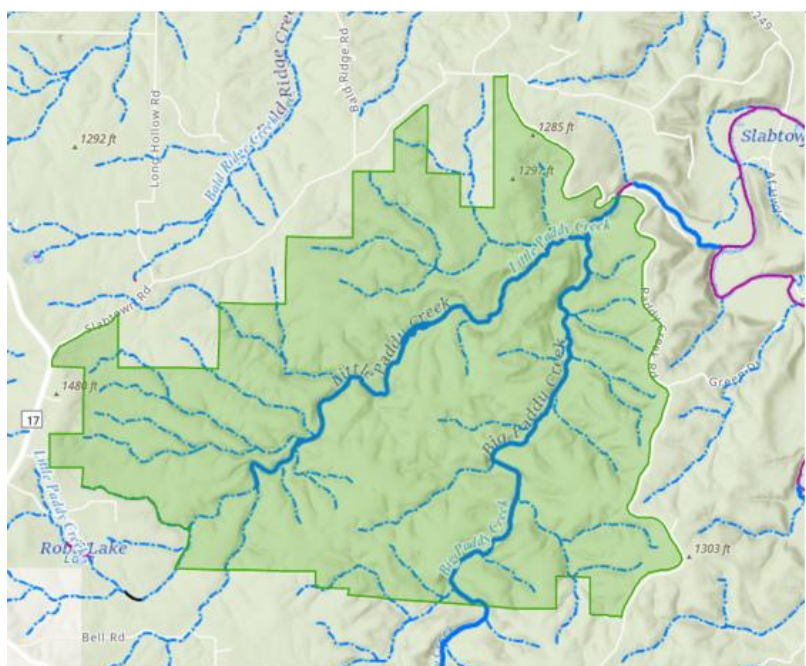


Low densities of redband trout occur in the Owyhee River and in Petes Creek and Red Canyon tributary system of the Owyhee. (Mayfield) Good populations of smallmouth bass and catfish as well as shiners and dace occur in the main Owyhee. (US Dept of Interior, BLM, Vale 1993)



Paddy Creek Wilderness (MO)

The Paddy Creek drainage, tributary to the Big Piney River, is perennial almost throughout the wilderness. (USGS 2021) Roby Lake is less than a mile upstream from the wilderness on Little Paddy Creek and has bass, sunfish and catfish (US Forest Service, Mark Twain NF, 2022) There are records of smallmouth, spotted and rock bass and pumpkinseed in Big Paddy Creek. (Fishbrain 2022)



Paiute Wilderness (AZ)



The only critical habitat for the Virgin River chub is in the Virgin River, portions of which cross the northern edge of the wilderness. The same is true for critical habitat for woundfin. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) The Virgin River also holds Virgin spinedace, speckled dace and desert sucker throughout the length in the wilderness. (AZG&F Habimap 2022)

I tried at the north end of Sullivan Canyon in September 2022. Late summer low water is still pretty opaque, it's hard to find fish.

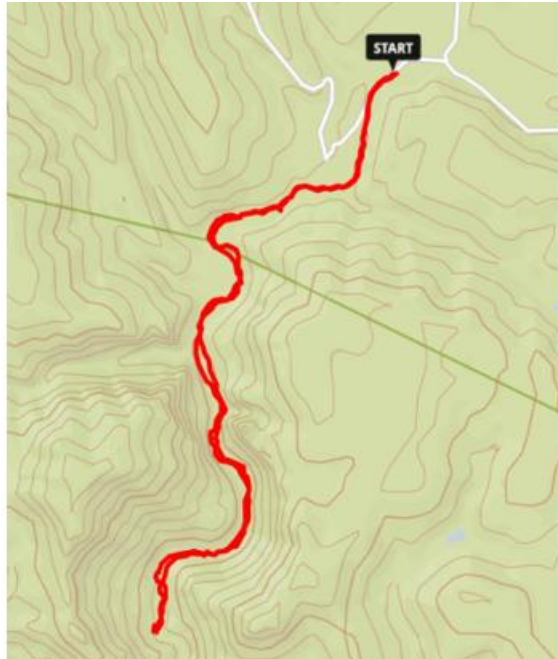


Pajarita Wilderness (AZ)

June 26, 2021 hiked in from Sycamore Canyon trailhead and followed the creek for about 1 mile. There were only three disconnected pools large enough to hold fish in the entire uppermost mile. I dipped some dace with the landing net, then improvised a tenkara rod with a branch, some 5x tippet and a midge fly I had in the backpack. The fish were very eager, I don't think they've seen many tenkara rods. Or people, for that matter. (Number 38)



Note the “rod” laying on the rock below.

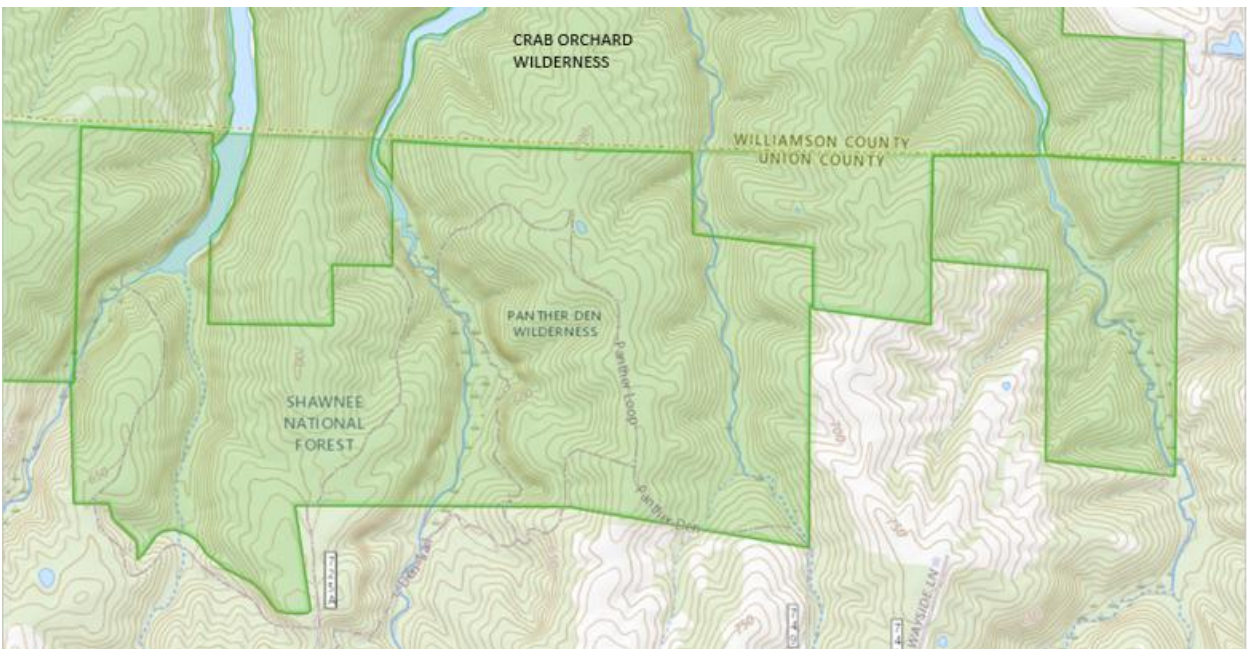


Pajarita Wilderness (AZ)



The *only* critical habitat for the Sonora chub is centered on Sycamore Canyon. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

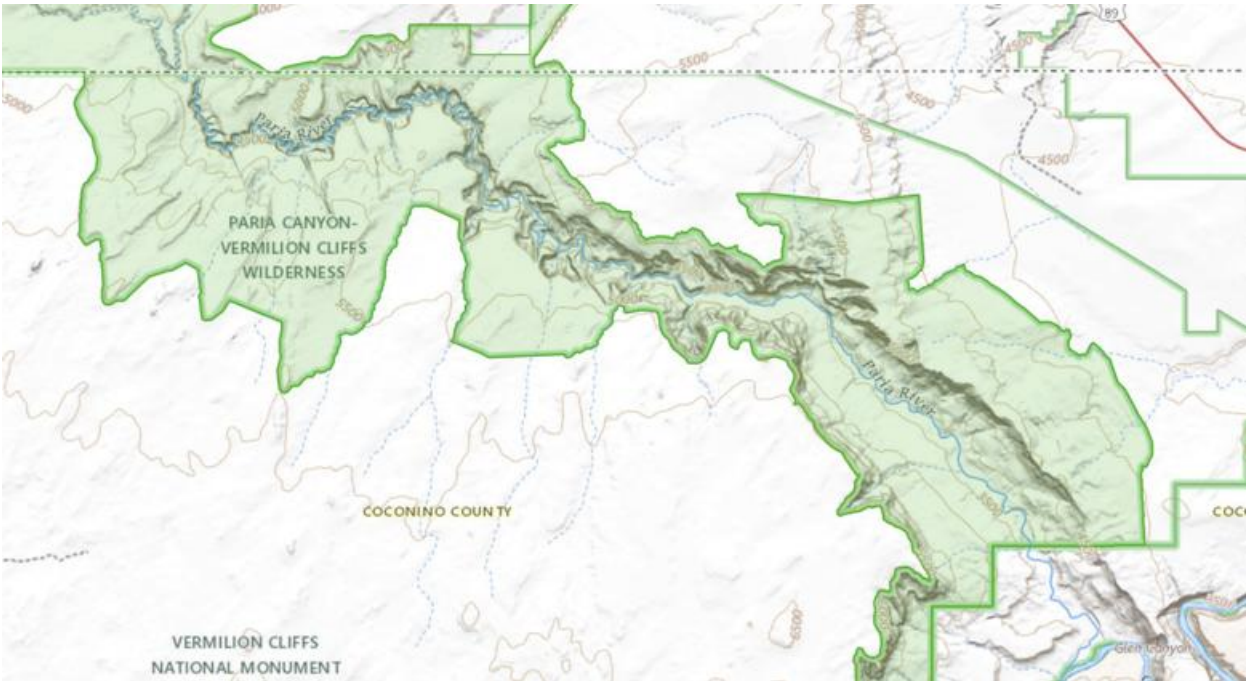
Panther Den Wilderness (IL)



Little Grassy Lake and Devil's Kitchen Lake to the north have bluegill, redear sunfish, and largemouth bass. Devil's Kitchen has stocked rainbow trout year-round. Some fish must make it up the feeder creeks FROM Devil's Kitchen into the actual wilderness. (USF&WS 2007 Crab Orchard)

Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (AZ)

Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (AZ)



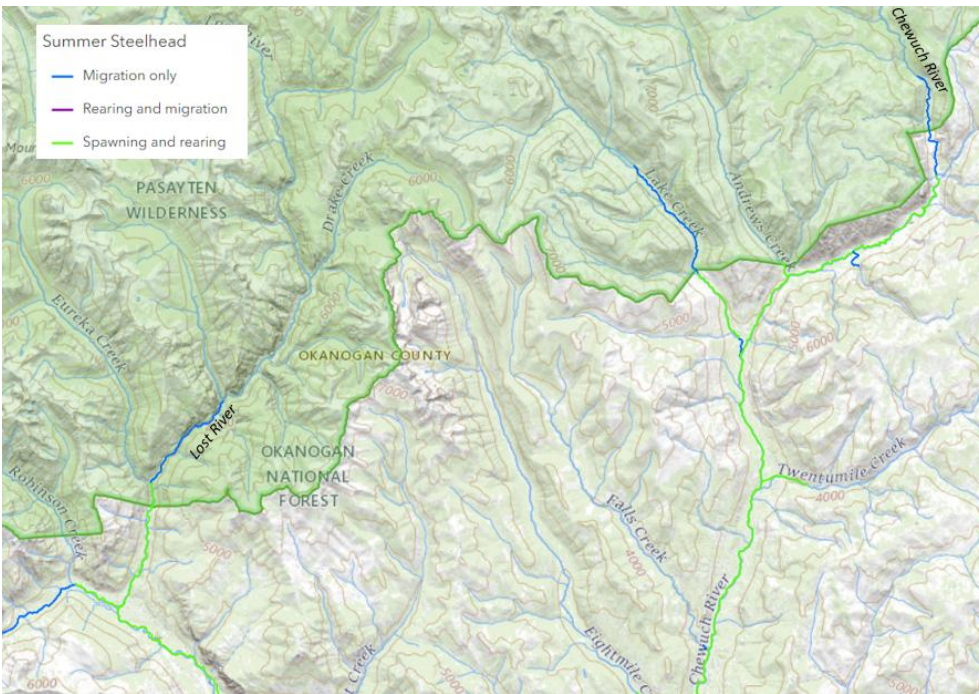
The lower portion of Paria River near Lee's Ferry holds speckled dace, bluehead mountain sucker and flannelmouth sucker, and is critical habitat for humpback chub and razorback sucker, although finding a razorback here is extremely unlikely. (US Dept of Interior Kanab Field Office, 1997)

