

Wilderness Fish

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

Volume 1

**Wilderness Areas A through G
plus graphical index and an introduction explaining why (and how) I do this**



by Mapdawg



The Challenge

I suppose I'm engaged in an unusual pursuit: My goal is to catch fish in as many wilderness areas as possible. That's what this book is essentially about. I'm not sure anyone else is doing this, but it seems to make sense to me. The seed for this venture entered my head in about 2006, on a Boy Scout backpacking trip with my son in the Wet Beaver Creek Wilderness in Arizona. An off-hand comment by a thirteen-year old: "Wouldn't it be great to catch a fish in every wilderness area?" I told my son Bubba "Sure, that sounds like a good idea." And the idea festered in my head.

I had never even known about federally designated wilderness areas until I moved to Arizona in 2004. Still, I had been in several because wilderness areas are simply the kind of place I seek out. This book includes some of my early experiences in wilderness areas, like the Daniel J. Evans Wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula, which I stumbled into during the early 1980's while stationed at what was then called Fort Lewis. When I finally did learn about the Wilderness Act and the dedicated wilderness areas it created, visiting wilderness areas and experiencing what they had to offer, to include chasing fish, became a bit of an obsession.

The Wilderness Areas

So, what are wilderness areas? One of the things that absolutely makes this country great is that we all own it. Over 28% of all the land in the US is owned by the federal government, over 600 *million* acres. "Owned by the federal government" translates roughly to "owned by you and me." Most of this land, with the notable exception of some military reservations and Department of Energy land, is available for public use. This is way different than what you will find in almost every other country, including ones in Asia and Europe where I've lived and traveled. We are special, and we are specially endowed.

Most of this land is out there for us to enjoy and use. Many people are well aware of some of this land, in particular the units of the National Park system. Even people who have never been there know something about Yellowstone or Yosemite, and millions visit these and other units every year. These are the crown jewels of US public land, the lands with exceptional visual and recreational opportunities and legendary reputations. But they have lots of people. Did I say millions visit each year?

Some people are also well aware of other public land. People who like to camp are generally familiar with the country's extensive network of National Forests, and birders are usually pretty familiar with our network of National Wildlife Refuges. Fewer people know about lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, but if you frequent the deserts of Arizona, Nevada and southern California the chances are good that you've been on BLM land.

These are all great things that you and I and all the rest of us own. But it gets better: Some of these places have exceptional visual and recreational opportunities, and they *do not get crowded*. Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964 to set aside tracts of land across the country as unspoiled wilderness. These are all areas located on public land managed by the same agencies that manage the National Parks, National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges and BLM properties, but they are managed differently to preserve the wilderness nature of the lands. Principal among the differences are that the lands contain no roads, and minimal evidence of human impact. Buildings are extremely rare, and are almost always historical relics that long predate wilderness designation. Motorized vehicles, including ATV's, cars, and dirt bikes, are not allowed. Trail maintenance crews walk in or ride horses.

These wilderness areas are truly special. If you go more than a few hundred yards into one of them you leave the modern world, and most of the people who inhabit the modern world, behind. Welcome to solitude, adventure, and spectacular beauty. Enjoy getting close to your natural surroundings in ways that are just not possible most anywhere else. Wilderness areas also encompass a huge variety of environments; there are isolated oceanic islands and remote mountaintops, harsh deserts and dense forests, and every kind of imaginable habitat in between.

Some wildernesses are close to a lot of people: You can rub elbows with thousands of other people in the Yosemite Valley, or on the shuttle buses in the Virgin River valley in Zion, but you can also cross the threshold into the expansive wilderness portions of these popular parks that relatively few people ever

enjoy. Some wildernesses are close to large urban areas. I am writing in my living room in Mesa, Arizona, a 20-minute drive from my “home wilderness,” the Superstition Wilderness. It’s popular, and relatively accessible, and certainly gets thousands of visitors each year. The parking lots at the major trailheads are full of cars on winter weekends. You can still, however, go half a mile down a trail and lose most of the other people. If you’re willing to carry a backpack and spend the night you can lose almost all the other people, and have a magical place all to yourself. Then there are the many wilderness areas that require a great effort just to get to the trailhead, whether you have to pay to fly in to the Jay Hammond-Lake Clark Wilderness (or any of a couple of dozen others) in Alaska, or take the truck down 12 miles of rutted, rock-strewn “road” to get to the Jackson Cabin trailhead at the edge of the Redfield Canyon Wilderness (or to get to Carpenter Canyon on the west side of the Mount Charleston Wilderness in Nevada, ask my beautiful wife Cathie about that one; she got out of the truck and walked at one point when it got too scary). At many you have to walk several miles after you park the truck just to get the rest of the way to the actual wilderness area boundary. Regardless of the effort required, however, they are all worth it.

As of September, 2026, there are 806 of these gems in the fifty states (plus one in Puerto Rico). Here’s a quick look at where they are:



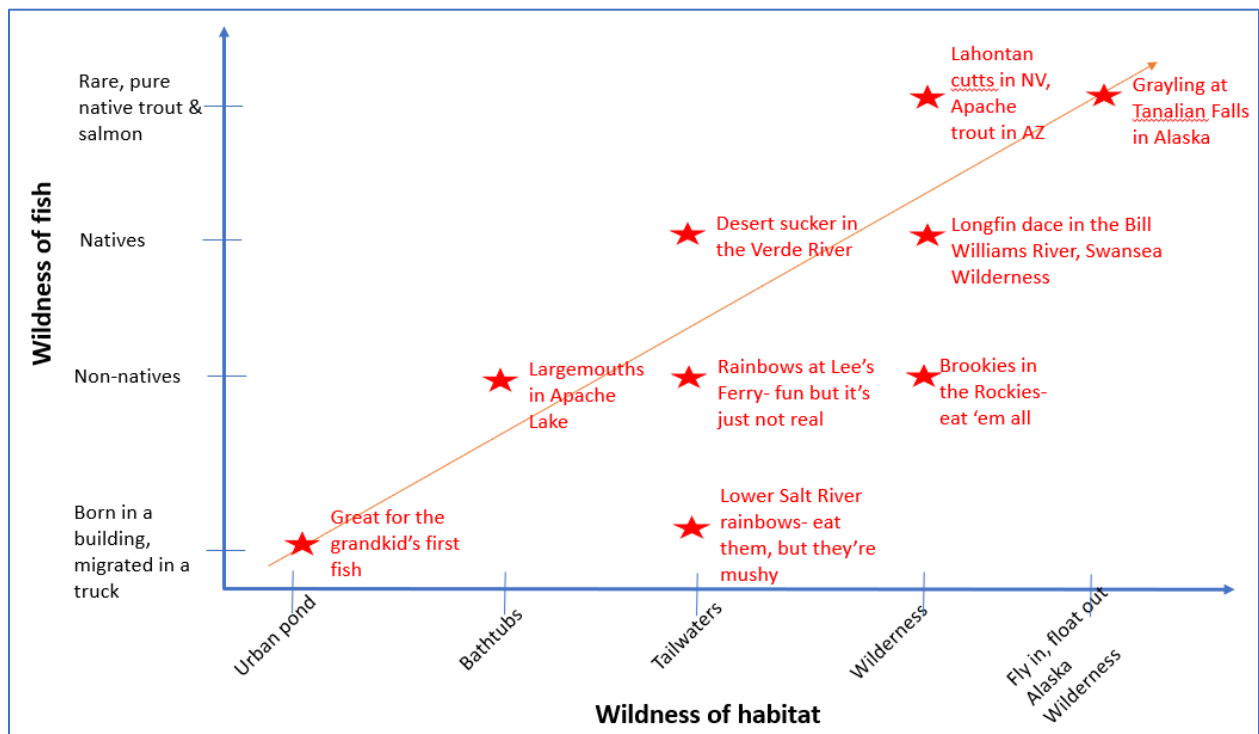


Yes, that's a *quick* look. More details to follow...

The Fish

People ask me "what kind of fishing do you like to do?" The question still takes me a little by surprise. I like the kind of fishing where there are fish involved. I thought that seemed obvious (Actually, if you look at some of the entries in this book for desert wildernesses in Arizona, Nevada and California, I've done quite a bit of fish-seeking where there were no fish involved). But on reflection I suppose it's a little more complex than that.

Wildness counts. The wildness of the fish and the wildness of the place are both important variables. Combine the two and you have a spectrum of opportunities:



Of course, I will fish anywhere on this chart because a day fishing is simply better than a day not fishing, but if given a choice I would move as far toward the upper right as possible.

But then this is not a book about fishing, it's a book about fish, and the wild places where they occur. My quest involves catching fish, but the ones I've managed to catch are not all game fish. Many are not even very big. The only fish I caught in the Imnaha River in the Eagle Cap Wilderness was a trout, but it was only 1-½ inches long and I caught it in a side channel by scooping it up with the landing net. It's not a trophy, but it's a fish. By the way, there are steelhead in that river, I just didn't find them (unless that little one I scooped up was a baby steelhead, which is what I firmly believe). But I did find fish.

The fact is that many wilderness areas have fish, but not all have game fish. There are wilderness areas where the only fish I could find were dace, less than two inches long. After hiking for miles up the bed of the Bill Williams River in the Swansea Wilderness, a large portion of it without any water in sight, those dace were trophy fish for me. Desert wildernesses have taught me to get excited, very excited, about tiny fish. Pupfish in Salt Creek in Death Valley aren't anything I can really brag about to other fishermen, but the tenacity of those fish in the harsh environment in which they live is remarkable. Salt Creek Pupfish are stunningly beautiful in their own way, a testimony to the God who created them and made them perfectly suited to living in hot, desert water that no other fish has been able to thrive in.

The focus on fish and not fishing does present some challenges, however. There is plenty of data available on-line and in other sources, but the vast majority of this data is oriented on the fishes that are popular with more orthodox fisherman. This means that if a wilderness area does not have trout, salmon or bass in it, the literature is often sorely lacking. The maps in this book reflect this reality; trout and salmon are well-documented, but chubs, dace and sunfish are not. This is not universally true, Arizona is a good example of a state that publishes good, informative and well-researched habitat maps for non-game fishes. Unfortunately, some states that have an abundance of game fish, like Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, have relatively little published data about the other species.

The Book

This volume started with a dual purpose. First was the desire to record what I had done so far, this was simple enough. It started on a spreadsheet (I have spreadsheets for everything), then I began adding pictures. As the number of entries grew I had to put the data into a format that was more manageable and accessible. A living, growing book, complete with pictures and maps, seemed appropriate.

The second purpose behind this book was more ambitious. As I became more methodical in my pursuit I had to actually do some detailed planning. First task was to figure out where the fish were. Not every wilderness area has fish, particularly because not every wilderness area has perennial water (see appendix 1, the "No Fish List"). Remember, I live in Arizona. If I lived in Colorado, I would have been able to pick a nearby wilderness, find a blue line on a map, go there and catch fish. Not so in Arizona. Many of the blue lines were dashed blue lines. Some of the solid lines were wishful thinking. And as we progress (if that's the right word) into an environment with drier winters, hotter summers, more groundwater withdrawals, and more and bigger wildfires, some of those blue lines are disappearing (see Pajarita Wilderness). If I was going to maximize the limited time I had in the field I had to do a bit of research. Equipped with a rudimentary knowledge of Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and with a vast trove of data from state and federal agencies, non-profit conservation groups, and academic institutions available on-line and in GIS formats, I began collecting information and producing maps to show where the fish are (or ought to be) in wilderness areas I had never been to. It made sense to add this information to the book, making it a log not just of the places I'd been, but also of the places I will someday get to.

And I'm making some progress getting to them, despite having to deal with the inconvenience of still being fully employed in Arizona (actually, temporarily in Oregon, at least for a couple of years, where I am now), and having to go to some lengths to integrate my wilderness exploration into other travel and vacation plans. As of September 2026, I've actually hiked or paddled in 241 of the 806 designated wilderness areas, and caught fish in 122 of them. I've still got a lot of work to do...

An additional note: Not all wildernesses have fish, but they are all in the book. As of September 2026, a total of 596 out of the 806 wilderness areas in the 50 states have an entry in the main part of the book. These are wildernesses where I know there are fish, including the ones where I have caught fish; or I strongly suspect there are fish. The remaining 210 wilderness areas are listed in appendix 1, the "No Fish List." It may seem like a pretty bold statement on my part to definitively say there are no fish in a particular wilderness, but the "No Fish List" includes details to back up the assertion. In many cases there is simply no perennial water, a very common occurrence in southern California, Nevada and Arizona and parts of some neighboring states. I usually make this "no water" determination based on extensive and detailed data from the US Geological Survey's National Hydrographic Database, an incredibly valuable tool. Also,

I can be wrong; I have moved at least one area from the “No Fish List” into the main book based on personal observation, I can’t tell you how surprised I was that day when I saw what most probably was a large fish making a wake in a muddy pond (see Woodchute Wilderness). *Breaking news*: In July 2026, I actually *caught* fish in a wilderness area on the “No Fish List,” the Oregon Badlands Wilderness.

One more additional note: The text for wilderness areas where I have caught a fish includes a note in parentheses that says “Number x.” This is simply the chronological sequence that this particular wilderness holds in the growing list of wilderness areas where I’ve been lucky enough to catch a fish. The first one, with the note saying “Number 1,” is the Daniel J Evans Wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, where I was hiking and catching rainbows in 1983 before I even knew wilderness areas were a thing. Every wilderness where I’ve caught a fish has a number, right on up to the ones where I was successful last month. This is probably meaningless to anyone but me, but remember, part of the reason for the book is to record what I have done so far, and the numbering is helpful to me for that purpose, even if no one else really cares. Except for maybe Bubba.

The Maps

This book would not be possible without ESRI and their ArcGIS software. In fact, the quest that this book documents would not be nearly as possible without ArcGIS, it’s a game changer. I can say that authoritatively because I started my fishing career in the 1970’s, long before the days when I could do online searches to access data from a multitude of fishery, conservation and research organizations, and then build maps using a GIS application, plan every aspect of my trip, and finally use the GPS on my smart phone together with downloaded USGS maps to keep track of exactly where I was every step along the way. It’s a wonder I could find any fish at all when I moved to Washington state in 1982. It’s a wonder I could find my way out of the woods in 1982. My only resources were some articles from Fly Fisherman magazine and an actual, printed-on-paper, Rand McNally road atlas.

But I digress. ArcGIS is the application I used to create all the original maps in the book. There are a small handful of maps, all with proper citations, that I cut and pasted from other sources and did not produce using ArcGIS, but that number is dwindling as I replace them with much better ones. For those not familiar, ArcGIS is available online (<https://arcgis.com>) for anyone to use, and you definitely should check it out. When you use this program, you can build your own maps by finding and selecting data layers and superimposing them on any of a couple of dozen possible background maps provided by ESRI. You can search within the program for data available on-line, and there are thousands and thousands of data sets available on-line. Try entering “trout” in the search box and be amazed at the wealth of information that comes up, all in a format compatible with ArcGIS that you can input directly into your very own map. The program also has controls that allow you tremendous flexibility in how you display data- you can pick colors, transparency levels, show or not show labels, go into the data tables of the data you have found and select specific features to display. You can turn individual data layers on and off as needed. Experiment, and you will find things you didn’t know you needed.

ArcGIS is an essential tool. The one most essential dataset is the wilderness areas layer maintained by a wonderful organization called Wilderness.net. You see wilderness boundaries on every map I made, these all come from the Wilderness.net data layer. One other item of interest to no one but me: The Wilderness.net dataset has photos linked to each wilderness area (or at least those which they have managed to get photos of) in the database. If you’re paying attention you might realize some of those photos look just like some of the photos in the book. That’s not because I stole the photos from Wilderness.net, I didn’t. In fact, all the photos in this book are mine (yes, that includes some that are of such poor quality that I’m not prone to brag about them, but fish don’t pose well for pictures and I’m not going to keep them out of the water too long). What happens in some cases is that Wilderness.net uses my photos, which I think is pretty cool. If you manage to get to a wilderness area that they don’t have a picture of, they’ll gladly use yours, too, if you provide it to them.

Different maps have different qualities that may make them more or less useful, or in some cases more or less easy to read. One important difference to keep in mind is that different data sets tell you different things about the fish distributions they illustrate. Ideally, the highlighted stream segments tell you there are fish there, but that is not always true. Some data layers document historical distribution. I usually avoid using these unless the historical distributions are shown alongside current distributions on one map. Some data layers document predicted distribution of fish, for example the USDA Climate Shield models. One variation on the concept of predictive distribution is data that shows habitat instead of actual fish distribution. The focus of the Endangered Species Act on critical habitat leads to an emphasis on habitat mapping, although I can tell you from many first-hand experiences that habitat does not always equate to the presence of fish. Where the data shows habitat and not actual fish presence I try to specify that distinction in the narrative.

Also, many of the maps have no legends, none have complete legends. Sorry, I hope that doesn't throw you off too much. You can look at the different color lines on maps where I got data from the USDA Climate Shield bull trout predictive distribution models, which are essentially a study on the potential effects of warming temperatures, and together with my limited narrative you might be able to figure out what the different colors mean. Maybe not. But in most cases, the narrative gives you some clues and you can basically figure out what the different lines mean. On the maps I make, the wilderness areas are always shaded green with a dark green boundary. I have started to go back and add partial legends, but unfortunately that's a time-consuming process.

There are no map scales either. You're just going to have to guess. Or get into ArcGIS yourself, where you can pretty much recreate my maps and measure distances using the program's measurement tool. That's what I do when I'm actually planning a trip.

Finally, you may notice that many (most?) of the maps and descriptions tell you where there are fish, but they don't tell you how to get there. Why would I tell anyone how to get there? You're on your own for that. But if you've taken my advice and learned how to use ArcGIS you're well on your way.

The Sources

I've used a wide variety of sources to document the presence or absence of fish in different wilderness areas. I can group most of the sources into several categories.

I started this project with primarily non-scientific media sources. I had what eventually grew to be about a 15-year collection of Northwest Flyfishing, Southwest Flyfishing, Fly Fisherman and Trout magazines, plus a few random copies of other publications. Many articles in these magazines, especially the first two I listed, have articles about places. I would scan all these place articles and look for wilderness areas, and then catalog them in a database with notes. Most of the entries in this database translated directly into this book. This was a very useful starting point, but I no longer look at these publications very often. Over a period of many years, they tend to get somewhat repetitive. They also focus on a subset of wilderness areas, generally the larger ones and always the ones with gamefish, primarily trout. Trout are well-covered in other sources, and the media publications don't help much with those remaining "undetermined" wilderness areas.

I have found a great wealth of data from other sources as this effort matured. These include:

- Government agencies: State game and fish departments often publish stocking records, some have a wealth of species-specific distribution data in map form, ideally as GIS layers. Federal government agencies are also responsible for designating critical habitat for endangered species, which lends itself very well to publication in GIS formats.
- Academic institutions; Most of the detailed state-level fish catalogues are produced by state universities. These often require me to read through narrative pages and match places up manually with the maps, which is time-consuming. I don't do this often, but it has been useful for filling in some of the blanks where available GIS data doesn't show any fish.
- Conservation organizations are also helpful, with special mention to Trout Unlimited. TU has a significant science presence, and has been involved producing GIS data that reflects both critical habitat and actual fish presence from surveys.
- Where there just isn't anything else I have cited observations of fish documented by users of iNaturalist.com and FishBrain.com, which are sites populated by users. iNaturalist.com is especially useful because it is not heavily oriented just on game fish, all fish observations are welcome. A growing number of these observations in wilderness areas came from me, by the way.

The Writing

My apologies in advance. The maps are the primary feature of this book. The accompanying narratives can often tend to be quite un-narrative in form. I try to include the pertinent facts, but often neglect some things, like writing in complete sentences and other stuff like that. If you want well-written narrative, read Ernest Hemingway (see note in the Beer Labels appendix under "Bell's Brewing"). If you want to know where the fish are, read on. Or at least look at the maps. Someday I'll go back and flesh out the narratives. Maybe.

The Distribution of the Book

I never intended a wide distribution for this book. Some who have seen it think I should publish it, either in hard copy or on-line. This will never happen. I have several good reasons for this.

For one thing, it's in large part a diary. Diaries are personal and private. Diaries don't generally get published, unless they were kept by someone famous, and then they are often published after the writer is no longer around to object.

The book, if published, would also appeal to a very limited audience.

If I'm wrong, and the book would actually prove to be popular, and thousands upon thousands of people are truly interested in learning where they can go in our designated wilderness areas to catch fish, then I *really* don't want it to get distributed. I would feel terrible if I knew that my work had made some of these wilderness areas accessible to thousands of people, or had instilled the desire in thousands of people to go and visit. These places are precious, and I don't wish to spoil some of that special value by inviting overuse. Real fishermen understand.

And one more reason I'm not going to publish the book: It will never be finished. It's a work in progress, and I don't plan on stopping the quest until I can no longer hike and fish, which will be the day I can't do anything else, either. I will always be looking for the next new wilderness area to explore, and I will always be adding information I find, either first hand or from other sources, to make the book better. If you have a hard copy it will have an "as of" date, you won't have the most current version, only I will. And if you have more up-to-date or more complete information, let me know about it and you may be part of the next update. Especially if you have documented proof of fish in areas where I am uncertain, or even more important, in areas where I say there are no fish. I'm certain there are areas in my "No Fish" appendix that actually have fish. I had to remove the Woodchute Wilderness from the "No Fish" list when I encountered the Woodchute Sea Monster, I'm sure there will be other areas like Woodchute (Update: In July 2026 Oregon Badlands had to come off the "No Fish" list because I caught fish!). If you have knowledge of one of them, let me know and I'll make you famous. OK, I'll make you famous to at least eight other people...

The bottom line is that the number of people who have seen this book or who have copies is very limited, currently in the single digits. Most of these people are related to me. If you have a copy, consider yourself to be very lucky (or a relative). You are one of the very small number of people who I feel I can trust with the very sensitive information contained in these volumes.

And the Labels

It's my book, so I can do what I want with it. And I want to include entries from my collection of beer labels featuring flyfishing for trout and salmon. It makes sense if you think about it; brewers have long bragged about the cool, clear water that goes into their product. One of the things that many beer drinkers most associate with cool, clear water is mountain streams, the kind that often are full of trout and salmon. The two go together, and brewers have long recognized and celebrated this fact by placing trout and salmon on their labels, and frequently using these fish as the inspiration for the names of the beers themselves. I have chosen to honor this connection by placing beer labels at strategic locations within the narratives for the individual wilderness areas. I try as much as I can to make sure there is a connection between the beer and the wilderness. Sometimes it's easy: When I drove away from the Flat Tops Wilderness in Colorado, the first town I came to was Meeker, and one of the first things I saw in Meeker was the Smoking River Brewery. The labels that Smoking River uses are exceptionally beautiful, with a detailed line drawing of a trout superimposed over a topographic map of the White River valley coming out of the wilderness. That label had to go with the Flat Tops Wilderness entry, it could not have gone anywhere else in the book. It still makes me smile.

Some of the other associations of label with wilderness area aren't so clear. Same state, same fish, sometimes it's a real stretch. I do have a Michigan brewery with a label in an entry for a Wyoming wilderness area. If you can't figure it out, or if you want to know a little more about the beer and the brewery that produces it, check out Appendix 3, Index to the Beer Labels.

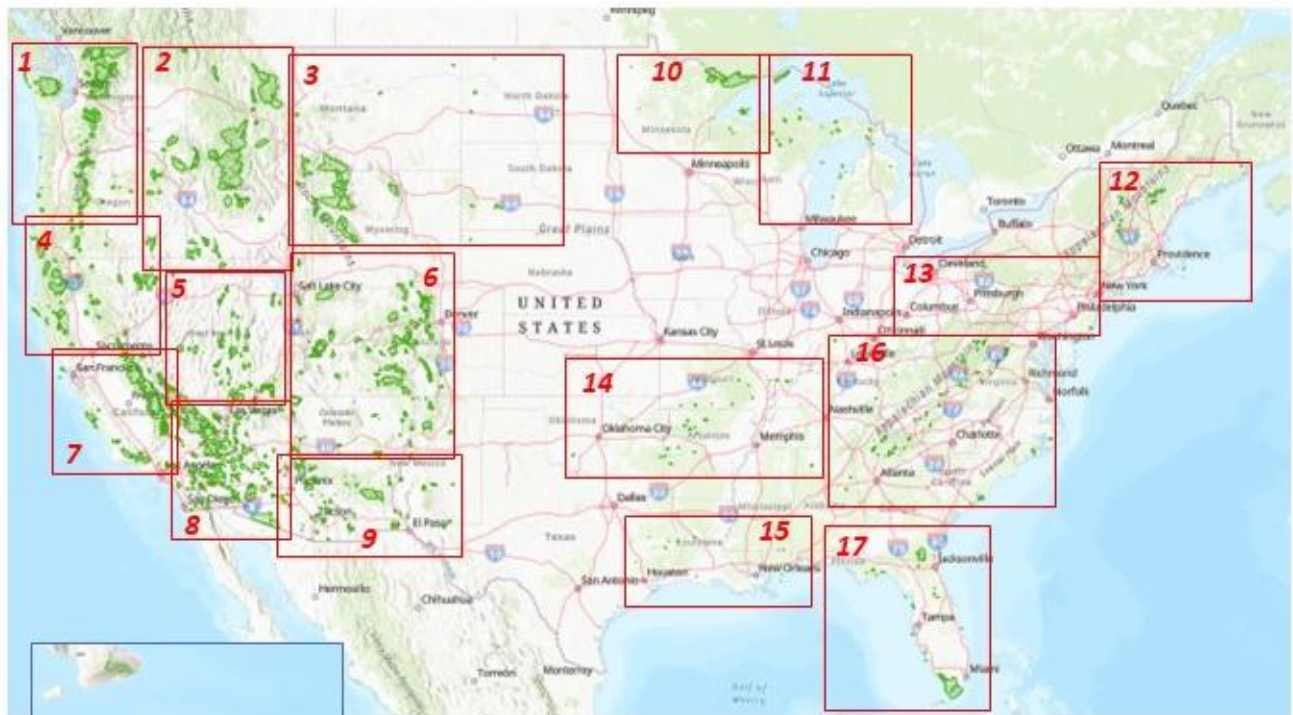
Finally, the Wildernesses

The wildernesses where I have reason to believe fish reside are listed in alphabetical order. For a graphical index, and an idea of where these wilderness areas are located, turn the page.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one with a trout stream by,
And that has made all the difference.

- Apologies to Robert Frost

Key to locator maps on the following pages. Use these maps to figure out where the wilderness areas are. Wherever you are or wherever you are going to be, you can figure out where the nearest wildernesses are and explore. Unless you are in Kansas or Iowa, then you'll just have to go somewhere else.



Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text



Map 1



Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text

Locations in pale red are in the "No Fish List" appendix, until someone proves to me that they shouldn't be there

Map 2



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Map 3



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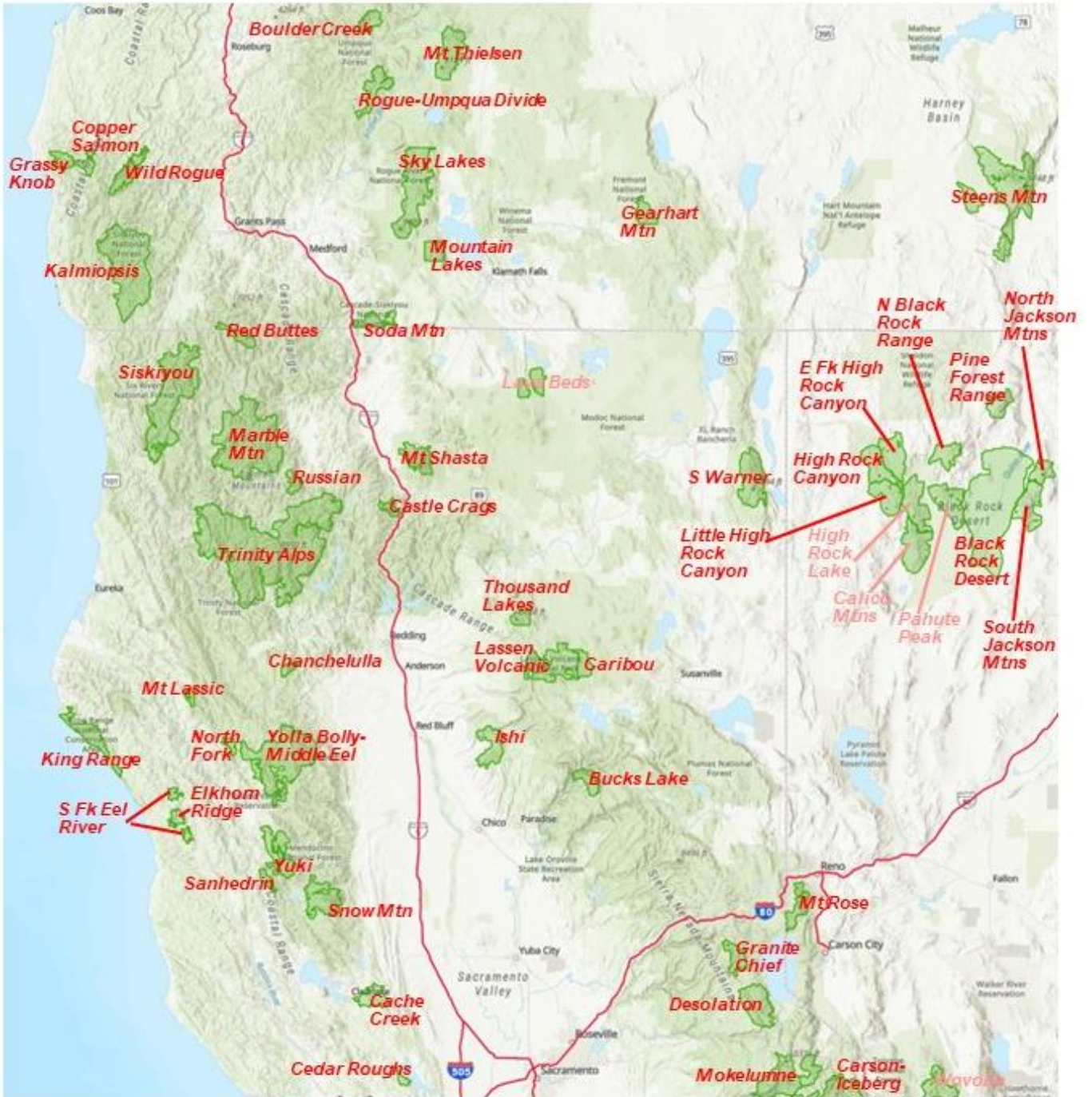
"There are no words that can tell the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its charm."

"The farther one gets into the wilderness, the greater is the attraction of its lonely freedom."

"Sometimes we vary our diet with fish - wall-eyed pike, ugly slimy catfish, and other uncouth finny things, looking very fit denizens of the mud-choked water..."

- Theodore Roosevelt (US National Park Service, Theodore Roosevelt NP)

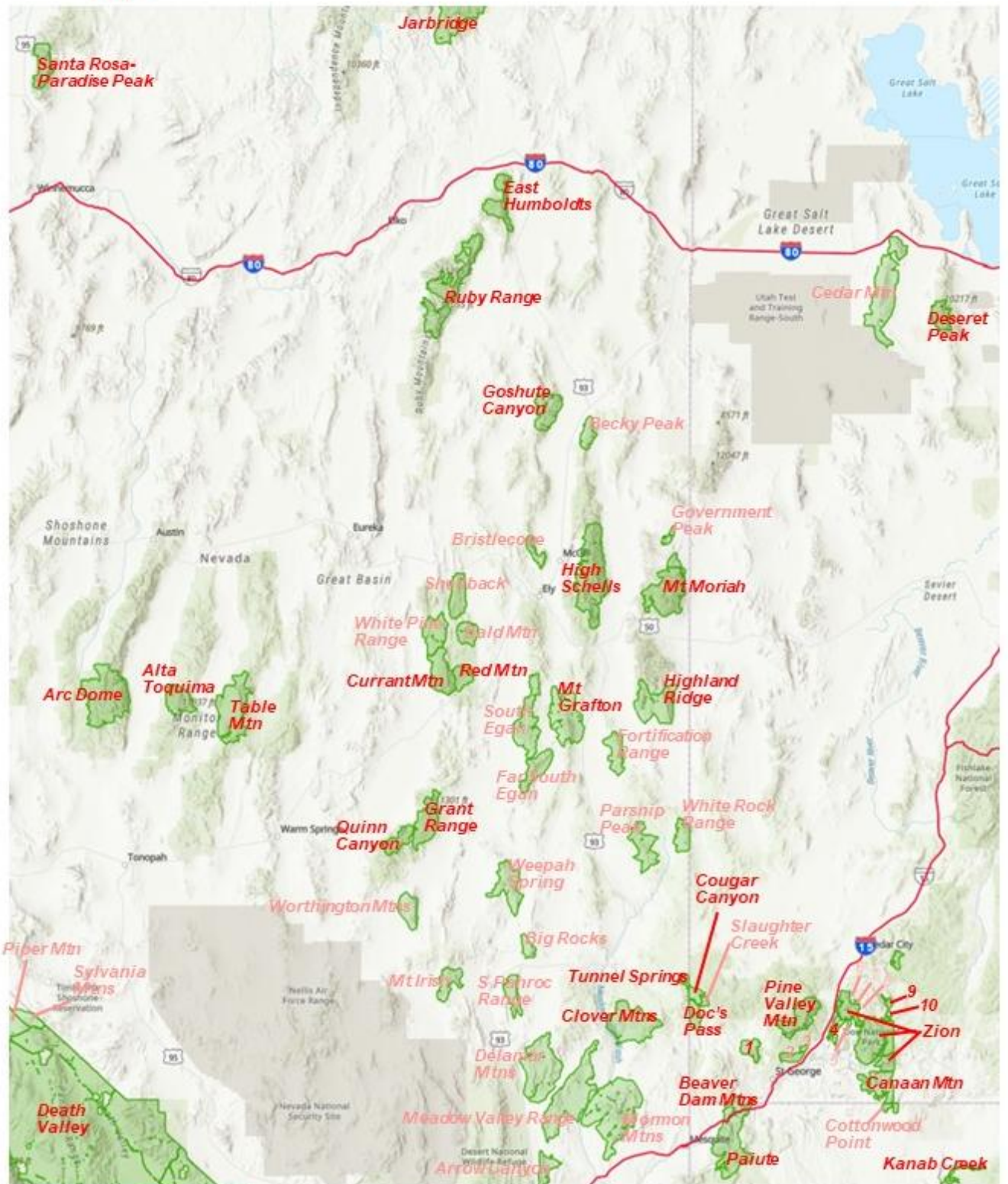
Map 4



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Map 5

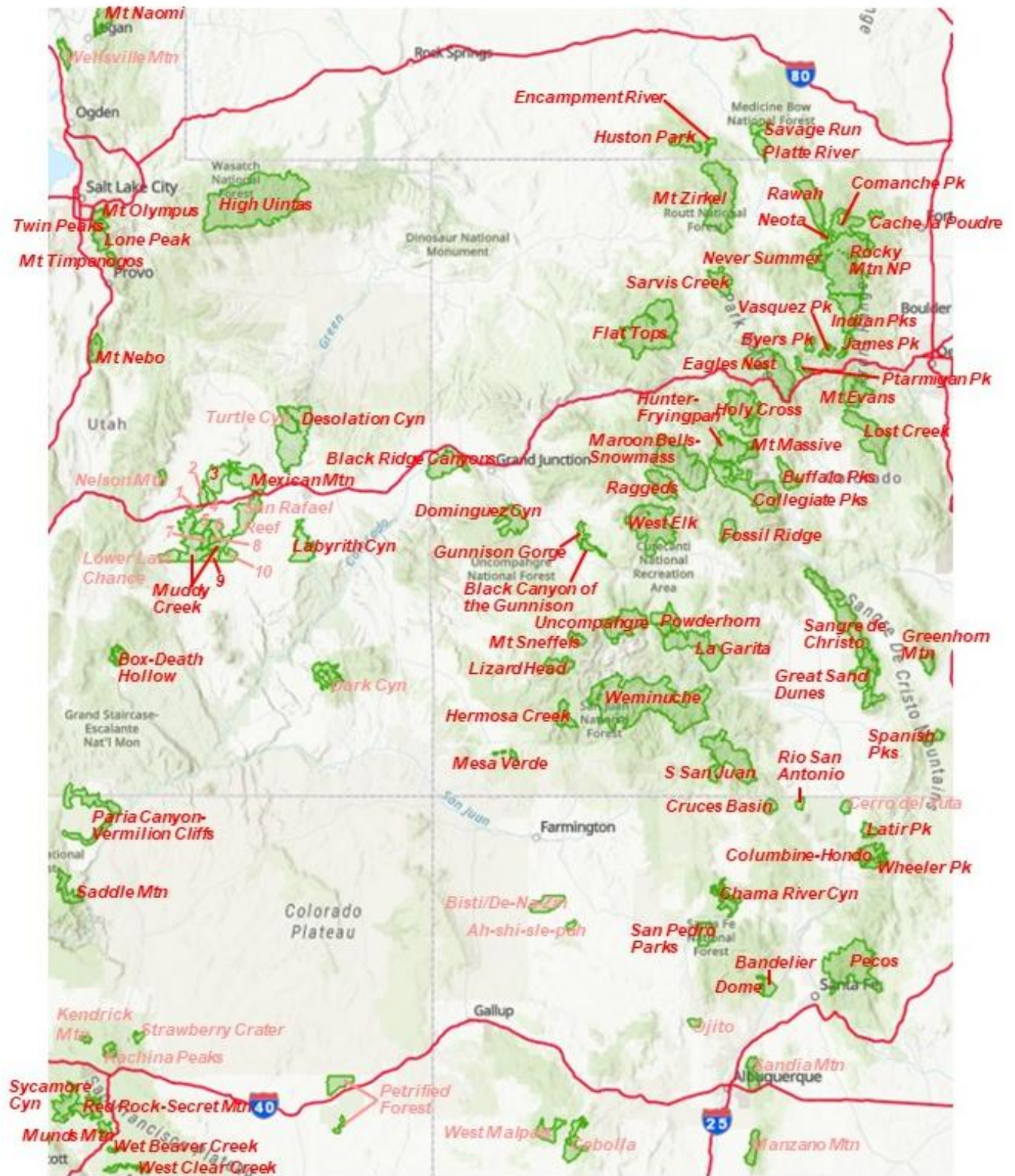


- 1 Red Mountain
- 2 Cottonwood Canyon
- 3 Cottonwood Forest
- 4 Blackridge
- 5 Red Butte

- 6 Taylor Creek
- 7 LaVerkin Creek
- 8 Beartrap Canyon
- 9 Deep Creek North
- 10 Deep Creek

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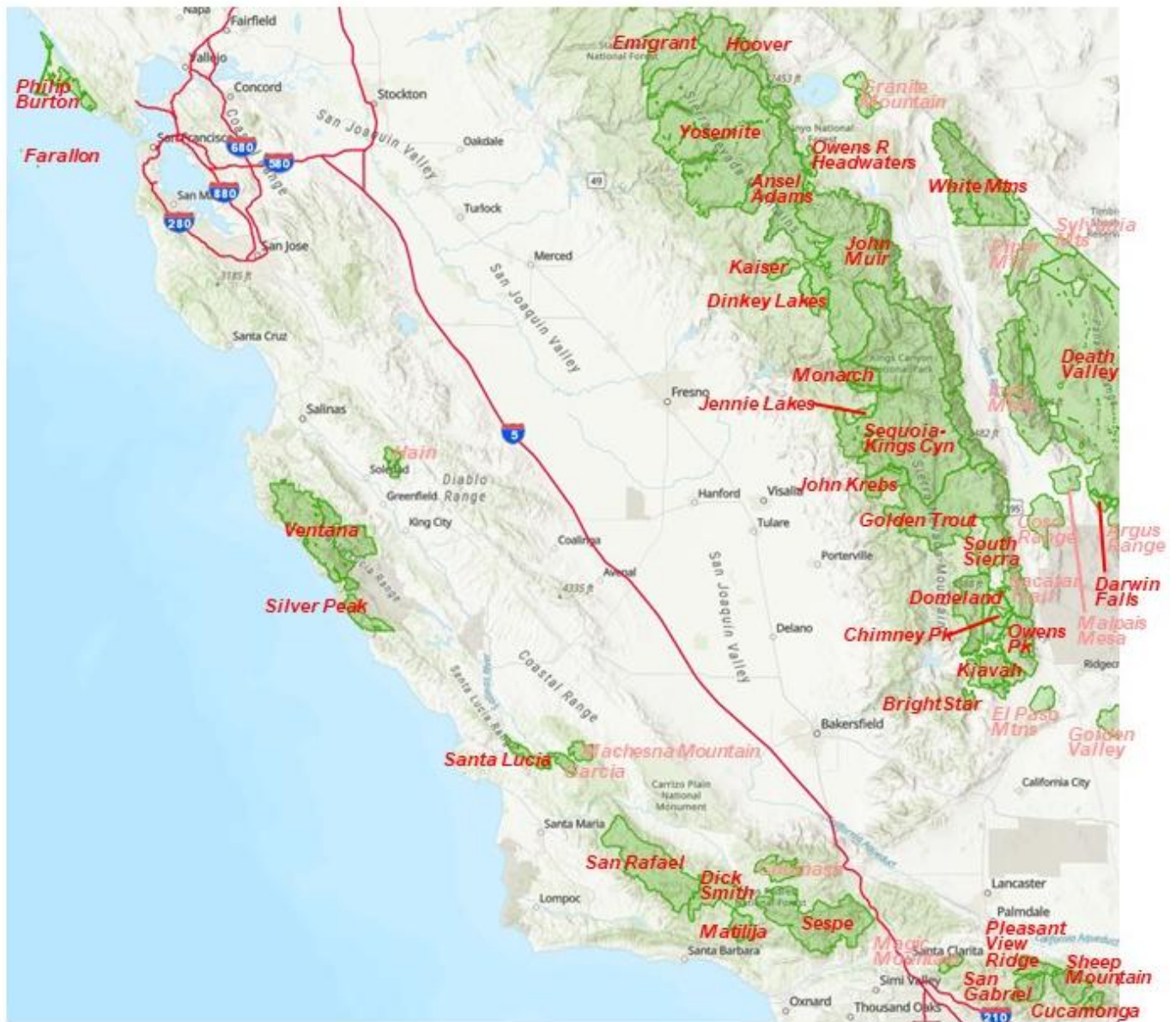
Map 6



- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Devil's Canyon | 6 Little Ocean Draw |
| 2 Eagle Canyon | 7 Horse Valley |
| 3 Sid's Mountain | 8 Little Wild Horse Canyon |
| 4 Cold Wash | 9 Middle Wild Horse Mesa |
| 5 Red's Canyon | 10 Big Wild Horse Mesa |

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Map 7

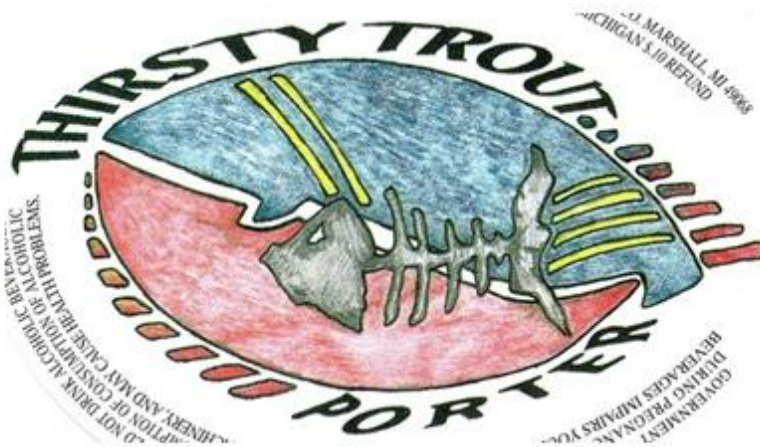


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Map 8



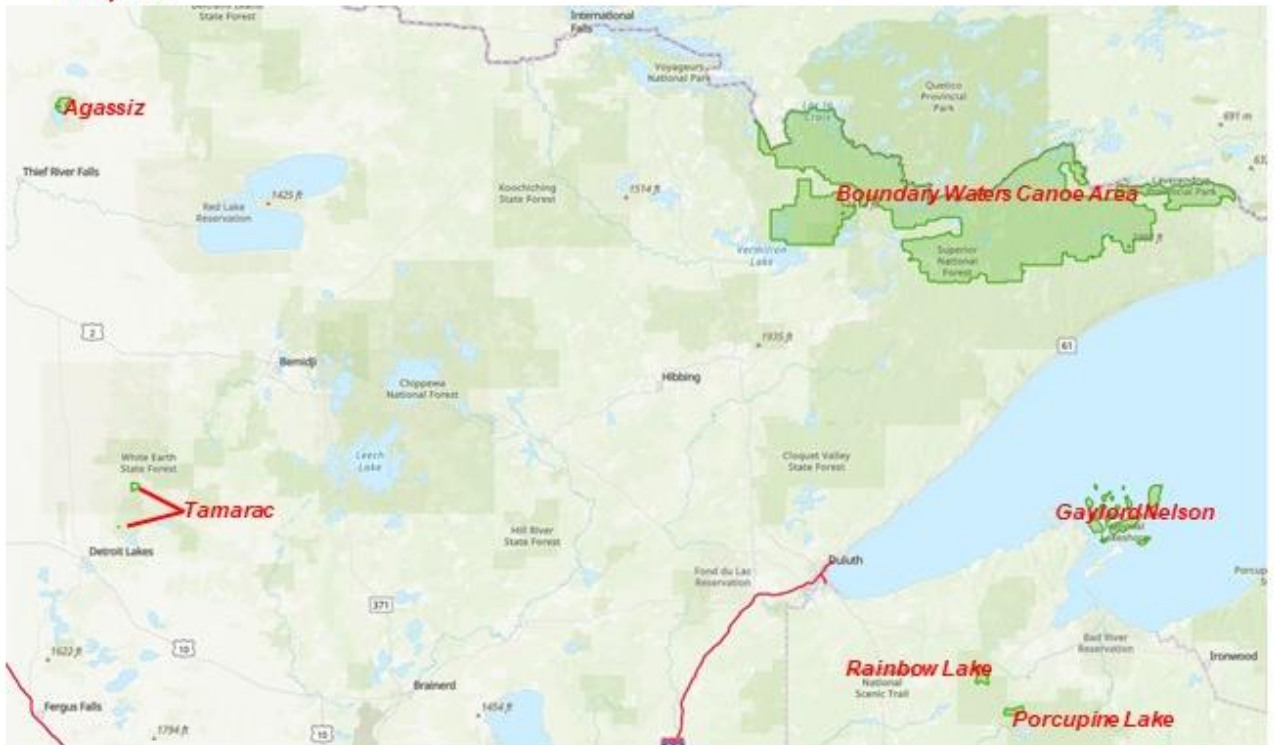
Map 9



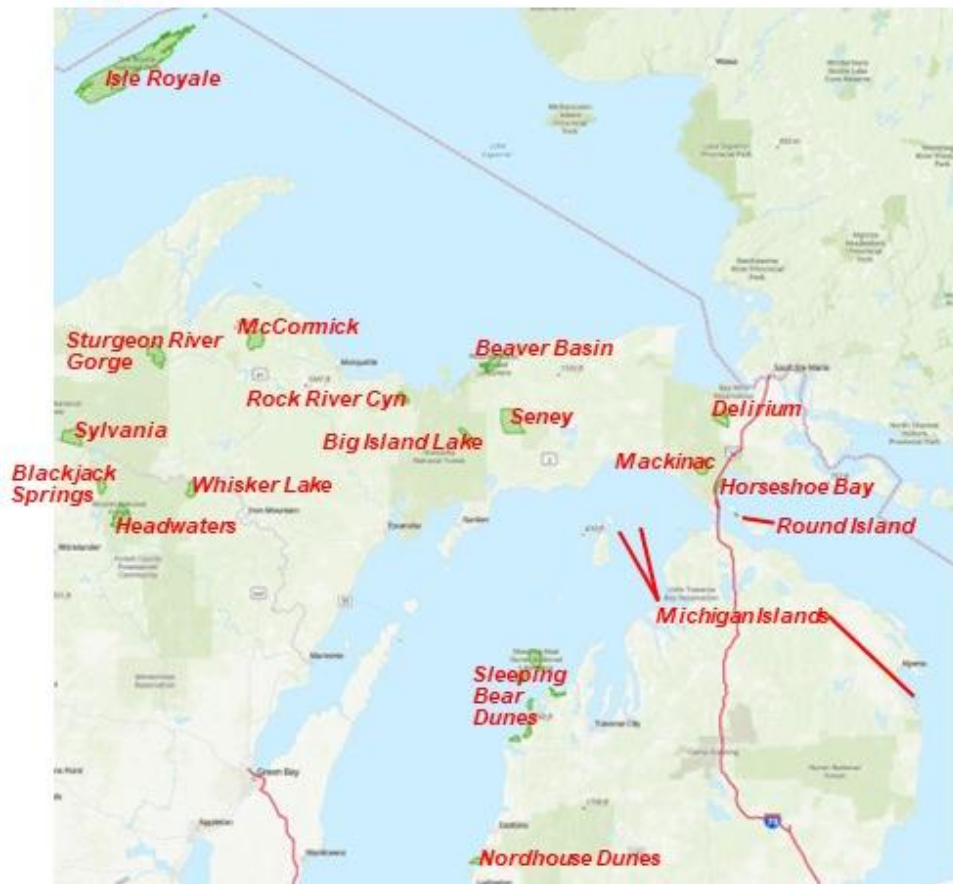
Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text. Locations in pale red are in the "No Fish List" appendix, until someone proves to me that they shouldn't be there.

There are desert fishes, but there are also fish deserts...

Map 10



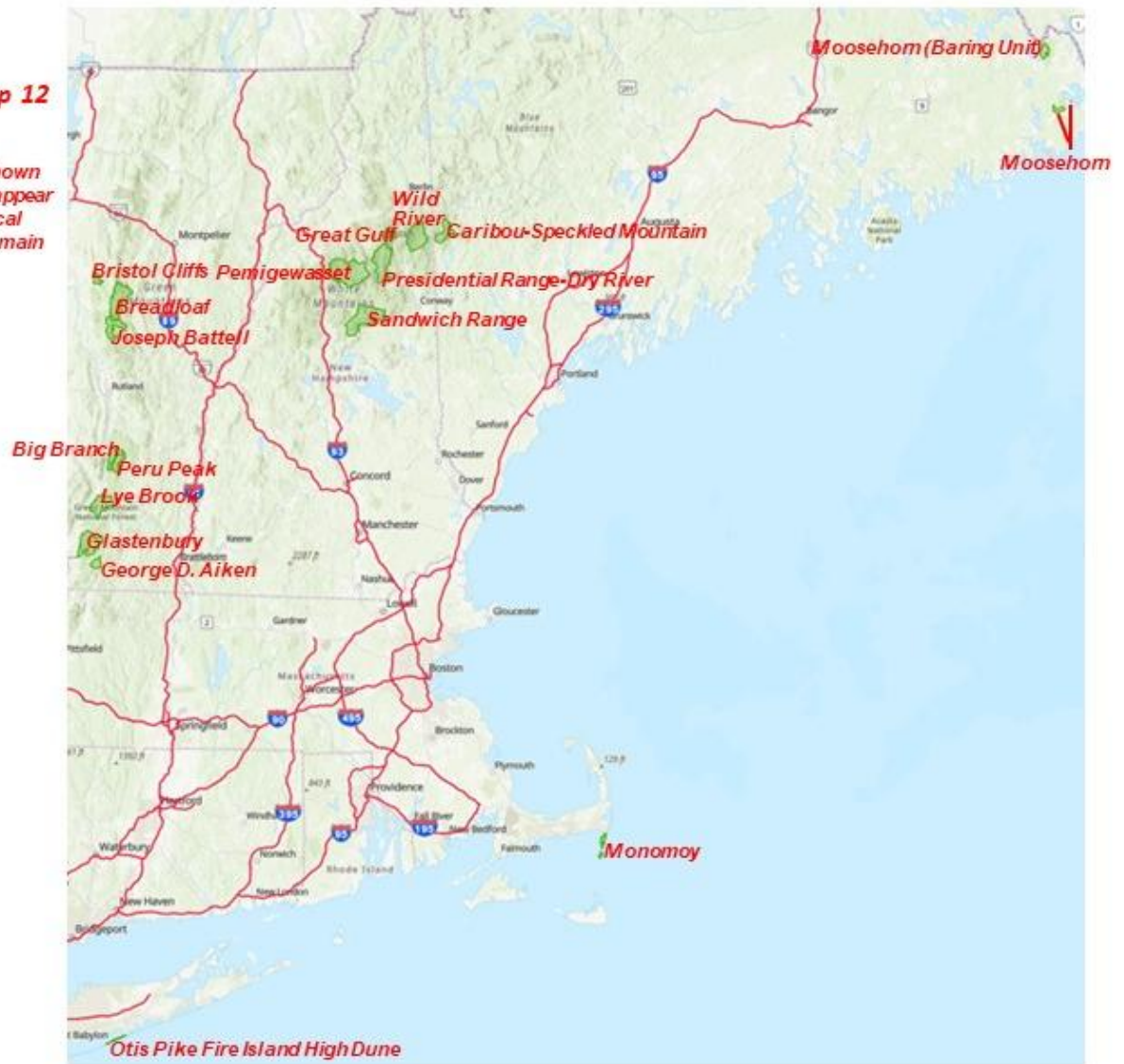
Map 11



Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text
There is no light-colored text, we're getting into the wet end of the country

Map 12

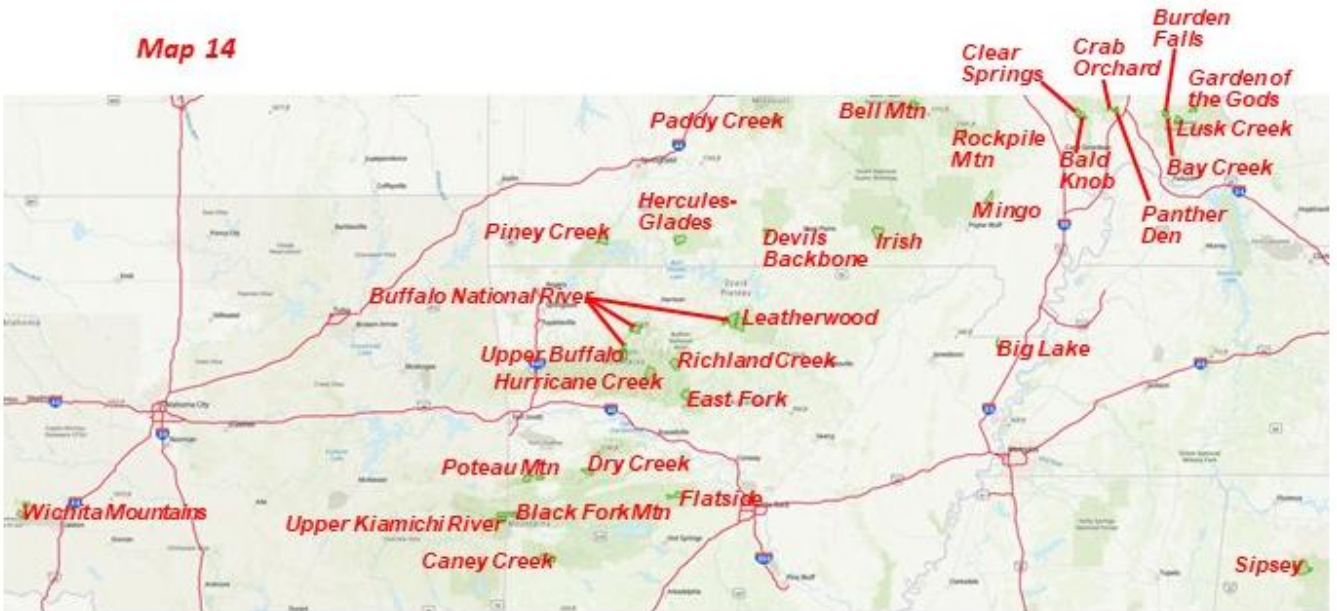
Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text



Map 13

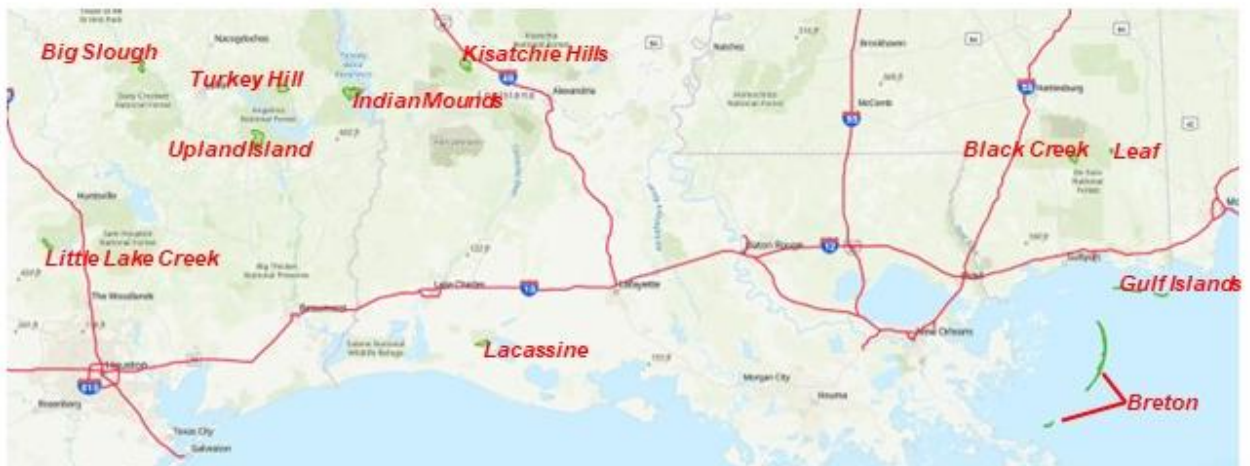


Map 14



*Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text
Small and scattered, but the Ozarks have their share.*

Map 15



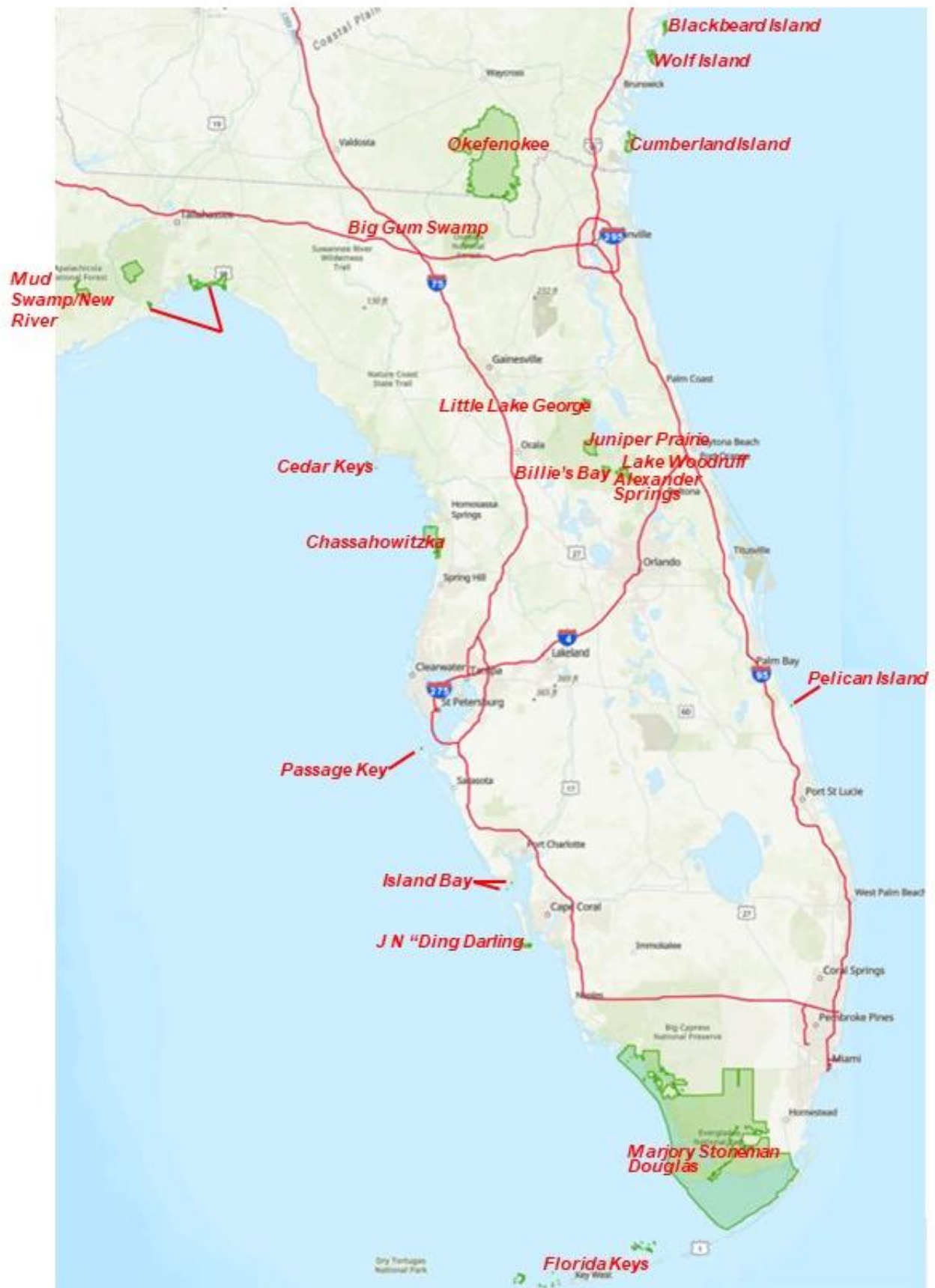
Map 16



Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order
in the main text
Lots of little ones...



Map 17



Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text

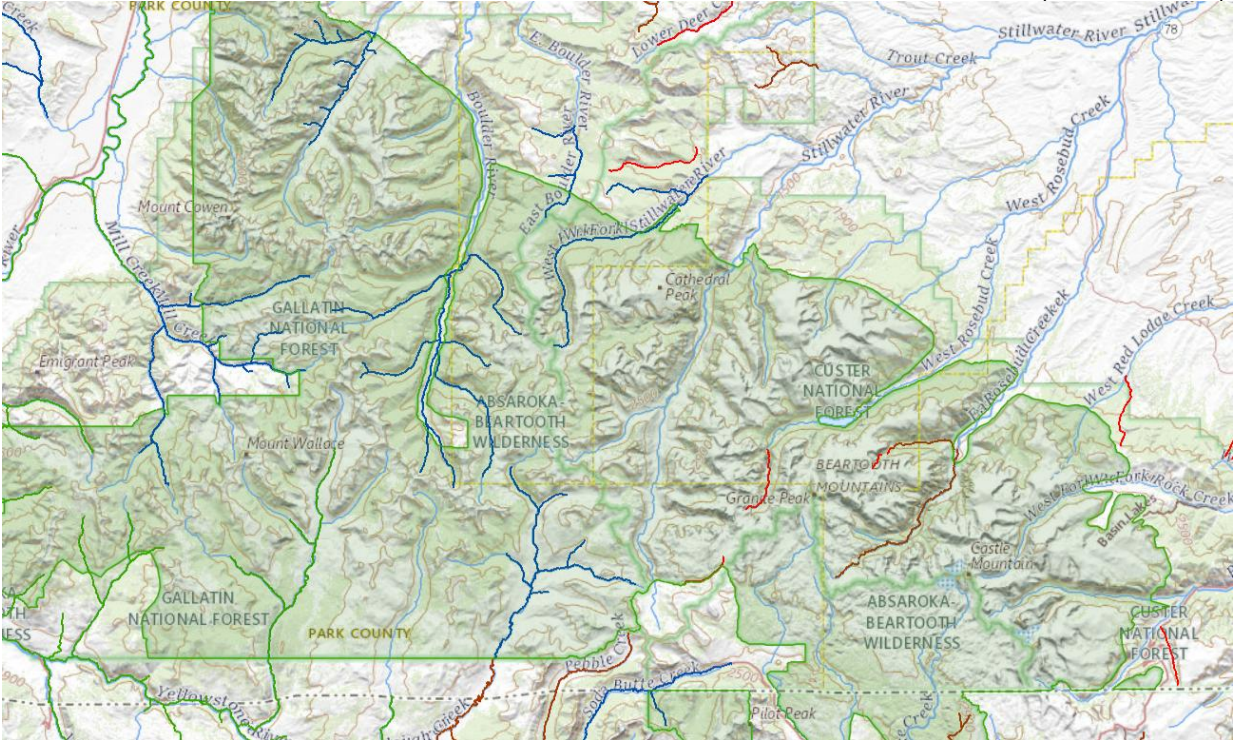
Map 18



Locations shown in dark red appear in alphabetical order in the main text

Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness (MT, WY)

Yellowstone cutthroat core conservation populations are in Mill Creek drainage on west side, West Fork Stillwater River and East Boulder River in central area, in Slough Creek to the south, and in East Rosebud Creek headwaters to the east. Conservation populations in Bear Creek in the west, Hellroaring Creek in the south, and West Boulder River and Boulder River in the north central area. (TU YCT, 2019)



July 31 2020 I hiked in on the West Fork Mill Creek trail and caught some nice Yellowstone cutthroats. Five miles on the trail, and I only encountered two other people, a weathered-looking guide and his client on horseback looking for a "lost donkey." (Number 24)



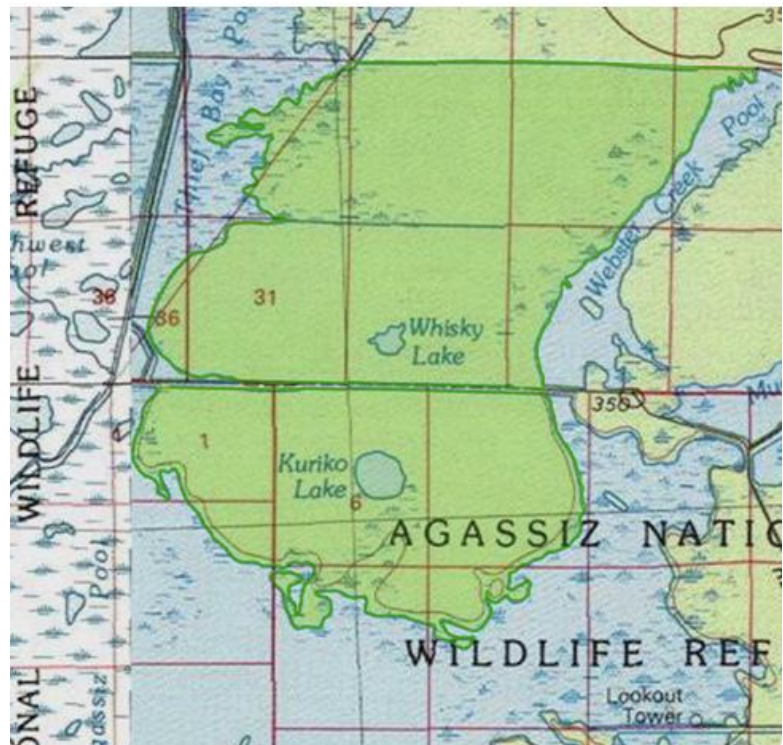
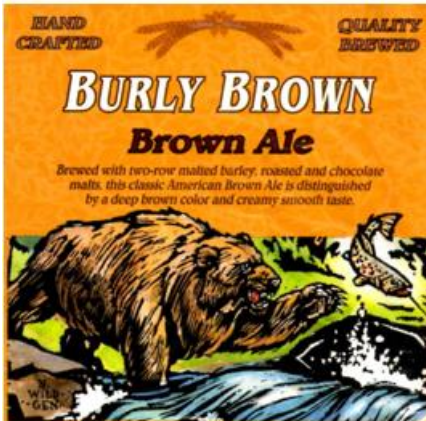
Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness (MT, WY)



In the eastern part of the wilderness several lakes, including Granite Lake and Albino Lake with cutthroats, have relatively easy hiking access from the Beartooth Highway running between Red Lodge and Cooke City. (NWFF May-Jun 2019, p.37)

Agassiz Wilderness (MN)

The wilderness is within the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, and contains small pieces of open water, larger swamp areas, and shoreline along larger pools. Thirty species of fish have been documented in pools, ponds, and watercourses on the Refuge. The most abundant species are the brook stickleback and the fathead minnow. (USF&WS 2005 Agassiz NWR p. 38)



Agua Tibia Wilderness (CA)



Agua Tibia Creek comes off of Agua Tibia Mountain near the southern edge of the wilderness. The creek holds arroyo chub, although it's not clear if they extend up into the wilderness. (Stephenson, 1999, p. 128) USGS NWIS shows this section of Agua Tibia Creek, as well as Arroyo Seco Creek and a couple of others as perennial. (USGS 2021)

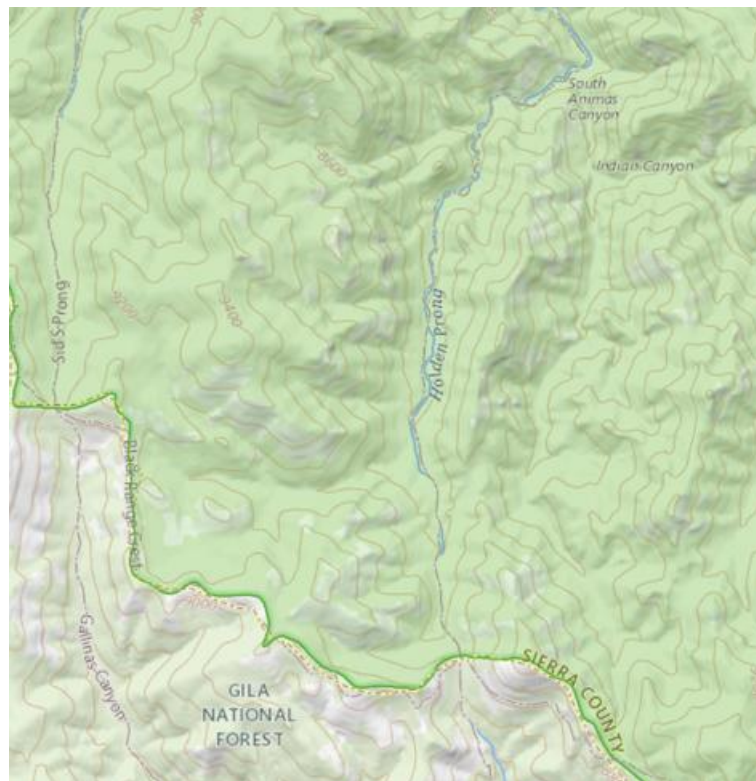
Aldo Leopold Wilderness (NM)

Bubba and I camped next to the west side of the wilderness on FS 150 and hiked in along the Black Canyon creek toward the east to fish in July 2010. I caught several nice Gila trout, my first ones anywhere. One of the reasons we went was a SWFF article that said you will see “more bears than people;” we did, three to two, and we were the two. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2008, p. 10; number 6)



The next day we caught Rio Grande cutthroats (or at least we thought they were) in Holden Prong of Animas Creek. Bubba and I hiked up from the south on the Railroad Trail, about 9 miles each way up and over the Continental Divide; that's the only way in unless Ted Turner invites you to come up from below through his ranch. (Trout, Winter 2012, p. 8) I actually had the opportunity to meet Ted's daughter, Laura Turner Seydel, shortly after this. If I had known at the time she was Ted's daughter I would have asked for permission to come up the creek. I also probably would not have disrespected the Atlanta Braves and told her I was a Mets fan...

There are also rainbows in headwaters of Mimbres River in the southwestern portion of the wilderness (SWFF Nov-Dec 2008, p. 12)



Aleutian Islands Wilderness (AK)



Salmon run in streams on major islands, including over 100 streams on Unalaska Island, and 20 or more streams each on Atka, Amlia, Adak and Anchitka. Most have pink salmon, while sockeye, coho and chum are also present. (USF&WS 1988 Alaska Maritime NWR, p. II-160)

There is a record of Atka mackerel at a small island southeast of Amchitka Island, I'm guessing they may be quite common. (iNaturalist 2023)

Adak Island also has kokanee, with Dolly Varden and Arctic char in streams. Hidden Bay on the south coast has a run of sockeye salmon (USF&WS 1988 Alaska Maritime NWR, p. II-160) with chums and pinks also present (ADFG 2023)



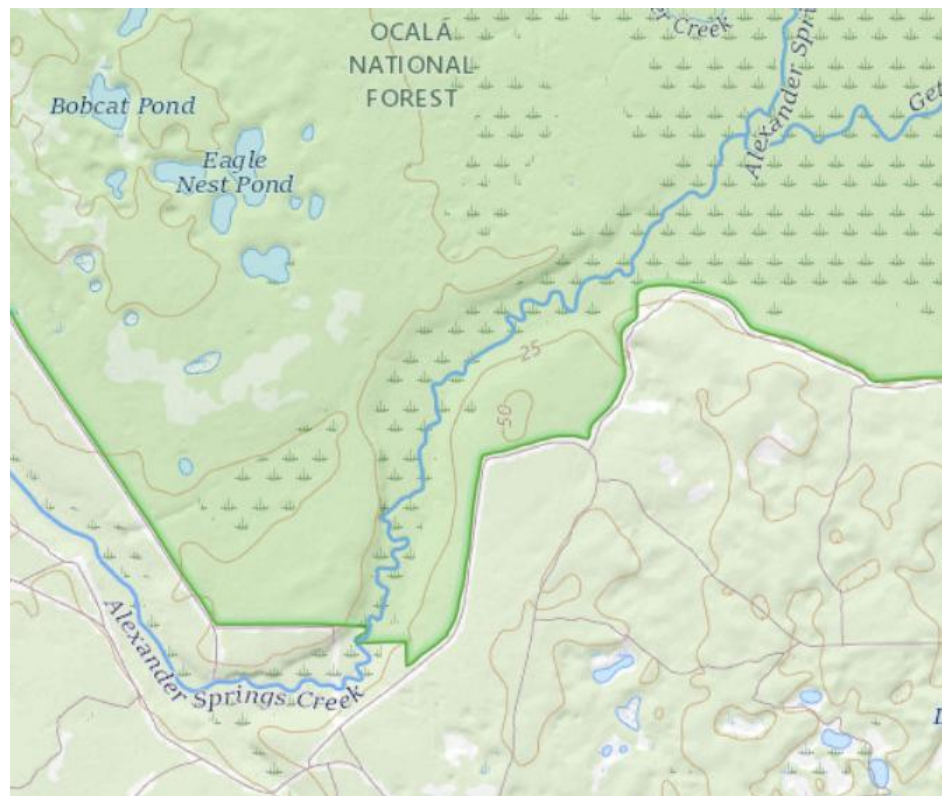
Aleutian Islands Wilderness (AK)



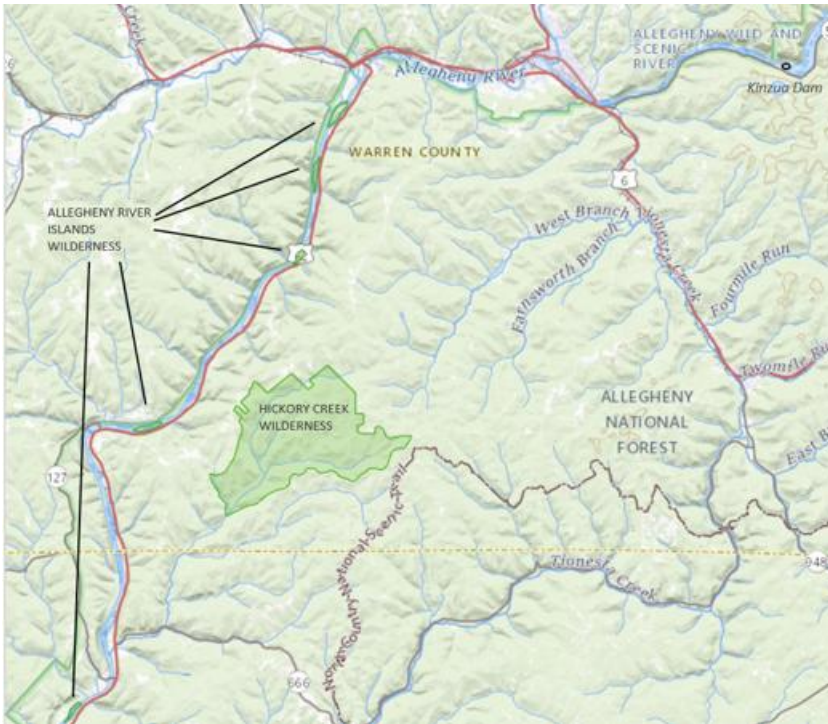
Attu Island is wilderness except for the area immediately around the Navy base on the southeastern corner of the island. Peaceful River and Henderson River extend into the wilderness and hold runs of pink salmon. (USF&WS 1988 Alaska Maritime NWR, p. II-160)

Alexander Springs Wilderness (FL)

Alexander Springs is actually adjacent to Billie's Bay Wilderness, upstream from here. The Alexander Springs Creek runs through this wilderness on the way to the St. Johns River, and holds good quantities of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear, and spotted sunfish. (US Forest Service, Ocala NF, 2018)



Allegheny River Islands Wilderness (PA)

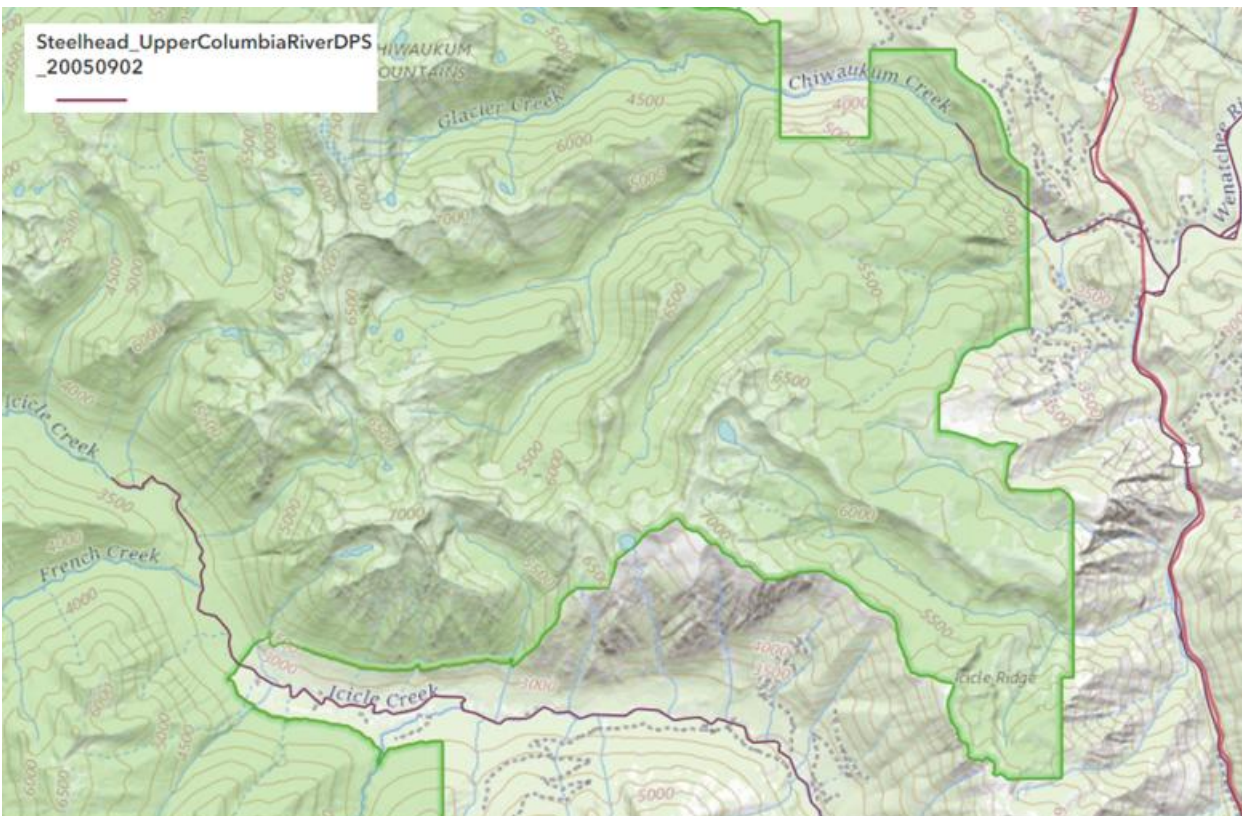


Tailwaters below the Kinzua Dam on the Allegheny River provide large brown trout and rainbow trout, including in channels within the wilderness. (FF Jun-Jul 2013, p. 49)

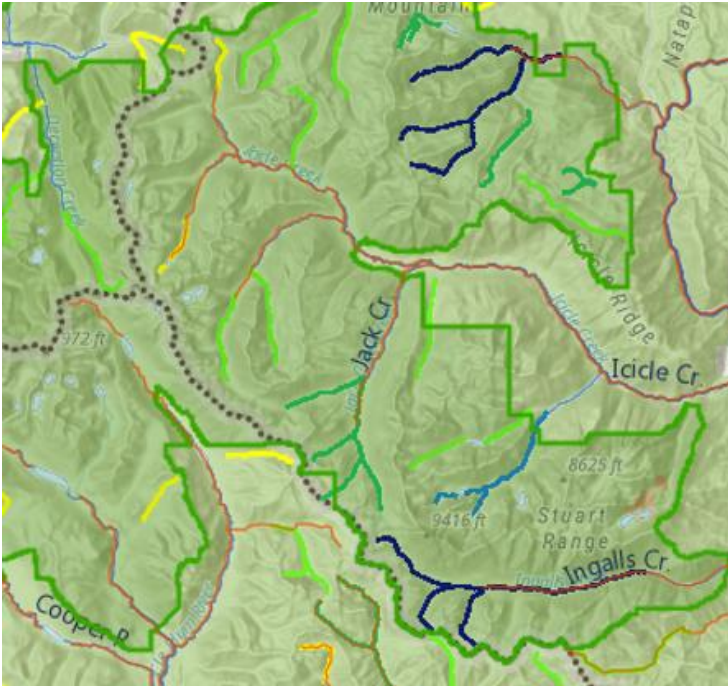


Alpine Lakes Wilderness (WA)

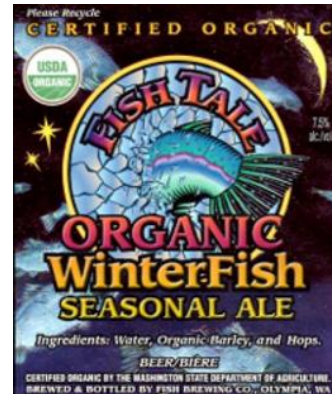
Icicle Creek is critical habitat for steelhead, as well as a small portion of Chiwaukum Creek, another Wenatchee River tributary. The same portions of Chiwaukum Creek are also chinook salmon critical habitat. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



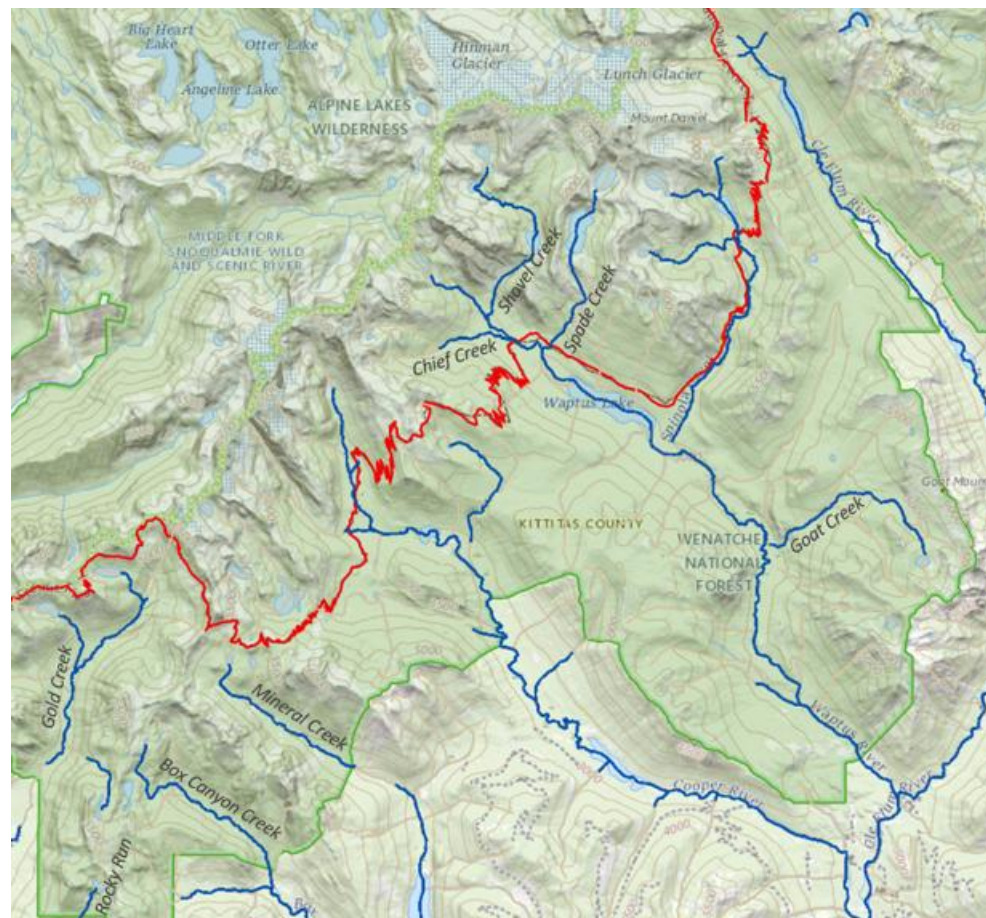
Alpine Lakes Wilderness (WA)



The Cle Elum River system in the south-central part of wilderness is critical habitat for bull trout, as well as Ingalls Creek, Icicle Creek, and Chiwaukum Creek systems in the eastern portion of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)
Climate Shield predictive model (map) shows high probability of bull trout in Ingalls and Chiwaukum systems. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

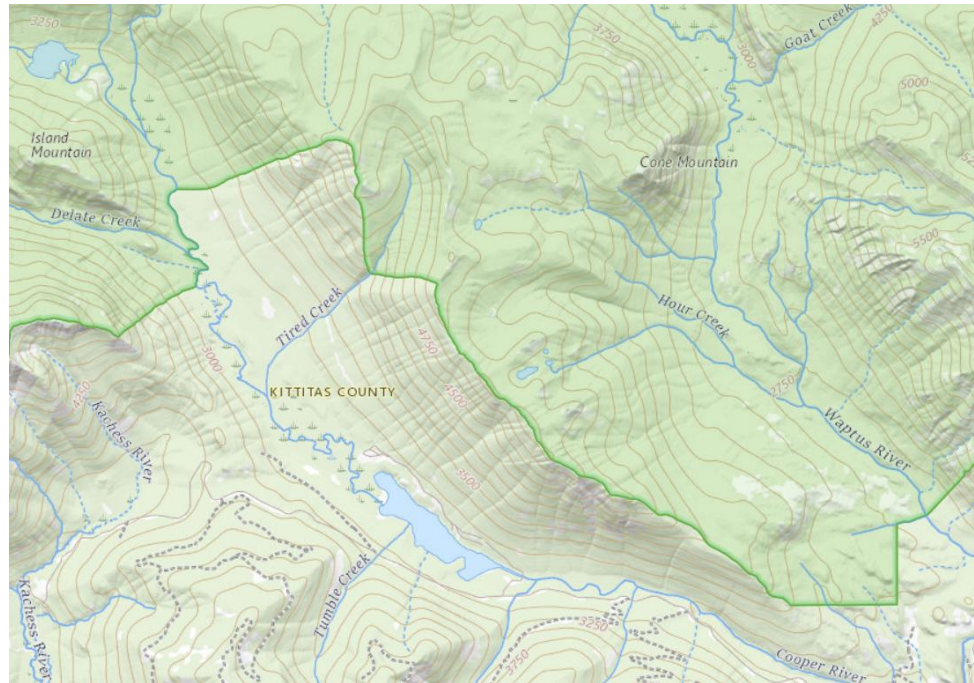


There are Westslope cutthroats in the south-central portion of the wilderness. Populations exist in upper Yakima River tributaries Gold Creek and Rocky Run; in Kachess River tributaries Box Canyon Creek and Mineral Creek; in Cooper River; in Waptus River and tributaries Goat Creek, Spinola Creek, Spade Creek, Shovel Creek and Chief Creek; and in upper Cle Elum River. (Mayfield)



Alpine Lakes Wilderness (WA)

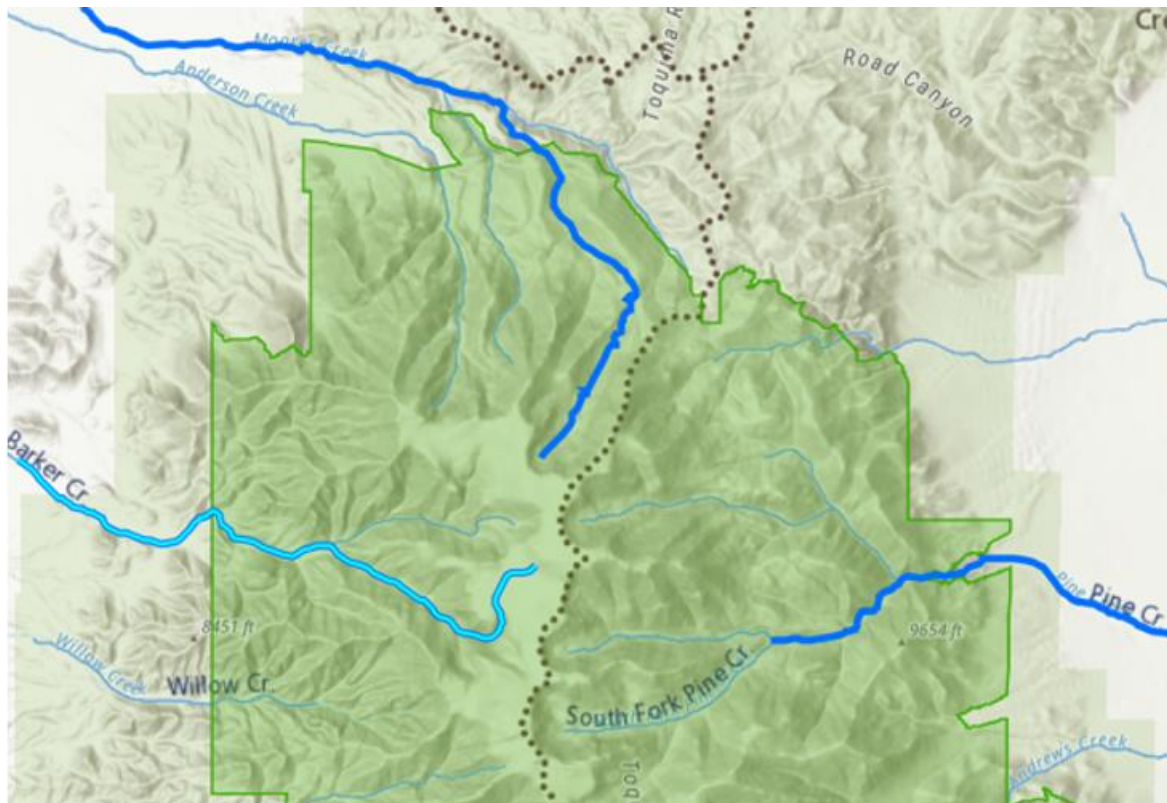
There are rainbow trout in Cooper River, between Pete's Lake and the wilderness boundary. Wapatus River is almost entirely within the wilderness, with rainbow trout in lower parts and brookies in upper. (NWFF Jul-Aug 2017, p. 36)



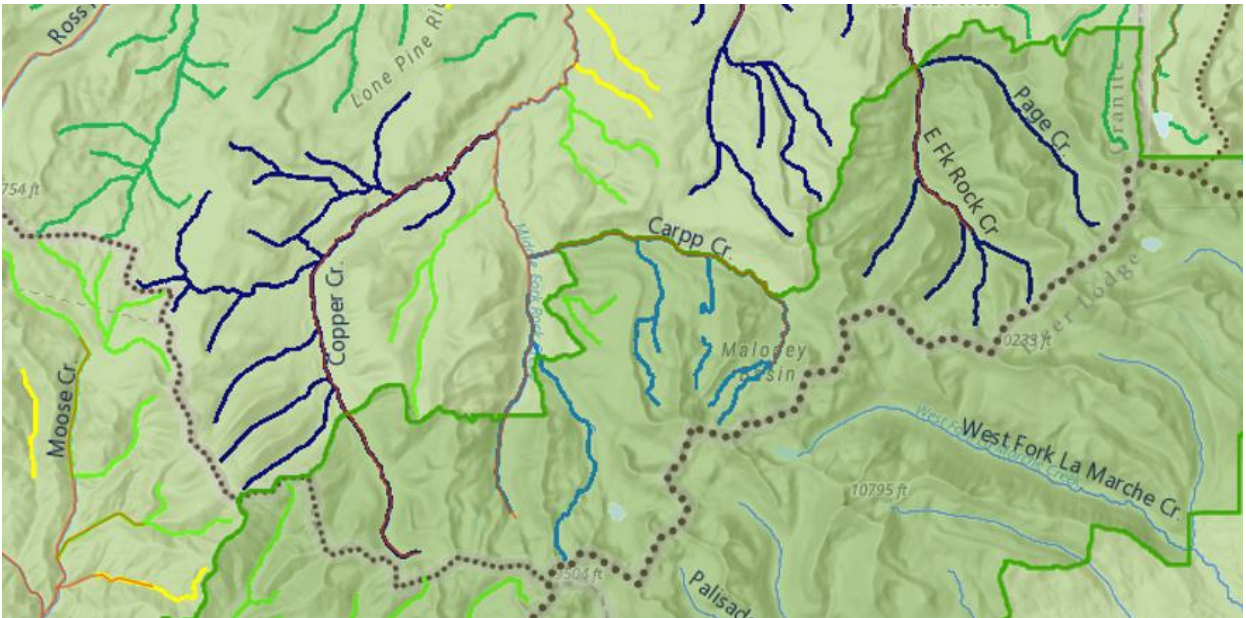
Alta Toquima Wilderness (NV)

A mile of Moores Creek on the west slope and a small segment of Pine Creek on the east slope each have restored populations of Lahontan cutthroats, with brookies and browns as well. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009, p. 23; TU LCT 2020)

Barker Creek on the west slope has brookies and rainbows but not the cutthroats. (Nevada DOW 2017)

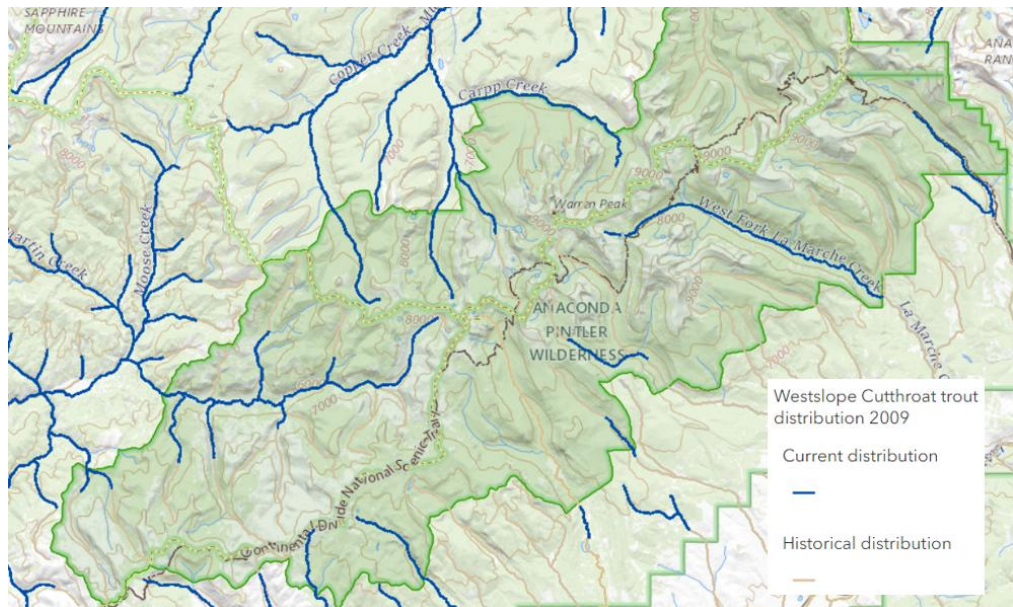


Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness (MT)



There is critical habitat for bull trout in East Fork Bitterroot River in the western part of the wilderness; in Copper Creek and Meadow Creek tributaries of Rock Creek in the central part of the wilderness; and in East Fork Rock Creek in eastern portion of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in Copper Creek and East Fork Rock Creek systems. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Westslope cutthroats are in the Bitterroot drainage in the western part of the wilderness, in the Rock Creek Drainage in the northern portions, and in Big Hole tributaries across the southern part of the wilderness. (Mayfield)



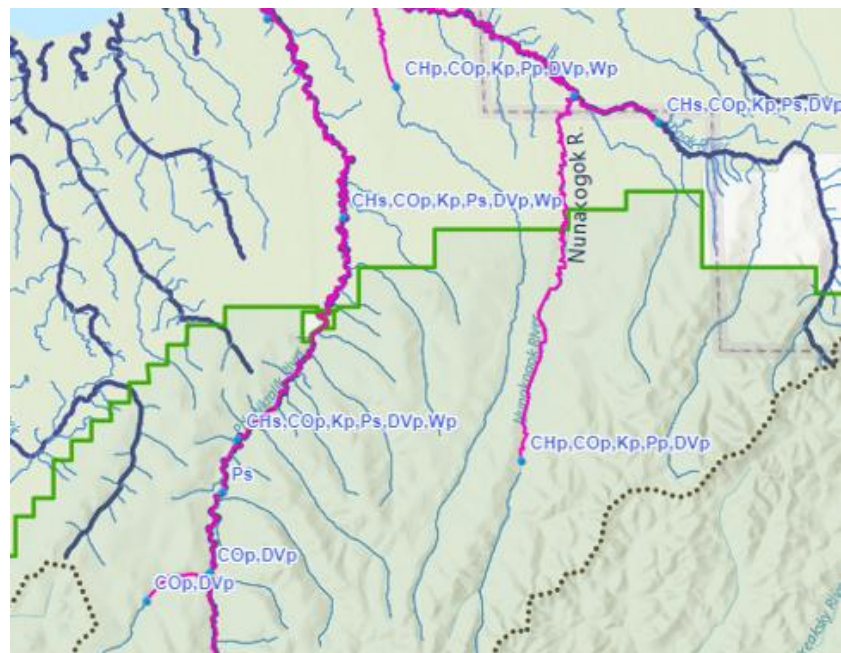
Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness (MT)

On July 30, 2020 I caught westslope cutthroats, as well as some small brook trout, in E Fork Rock Creek, in the first mile within the wilderness. Also went up E Fork Rock Creek tributary Page creek above the cascade, no luck but nice hike. (Number 23)

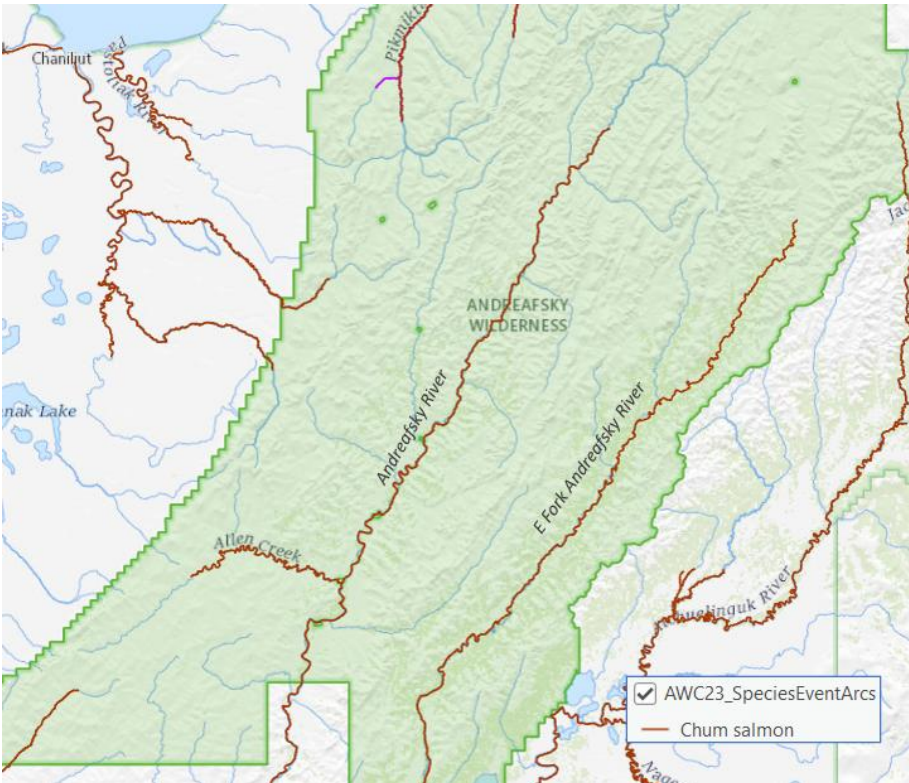


Andreafsky Wilderness (AK)

Chum, coho, chinook and pink salmon and Dolly Varden char are in the Nunakogok and Pikmiktalik Rivers in the northwestern corner of the wilderness. (ADF&G 2016)



Andreafsky Wilderness (AK)



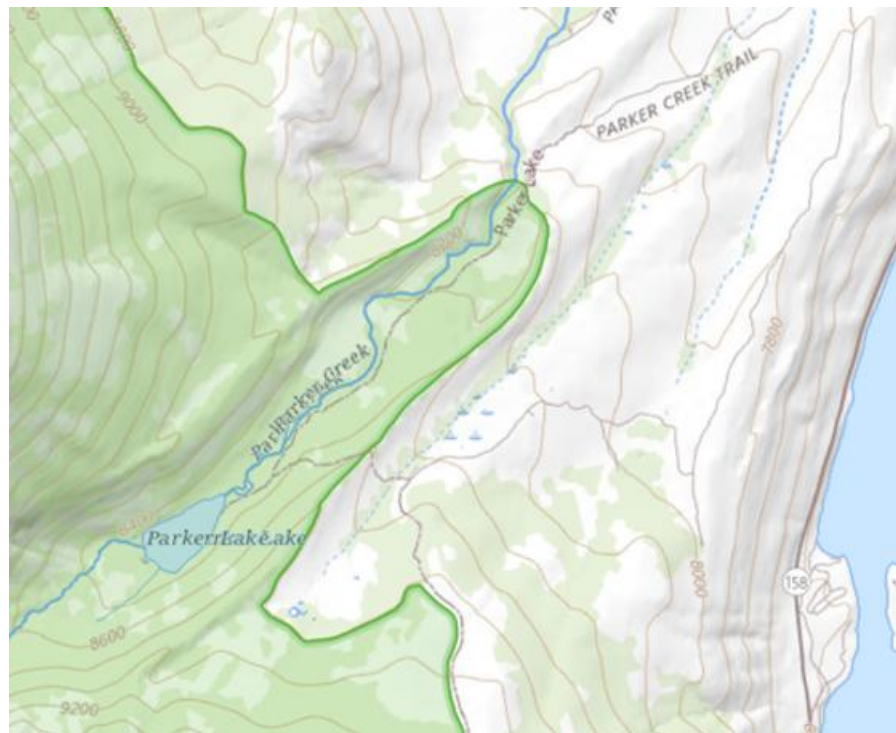
The Andreafsky River and its East Fork hold runs of chum, coho and pink salmon. Chinooks run up the same rivers and spawn in most the the short tributaries. (ADFG 2023)



Ansel Adams Wilderness (CA)

From north to south: In the northeastern corner of the wilderness, south of the Tioga Highway and west of the June Lake loop road, Parker Creek and Parker Lake flow north into Mono Lake. Brown trout in both lake and creek. (SWFF Jul-AUG 2011, P. 6; SWFF Jan-Aug 2018, p. 44)

To the south, Fern Lake is just inside the wilderness, but a tough 3-mile hike from the June Lake Loop road, with brook trout. (SWFF Jan-Aug 2018, p. 44)



Ansel Adams Wilderness (CA)



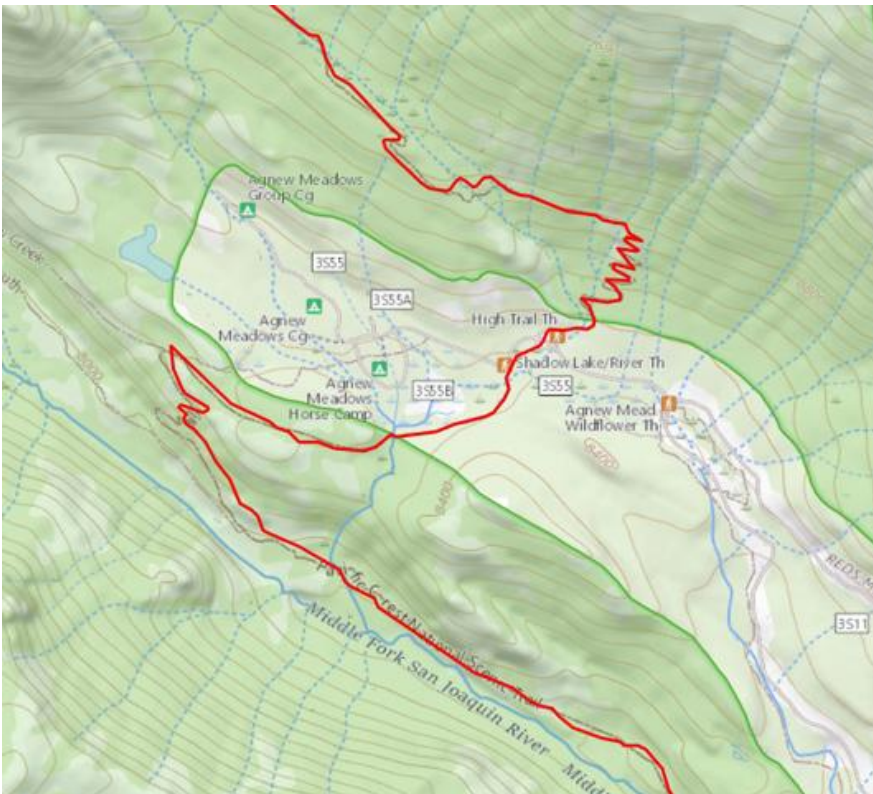
Further south on the east slope Alger Lakes holds large golden trout. A 7.3 mile hike from the Silver Lake trailhead on the June Lake Loop road. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2018, p.44)

From north to south along the John Muir Trail, there are brook trout in Rush Creek and the Rush Creek forks just downhill from Donahue Pass. Thousand Island Lake is supposedly spectacularly beautiful and it contains rainbows and brookies, although location on the most heavily used part of the PCT/JMT (red line on the map is PCT) makes it a little crowded. (Beck 2000)



Ansel Adams Wilderness (CA)

Garnet Lake and Shadow Lake have fair amounts of rainbow trout and brookies, with brookies in the Garnet Lake outlet; most of these and smaller nearby lakes are dependant on stocking, or at least they were in 2000. Good populations of rainbows in Middle Fork San Joaquin River parallel to JMT along Shadow Creek Trail. (Beck 2000)

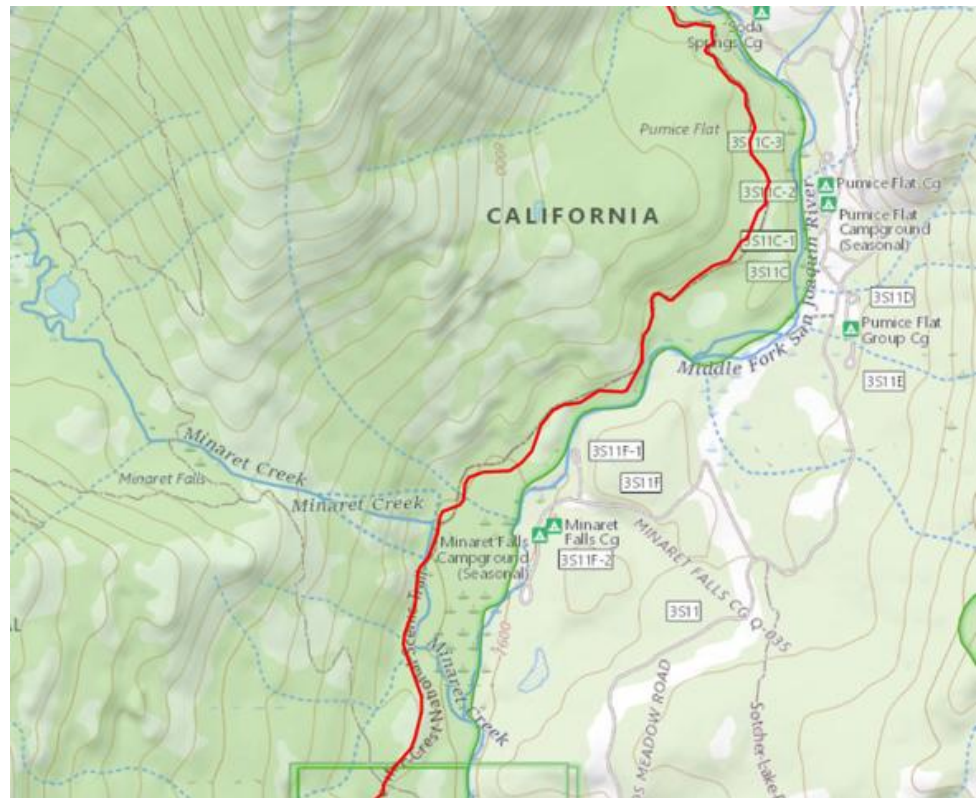


Agnew Meadows, just inside the wilderness at Agnew Meadows Campground, holds browns, rainbows, brookies and goldens. (SWFF May-Jun 2010, p. 10; SWFF Jul-Aug 2017 P. 36) It's reachable from Mammoth Lakes on the east side of the Sierra.

Ansel Adams Wilderness (CA)

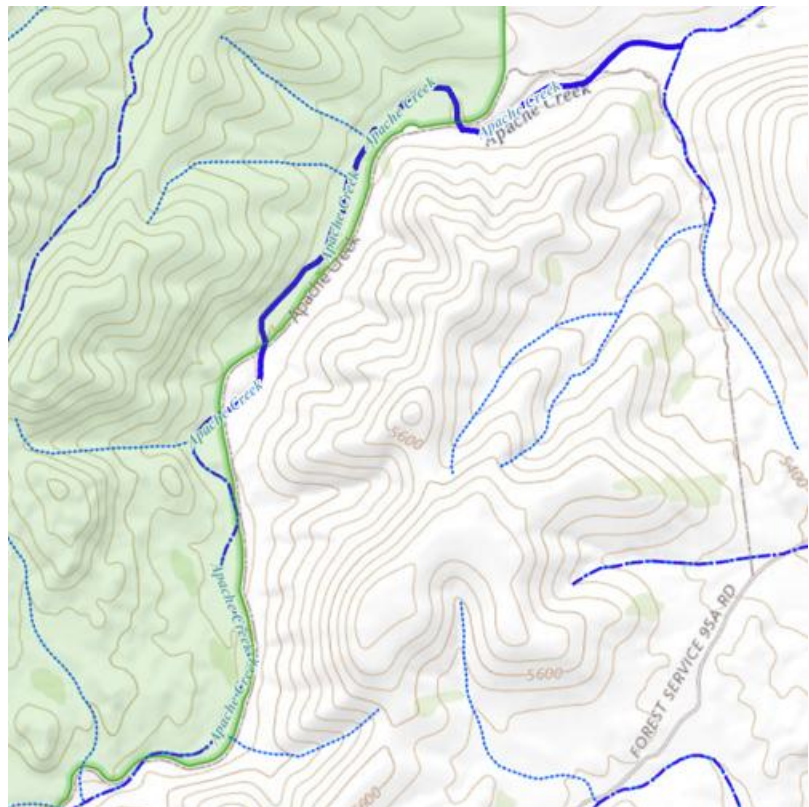
Minaret Creek, with Minaret Falls, is full of brook trout and rainbows. Minaret Creek below the falls flows into the Middle Fork San Joaquin, which flows south through Devil's Postpile National Monument, and which also holds good numbers of brown trout and rainbow trout. (Beck 2000)

This area is also accessible from the Mammoth Lakes area on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada.



Apache Creek Wilderness (AZ)

Long stretches of Apache Creek across the wilderness are allegedly perennial. (USGS 2021) These perennial stretches are all habitat for speckled dace. (AZG&F Habimap 2022)

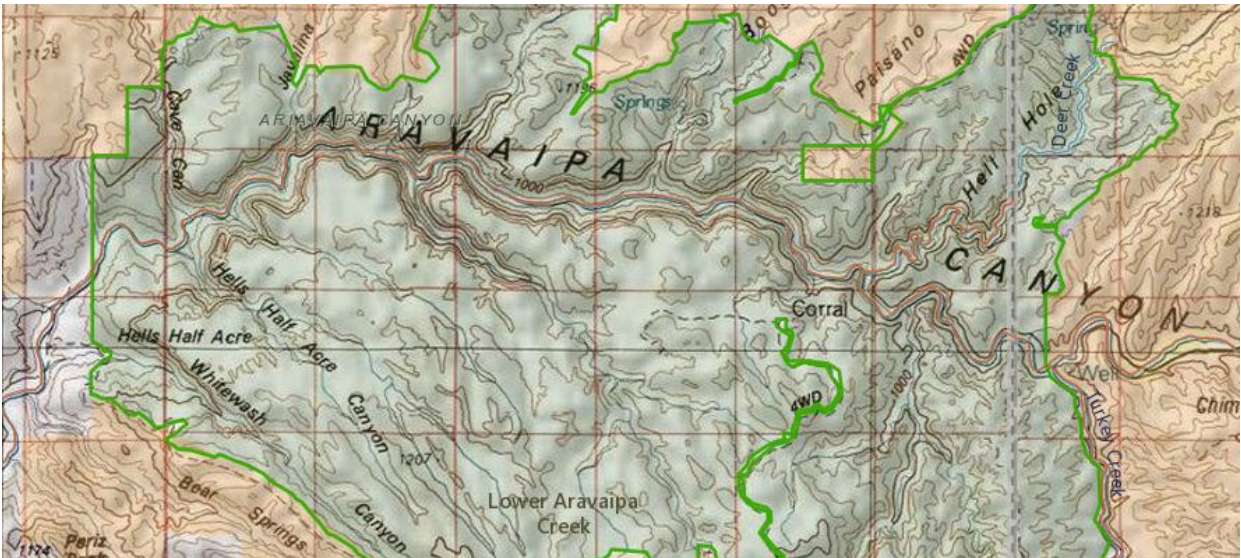


Apache Creek Wilderness (AZ)



I hiked in on the northern part of the Apache Creek Loop Trail in late March, 2023. Water was high but clear at the tail end of a very wet winter (more snow fell that afternoon, actually). I found dace in a few different locations and managed to catch one with the net. (Number 60)

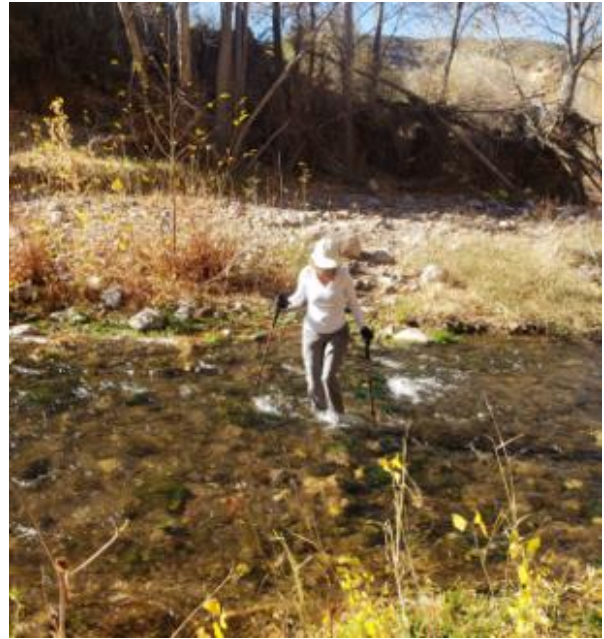
Aravaipa Wilderness (AZ)



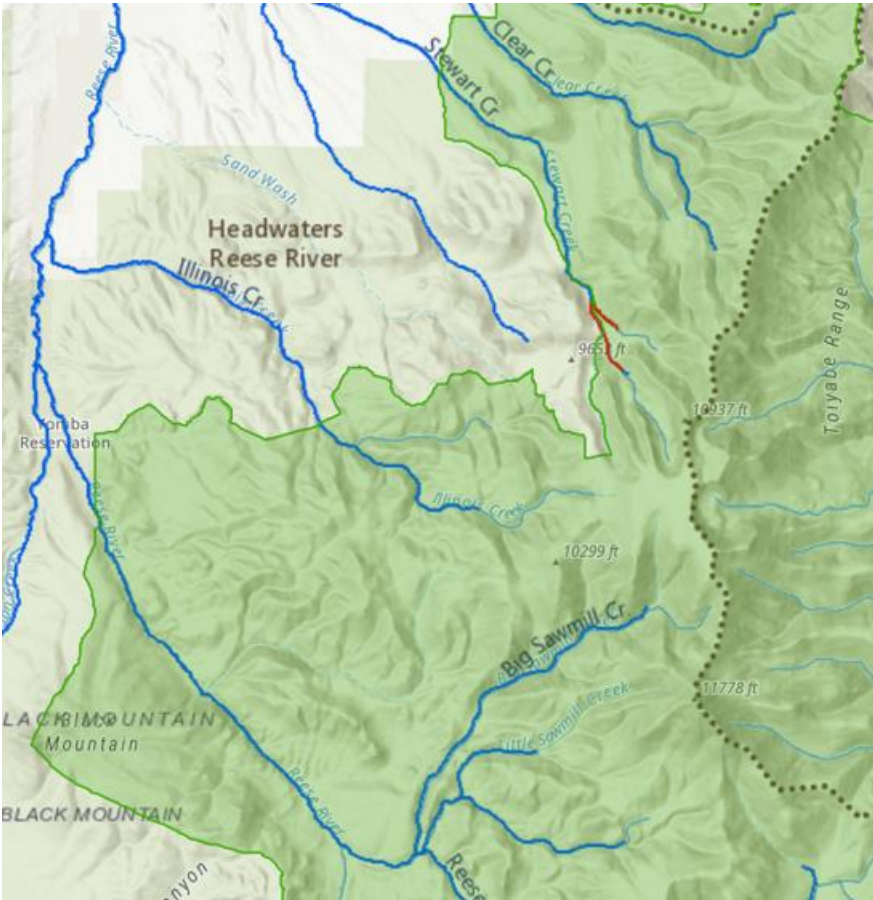
Critical habitat for loach minnow exists throughout the length of the canyon in the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Aravaipa Wilderness (AZ)

On December 30, 2020, I did a birthday hike upstream from the west entrance with my spectacularly beautiful wife Cathie. We experienced lots of wet-wading crossings in clear, cold water, wonderful fall scenery, and a few long-finned dace in a relatively deep pool about 1.5 miles in. (number 36)



Arc Dome Wilderness (NV)



There are brook, brown and rainbow trout in Reese River and tributaries draining toward the west of the Toiyabe Range divide, as well as in streams draining toward Smokey Valley off the east slope. Nearest town of any size is Tonopah, “driven every kind of rig that’s ever been made.” (SWFF May-Jun 2008, p.8)

There are remnant population of Lahontan cutthroats in upper reaches of Stewart Creek. 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)

Cathie and I drove several miles over a really bad road to get to Columbine Campground in July 2023.

Arc Dome Wilderness (NV)

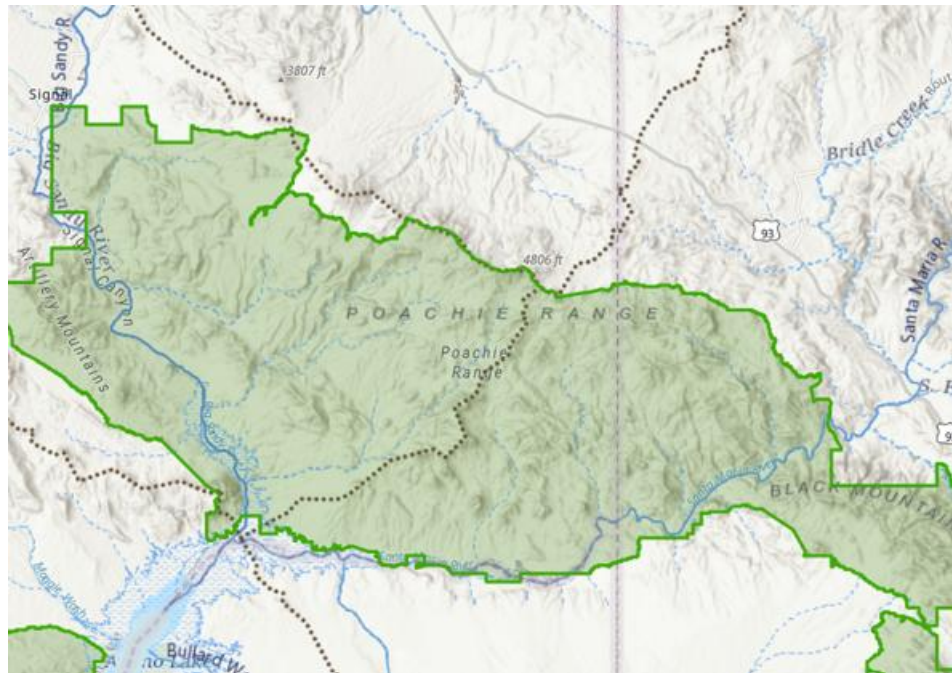
I didn't expect to see anyone else, but was shocked to find three other campsites occupied. We pitched our tent next door to Justin, a talkative young guy there to scout for deer. When he saw the fly rod he told me the old guy in the next site over, another deer hunter from the nearby "town" of Gabbs, said there wasn't any fish in the creek. I told Justin that Game & Fish said there were cutthroats. I then went out that evening and caught one (Number 66). The old guy saw me the next morning and said "I hear you think there's fish in that creek," to which I answered "Yes, and I caught one last night." He said "What??" and looked amazed. This was one of my most satisfying fishes...



Arrastra Mountain Wilderness (AZ)

Summer flows in the Santa Maria River are reduced to intermittent flows and disconnected pools, but longfin dace are still widespread. Roundtail chub, desert sucker and red shiner may also be present. (Kepner 1979, p. 20)

Red shiner predominates in Big Sandy River below Burro Creek confluence. (Kepner 1979)



Arizona Game and Fish says there are gila topminnow in the wilderness reaches of the Santa Maria that are allegedly perennial, and longfin dace in the entire length of the Big Sandy within the wilderness, as well as roundtail chub in lower stretches of the Big Sandy. (AZGF Habimap 2021)

Arrastra Mountain Wilderness (AZ)



I tried the Big Sandy in the extreme northwest corner of the wilderness in May 2022. Not much water... not much at all.



I tried hiking up the Big Sandy from the Alamo Lake end in June, 2024. I was pleasantly surprised to find water, with a decent flow nonetheless. I was even more surprised to find lots of mosquitofish (Number 71)...

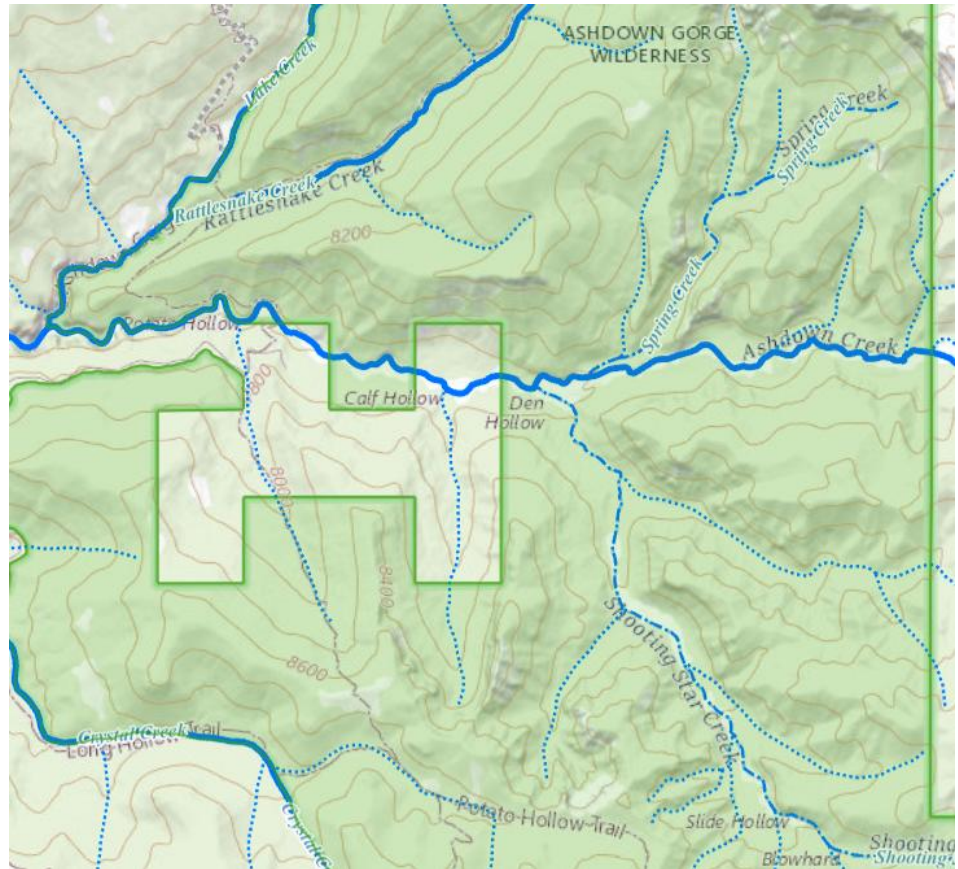


...and even more surprised to find carp! All I had with me was a brand new 3-weight in anticipation of some dace angling. I was sorely tempted... landing a carp on a 3-weight in a tiny stream would have been epic! But it was *brand new*...

So I just chased them around a bit with the net. Those guys are *fast*. It was almost like bullfighting.

Ashdown Gorge Wilderness (UT)

Ashdown Gorge Wilderness (UT): USGS NHD shows Ashdown Creek coming from Cedar Breaks all the way across the wilderness as perennial, as well as Rattlesnake Creek to the north. I'm guessing there's speckled dace in the perennial streams. (Utah AGRC 2020) There are records of rainbow trout in Spring Creek and channel catfish in Shooting Star Creek. (Fishbrain 2022)



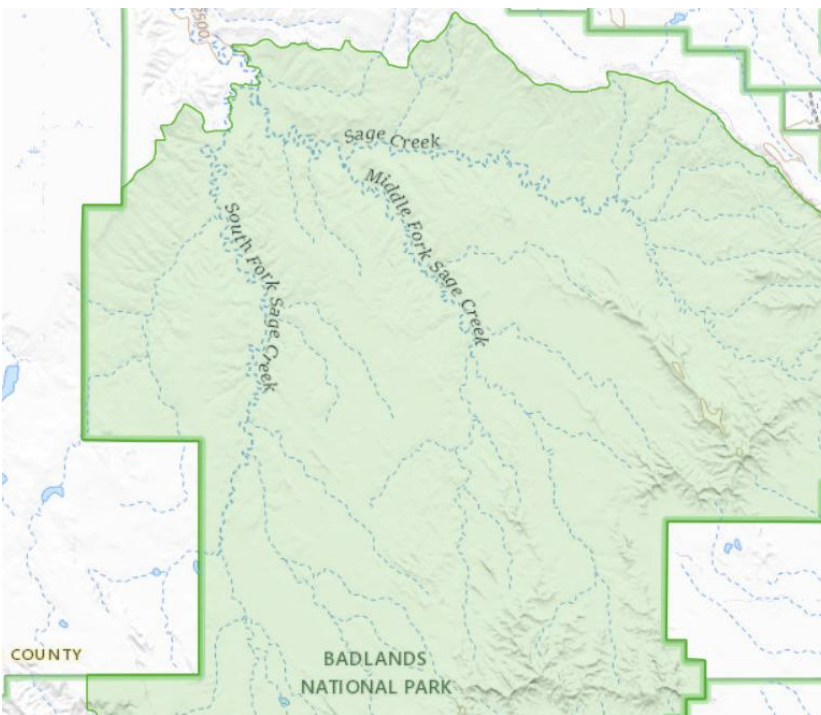
Cathie and I didn't quite make it up to the wilderness hiking up Ashdown Creek in August 2024, but the flow was good. Very muddy, but plenty of water. We passed a side tributary that was running clear and cold, I think there's good potential here.

Badger Creek Wilderness (OR)



There are redband rainbow trout in Badger Creek, Little Badger Creek and Tygh Creek, tributaries of Deschutes River. (StreamNet 2019)

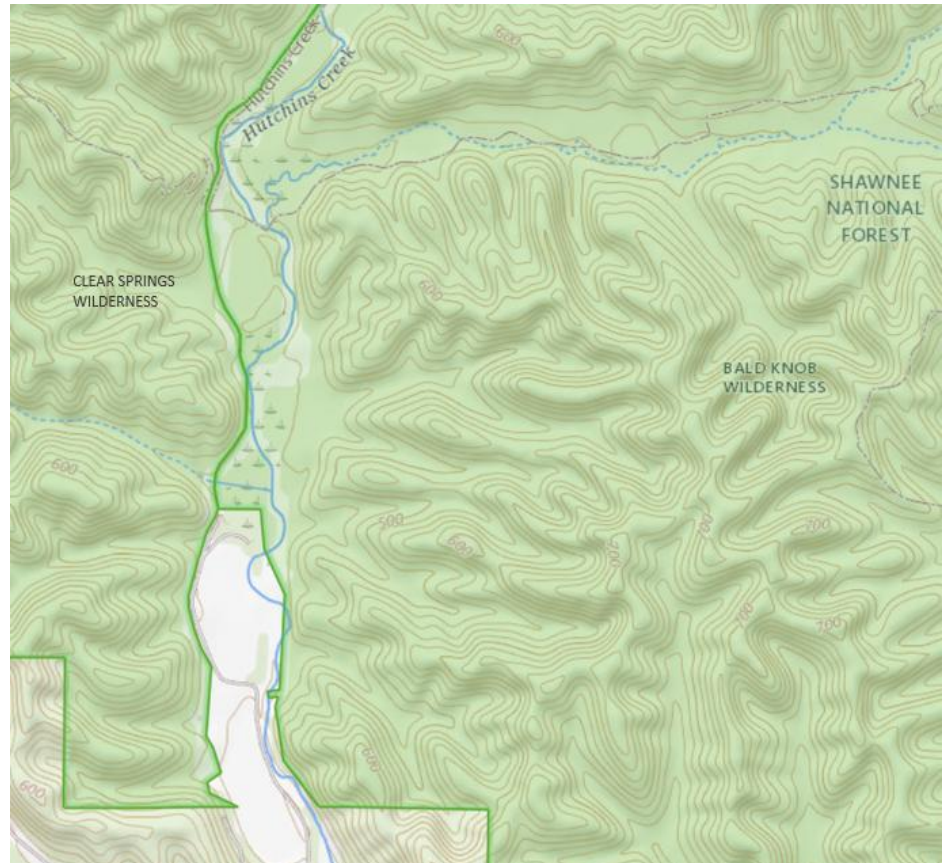
Badlands Wilderness (SD)



USGS NWIS shows perennial flows in portions of the Sage Creek watershed within the wilderness (USGS 2021), however the aeriels show a lot of sand and not much water. The National Park Service says, "there are probably several fish species in drainages like Sage Creek and in stock ponds in the North Unit" of the Badlands National Park, much of which consists of the wilderness, "although the number and type of species have not been documented." Some of the 22 impoundments that are grandfathered within the wilderness are likely candidates. (NPS, Dept of Interior, Badlands 2008)

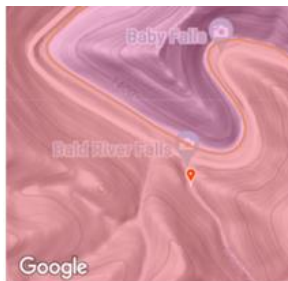
Bald Knob Wilderness (IL)

Hutchins Creek runs back and forth across the boundary between the Bald Knob Wilderness and Clear Springs Wilderness. While I couldn't find records of fish in the wilderness section of the creek, there are records of various darters, madtoms, shiners, chubs and sunfish just downstream from the wilderness boundary, and the creek flows continuously through the wilderness stretch. (Gorrell 2022, iNaturalist and Lost in Nature blog)



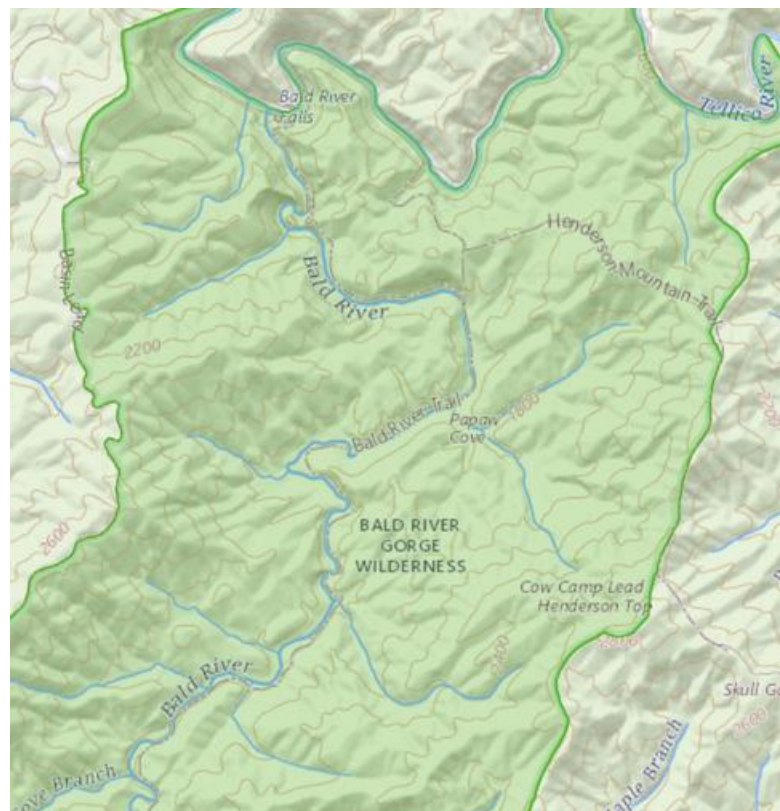
Bald River Gorge Wilderness (TN)

There are records of saffron shiner inside the wilderness at Bald River Falls. (iNaturalist, 2022)



The saffron shiner (*Notropis rubricroceus*)

There may also be brook trout in upper stretches of Bald River including the Big Cove Branch tributary, but the probabilities are low. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014) There are records of rainbow trout in the Bald River upstream from the wilderness, and records of river chub in the Tellico River where it forms the northern boundary of the wilderness. Both likely occur in between the two locations, within the wilderness.

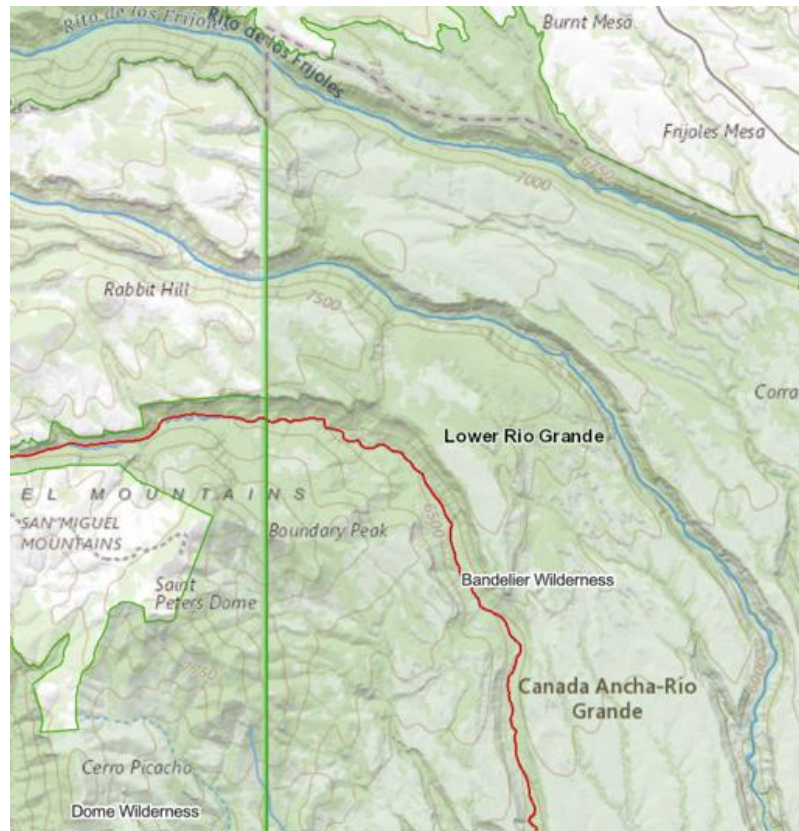


Bandelier Wilderness (NM)

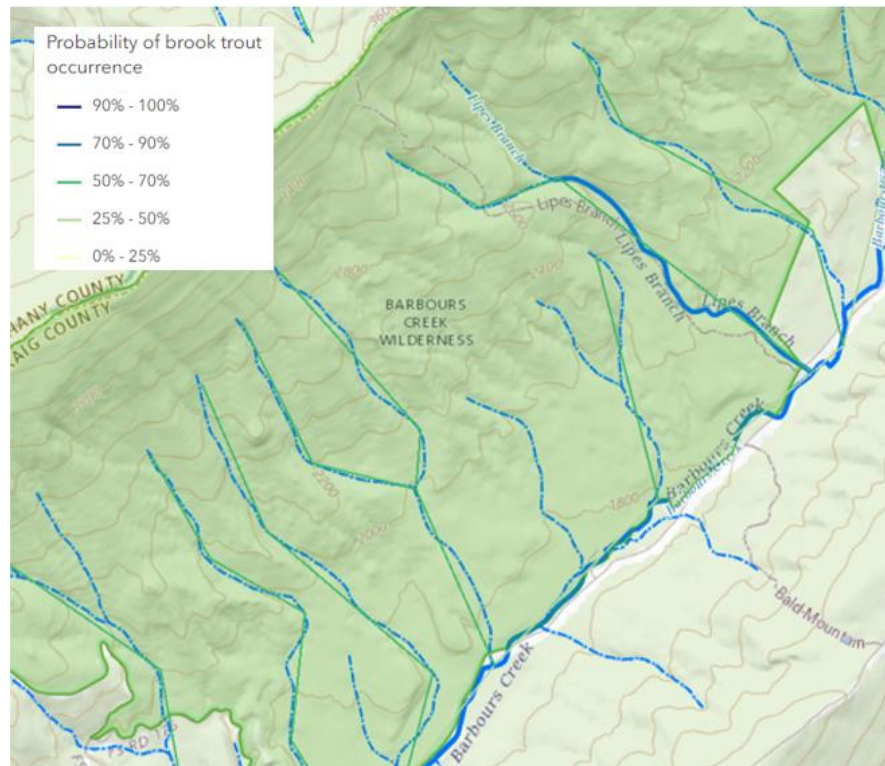
Rio Grande Cutthroats form a non-persistent population in Capulin Canyon (red line on map), with (alleged) trail access along the stream (Bakevich et al 2019; TU 2019 RGCT)

I hiked in from Dome Wilderness along Capulin Canyon on Labor Day weekend 2021. I found cutthroat in Dome but none just downstream in Bandelier.

To the north, Rito de los Frijoles has brookies. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2010, p. 28)



Barbours Creek Wilderness (VA)



The entire wilderness is within a stronghold population of brook trout (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range), the probability of finding brook trout in these streams is 50 to 70% (straight green lines on the map, DeWeber and Wagner, 2014). Perennial water is in Barbours Creek along the edge of the wilderness and Lipes Branch (USGS 2021). Barbours Creek flows south into Craig Creek, a right-bank tributary of the James River.

Bay Creek Wilderness (IL)

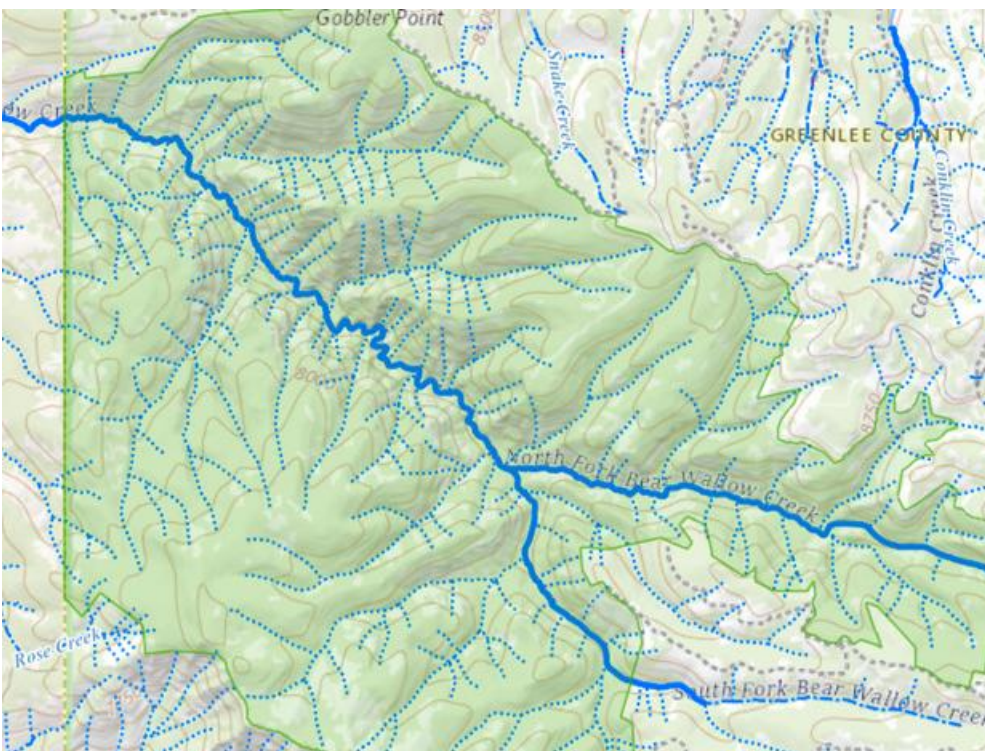


Bay Creek runs through the middle of Bay Creek Wilderness (what a coincidence!). There is a record of long-eared sunfish in a Bay Creek tributary within the wilderness. Downstream of the wilderness records include spotted bass, longear sunfish, madtoms, darters and topminnows. (iNaturalist, 2023)



See also Burden Falls Wilderness.

Bear Wallow Wilderness (AZ)



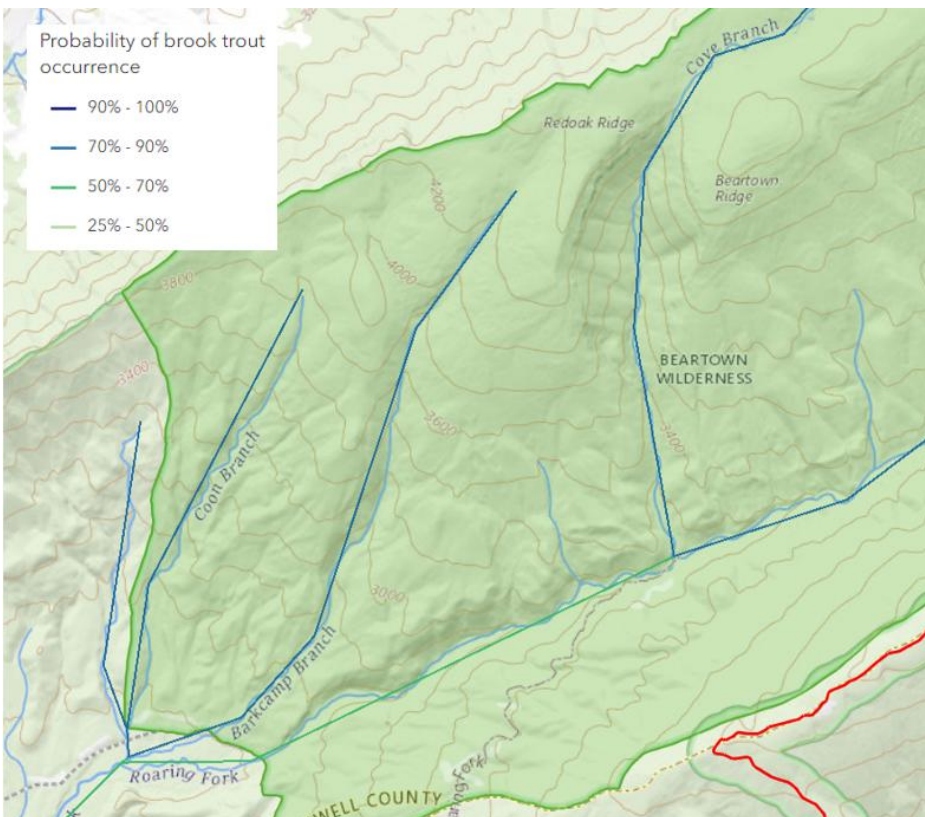
There are supposedly Apache trout in Bear Wallow Creek. Someday AZ Game & Fish will let me try to catch them.

Bear Wallow Wilderness (AZ)

Becoming impatient *11 years* after the Wallow Fire with no relaxation of the restrictions in sight, I hiked down the Reno Trail to Bear Wallow Creek in July 2022. Don't tell anybody, but I may even have had a three-weight and some flies with me. The creek looked beautiful, except for the apparent lack of fish. Maybe AZ Fish & Game is "renovating" to prepare for an Apache reintroduction?

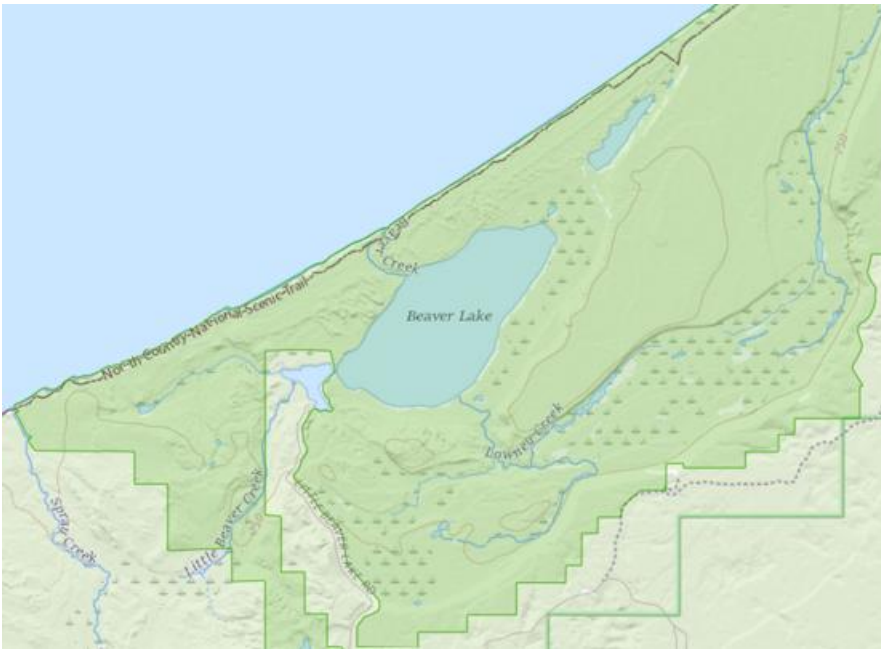


Beartown Wilderness (VA)

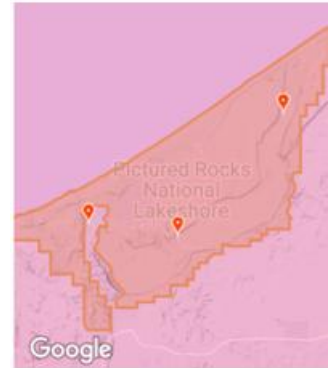


Persistent populations of brook trout reside in Coon Branch and Roaring Fork of Laurel Creek. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Probability of finding brook trout in upper Roaring Fork and larger tributaries is high. (straight blue lines on the map, DeWeber and Wagner 2014). Rainbow trout are also present. Laurel Fork is a right bank tributary of North Fork Holston River.

Beaver Basin Wilderness (MI)



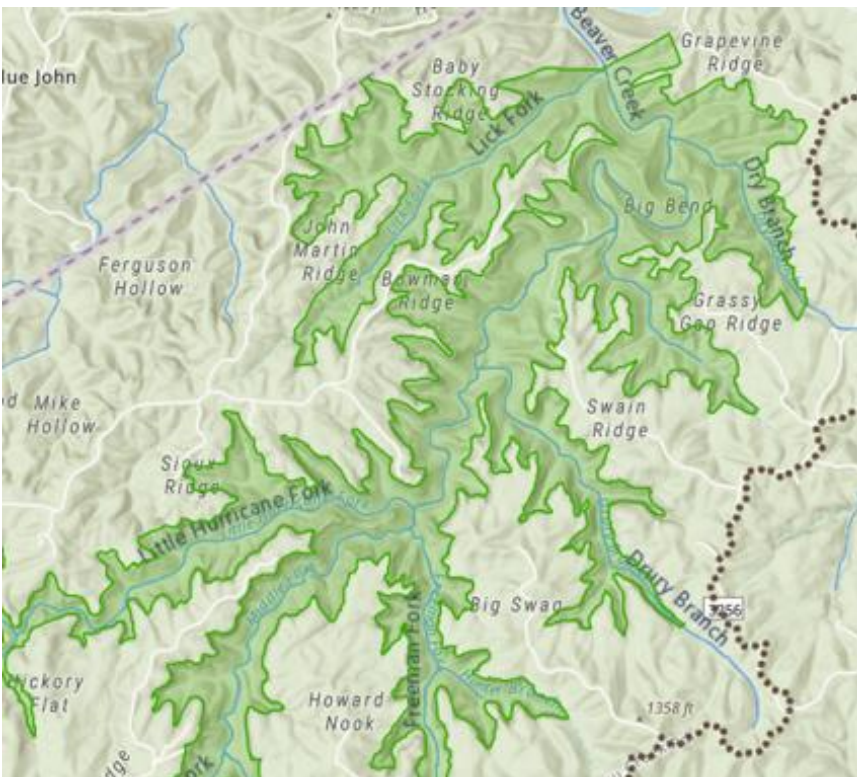
There are brook trout records in Sevenmile Creek and the Beaver Lake inlet stream. There are also records of longnose sucker at the mouth of Sevenmile Creek. (iNaturalist, 2022)



The brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

The wilderness is located within Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Extensive Lake Superior shoreline allows access to walleye, lake trout and coho salmon. Interior waters likely hold brook trout, smallmouth bass, northern pike, yellow perch, whitefish, menominee, and smelt.