AZ F&G shows all these species plus longfin dace occupying the entire reach of the Paria River within Arizona. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022)

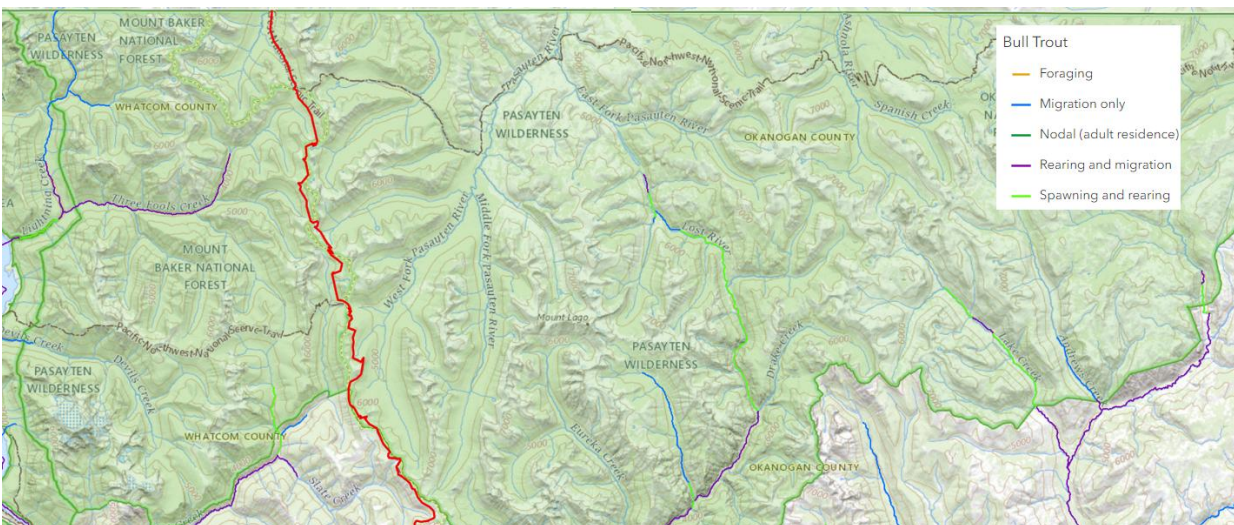
In September 2022 the river upstream from Lee's Ferry was pretty... and pretty muddy. Couldn't find any fish.



Pasayten Wilderness (WA)

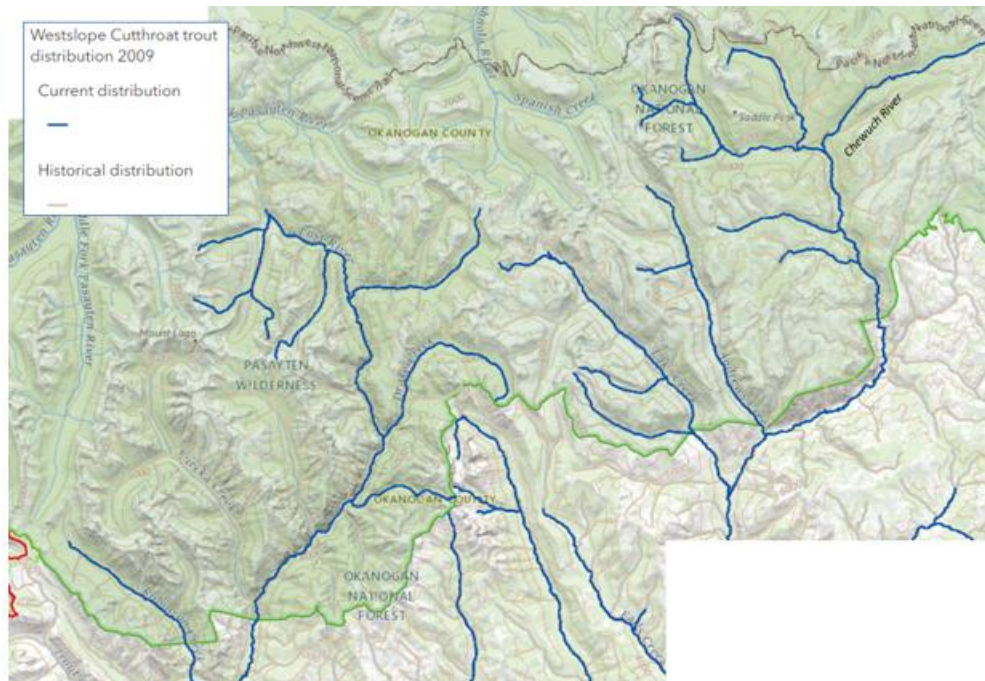


Summer steelhead and chinook salmon occur in Chewuch River and Lost River, both Methow River tributaries, in the eastern portion of the wilderness. (StreamNet 2019)



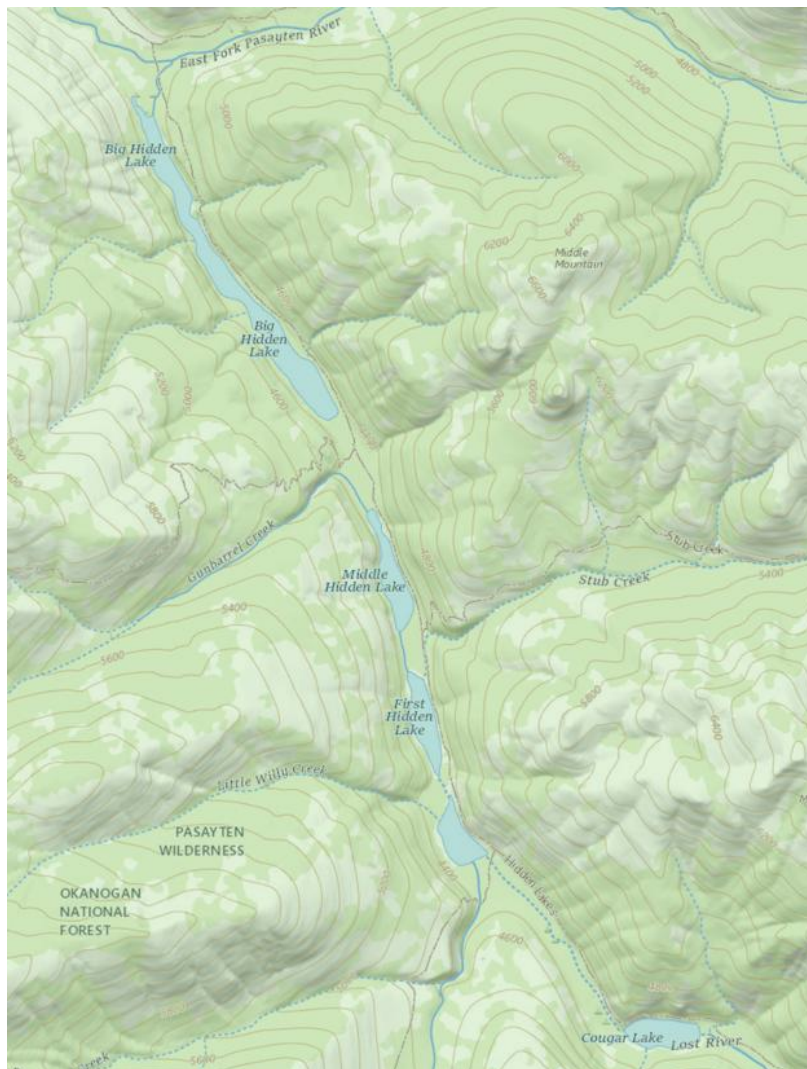
Bull trout occur in Lightning Creek and Three Fools Creek, Skagit River tributaries in western part of wilderness; in Lost River in the central part of wilderness; and in Lake Creek, Andrews Creek and Chewuch River in the eastern part of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Pasayten Wilderness (WA)

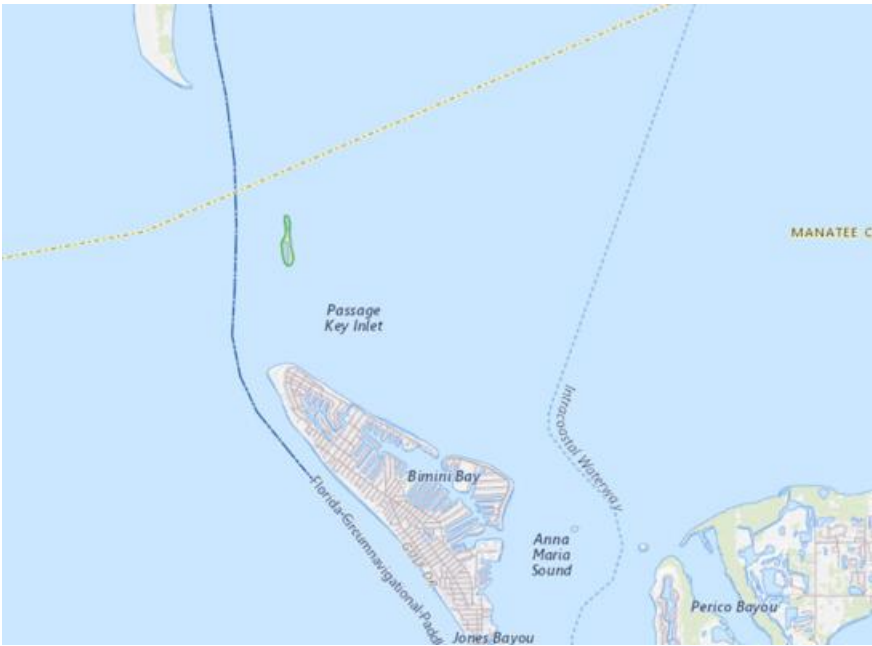


Westslope cutthroats occur in Lost River in the central part of wilderness, as well as Ptarmigan, Johnny, Diamond and Drake Creek tributaries; and in Lake Creek, Disaster Creek, Andrews Creek and Chewuch River, Methow River tributaries in eastern part of wilderness. (Mayfield 2009)

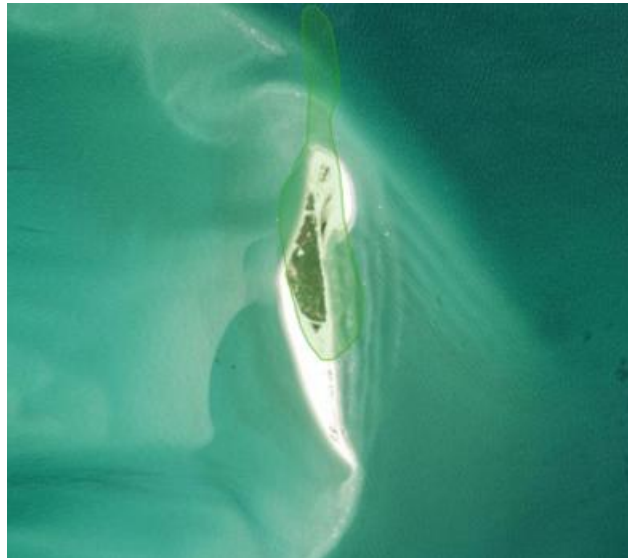
Bull trout, cutthroat trout and rainbow trout are found in Hidden Lakes and Cougar Lake, East Fork Pasayten River valley. Pasayten River is not within historic range of westslope cutthroats. (NWFF May-June 2007, p 52)



Passage Key Wilderness (GFL)



Passage Key is now a meandering sand bar, varying in size from 0.5 to 10 acres. Because of its fragility it is closed to public use. While technically not accessible, the flats in the area likely support redfish, snook and spotted seatrout. (USF&WS, Tampa Bay, May 2010) There is a record of scrawled cowfish within the wilderness boundary. (iNaturalist 2022)