Beaver Creek Wilderness (KY)

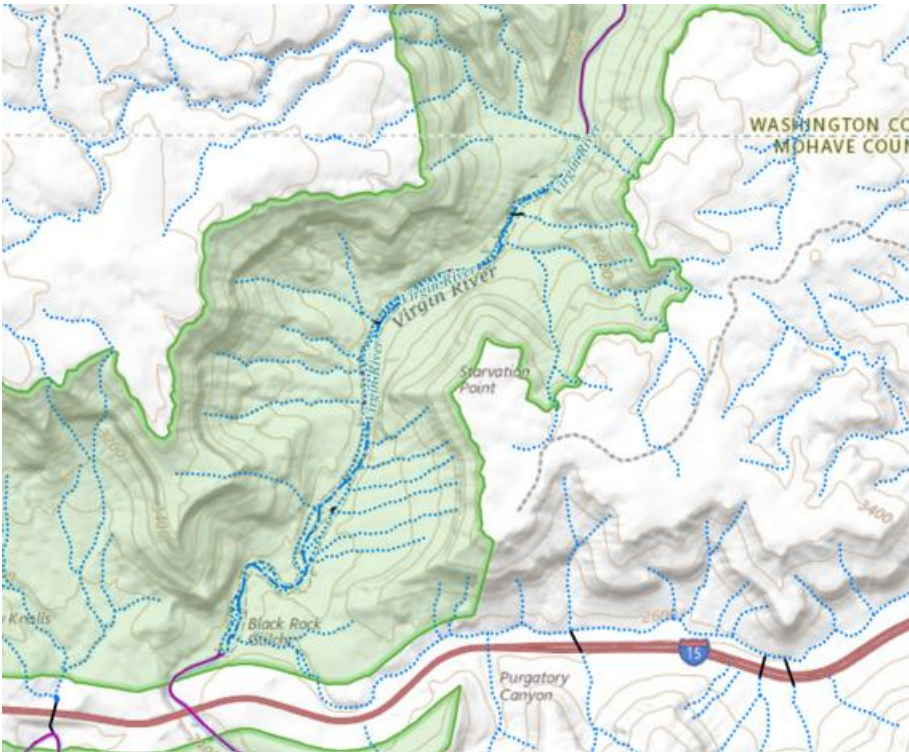


There are records of rainbow darter, scarlet shiner, striped darter and stonecat all in Beaver Creek running through the middle of the wilderness. (iNaturalist, 2022)



The rainbow darter (*Etheostoma caeruleum*)

Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness (AZ, UT)



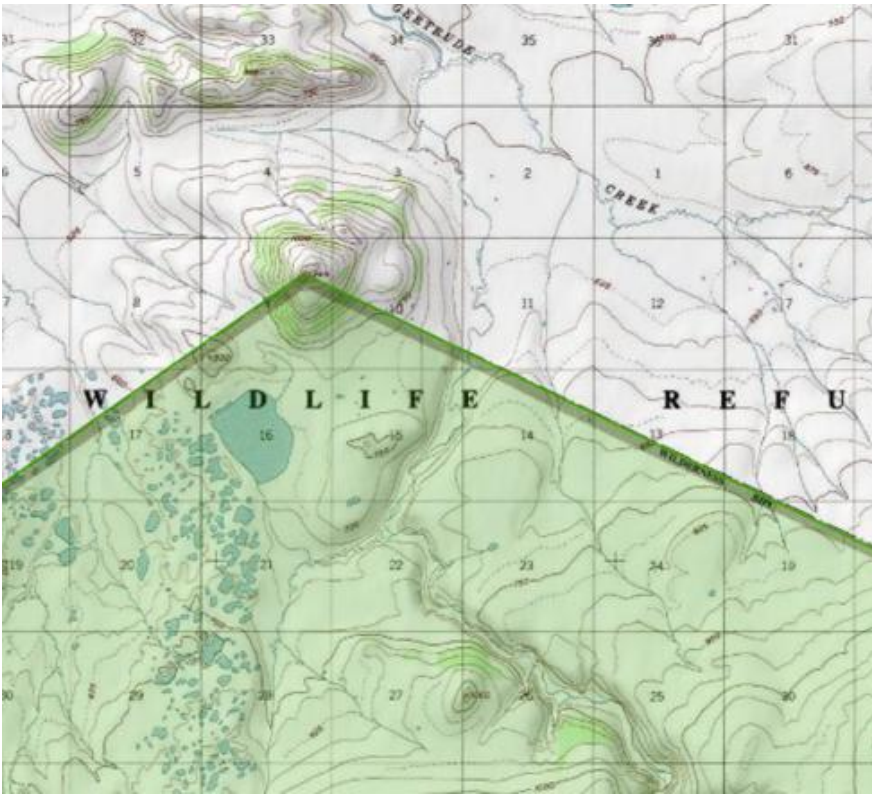
The only critical habitat for the Virgin River chub is in the Virgin River, portions of which cross the eastern part of the wilderness. The same is true for critical habitat for woundfin. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) The Virgin River also holds Virgin spinedace, speckled dace and desert sucker throughout the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

The map shows the virgin River as intermittent (USGS 2021), but the stretches I've been on in mid-summer had plenty of flow, and it was carrying lots of sediment.

Access off of I-15 is pretty easy, although the times I've tried it I found the sediment whenever I got close to the water to be pretty waterlogged and soft, making it a little difficult to walk along the riverside. Even at low summer flows the water is pretty opaque, I imagine catching a fish here will eventually be a result of blindly dragging a net through a pool, or quite possibly getting lucky with the minnow trap.



Becharof Wilderness (AK)



There have been observations of Arctic char and chinook salmon in a south fork tributary of Gertrude Creek, which drains west toward the King Salmon River in the far northwestern corner of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 20232)

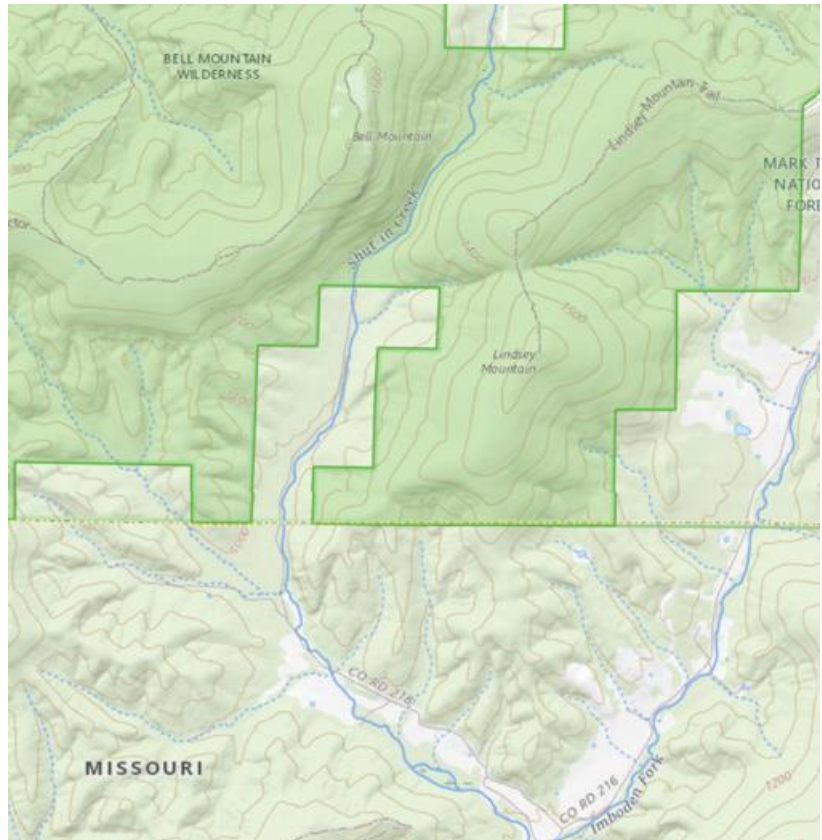


Chinooks are only in the far northwest, in the King Salmon River drainage (go figure). Sockeyes are widespread in the interior streams, pinks in the coastal streams. (ADFG 2023)

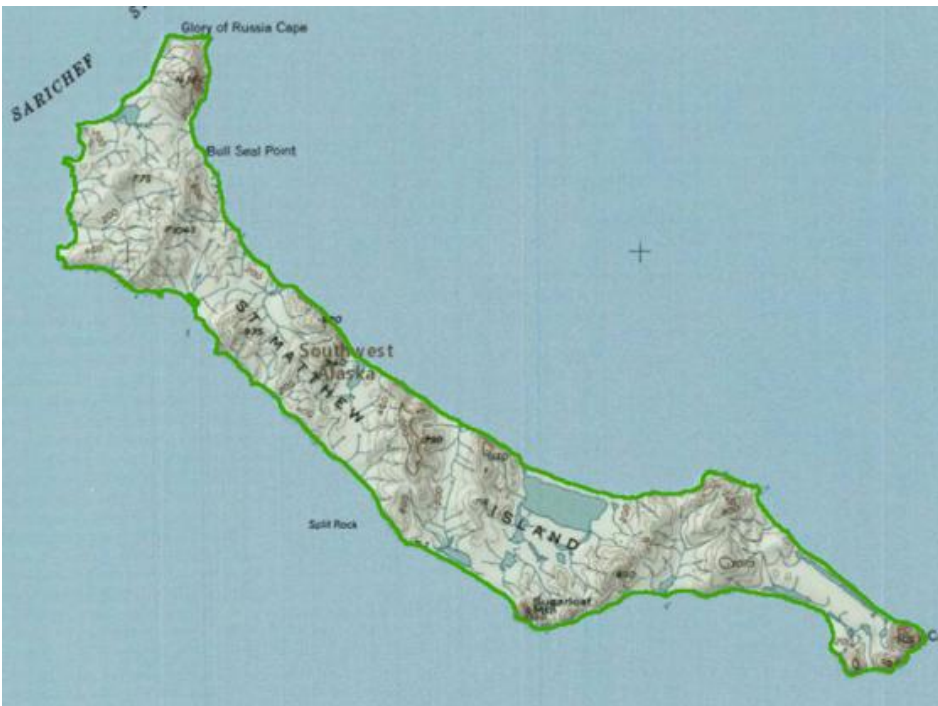


Bell Mountain Wilderness (MO)

I couldn't find any records of fish in the wilderness, but Shut-In Creek, a tributary of the East Fork Black River, is perennial above, below and through the wilderness. (USGS 2021) Where Shut-In Creek and Imboden Fork join about 3 miles downstream from the wilderness in Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park there are records of sunfish, darters, topminnows and shiners. There is even a record of rainbow trout downstream, they surely must be above as well. (iNaturalist 2022)

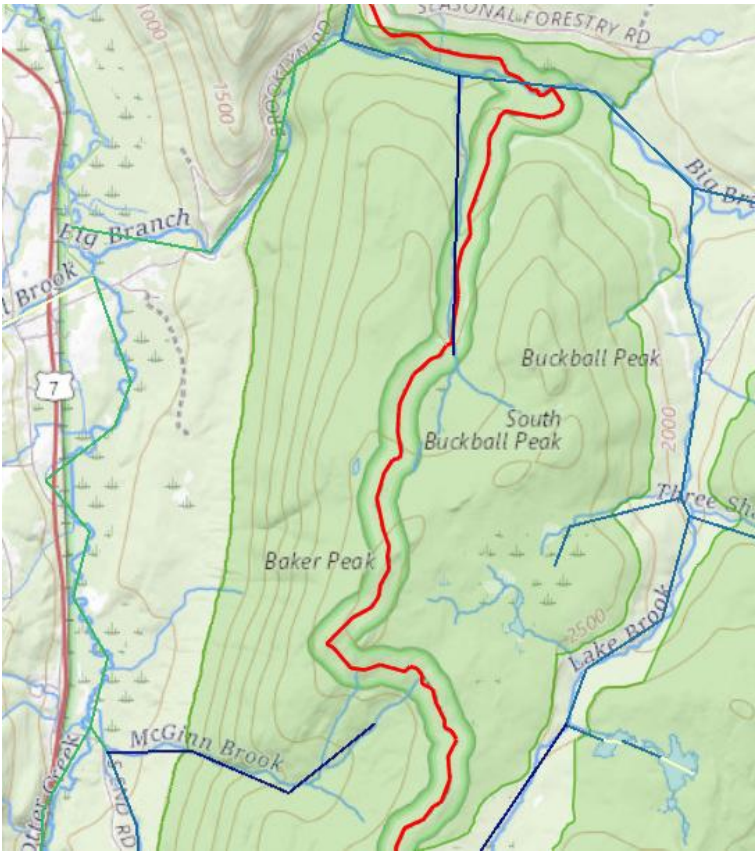


Bering Sea Wilderness (AK)

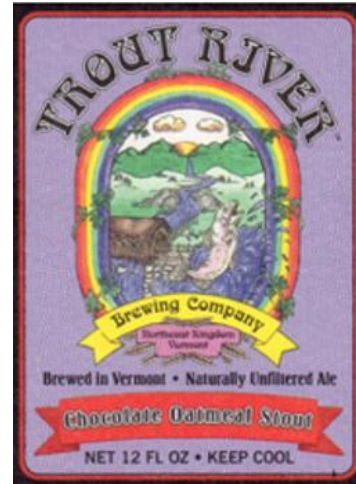


A lake on St. Matthew Island has a land-locked population of chinook salmon. Streams on the island hold Dolly Varden and Arctic char. (USF&WS 1988 Alaska Maritime NWR, p. II-123; ADFG 2023 does not show the Arctic char, but does show Dolly Varden) Common Bering Sea near-shore species like gunnells, sticklebacks and greenlings are likely also present along the shoreline.

Big Branch Wilderness (VT)

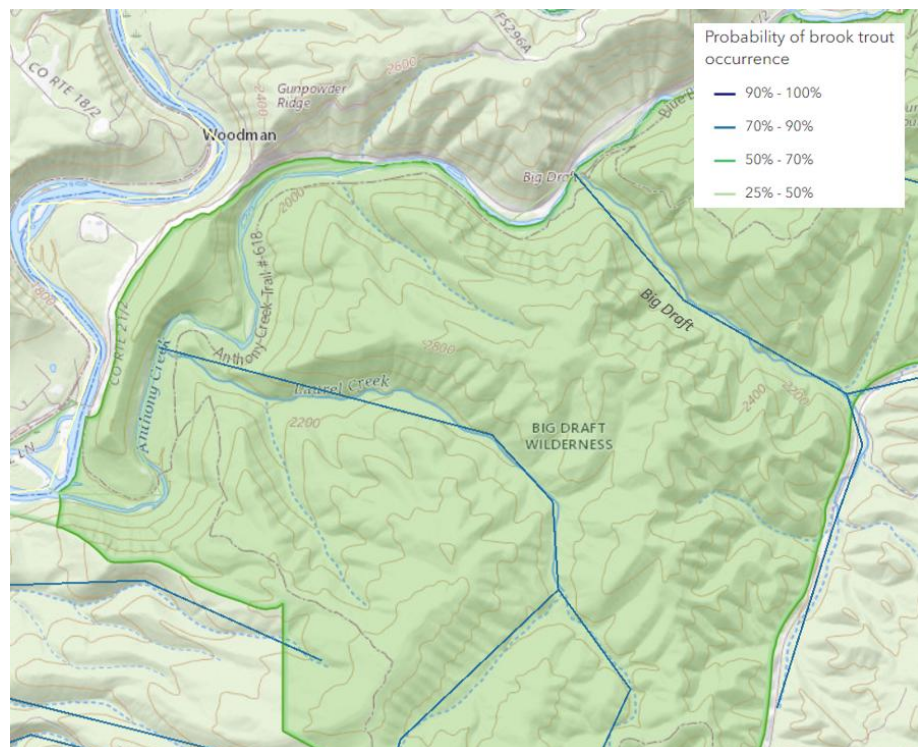


The Otter Creek drainage, including Big Branch, holds a persistent population of brook trout along with rainbows and browns. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Very high probability (over 90%) of brook trout in several streams (straight blue lines on map; DeWeber and Wagner, 2014). Big Branch within the wilderness is accessible from the Appalachian Trail (red line).

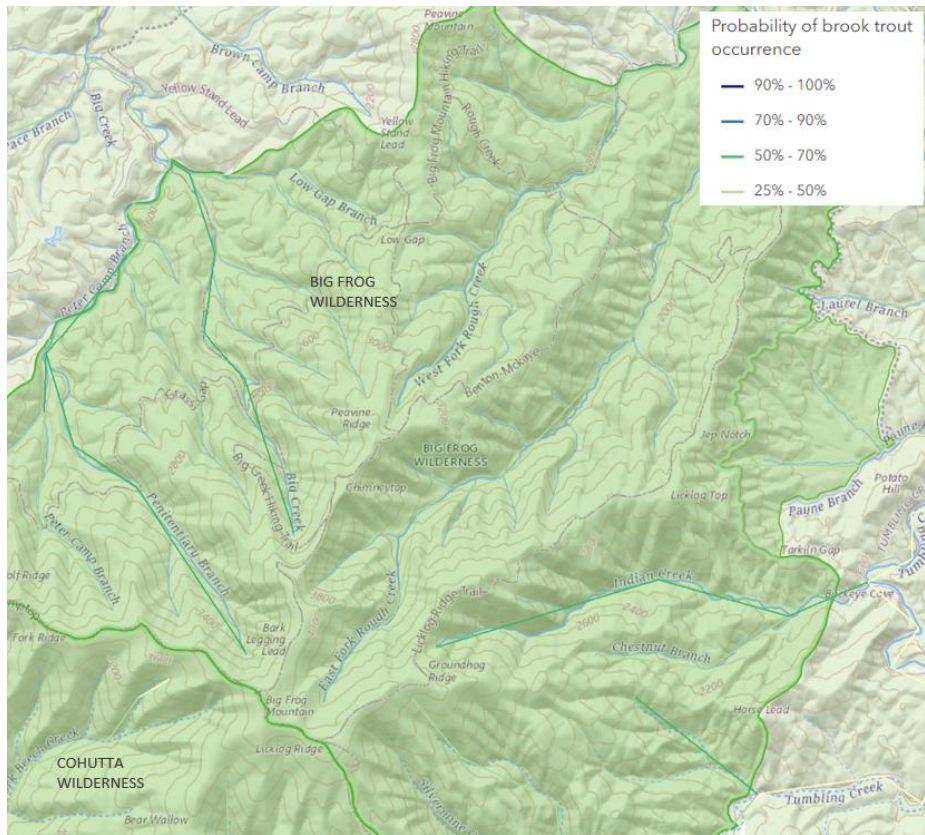


Big Draft Wilderness (WV)

Anthony Creek flows through the wilderness and is accessible by nearby road just above the confluence with the Greenbrier River. Tributaries Big Draft and Laurel Creek are also perennial across the wilderness. (USGS 2022) There are records of smallmouth bass and rainbow trout in Anthony Creek in the wilderness. (Fishbrain 2022) Probabilities of finding brook trout in Big Draft and Laurel Creek are high. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



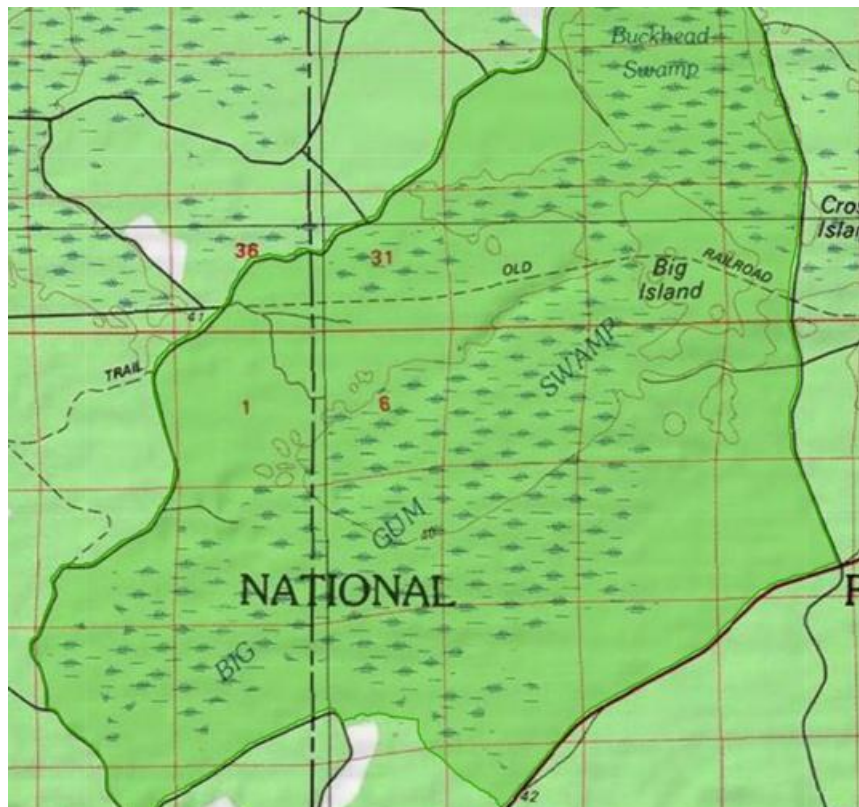
Big Frog Wilderness (GA, TN)



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. There are records of central stoneroller, largescale stoneroller, Tennessee shiner and greenside darter just outside the wilderness in Tumbling Creek. (North American Native Fishes 2022) There is a moderate probability of brook trout in some of the tributaries. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Big Gum Swamp Wilderness (FL)

It's a swamp in Florida, it has to have fish. There is access along the south edge by road, with a record of mud sunfish and nearby records of warmouth and blue-spotted sunfish. Access from a trail on an old railroad grade on the north side, with records of pickerel and coppernose bluegill. (iNaturalist 2022)



Big Gum Swamp Wilderness (FL)



In early November 2025, I used a small cast net to catch a bunch of little fish in the Big Gum Slough where it flows (and I use the term generously) south out of the wilderness. (Number 98) Fish included Eastern Mosquitofish, Warmouth, Flier, and Lake Chubsucker.



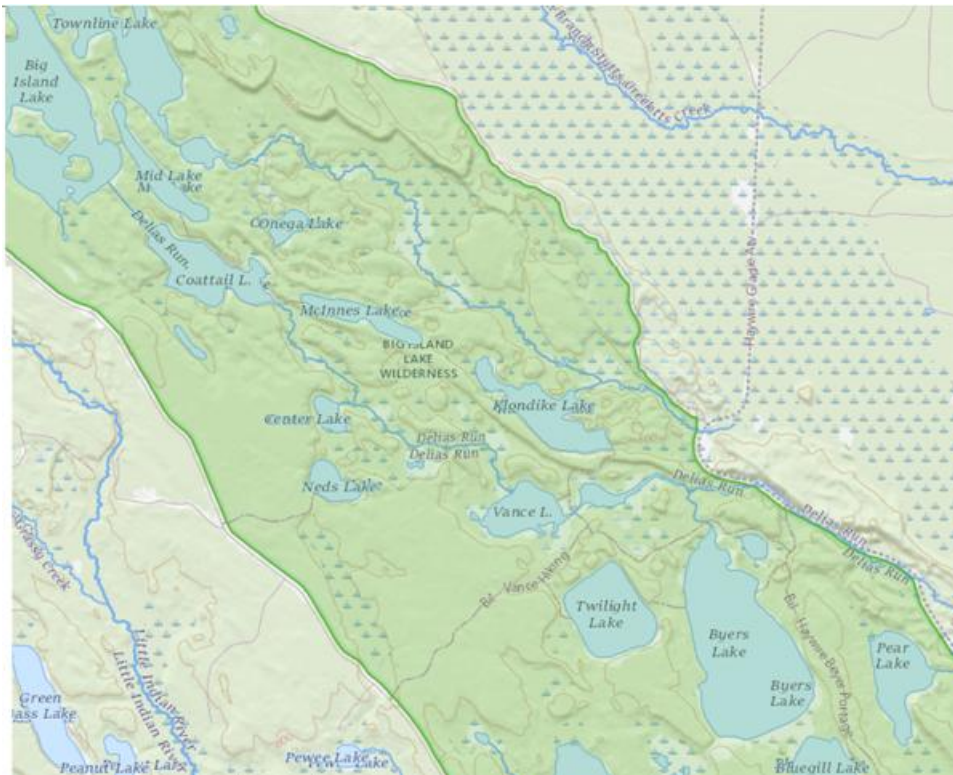
Warmouth

Flier



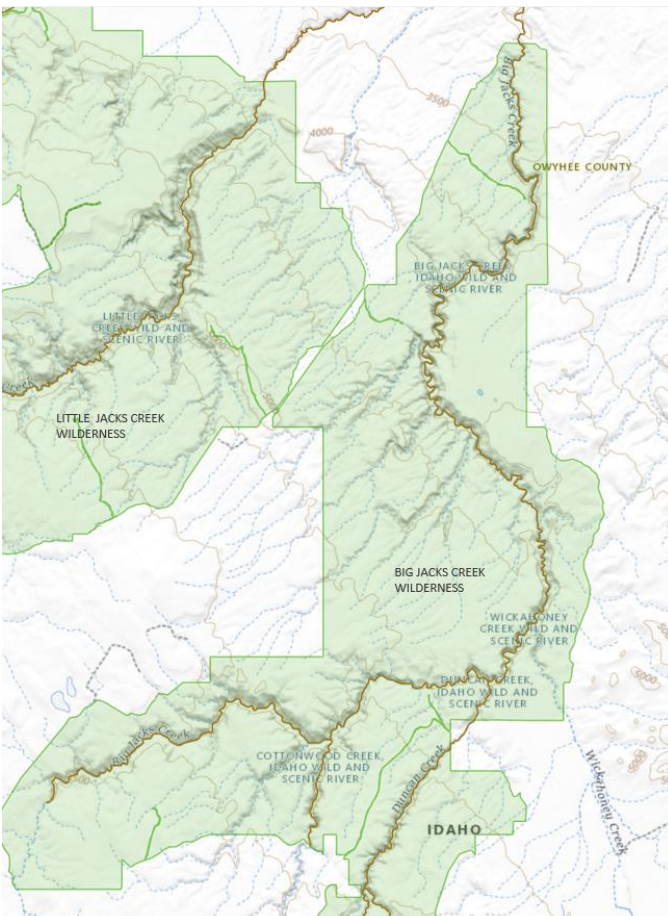
Lake Chubsucker

Big Island Lake Wilderness (MI)



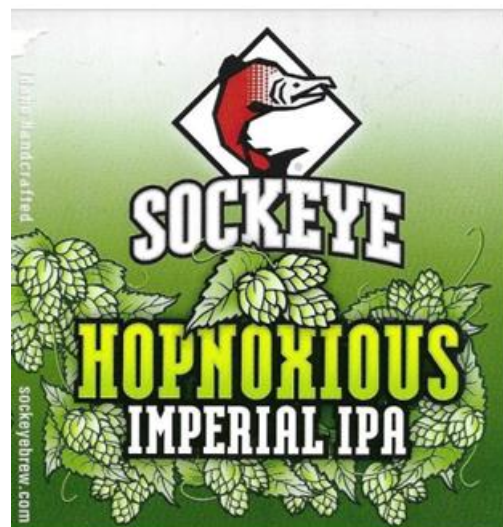
Byers Lake has yellow perch, bluegill, pumpkinseed, largemouth bass, bullhead and northern pike, apparently with good trail access. Townline, Coattail and Bluegill lakes have many of the same species. (US Forest Service, Hiawatha NF, 2022)

Big Jacks Creek Wilderness (ID)



There are moderate densities of redband trout in Big Jacks Creek and Duncan Creek pretty much throughout the wilderness. (Hare 2019)

The biggest challenge might be getting down to them.



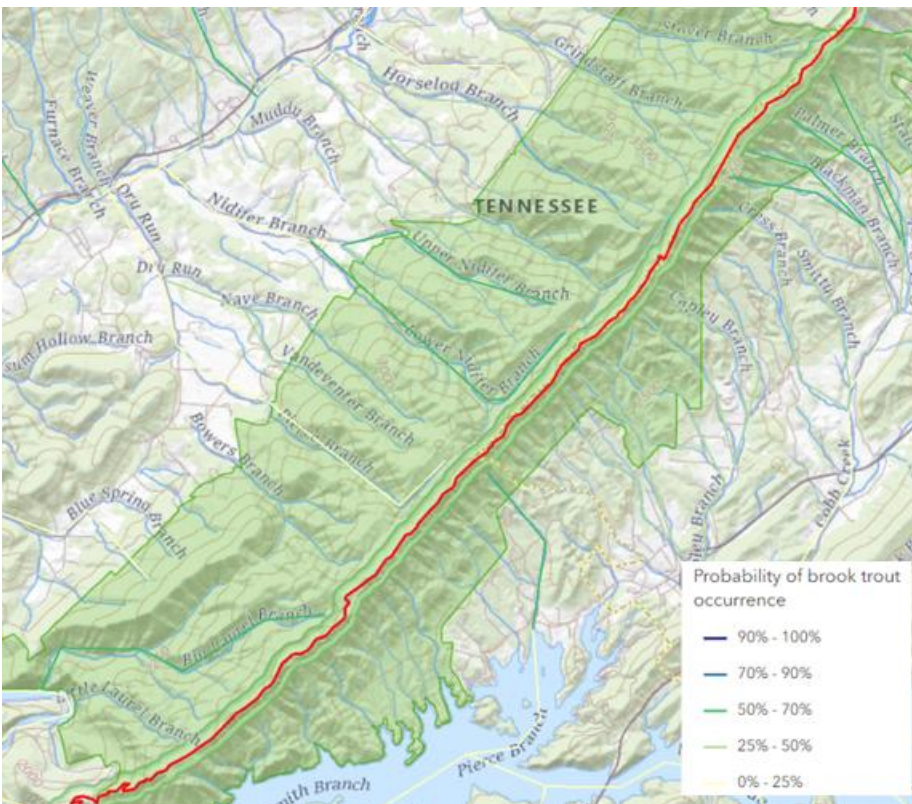
Big Lake Wilderness (AR)



The open water of Big Lake itself mostly abuts the wilderness, although the wilderness area is almost entirely bald cypress, sure to have water in and among the trees that will hold fish. The lake and adjoining waters hold buffalo, drum, carp, gar, bowfin, largemouth bass, crappie, several species of sunfish, and blue, channel, and flathead catfish. There is boat access at the south end of the lake, fishing usage is heavy all summer. (USF&WS 2009 Central Arkansas, p 34, 46)

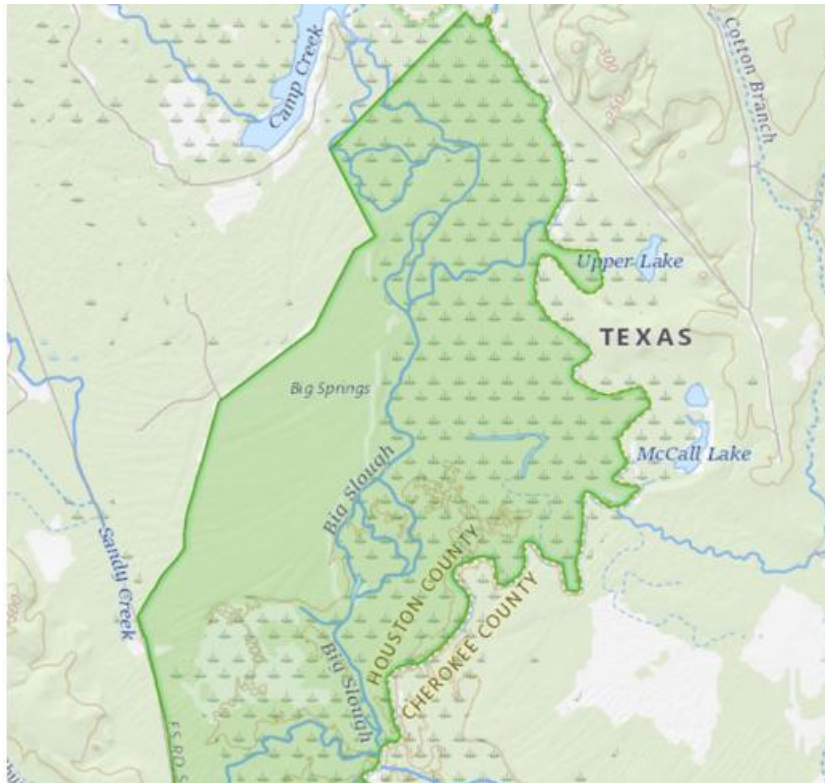
Purple lines on the map are man-made water features, including reservoir channels and ditches.

Big Laurel Branch Wilderness (TN)



A resilient population of brook trout occurs not in Big Laurel Branch, but in westward flowing tributaries of Stony Creek in the Watauga River watershed. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout) There is a moderate probability of presence of brook trout in Big Laurel Branch, Upper and Lower Nidifer Branch and some of the shorter eastward flowing streams (DeWeber and Wagner 2014). Red line on map is the AT, which runs strictly along the ridge and does not seem to provide much access to the streams.

Big Slough Wilderness (TX)



Bowfin are recorded from Big Slough, tributary to Neches River, in the northern part of the wilderness (iNaturalist 2022)



Lots of water here, I'm sure there's lots of other fish as well, likely including largemouth bass, crappie and sunfish.

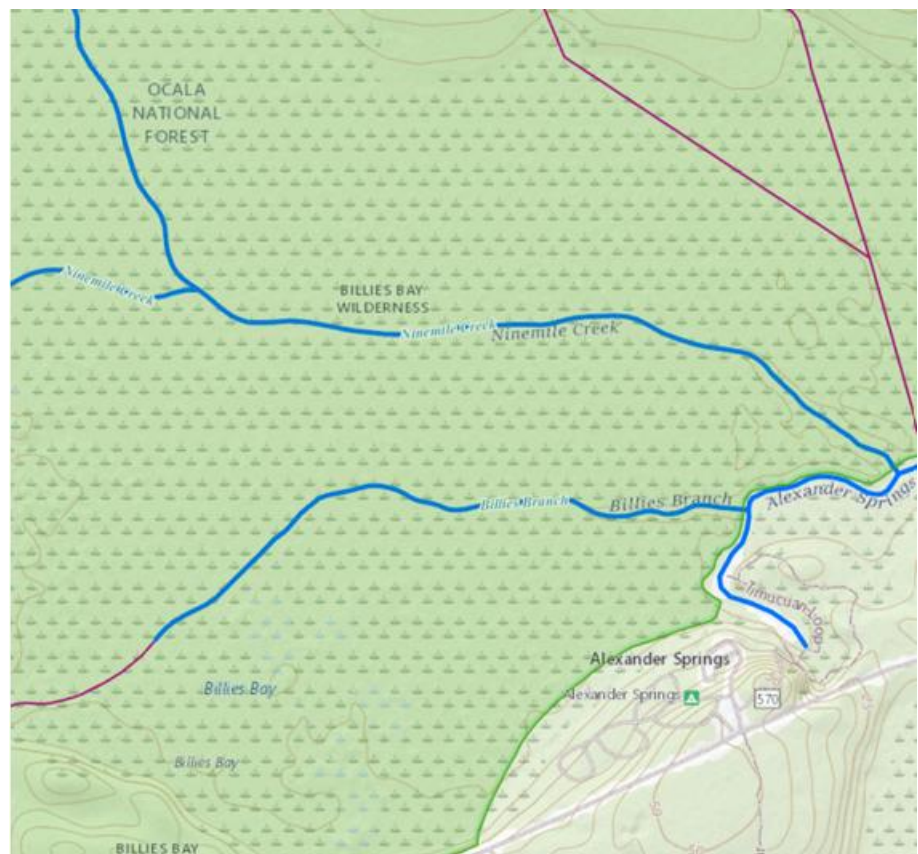
Billies Bay Wilderness (FL)

Ironcolor shiner recorded from Billies Bay Branch at its mouth where it enters Alexander Springs Creek, tributary to St. Johns River. (iNaturalist 2022)



The ironcolor shiner (*Notropis chalybaeus*)

Lots of water here, there are likely many other fishes as well, possibly including lake chubsucker, redear and spotted sunfish, longnose and Florida gar, tilapia, mullet and killifish, all found in Alexander Springs Creek just outside the wilderness.



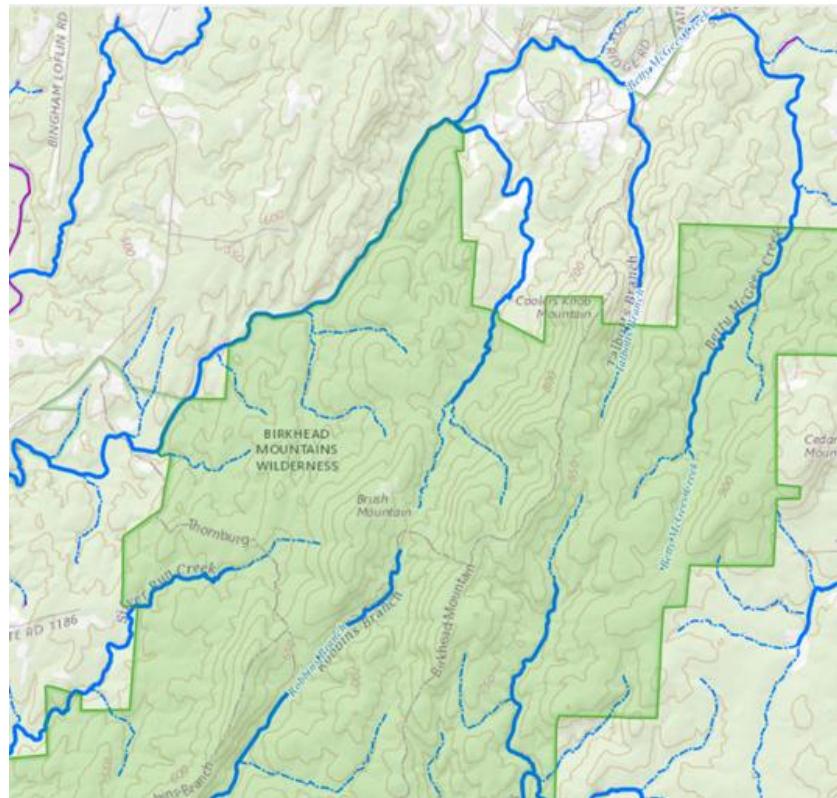
Birkhead Mountains Wilderness (NC)

Tessellated darter has been recorded from Betty McGees Creek along the western edge of the wilderness.
(iNaturalist 2022)

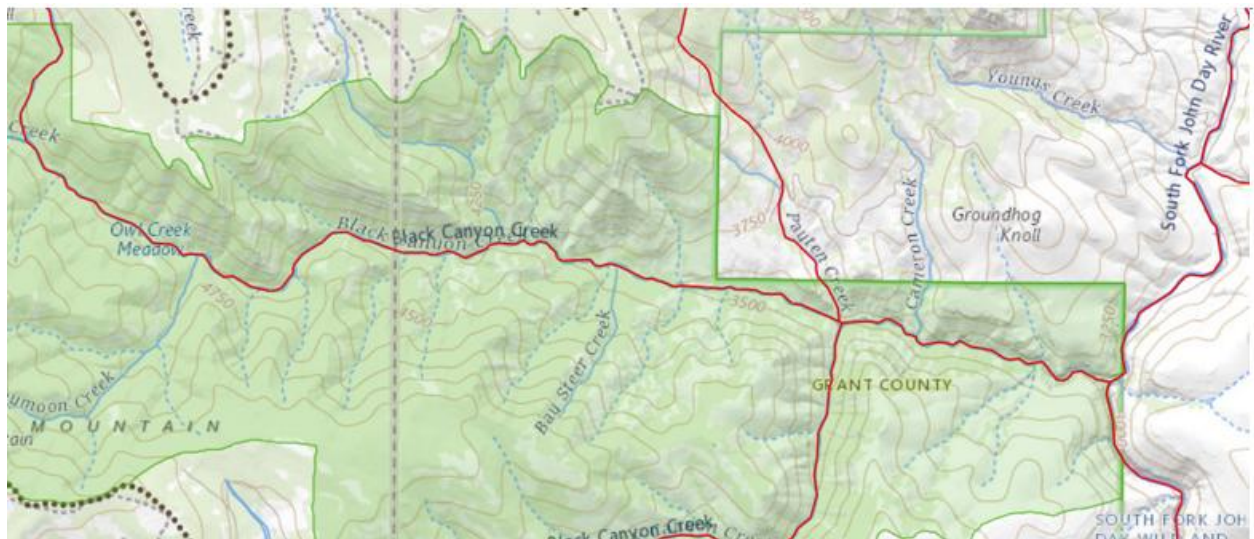


The tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*)

Lots of perennial water in the rest of the wilderness, it likely holds fish like redbreast sunfish, creek chub, rosieside dace and largemouth and smallmouth bass.



Black Canyon Wilderness (OR)



Critical habitat for steelhead is present in Black Canyon Creek, tributary of South Fork John Day River.
(ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP Wilderness (CO)



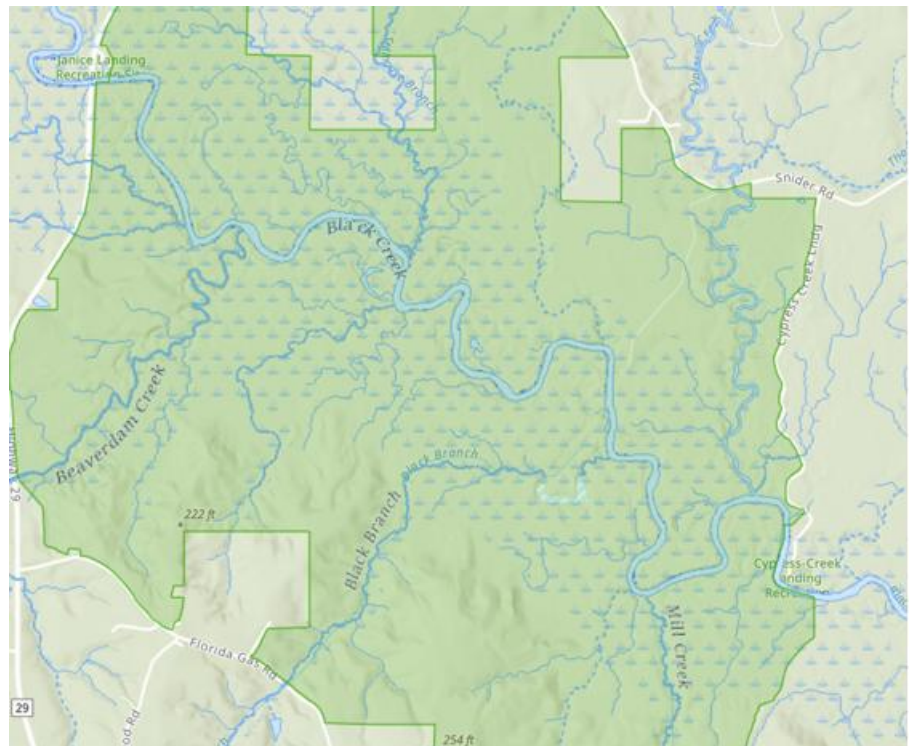
Limited foot access to Gunnison River in the National Park stretch of the river. (FF, May 2008, p. 60)



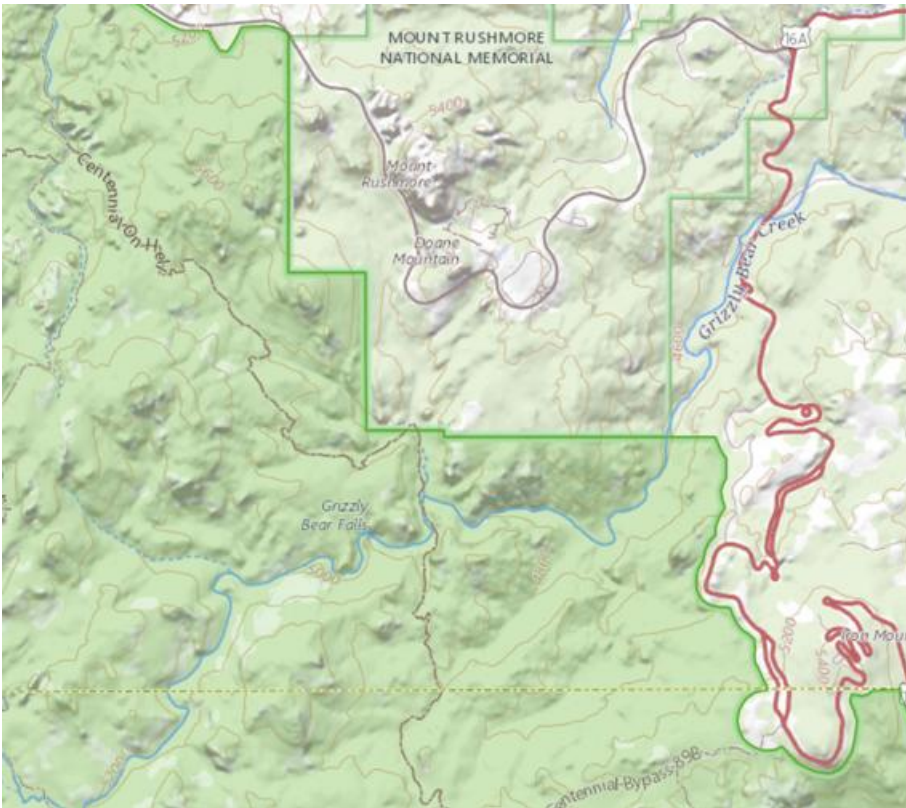
The river itself, of course, is a renowned blue-ribbon rainbow and brown trout stream.

Black Creek Wilderness (MS)

The segment of Black Creek that runs through the wilderness is a designated Wild and Scenic River, with a parallel trail accessible from both ends. It holds bass and panfish. (US Forest Service Region 8, 2014) There are records of banded pygmy sunfish, blacktail redhorse, and blackspotted topminnow in Black Creek within the wilderness, along with many other fish both upstream and downstream from the wilderness. There are also records of black-banded darter and cherryfin shiner in Black Creek tributary Cypress Creek. (North American Native Fishes 2022)



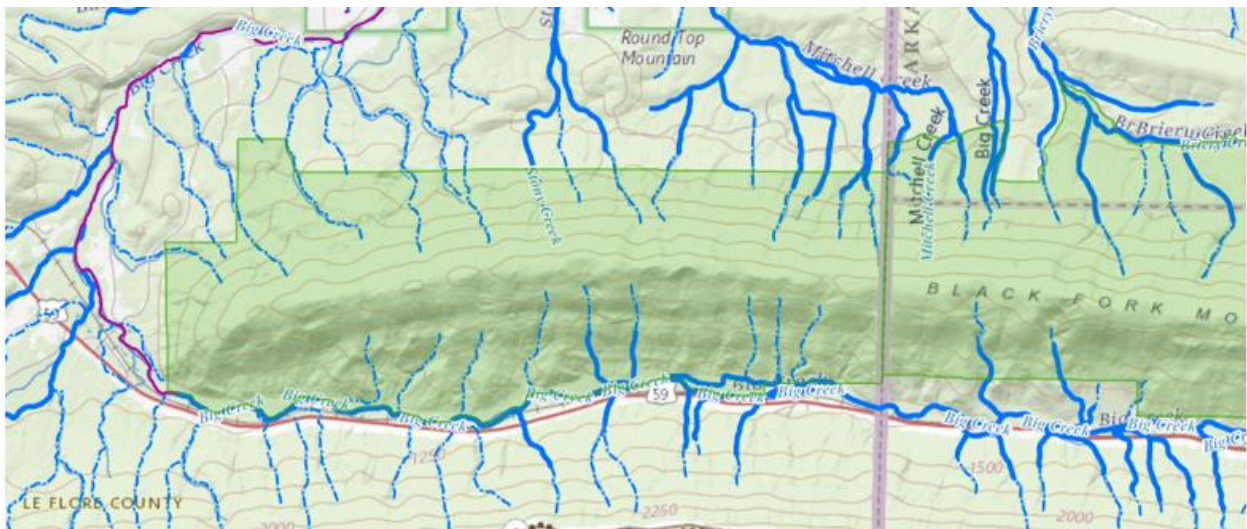
Black Elk Wilderness (SD)



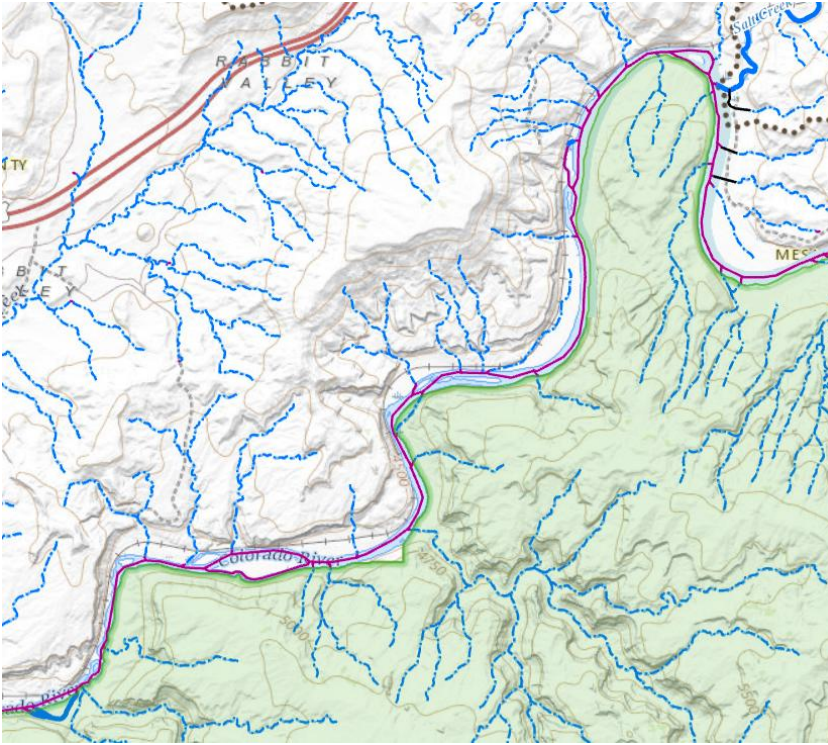
There is a record of brook trout in Grizzly Bear Creek, just outside of Mount Rushmore. (iNaturalist 2022) There are also records of brook trout, largemouth bass and yellow perch at Grizzly Bear Falls, as well as records of rainbow trout in Iron Creek along the southern edge of the wilderness. (Fishbrain, 2022)

Black Fork Mountain Wilderness (AR, OK)

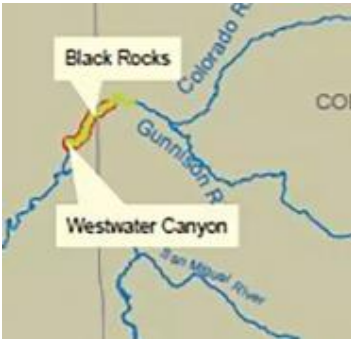
The wilderness basically consists of a long, steep-sided ridge, with a handful of short perennial streams coming down the sides. Big Creek, tributary to Black Fork of the Poteau, which in turn ends up in the Arkansas River near Fort Smith, winds back and forth across the southern wilderness boundary and might provide the best shot at finding fish. There is a record of redbfin darter from this segment of Big Creek (iNaturalist 2023), other darters, dace and sunfish are likely present as well.



Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness (CO, UT)



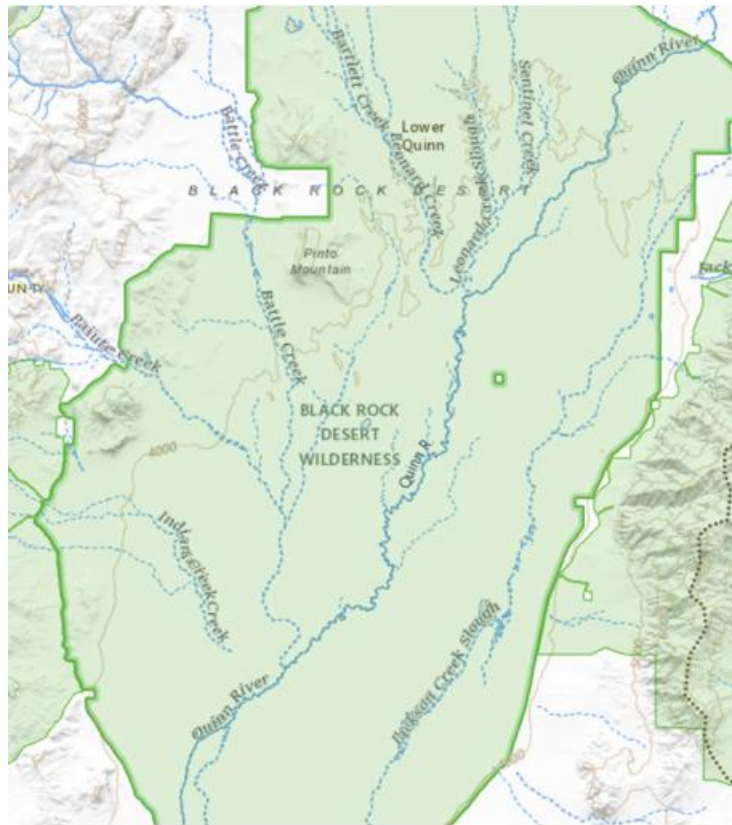
There is very little perennial water in this wilderness except for the Colorado River, which forms much of the northern boundary of the wilderness. There are channel catfish, and no doubt other fish, in this stretch of the Colorado. (iNaturalist 2023)



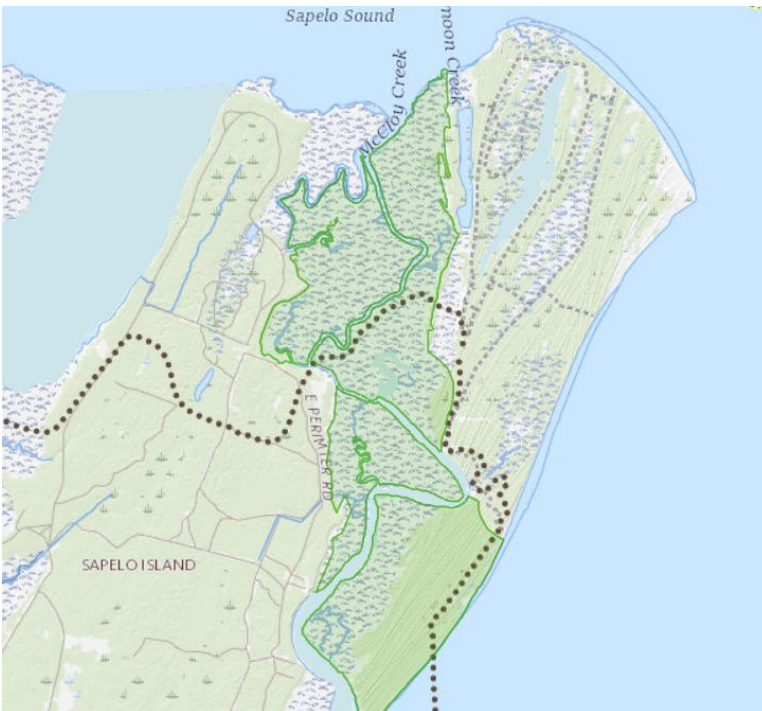
US F&WS says there are humpback chub in this stretch of the Colorado River as well. (map taken from Stahl, USFWS, 2022). Red is critical habitat, green is occupied.

Black Rock Desert Wilderness (NV)

The Nevada DOW seems to think the Quinn River (you ain't seen nothing like the mighty Quinn...) is a fishable stream with brook, brown and rainbow trout crossing the entire wilderness. (Nevada DOW 2017) USGS seems to think the Quinn River doesn't have water in it for most of the time, so I have doubts about trout. (USGS NHD Nevada 2020) I suppose someday I'm going to have to go there and resolve the dispute.



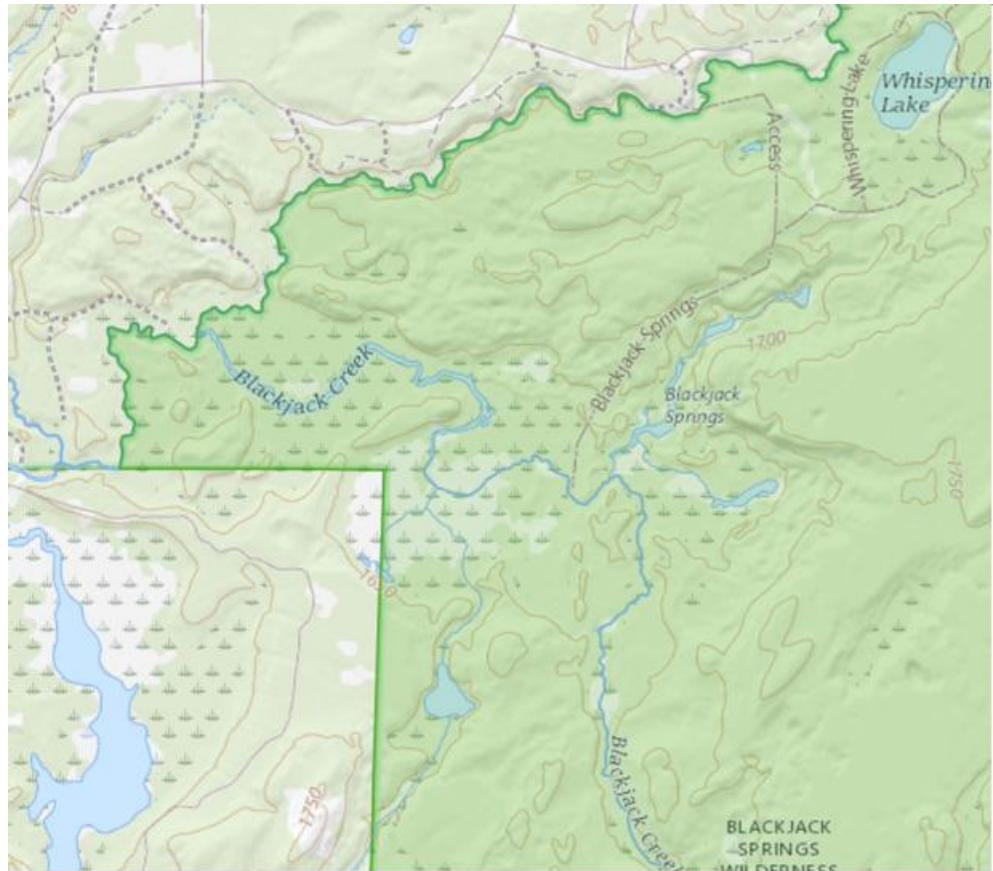
Blackbeard Island Wilderness (GA)



The wilderness is primarily saltwater marsh between two islands, with the main channel of Blackbeard Creek mostly cherry-stemmed out, although imagery clearly shows open channels within the wilderness, including one with a boat ramp on the eastern edge of the wilderness. "Salt marshes provide important nursery habitat for a variety of marine organisms including many species of fish. (U.S. Department of the Interior F&WS 2011 p. 72, 93) Fish common in nearby swamps include mullets, kingfish, silver perch and red drum.

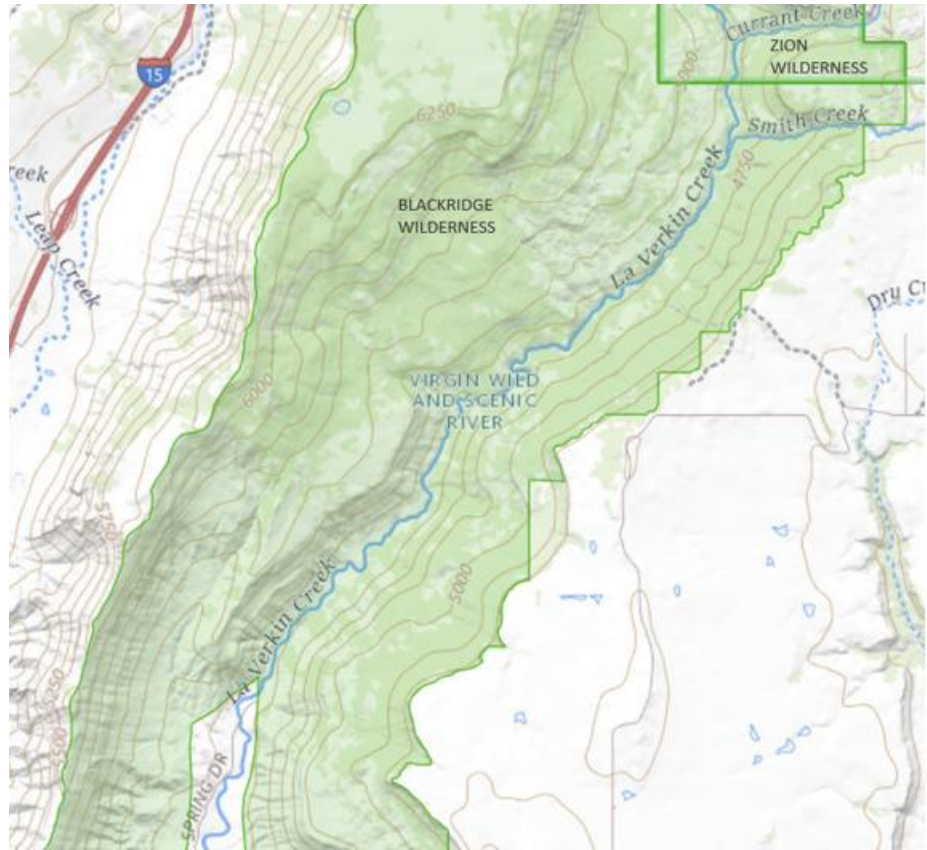
Blackjack Springs Wilderness (WI)

Brook trout are recorded from Deerskin River, which forms the northern boundary of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022) Blackjack Creek runs through the middle of the wilderness and is tributary to the Deerskin River, it is likely that the creek also holds brook trout. Whispering Lake also likely holds panfish and largemouths, and has easy trail access.



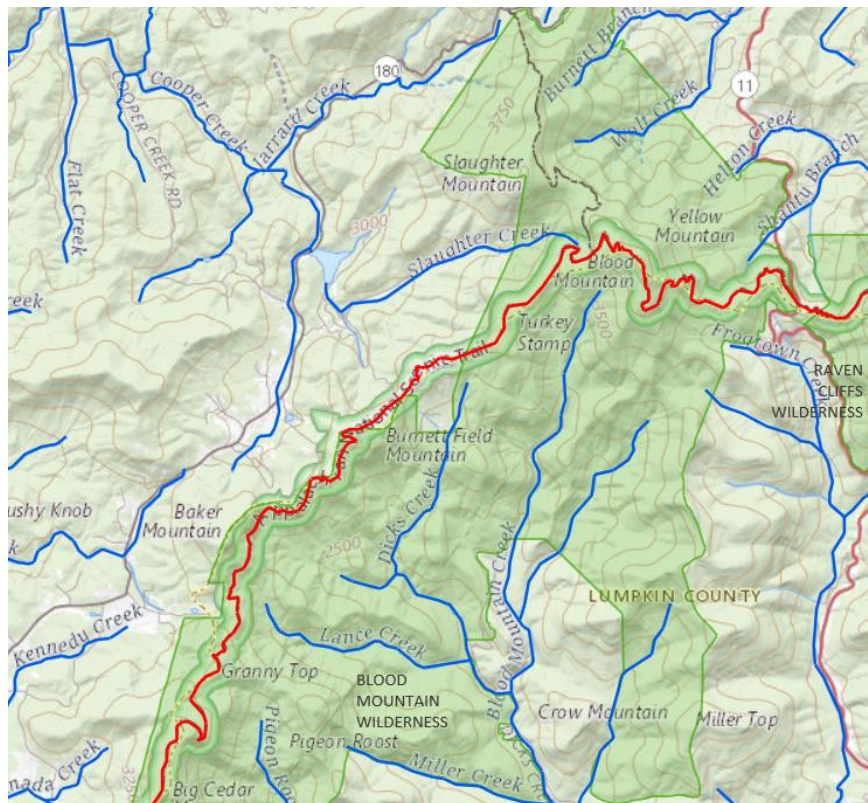
Blackridge Wilderness (UT)

Virgin River tributary LaVerkin Creek is long and perennial but supposedly has no fish as it crosses Zion National Park, and none above a barrier 5 miles south of the park boundary. This would mean the lower mile of the Blackridge Wilderness stretch could have fish, likely Virgin spinedace, speckled dace and desert suckers. (Sharrow, 2007) I tried to get there in July 2021 but the road from Toquerville was pretty challenging; I could probably have made it, but didn't really have the time to try on that particular trip.



Blood Mountain Wilderness (GA)

Georgia Department of Natural Resources shows pretty much every stream in the wilderness as a trout stream. (Georgia DNR 2022) The predictive model (DeWeber and Wagner 2014) is more pessimistic; only Wolf Creek near the northern end of the wilderness shows a greater than 50% probability of brook trout. The east branch of Blood Mountain Creek and headwaters of Frogtown Creek show lower probabilities. Those other creeks must all be full of rainbows. Red line on the map is the AT.



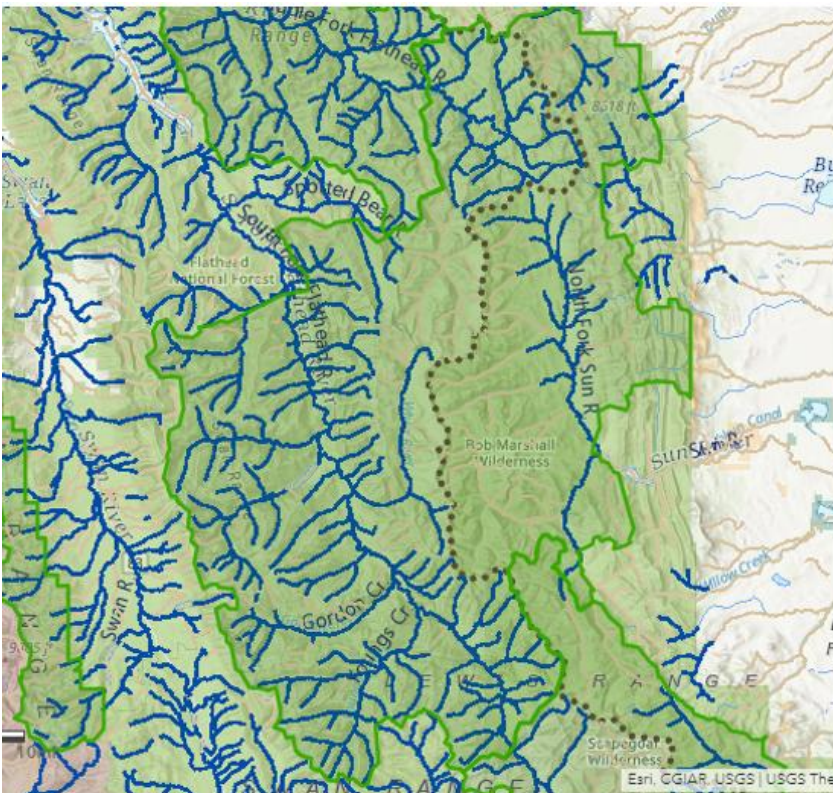
Blue Range Wilderness (NM)



It looks like it should have fish, but I didn't find any when I tried in June 2019. I hiked one mile down Pueblo Creek from the campground on north side of the wilderness; I did not fish, there was minimal water in creek, and what was there was muddy from thunderstorm runoff. In July 2022 I tried a one-mile stretch of Pueblo Creek at the southern end of the wilderness; I found discontinuous stretches of flowing water, maybe 1 or 2 gpm; but no fish. USGS NWIS shows perennial water, but that might be debatable. (USGS 2021)



Bob Marshall Wilderness (MT)



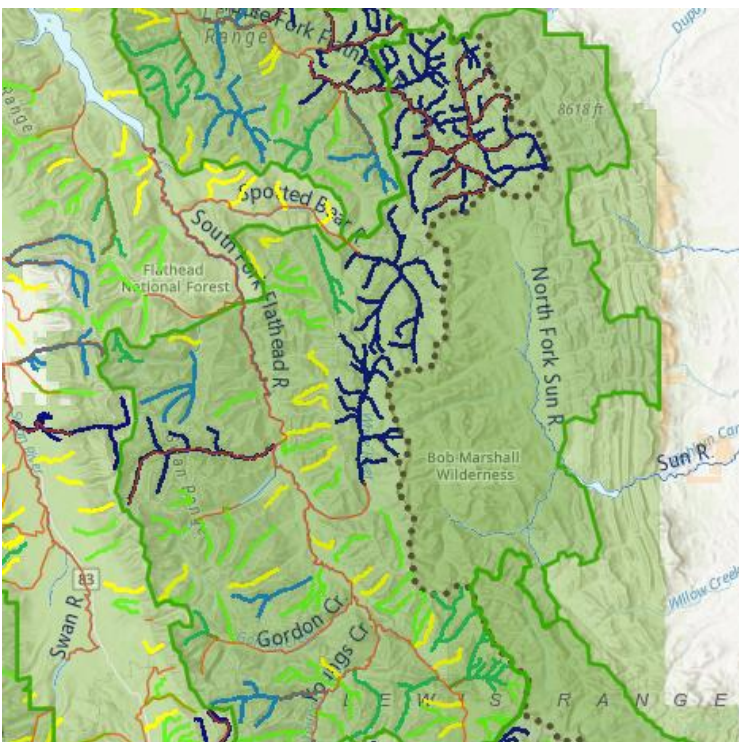
Of course, this wilderness is inundated with westslope cutthroats. The South Fork and Middle Fork of the Flathead River and pretty much all their tributaries hold westslope cutts. Even the east slope holds westslopes, with headwaters of the Teton River and the North and South Forks of the Sun River within the wilderness hosting populations. (Mayfield)

South Fork Flathead River is accessible by float, most operators do multi-day trips. There are bull trout in Flathead, westslope cutthroats in Danaher Creek and Flathead. (AA, May-Jun 2017, p 62)

Bob Marshall Wilderness (MT)



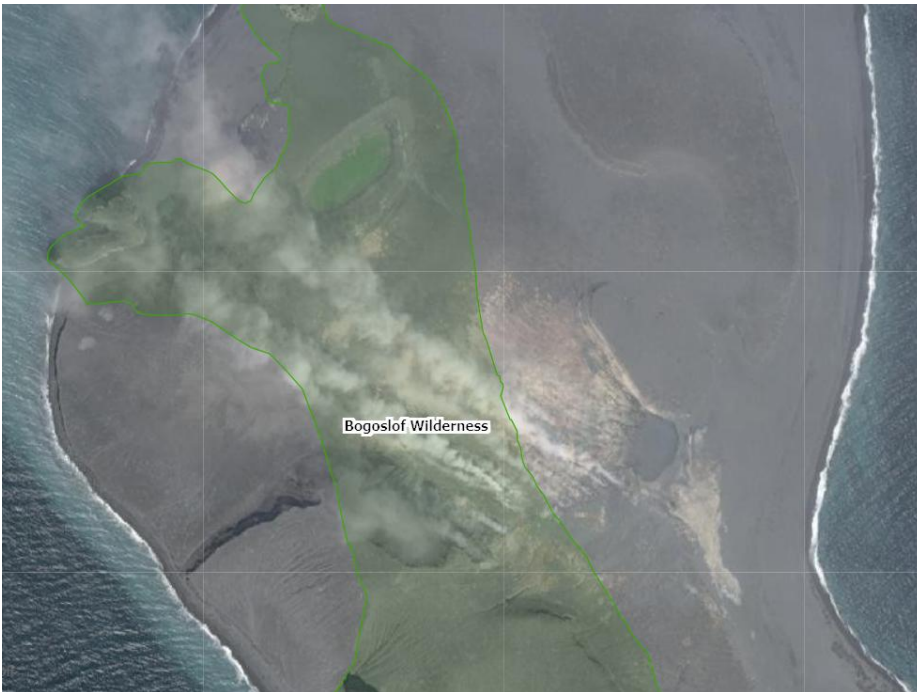
There are cutthroats in Sunburst Lake in the northwest corner of the wilderness above the Swan River Valley. Tantalizingly close to the wilderness boundary but on the east facing slope, still a very long hike in. (NWFF Jul-Aug 2008, p. 34)



There is critical habitat for bull trout in upper Middle Fork Flathead River and tributaries, including Strawberry Creek, Basin Creek and Trail Creek; in a small portion of Spotted Bear River; and in South Fork Flathead River and tributaries including Little Salmon Creek, White River, Gordon Creek, Youngs Creek and Danaher Creek. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

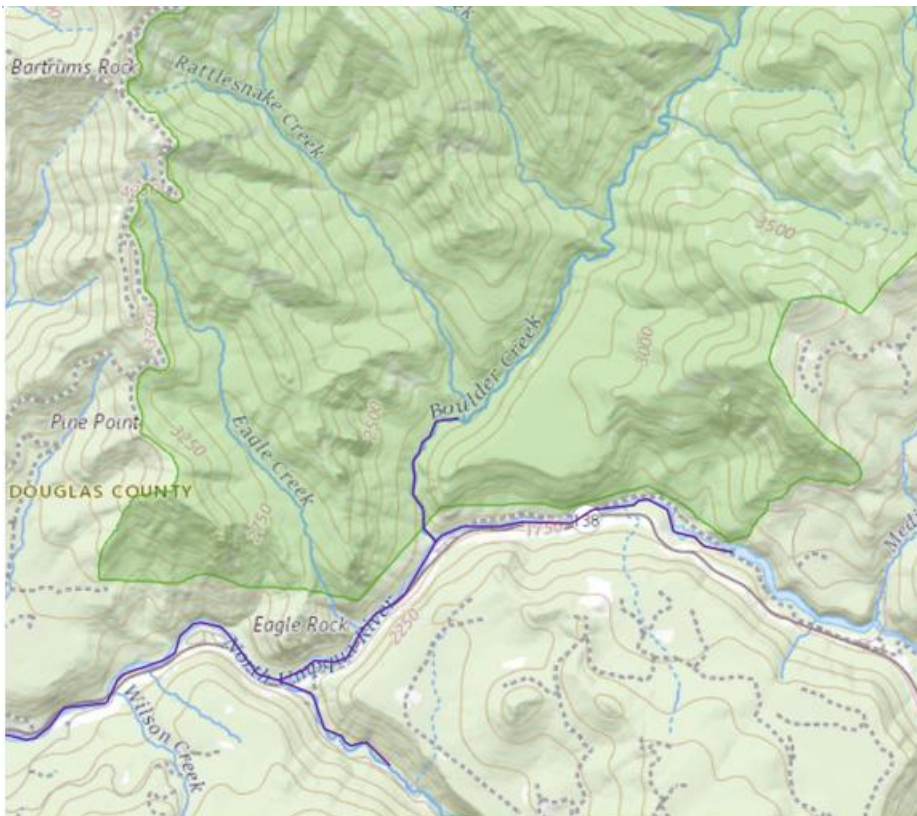
Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout throughout the upper tributaries of both Spotted Bear River and White River, in both cases pretty much all above the critical habitat. Also in Little Salmon Creek, Bartlett Creek, and upper headwaters of Youngs Creek. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Bogoslof Wilderness (AK)



I haven't found any records of fish in the wilderness, but it's an island in the Bering Sea, so it should be surrounded by fish. The island is home to colonies of fish-eating fur seals and sea birds. Common Bering Sea inshore fishes include gunnels, greenlings and sticklebacks. The wilderness boundaries don't appear to match the shoreline as a result of a 2018 volcanic eruption. Portions of the wilderness boundary do appear to encompass shoreline.