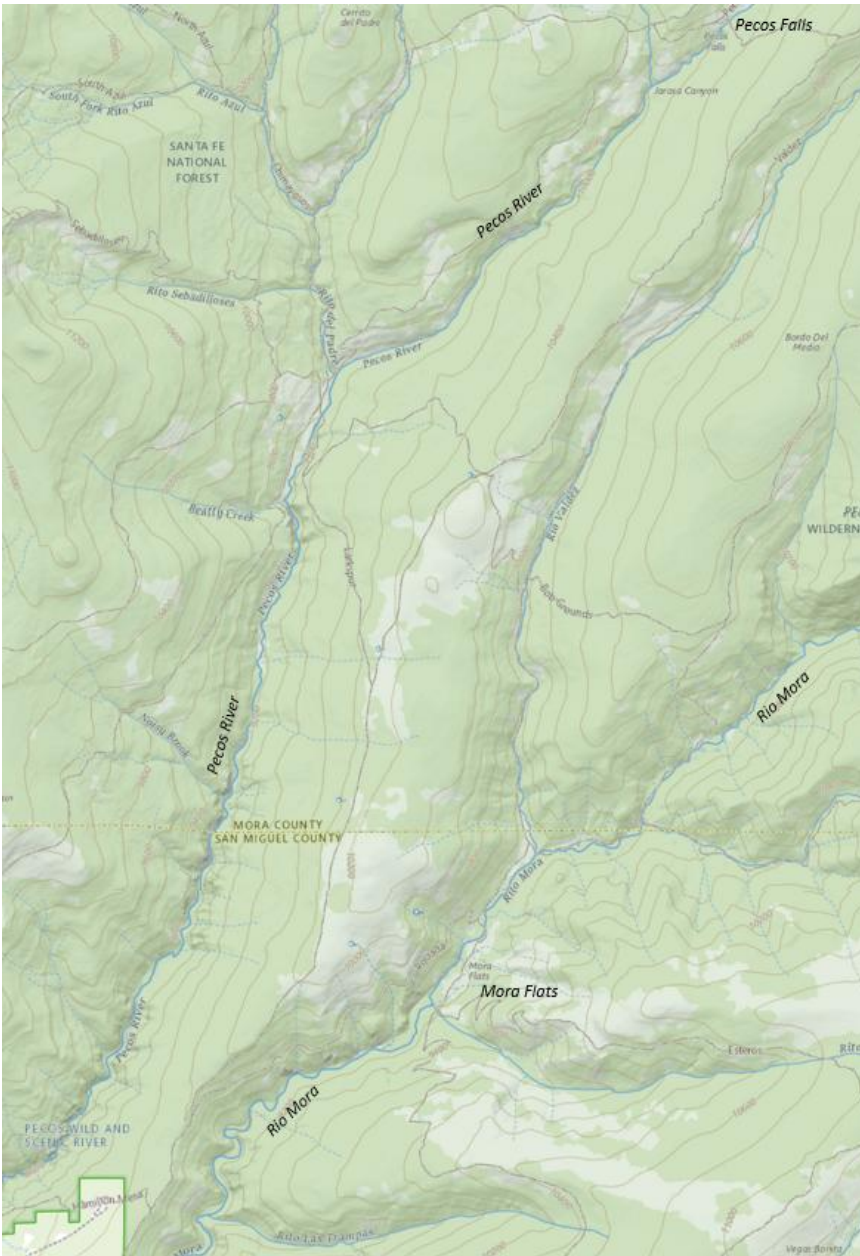
Pecos Wilderness (NM)

Streams flowing west to the Rio Grande, including Rio Frijoles, Rio Medio, Rio de las Trampas and Rio Santa Barbara have hybridized core populations of Rio Grande Cutthroats. Cutts in Rio Truchas and Rio Quemado are genetically pure. South-flowing Pecos River and several tributaries have core populations of Rio Grande cutts; Rio Valdez and Rio Mora systems to the east are genetically pure, as is the persistent population in Jacks Creek in the western part of the watershed. (Bakevich et al 2019; TU RGCT 2016)

The Rio Santa Barbara Forks have plenty of good trail access from a nearby campground. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2012, p. 29)



Pecos Wilderness (NM)



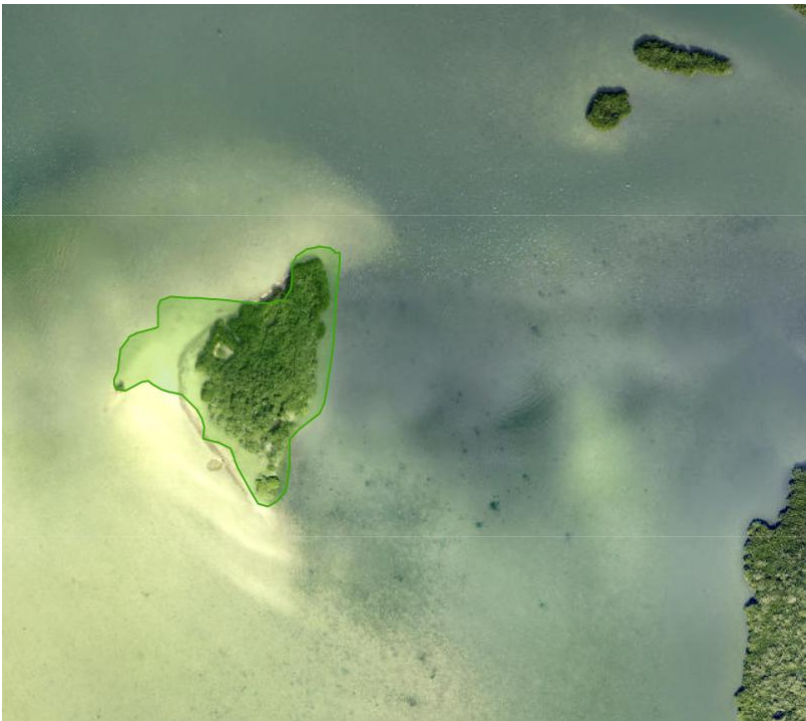
Browns, rainbows and, above Pecos Falls, Rio Grande cutthroats occur in the Pecos River. Looks on the map like lots of trails for access. Lots of brown trout at Beatty's Cabin Meadow six miles into the wilderness. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2009, p.40)

There are brown trout in Rio Mora at the flats, and bigger browns in the steep canyon below the flats. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2016, p. 28)

Stewart Lake near the head of Pecos River tributary Winsor Creek, has rainbows and cutthroats. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2017, p. 22)

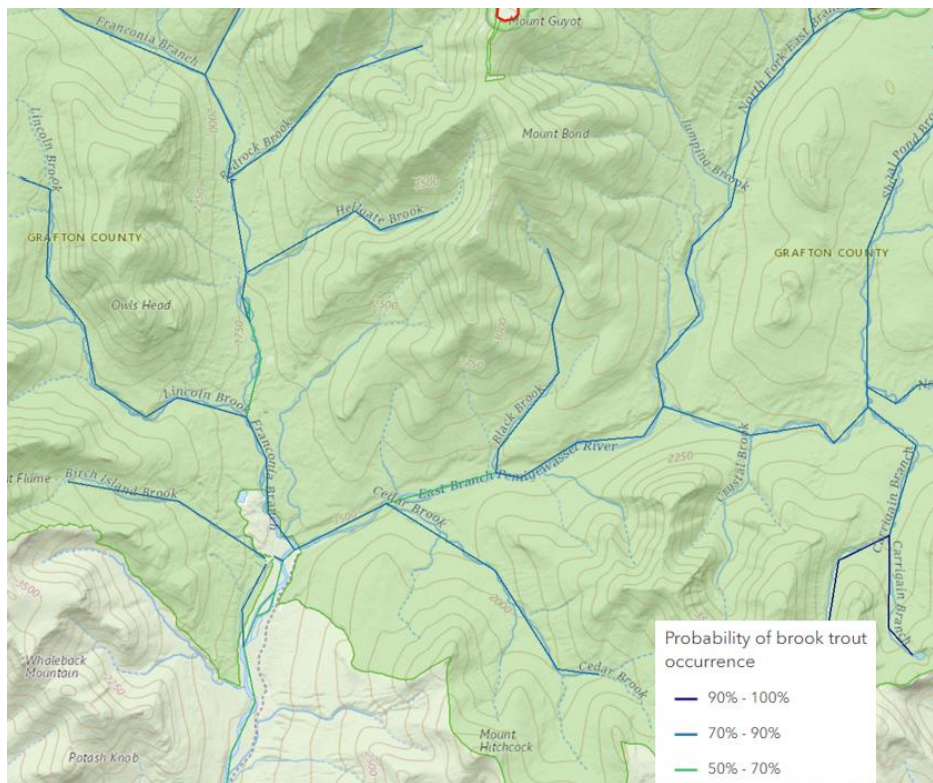
Pelican Island Wilderness (FL)

The wilderness is a very small island in the back bay behind the larger Pelican NWR, of which it is a part. The island is a major pelican rookery, which is why it was protected in 1903 as the country's first National Wildlife Refuge. The wilderness appears to encompass beach and water, likely a result of extensive erosion that the USF&WS is attempting to stabilize. This means there will be fish, likely including redfish, snook, sea trout, flounder, mangrove snapper, Jack Crevalle and other popular sportfish. The catch is that there is a no-entry buffer about 500 feet wide to keep visitors from disturbing the pelicans. (USF&WS Pelican Island) At this time, you can't (legally) get into the wilderness.



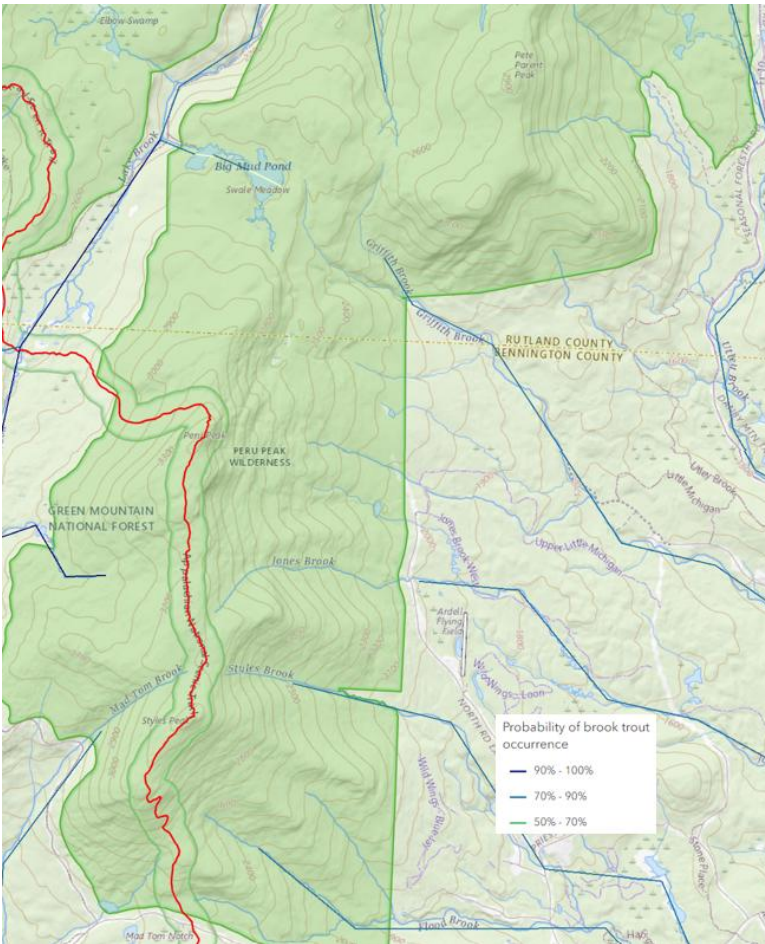
Pemigewasset Wilderness (NH)

There are records of brook trout in the Franconia Branch of the East Branch of the Pemigewasset River, with trail access along most of the length of the branch. (iNaturalist 2022)



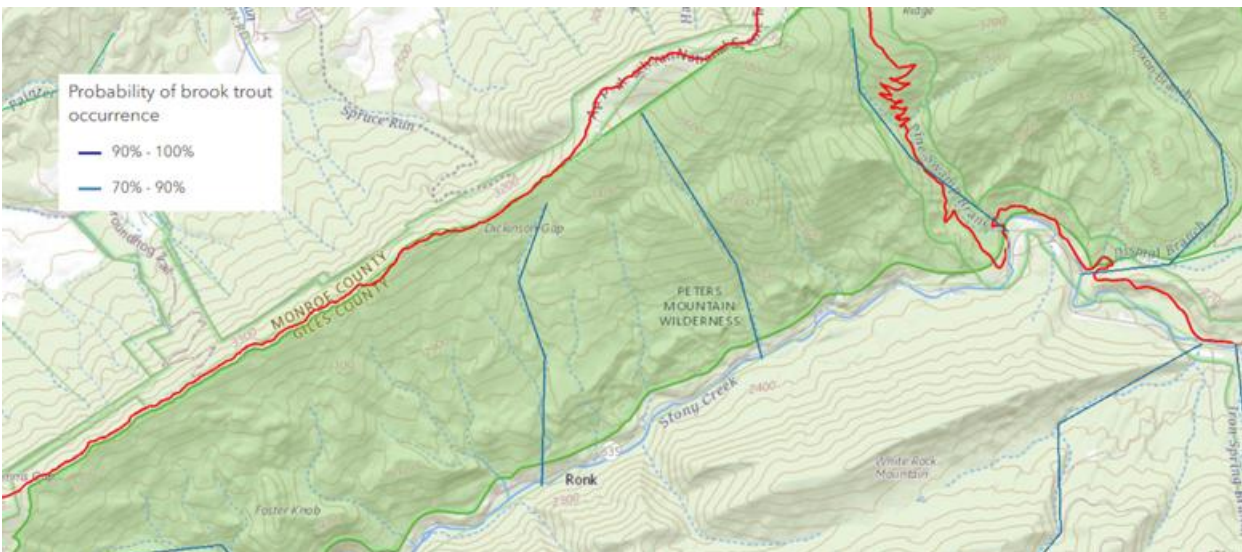
Pretty much the entire Pemigewasset watershed within the wilderness has a high probability of presence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Peru Peak Wilderness (VT)



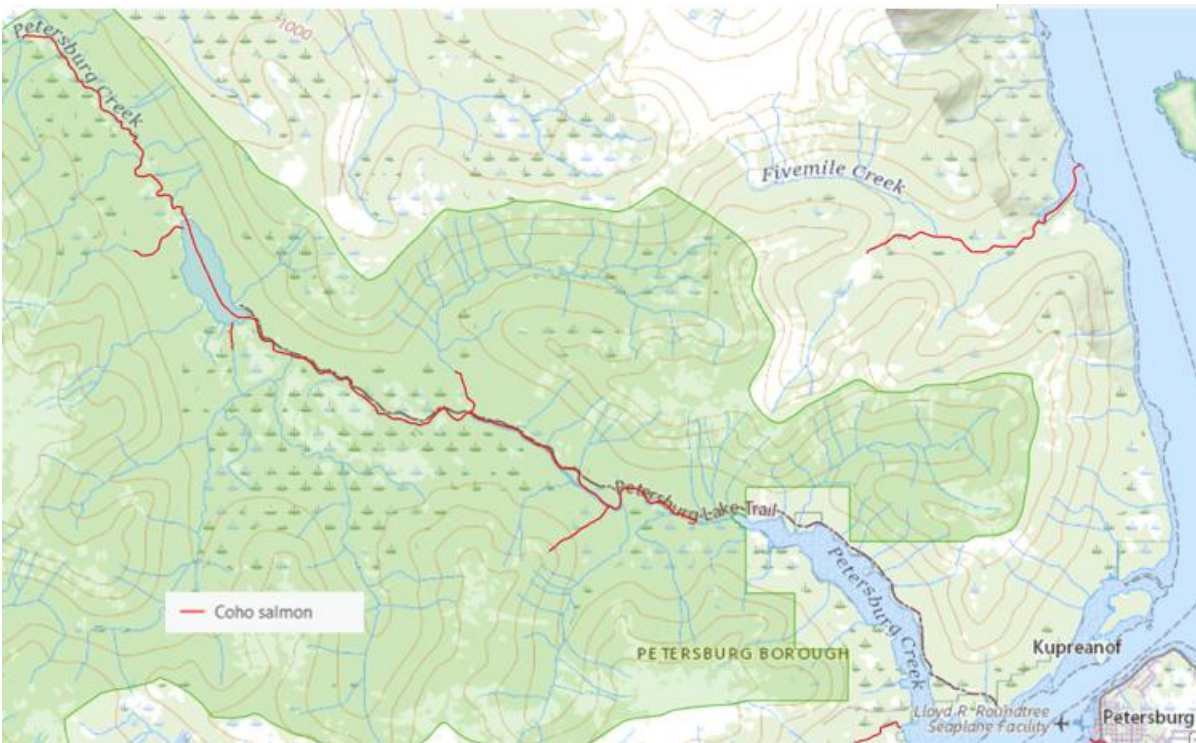
There is a secure stronghold population of brook trout in the Utley Creek drainage on the east slope of the wilderness. Otter Creek tributaries on the west slope holds a persistent population of brook trout along with rainbows and browns. Flood Brook on the east slope at the south end of the wilderness also holds a persistent population of brook trout. Flood Brook and Utley Brook both flow east to the West River which of course flows south. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

Peters Mountain Wilderness (VA)



Stony Creek flowing west toward the New River lies outside the southern boundary of the wilderness, but tributaries coming down off the Peters Mountain ridge hold a stronghold population of brook trout, along with brown trout and rainbows. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Most of these tributaries have a high probability of brook trout occurrence. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

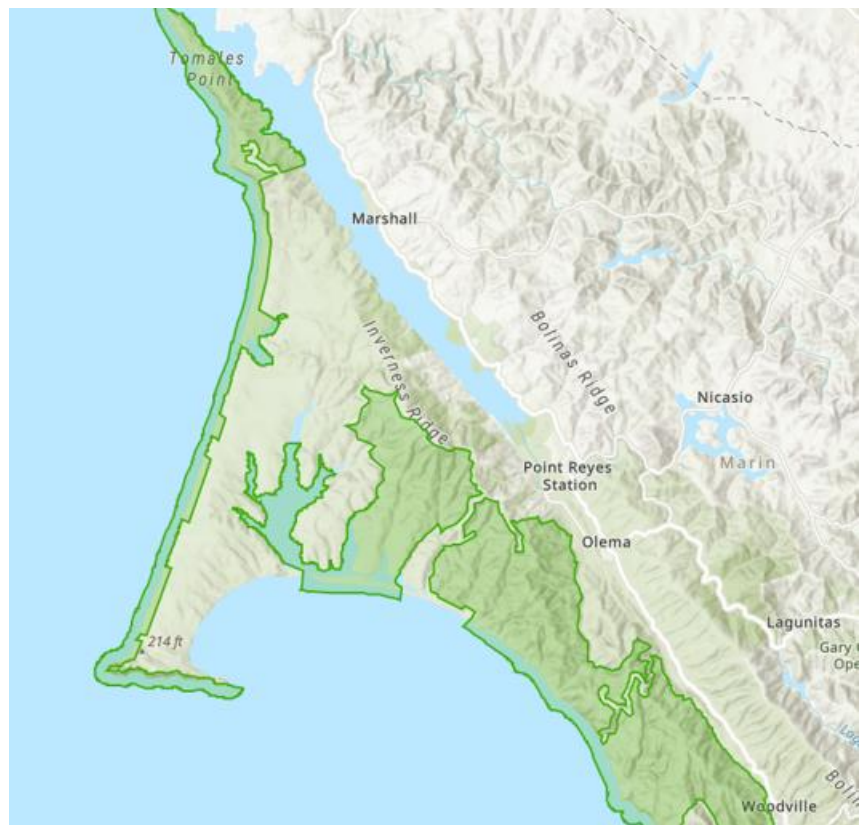
Petersburg Creek-Duncan Salt Chuck Wilderness (AK)



Coho and sockeye salmon run as far as the lake on Petersburg Creek, with chums and pinks further down; cutthroats, steelhead and Dolly Varden occur throughout the Creek. There is a trail parallel to the length of the Creek originating in the village of Kupreanof. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016)

Phillip Burton Wilderness (CA)

The wilderness includes several miles of beach and adjacent water as well as a couple of inlets, so there are plenty of fish. Common species include several types of surf perch, stickleback, sculpins, halibut and sole, as well as many others. (iNaturalist 2022)



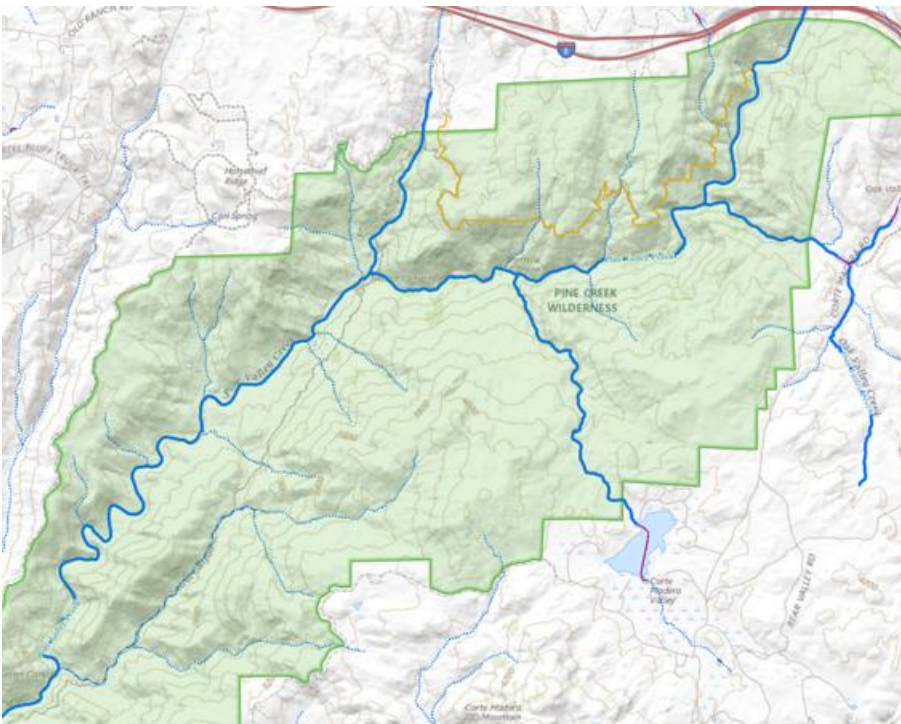
Phillip Burton Wilderness (CA)



In late November 2023 Cathie and I hiked to the beach on the Abbott Lagoon Trail. I was fully equipped to fish the surf for surf perch, but the wind and waves made it seem a little undesirable. The wind did allow a pretty spectacular display of kite-boarding from a woman who obviously knew what she was doing on the lagoon. The lagoon also yielded a couple of three-spined stickleback to the minnow trap. (Number 69) Pretty fierce looking for a fish that was about 1 ½ inches long.



Pine Creek Wilderness (CA)



I've driven past many times on I-8 but haven't stopped. Frankly, it looks somewhat barren. Supposedly Pine Valley Creek is "perennial enough to be strong candidates for permanent trout waters." (Swift et al 1993, p. 113) It doesn't really look like that's the case in the aerials, but someday I'm going to have to try.

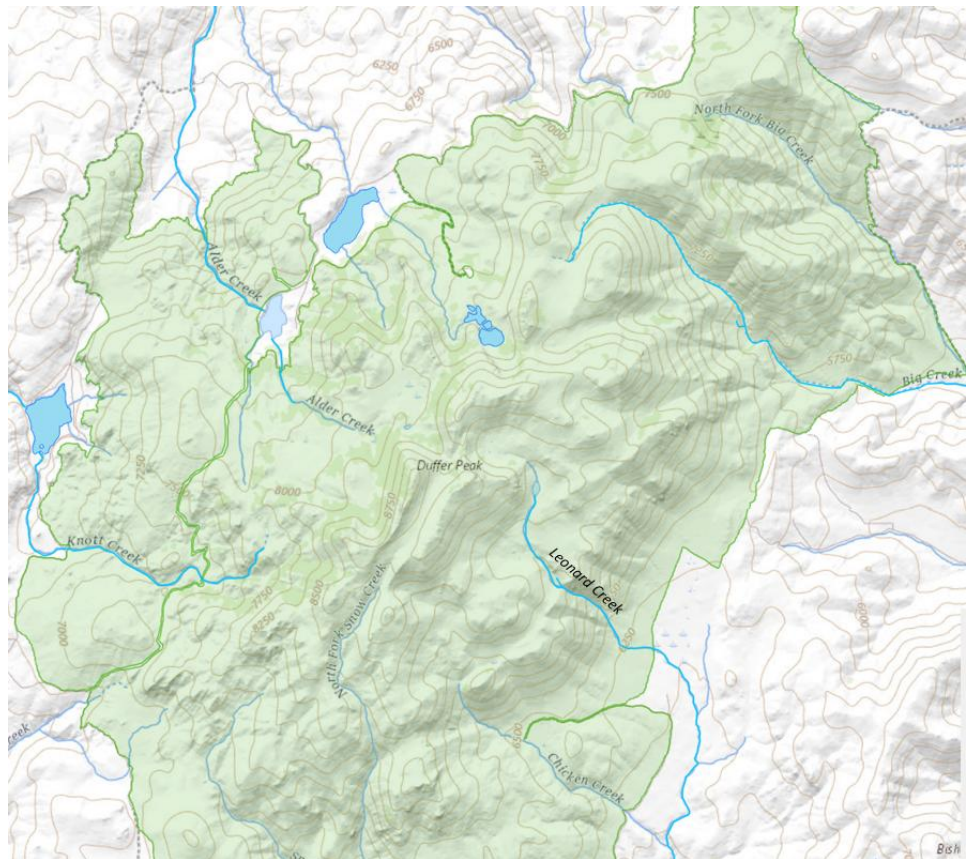
Pine Creek Wilderness (CA)

OK, in January 2025 the creek had water, quite a bit actually. Maybe it was just a January thing, but it looked like there should be fish. In the hour or two I had I didn't find any, but it's definitely worth another look.