Boulder Creek Wilderness (OR)



There is critical habitat for coho salmon in the very lower portion of Boulder Creek within the wilderness. Boulder Creek is tributary to North Umpqua River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

The same segment holds coastal cutthroats and has records of winter and summer steelhead (StreamNet, 2019)

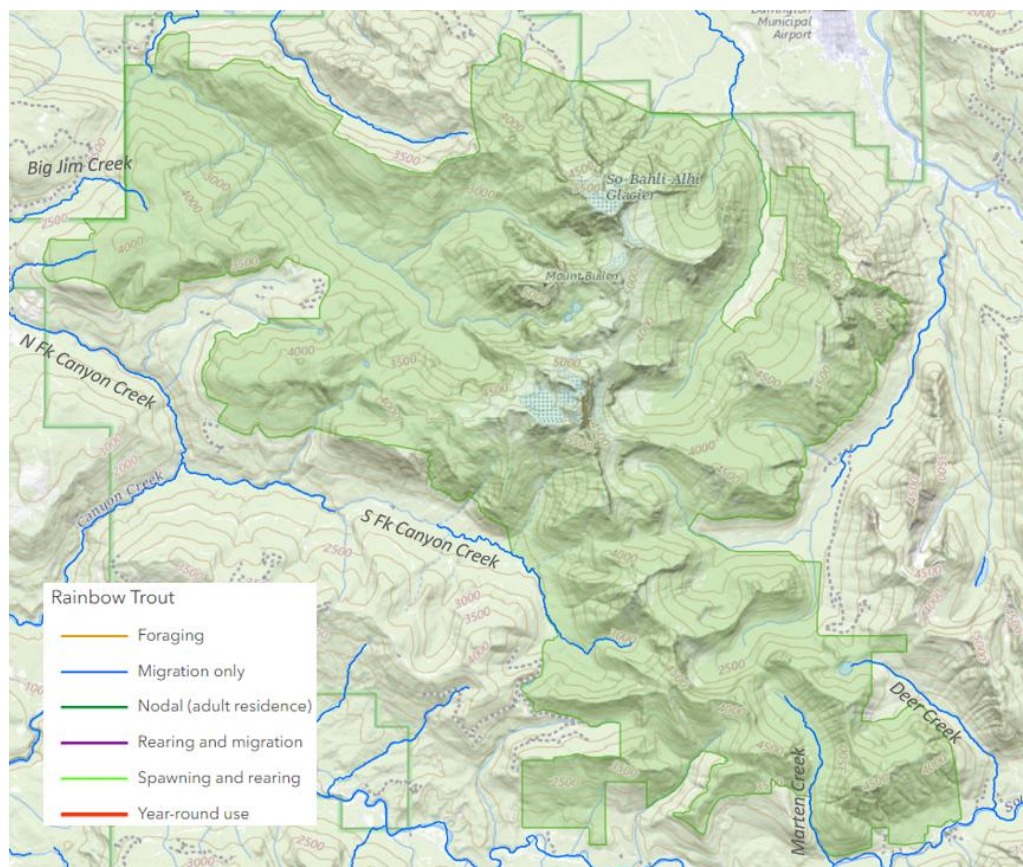
Boulder Creek Wilderness (OR)

I hiked in to Boulder Creek in mid-October 2025, and where the trail crosses the creek I found a bunch of small rainbows in a pool below a pretty waterfall. (Number 97)

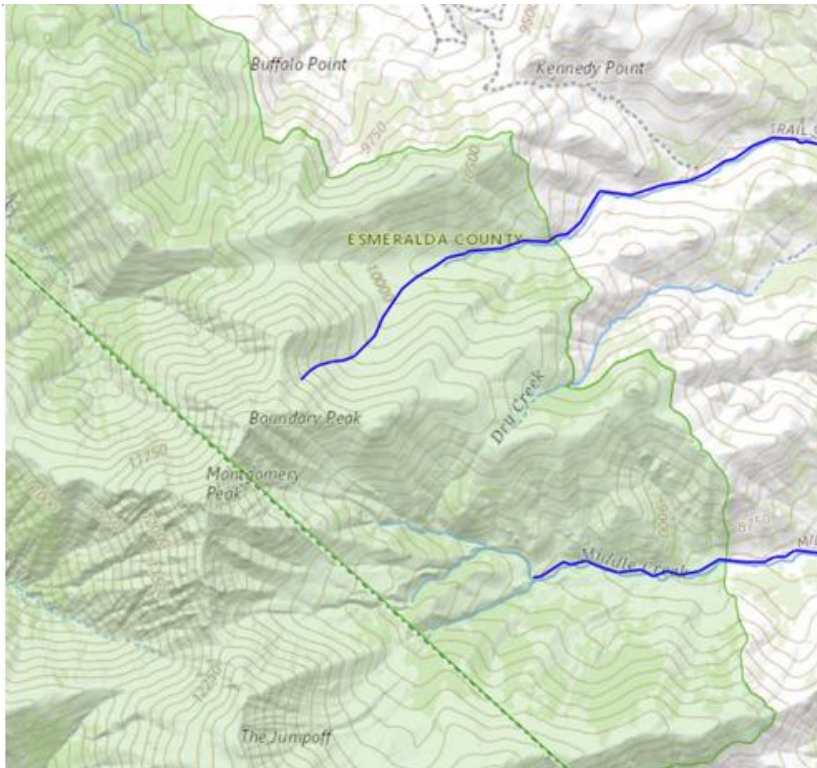


Boulder River Wilderness (WA)

Rainbow trout are present in Stillaguamish River tributaries Jim Creek, Canyon Creek, Marten Creek and Deer Creek. (StreamNet 2019)



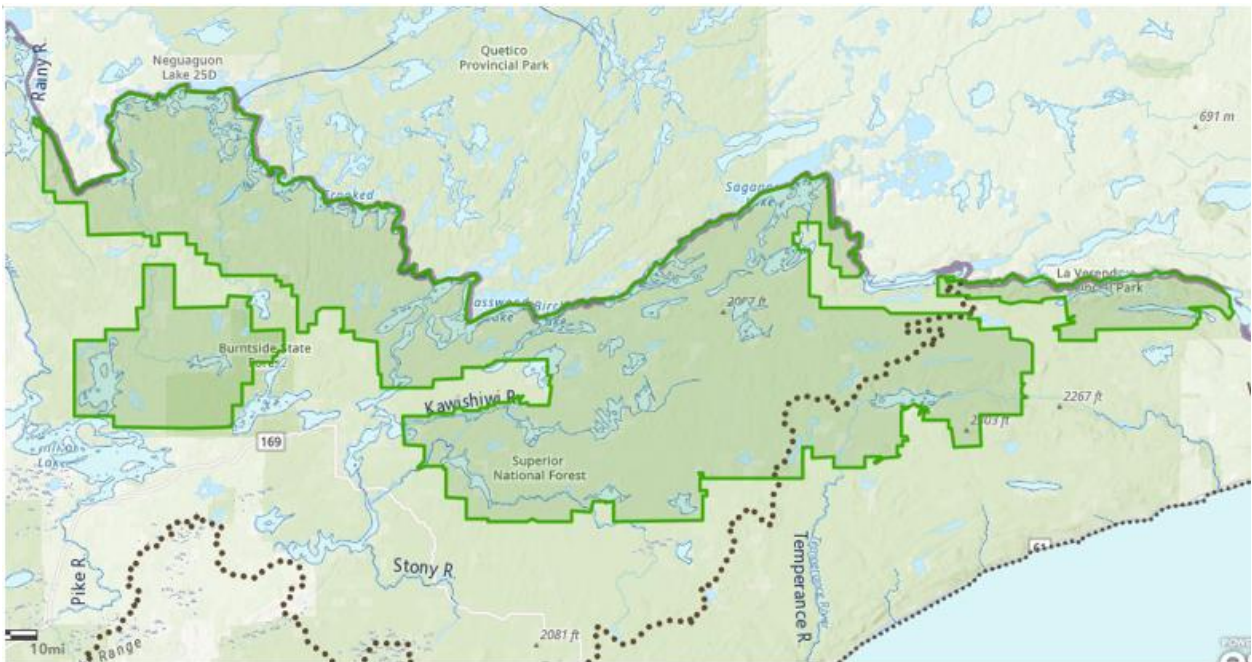
Boundary Peak Wilderness (NV)



Part of the White Mountains, Trail Creek and Middle Creek flow into a sink to the east. Both have brook trout, Middle Creek has rainbows as well. (Nevada DOW 2017)

I tried to get to Middle Creek in July 2024, but the road along Chiatovich Creek and Middle Creek turns private and I couldn't get through. It appears I might be able to get to Trail Creek from the north.

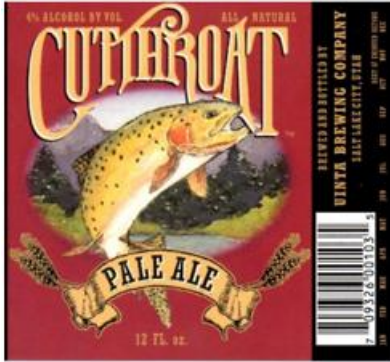
Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness (MN)



There are over a thousand lakes and “several hundred miles of streams,” with good populations of lake trout, walleye, northern pike, smallmouth and largemouth bass, perch and crappie. (Trout Fall 2014, p. 46; also AA Jul-Aug 2008, p 68)

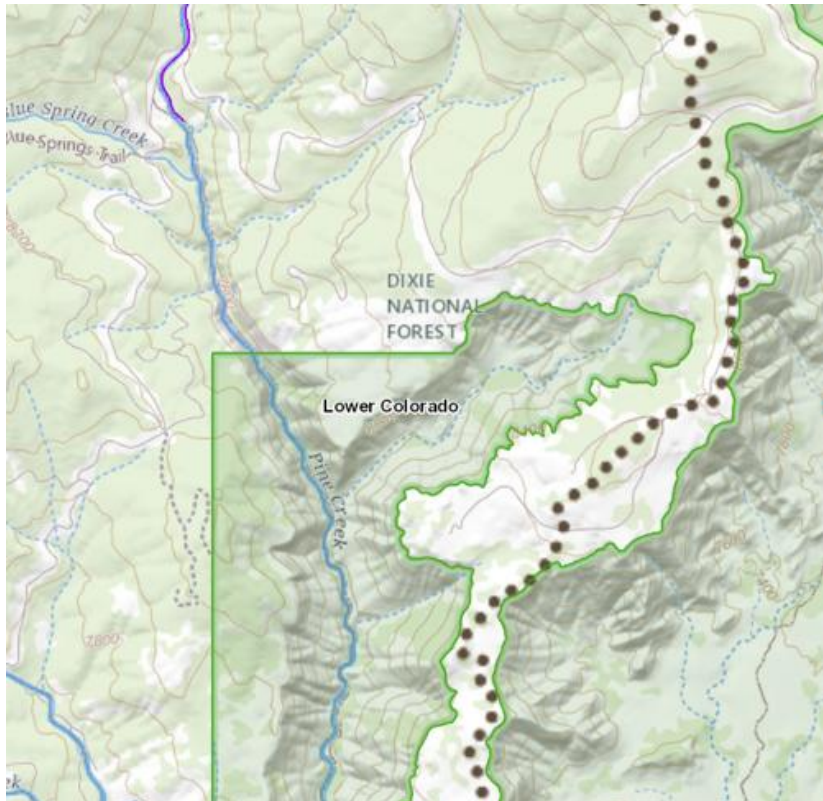
Box Death Hollow Wilderness (UT)

A genetically pure replicate population of Colorado cutthroats in Pine Creek appears to be upstream of the wilderness area, but I'll bet some make it into the wilderness. We'll see. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU 2019 CRCT)



Hiking upstream from the lower trailhead on Pine Creek you encounter brown trout first, with Colorado cutthroats above the barriers further upstream. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2011, p. 41)

August 1, 2020 I hiked in from the Upper Box trailhead. Lots of brown trout, mostly 8 to 10 inches, in Pine Creek in the upper part of the Box. I was hoping some Colorado cutts might make it down here from the areas where the studies say they are a mile upstream, but now I can see how they might have a tough time outcompeting the voracious browns in this stretch of creek. I did go upstream a mile from the Wilderness boundary and caught a nice Colorado cutt. (Number 26)



Bradwell Bay Wilderness (FL)



There is a record of Everglades pygmy sunfish apparently from one of the ponds (or near one of them...) in the northwestern corner of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)

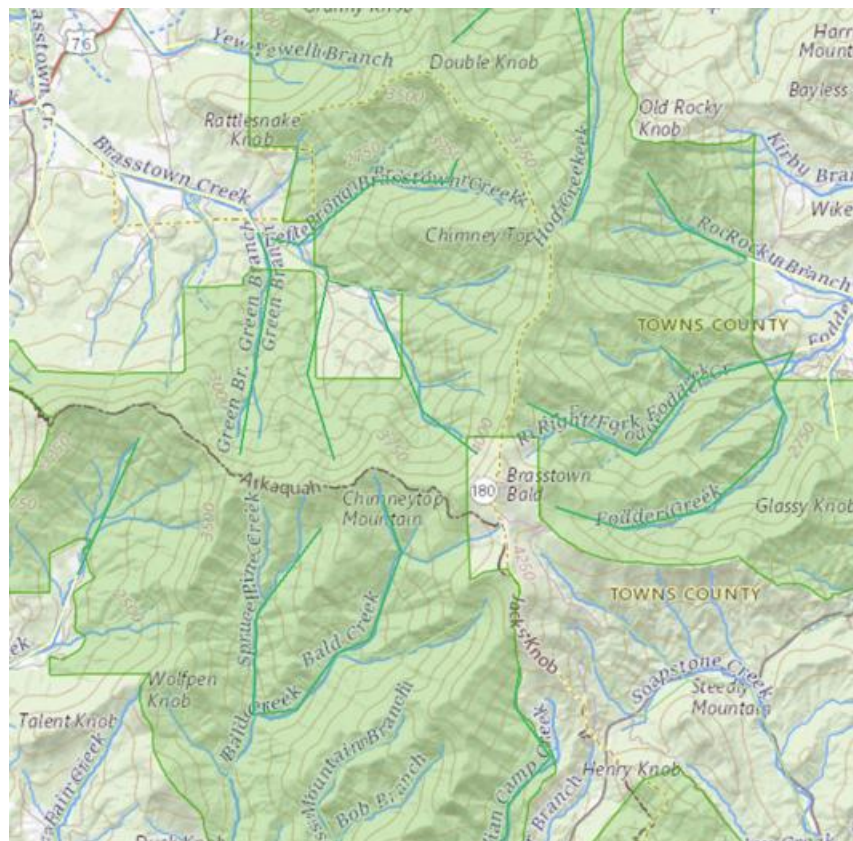
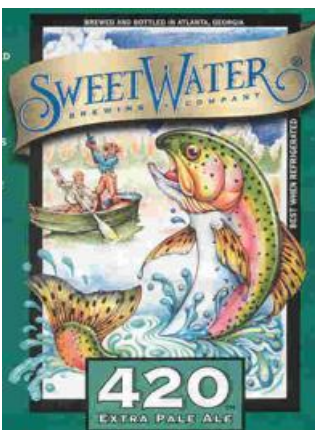


Elassoma evergladei, or the Everglades pygmy sunfish

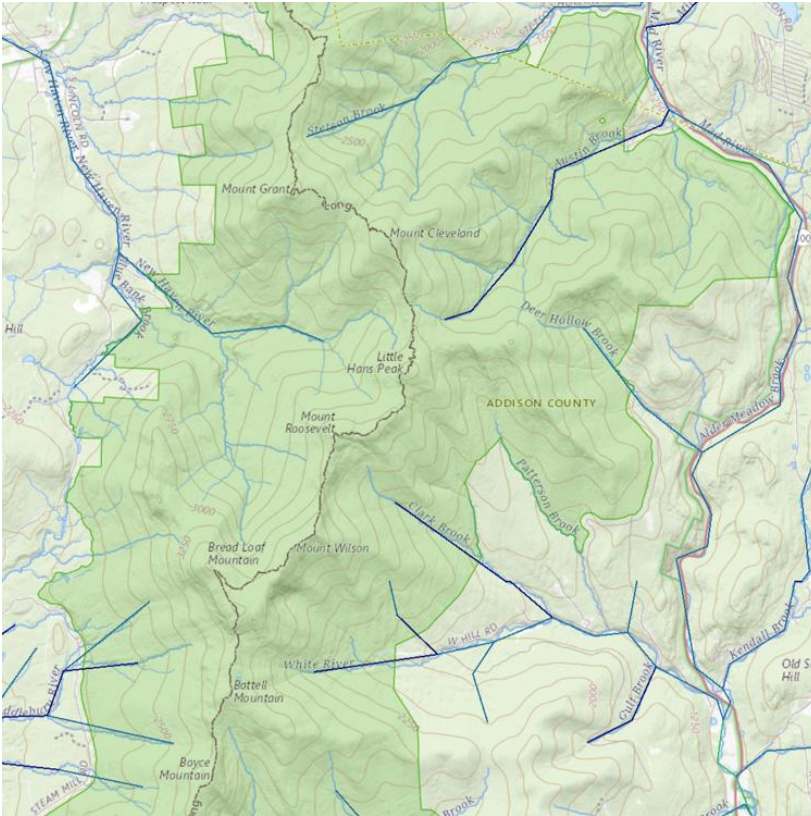
There appears to be streams with good trail access in the eastern part of the wilderness, other likely fish include catfish, mosquitofish and shiners.

Brasstown Wilderness (GA)

Georgia Department of Natural Resources shows pretty much every stream in the wilderness as a trout stream. (Georgia DNR 2022) The ones on the map overlayed with straight green lines have greater than 50% probability of brook trout presence. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)



Breadloaf Wilderness (VT)



Stronghold populations of brook trout exist, along with rainbow trout and brown trout, in the Mad River drainage in the northern part of the wilderness; Mad River flows north to Winooskie River. Another stronghold population of brook trout, also with browns and rainbows, is in the Middlebury River drainage, flowing west toward Otter Creek. White River tributaries in the eastern part of the wilderness have a persistent population of brook trout. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

Most streams in the wilderness have a high probability of holding brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

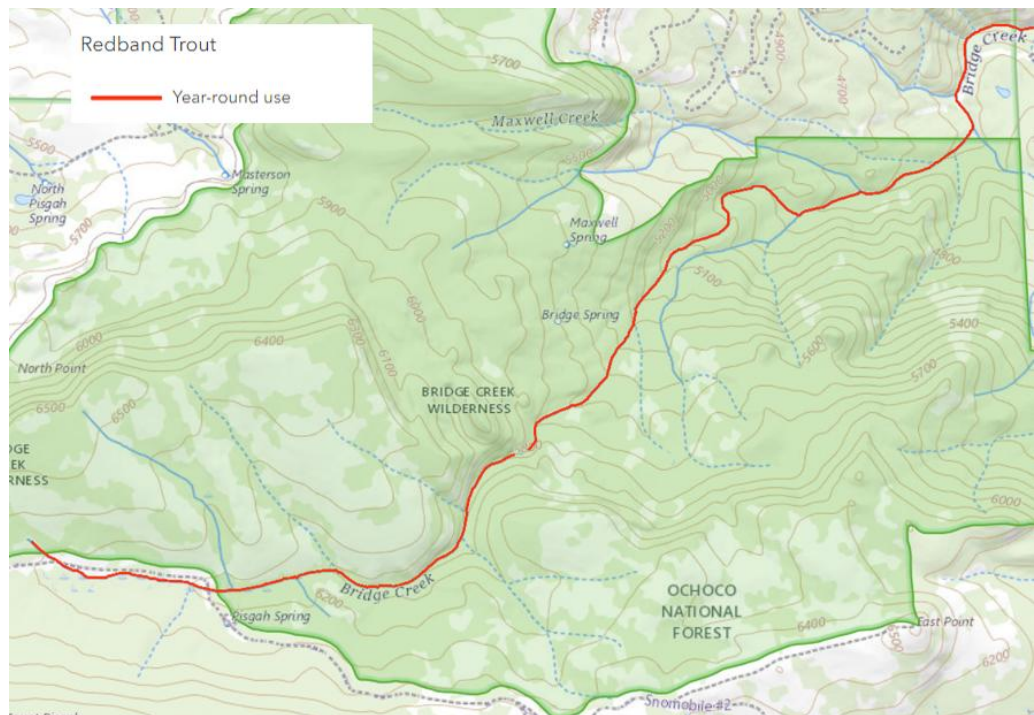
Breton Wilderness (LA)



The wilderness includes near shore water on the west side of the islands. 70% of the land area disappeared in 2005 from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Marshes are tidally inundated and serve as an important nursery area for many types of fish. (USF&WS 2008 Breton and Delta, p. 15-20)

Bridge Creek Wilderness (OR)

Redband rainbow trout populations exist in Bridge Creek throughout the length of the wilderness. There is also critical habitat for steelhead in the same water. North-flowing Bridge Creek eventually makes it to the John Day River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

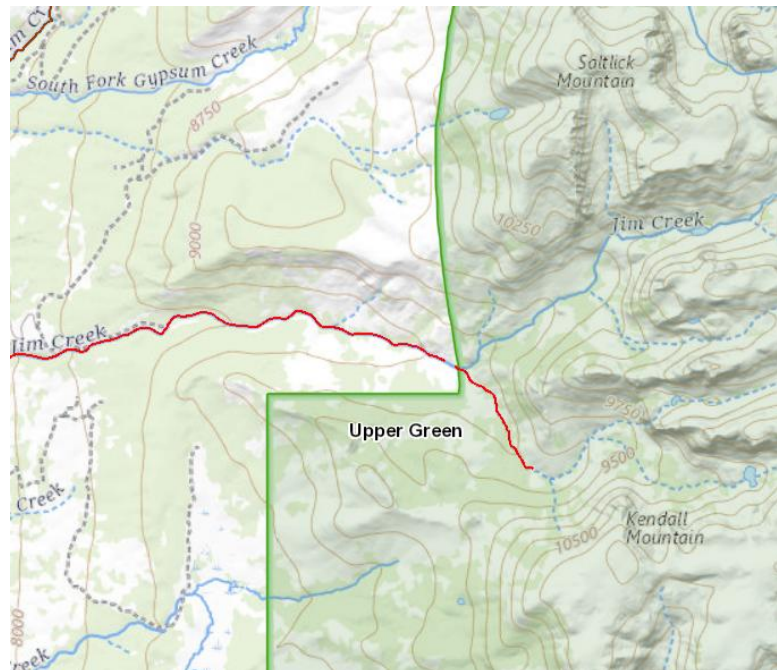
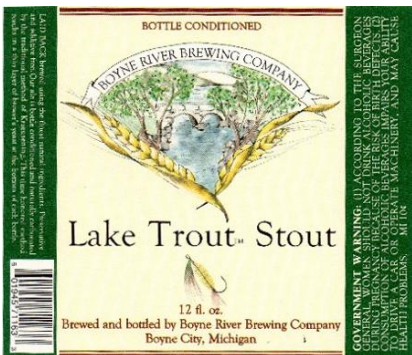


Bridger Wilderness (WY)

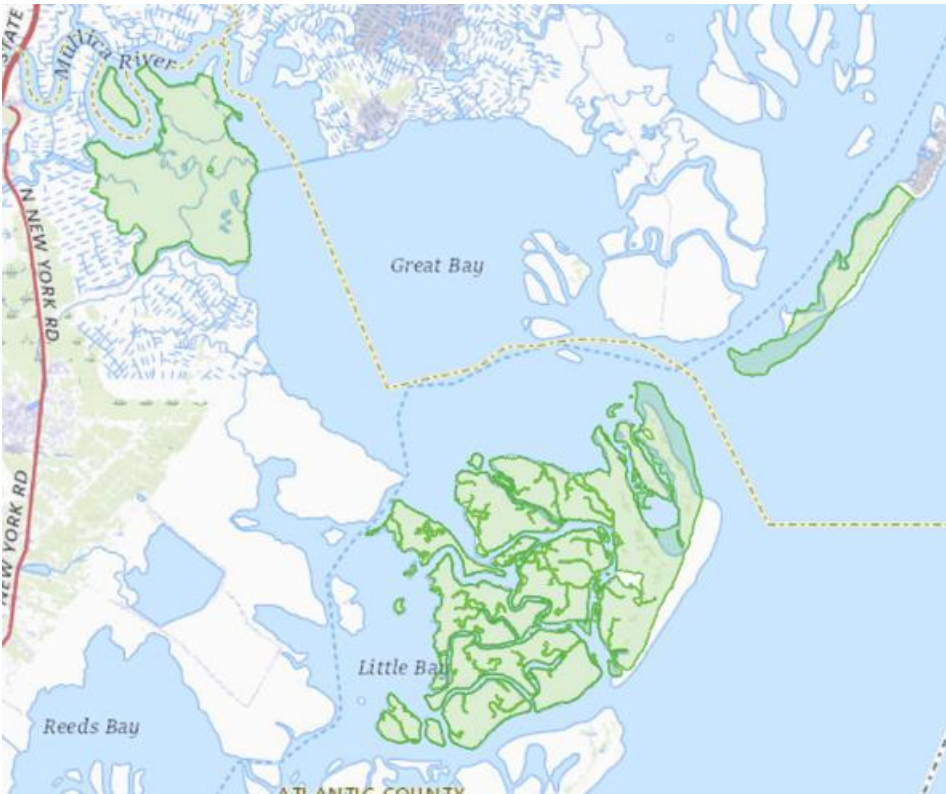
The headwaters of the Green River between upper and lower Green River Lakes have brook trout, rainbows, browns, cutthroats and whitefish. Tributary Clear Creek has brook trout, with goldens at Clear Lake. You can drag a kayak from the lower lake into the wilderness and the upper lake, which has lake trout in addition to the brookies, cutts and rainbows. (NWFF Nov-Dec 2016, p. 54)



Jim Creek has 90% pure population of Colorado cutthroats. (TU CRCT 2019)



Brigantine Wilderness (NJ)

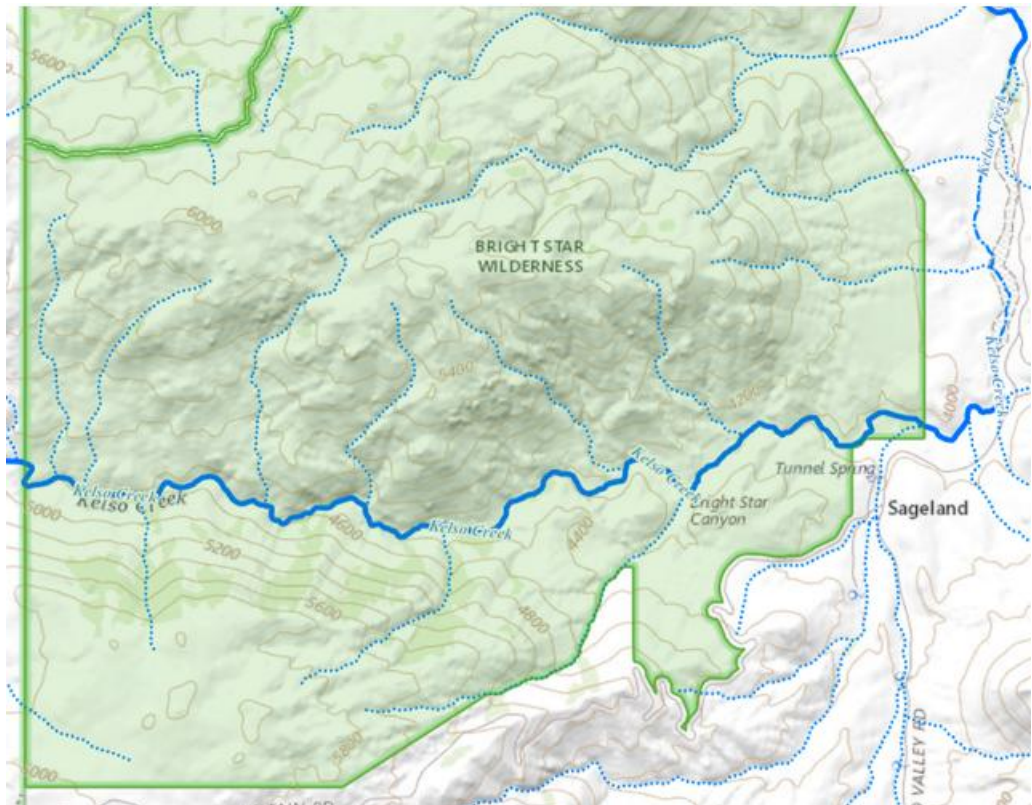


Most of the wilderness is salt marsh, which is interlaced with small tidal streams and ponds. These marshes and their streams “contain a rich variety of fish.” There are also surf fishing opportunities at the Holgate Unit on Long Beach, with access on foot. (USF&WS 2004 Brigantine, p. 24, 26, 45)

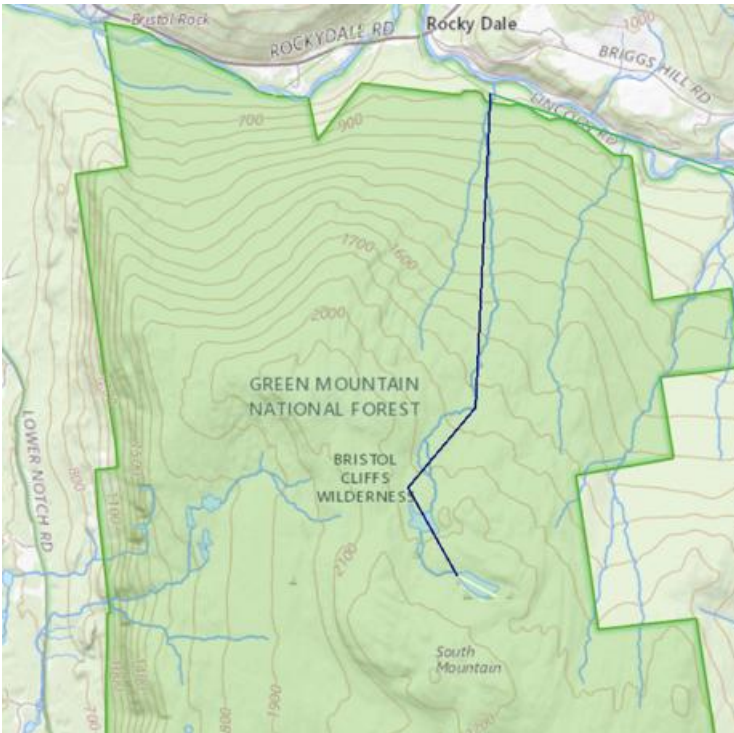
There are records of white perch in the Mullica River at the northwest corner of the inland unit of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)

Bright Star Wilderness (CA)

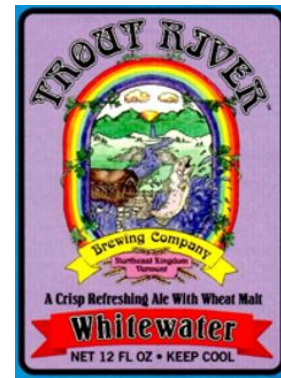
Kelso Creek has perennial flow through the wilderness. (USGS 2021) Sacramento sucker, Sacramento pikeminnow and Central California roach are native to the Kelso Creek watershed. (UCal PISCES, 2022)



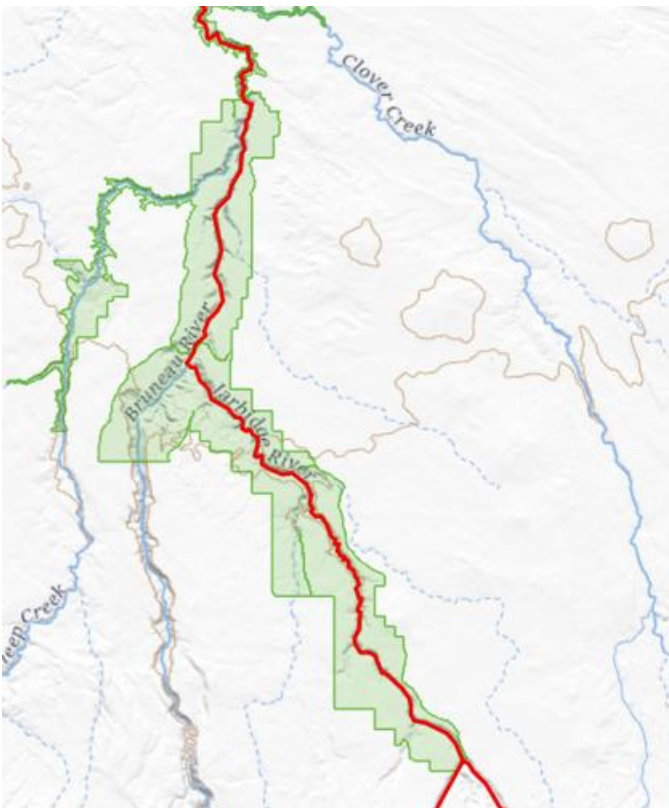
Bristol Cliffs Wilderness (VT)



Redundant populations of brook trout, along with rainbow trout and brown trout, occupy the New Haven River drainage in the western part of the wilderness. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Highest probability of brook trout, over 90%, appears in the North Pond outlet creek, flowing north, also to the New Haven River. Topo quad shows trail access to the creek. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)



Bruneau-Jarbridge Wilderness (ID)

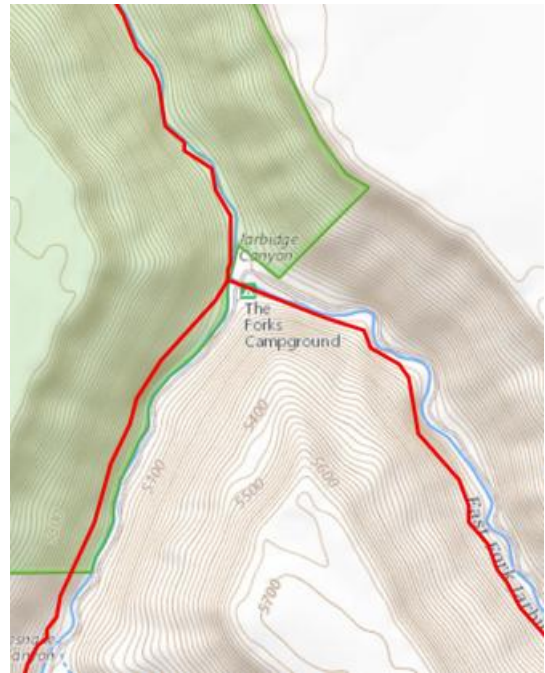


Critical habitat for bull trout in Jarbridge River and in Bruneau River downstream from confluence with Jarbridge. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



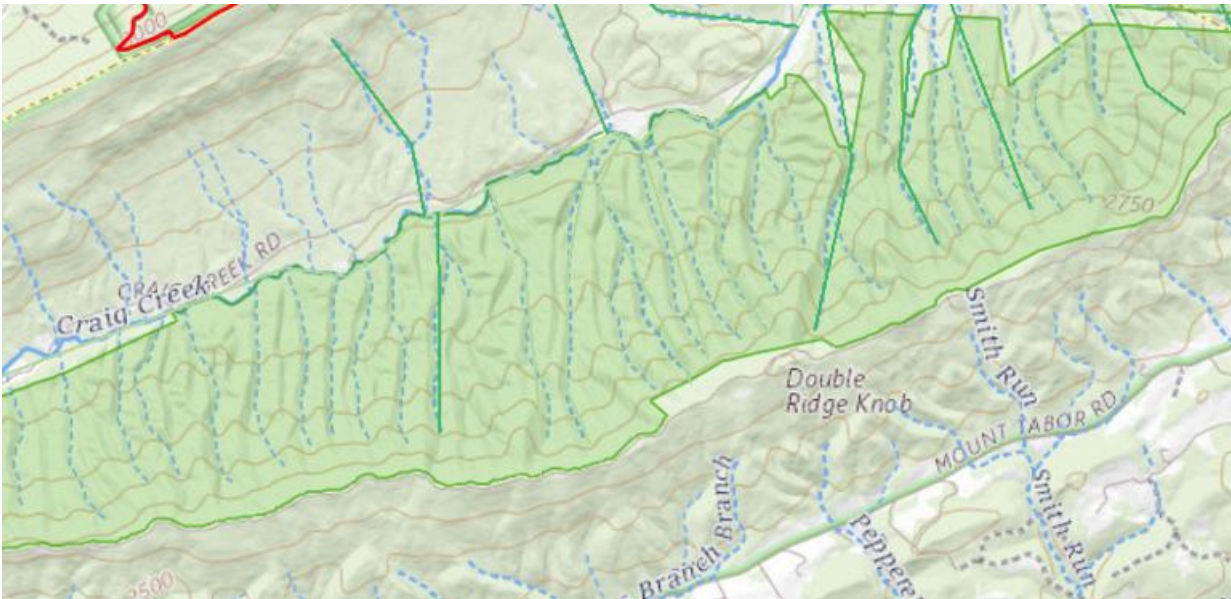
Bruneau-Jarbridge Wilderness (ID)

Redband trout occur throughout the Bruneau and Jarbridge Rivers above the confluence with Clover Creek, with low densities downstream increasing to moderate densities in upper portions. (Mayfield; SWFF Sep-Oct 2010, p. 43)



I had the opportunity to fish for some of those higher densities of redbands in October, 2022, at the put-in at the Forks of the Jarbridge at the southern end of the wilderness. On a cold wet morning I caught a few very nice redbands. I was then somewhat surprised when I drove up out of the canyon onto the surrounding sagebrush plain and found it covered with snow, which had fallen overnight and was still coming down in a first-of-the-season snow storm. (number 57)

Brush Mountain Wilderness (VA)



Craig Creek generally forms the northern edge of the wilderness, although it appears to come in and out of the wilderness to some degree. Records of rainbow trout, bluehead chub, smallmouth bass and longnose dace in the creek. (iNaturalist 2022)

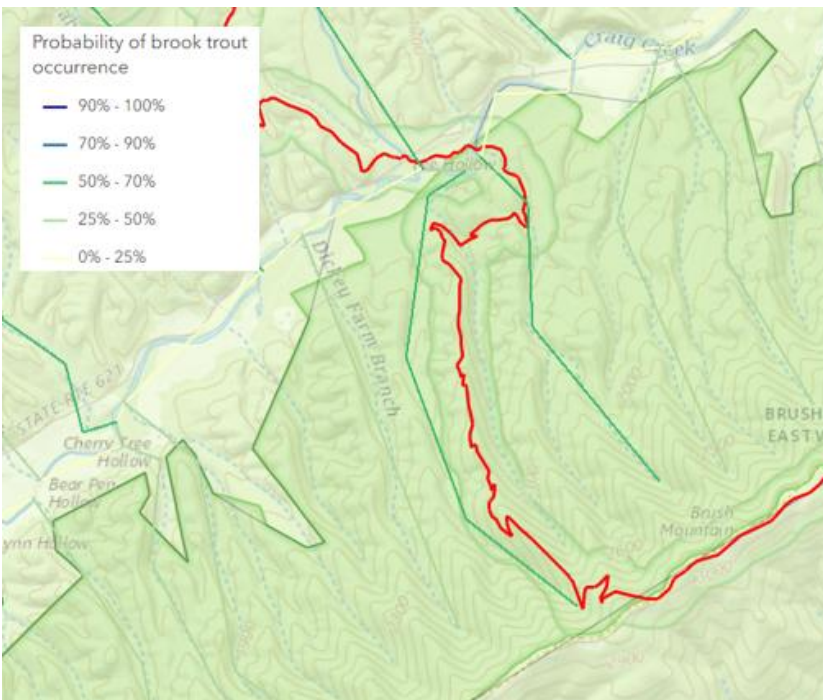
Probability of brook trout presence in some of the Craig Creek tributaries flowing north off the ridge is 50 to 70%. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

Chain pickerel and mountain redbelly dace apparently occur within the wilderness in some of the hollows that feed the main creek. (iNaturalist 2022)



The mountain redbelly dace (*Chrosomus oreas*)

Brush Mountain East Wilderness (VA)



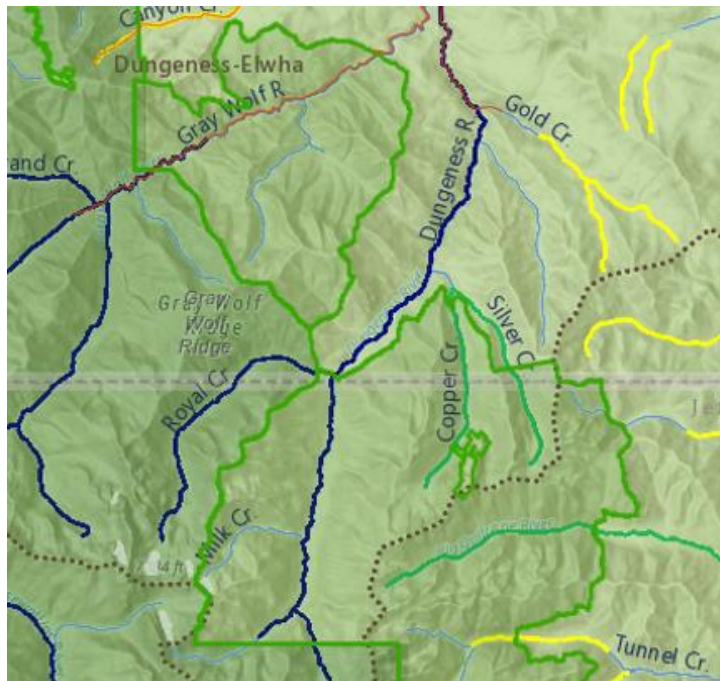
There are records of central stoneroller, fallfish, redbreast sunfish and telescope shiner where Craig Creek meanders into the wilderness adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. (iNaturalist 2022)



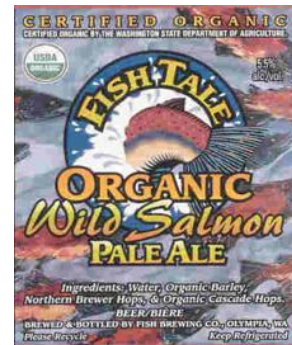
The central stoneroller (*Campostoma anomalum*)

The north-flowing Craig Creek tributaries coming off the ridge have over 50% probability of brook trout presence. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

Buckhorn Wilderness (WA)



Critical habitat exists for bull trout in the Gray Wolf River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)
 The Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in Dungeness and Gray Wolf Rivers. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)



There is also critical habitat for chinook salmon in the Gray Wolf in the entire stretch within the Buckhorn Wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

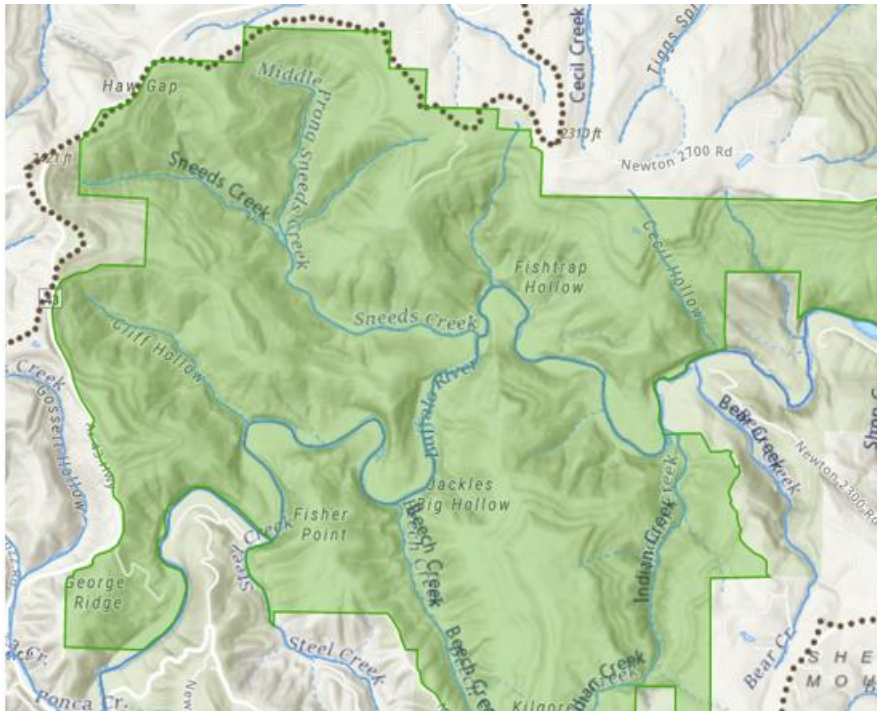
Bucks Lake Wilderness (CA)

Three Lakes on the western edge of the wilderness contains brook trout. (Schalla 2021)

Bucks Lake and Silver Lake are adjacent to the wilderness, both are stocked with rainbow and brook trout, and I'm guessing some of these make it into streams in the wilderness that feed into the lakes. There is actually a record of kokanee in one of the streams the feeds into Bucks Lake, where kokanee are also regularly planted. (iNaturalist 2023)



Buffalo National River Wilderness (AR)



Smallmouth bass reside in the Buffalo River in the western unit of the wilderness (shown at left), also in the eastern unit. Green sunfish, rainbow darter, northern hog sucker and hornyhead chub occur in the same stretches of river. (iNaturalist 2022)

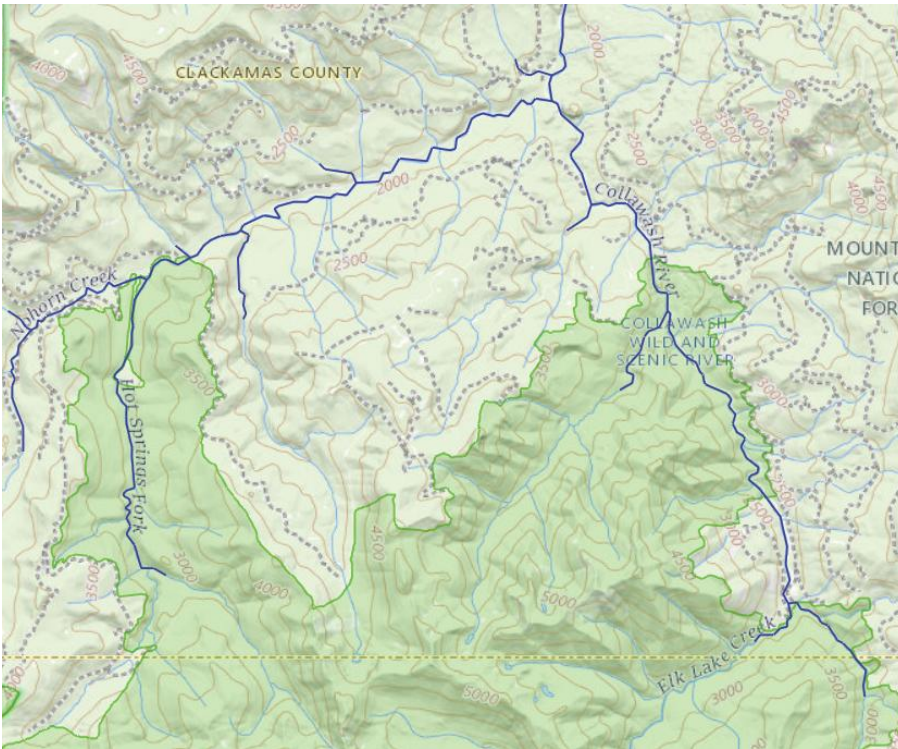


Buffalo Peaks Wilderness (CO)

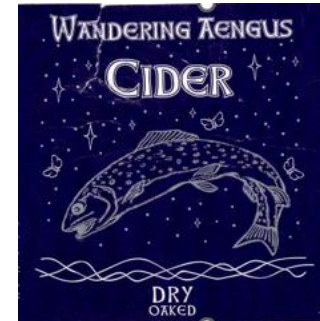
Rich Creek is perennial for over four miles in the wilderness (USGS 2021), runs through some attractive looking meadow stretches with multiple beaver ponds, has parallel trail access for the full length, and holds brookies plus the occasional cutthroat. (Duerkson, 2020)



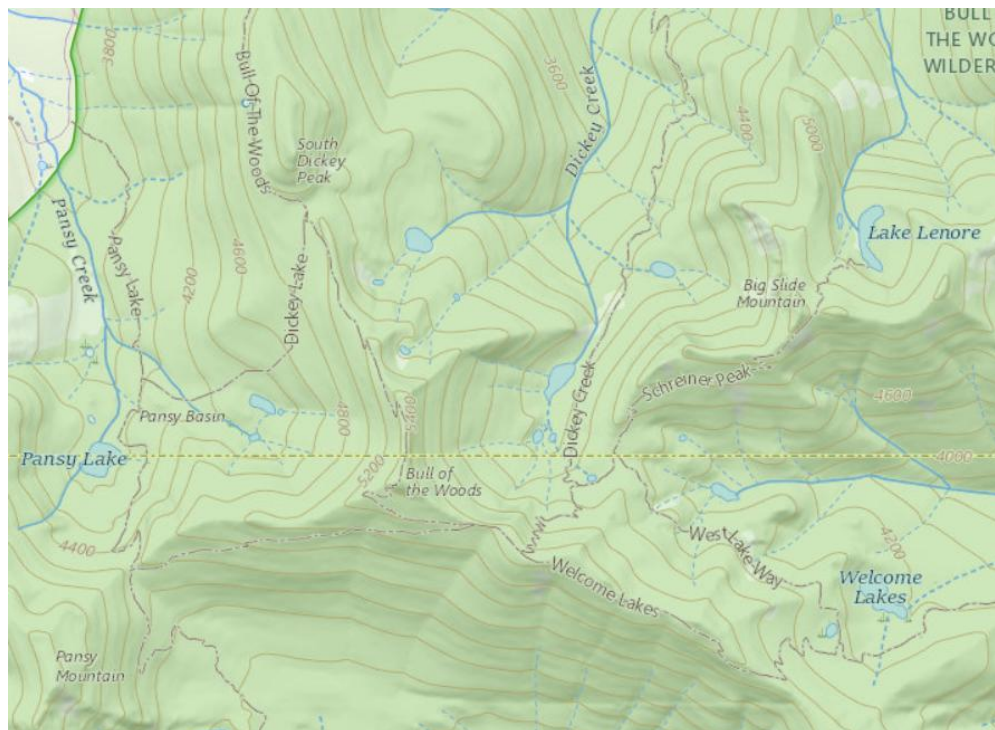
Bull of the Woods Wilderness (OR)



There is critical habitat for steelhead in the main stem and the Hot Springs Fork of the Collawash River. There is coho salmon critical habitat in the lower Collawash below Dickey Creek, and in the lower Hot Springs Fork along the cherry-stem. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



Several lakes in the center of the wilderness hold brookies, including Big Slide Lake, four foot deep Pansy Lake, Lenore Lake, Welcome Lake and West Lake. (NWFF Jul-Aug 2017, p. 24)

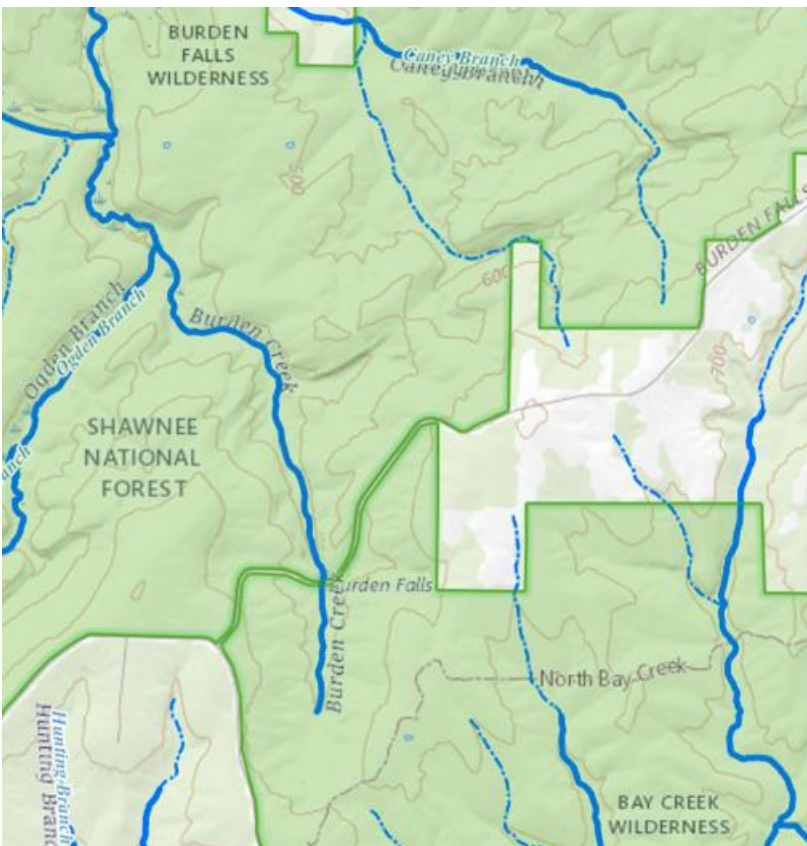


Bull of the Woods Wilderness (OR)

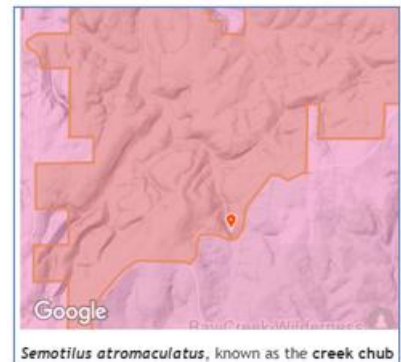


In July, 2025, I caught a rainbow trout in a section of Hot Springs Fork that was composed of very flat, very weathered, and very slippery limestone with the river flowing over and through it. (Number 88) The trout came from one of many 2- or 3-foot deep channels cut through the limestone. Needless to say, the fish could see me coming.

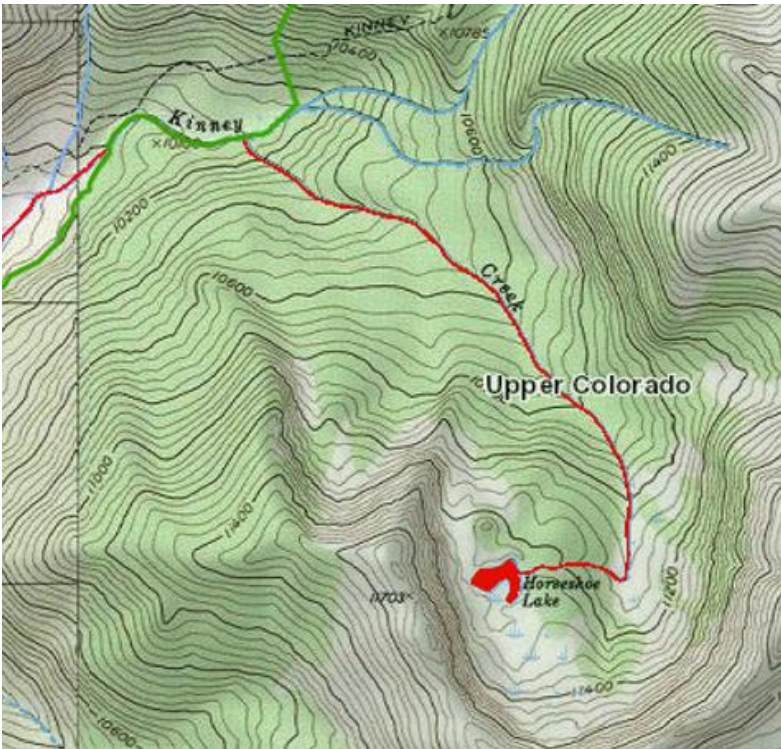
Burden Falls Wilderness (IL)



There is a record of creek chub at Burden Falls on Burden Creek. I would think they are also in Burden Creek upstream into the Bay Creek Wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



Byers Peak Wilderness (CO)



Kinney Creek has a hybridized population of Colorado cutthroats. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



I hiked up the Kinney Creek trail June 26, 2018. Went to end of the trail at Horseshoe Lake and found big, beautiful, colorful Colorado cutthroats cruising the shoreline of the lake.

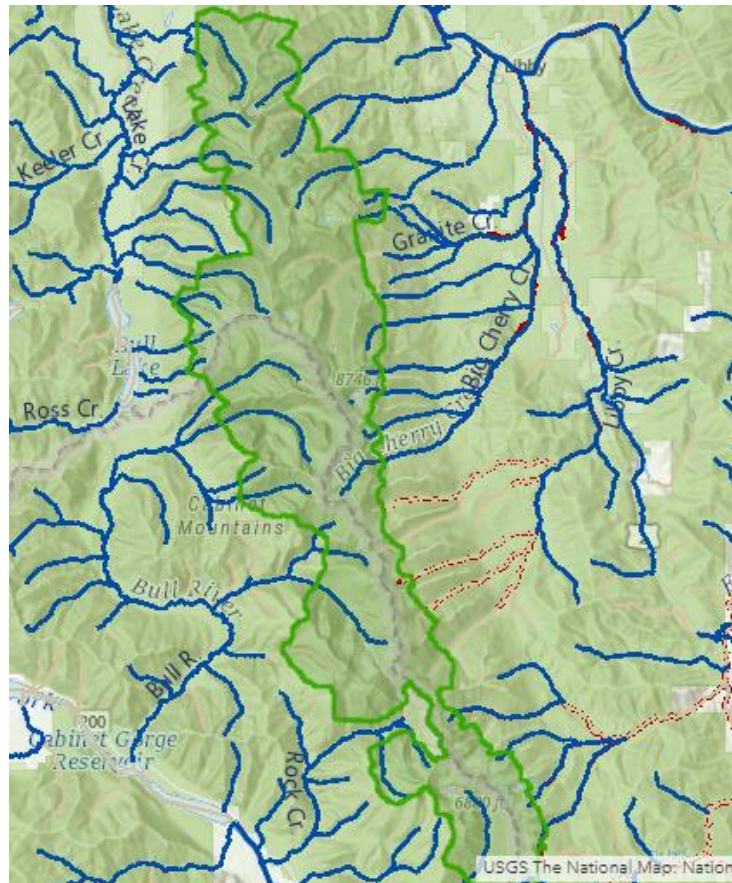
Byers Peak Wilderness (CO)

I only managed to hook one and didn't bring him in. I did land a colorful (but smaller) Colorado cutthroat from Kinney Creek at the lake's outlet. (Number 17)

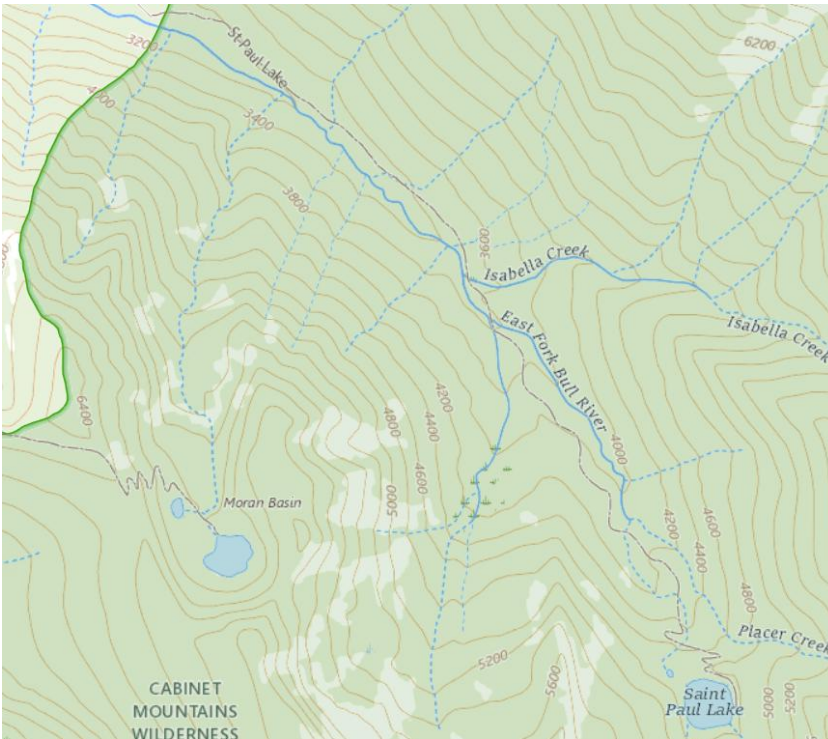


Cabinet Mountains Wilderness (MT)

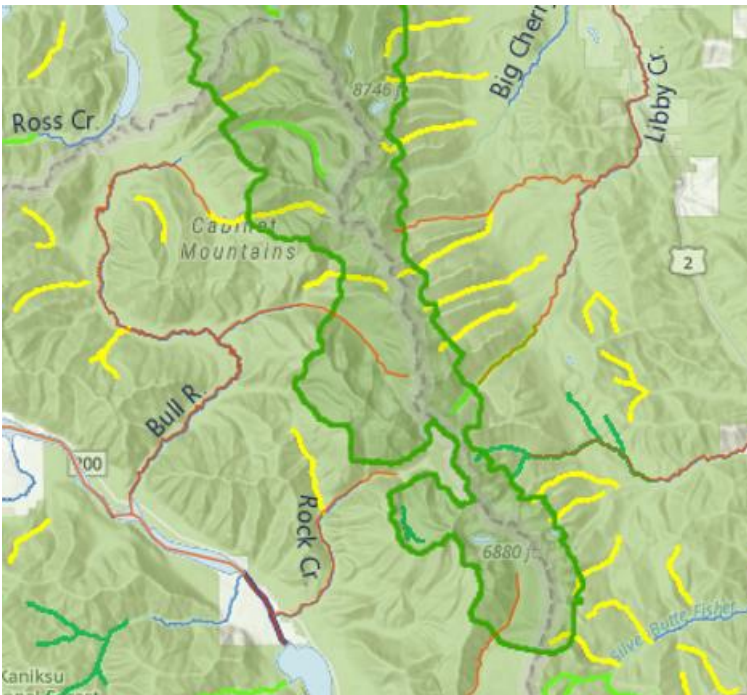
Most streams flowing west off of the Cabinet Mountains, tributary to the Bull River, which flows south to the Clarks Fork River; or tributary to Lake Creek, which flows north to the Kootenai River; have westslope cutthroats. East flowing streams in the Libby Creek drainage have westslope cutts as well. (Mayfield)



Cabinet Mountains Wilderness (MT)



I caught some westslope cutthroats in East Fork Bull River on May 30, 2018 on a hike up to St. Paul Lake. (Number 16) Didn't get any fish pictures, but I did get this dusky grouse.



There is critical habitat for bull trout in East Fork Bull River and Swamp Creek at very southern end of wilderness, although the Climate Shield model shows low probabilities. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

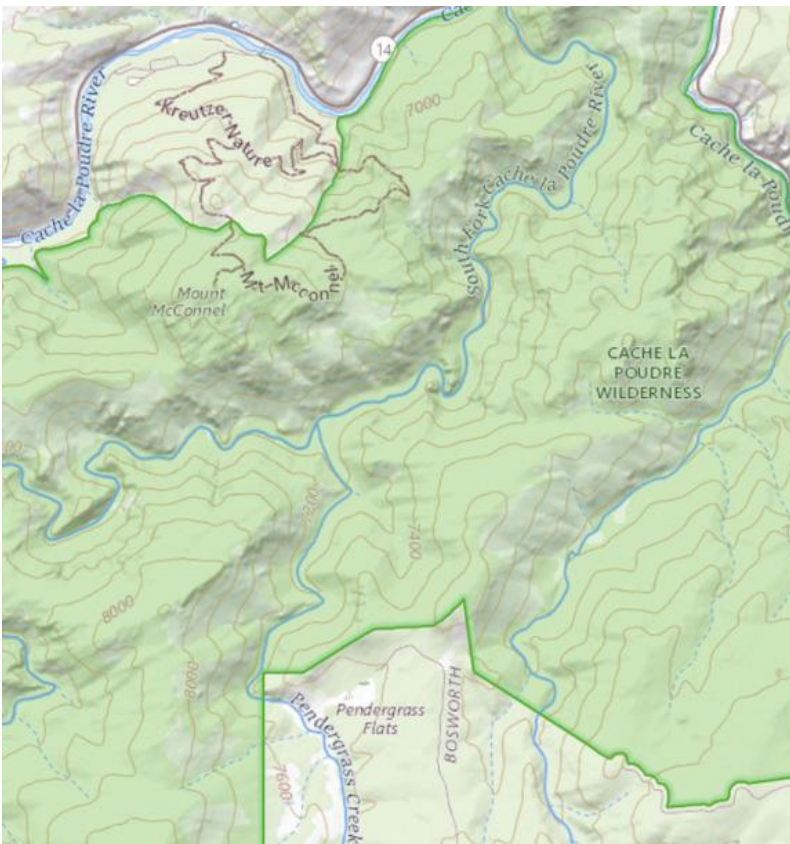


Cache Creek Wilderness (CA)

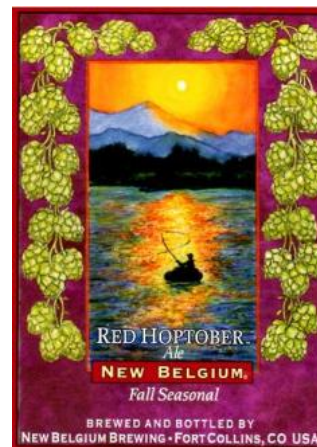


The Cache Creek watershed is within native range of coastal rainbow trout, Sacramento sucker, Sacramento pikeminnow, Sacramento speckled dace, Sacramento blackfish, hardhead, California roach and others. (UCal PISCES, 2022)

Cache la Poudre Wilderness (CO)



South Fork Cache la Poudre River crosses through the wilderness, there are multiple records of brown trout and rainbow trout. There are also rainbows in Pendergrass Creek, a tributary of South Fork, as well. (Fishbrain 2023)



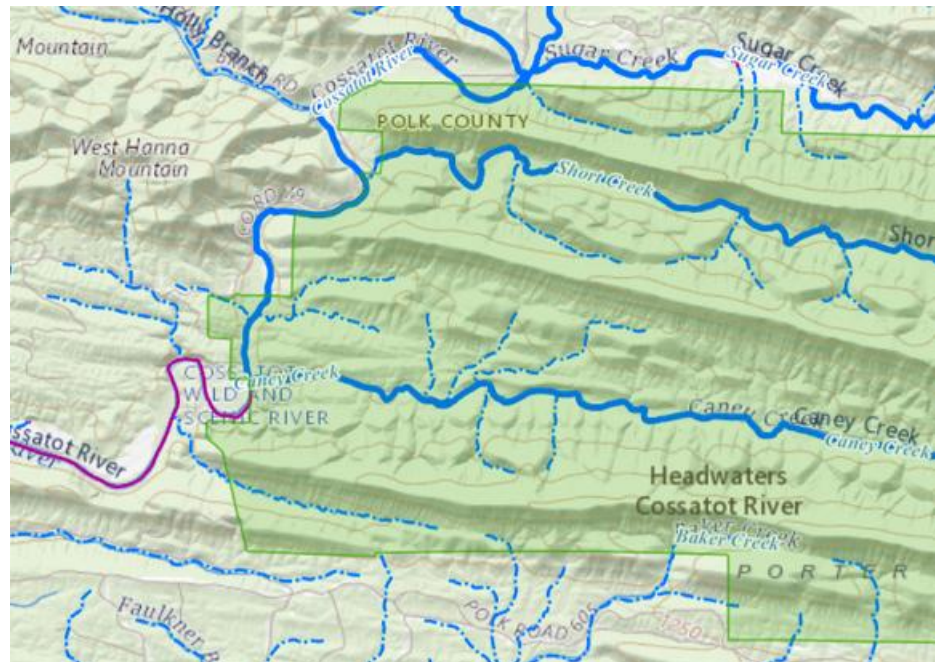
Canaan Mountain Wilderness (UT)

East Fork Virgin River tributary Shunes Creek has small numbers of Virgin spinedace, speckled dace and desert suckers through the stretch in Zion National Park, it seems like a good assumption they will also be in the creek above the National Park as it flows through Canaan Mountain Wilderness. (Sharrow, 2007) I tried to access from downstream via Shunesburg in 2021. Not only was the road posted “private,” but there was an armed guard in a gatehouse to make sure the wrong people didn’t get in. These are some well-protected suckers.

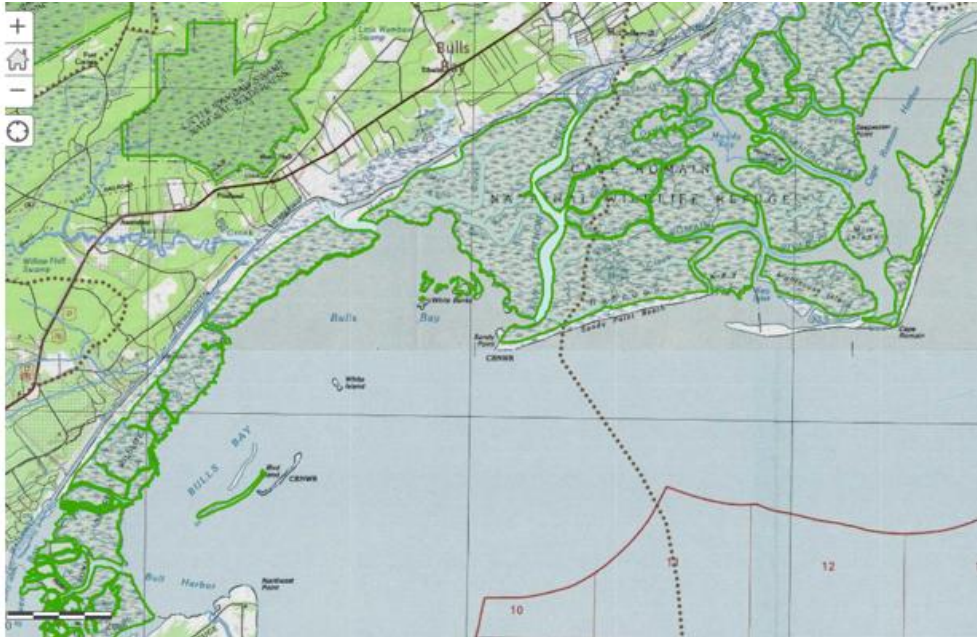


Caney Creek Wilderness (AR)

Caney Creek, tributary to the Cossatot River, is entirely within the wilderness and holds many fish, including yellow bullhead, highland stoneroller, orangebelly darter, northern studroller and black-spotted topminnow (Fundulidae), green and longeared sunfish, smallmouth bass and creek chub. (USDA USFS Southern Research Station 2016) Cossatot River flows south into Little River, a Red River tributary.



Cape Romain Wilderness (SC)

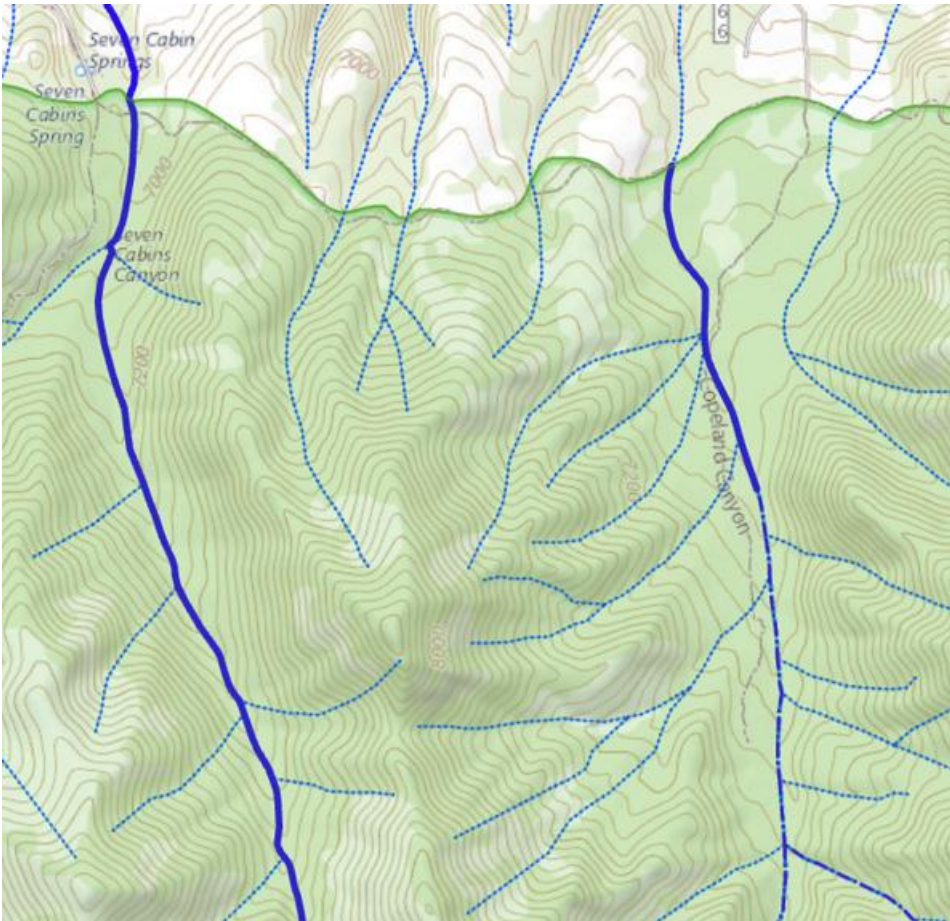


The wilderness is primarily estuarine emergent wetlands dominated by smooth cordgrass, completely inundated at high tide. Habitat is important for juvenile fish, crabs, and shrimp. These organisms often remain in the marsh trapped in pools during low tide.