Pine Forest Range Wilderness (NV)

There are brookies and rainbows in Big Creek, Knott Creek and Alder Creek. Leonard Creek also has cutthroats. (Nevada DOW 2017) As of July 2024, Knott Creek has cutts as well.



Pine Forest Range Wilderness (NV)



In July 2024 I fished my way up the lower portion of Knott Creek and found cutthroats instantly (first-cast instantly; Number 77). There seems to be a lot of fish, and they seem to see very few people. I was at the edge of the wilderness, but it takes a real effort to even get that far.



Pine Mountain Wilderness (AZ)



Critical habitat for Gila chub starts just below the wilderness boundary. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

In September 2022 I saw lots of Gila chub in that critical habitat. The biologists were apparently correct: Three springs, including Beehouse Spring shown on the map, feed into Sycamore Creek, but all reach the creek below the wilderness boundary. Everything above the boundary was bone dry.

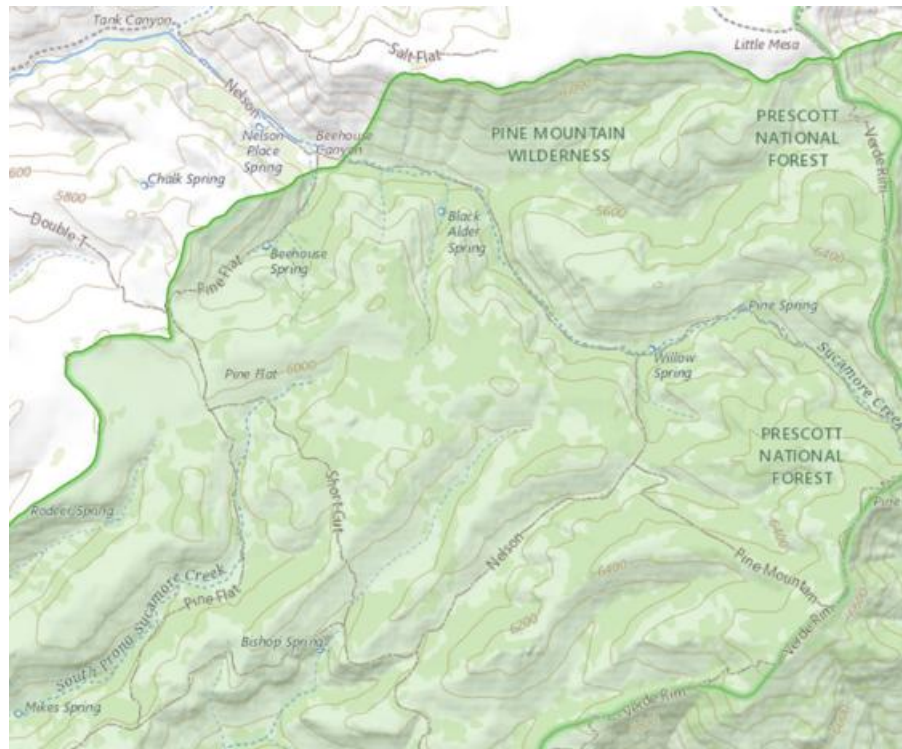
I think there still might be a chance that fish can make it above the wilderness boundary during a runoff event that puts water in the creek above the springs. I thought at one time that there may be perennial water in the channel further upstream, below Willow Spring, but a hike to all the Sycamore Creek springs in June 2024 found no surface water. Other than that, I'm tempted to demote this wilderness to "no fish" status.

Pine Mountain Wilderness (AZ)

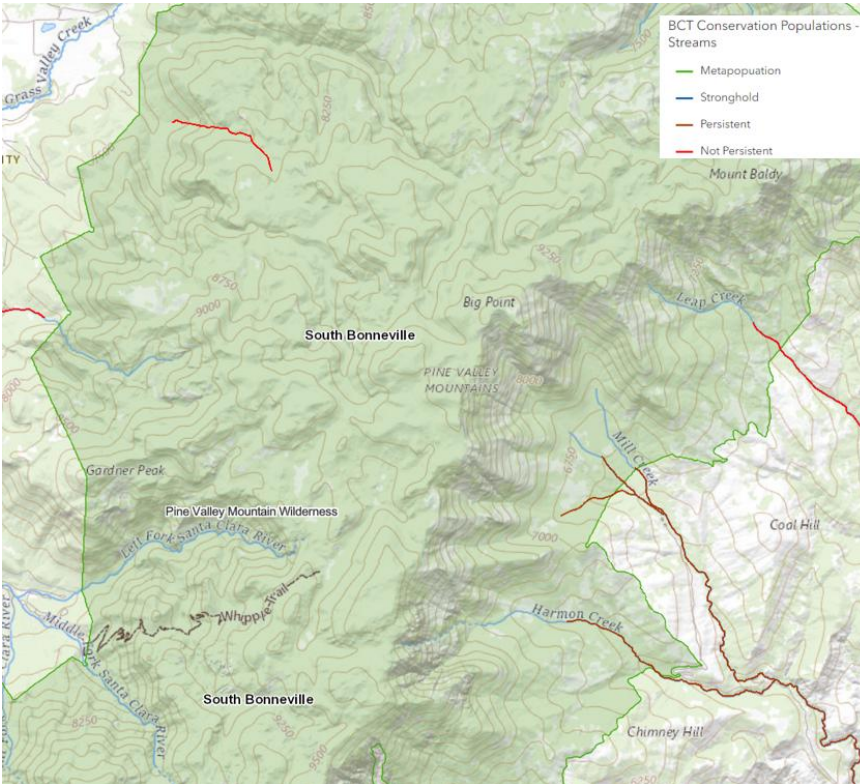
Arizona Game & Fish's Habimap shows desert sucker and Gila chub habitat in South Prong Sycamore Creek, although USGS shows this as intermittent. (Arizona Game & Fish Habimap 2022; USGS NWIS 2021)



Oddly enough, Habimap does *not* show Gila chub habitat in the Beehouse Canyon reach of Sycamore Creek, where I saw them in September 2022.



Pine Valley Mountain Wilderness (UT)



Genetically unaltered populations of Bonneville cutthroats occur in a Grass Valley Creek tributary, ultimately flowing into the Santa Clara River on the west side of the wilderness. On the east slope, additional unaltered populations are in Leap Creek and in the Mill Creek system. (TU BCT, 2019)

I unsuccessfully fished the creek in Mill Canyon on the west side of the wilderness in July 2021; a very pretty stream, but I found no fish. On Labor Day weekend 2022 I returned and fished the *correct* Mill Creek, the one on the east side of the wilderness, upstream from the Browse Guard Station.

Pine Valley Mountain Wilderness (UT)



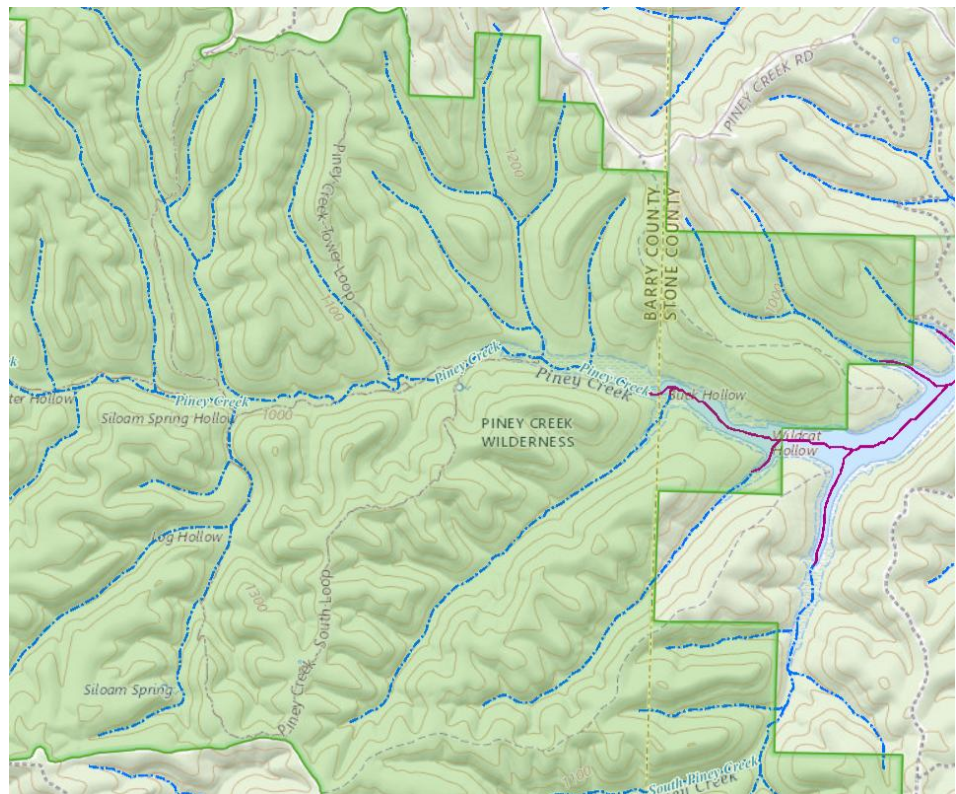
Not much water in this creek, but enough...

The results were rewarding: Several beautiful Bonneville cutts, including one at about 12 inches. (Number 56)

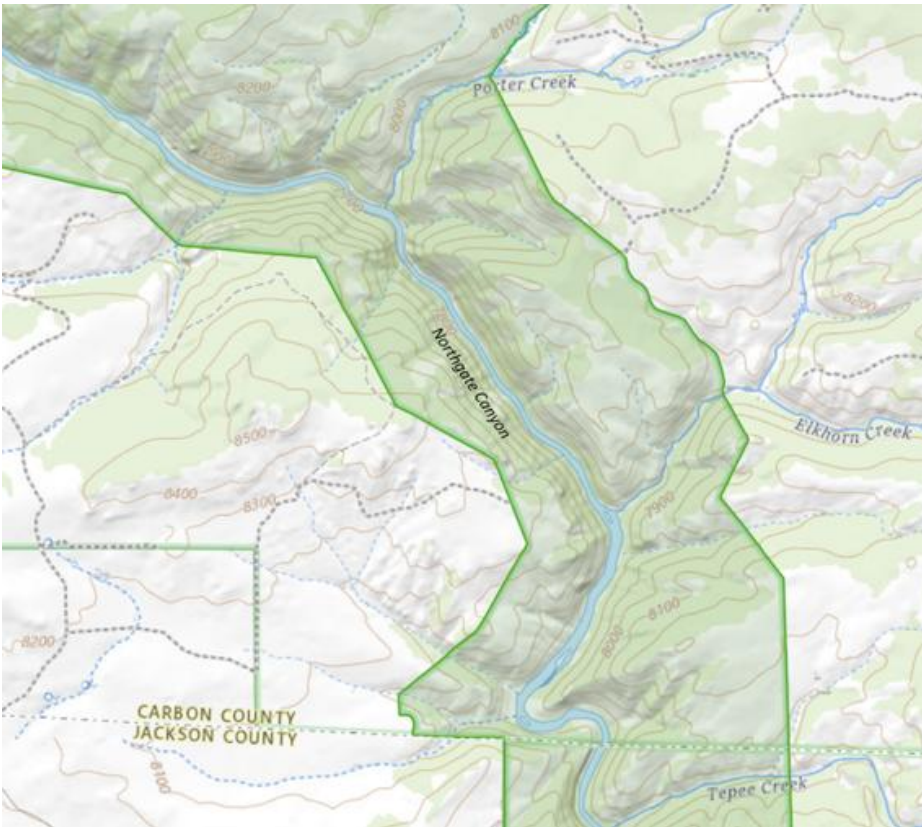


Piney Creek Wilderness (MO)

There is more than one Piney Creek in Missouri; this one is a tributary of the Table Rock Reservoir, a White River impoundment. The creek has a parallel trail for much of its length, and the lower portion within the wilderness is an arm of the reservoir, at least at high water levels. There are bass, bluegill and crappie in the reservoir, they likely make it up Piney Creek, as least as far as the portion of the reservoir in the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



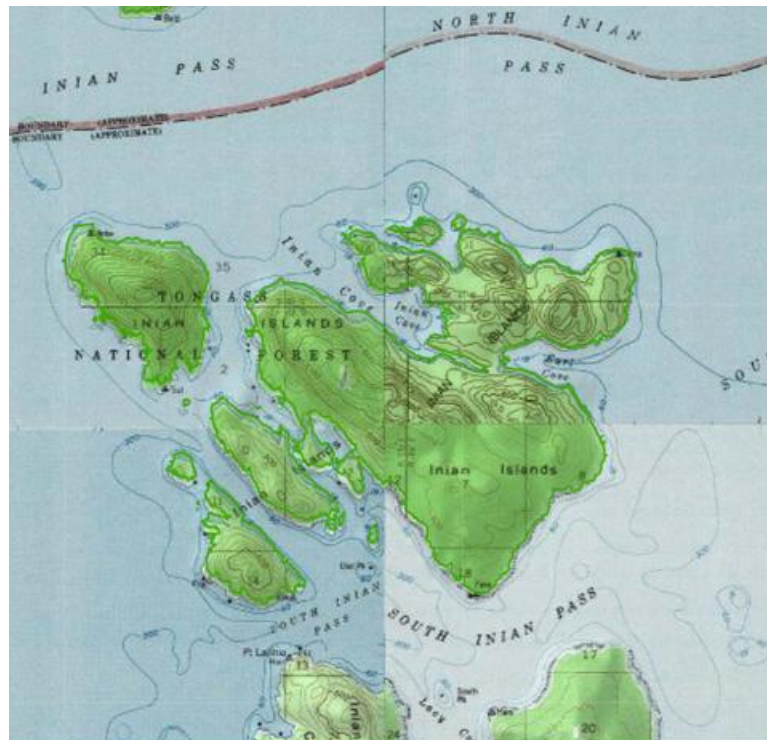
Platte River Wilderness (WY)



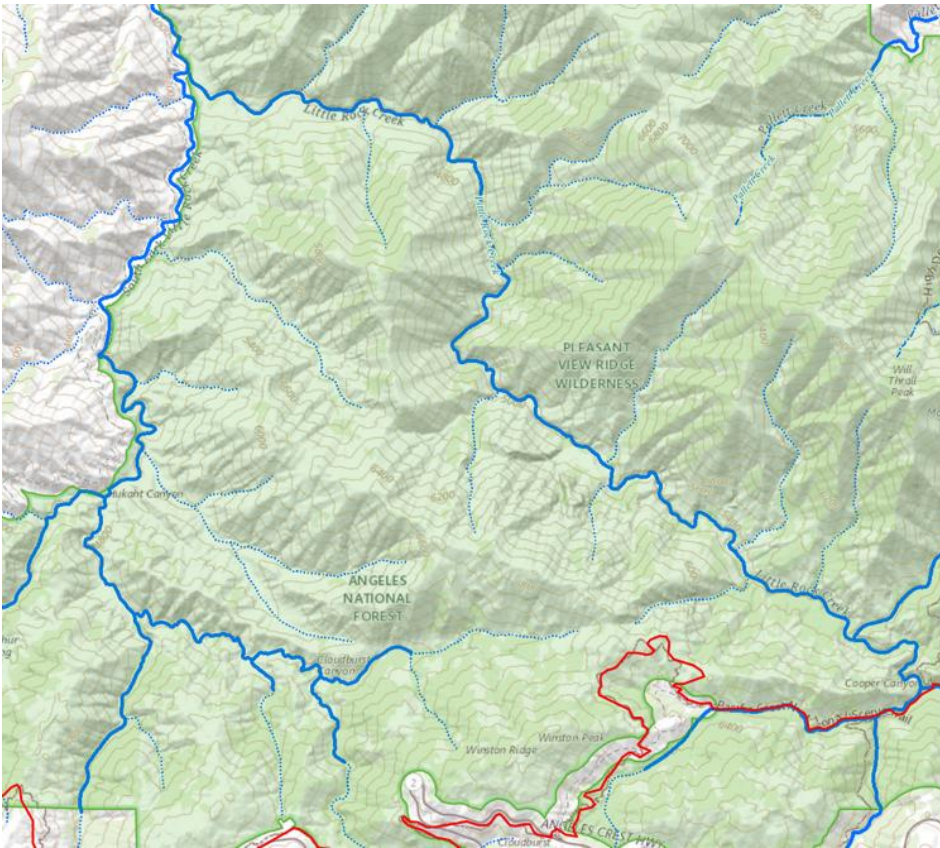
There are trout in the Northgate Canyon stretch of the Platte River at the Colorado-Wyoming border, allegedly with trail access, although it doesn't show on the map. (FF Apr-May 2010, p. 42)

Pleasant/Lemusurier/Inian Islands Wilderness (AK)

They're ocean islands so there must be fish, however the only record I've been able to find so far is of Alaskan ronquil along the shore of one of the Inian Islands. I suppose access difficulties limit the amount of observations. (iNaturalist 2023)



Pleasant View Ridge Wilderness (CA)

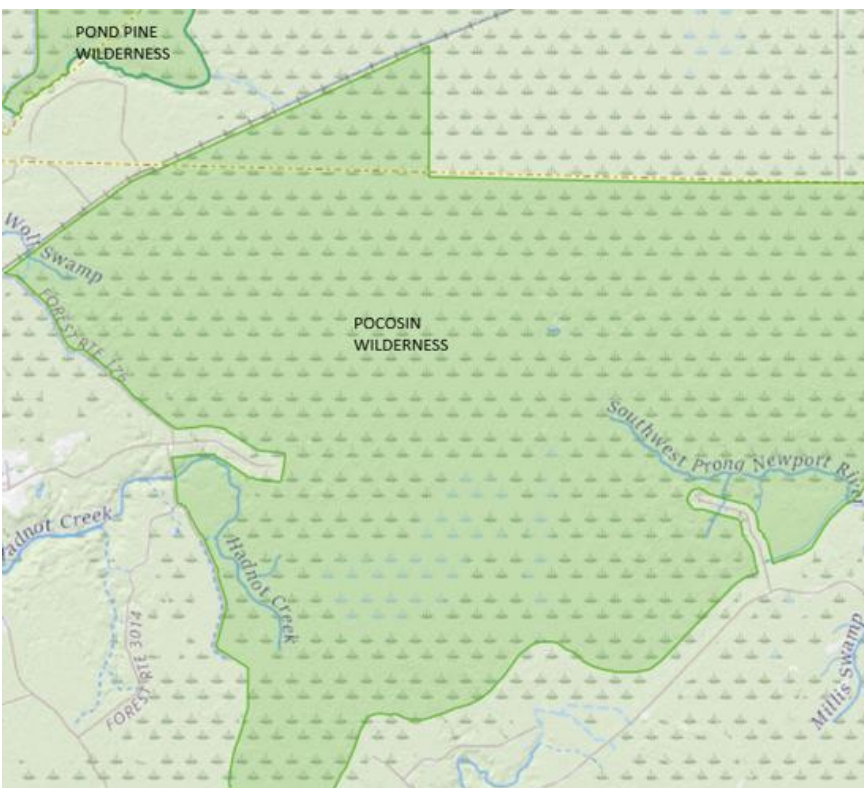


There is an established population of partially armored three-spine stickleback in Little Rock Creek. Not sure if the population extends up into the wilderness. (Stephenson and Calcarone, 1999, p. 132)

Trout were apparently stocked with the stickleback, brown trout persist in Little Rock Creek. (Stephenson and Calcarone, 1999, p. 82)

Red line on the map is the Pacific Crest Trail.

Pocosin Wilderness (NC)

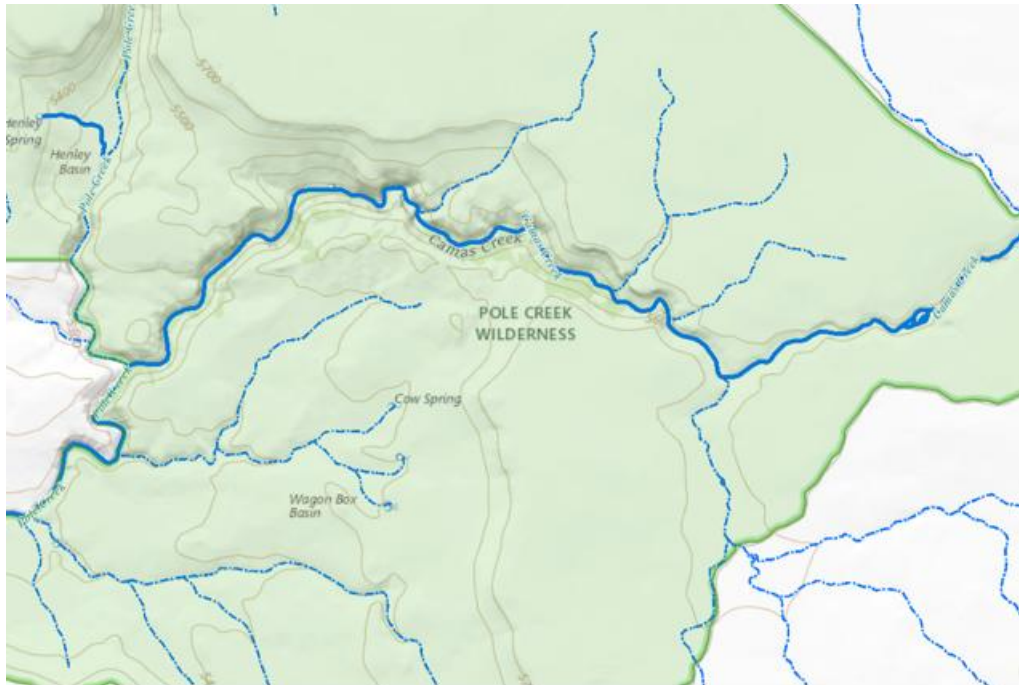


Lakes (yes, plural) Pocosin appears to be largely swamp, with a few spots of open water. It provides the source for the very short Newport River. There is a record of mud sunfish in the upper reach of the river, and American pickerel in other parts of the swamp. (iNaturalist 2022)

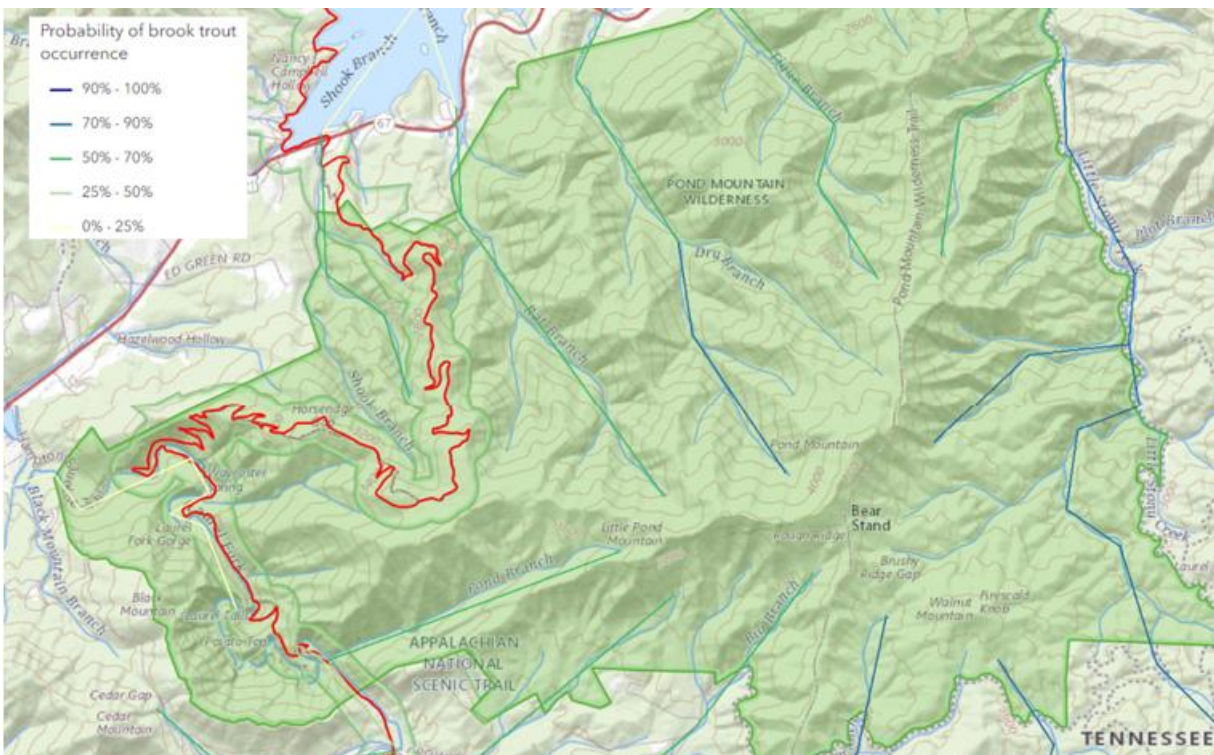


Pole Creek Wilderness (ID)

Pole Creek tributary Camas Creek is perennial across the wilderness (NHD USGS 2019). Similarly situated streams nearby hold redband trout, although I haven't seen confirmation that they are also here.