Species in the marine waters include spot, Atlantic croaker, bluefish, summer and southern flounders, spotted seatrout, red drum, black drum, pinfish, southern and gulf kingfish, and sheepshead. (U.S. Department of the Interior F&WS 2010 Cape Romain p. 24, 30) There are records of spotted seatrout in the northern edge of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



Capitan Mountains Wilderness (NM)

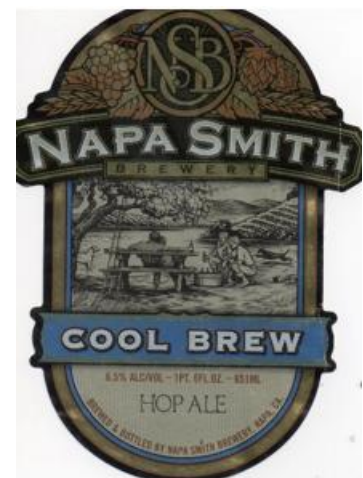


There are a small number of perennial streams, mostly flowing north out of the wilderness and at elevations over 7000 feet. Some of these have enough water to support brook trout. These include Copeland Canyon, Kelly Canyon, and Seven Cabins Canyon (Wilderness Connect, 2023)

Caribou Wilderness (CA)



There is lake fishing for rainbow trout in “about 20 lakes from tiny to vast,” although the article lacks any details about any of them in particular. (NWFF Sep-Oct 2008, p. 32)

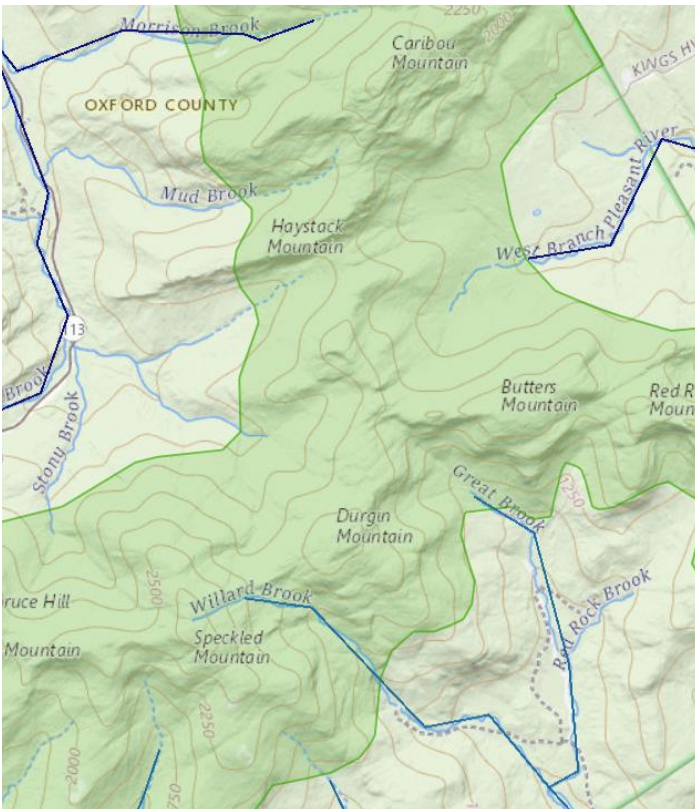


Caribou Wilderness (CA)

I visited Triangle Lake in July, 2026. The lake was beautiful, the wind was tough, and I found no trout in Triangle as well as a few smaller lakes nearby. I did manage to catch a single dace in the minnow trap at the north end of the lake. (Number 111)



Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness (ME)



There is a persistent population of brook trout in the Wild River system, including Morrison Brook. Browns and rainbows are present as well. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Morrison and other streams have over 70% probability of the presence of brook trout (straight blue lines, DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)



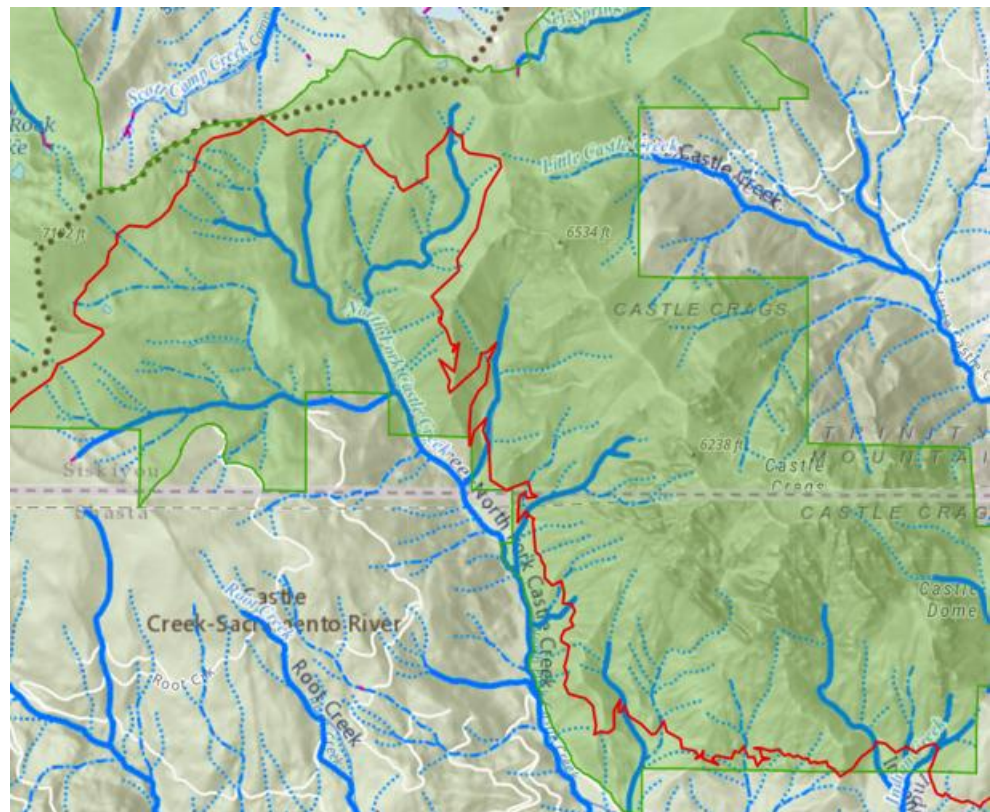
Carson-Iceberg Wilderness (CA)



A restored population of almost pure Lahontan cutthroats resides in East Fork Carson River, with high densities of 150 to 400 fish per mile. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009, p. 23; TU LCT 2020)

Castle Crag Wilderness (CA)

The Castle Creek and North Fork Castle Creek watersheds are both home to native coastal rainbow trout. (UCal PISCES, 2022) The Pacific Crest Trail also traverses much of the wilderness, crossing and providing access to several perennial streams. (USGS 2021)



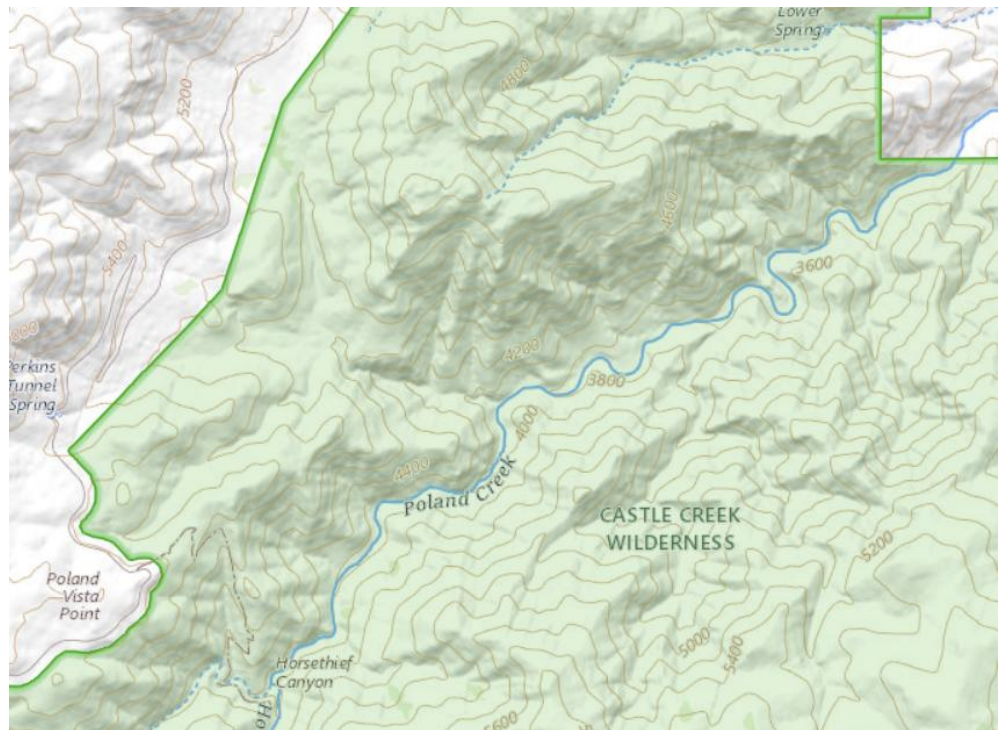
Castle Crag Wilderness (CA)

On a cold, snowy day in October 2025 I hiked in to Gray Rock Lake. Very pretty, but I saw no fish. I went further up to Timber Lake, and found it small, shallow and full of vegetation. The Timber Lake outfall, however, looked small, pretty and trouty. I did see one trout who came out from hiding to taunt me repeatedly. This spot is definitely on the “come back when it’s warmer” list.



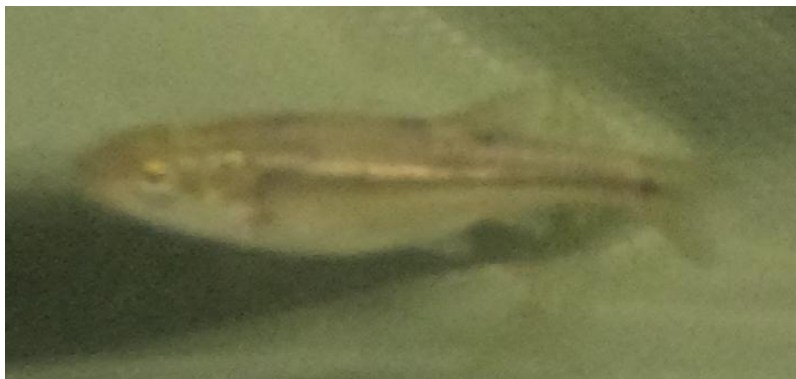
Castle Creek Wilderness (AZ)

There seems to be good perennial flow in Poland Creek, at least through its lower reaches in the wilderness, according to both USGS (USGS 2021) and personal observations in different seasons, including summer. There are supposedly Gila topminnow and longfin dace as far up as Hells Hole. (AZG&F Habimap 2022)



I hiked a half mile of stream bed in January 2021, walking through snow coming down from the Hells Hole trailhead (that’s what I call it, the map says Poland Vista), but did not find any fish. I tried the same stretch of creek again (actually a tributary just above the confluence with Poland Creek) in summer 2022, the only thing I found swimming was tadpoles.

I finally met with success in June, 2024 hiking in from the downstream side of Poland Creek, scooping up some longfin dace. (Number 70)



They can look pretty big when the camera is only two inches away...

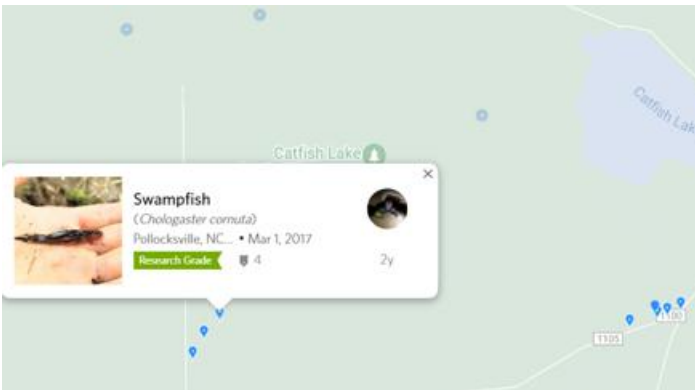
Castle Creek Wilderness (AZ)



Gila topminnow habitat (AZF&G Habimap 2022)



Catfish Lake South Wilderness (NC)

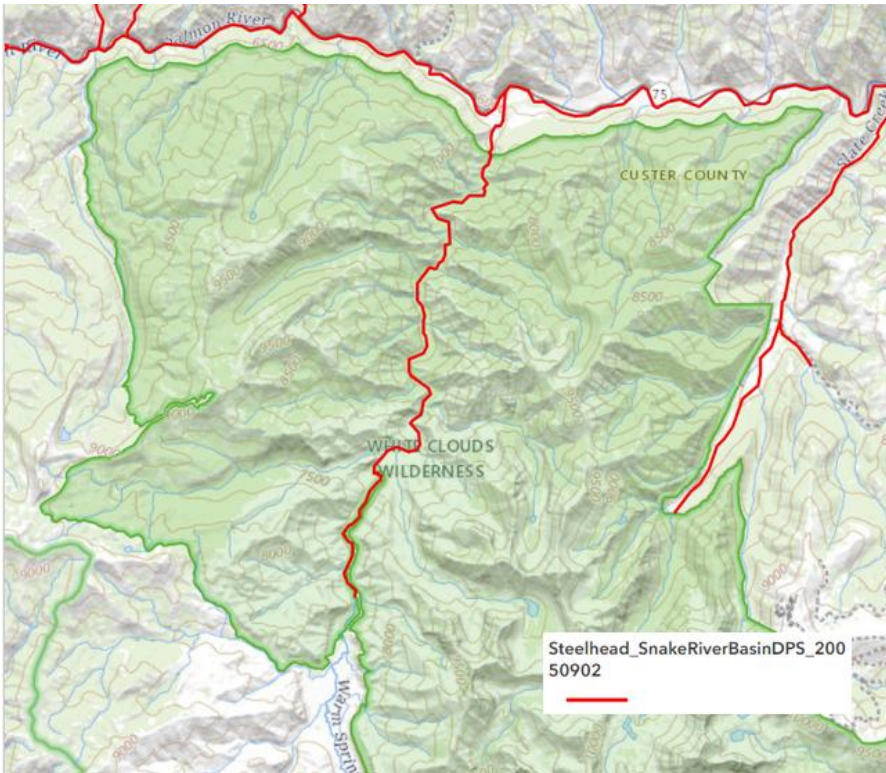


Records include banded sunfish, redbfin pickerel, eastern mudminnow and an Amblyopsidae (cavefish family) fish actually known as the swampfish. (iNaturalist 2023)

Located in the coastal plain and composed primarily of pocosin or raised bogland. This kind of environment has a high water table which often results in shallow ponds where you would expect to find fish often associated with swamps or bogs.



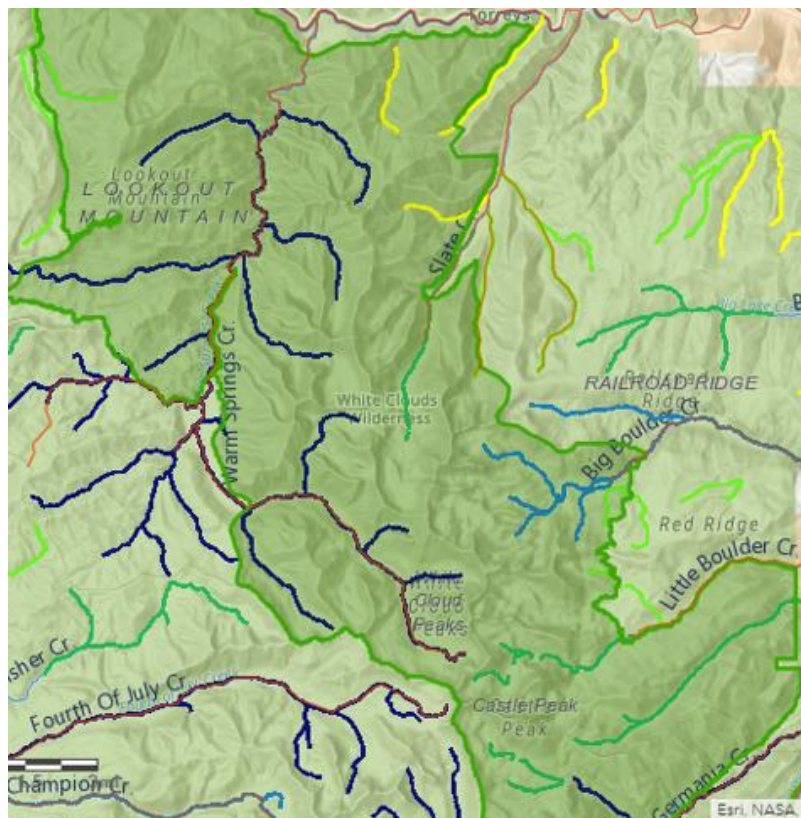
Cecil D. Andrus White Clouds Wilderness (ID)



There is critical habitat for steelhead in Warm Springs Creek, tributary of Salmon River, in the northern portion of the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

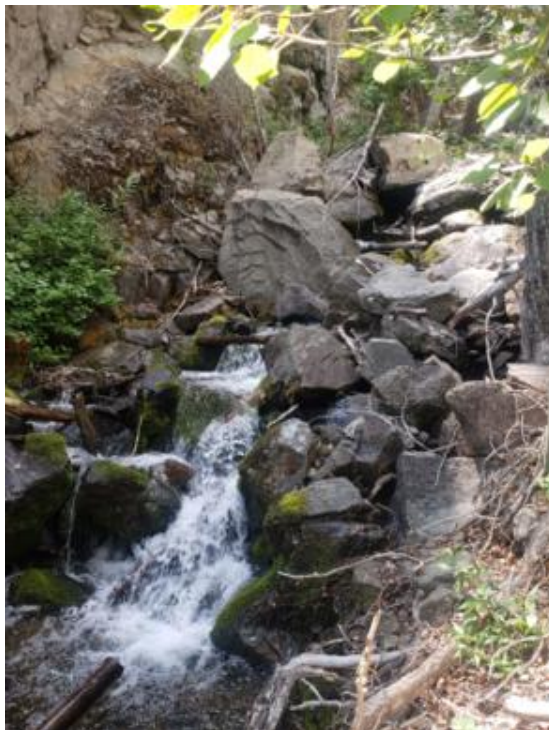
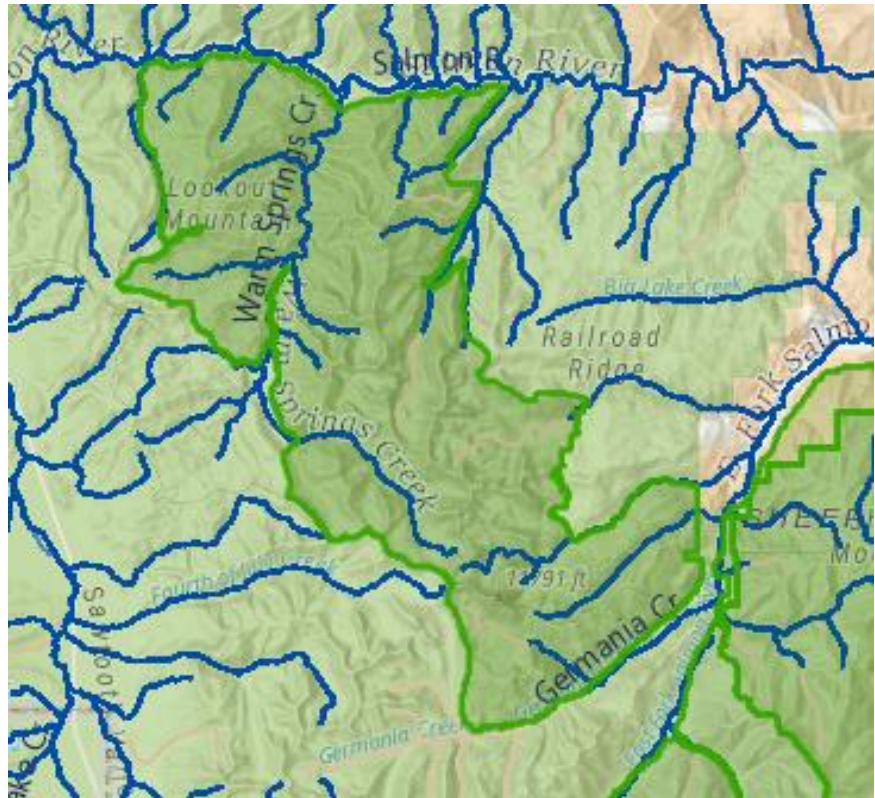


Critical habitat for bull trout exists in Warm Springs Creek, and in Big Boulder Creek and Germania Creek, tributary to East Fork Salmon River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout throughout Warm Springs Creek system, as well as in Germania Creek and Big Boulder Creek. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)



Cecil D. Andrus White Clouds Wilderness (ID)

Westslope cutthroats live throughout the wilderness: in Warm Springs Creek system on northwestern portion of the wilderness; in Slate Creek and other Salmon River tributaries in the northeastern portion; and in East Fork Salmon River tributaries in the south. (Mayfield)

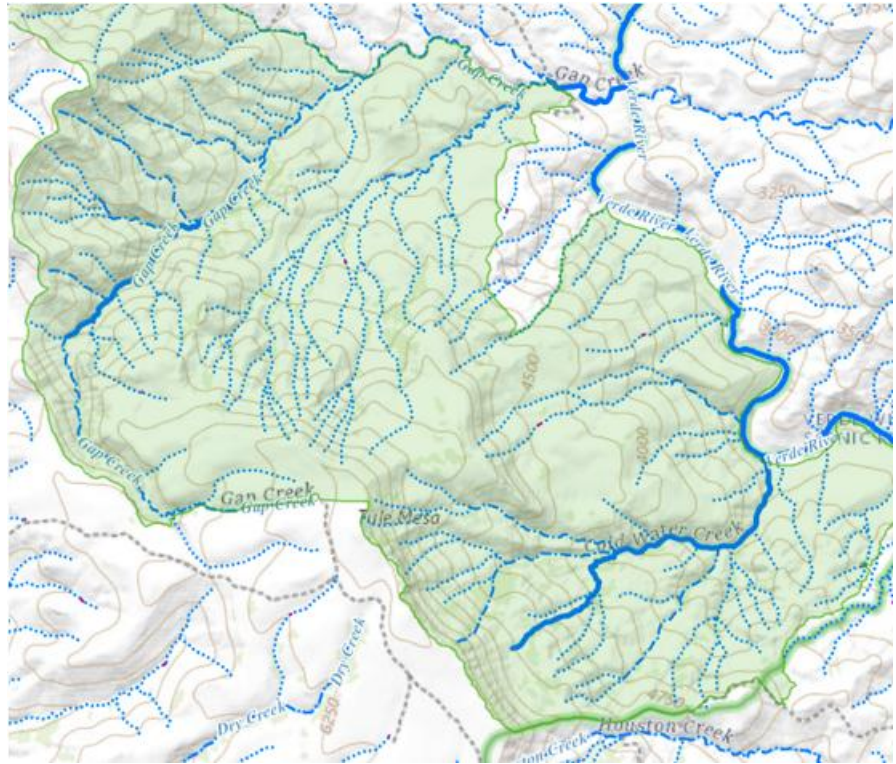


I caught westslope cutthroats in Wickiup Creek on the east side of the wilderness in BLM-managed area on July 15, 2021. (Number 41)

One can start hiking at Fourth of July Creek trailhead in southwestern border of wilderness, and follow a trail to Born Lakes, Shallow Lake, Snow Lake, Tin Cup Lake, and Noisy Lake. Fishing is mostly for westslope cutthroats. There are other lakes as well, mostly on the east slope of the White Cloud Mountains. (NWFF Jan-Feb 2017, p.36)

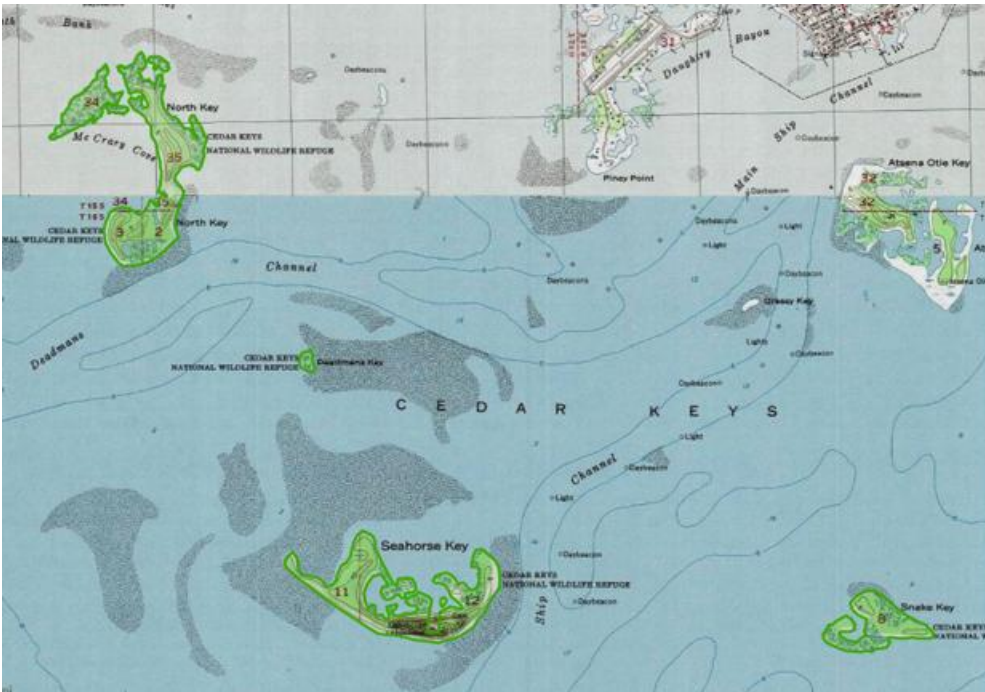
Cedar Bench Wilderness (AZ)

Verde River tributaries Coldwater Creek and Gap Creek have perennial stretches in the wilderness (USGS NWIS 2021) that are habitat for desert sucker, Gila topminnow and headwater chub. (AZF&G Habimap 2022)



I visited in September 2022 and hiked part of the way in on the Oxbow Trail, I never did get to water. I also had to walk the last two miles on the road just to get to the trail; this road is very rough in places.

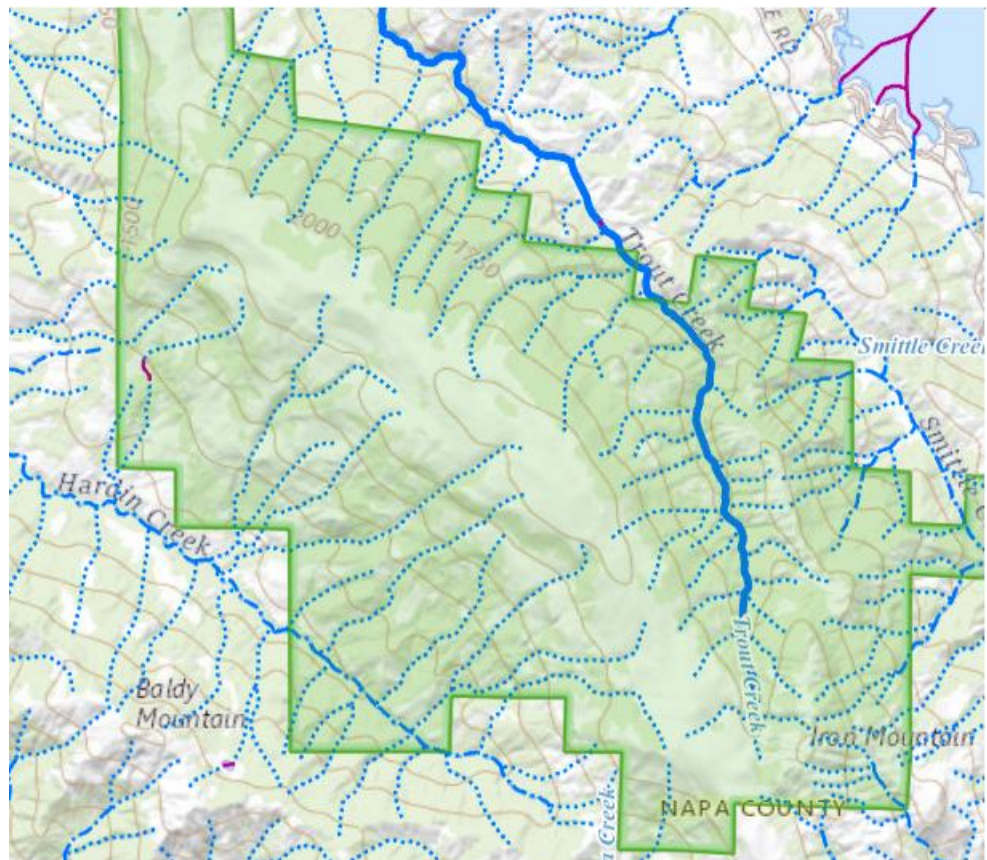
Cedar Keys Wilderness (FL)



Fisherman target redfish, sea trout and mullet. (U.S. F&WS 2000 Lower Suwannee, App B Cedar Keys EIS)

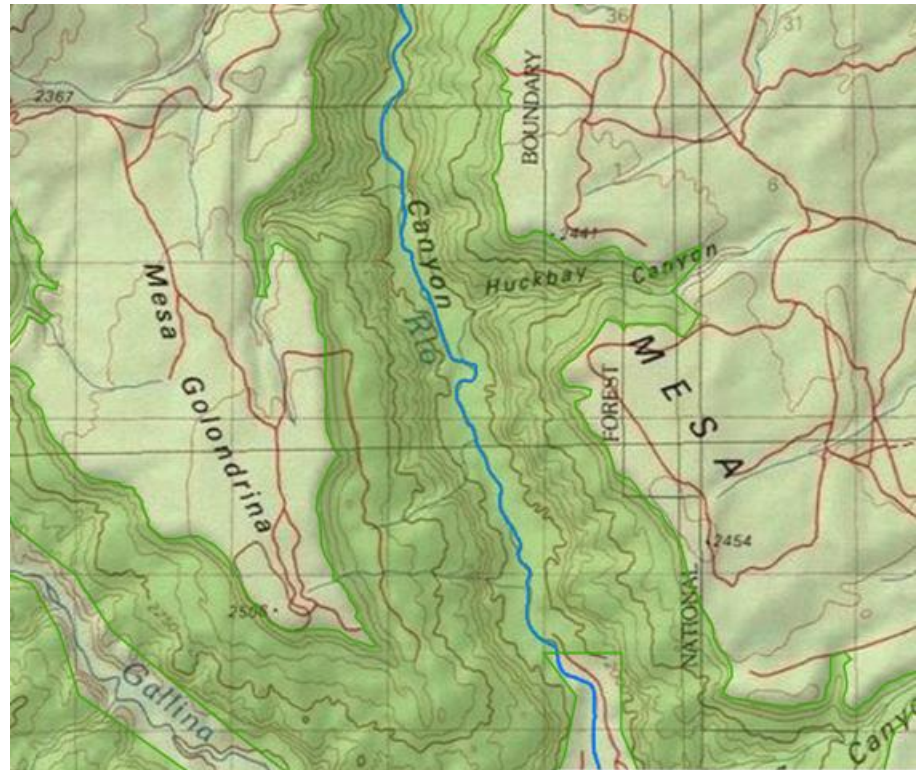
Cedar Roughts Wilderness (CA)

Trout Creek on the eastern slope of the wilderness and Hardin Creek on the western slope are both in drainages that support native populations of coastal rainbow trout, as well as Sacramento pikeperch, Sacramento sucker, hardhead, California roach and rifle sculpin. (UCal PISCES, 2022)

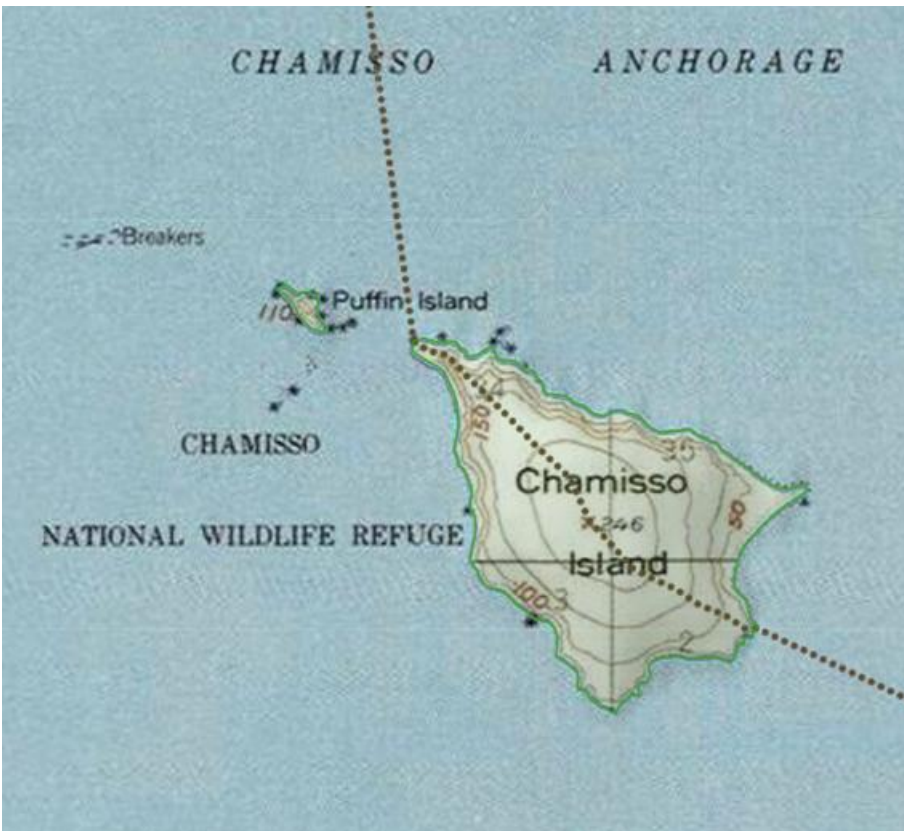


Chama River Canyon Wilderness (NM)

The Chama River is a wild and scenic river from El Vado Reservoir upstream from the wilderness, all the way through the canyon, down to the Abiqui Reservoir below. Most of the wild and scenic river, including the reach through the wilderness, is managed as a brown trout fishery. (USDA, USFS; US Dept of Interior, BLM; and US Army Corps of Engineers; 1990) There appears to be parallel stream access for about 1.5 miles from where the river flows out of the southern part of the wilderness.



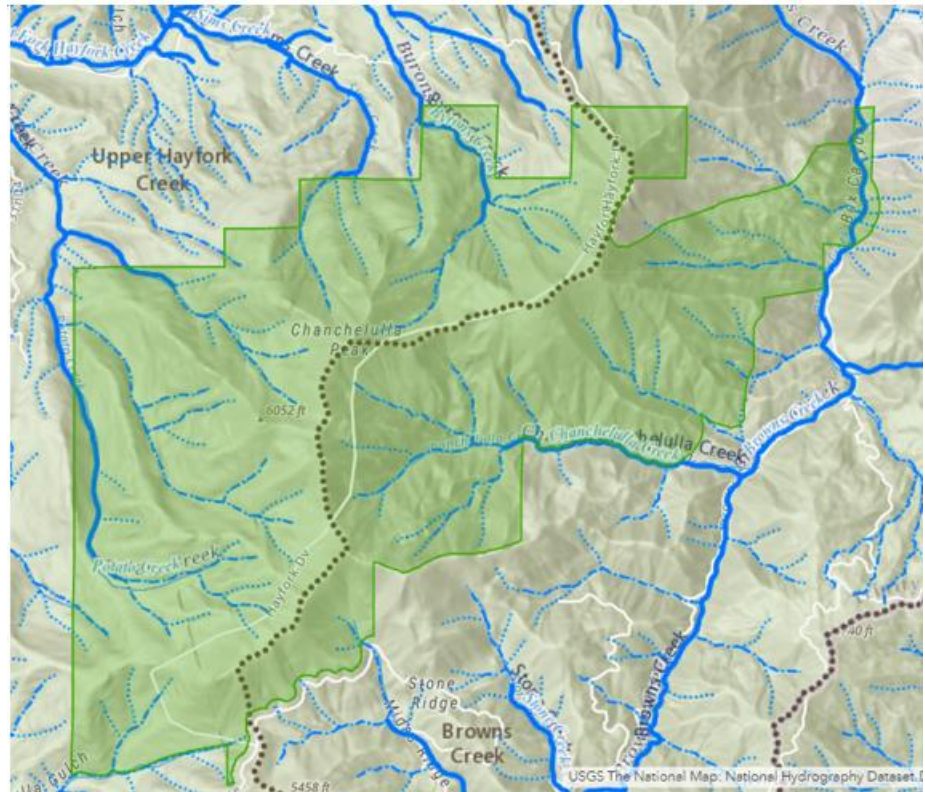
Chamisso Wilderness (AK)



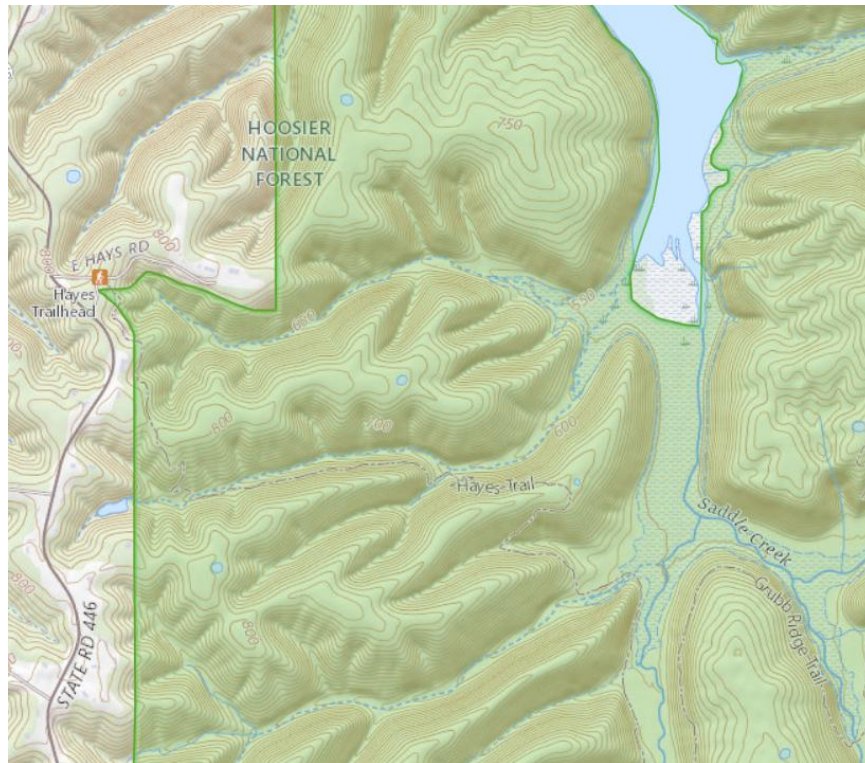
The wilderness is an island in Kotzebue Sound, there are plenty of fish in adjacent waters. Species include starry flounder, capelin, sandlance, herring and saffron and Arctic cod. Most of the wilderness boundary appears to follow the shoreline of the island, and the wilderness also includes several rocky islets, likely holding near shore and tidal pool fishes. (USF&WS Alaska Maritime 1988)

Chanchelulla Wilderness (CA)

This wilderness is basically a mountain peak, most of the streams are headwaters and generally intermittent. The longest stretches of perennial water include Potato Creek on the western edge and Browns Creek on the eastern edge of the wilderness. (USGS 2022) Both watersheds are home to native coastal rainbow trout, Klamath Speckled dace, and lampreys. Historically steelhead, coho and chinook also inhabited the watersheds. (UCal PISCES, 2022)



Charles C. Deam Wilderness (IN)



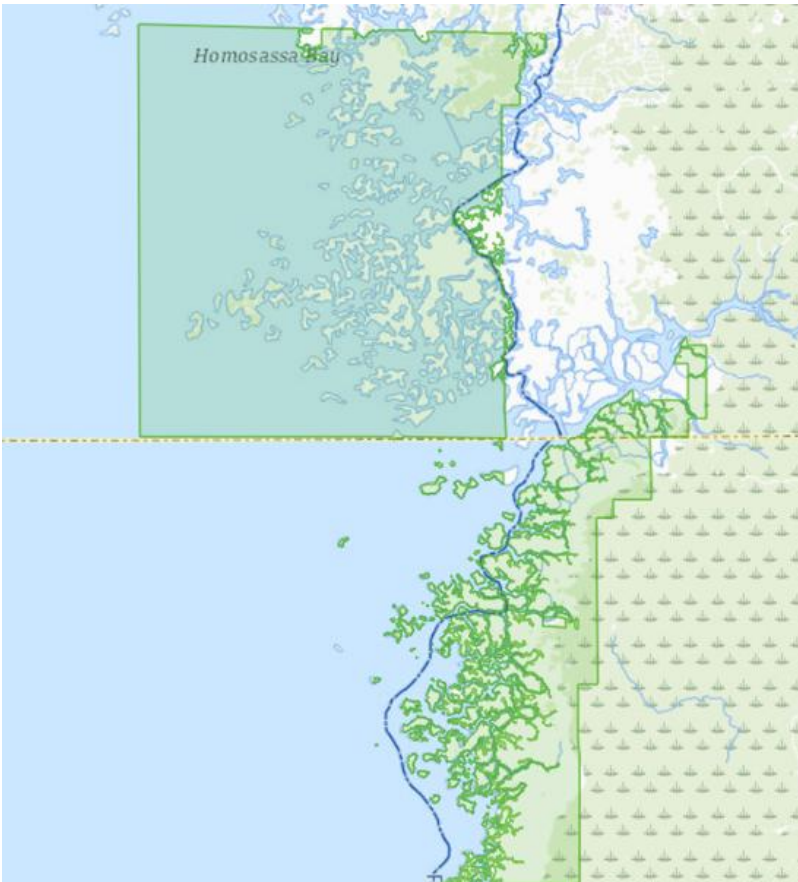
Streams in the north feed into Monroe Lake, an impoundment of Salt Creek, which ultimately flows to E Fork White River. Saddle Creek holds largemouth bass, bluegill and longear sunfish. (iNaturalist 2022)



The largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)

Hays Trail gets you into Saddle Creek from the west, although a kayak from the lake might still be the best bet.

Chassahowitzka Wilderness (FL)



Brackish tidal areas and shallow bays host species such as mullet, spotted seatrout, and sheepshead. Deeper, more saline waters hold endangered smalltooth sawfish. (U.S. F&WS 2012 Chassahowitzka, p. 46-47)

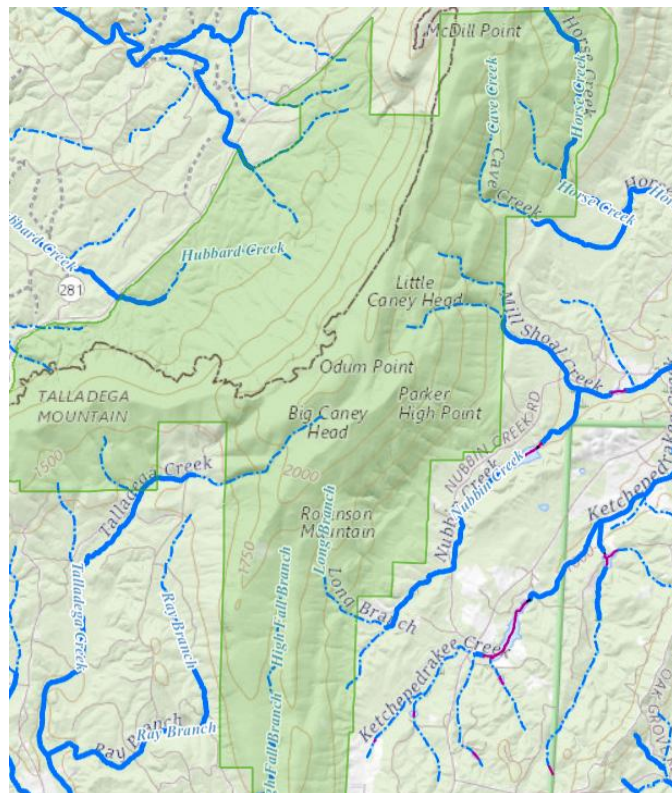
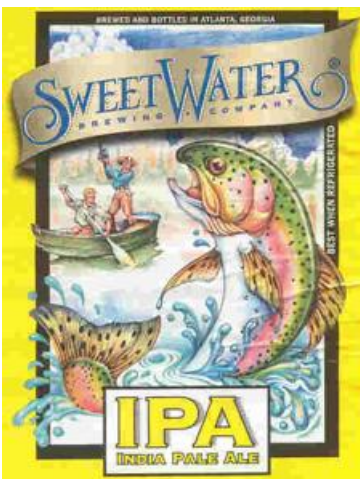
Flats fishing can lead to tarpon, redfish, abundant snook and sea trout. (AFF Sep-Oct 2020, p. 52)

Open water (not usually included within wilderness boundaries) holds mangrove snapper, spotted seatrout, cobia and red drum. (iNaturalist 2022)

The Florida Circumnavigational Paddle Trail (kind of a kayak Appalachian Trail) weaves through the islands of the wilderness.

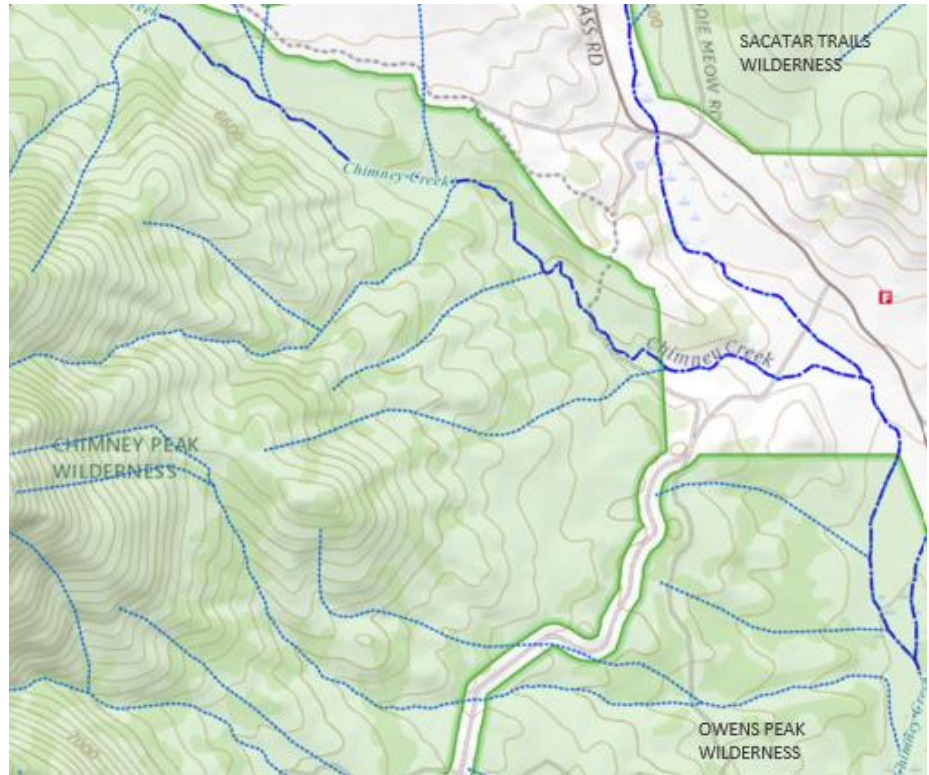
Cheaha Wilderness (AL)

There is perennial water in a few streams along the margin of the wilderness. Various shiners, darters and sunfish are likely to occur in at least some of these stream segments, although I've seen no records yet.

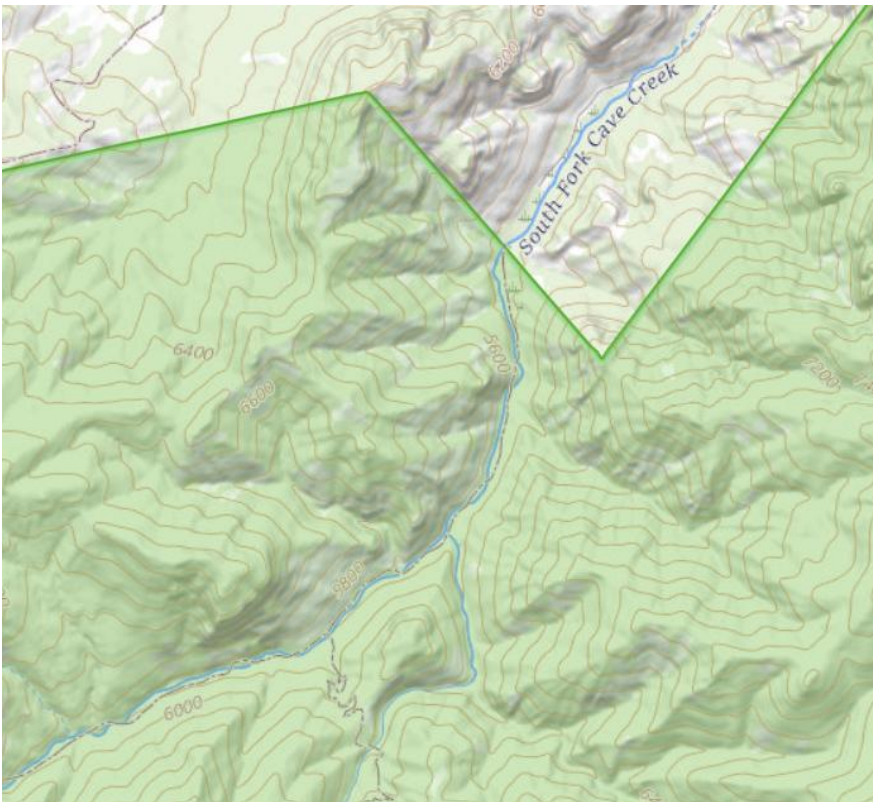


Chimney Peak Wilderness (CA)

I checked out Chimney Creek in October 2020, it was dry coming out of the wilderness, although USGS NWIS shows it to be intermittent (earlier data shows it as perennial); there is no other perennial surface water. (USGS 2021)



Chiricahua Wilderness (AZ)



There are multiple records of speckled dace in South Fork Cave Creek, tributary of San Simon River, in the northeast portion of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



The speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*).

Chiricahua Wilderness (AZ)

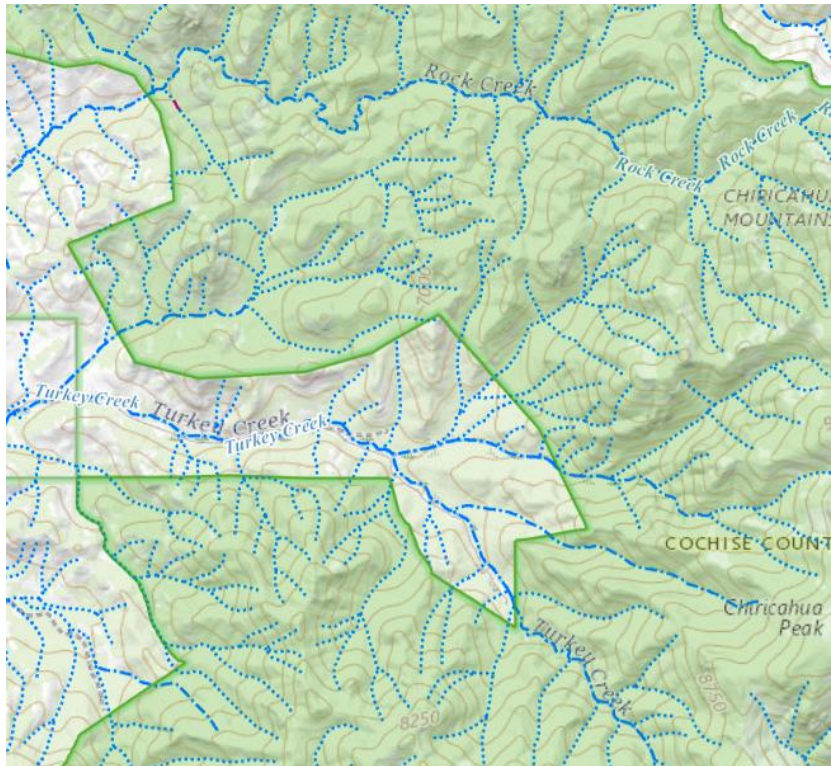
Cathie and I had a great New Years Eve hike (while I suffered a bit from what turned out to be a bout of COVID) in December 2022 along South Fork Cave Creek. Lots of water, great scenery, no fish. A little chilly, too. Yes, even in Arizona.



The west slope of the wilderness drains into the Yaqui River drainage basin, the Yaqui flows south into Mexico. Yaqui chub and Yaqui topminnow are in the upper reaches of Rock Canyon and Turkey Creek within the wilderness. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022)



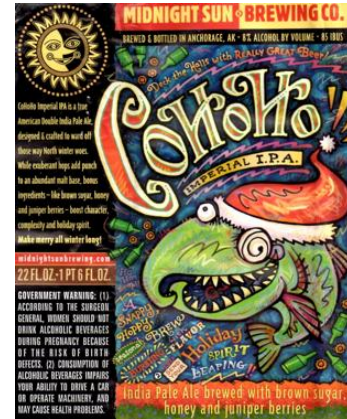
Rock Creek shows as intermittent (USGS 2021) but has parallel trail access for the entire length in the wilderness.



Chuck River Wilderness (AK)

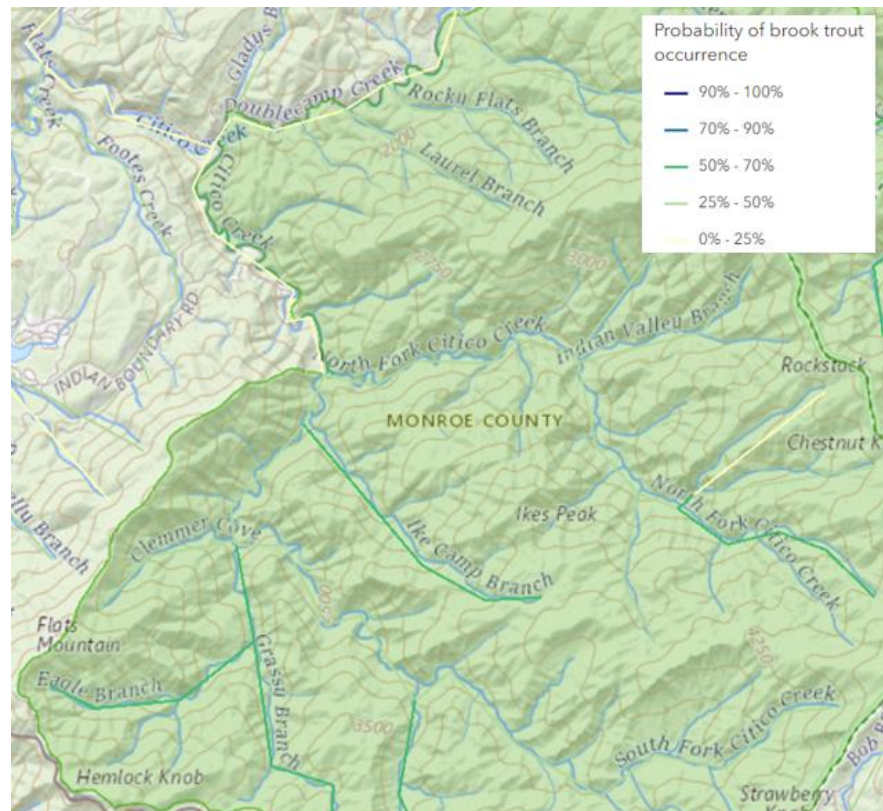


Coho, chinook and pink salmon and cutthroat trout reside in upper reaches of Chuck River; steelhead and chums are in lower reaches only. (Coastal Cutthroat Interagency, retrieved 2023; ADFG 2023). There are also chum and pink salmon along with cutthroats and Dolly Varden in two drainages feeding into Windham Bay in the north (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016)



Citico Creek Wilderness (TN)

A redundant population of brook trout resides in South Fork Citico Creek and Falls Branch tributary. Other populations of brook trout occur in North Fork Citico Creek. Citico Creek flows north into the Little Tennessee River, joining it west of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout) There is a low to moderate probability of presence of brook trout in several streams. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014) Rosyside dace are in Citico Creek at the edge of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022). There is parallel trail access on almost all the major Citico Creek tributaries.



Clackamas Wilderness (OR)



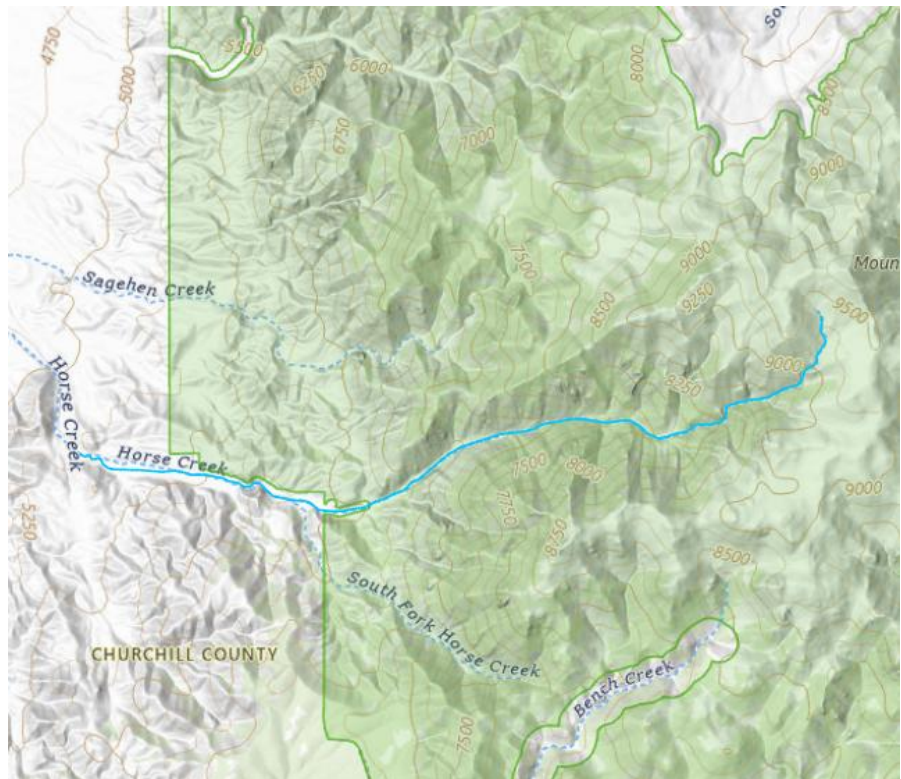
There is critical habitat for steelhead in the Clackamas River and the Whale Creek tributary of Clackamas River in the Clackamas Canyon unit of the wilderness. The southernmost of the five units of the wilderness is the Big Bottom unit, which has critical chinook salmon habitat. There is also coho salmon critical habitat in the Big Bottom unit, including almost all tributaries and side channels. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Only two of the five units are shown here, Big Bottom in the southeast and Clackamas Canyon. Roaring River Wilderness is adjacent to the east.

In late July, 2025, I fished at the upstream end of the river stretch that runs through the Big Bottom unit. Flow was low, but I found several small rainbows. (Number 87)



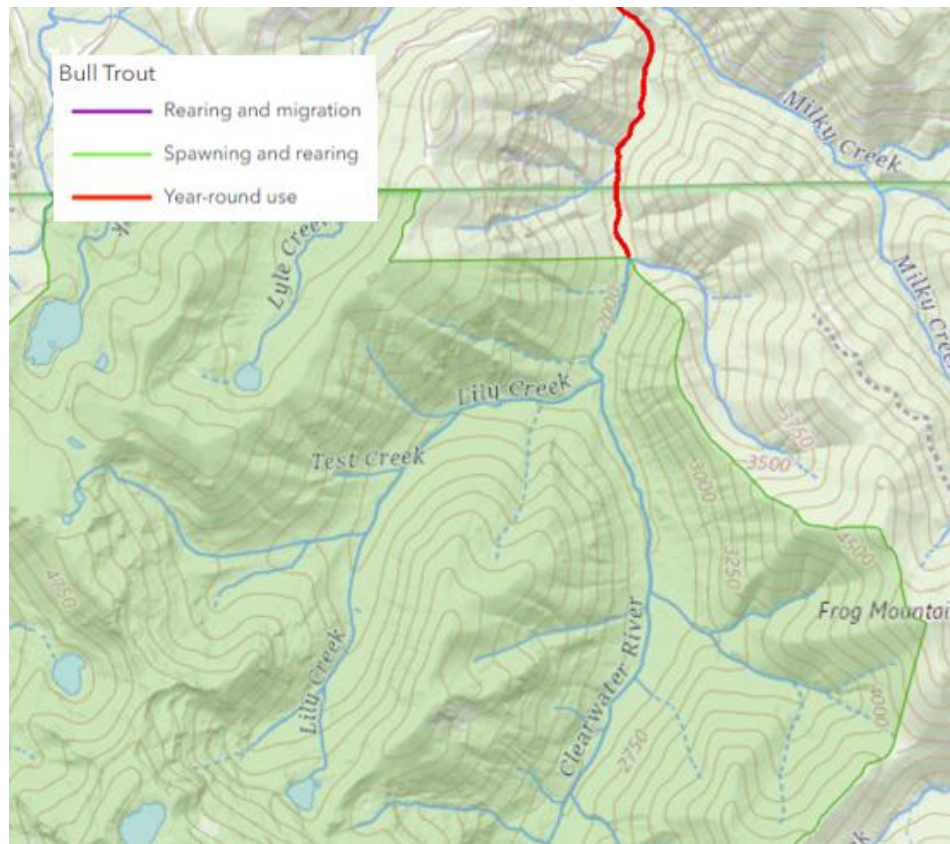
Clan Alpine Wilderness (NV)

There is a “trout fishery” in Horse Creek, apparently consisting of small brook trout (U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM, Carson City Field Office, 2000). Nevada Department of Wildlife agrees, as shown on the map (NDOW 2017).



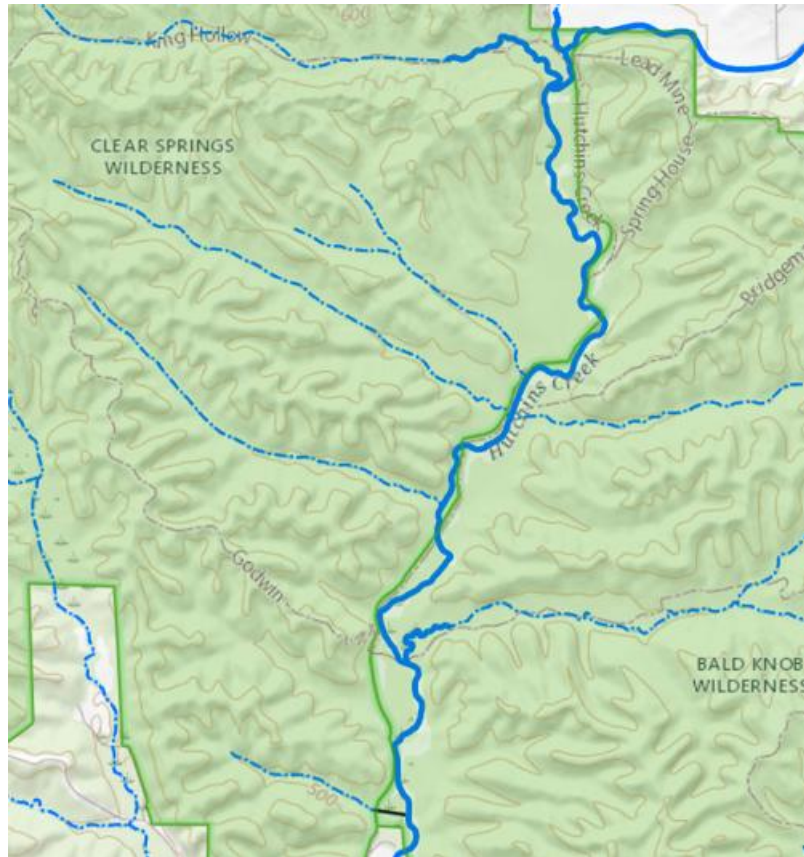
Clearwater Wilderness (WA)

There are bull trout in the Clearwater River right up to the wilderness boundary, some must get into the wilderness portion of the river. Clearwater River also has winter steelhead, spring and fall chinook and coho salmon just a little further downstream. (StreamNet 2019)



Clear Springs Wilderness (IL)

Hutchins Creek runs back and forth across the boundary between the Bald Knob Wilderness and Clear Springs Wilderness, with trail access along the length of it. While I couldn't find records of fish in the wilderness section of the creek, there are records of various darters, madtoms, shiners, chubs and bluegills just downstream from the wilderness boundary, and the creek flows continuously through the wilderness stretch. (Gorrell 2022, iNaturalist and Lost in Nature blog) If this sounds familiar, you may have read the Bald Knob Wilderness entry already...



Clifty Wilderness (KY)

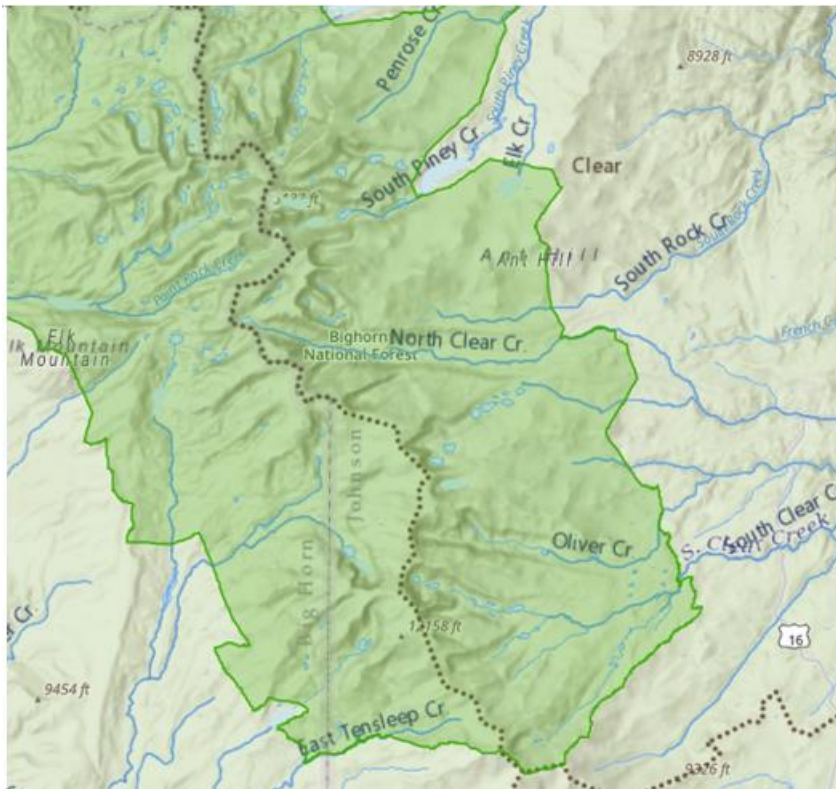


There are records of rainbow trout in Red River through the center of the wilderness, as well as creek chub and mottled sculpin. Red River is a Kentucky River tributary. (iNaturalist 2022)

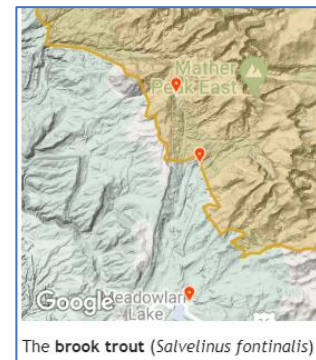


Blue line on map is Red River Wild and Scenic River. Lots of water here, lots of trail access.

Cloud Peak Wilderness (WY)



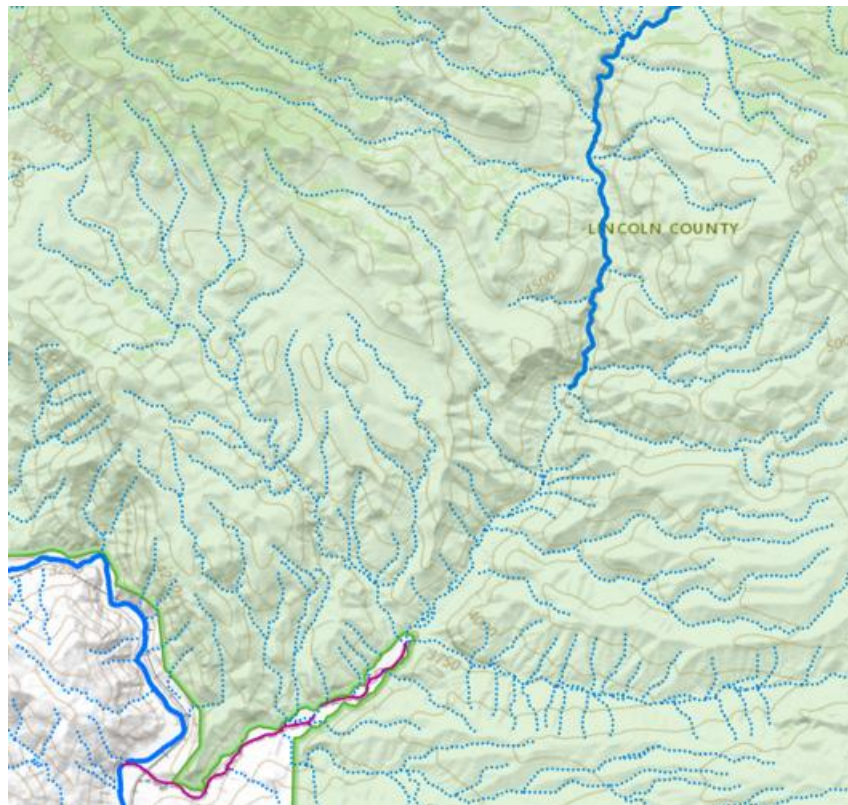
There are non-native brook trout in the headwaters of Tensleep Creek in the southwestern part of the wilderness. There are also records of rainbow trout in east slope drainages, including N Clear Creek. (iNaturalist 2022) There are Yellowstone cutthroats on lower slopes below the wilderness, I'm guessing some make it into the wilderness, although I haven't seen any documentation.



The brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

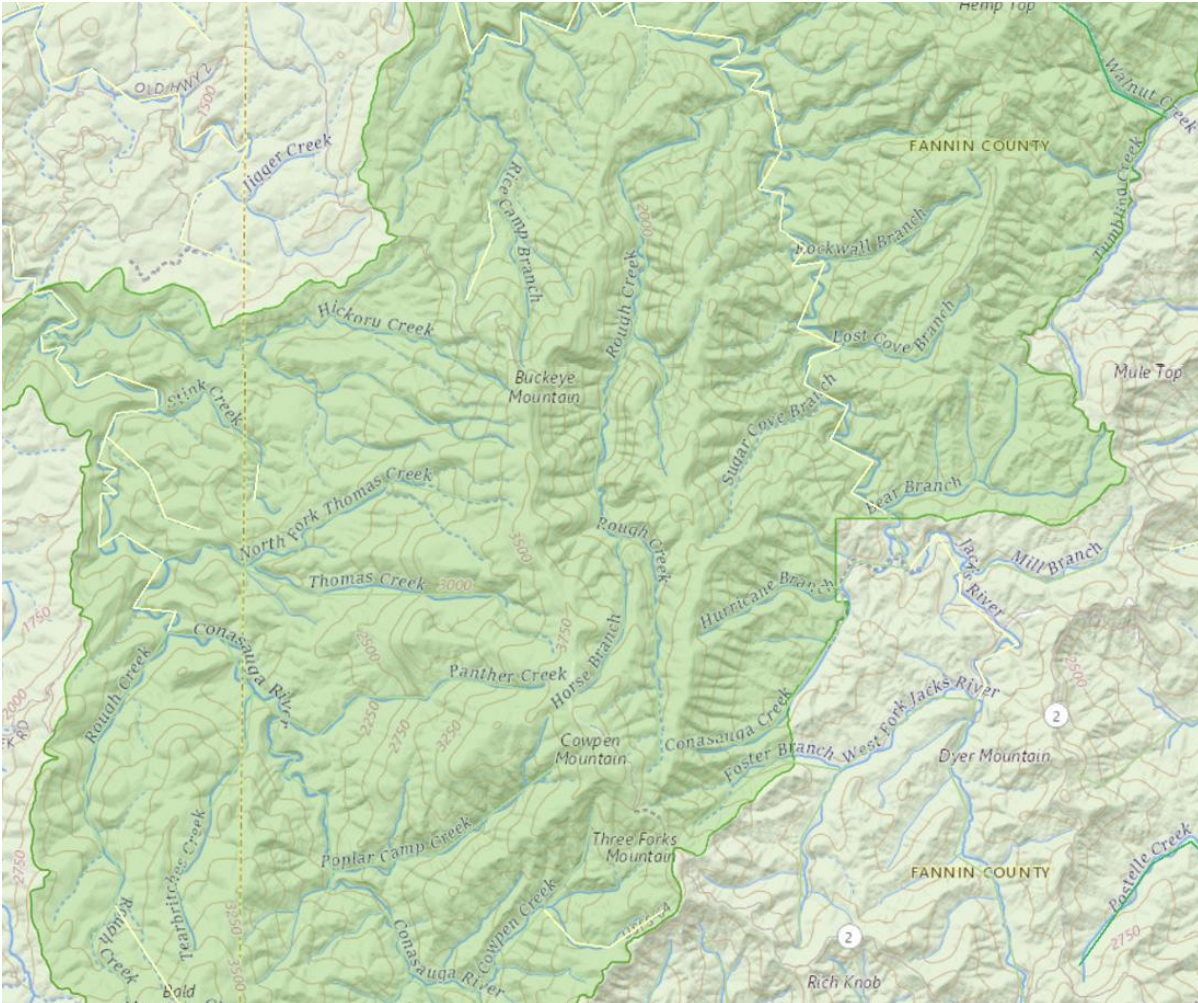
Clover Mountains Wilderness (NV)

Cottonwood Creek is perennial. Fish, such as various minnows (Cyprinidae family), may be found in the perennial streams within wilderness. (US Dept of Interior, BLM, Nevada 2010) It's 2.5 miles on foot to come up from the southern wilderness boundary to where the water is perennial.

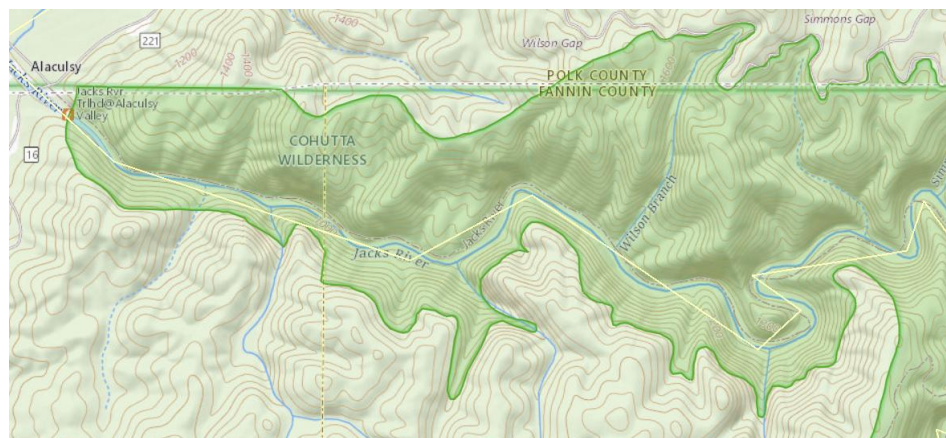


Cohutta Wilderness (GA, TN)

A redundant population of brook trout resides in the extreme southwestern portion of the wilderness in Rough Creek, a headwater tributary of Conasauga River. The Conasauga flows north from the wilderness and then turns south toward the Coosa River and the Alabama River system. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout) Yellow lines show probability of brook trout presence less than 25%, green lines are 50 to 70%. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2104) The same streams hold populations of endangered amber darters. (US F&W Service, South Atlantic–Gulf and Mississippi Basin Regions, 2021)



There are also brown and rainbow trout in the Jacks River, almost all of which flows through the northwestern corner of the wilderness. (AFF Sep-Oct 2020, p. 66)



Collegiate Peaks Wilderness (CO)

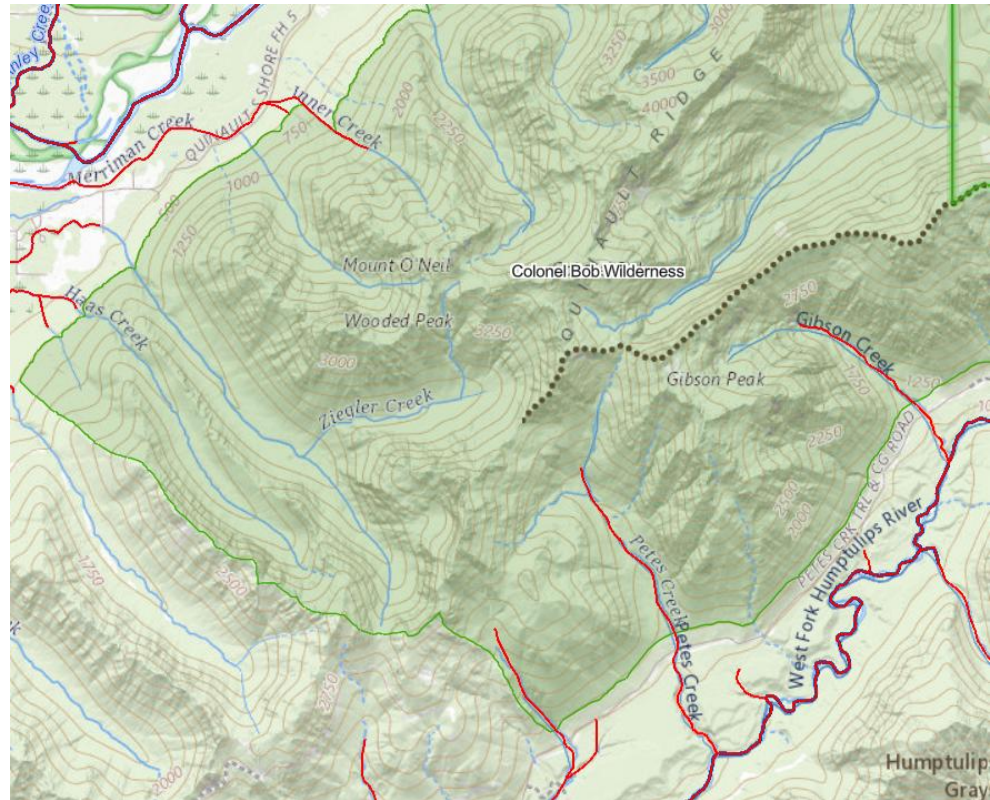
Bear Lake, Kroenke Lake and Anglemayer Lake (in between the other two) hold cutthroats. Lakes are accessible from the North Cottonwood Creek trail about 8 miles west of Buena Vista. (AFF Sep-Oct 2020, p. 62)



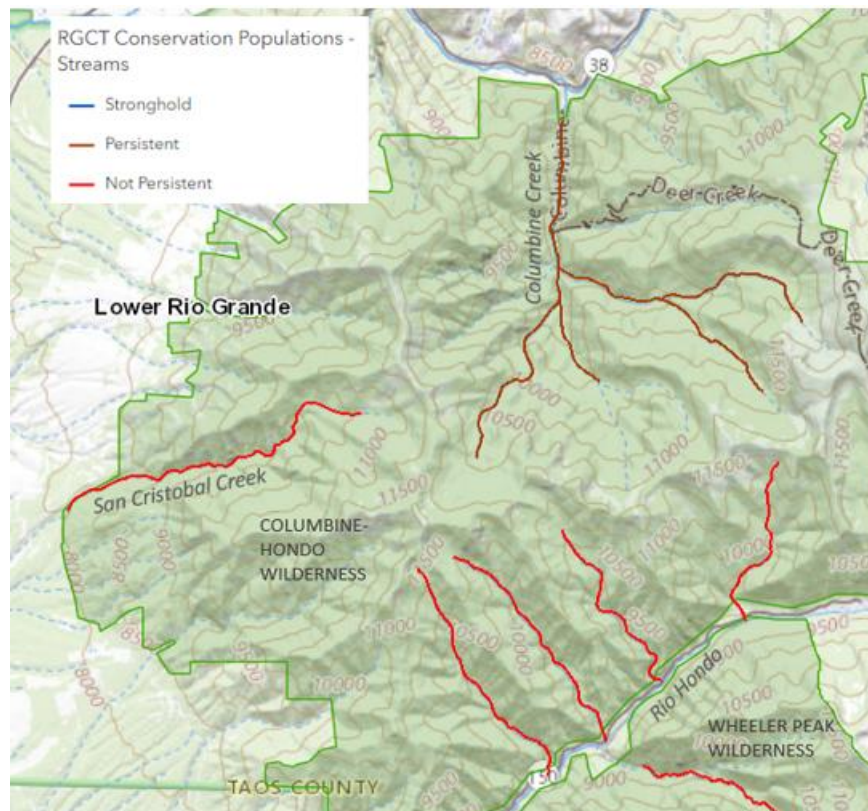
In the next drainage to the north, Twin Lakes and Silver King Lake are accessible by the Pine Creek trail. These lakes are stocked with cutthroats and grayling, but susceptible to winter kill. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2016, p. 22)

Colonel Bob Wilderness (WA)

Coastal cutthroat trout occur in Gibson Creek, Pete's Creek and Rampage Creek, east-flowing tributaries of West Fork Humptulips River on the eastern side of the wilderness. On the other side of the wilderness coho salmon make it up to Inner Creek from the Quinault River. (StreamNet 2019)



Columbine-Hondo Wilderness (NM)

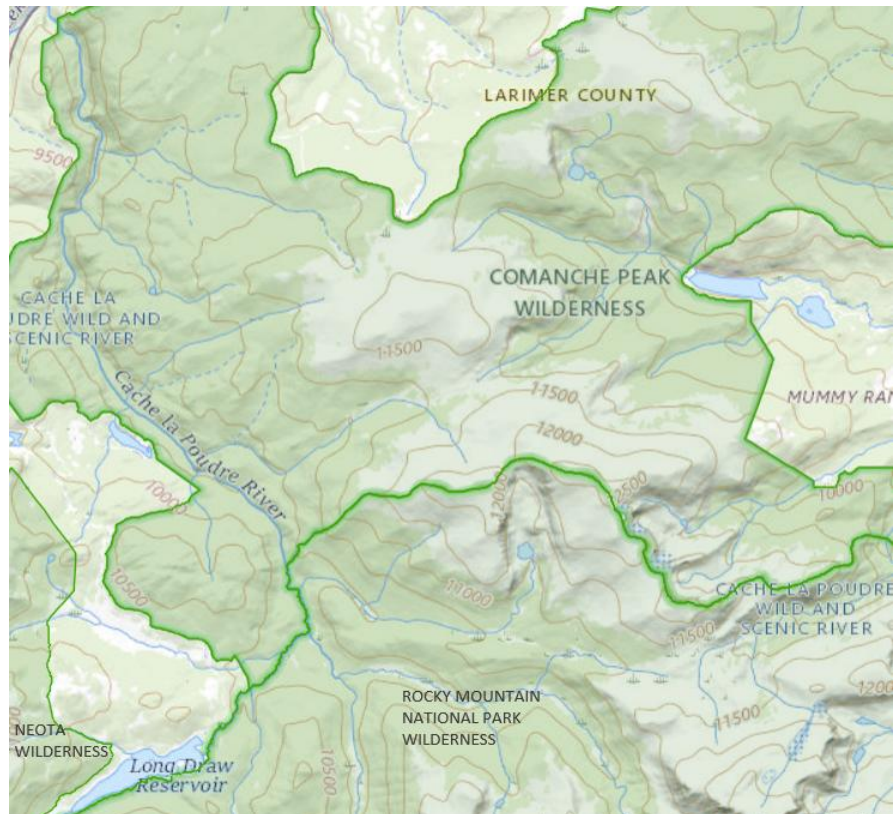
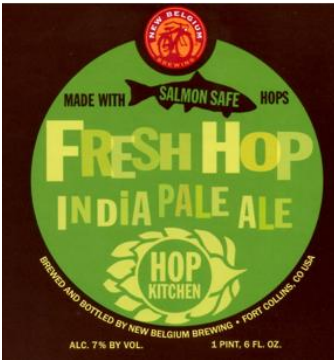


Pure, non-persistent populations of Rio Grande Cutthroats exist in Rio Hondo right bank tributaries in Columbine-Hondo and in San Cristobal Creek, tributary to Rio Grande, in the western portion of the wilderness. Pure, persistent populations of Rio Grande cutthroat occur in the Columbine Creek system flowing north toward the Red River. (Bakevich et al 2019; TU 2019 RGCT; TU Summer 2020, p. 52)

Columbine Creek is tiny creek fishing, protected by overhanging alders. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2016, p. 25) But then again, so much of wilderness fishing is...

Comanche Peak Wilderness (CO)

As of 2018, a planned project was to “renovate” (this usually means killing all the fish) 40 miles of the Cache la Poudre River downstream from Long Draw Reservoir, which includes the entire Comanche Peak Wilderness segment of the river. The goal is restoration of greenback cutthroats. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2018, p. 21)



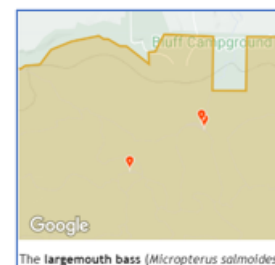
Congaree National Park Wilderness (SC)



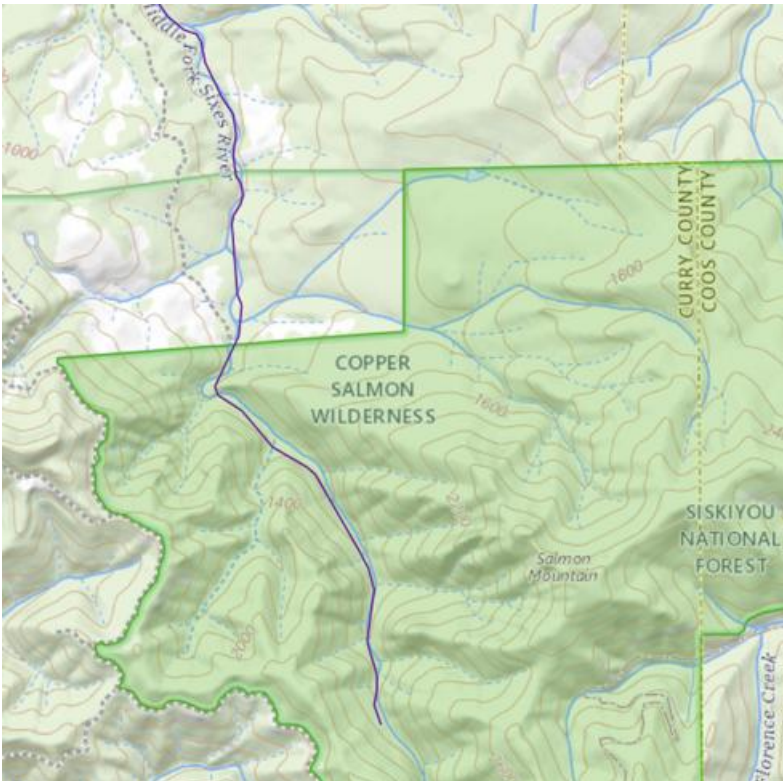
Looks like water flowing every which way. Or maybe not so much flowing, but sitting...

There are records of bluegill in Weston Lake and Cedar Creek. Also eastern mosquitofish, longnose gar, bowfin, largemouth bass, redbreast and dollar sunfish, warmouth, chain and American pickerel. (iNaturalist 2022)

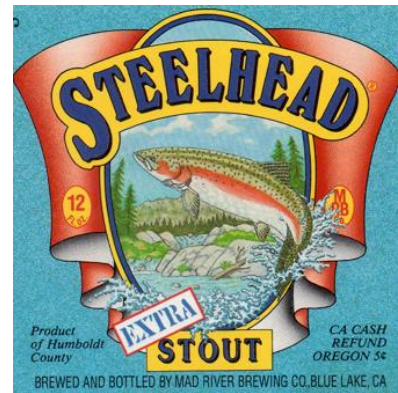
Many of the same species are likely present in the portion of the Congaree River within the wilderness.



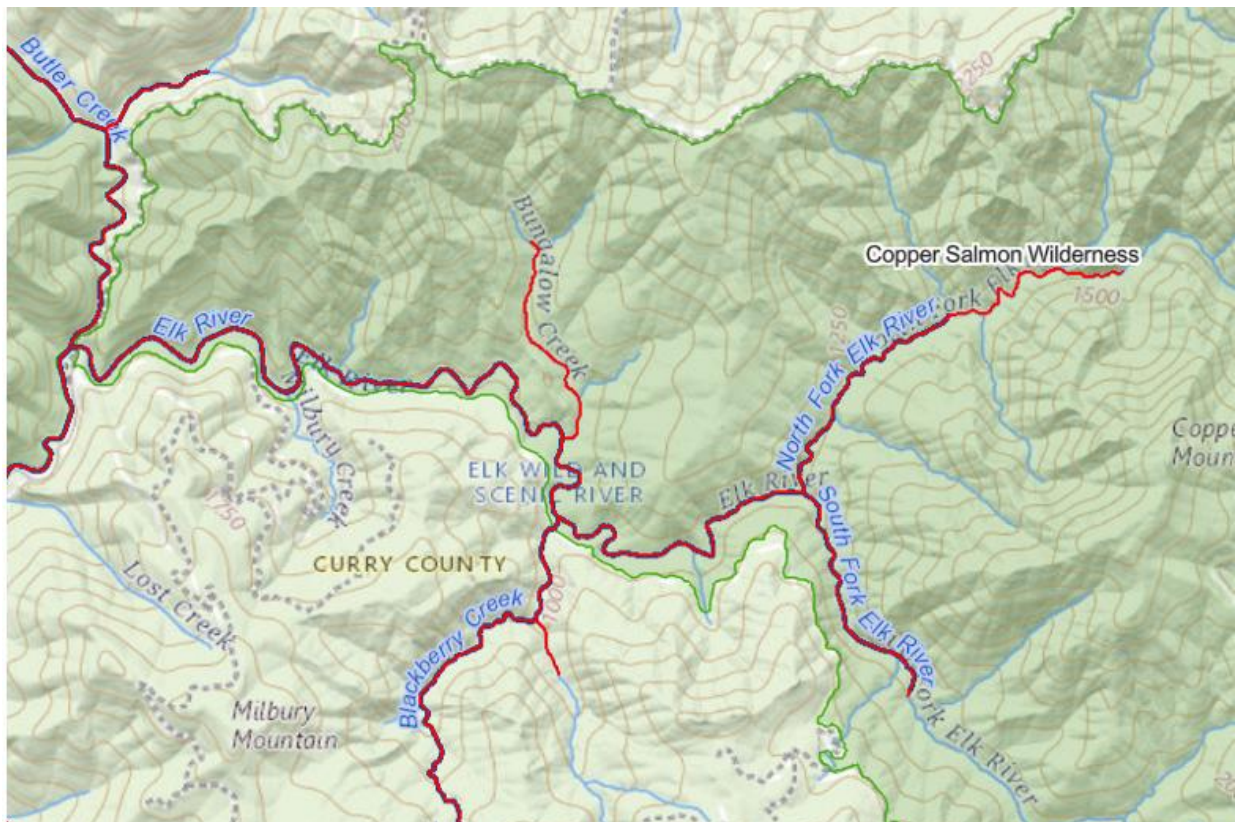
Copper Salmon Wilderness (OR)



There is critical habitat for coho salmon in Middle Fork Sixes River in the northern end of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



The Elk River system in the southern portion of the wilderness has a large run of both wild and hatchery fall chinook salmon, a wild winter steelhead run, a small remnant coho salmon run, and coastal cutthroat trout. (FF Feb-Mar 2013, p. 13) Red lines are all species, coastal cutthroat is included in all of these, but many are salmon as well. (StreamNet 2019)



Copper Salmon Wilderness (OR)



In August 2026 I dropped into the Elk River just upstream from where it flows out of the wilderness, goes under a bridge and becomes the southern border of the Grassy Knob Wilderness. I caught a rainbow at Butler Bar in the Elk (Number 117) and then moved on to Grassy Knob.



Coronation Island Wilderness (AK)



Coronation Island is difficult to access with a steep, rocky shoreline all around. Expected species along the coast include all five eastern Pacific salmon, lingcod, Pacific cod, a variety of rockfish, sculpins, greenling, halibut, ratfish, and dog sharks. Pink salmon apparently make it up Egg Harbor Creek. (ADFG 2023)

Cougar Canyon Wilderness (UT)

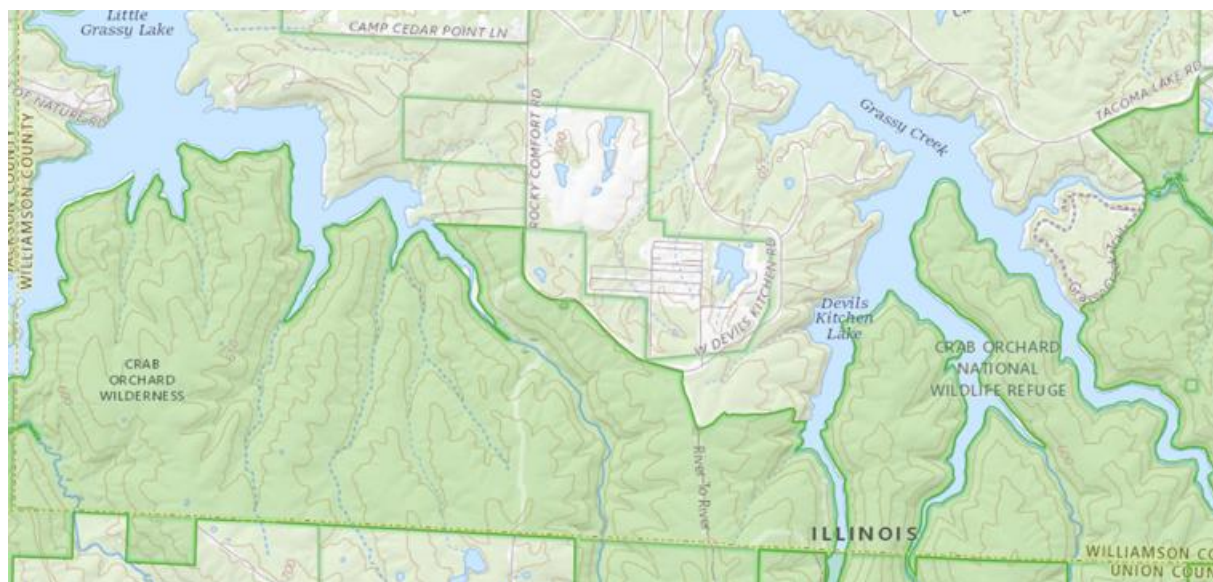
The Nevada Department of Wildlife stocks Beaver Dam Wash (red line on map), which runs through Tunnel Spring Wilderness in Nevada, with rainbow trout. East Fork Beaver Dam Wash continues upstream as a perennial stream into Cougar Canyon Wilderness, some of those trout might make it that far upstream.

There is also a very short stretch of Beaver Dam Wash that crosses briefly into Cougar Canyon Wilderness just downstream of the stocking location. The Virgin Spinedace Conservation Strategy (Utah DNR, undated, but appears to be early 1990's) proposes removing trout below Schroeder Reservoir in Nevada to support reestablishment of the native fish assemblage. If this plan has been put into effect it could mean presence of Virgin spinedace and other fish in the Cougar Canyon stretch of Beaver Dam Wash.



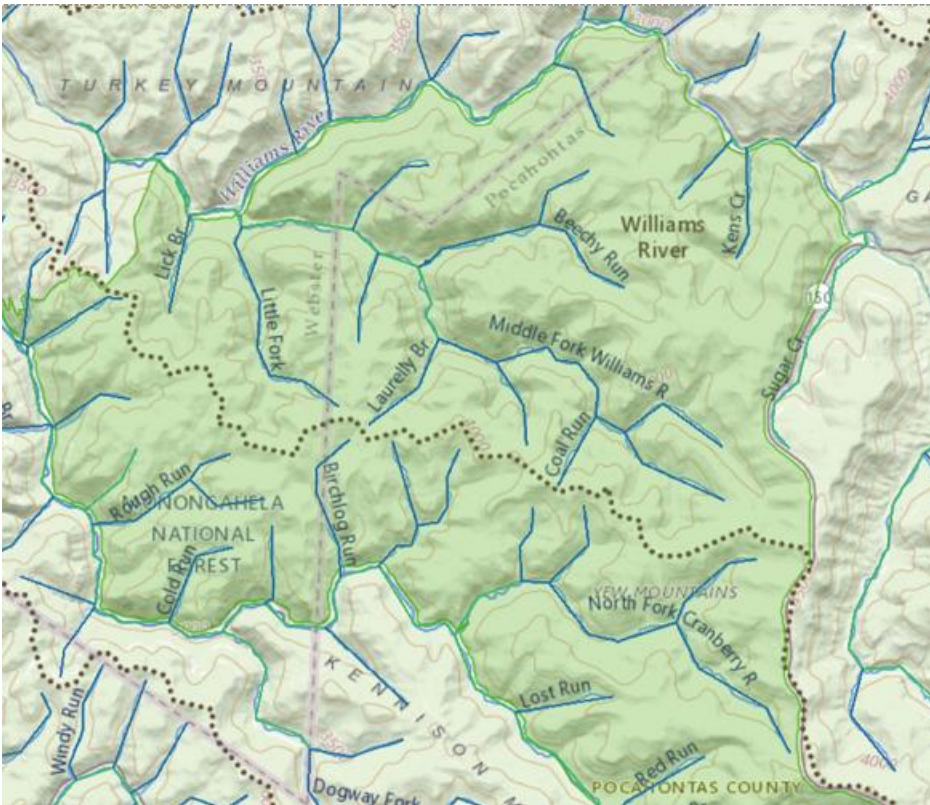
Crab Orchard Wilderness (IL)

The wilderness abuts Little Grassy Lake and Devil's Kitchen Lake. The lakes have bluegill, redear sunfish, and largemouth bass. Devil's Kitchen Lake has stocked rainbow trout year-round. Threadfin shad are stocked as forage. Some fish must make it up the feeder creeks into the actual wilderness. (USF&WS 2007 Crab Orchard)



There are records of orangethroat darter in the southeasternmost feeder stream of Little Grassy Lake. Yellow bullhead, slough darter, creek chub, redbfin shiner, warmouth and common logroller also occur in the same general location. (iNaturalist 2022)

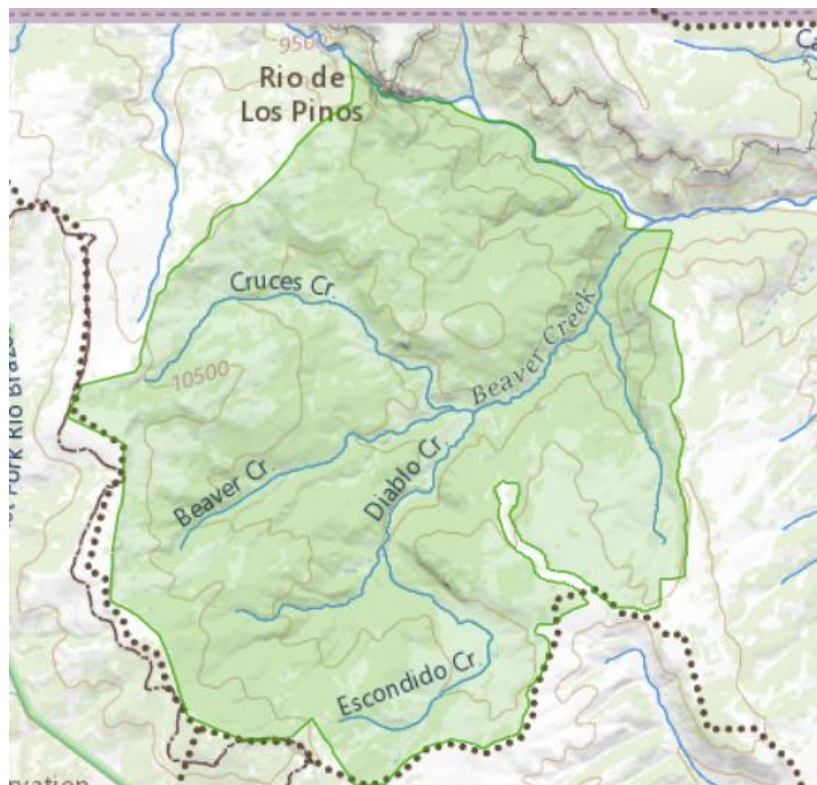
Cranberry Wilderness (WV)



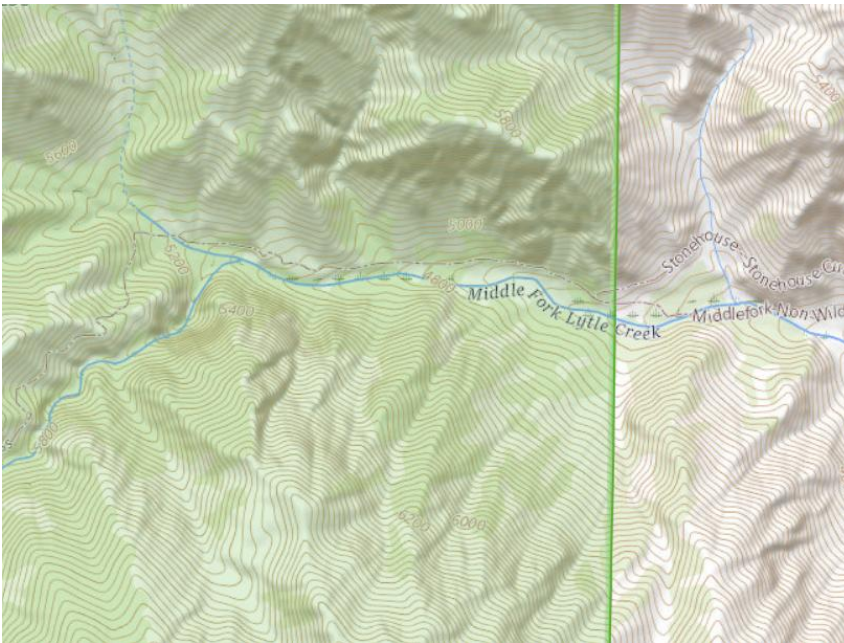
Pick a stream, there's brook trout. All those dark lines are 70% or greater probability of presence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014) The Middle Fork Williams River is a secure stronghold population. North Fork Cranberry River, also has browns and rainbows. Both the Williams and the Cranberry flow into Gauley River, which is tributary to the Kanawha (New) River. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range)

Cruces Basin Wilderness (NM)

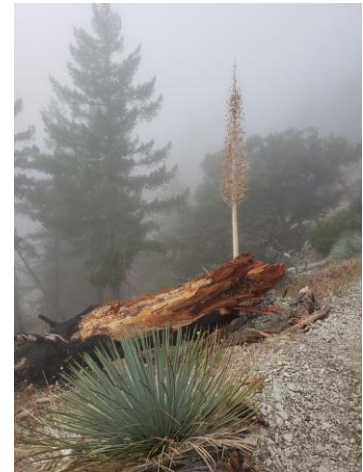
There are brook trout in Diablo Creek and other small, meandering meadow streams. Diablo is tributary to Beaver Creek, Rio San Antonio, Conejos River and ultimately Rio Grande. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2013, p. 26) Cruces Creek is similar, a meandering meadow creek with timid brook trout. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2014, p. 30) Beaver Creek is also a similar meadow stream full of brookies, but downstream of the confluence with the other creeks it winds through beaver ponds and then down a steep cascade with alternating pools, and holds some larger fish. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2014, p. 22)



Cucamonga Wilderness (CA)



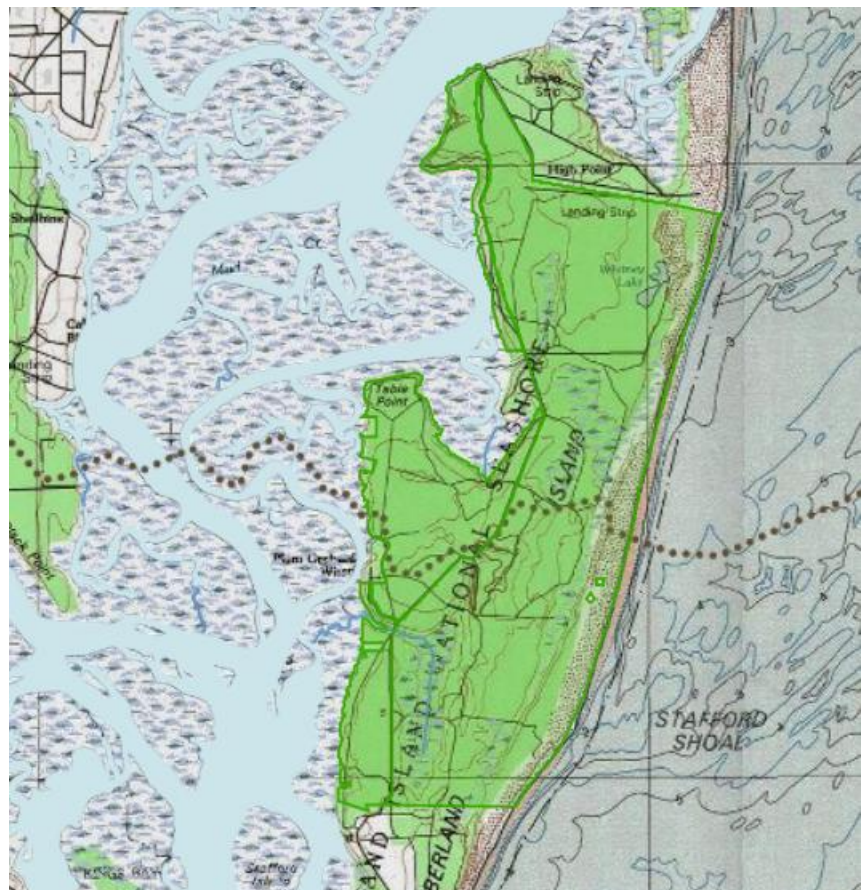
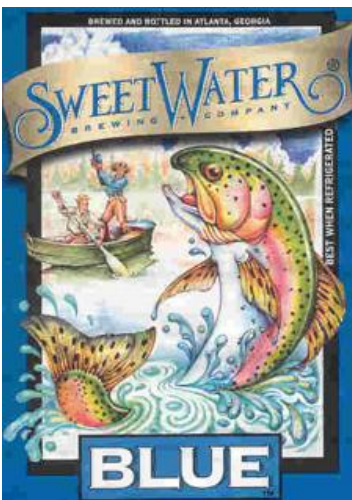
There are allegedly wild trout in Middle Fork Lytle Creek, with good parallel trail access. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2008, p. 10)



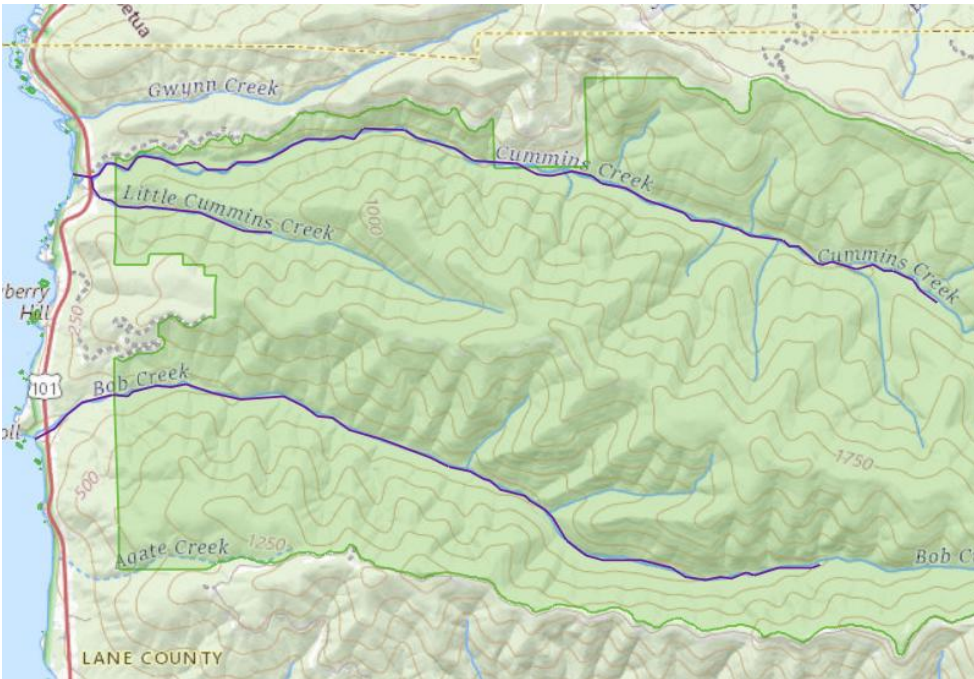
I hiked to Third Stream Crossing in early May 2022. Douglas fir and cedar in the stream bottom in some places, coupled with a dense morning fog and drizzle made me feel almost like I was in the Olympic Peninsula. Stream was beautiful, clear and cold, but I found no fish!

Cumberland Island Wilderness (GA)

There are records of Atlantic Spanish mackerel and barracuda along the beach, and hogchoker on the back bay side of the island. (iNaturalist 2022)



Cummins Creek Wilderness (OR)



There is critical habitat for coho salmon in Bob Creek, Cummins Creek and Little Cummins Creek (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Coastal cutthroats occupy the entire length of Bob Creek and lower portions of Cummins and Little Cummins Creeks. (StreamNet)

In December 2025 I was looking for something bigger but was happy to pick up some fingerling trout in the minnow trap, and some sculpins I scooped out from under an overhang with the landing net. (number 101)



Currant Mountain Wilderness (NV)

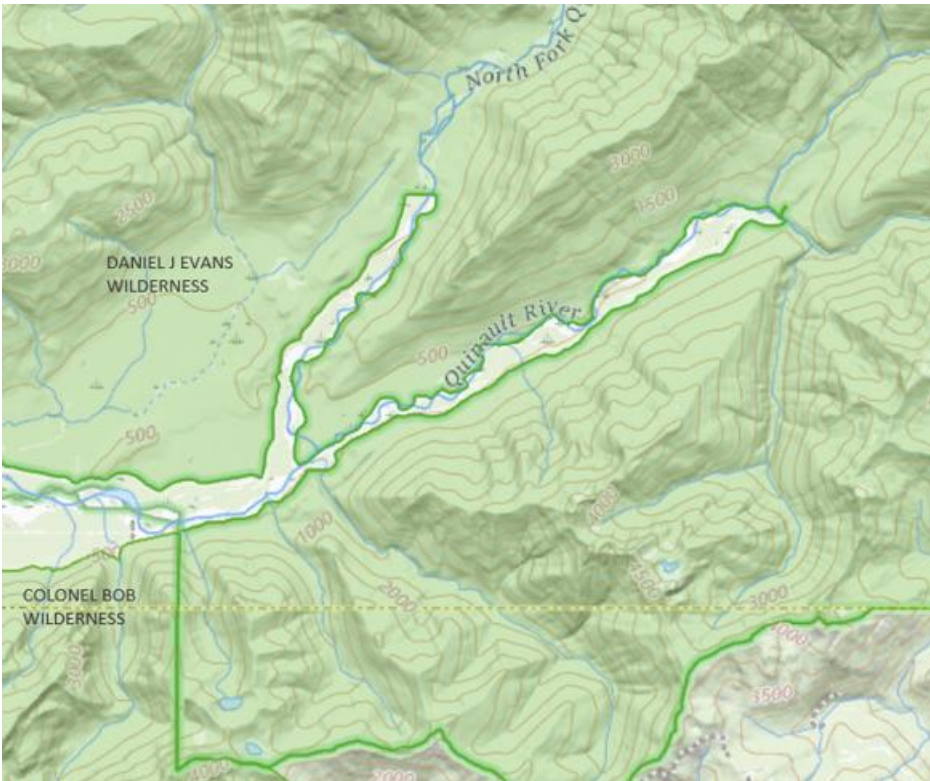


There are supposedly brookies and rainbows in a stretch of Currant Creek about 0.8 miles long. The cherry-stem is a road, the creek is on the Currant Mountain Wilderness (west) side of the road for the southern part of the blue line, and crosses to the Red Mountain Wilderness side for the northern part of the blue line. (Nevada DOW 2017)

Based on a visit on a snowy October day in 2022, I can confirm there is water in the creek, though the creek is very small. The water does disappear at the southern end of the blue line. The creek continues a bit to the north of the line, and there may be fish in it, although there is a culvert at the north end of the line that may prevent upstream passage. I was able to hook a trout in the pool at the bottom of the culvert, so I can confirm the presence of fish, although the culvert pool is in the cherry stem, not in either wilderness. I didn't manage to actually catch anything in either of the two wilderness areas.

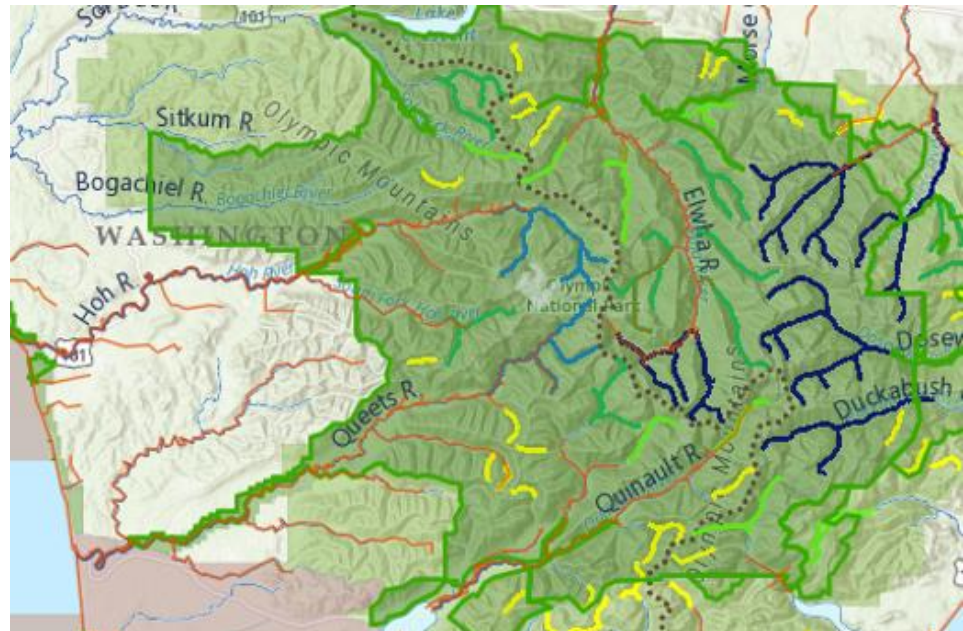


Daniel J Evans Wilderness (WA)

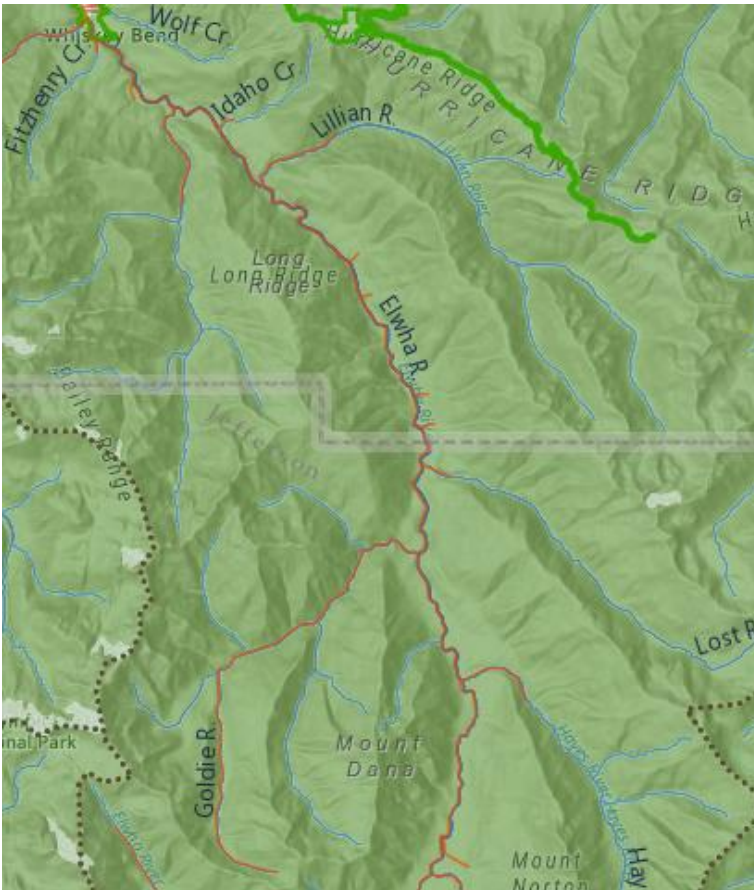


Wish I had pictures.
Wish I knew what I
was doing when I lived
in Washington and
made frequent trips to
the Olympic
Peninsula. No internet,
no books, very little
local knowledge, I did
a lot of guessing. I
didn't know anything
about the Wilderness
Act. I did manage to
catch a rainbow trout
in the wilderness
portion of the Quinault
River in 1982. Of
course, I was looking
for steelhead...
(Number 1)

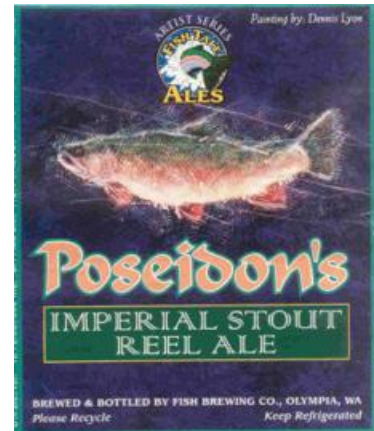
There is critical
habitat for bull trout
in all major river
systems: Queets,
Quinault, Elwha and
Hoh, as well as
along coast. (ESRI,
USF&WS 2016)
Climate Shield
predictive model
shows high
probability of bull
trout in upper Elwha,
Duckabush,
Dosewallips,
Dungeness and
Gray Wolf River
systems. (USDA
Climate Shield
2020)



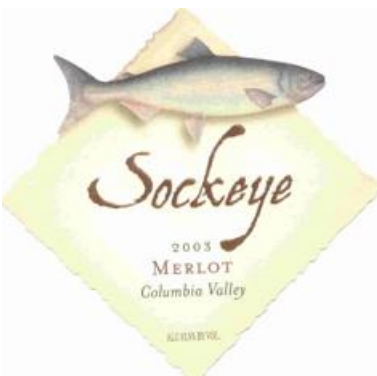
Daniel J Evans Wilderness (WA)



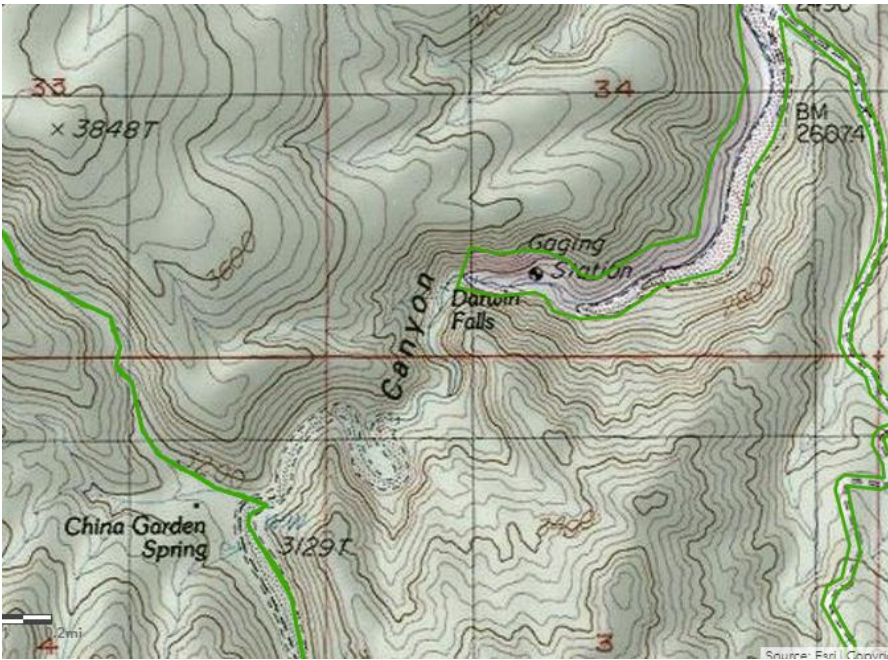
The removal of the Elwha Dam was a monumental event, opening the river back up to historic runs of multiple species of salmon. Recovery since the removal has been rapid and dramatic. (Trout Spring 2012, p. 24; Trout Winter 2015, p. 27) Even before removal there were trout on the upper river above the old Lake Mills (AA, May-Jun 2009, p 44)



Along the coast, there is critical habitat for sockeye salmon in the Ozette River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



Darwin Falls Wilderness (CA)



China Garden Spring is a desert spring in the Panamint Springs area of the Panamint Range, west of Death Valley. The spring is upstream from Darwin Falls, which is actually in the Death Valley Wilderness. (Zdon 2016, site 273, 20 gpm)

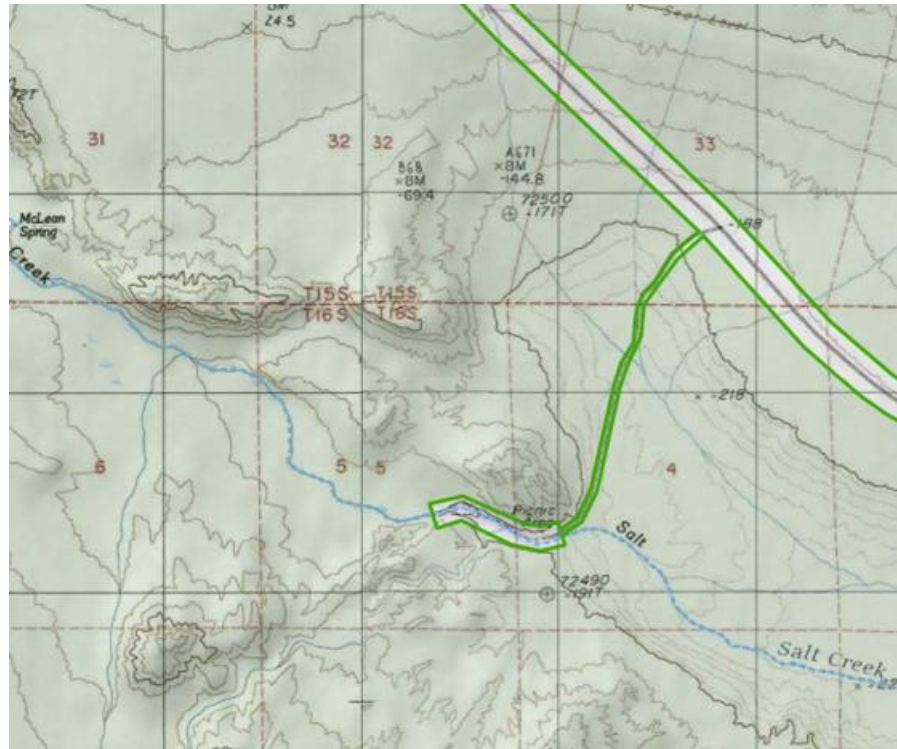
Oddly enough, the pond at China Garden held a healthy population of Koi in 2019, documented with photos! (Tarannosaurus, 2019)

November 1, 2020 I had to check it out. You can drive right up to the spring; I saw plenty of koi fish, and netted one of them. There were lots of birds and some interesting cultural artifacts (besides the koi fish) as well, this is a great place. (Number 33)



Death Valley Wilderness (CA)

Several subspecies of pupfish live in the wilderness: Amargosa pupfish in the Amargosa River “for about 1.5 km northwest of Saratoga Springs;” Cottonball Marsh pupfish in Cottonball Marsh on the west side of central Death Valley, near Death Valley Airport; and Salt Creek pupfish in Salt Creek in the central part of Death Valley, east of Stovepipe Wells and near Devil’s Cornfield.



The Salt Creek pupfish, relatively abundant and not on either the state or federal threatened or endangered lists, occupy “Salt Creek and associated marshes for about 1.5 to 6 km below McLean Springs... depending on rainfall.” (Swift et al, 1993, pp. 121—122)

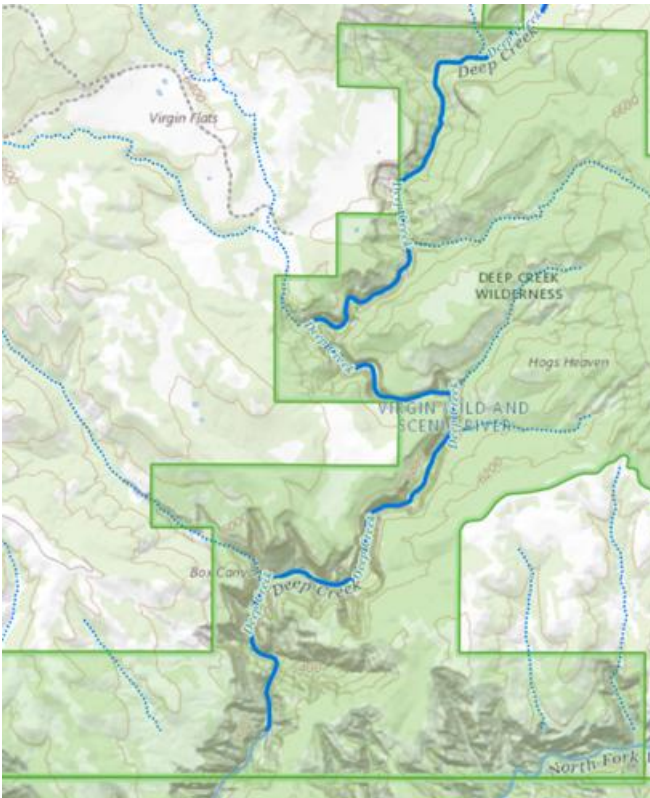
After failing to find a live fish (I did find a dead one) and being surrounded by tourists on the Salt Creek interpretive trail who would have been horrified if they saw me break out the landing net in October 2020, I returned in March 2023.

Death Valley Wilderness (CA)

The interpretive trail was closed because of storm damage, there was no one else around. I also hiked in cross country well upstream of the interpretive trail, near McLean Spring. There were pupfish in narrow, clear-running channels (some as narrow as one foot), and I managed to catch several. (Number 59) At about 130 feet below sea level, this is the lowest elevation at which I've caught fish in a wilderness area.



Deep Creek Wilderness (UT)

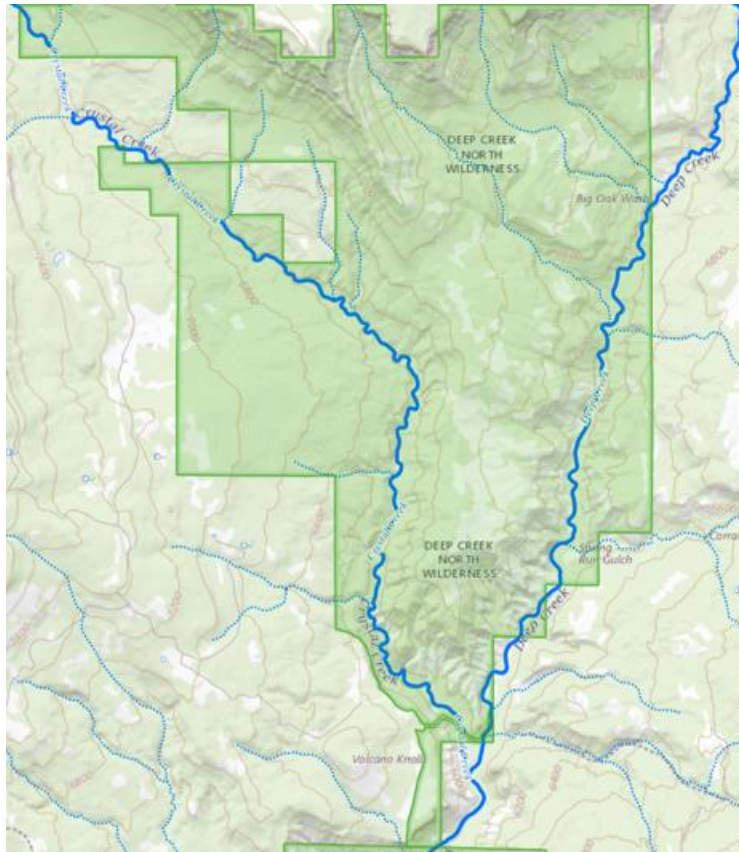


Deep Creek contains native flannelmouth sucker and desert sucker, largely transitional populations, reproduction may be occurring. Habitat is marginal for native fish species and the presence of native fish is impacted by nonnative species such as brown trout and cutthroat trout. (US Dept of Interior, NPS, 2013 Virgin River, p. 173)

Deep Creek is also very deep; access to the bottom of the canyon appears to be extremely difficult

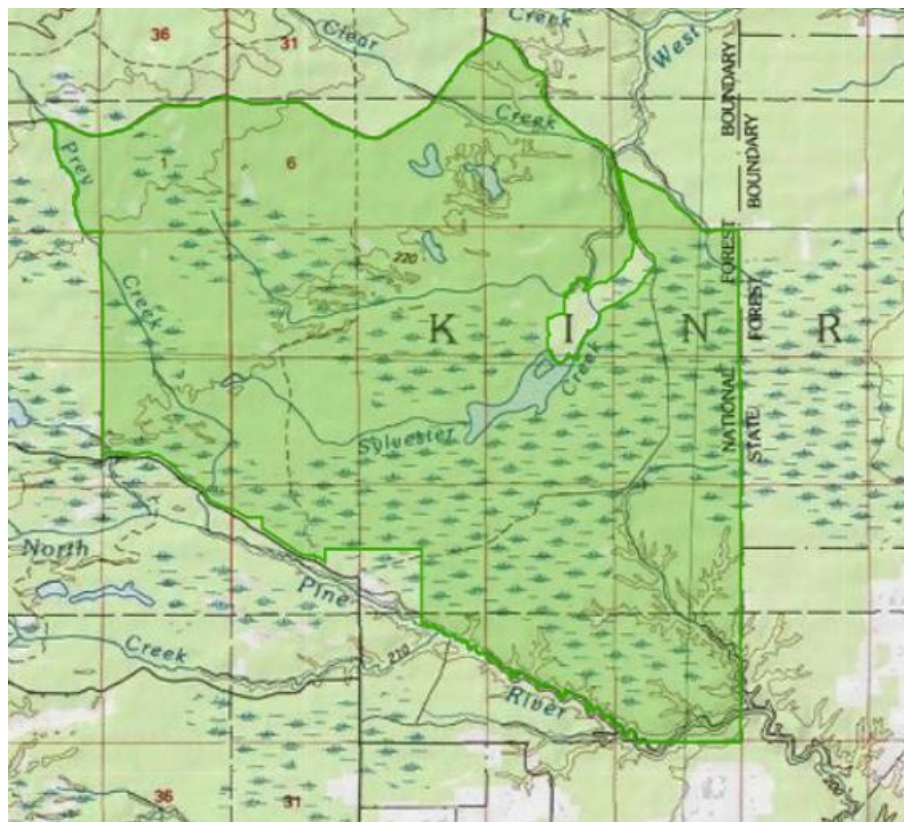
Deep Creek North Wilderness (UT)

Deep Creek contains native flannelmouth sucker and desert sucker, largely transitional populations, reproduction may be occurring. Habitat is marginal for native fish species and the presence of native fish is impacted by nonnative species such as brown trout and cutthroat trout. (US Dept of Interior, NPS, 2013 Virgin River, p. 173)

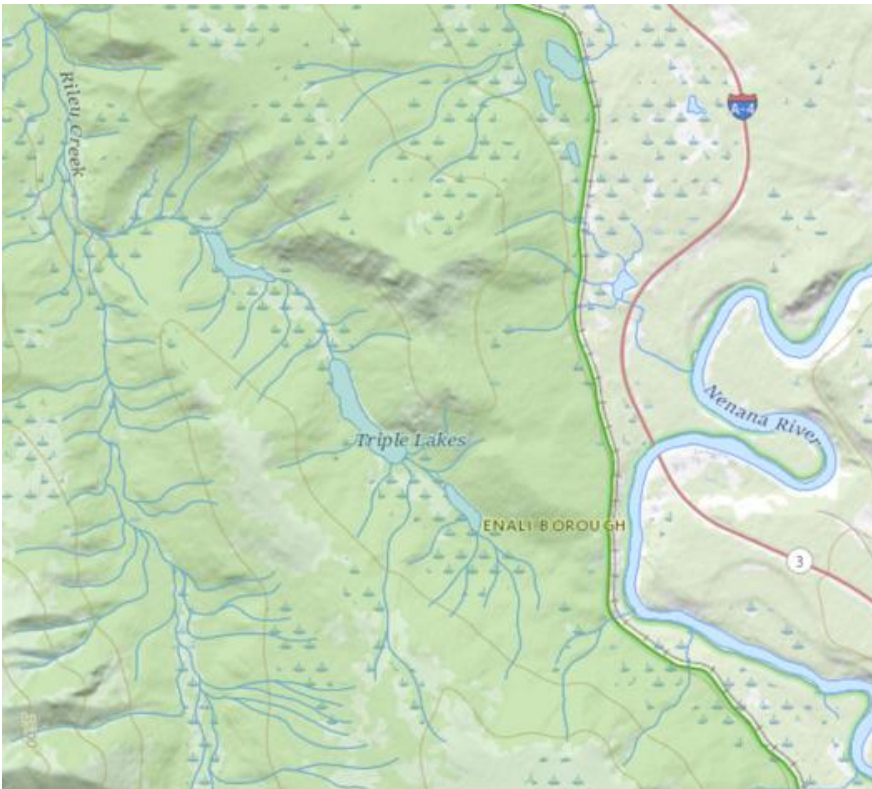


Delirium Wilderness (MI)

North Pine River forms the southern boundary of the wilderness, there are records of bluntnose minnow, longnose dace and logperch 4.5 miles downstream at the town of Rudyard. I assume these and other fish are also in the wilderness stretch, but don't show up in the records because of inaccessibility. (North American Native Fishes 2022)



Denali Wilderness (AK)



There are records of Arctic Grayling in the Triple Lakes tributary to Riley Creek in the east part of the wilderness, close to McKinley Village, with trail access from the Village. Grayling are also recorded from Savage River. (iNaturalist 2022)



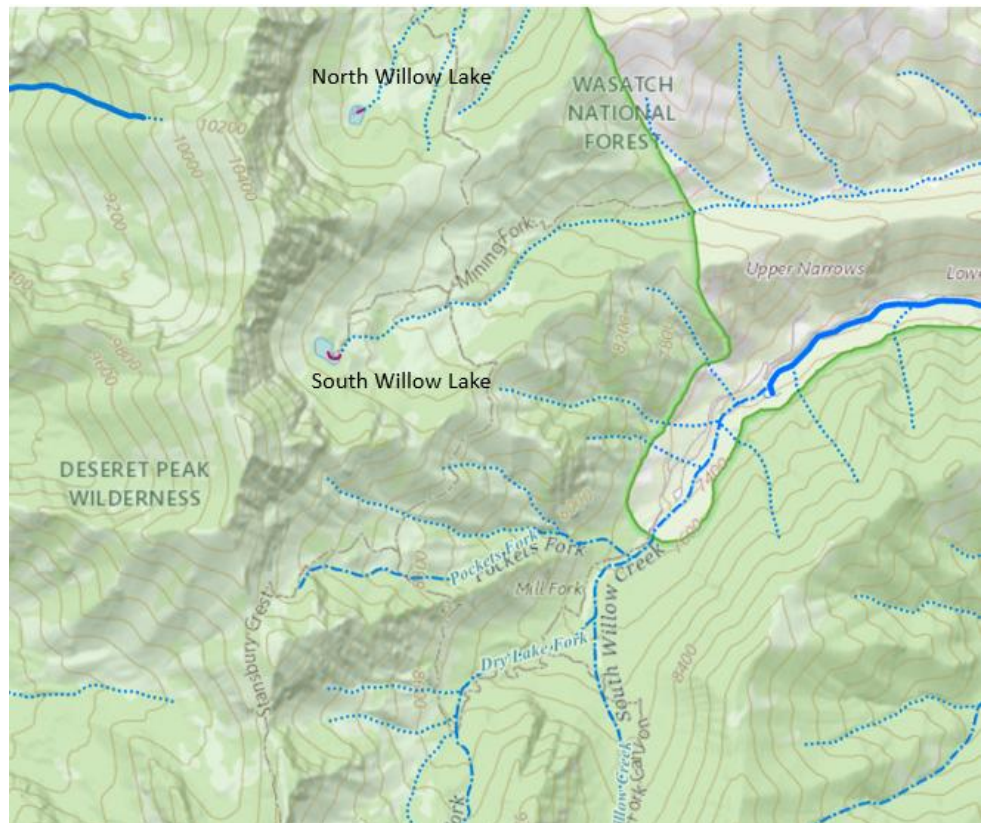
Desatoya Mountains Wilderness (NV)

There are small cutthroats in Edwards and Smith Creeks, and brookies in Big Den Creek (U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM, Carson City Field Office, 2000). Nevada Department of Wildlife agrees, as shown on the map, but it looks like some of this fishable water barely extends into the wilderness (NDOW 2017). The aeriels make it look like there may not be much water in those creeks, either.



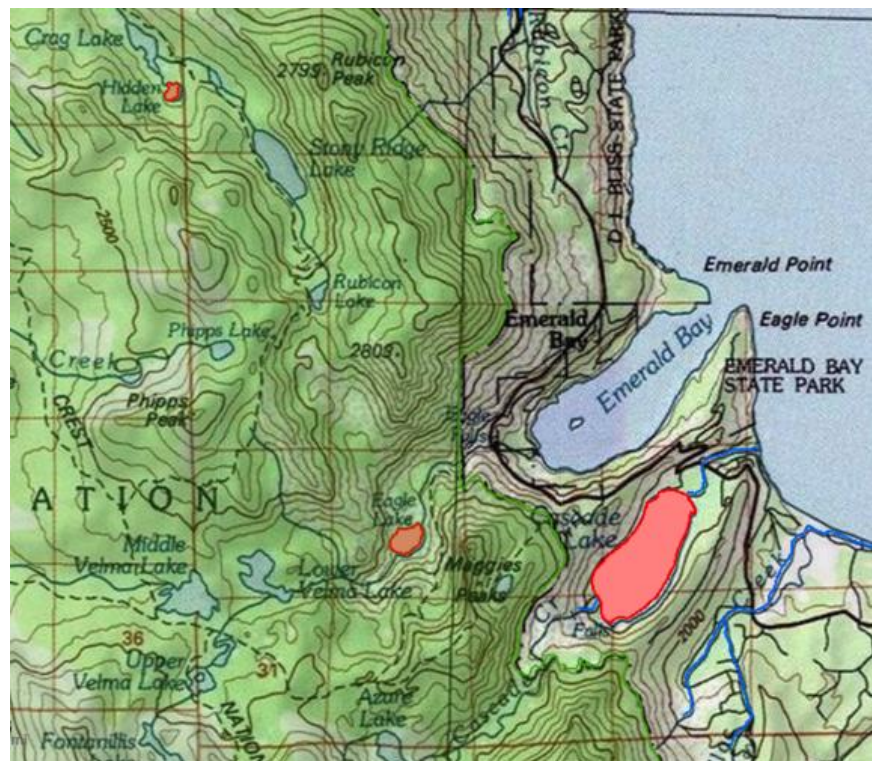
Deseret Peak Wilderness (UT)

There are rainbow trout in South Willow Canyon and in South Willow Lake (which does not connect to South Willow Canyon!) and North Willow Lake. (Green 2017) There is a trail network that parallels the lowest portion of the creek and reaches the lakes, but not in any direct way.



Desolation Wilderness (CA)

Restored populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout occur in Hidden Lake and Eagle Lake. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009, p. 23; TU LCT 2020)



Desolation Wilderness (CA)



There are brook trout in mountain lakes. Be aware of permit system required for entry. (NWFF, May-Jun 2017, p, 28)

There are also Lahontan redside, a shiner, on the east slope; and brook trout throughout, with many records in the small lakes in the southwestern corner of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2023)



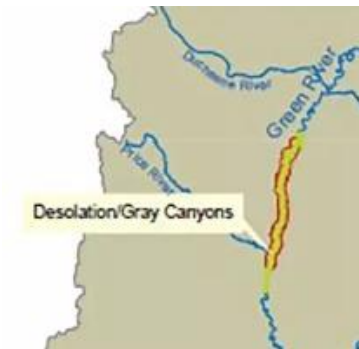
The brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

Desolation Canyon Wilderness (UT)

Price River is perennial across the wilderness, while the Green River forms the eastern boundary. (Utah AGRC 2020) There is a trail along the west side of the Green reaching the Price from the south, but it's over 6 miles. Bluehead suckers are abundant in Price River and at the confluence of the Price and Green Rivers. Flannemouth suckers are also abundant at the confluence with the Green River. (Utah DNR, 2006) There are red shiners in the Green River above Range Creek, and most likely the whole length of the river. (iNaturalist 2022)

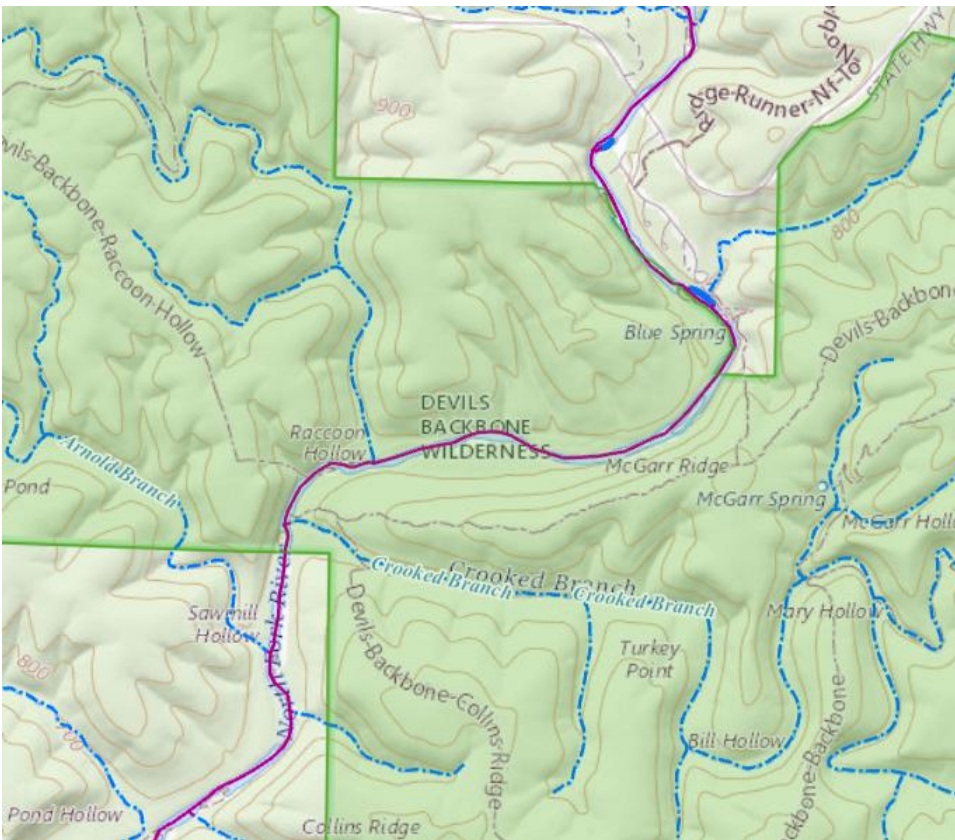


Desolation Canyon Wilderness (UT)



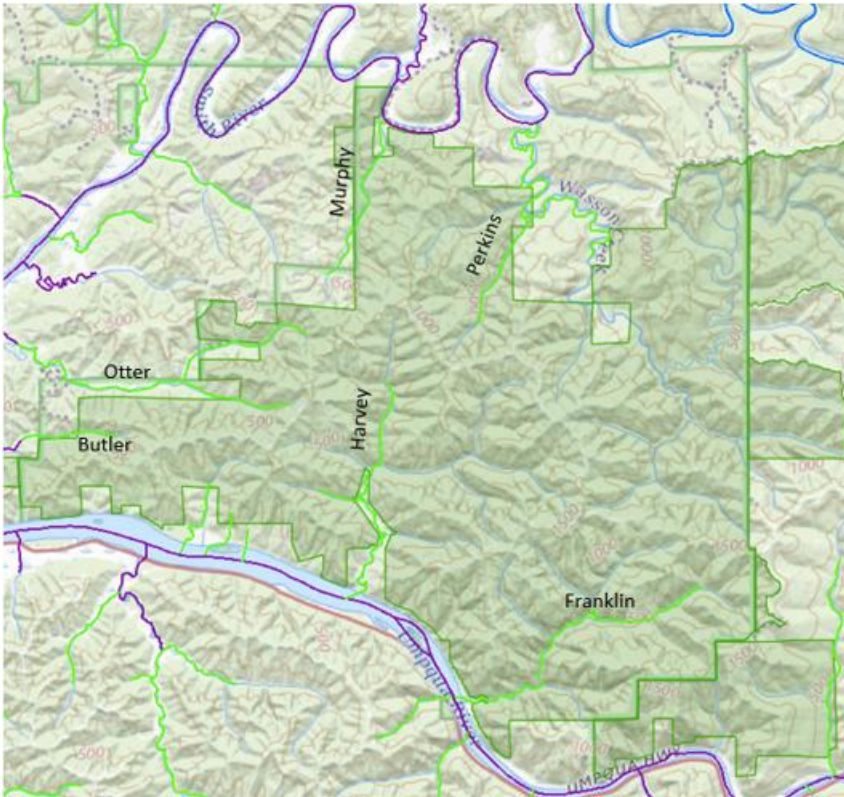
US F&WS says there are humpback chub in the Green River as well. (map taken from Stahli, USFWS, 2022). Red is critical habitat, green is occupied.

Devil's Backbone Wilderness (MO)



There are smallmouth bass as well as brown and rainbow trout in the North Fork River. (AA, May-Jun 2017, p28) Surprisingly enough, the rest of this wilderness looks pretty dry.

Devil's Staircase Wilderness (OR)



There is critical habitat for coho salmon (light green lines) in Franklin Creek in the east, Harvey Creek in the center, and Butler Creek in the west, all tributaries of Umpqua River; and in Perkins Creek in the east, Murphy Creek in the center and Otter Creek in the west, all tributaries of Smith River on the north side of the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Of course, the wilderness abuts the Umpqua with its steelhead. There are also year-round resident coastal cutthroats pretty much throughout all the streams in the wilderness.

Diamond Peak Wilderness (OR)



Critical habitat for bull trout exists in Trapper Creek which flows through O'Dell Lake into the Deschutes system, and Swift Creek which is a tributary of Middle Fork Willamette River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows moderate probability of bull trout in these streams, plus high probability in Whitefish Creek and Mountain Creek system. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Diamond Peak Wilderness (OR)

Short stretches of Trapper Creek and Crystal Creek flowing into O'Dell Lake, which eventually flows out to the headwaters of the Deschutes River, hold low density populations of redband trout. (Mayfield) Red line along the divide on the map is the PCT.

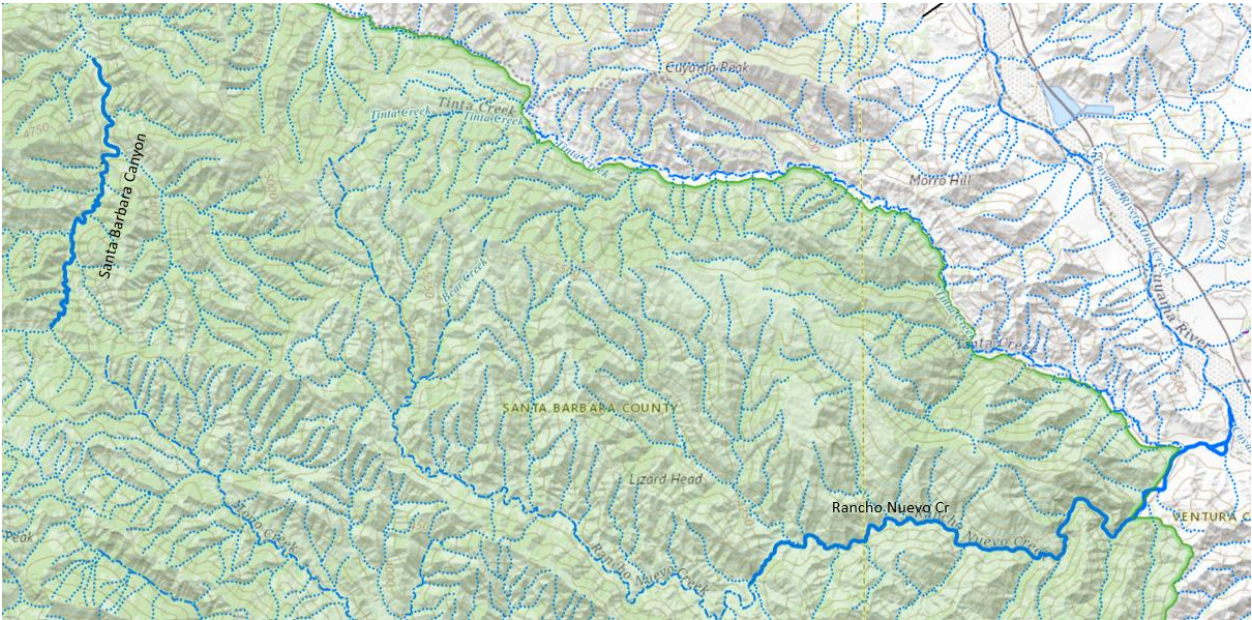


I hiked in along Whitefish Creek in July, 2026. I hooked a couple of fish without landing them, but did manage to scoop up a small trout with a long-handled landing net, scooping where the fish seemed to be holding under a log after he made several attempts to get a fly into his mouth. (Number 112)

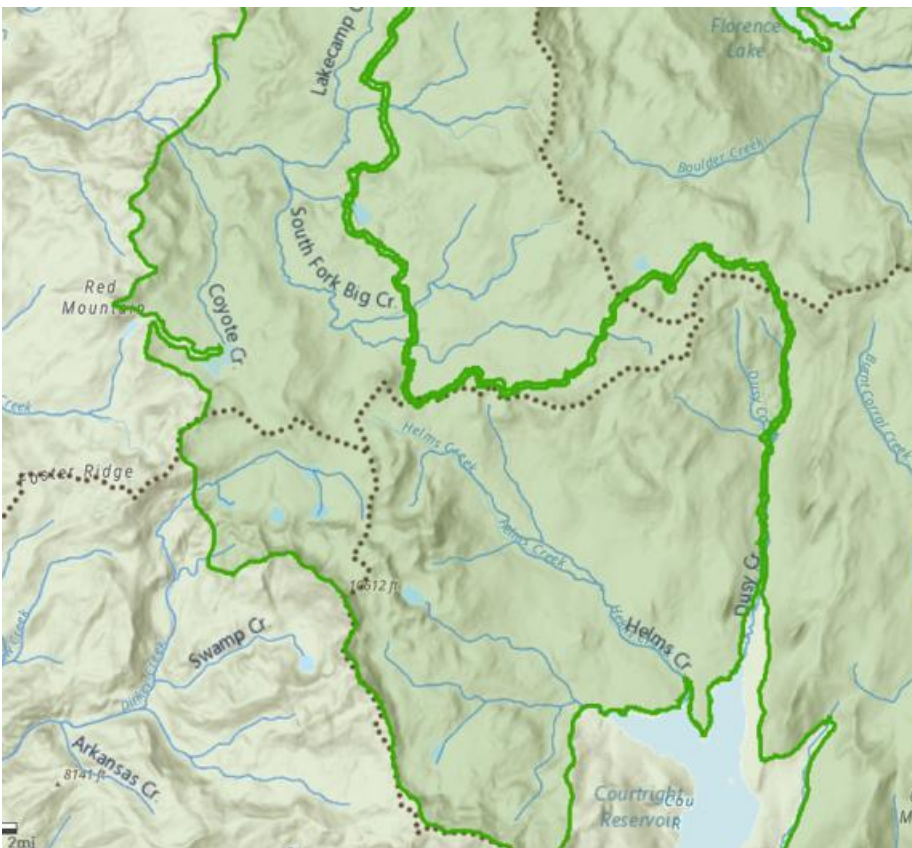


Dick Smith Wilderness (CA)

Not much perennial water here, just two streams that flow north and east to the Cuyama River, which doesn't have an exceptional amount of water either. Arroyo chub have resided in both the Rancho Nuevo Creek system and Santa Barbara Canyon, together with a few non-native sunfishes. There have even been rainbow trout here. (U Cal Pisces database)



Dinkey Lakes Wilderness (CA)

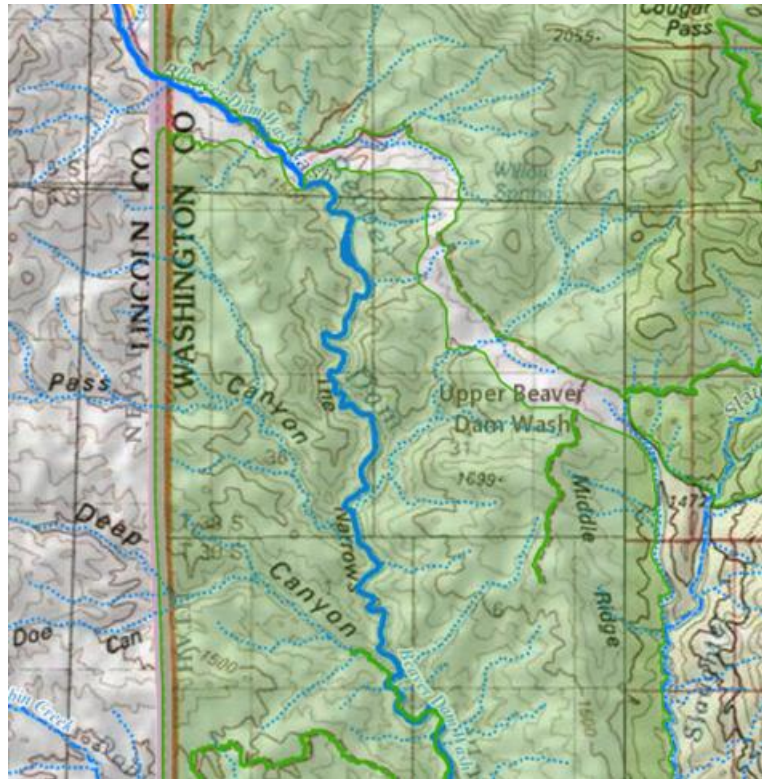


Rainbow trout and brook trout occur in 16 lakes and numerous streams in the wilderness. Access from Courtwright Reservoir or from Kaiser Pass road. (Schalla, 2021)

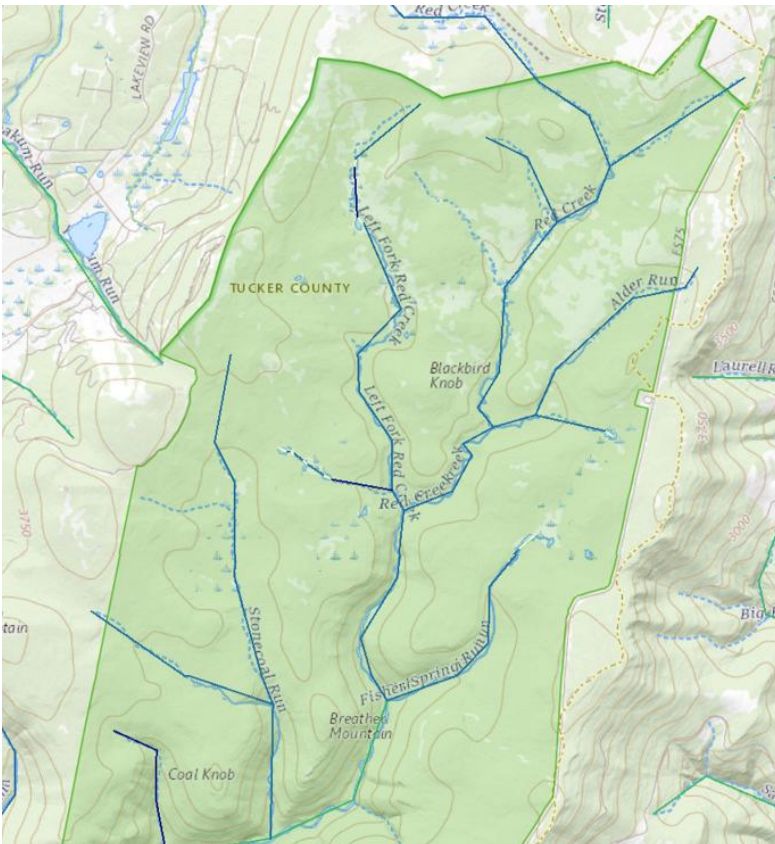
Doc's Pass Wilderness (UT)

The Nevada Department of Wildlife stocks Beaver Dam Wash, which runs through Tunnel Spring Wilderness, with rainbow trout. The wash continues downstream as a perennial stream into Doc's Pass Wilderness, some of those trout might make it that far downstream, some Cyprinidae almost certainly make it. (US Dept of Interior, BLM, Nevada 2010)

The Virgin Spinedace Conservation Strategy (Utah DNR, undated, but appears to be early 1990's) proposes removing trout below Schroeder Reservoir in Nevada, which would mean no trout here if that proposal was acted on. The purpose of the removal, however, was to reestablish the native fish assemblage, which would indicate presence of Virgin spinedace in the Doc's Pass stretch of Beaver Dam Wash. Again, this is if the proposal was ever put into effect.