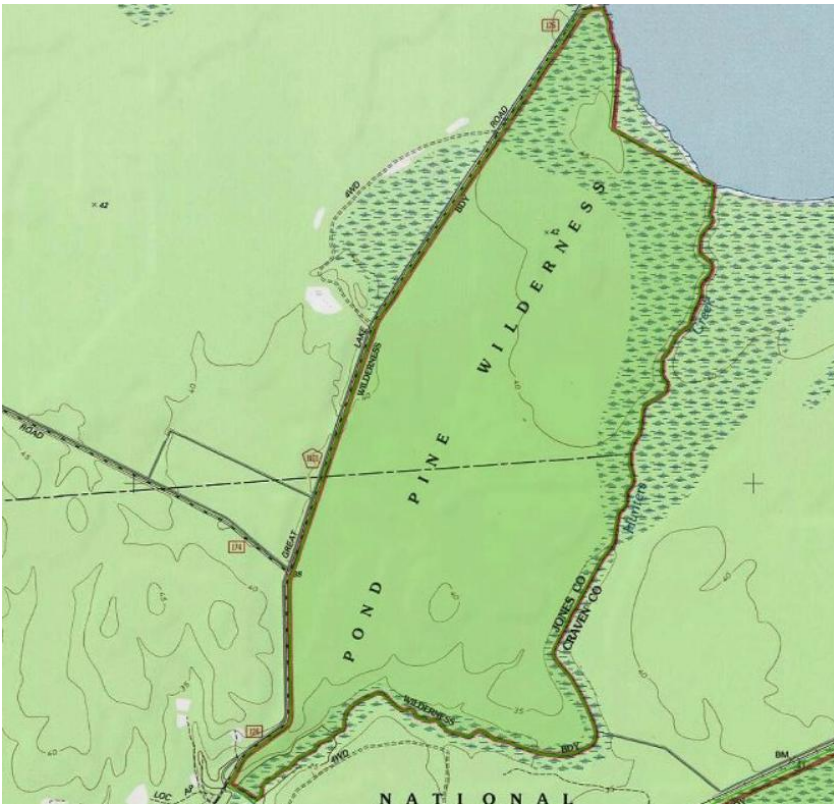


Pond Mountain Wilderness (TN)



There is a redundant population of brook trout in the Doe River watershed, extending up Firescald Creek into the extreme southeastern portion of the wilderness. Firescald Cr flows south into Laurel Fork of Doe River, Doe River eventually flows north into the Watauga River. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout) Probabilities of finding brook trout are moderate to high in most wilderness streams. As you might expect, chance improve the higher you go. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

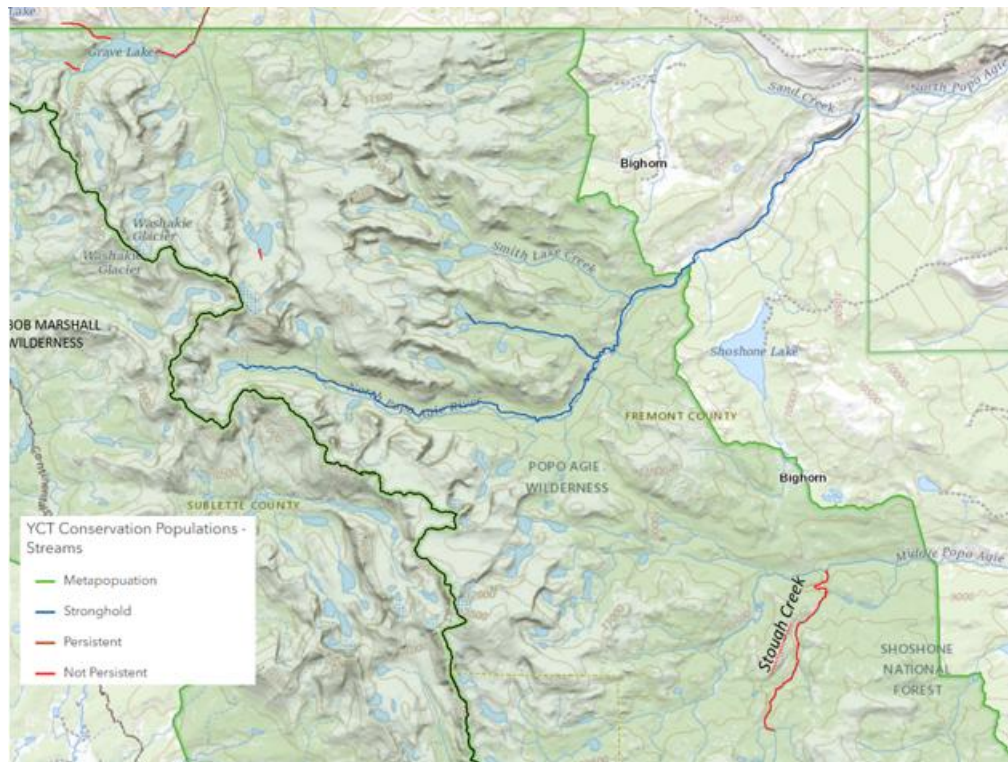
Pond Pine Wilderness (NC)



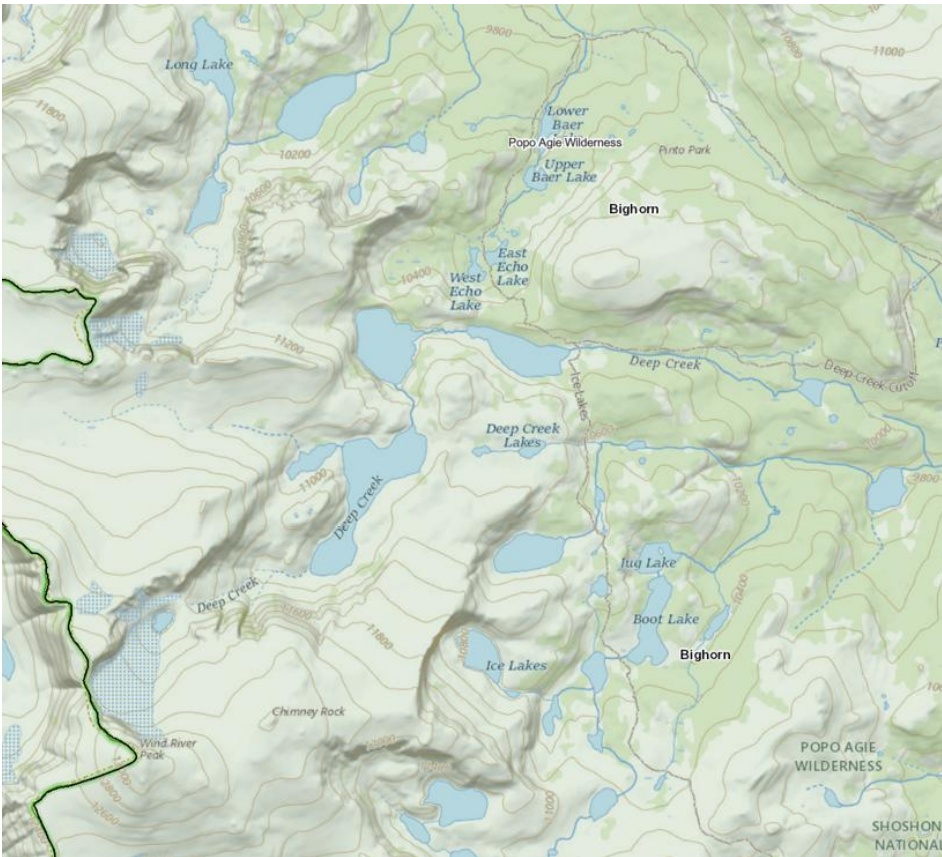
A raised bogland or pocosin located in the coastal plain, with Hunter's Creek forming the eastern edge of the wilderness. The creek has records of mud sunfish and American eel, not in the wilderness but nearby. (iNaturalist, 2023) This type of environment also may have small ponds or depressions, which may also hold fish.

Popo Agie Wilderness (WY)

Yellowstone cutthroat conservation populations occupy upper reaches of North and Middle Popo Agie River. North Fork holds an extensive stronghold population, with a persistent population in Stough Creek in the Middle Fork drainage. (Endicott, Nelson et al 2016; TU YCT 2019)



Popo Agie Wilderness (WY)



Deep Creek Lakes at 10,700 feet to over 10,900 feet elevation in the Middle Popo Agie River drainage hold some of the largest golden trout anywhere. Other nearby lakes, including Echo, Baer and Ice Lakes, hold brookies. (NWFF Nov-Dec 2018, p. 30)

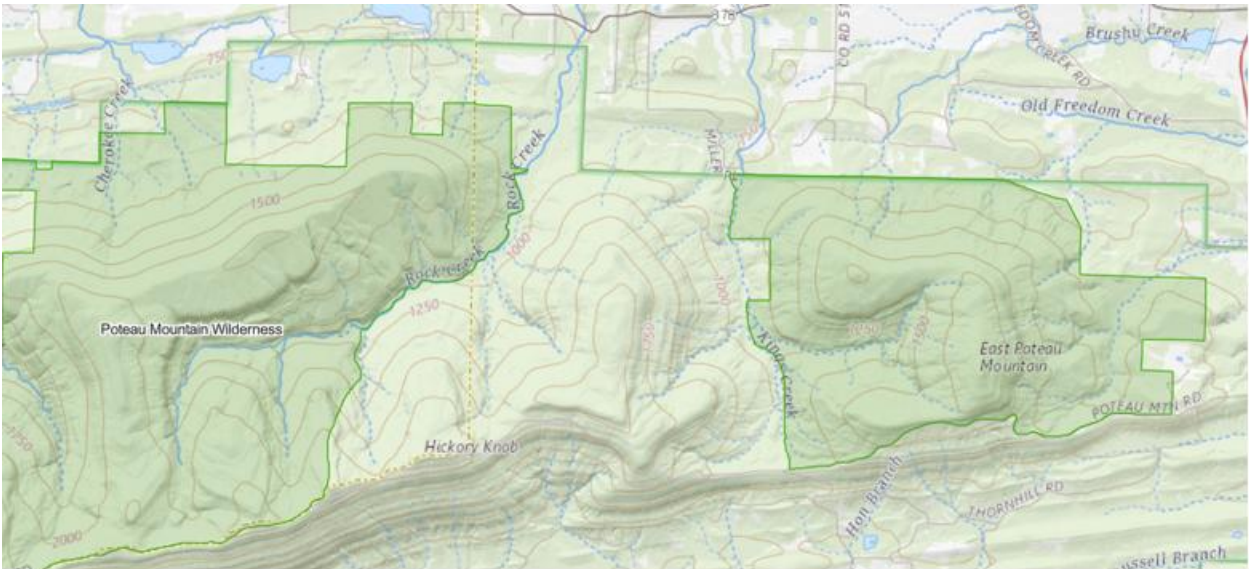
Porcupine Lake Wilderness (WI)



There is a record of largemouth bass in Porcupine Lake. (iNaturalist 2022)



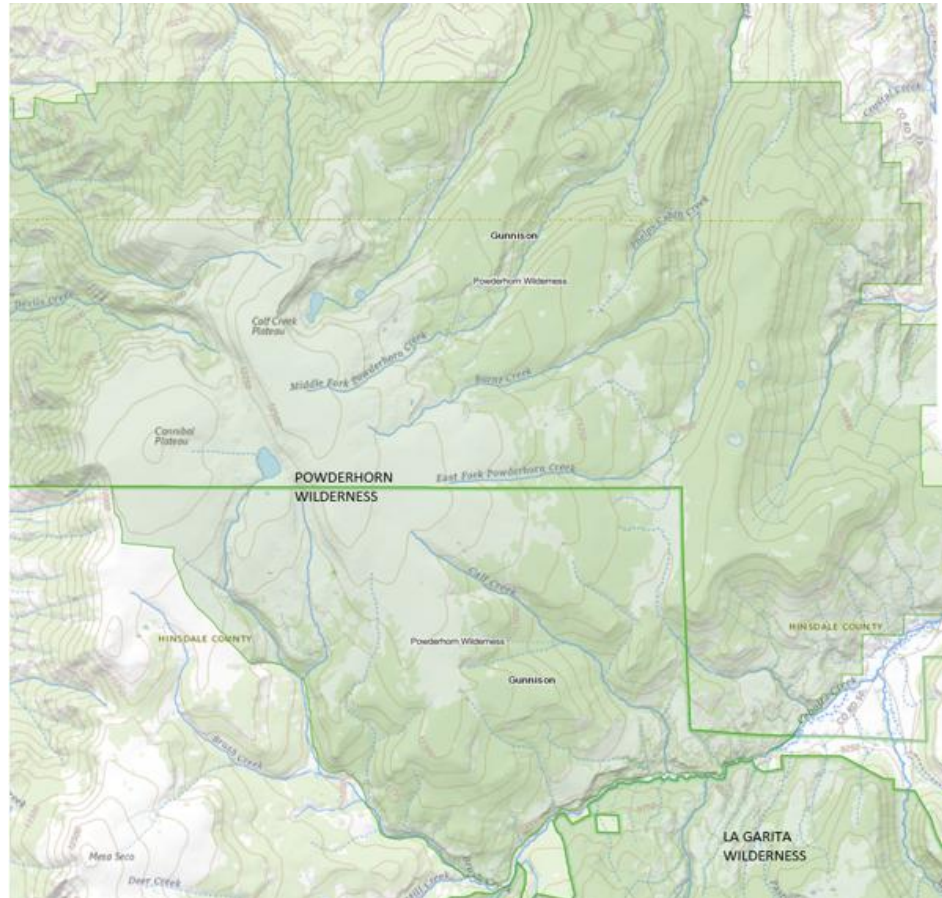
Poteau Mountain Wilderness (AR)



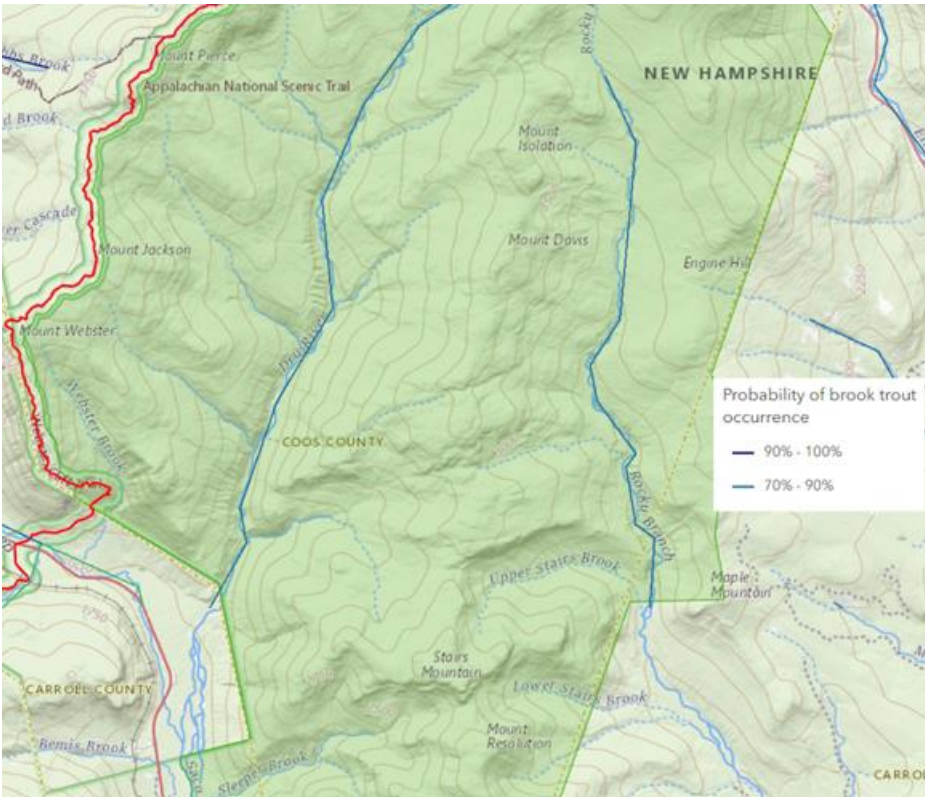
Brushy Creek, tributary to the Petite-Jean River, holds many fish, including yellow bullhead, highland stoneroller, orangebelly darter, northern studroller and black-spotted topminnow (*Fundulidae*), bluegill, green and longeared sunfish, spotted and smallmouth bass and creek chub. (USDA USFS Southern Research Station 2016) A similar composition of fishes is likely to occupy Rock Creek and other streams in the wilderness.

Powderhorn Wilderness (CO)

There are records of brook trout in a Cebolla Creek tributary just outside the southern end of the wilderness (iNaturalist 2023), it's likely there are brook trout throughout the Cebolla system in the wilderness.



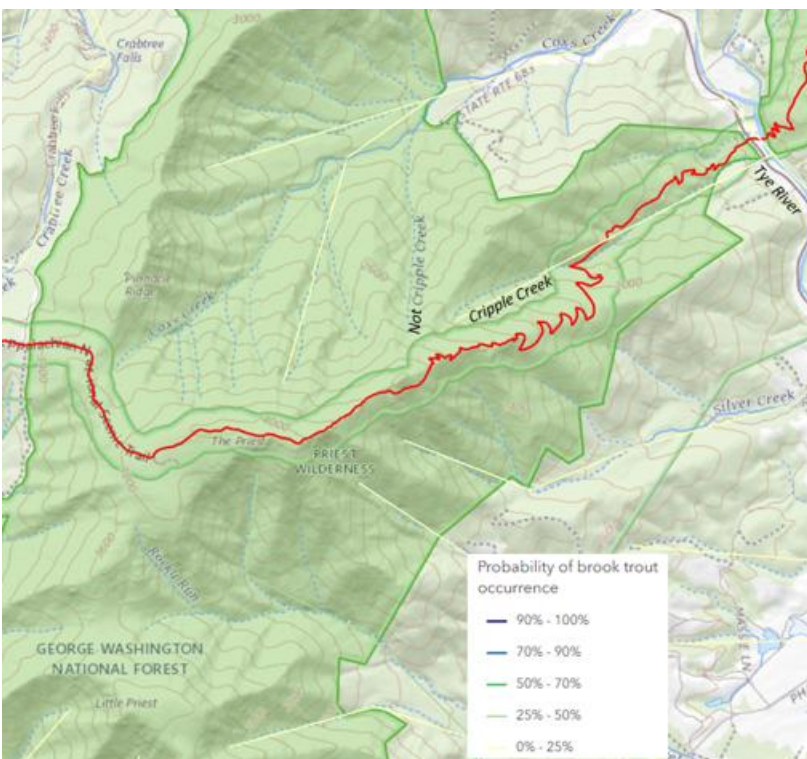
Presidential Range-Dry River Wilderness (NH)



Resilient population of brook trout only in the far northeastern portion of the wilderness in tributaries to the Ellis River, which flows south to the Saco River. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

There is a high probability of presence of brook trout in Dry River and Rocky Branch, both tributary to Saco River to the south. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Priest Wilderness (VA)



There is a stronghold population of brook trout as well as brown trout in the northern portion of the wilderness in tributaries flowing east into the Tye River, and a stronghold population of brook trout in the southern part of the wilderness in tributaries flowing south into the Piney River, a Tye River tributary. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

The possibility of finding brook trout appears low throughout the wilderness. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

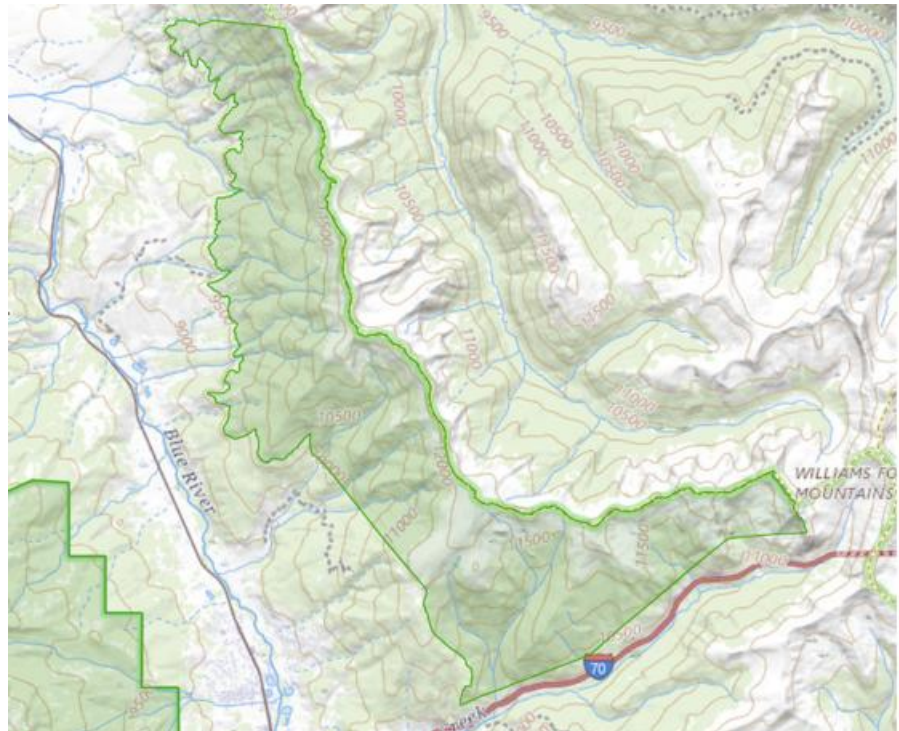
Priest Wilderness (VA)

April 2023 I didn't find any trout, but I caught some blacknosed dace in Cripple Creek just inside the wilderness above the Tye River. (Number 61)



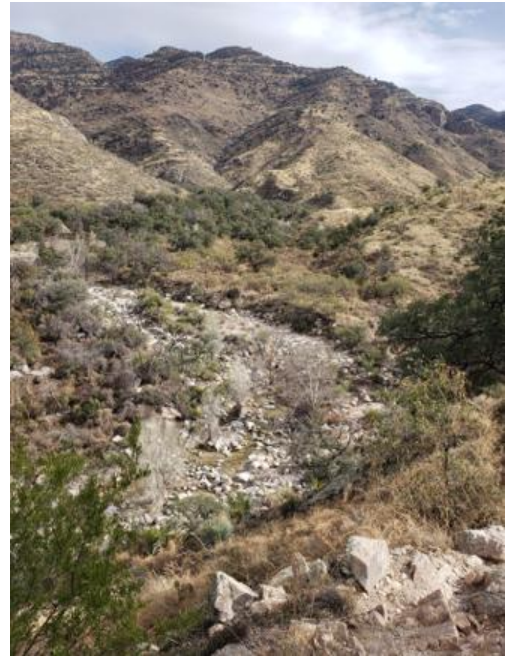
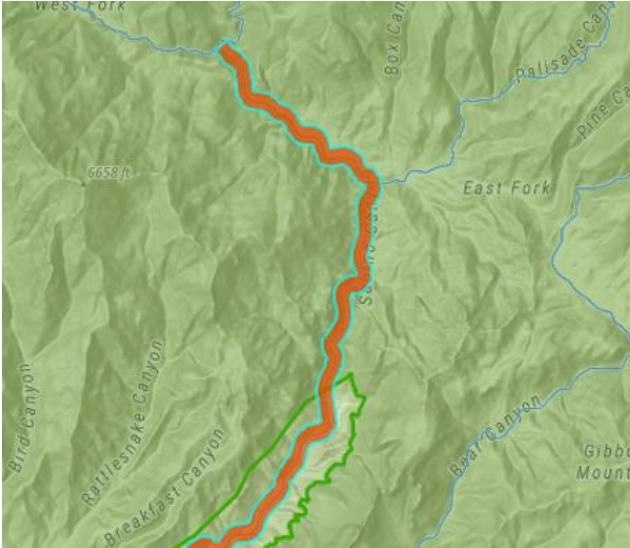
Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness (CO)

I haven't seen any positive records of fish in this wilderness, but it's squarely in trout country. There are records of brook trout and brown trout in the Blue River valley below the wilderness (iNaturalist 2023), I would be shocked if some of those brookies don't make it up the tributaries into the wilderness. I caught bunches of brookies 5 miles away in Eagle Nest Wilderness on the other side of the valley. They've got to be here.



Pusch Ridge Wilderness (AZ)

Sabino Canyon is critical habitat for Gila chub. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) I hiked about 2.5 miles into the wilderness along the canyon in January 2022 and found lots of water, but no fish. I'm sure they are there, it looks too good...



In June 2024 I hiked about a mile and a half up Bear Canyon into the wilderness. I found a beautiful pool full of dace and chub, some of which looked pretty big. I manage to catch a couple of chub on my second try with my new cast net (number 73), which was actually quite a thrill!!



There are Gila chub, Gila topminnow and desert pupfish throughout the Sabino Canyon system, as well as in Bear Canyon, a Sabino Canyon tributary near the southern edge of the wilderness. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022)