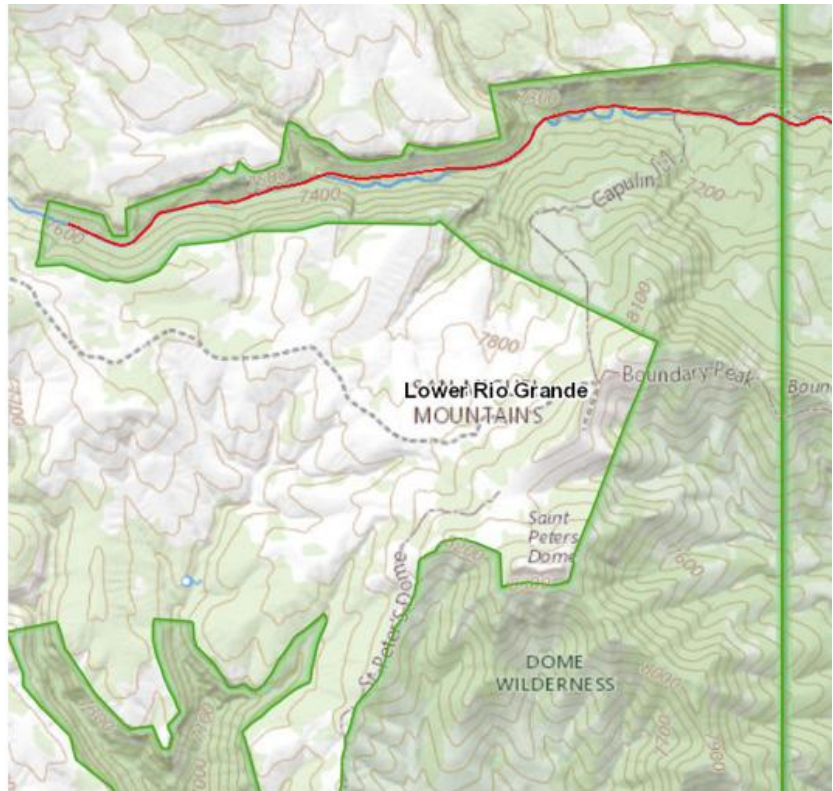
Dolly Sods Wilderness (WV)



There is brook trout every where, including a secure stronghold population in Red Creek running through the center of the wilderness. The entire wilderness is in the Red Creek system, tributary to Dry Fork of Cheat River, the Cheat flows north to the Monongahela. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) The darkest straight line segments are greater than 90% probability of brook trout occurrence, the slightly less dark blue lines have 70 to 90% probability. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

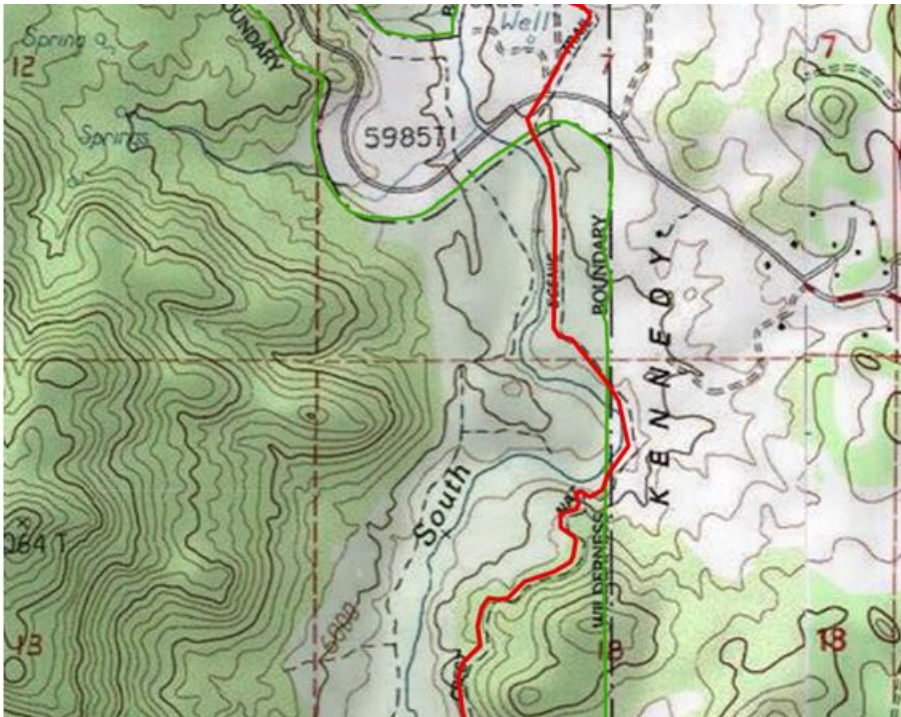
Dome Wilderness (NM)

There are Rio Grande Cutthroats in upper portions of Capulin Canyon, with trail access along stream (Bakevich et al 2019; TU 2019 RGCT)



Labor Day weekend 2021 I hiked in from the end of FS 142, about an 1100-foot drop along trails (shown on the map above) that were merely wishful thinking in many places. When I got to the bottom there was a beautiful little pool with a Rio Grande cutthroat that attacked the first cast. I landed him two casts later. Got my hopes up, but it was to be the only fish I saw all day... (Number 46)

Domeland Wilderness (CA)



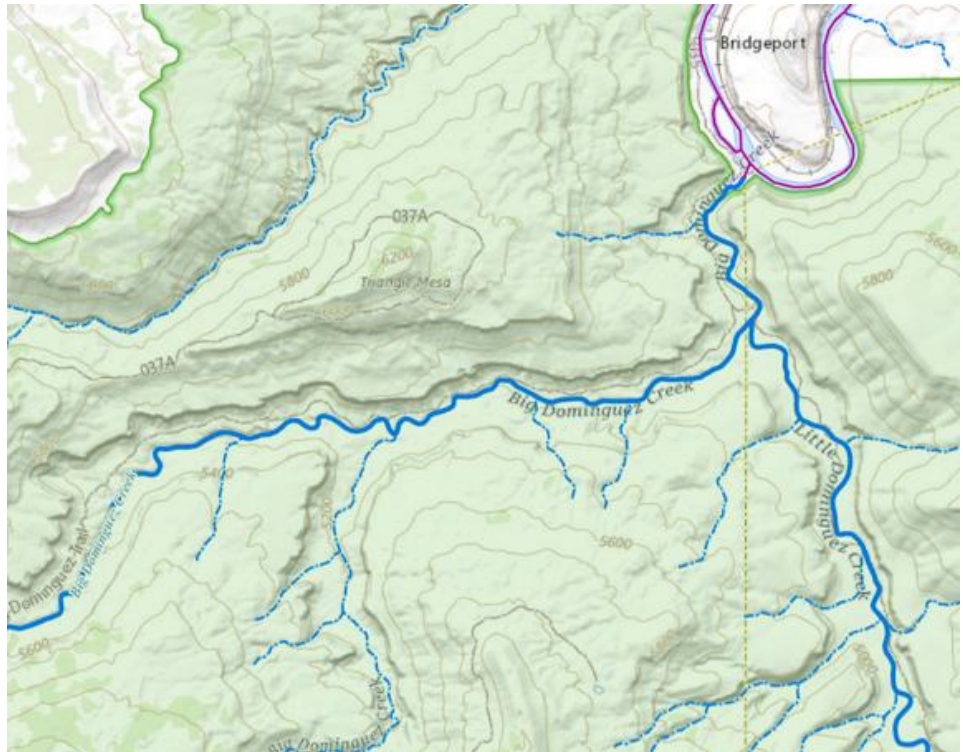
On October 31, 2020 I hiked from Sherman Pass Road south into the wilderness along the South Fork Kern River. Caught one rainbow trout, I suppose it could have had some golden in it but it looked very rainbow-ish. (Number 31) Red line on the map is PCT, which I spent some time on later in the day in South Sierra Wilderness.

And yes, he's foul-hooked. I'm not proud...

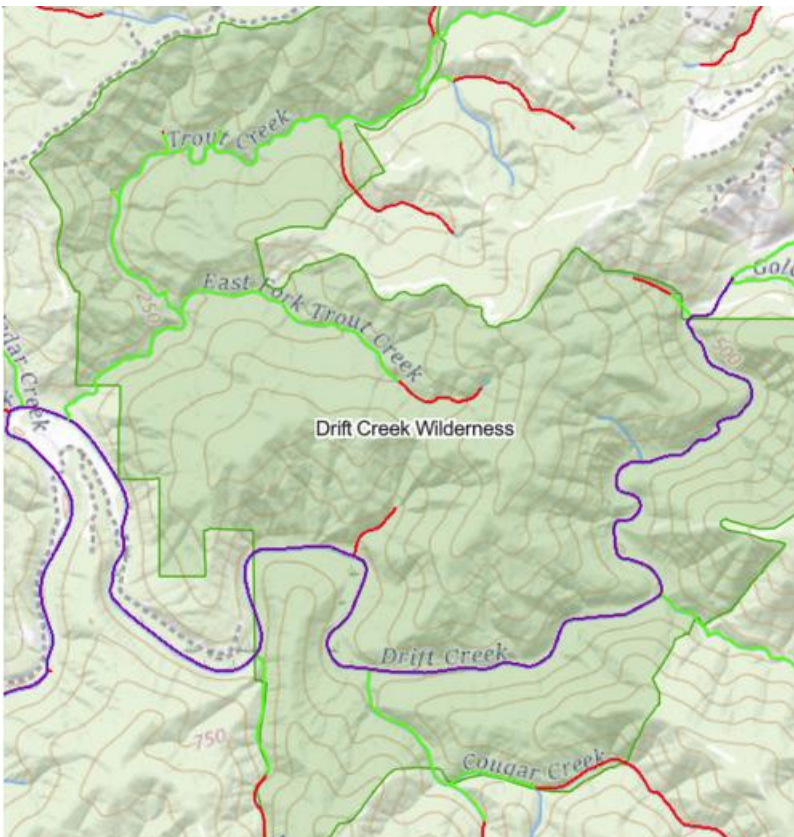


Dominguez Canyon Wilderness (CO)

The Gunnison River flows along the north and east side of the wilderness, forming the boundary in some locations. Big Dominguez and Little Dominguez Creeks are perennial throughout their length in the wilderness. Big Dominguez has good parallel trail access and is easy to get to from the downstream end. Nearby records include roundtail chub and speckled dace. (iNaturalist 2023)



Drift Creek Wilderness (OR)



With a location six miles from the Pacific coast, there is critical habitat for coho salmon in Drift Creek and Trout Creek (purple and green lines). (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Coastal cutthroats are also present in the same streams, plus some stretches further upstream from the coho habitat. (red lines, StreamNet)



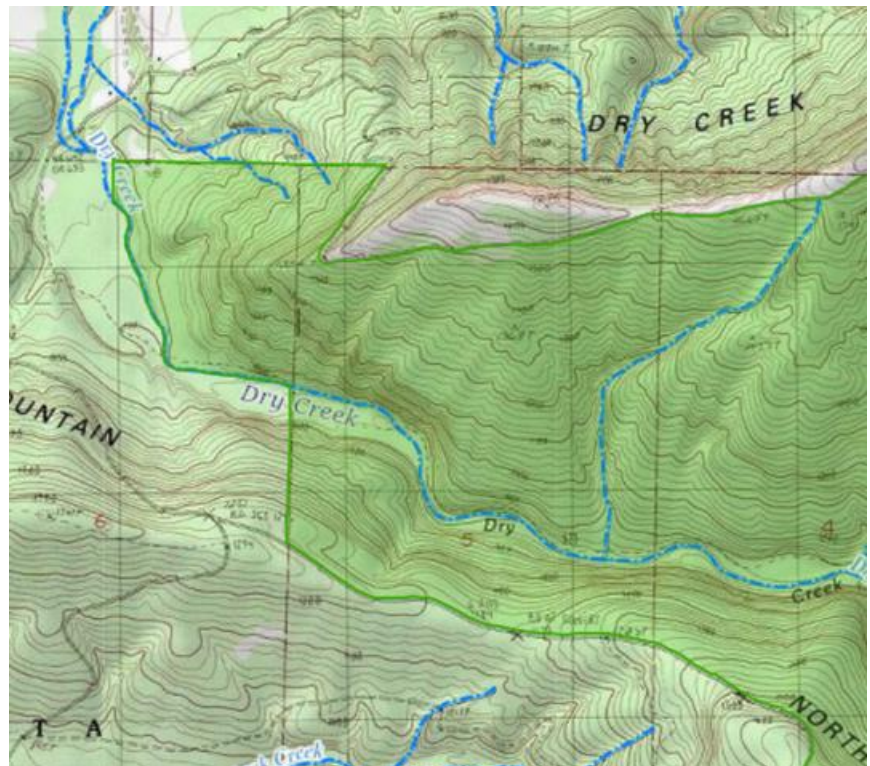
Drift Creek Wilderness (OR)

In March of 2026 I hiked the length of the Harris Ranch Trail to its end at Drift Creek. The spot looked great, but I could only manage a few tiny trout from some side pools using the landing net and minnow trap. (number 104)

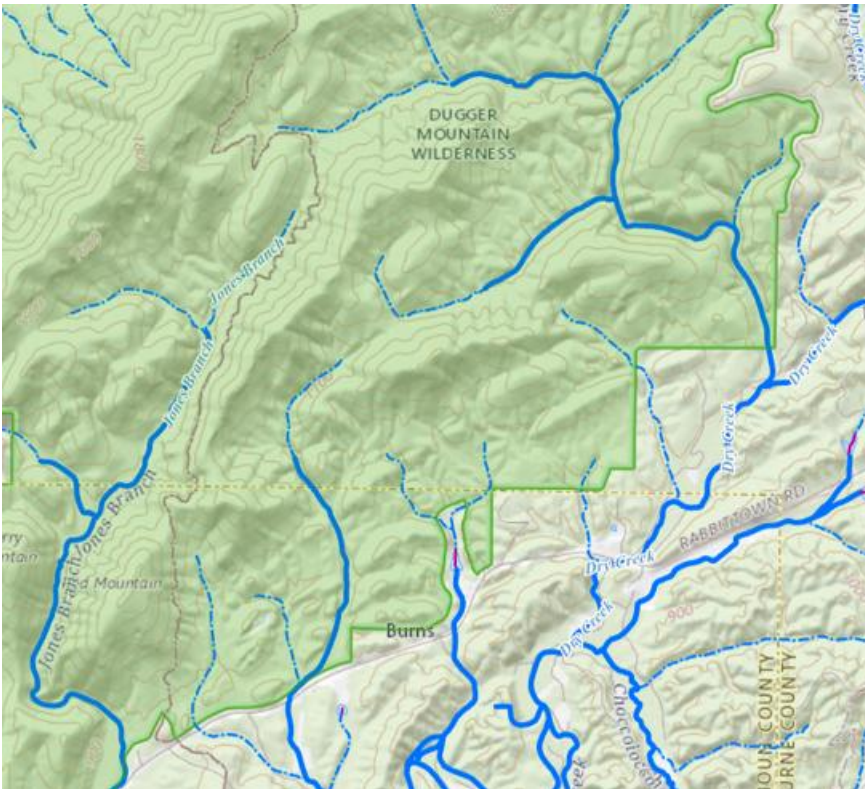


Dry Creek Wilderness (AR)

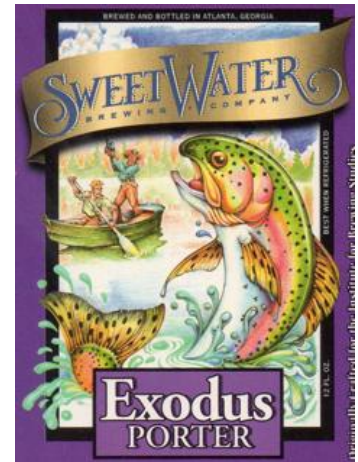
Surveys have found highland stoneroller and redbfin darter (USDA USFS Southern Research Station 2016)



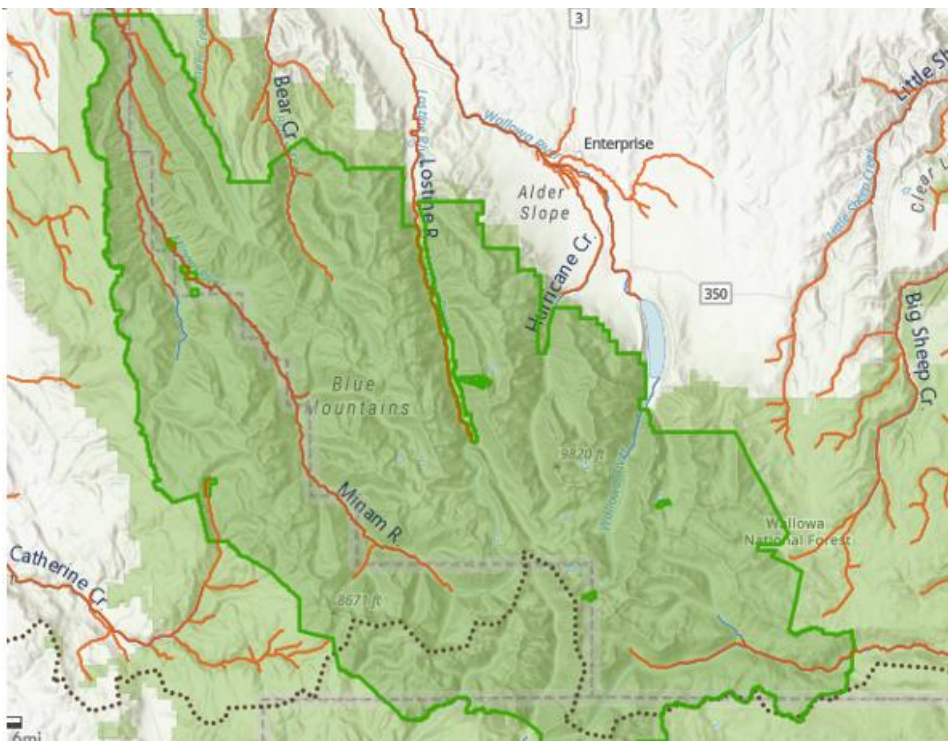
Dugger Mountain Wilderness (AL)



Some streams flowing off the east side of the Dugger Mountain Ridge have perennial flow, including oddly enough Dry Creek. There are records of tricolor shiner and Coosa darter within the wilderness, with warmouth from Dry Creek nearby. (iNaturalist 2023)



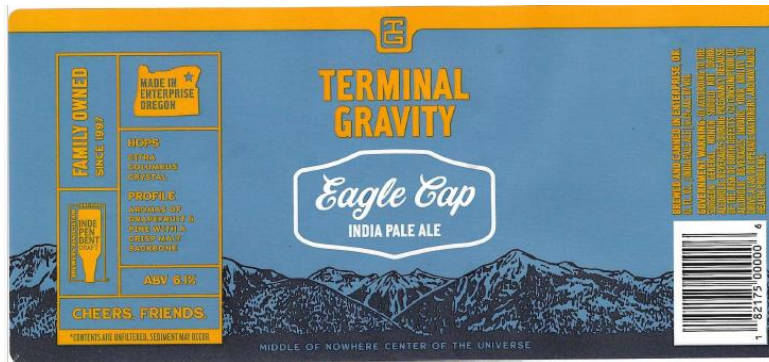
Eagle Cap Wilderness (OR)



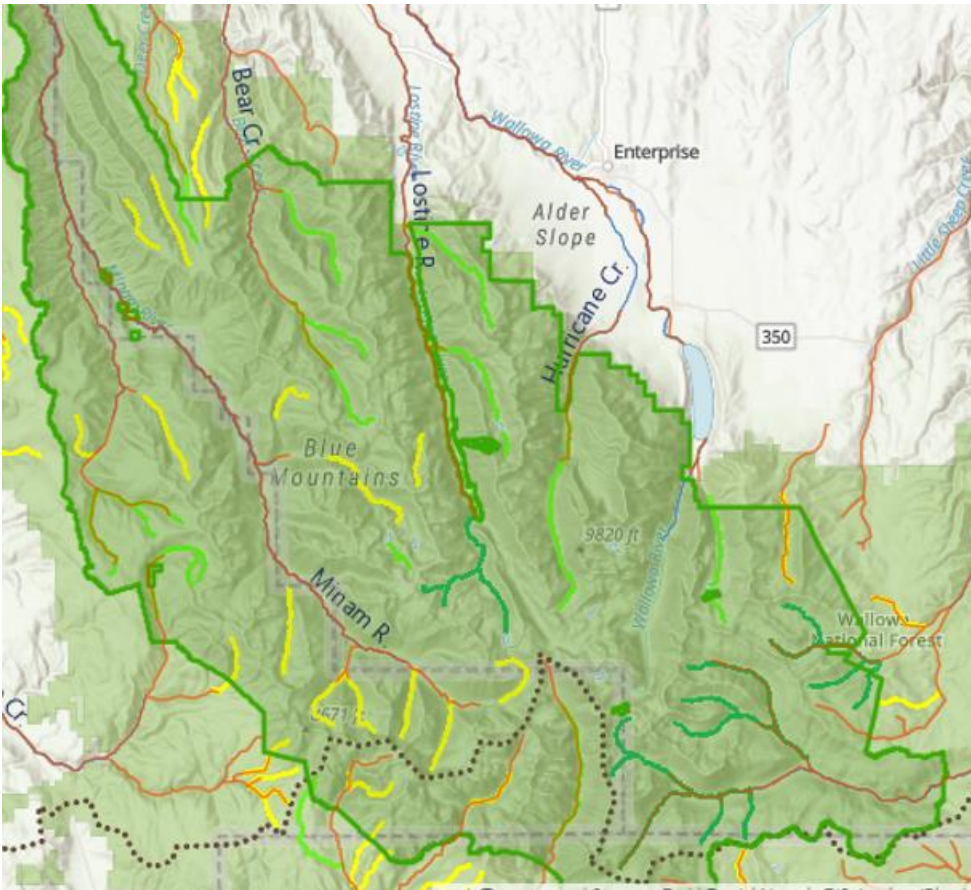
There is critical habitat for steelhead in the Minam River system in the west side of the wilderness, in the Lostine River and other Wallowa River tributaries on the east side of the wilderness, and in the upper Imnaha River in the south end of the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Eagle Cap Wilderness (OR)

I checked out the Imnaha River in late July 2023. The river looked great, but I didn't find any fish until I scooped this one out of a side channel just before I had to leave. I prefer to think it's a baby steelhead... (Number 63)

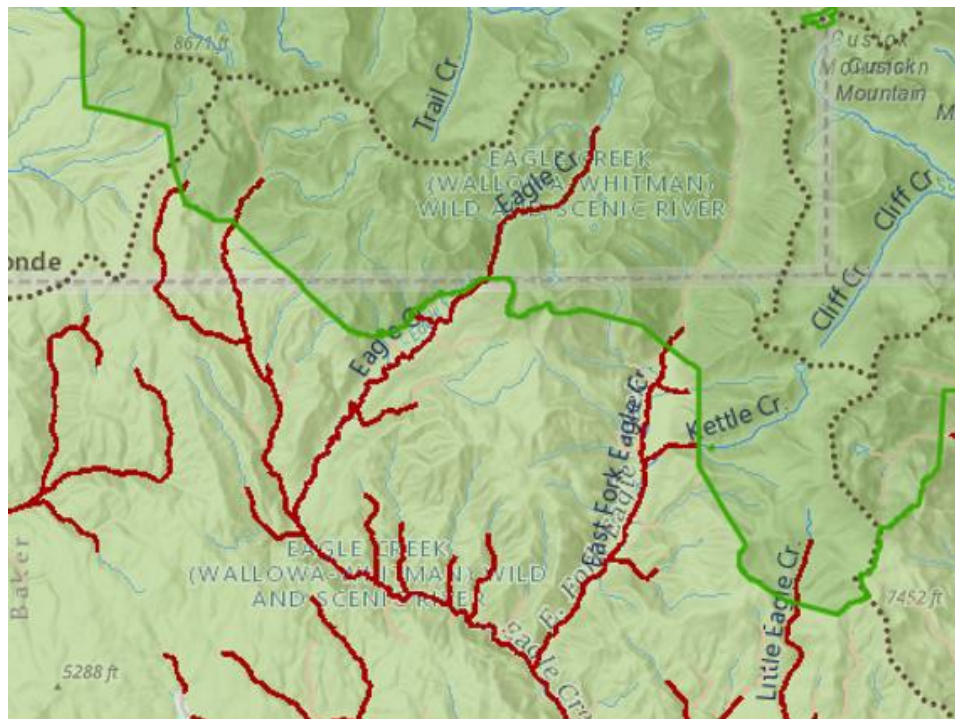


Eagle Cap Wilderness (OR)



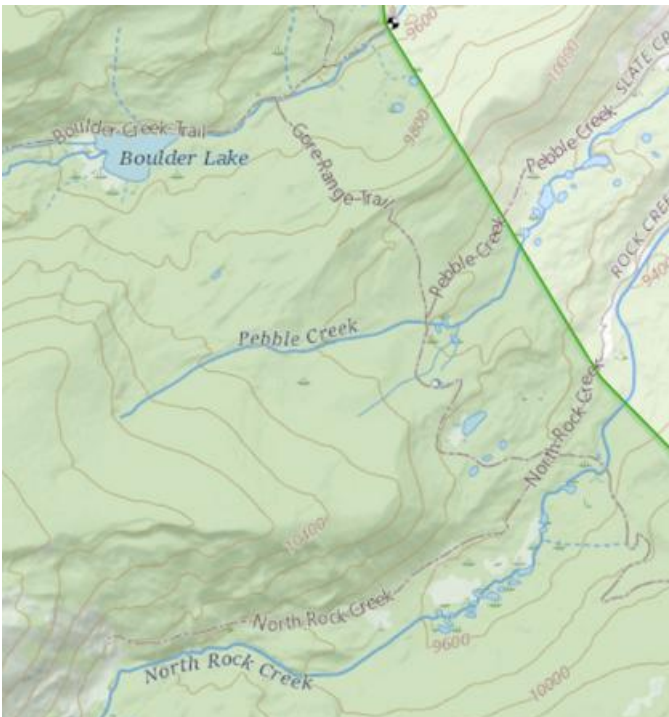
Many of the same streams that are designated as steelhead habitat are also critical habitat for bull trout (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) where Climate Shield predicts low to moderate probability of bull trout populations. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

There are populations of redband trout in the Eagle Creek system at the extreme southern end of wilderness, including West Eagle Creek, Eagle Creek, East Fork Eagle Creek and Little Eagle Creek, tributary to Powder River. (Mayfield)



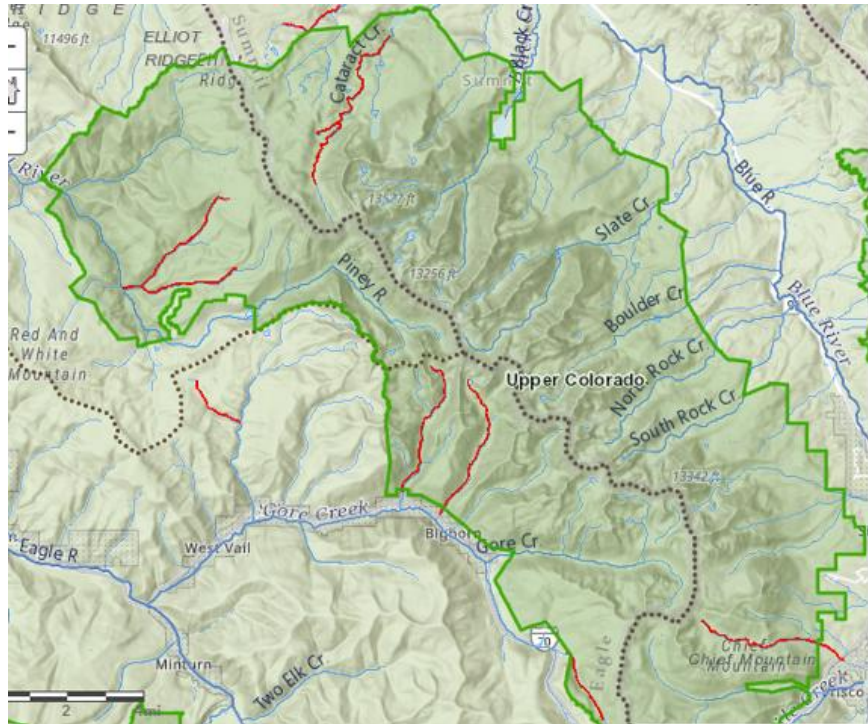
Eagles Nest Wilderness (CO)

I hiked Rock Creek Trail, Gore Mountains Trail, and Boulder Creek Trail to Boulder Lake and Boulder Creek above the lake on June 27, 2018. Caught brook trout both above and below the lake in Boulder Creek. On the way out stopped and caught some brook trout in Rock Creek at the Gore Mountain Trail crossing. (Number 18)



Eagles Nest Wilderness (CO)

There are genetically unaltered Colorado cutts in Meadow and East Meadow Creeks, tributaries of Piney River, in the northwestern part of the wilderness. Also on the west slope, Gore Creek tributaries Pitkin and Booth Creeks hold hybridized populations, with good trail access. In the northeast hybridized populations of Colorado cutthroats exist in Cataract Creek, with a conservation population in Black Creek. In the south genetically pure Colorado cutts are in Meadow Creek, with trail access along the creek out of the town of Frisco. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness (NV)

USGS does show two stretches of perennial flow in High Rock Canyon, with a parallel "road" running through a long cherry-stem alongside. (USGS 2021). There is also apparently a perennial stretch of East Fork High Rock Canyon. There are desert speckled dace nearby in a perennial stretch of Mahogany Creek, a tributary in neighboring High Rock Canyon Wilderness, which I scooped up in July 2024. This made me think they could also be in some of the perennial portions of High Rock Creek and East Fork High Rock as well.



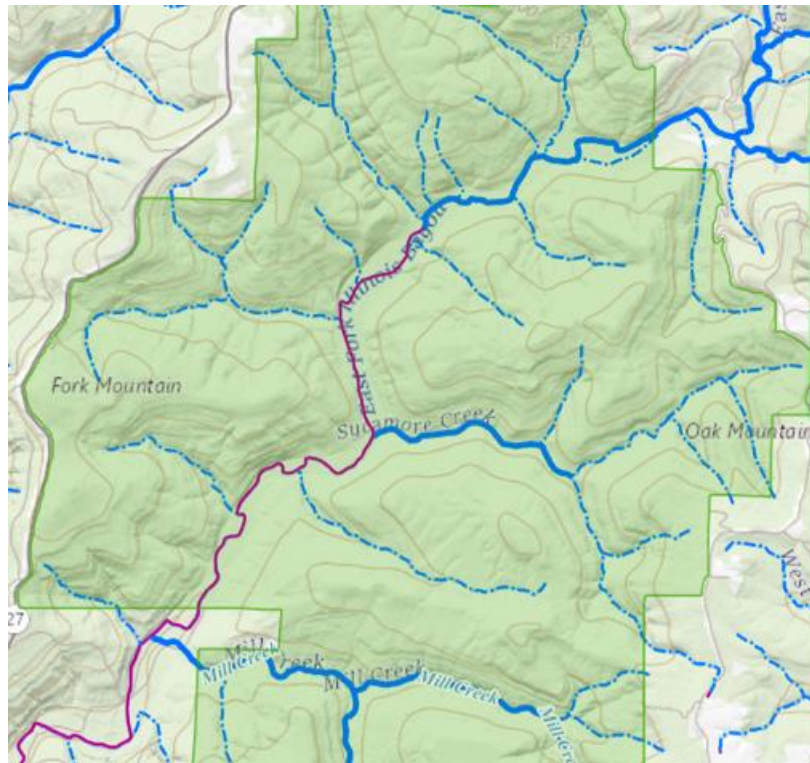
East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness (NV)

I returned in July 2026, two years after catching dace in Mahogany Creek, and found several dace in a pool in High Rock Creek as it crossed into the wilderness at the mouth of Pole Canyon (Number 107).

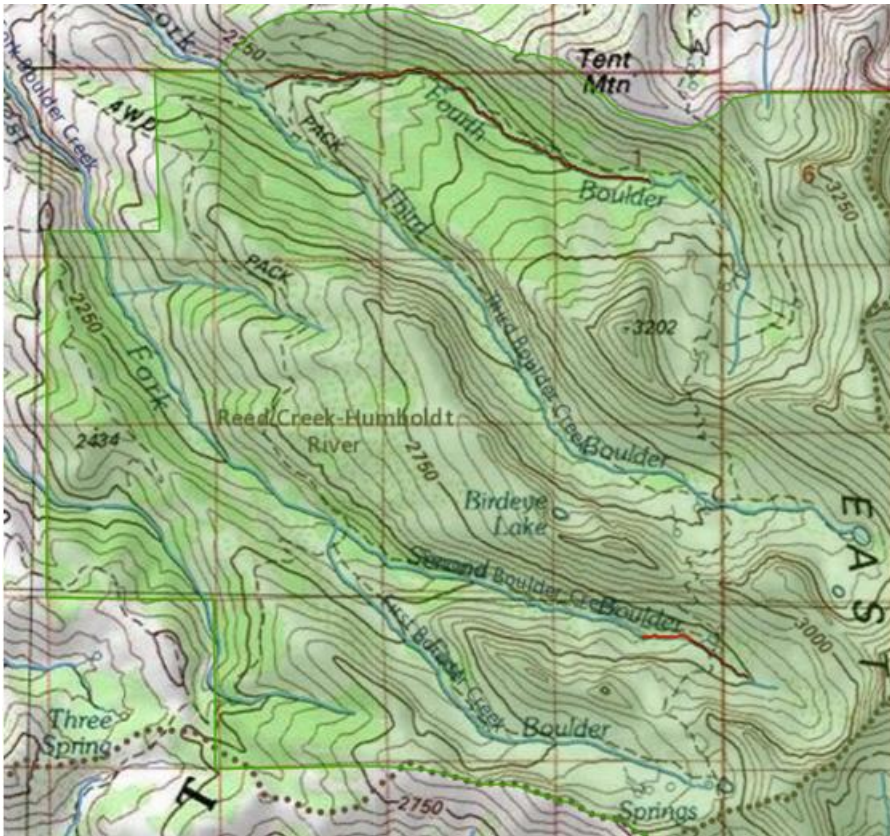


East Fork Wilderness (AR)

The East Fork of the Illinois Bayou runs through the East Fork Wilderness and holds smallmouth bass, Ozark bass, and green sunfish. (USDA USFS Ozark-St. Francis NF, 2022)

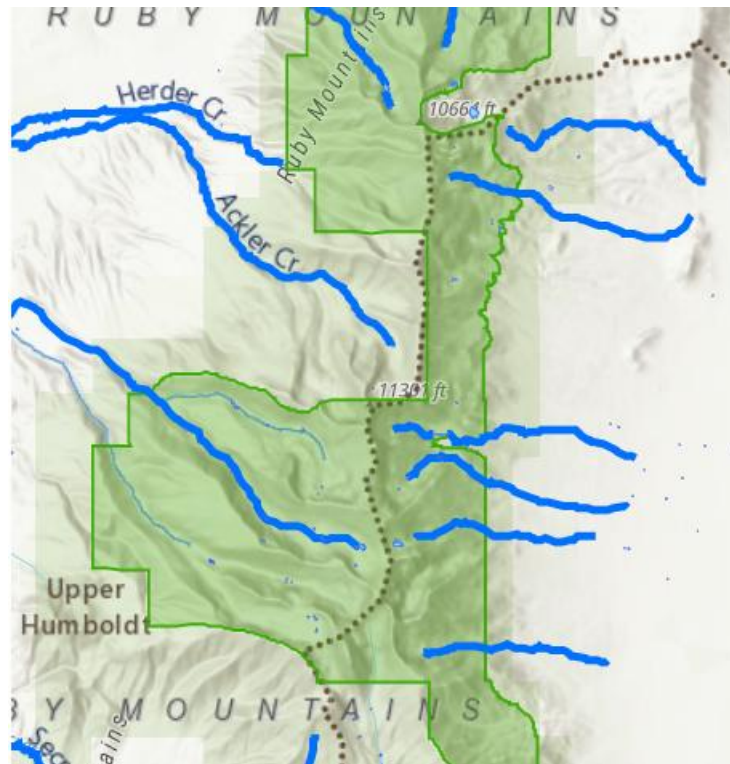


East Humboldts Wilderness (NV)



Fourth Boulder Creek has a low density, naturally occurring, genetically pure population of Lahontan cutthroats. First Boulder Creek Lahontan population is medium density, also naturally occurring. (USF&WS and NV F&W 2009, p. 23; TU LCT 2020)

Chances are good that if a stream doesn't have cutthroats it has brook trout. (Nevada DOW 2017)

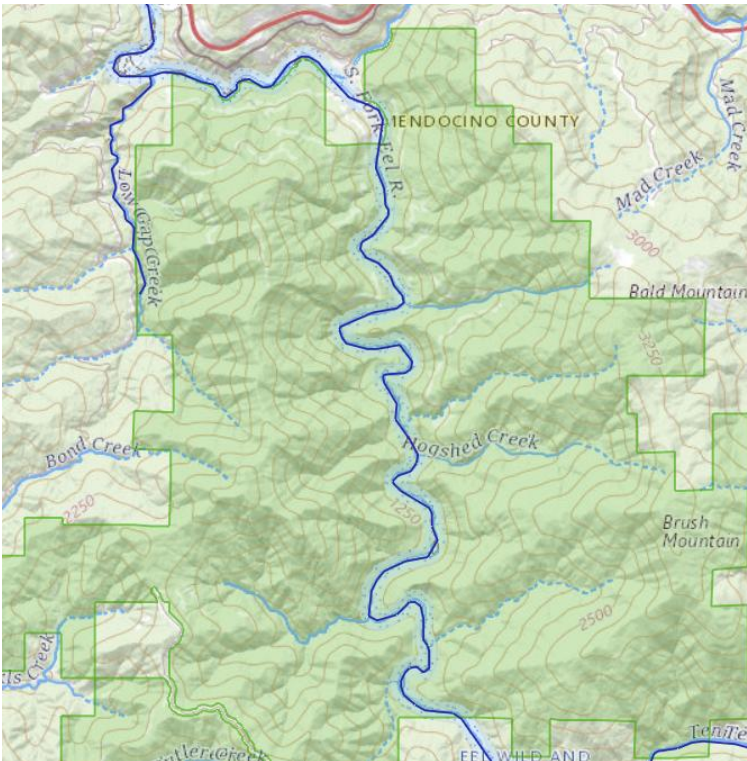


East Humboldt Wilderness (NV)



The problem I had when I visited in July 2021 was not finding fish, it was finding a way to get to them. The first trailhead I tried to get to was blocked by private landholdings, which apparently is common here. I actually made it to the Secret Starr Trailhead and started hiking. After six miles I got to where I had a nice view of First Boulder Creek, but I also had no more discernable trail. No way of getting down there. And it looked so easy to get to on the map...

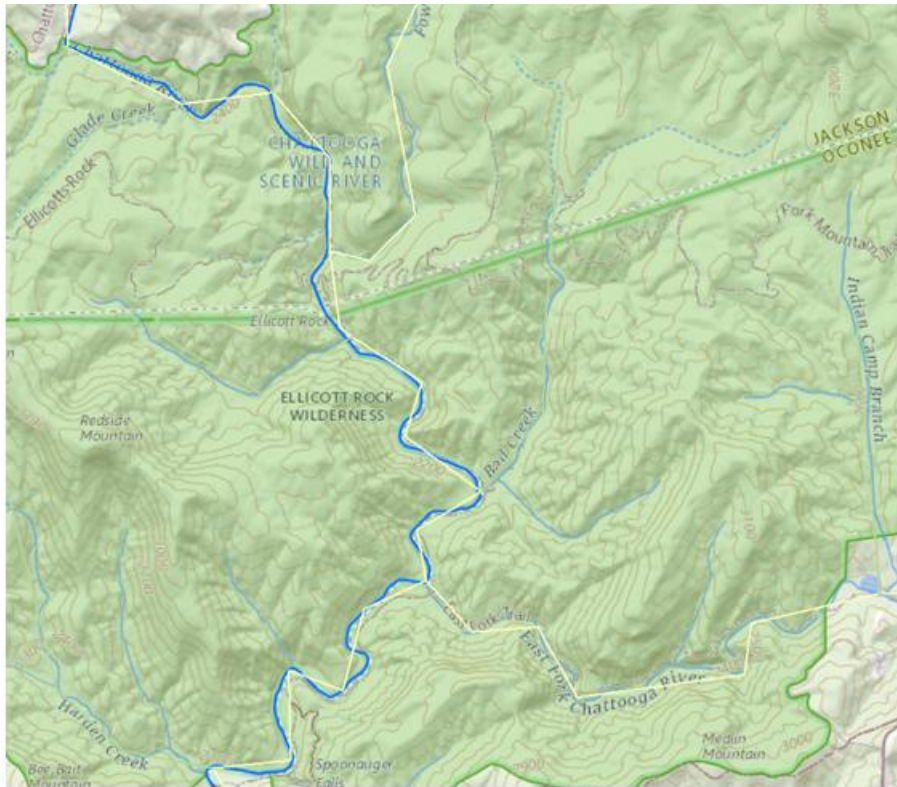
Elkhorn Ridge Wilderness (CA)



There is critical habitat for steelhead (shown in map) and chinook salmon in South Fork Eel River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



Ellicott Rock Wilderness (GA, SC, TN)



There are brook trout and brown trout in Glade Creek and a portion of the main stem Chattooga River in the extreme northwestern portion of the wilderness.

By the way, yes, this segment of the Chattooga is part of the 10-mile run of the river where they filmed the Movie. Personally, I need no other reason to try it out. In a canoe. With a banjo.

Bald Creek and Indian Camp Branch, tributaries of East Fork Chattooga, also hold brookies in the eastern part of the wilderness. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout)

There are wild browns and rainbows and native brookies in the Chattooga especially between the NC state line and Burrell's Ford. (Trout Fall 2014, p. 49) The straight yellow lines tell you your chances of finding brookies are less than 25%. (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

Emigrant Wilderness (CA)



Kennedy Meadows Trailhead (the other one, the famous one is at South Sierra Wilderness) in the northern part of wilderness gives access to Sharon Lake with brook trout, Kennedy Lake with large browns, and Lewis Lakes with brookies. Gianelli Cabin trailhead on west side of wilderness gives access to a large number of lakes in the interior, including the Emigrant Lakes near the eastern summits, many of which have brook trout. (Schalla 2021) The Emigrant Lakes, however, seem to be closer to Kennedy Meadows than to the west side of the wilderness.

Encampment River Wilderness (WY)



The Encampment River runs through a canyon the length of the wilderness area, with a 16-mile trail adjacent to it. The river holds brown trout, brookies and rainbows. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2019, p. 48)



Source: Esri | Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS | Esri, I

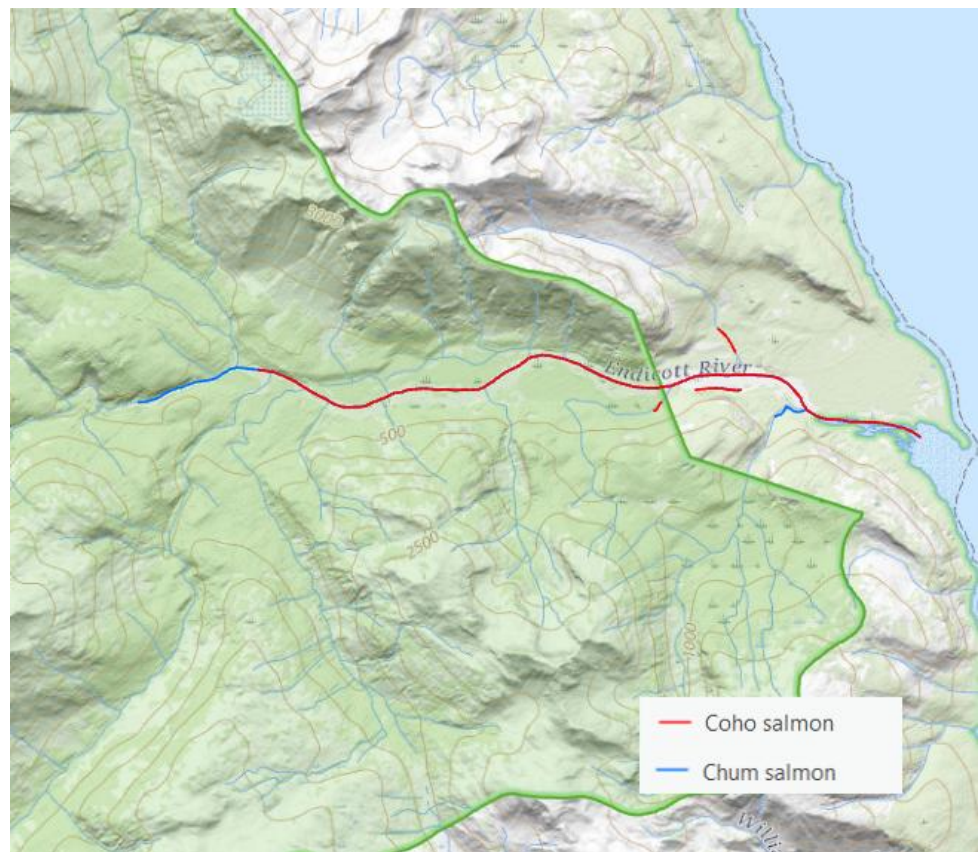
Encampment River Wilderness (WY)

In July 2022 I started at the least canyon-ish part of the river, the south end hiking in from the Commissary Park trailhead. River was pretty, fishing was hard, but I eventually managed to get some brookies below the confluence with the East Fork of the Encampment. (Number 50).



Endicott River Wilderness (AK)

Not far from Juneau and adjacent to Glacier Bay Wilderness, the Endicott River Wilderness is very tough to penetrate, and few do so. There are no trails; it's possible to hike up the river, but the coastal rainforest vegetation is tough and you'd be competing with bears for space and fish. So why you say? Chum and coho salmon are abundant during spawning, Dolly Varden occur as well. (Wilderness Connect, 2023; ADFG 2023)



Escudilla Wilderness (AZ)



There is not much perennial surface water in this wilderness. On July 27, 2019 I did a solo hike up Mamie Creek about 1.2 miles. I had to bushwack, there was no trail. It was also a burn area from the 2011 Wallow fire. I fished the very small creek and got nothing. A mile up the creek was emerging from under a rock field; I think it may have some more surface flow above the rock field. The creek is worth another try, I need a whole day to do it.

In July 2022 I did the other try. The creek had flow but not a lot. This time I moved straight up stream from the parking area where the stream crosses the Forest Service road. Same results as the previous trip- it looked good, but I found no evidence of fish.

Milk Creek flowing to the west off the mountain is habitat for bluehead sucker, speckled dace, Little Colorado spinedace and Little Colorado sucker. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022) Maybe that's what I'll try next time I'm out there.



Farallon Wilderness (CA)



The wilderness boundary appears to extend at least 100 feet or so into the ocean in places. This means nearshore fishes should be found, as well as tidepool fishes along the rocky shoreline. It also looks like it might be difficult to get to them. White sharks feed on seals in the near shore waters. (USF&WS ca. 2008 Farallon NWR p.56)

Fishhooks Wilderness (AZ)

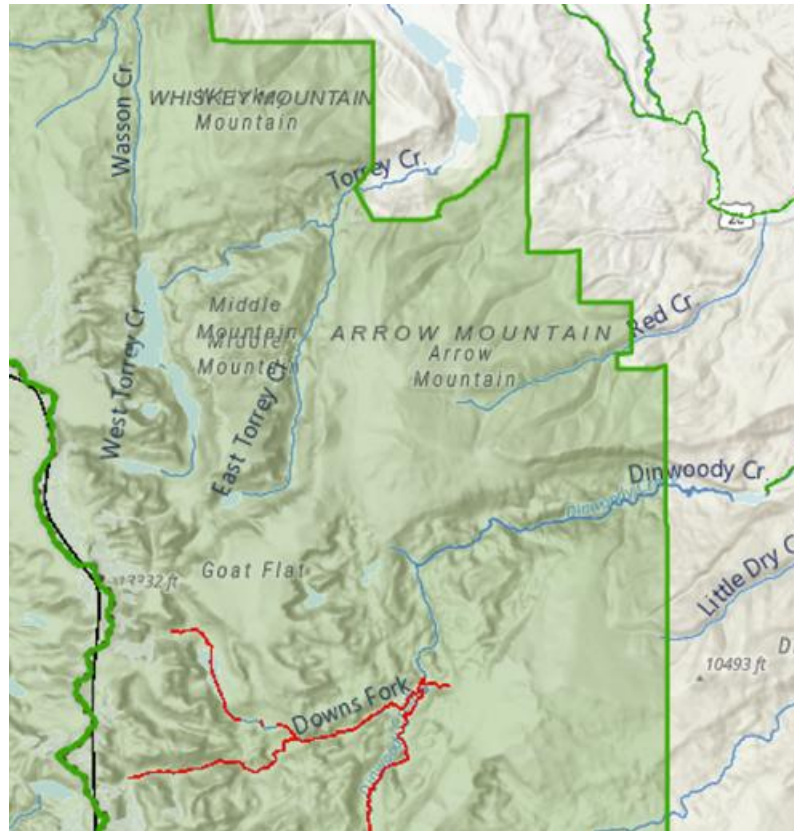
According to USGS, Upper Fishhook Canyon has perennial flow (USGS 2021) and is supposedly habitat for Gila topminnow. According to my visit in June 2024, maybe not. I hiked a mile up the Lower Fishhook Canyon (it looked more promising than the Upper Canyon when I came to the fork). Of course, Gila topminnow is federally listed as endangered, so might not be too easy to find. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022).



Fitzpatrick Wilderness (WY)

An unaltered, core conservation population of Yellowstone cutthroats resides in upper Dinwoodie and Dry Creeks. (Endicott, Nelson et al 2016; TU YCT 2019)

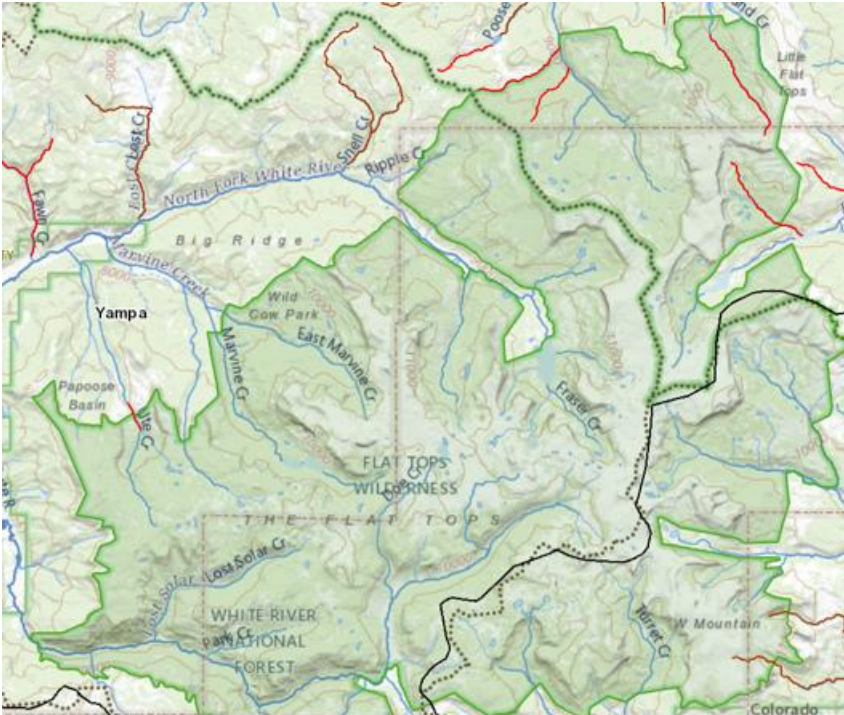
Torrey Creek watershed holds Yellowstone Cutthroats along with brookies, browns, rainbows and lakere. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2013, p.27)



I confirmed the brookies and rainbows in July 2022. Flows in Torrey Creek were very high, I caught rainbows in the current seams and brookies in the backwaters above and below the Glacier Trail footbridge. (Number 49)



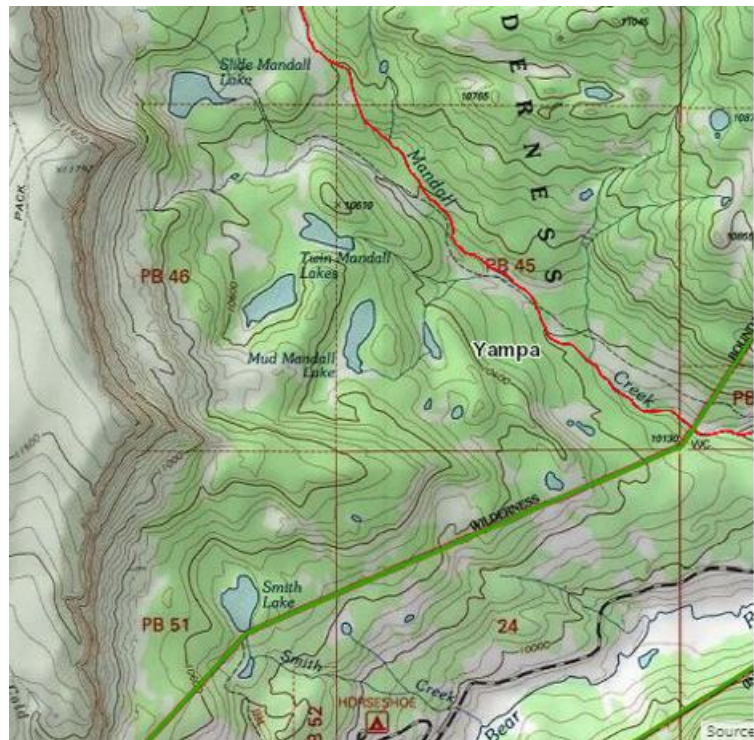
Flat Tops Wilderness (CO)



In the north Colorado cutthroat reside in East Fork Williams River, with a core conservation population in Bridge Creek tributary. There is also a population in the Mandall Creek tributary of Bear River. Colorado cutthroat population barely enters the southeast corner of the wilderness at East and West Forks of Red Dirt Creek. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)

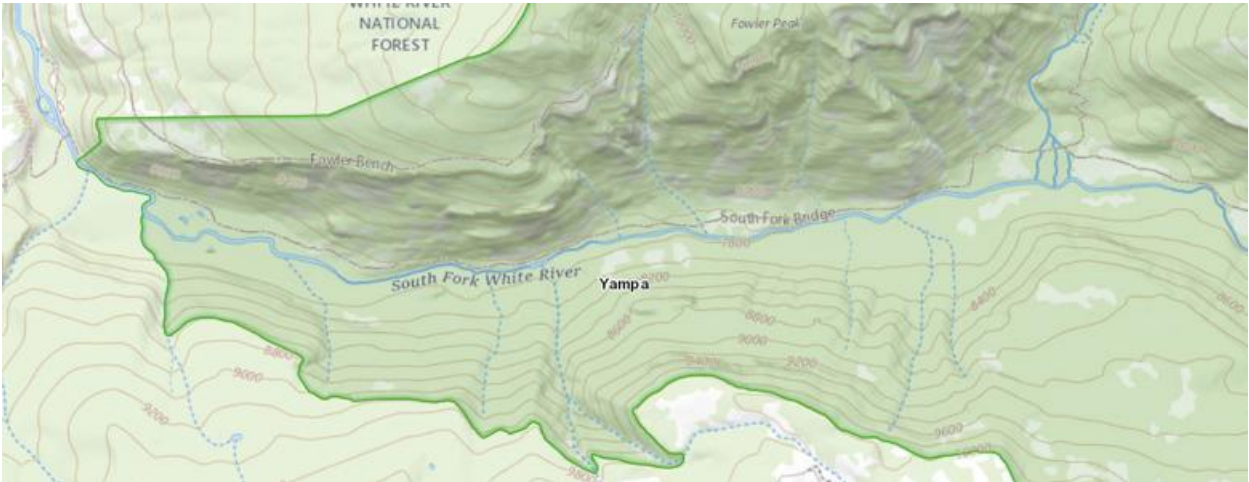
Bear River Basin above Stillwater Reservoir has hikable lakes with mostly cutthroat, including Little Causeway and Mosquito Lakes. The Devil's Causeway trail sounds spectacular. (SWFF Sep-Oct 2014, p.37)

Short hikes from the Stillwater Reservoir Road in the Bear River drainage lead to Mandall Lakes and Smith Lake with brookies and goldens. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2017, p. 43; SWFF Mar-Apr 2020, p. 24)



Flat Tops Wilderness (CO)

Sixteen miles of trail parallels the South Fork White River coming in from the South Fork campground. The river holds rainbows, browns, brookies and cutthroats. (SWFF Nov-Dec 2013, p. 18) As you go into the wilderness barriers mean mostly cutthroats. "One of the most spectacular hikes in Colorado." (SWFF Sep-Oct 2014, p.36)



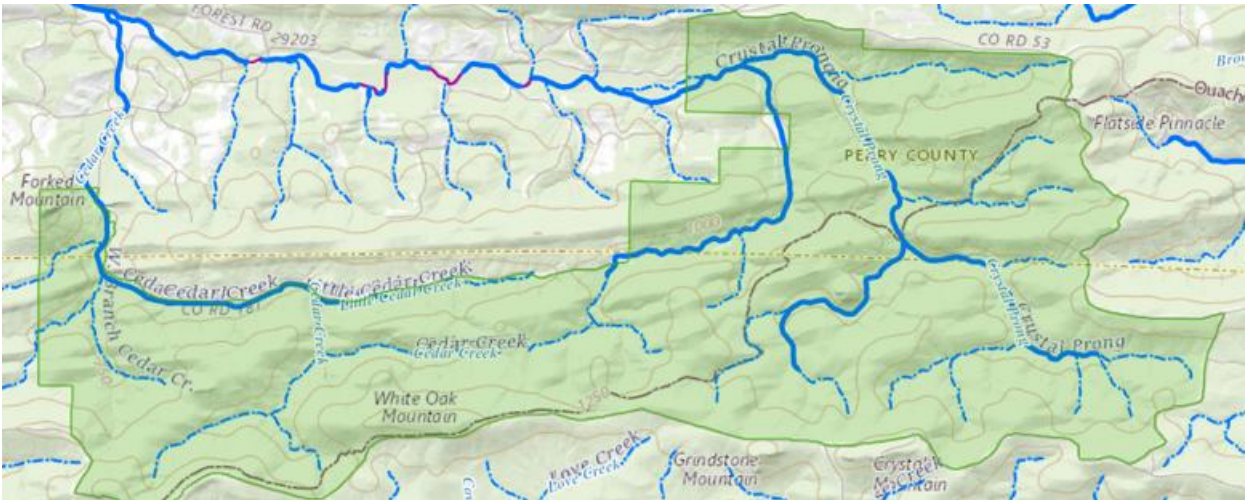
I had the opportunity in July 2022 to check out the claim about the trail, at least the lower 2.5 miles of it.



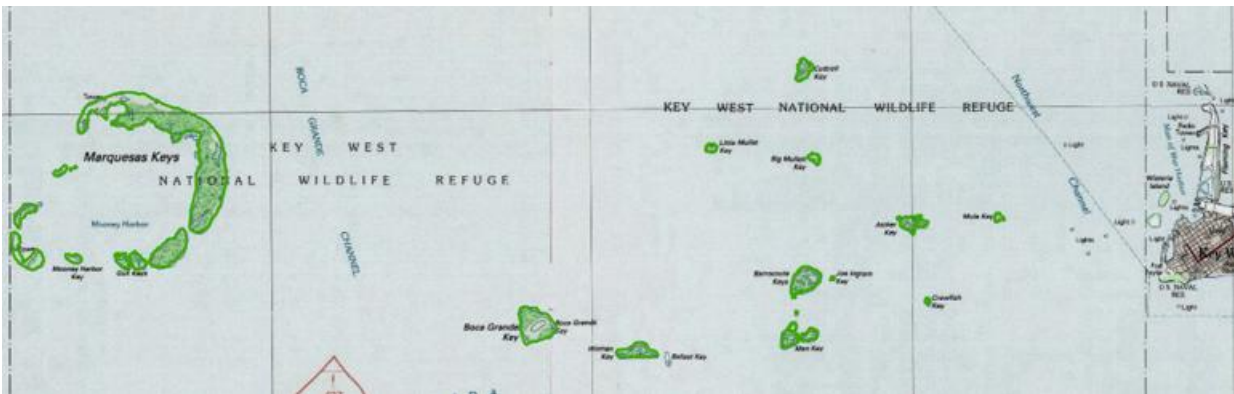
I was not disappointed. The scenery was spectacular. The previous night I sat through a powerful thunderstorm moments after I arrived at the campground (strong enough to trigger a landslide that wiped out a segment of trail about 0.75 miles in), so I expected the river to be blown out the next morning; it wasn't. I met a gentleman riding a horse and leading another one down the trail, he told me the river "has lots of rocks" so it stays pretty clear. He also told me if I fished an elk hair caddis "it usually works." It didn't for me until right at the very end as I was about to leave, I got my lone rainbow trout of the morning. (Number 53)

Flatside Wilderness (AR)

The major creeks in this wilderness are Cedar Creek and Crystal Prong of Cedar Creek. There is a record of creek chubs apparently from Crystal Prong (iNaturalist 2023). It's a good bet there are other assorted shiners, darters and sunfish as well.



Florida Keys Wilderness (FL)



Surrounded by salt water, fish are certainly reachable from tidal waters on the keys that make up the wilderness. Ponds on Boca Grande Key and other islands hold fish as evidenced by concentrations of feeding egrets and herons. (U.S. F&WS 2012 Florida Keys, p. 26)

These keys are halfway out the US1 highway and have reef fish and shallow water fish along the coasts, including rainbow parrotfish, gulf toadfish and French angelfish. (iNaturalist 2022)



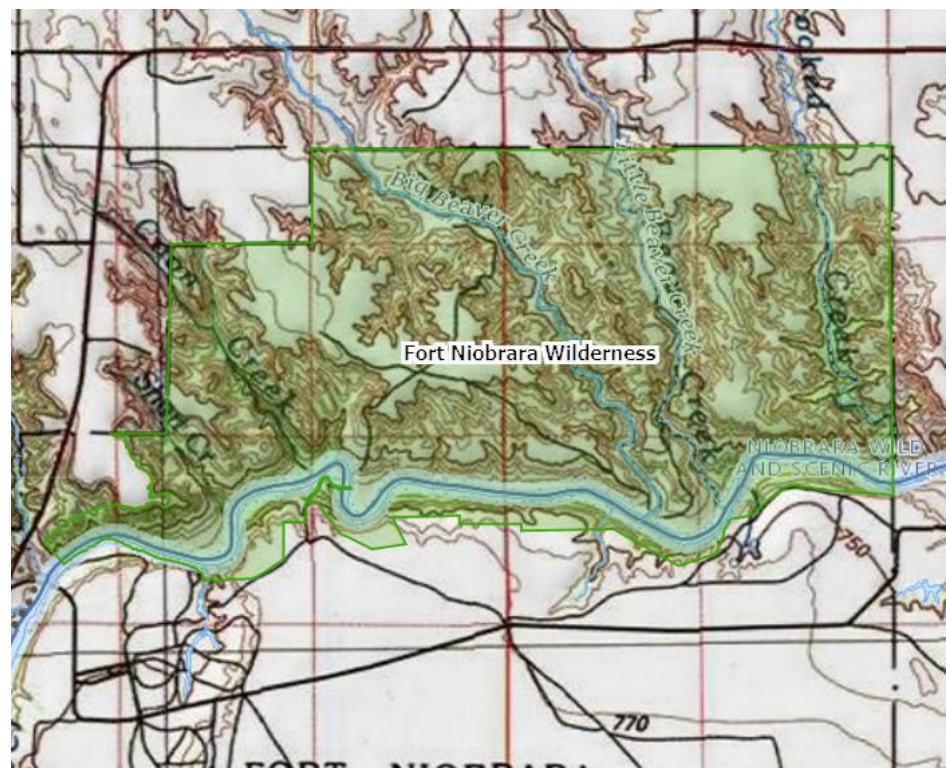
Forrester Islands Wilderness (AK)



The wilderness is a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean, there are plenty of fish in adjacent waters. Over a million seabirds nest on Forrester Island, there has to be a lot of nearshore fish to support that population. (USF&WS Alaska Maritime 1988 p. 56)

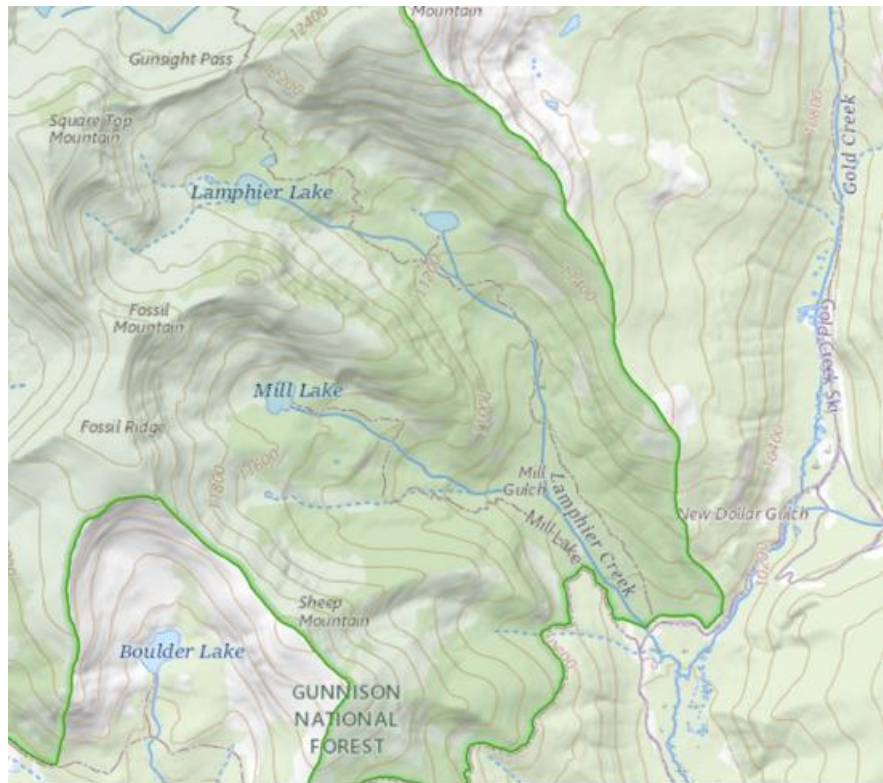
Fort Niobrara Wilderness (NE)

A rare Nebraska wilderness (there is only one other, and none in neighboring Kansas and Iowa). Numerous species of cyprinids, ictalurids, and percids are common here. Species of concern (Nebraska List) that may inhabit the Niobrara River and tributaries include northern redbellied dace, earl dace, finescale dace, and blacknose shiner. (U.S. F&WS Sep 1999 Fort Niobrara, p. 42)



Fossil Ridge Wilderness (CO)

In the southeastern part of the wilderness, native Colorado cutthroats inhabit Upper and Lower Lamphier Lakes, including some to 18 inches. Upper lake is about a 3-mile hike from the trailhead at Gold Creek campground. The lakes outlet into Gold Creek, which flows into Quartz Creek in the upper Gunnison watershed. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2020, p.23)



Fossil Springs Wilderness (AZ)



I caught roundtail chub on December 16, 2017. The springs are actually right on the edge of the wilderness boundary, the fish may have been outside the wilderness, but it was close.



Fossil Springs Wilderness (AZ)



I hiked up Fossil Creek inside the wilderness upstream from the springs, couldn't even find water until I got below the springs.
(Number 15)

Four Peaks Wilderness (AZ)

Large wilderness, largely devoid of water. The boundary along Apache Lake appears to be well above water, the boundary along the Salt River appears to be right up to the water. Cottonwood Creek along the west boundary shows as perennial, but aerials make me doubt this. Some streams internal to the wilderness show as intermittent, but may hold fish. (USGS 2021)



Four Peaks Wilderness (AZ)



Drainages that support habitat for both longfin dace and Gila topminnow include Cottonwood Creek along the west edge of the wilderness; Alder Creek flowing south from the four peaks; Rock Creek flowing north from the peaks at the extreme north end of the wilderness; and Picadilla Creek, tributary of Sycamore Creek flowing west across the extreme northwest corner of the wilderness. Picadilla Creek also supposedly supports desert sucker. (AZ F&G Habimap 2021)

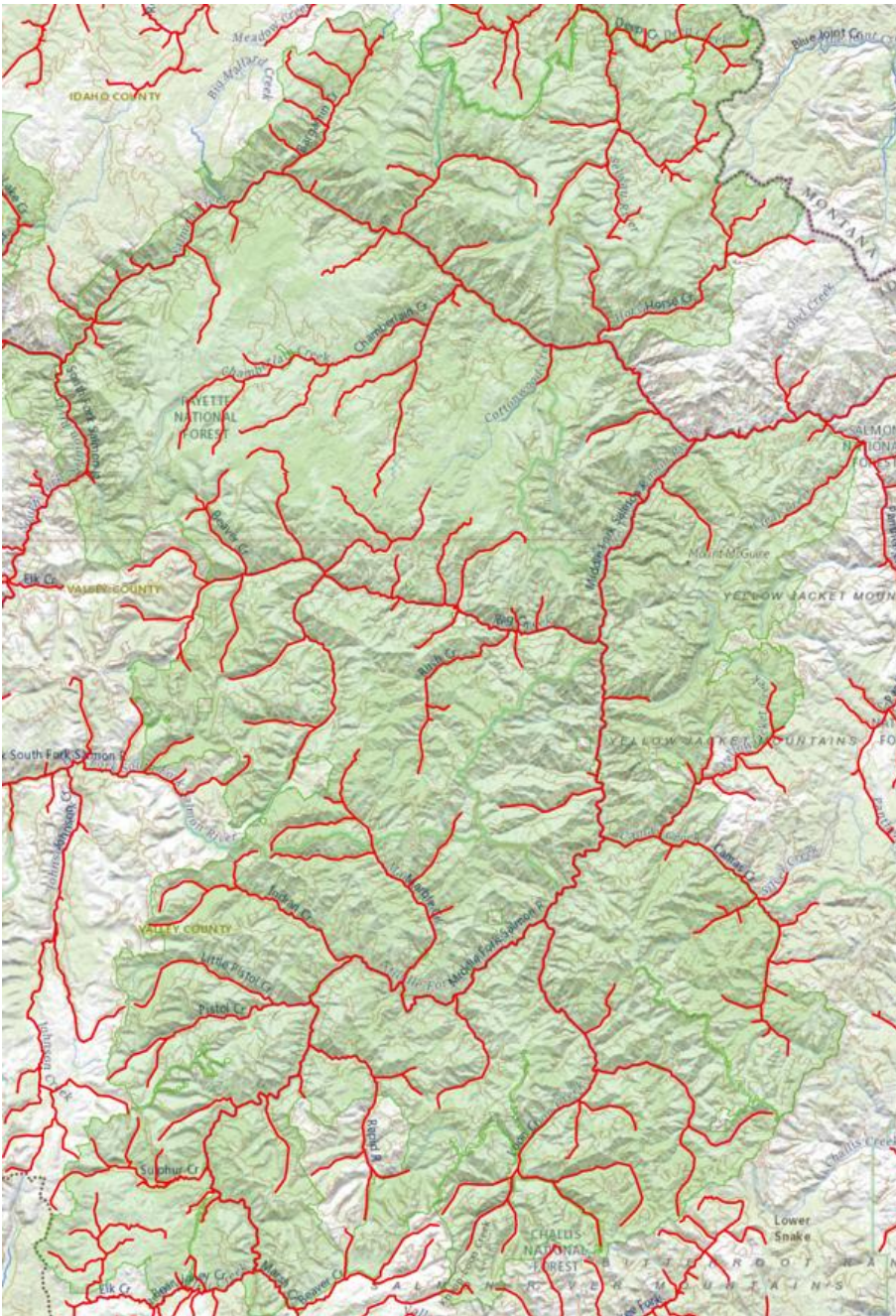
By the way, you might expect a label from the Four Peaks Brewery to be here, as these are the well-known peaks that give the brewery its name. But Four Peaks products are actually Budweiser, so not eligible...

Picadilla Creek had decent flows in June 2023, after a good winter for precipitation, so I had my hopes up, but all I found were tadpoles and bugs. Picture is a damselfly nymph, which swims like a fish...



Look closely, there is a “waterfall.”

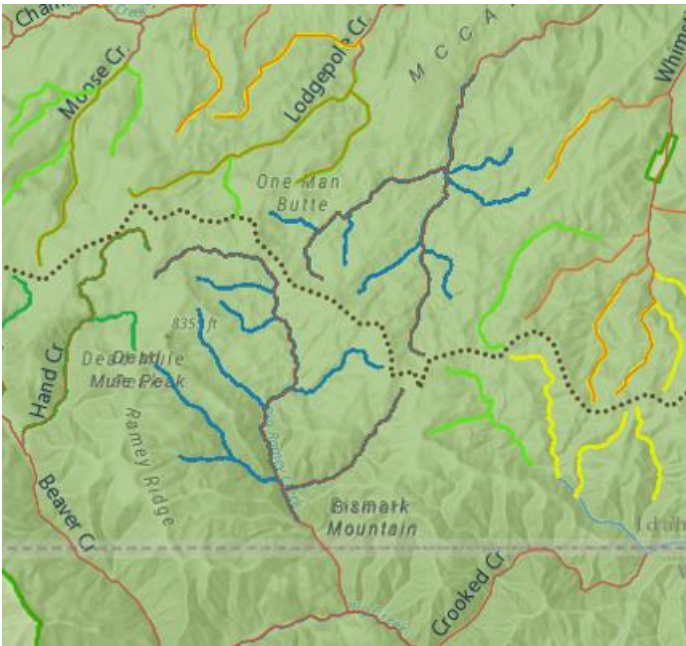
Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (ID)



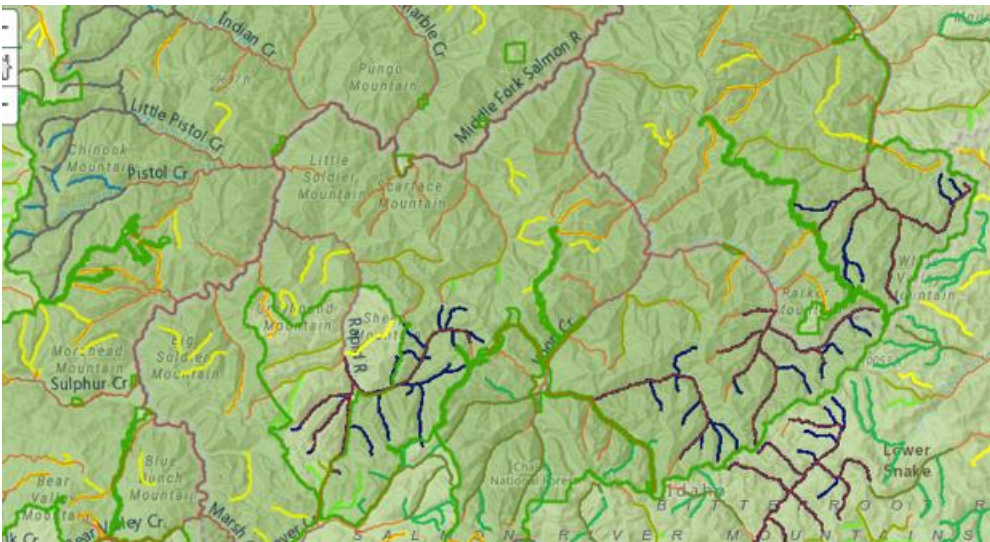
The map shows miles and miles of steelhead habitat. This includes most of the major streams in the wilderness, including north-flowing headwaters of the Selway River in the north; tributaries of the main stem Salmon River in the west and across the northern part of the wilderness; and the South and Middle Forks of the Salmon River and their tributaries. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

Not shown on the map is westslope cutthroat distribution; there is apparently not a stream in the wilderness that does not have westslope cutthroats. (Mayfield; also NWFF, Jan-Feb 2008, p. 37)

Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (ID)



Critical habitat for bull trout exists in much the same streams as for steelhead, although the bull trout network adds a few headwater streams. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in Big Ramey Creek and McCalla Creek systems in northwestern portion of the wilderness...



...and in Pistol Creek and Little Pistol Creek, Mayfield Creek system, Warm Springs Creek, and upper Camas Creek system in southern part of the wilderness. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

"One of the most robust populations of westslope cutthroat trout left in the entire world" is in the Middle Fork Salmon River, accessed through a float that passes through 25-mile long "Impassable Canyon." Dry fly fishing for cutts, including Camas Creek, Loon Creek and Big Creek tributaries. (NWFF Jan-Feb 2016, p. 52) Float from Indian Creek down for westslope cutts. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2008, p. 52)



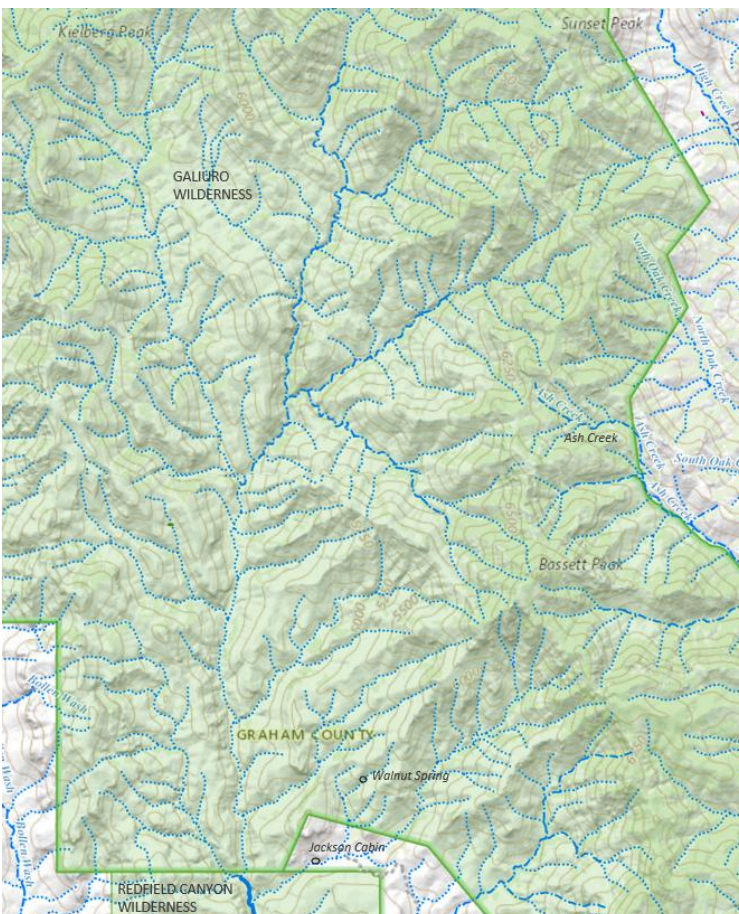
Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (ID)



Middle Fork Salmon tributary Loon Creek is loaded with westslope cutthroats. Access by road is through a 25-mile cherry-stem from the direction of Yankee Fork, parallel to Mayfield Creek which wanders in and out of the wilderness. There are bull trout in addition to the cutts. Good trail, broad creek, easy wading. (NWFF Jul-Aug 2016, p. 48)



Galiuro Wilderness (AZ)



Big wilderness, not much water. USGS NWIS shows no perennial surface water in Redfield Canyon, but it shows the stream turning perennial just outside the Galiuro Wilderness (within the Redfield Canyon Wilderness, where it is home to multiple native fishes). (USGS 2021)

There are a couple of short streams flowing east off the ridge, one flowing off Sunset Peak and the other, Ash Creek, flowing off Bassett Peak. Both seem to hold longfin dace, the fish in Arizona most likely to be found when nothing else is there. (AZ F&G Habimap 2022).

The 2010 status review of the desert pupfish reports an attempted establishment of a population in Walnut Spring, north of Jackson Cabin in the southern part of the wilderness, although success of the effort has not been confirmed. (USF&WS Arizona Ecological Services 2010)

Galiuro Wilderness (AZ)

I hiked into Galiuro from Redfield Canyon in Aug 2021, there was 1-2 cfs flow, continuous connected pools, and fairly cool temperatures; it sure looked like base flow in a perennial stream, and it was late summer when most intermittent streams dry up. In other words, it looked perfect for fish, but I found none.

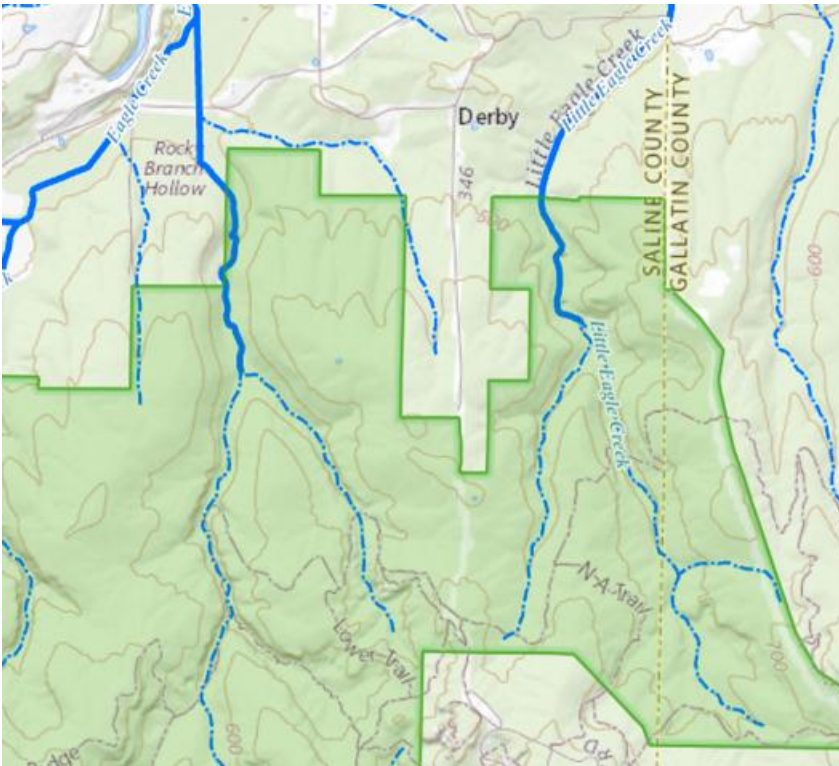


Garden Mountain Wilderness (VA)



Like neighboring Hunting Camp Creek Wilderness, this wilderness is basically a valley between two parallel ridges. The valley holds Lick Creek, a westward flowing part of the trellis-patterned upper Holston River drainage holding a redundant population of brook trout. (TU 2019, Southern Appalachian brook trout) The straight green lines mean greater than 50% probability of brook trout presence (DeWeber and Wagner, 2014)

Garden of the Gods Wilderness (IL)

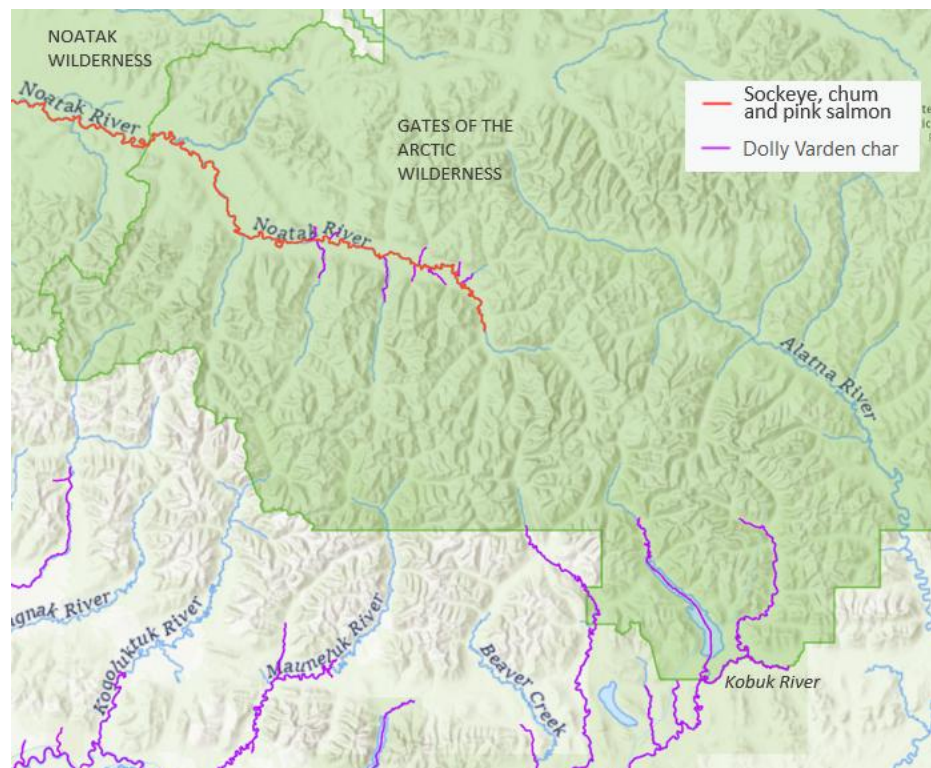


Green sunfish have been caught in Little Eagle Creek. (iNaturalist 2022)

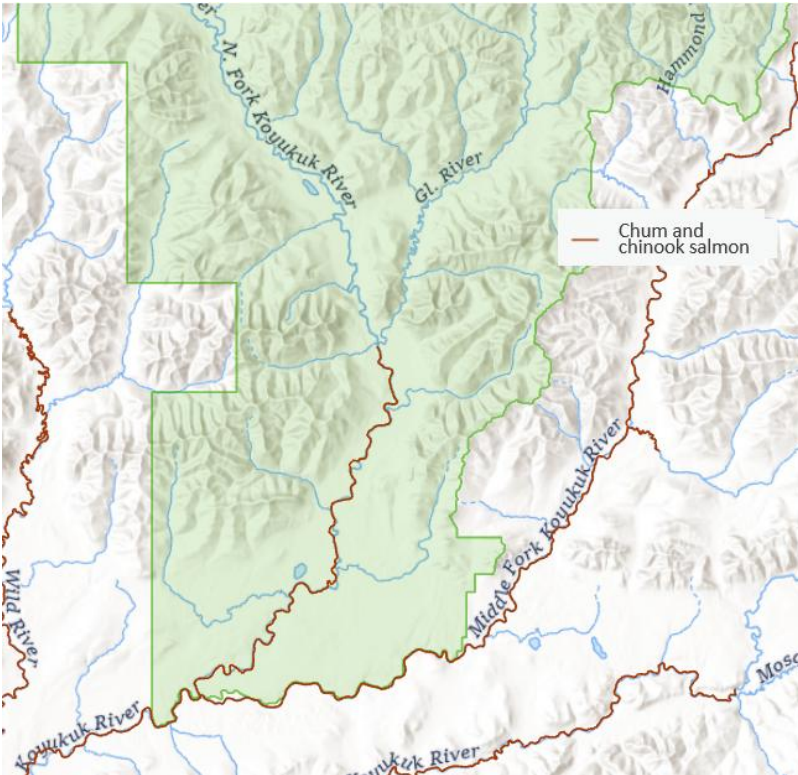


Gates of the Arctic Wilderness (AK)

In the western part of the wilderness the Noatak River holds Dolly Varden char and sockeye, pink and chum salmon; the char make it up some south flowing Kobuk River tributaries in the southern part of the wilderness as well. (ADFG 2023)



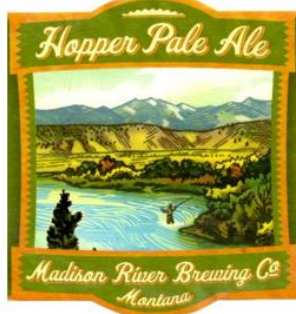
Gates of the Arctic Wilderness (AK)



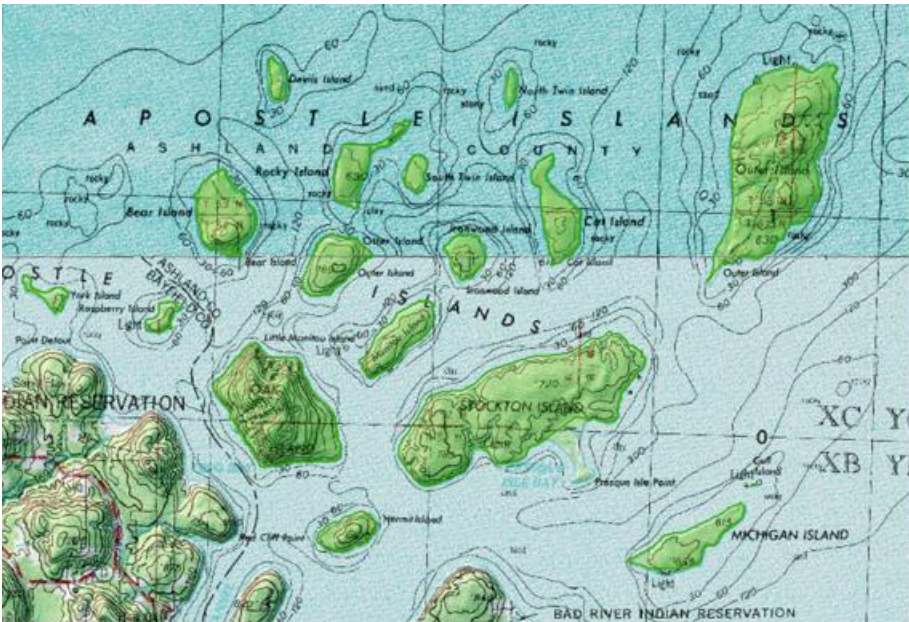
In the southeastern end of the wilderness chum and chinook salmon make it up Koyukuk River tributaries. (ADFG 2023)

Gates of the Mountains Wilderness (MT)

Westslope cutthroats occupy Porcupine Creek in the far eastern corner of the wilderness. (Mayfield) Light-brown lines show historical distribution.



Gaylord Nelson Wilderness (WI)

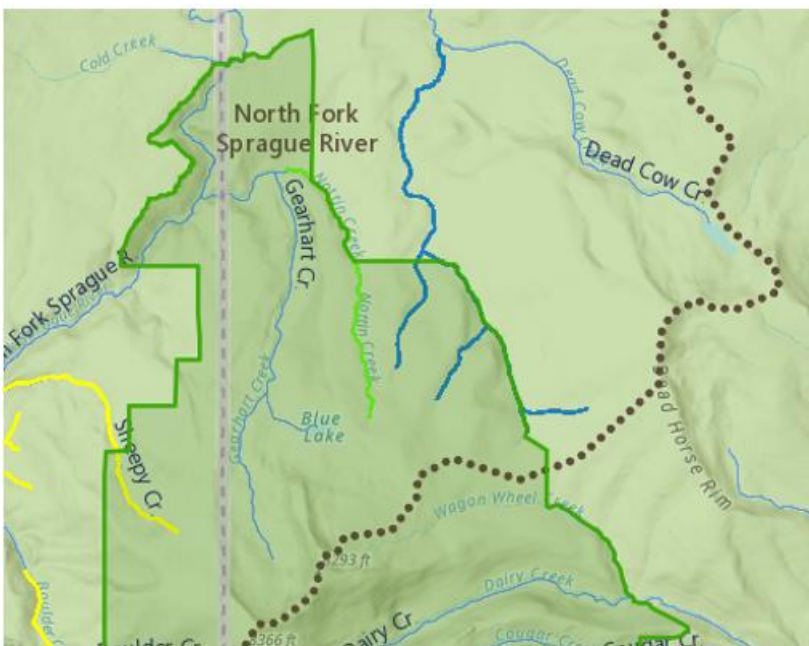


The Apostle Islands are, well, islands- there has to be lots of fish that can be caught from the shore. There is a record of longnose sucker on the north coast of Outer Island. (iNaturalist 2022)



There are multiple records of lake whitefish and a record of round whitefish alongside some of the islands on the west side of the archipelago. (North American Native Fishes 2022)

Gearhart Mountain Wilderness (OR)



The Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in North Fork Sprague River (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

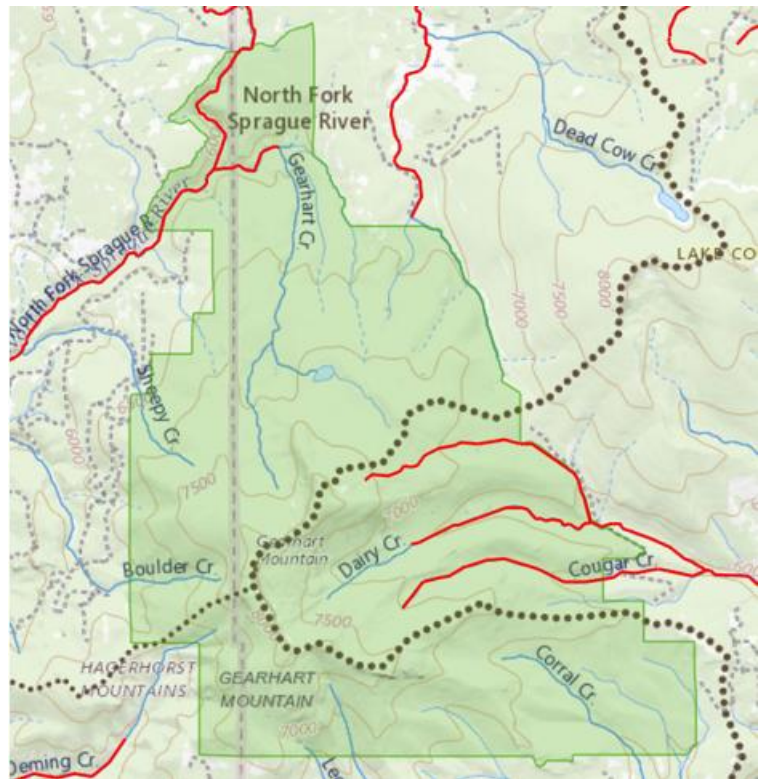


Bull trout occupy North Fork Sprague River. Conservation population in main stream, present in tributaries. (USF&WS Klamath RU Bull Trout 2015)

Gearhart Mountain Wilderness (OR)

A moderate population of redband trout occurs in North Fork Sprague River in northern part of the wilderness, and in Wagon Wheel Creek and Dairy Creek, with lower density population in Cougar Creek, flowing east into the Chewaucan River drainage. (US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station)

There are records of brook trout in Corral Creek just outside the southeastern corner of the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2023)



The Bootleg fire in summer 2021 burned almost all of the wilderness. When I hiked in to Blue Lake in Aug 2025 it still looked very desolate. The lake, though, was beautiful, and so was this 13-inch redband. (Number 92) I would have gotten a better picture but he didn't want to pose, and I didn't want to make him. Of course, I also wanted to keep him wet...

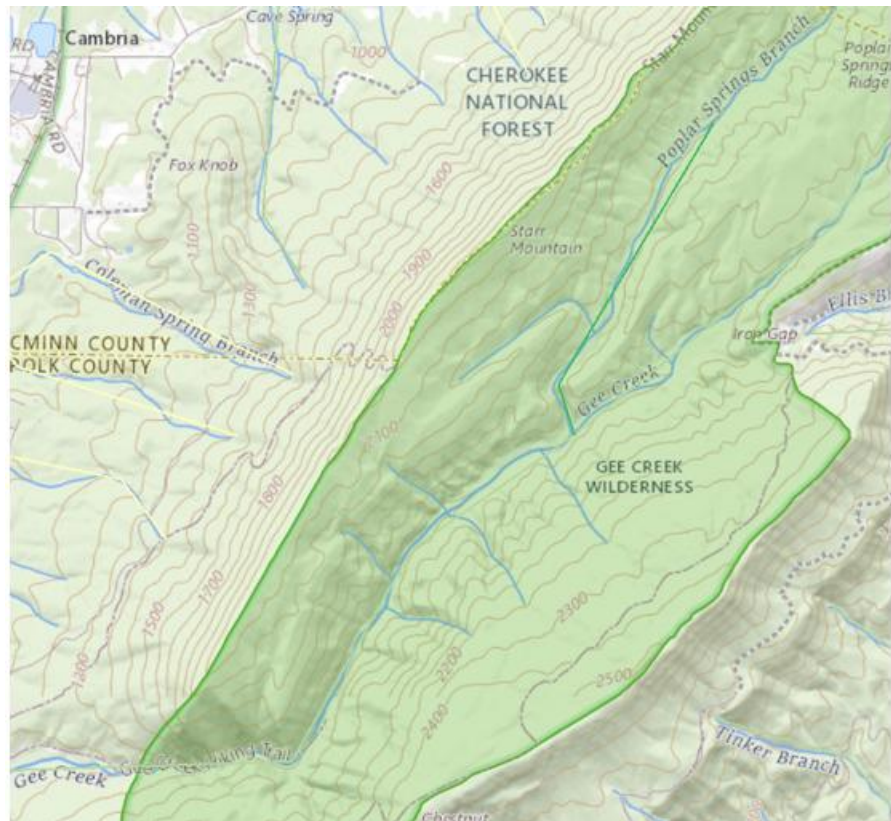


Gee Creek Wilderness (TN)

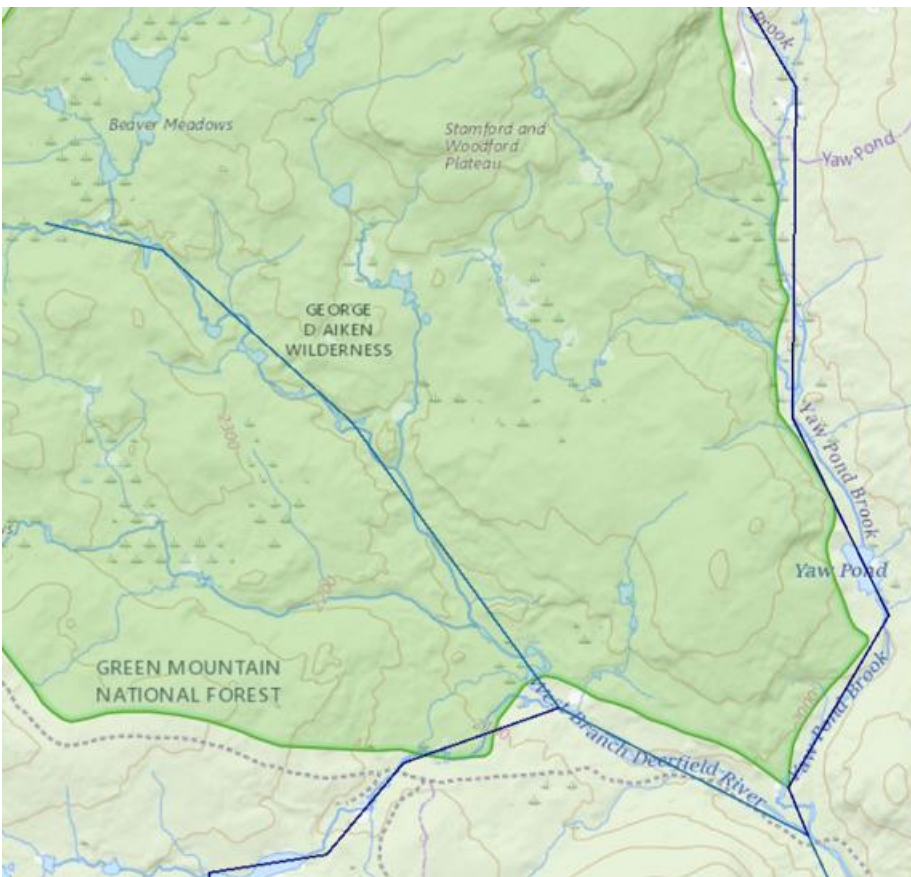
Record of western blacknosed dace in Gee Creek just upstream from where the creek leaves the wilderness. (iNaturalist 2022)



The pale green lines show a 25 to 50% probability of finding brook trout in the lowest reaches of Gee Creek in the wilderness, with good trail access. The dark green lines show a 50 to 70% probability farther up in the Poplar Springs Branch. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)



George D. Aiken Wilderness (VT)

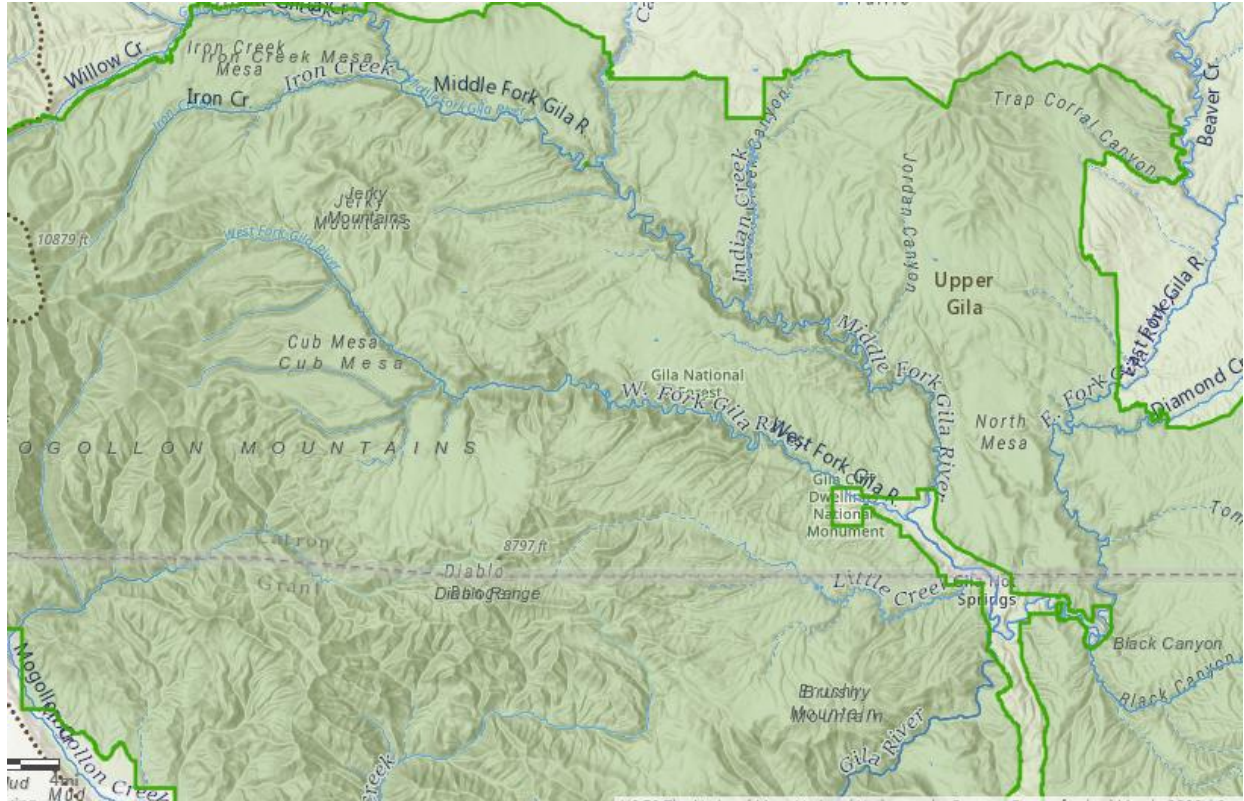


West Branch Deerfield River holds a persistent population of brook trout (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range). The dark blue lines show a 90% probability of the presence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Gila Wilderness (NM)

Gila trout occupy the East Fork Gila River and Black Canyon tributary; Middle Fork Gila and tributaries Gilita Creek and Iron Creek; West Fork Gila; and main stem tributaries Sapillo Creek and Mogollon Creek. (SWFF Jan-Feb 2010)

Middle Fork tributary Willow Creek also holds Gila trout. (SWFF May-Jun 2020, p. 26)



Lower sections of Middle Fork Gila River, near the cliff dwellings and above the hot springs, hold brown trout, with Gila trout and occasional rainbows as you move upstream. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2011 p. 7)

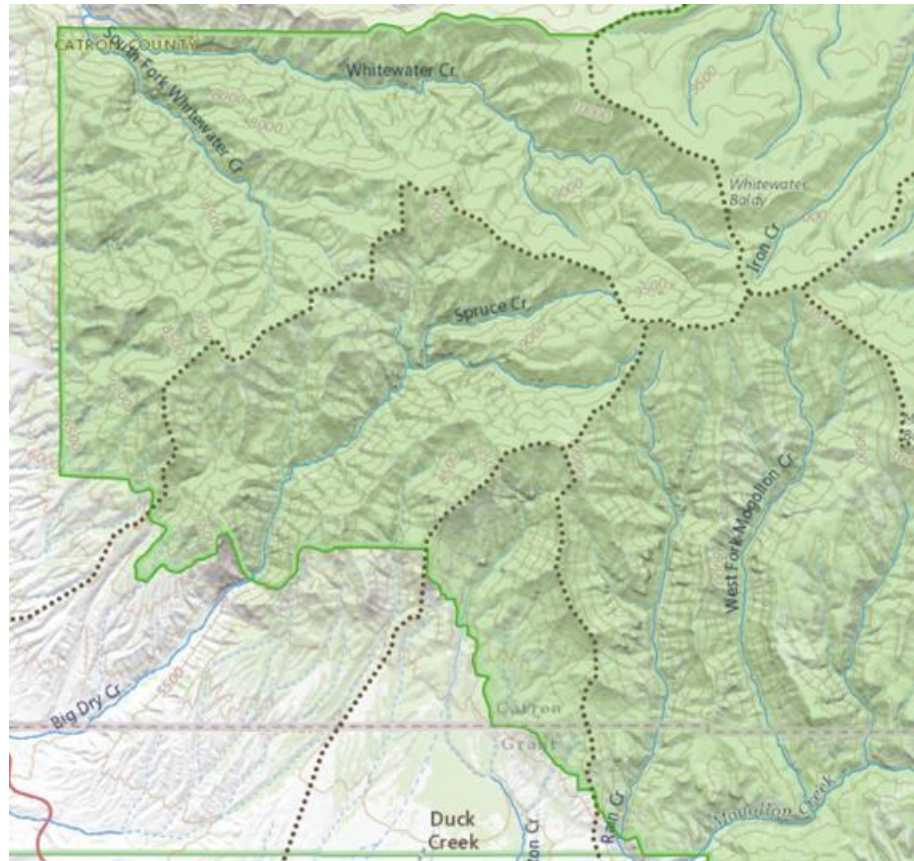
I hiked up the Middle Fork Gila River from the area of the cliff dwellings in late July 2021. I probably shouldn't have bothered as there were heavy (2 to 3 inches) monsoon rains for the three days before I went, and a stream that is normally at 5 to 10 cfs was flowing at 45+ cfs. Struck out on trout in the high, discolored water, but did manage to find some Poeciliidae in some slow side waters. (Number 44)



Gila Wilderness (NM)

Whitewater Creek flows west into Rio San Francisco. Much of the canyon burned in 2012. Following the fire NM Game & Fish eradicated non-natives and in 2018 restocked Gila trout. (SWFF May-June 2019, p.21)

Mogollon Creek also flows west out of the wilderness before it turns south to join Gila River. The creek holds Gila trout. (SWFF May-Jun 2019, p. 42)



Glacier Bay Wilderness (AK)



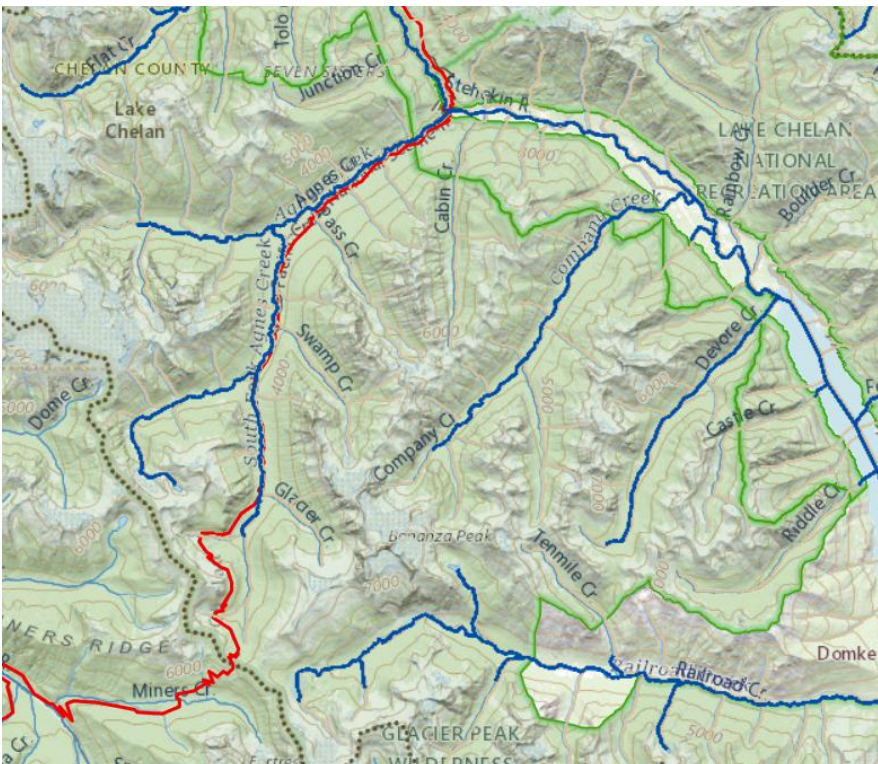
The most widespread gamefish in the wilderness appears to be sockeye salmon; chum salmon are also present in many of the same streams. (ADFG 2023)

Glacier Bay Wilderness (AK)



Cutthroat trout are present in Echo Creek on the Pacific Coast. Dolly Varden occur in some nearby streams. (ADF&G CUTTHROAT 2016; ADFG 2023)

Glacier Peak Wilderness (WA)



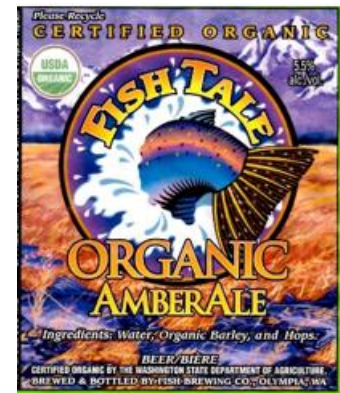
Westslope cutthroat occupy eastward flowing tributaries of Stehekin River, including Railroad Creek, Devore Creek, Company Creek, Flat Creek and Agnes Creek. (Mayfield) On the map, Glacier Wilderness is west of Stephen Mather Wilderness, which straddles the north end of Lake Chelan and the Stehekin River. Red line is the Pacific Crest Trail.

Glacier Peak Wilderness (WA)

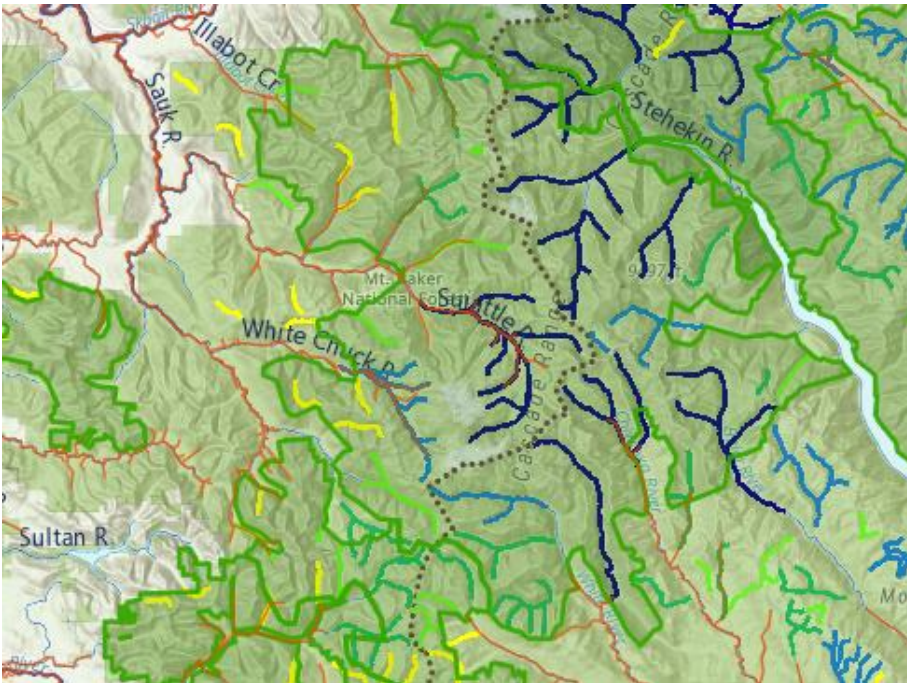


Critical habitat for steelhead exists in the Chiwawa River and a small portion of the Napeequa River, southeastward flowing tributaries of the Wenatchee River, in the southeastern portion of the wilderness . (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

There is also critical habitat for chinook salmon in lower portions of the Chiwawa River and in a small portion of Panther Creek. Chinook critical habitat also exists in the lowest segments of the Suiattle River and tributaries in the western part of the wilderness (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

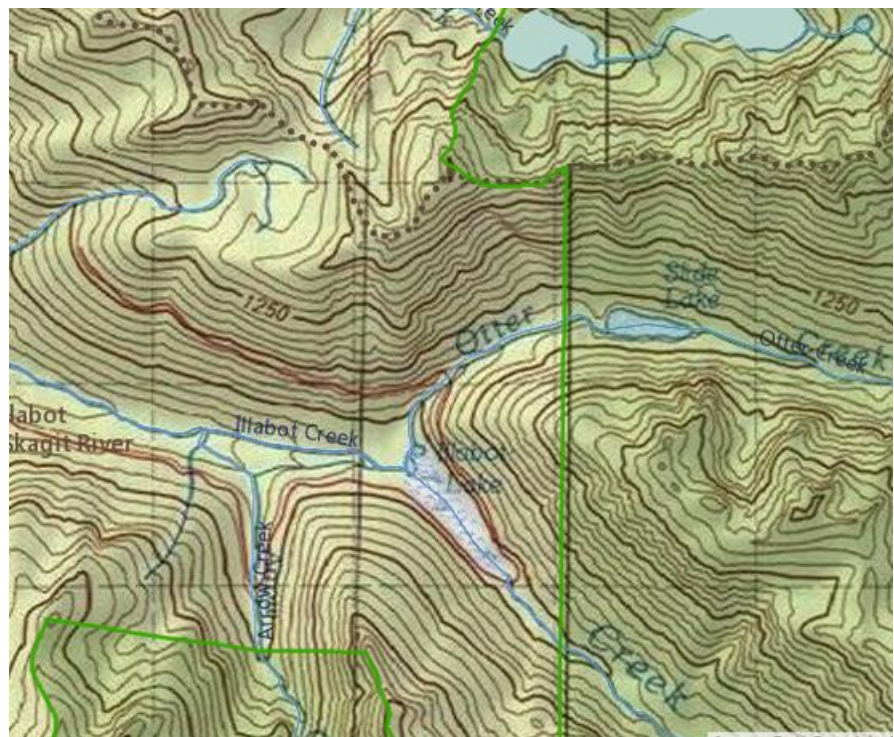


Glacier Peak Wilderness (WA)

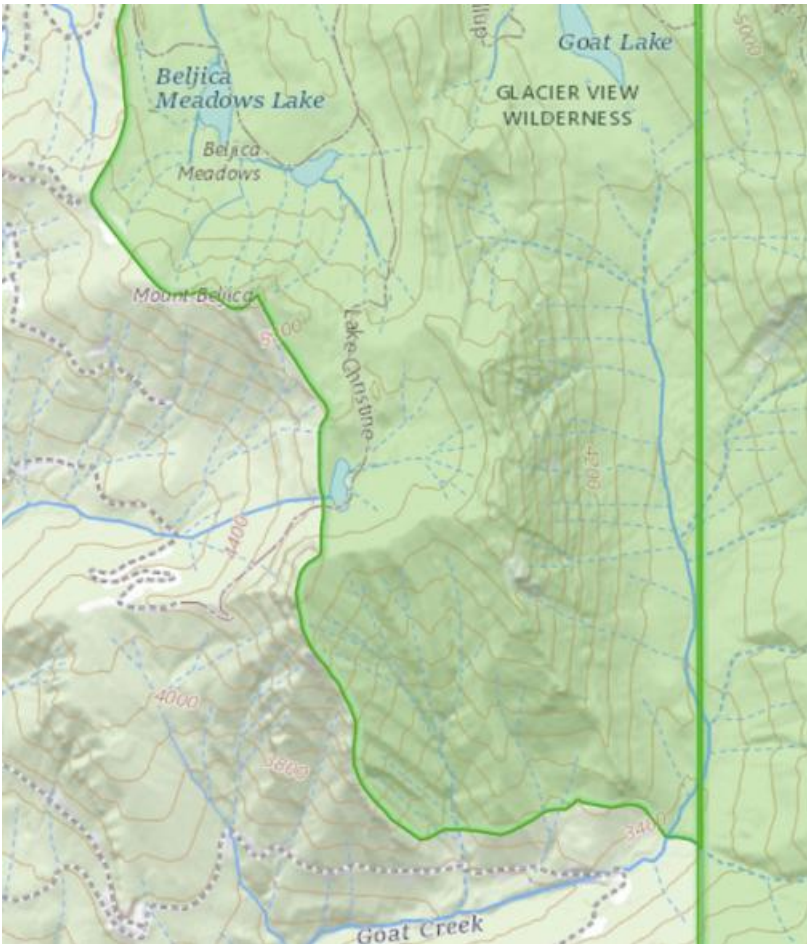


Critical habitat for bull trout (red lines) exists in the Suiattle and Whitechuck Rivers in the west, Wenatchee River in the southeast, and the Cascade River in the north. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in Suiattle River system and upper Wenatchee River system, as well as upper Entiat River system in southeastern portion of the wilderness; and Company Creek, Agnes Creek and Flat Creek in the northeastern area. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Coastal cutthroats occupy Slide Lake, a 1.3 mile hike from the road, on Otter Creek, which feeds into Illabot Creek and Skagit River. It's possible to drag a float tube in. (NWFF Sep-Oct 2019, p. 20) Surprisingly few of the west-flowing streams seem to hold coastal cutts, although in addition to Otter Creek in the northwestern corner of the wilderness they seem to inhabit the Suiattle River further south (StreamNet 2023)

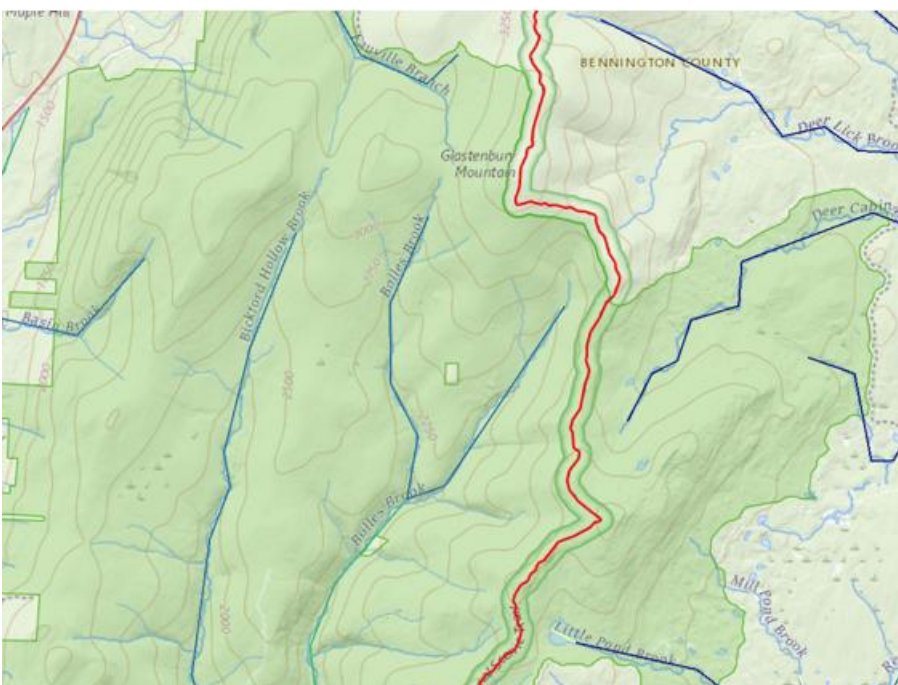


Glacier View Wilderness (WA)



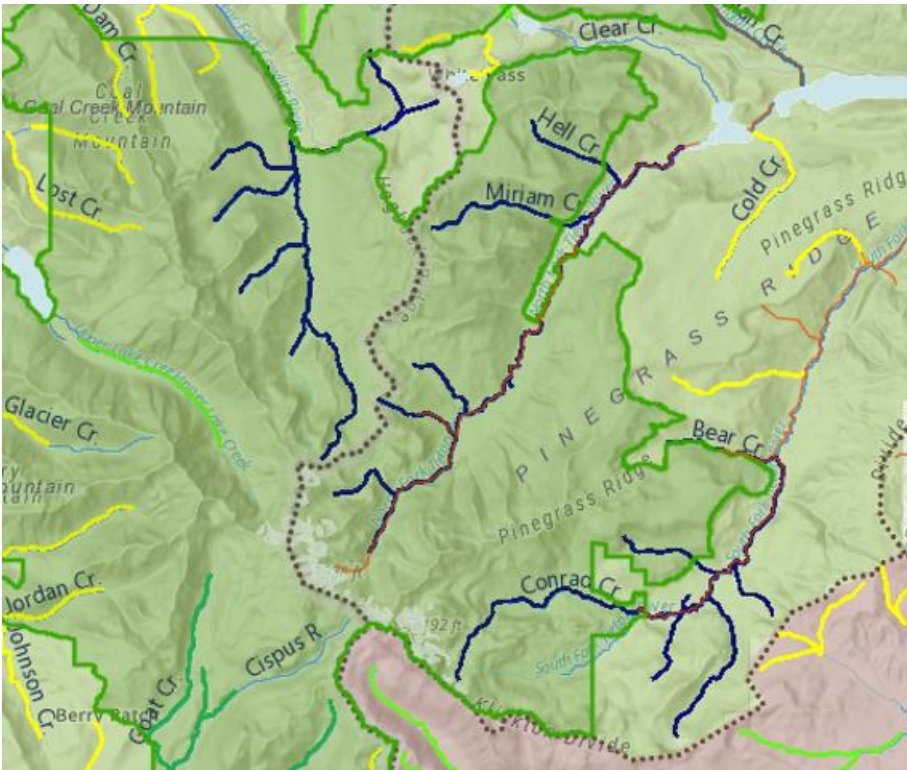
There is a record of brook trout at Goat Lake, in the headwaters of Goat Creek, which flows south to the Nisqually River. (iNaturalist 2022) Native salmonids appear to be extremely sparse here. When I lived in the neighborhood in the early 80's, the limited information I had access to at the time told me the Mount Rainier area wasn't where you went to find a lot of fish.

Glastonbury Wilderness (VT)



Bickford Hollow Brook and Bolles Brook, tributaries of Walloomsac Brook, hold a persistent population of brook trout as well as brown trout. The Appalachian Trail runs along a portion of Bolles Brook. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) The blue lines on the map show that most of the stream reaches west of the AT (shown in red) have a 70 to 90% probability of brook trout presence, while streams flowing east in the Deerfield River drainage have a 90% probability. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

Goat Rocks Wilderness (WA)



There is critical habitat for bull trout in the South Fork and North Fork of Tieton River. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in these streams and their tributaries, as well as upper Clear Fork Cowlitz River. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

Westslope cutthroats reside in North Fork Tieton, South Fork Tieton and Conrad Creek. (Mayfield) Light brown segments are historic habitat. The Tieton is an east-flowing Naches-Yakima River tributary.



Golden Trout Wilderness (CA)

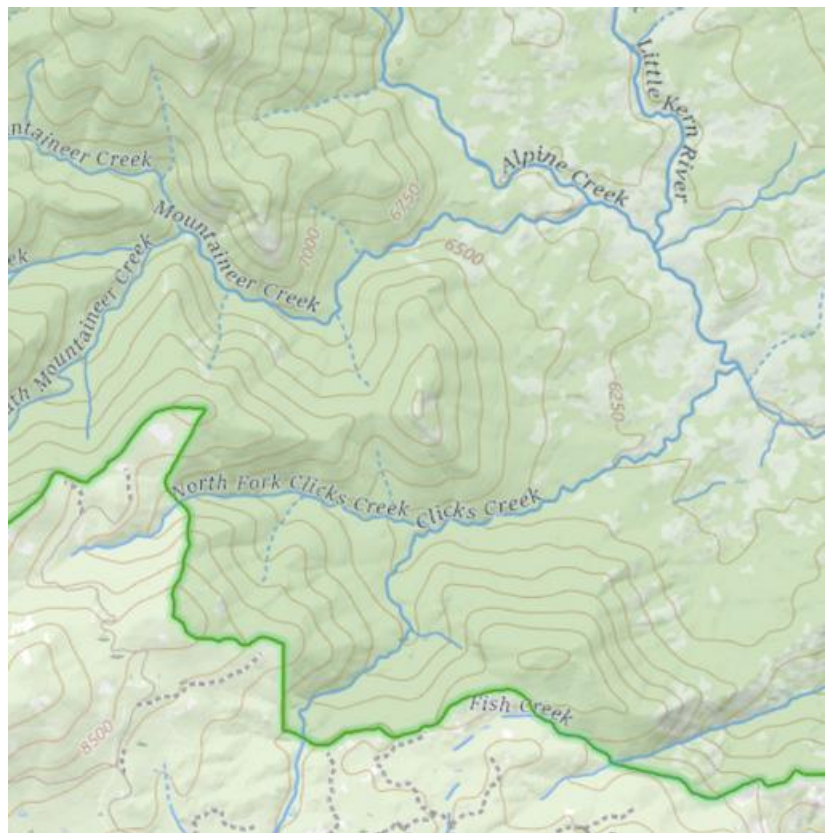


In September 2011 Stella and I 2011 hiked over Cottonwood Pass on the Pacific Crest into Golden Trout Creek basin and camped two nights in Big Whitney Meadow. Caught my first California golden trout, then over 70 more in one day (honestly, I lost track). Much of this trip is very similar to the description in a FF article. (Feb 2008, p 30; number 7)

Just to the southeast the South Fork Kern River offers very similar fishing in the Tinnel Meadow and Ramshaw Meadows stretches. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2014, p.24)

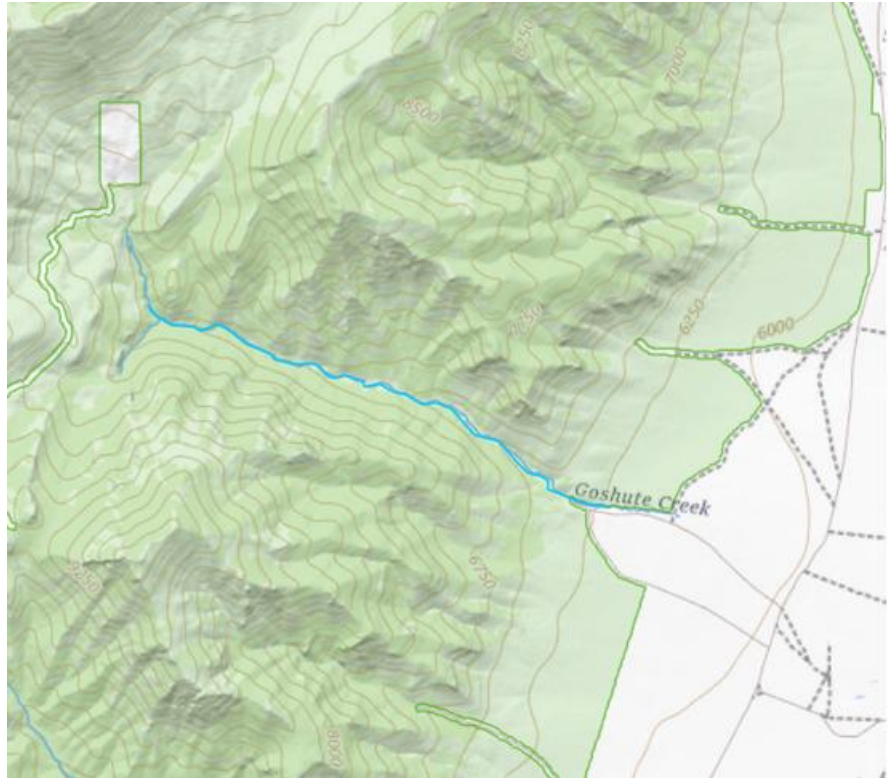
In the southwestern corner of the wilderness Clicks Creek, tributary of the Little Kern River, has Little Kern golden trout. Access is from the upstream end down into the wilderness, with parallel trails along the length. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2015, p. 38)

The Kern River throughout the wilderness holds Kern River rainbow trout. (SWFF Mar-Apr 2016, p. 54)



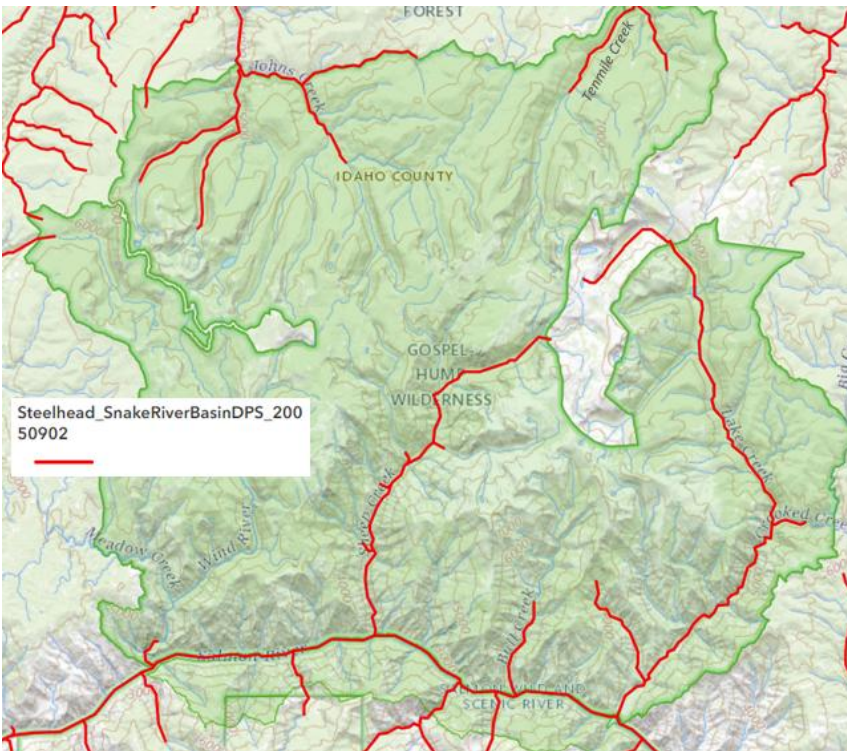
Goshute Canyon Wilderness (NV)

Goshute Creek is accessible from the bottom of the canyon or by way of a cherry stem from Goshute Basin at the top of the canyon. The creek holds cutthroat trout. (Nevada DOW 2017).



I hiked in from the bottom on a snowy day in October 2022. The creek had nice flow and looked great, I'm sure there's fish there, but I didn't stay too long as the snow was falling harder and I wanted to make sure I could get out without having to wait for spring...

Gospel Hump Wilderness (ID)

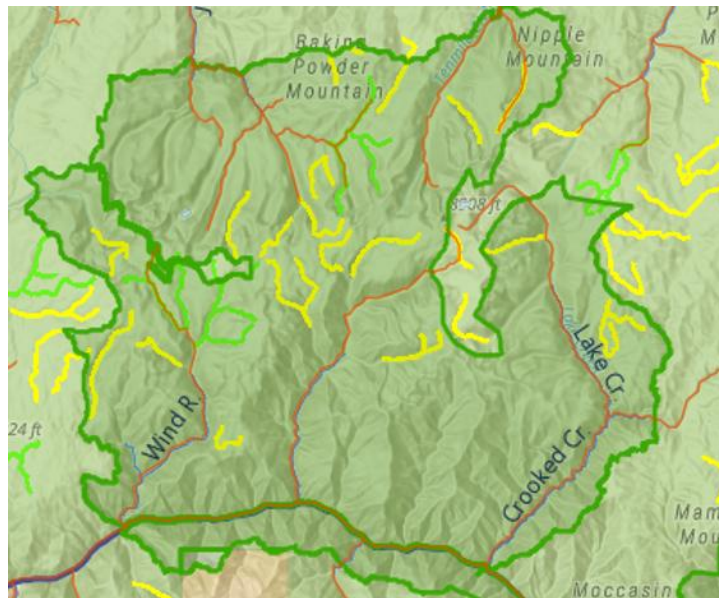


There is critical habitat for steelhead in Johns Creek and Tenmile Creek, tributaries of South Fork Clearwater River in the north; and in Sheep Creek and Crooked Creek, tributaries of the Salmon River in the southern part of the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)



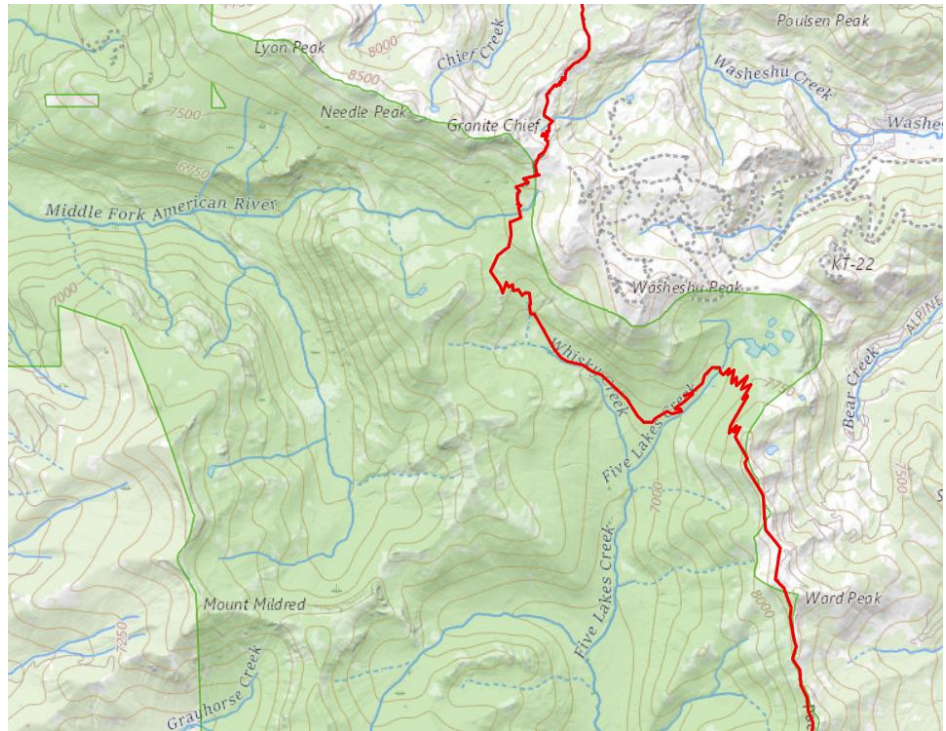
There is critical habitat for bull trout (map) in the same streams as steelhead, plus Wind River in southwestern portion of the wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

The entire wilderness is pretty well saturated with westslope cutthroats. (Mayfield)



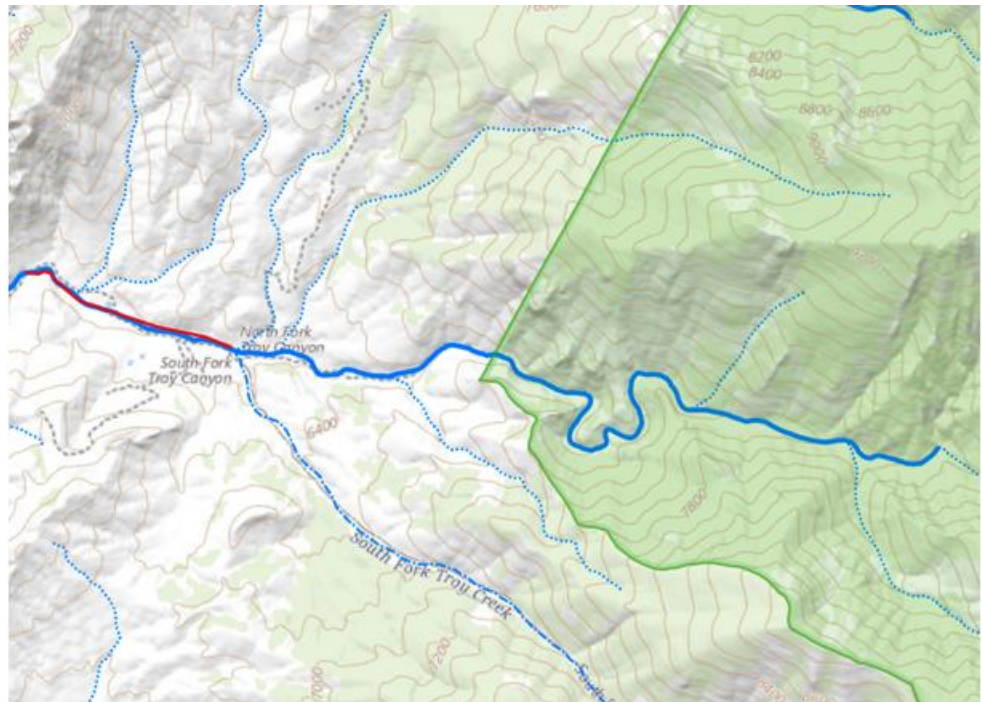
Granite Chief Wilderness (CA)

Accessible from highway 89 coming from the west side of Lake Tahoe, Five Lakes is at the upper end of the Five Lakes Creek watershed, east of the PCT (red line on map). The lakes hold rainbows in the largest lake and brookies in the others. Middle Fork American River has rainbows, including the Picayune Valley, a "mini-Yosemite." Five Lakes Creek and Whiskey Creek have brookies. (Schalla 2021)

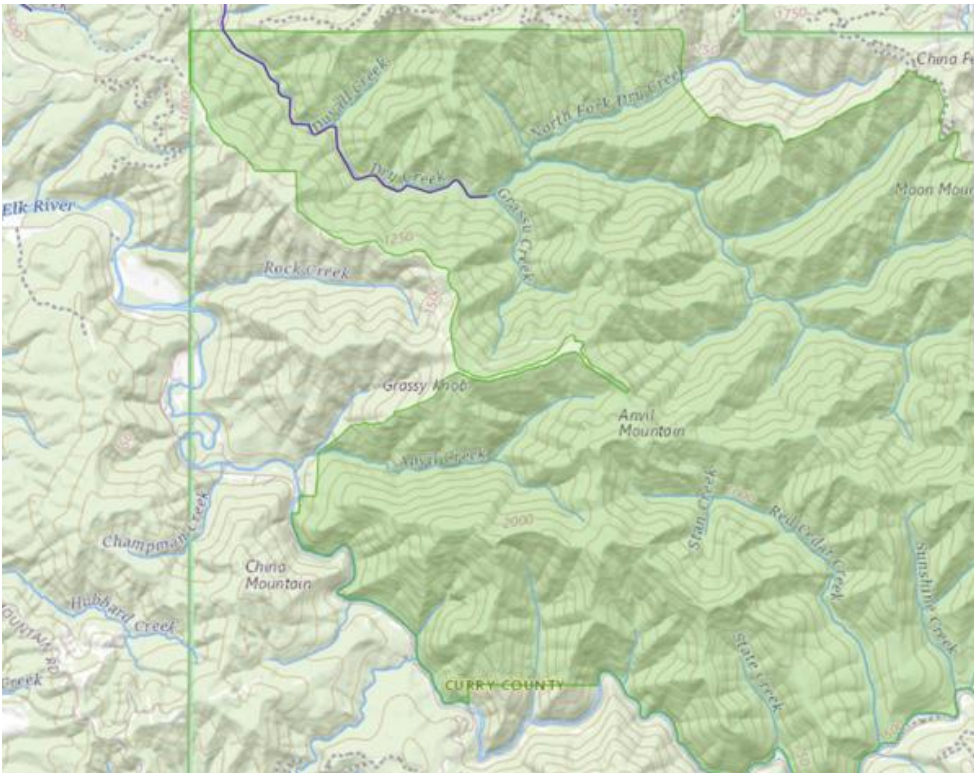


Grant Range Wilderness (NV)

NDOW says there are brook trout in Troy Canyon downstream from the wilderness (red line on map, NDOW 2017). Perennial water continues up into the wilderness in North Fork Troy Canyon (USGS 2021). If these brookies are like the brookies I know, some should find their way up into the wilderness.



Grassy Knob Wilderness (OR)



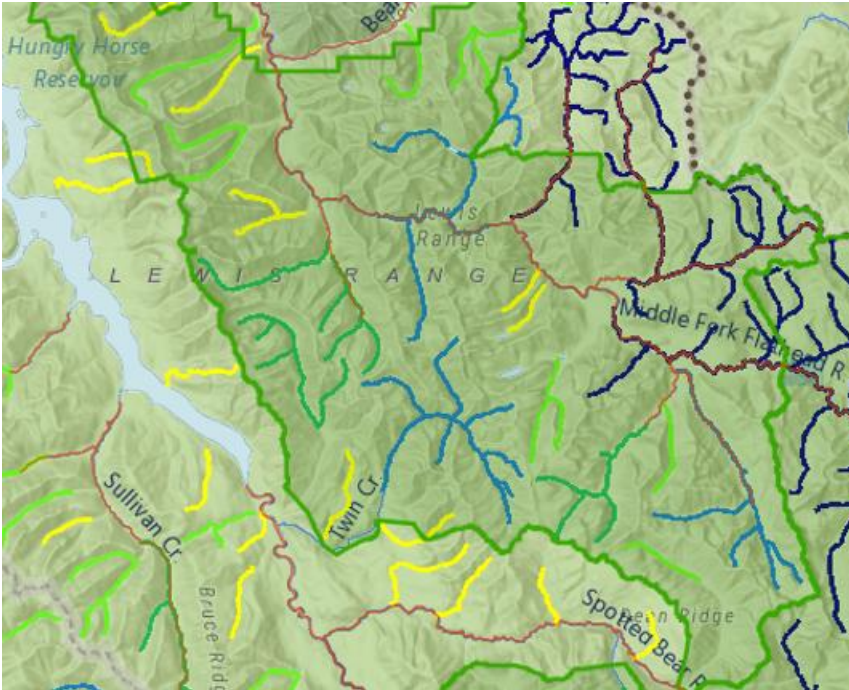
There is critical habitat for coho salmon in Dry Creek, tributary to Sixes River in northwestern corner of wilderness. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016)

The Elk River system in the southern portion of the wilderness has a large run of both wild and hatchery fall chinook salmon, a wild winter steelhead run, a small remnant coho salmon run, and coastal cutthroat trout. (FF Feb-Mar 2013, p. 13)

Coastal cutthroats also run far up Dry Creek, Anvil Creek and Red Cedar Creek. (StreamNet) In August 2026 I had a chance to find them in Anvil Creek, hiking upstream from the fish hatchery, I didn't find the cutts, but did find plenty of hungry rainbows. (Number 118)



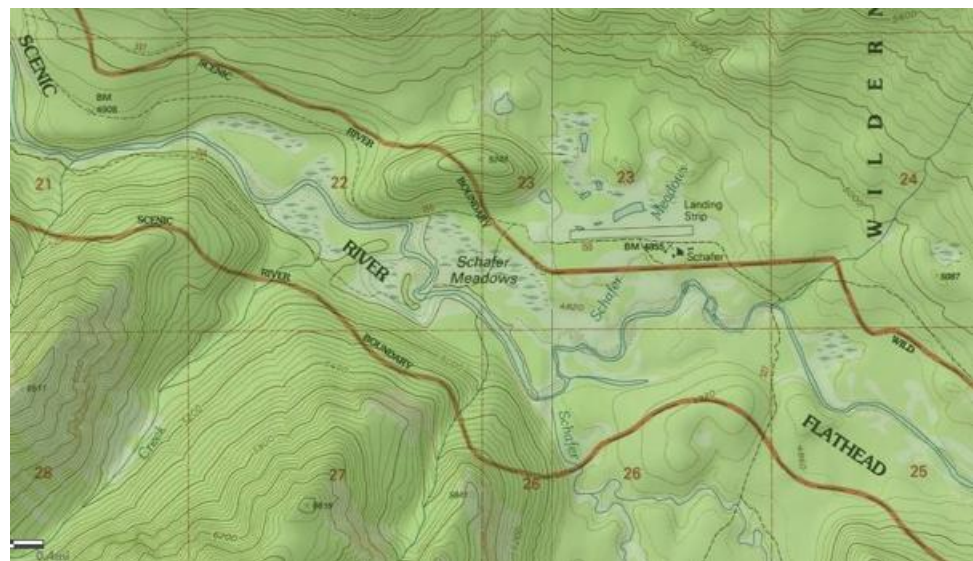
Great Bear Wilderness (MT)



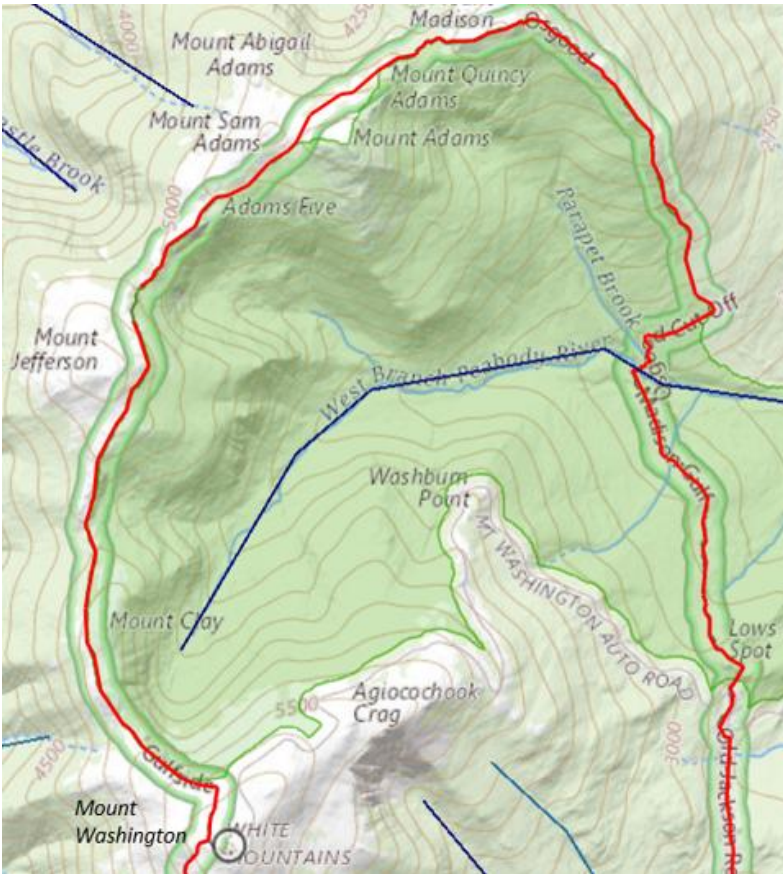
There is critical habitat for bull trout in the Middle Fork Flathead River and tributaries, including Long Creek, Granite Creek, the Morrison and Lodgepole Creek system, and the Dolly Varden (probably misnamed!) Creek and Schafer Creek system. (ESRI, USF&WS 2016) Climate Shield predictive model shows high probability of bull trout in the upper portion of the Middle Fork Flathead and Cy Creek, Granite Creek, the Morrison and Lodgepole Creek system, Dolly Varden Creek and the Twin Creek system in the upper headwaters of the South Fork Flathead River. (USDA Climate Shield 2020)

This wilderness is dominated by the Middle Fork Flathead River, which together with pretty much every one of its tributaries is full of westslope cutthroats. The northwestern reach of the wilderness also include several headwater tributaries of the South Fork Flathead, flowing into Hungry Horse Reservoir, which also hold populations of westslope cutts. (Mayfield)

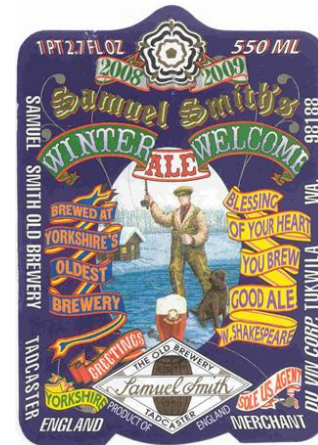
Float trips fly in to Schafer Meadows just west of boundary with Bob Marshall Wilderness and float the Middle Fork Flathead fishing for westslope cutthroats. (NWFF May-Jun 2016, p. 43)



Great Gulf Wilderness (NH)



Encircled and crossed by the Appalachian Trail (red line on map) and adjacent to Mount Washington, home of the famous 231-mph wind gust, this wilderness holds a persistent population of brook trout throughout the Peabody River system within the wilderness. Rainbows may be present as well. (TU 2019, Brook Trout eastern range) Dark blue line indicates greater than 90% probability of presence of brook trout. (DeWeber and Wagner 2014)

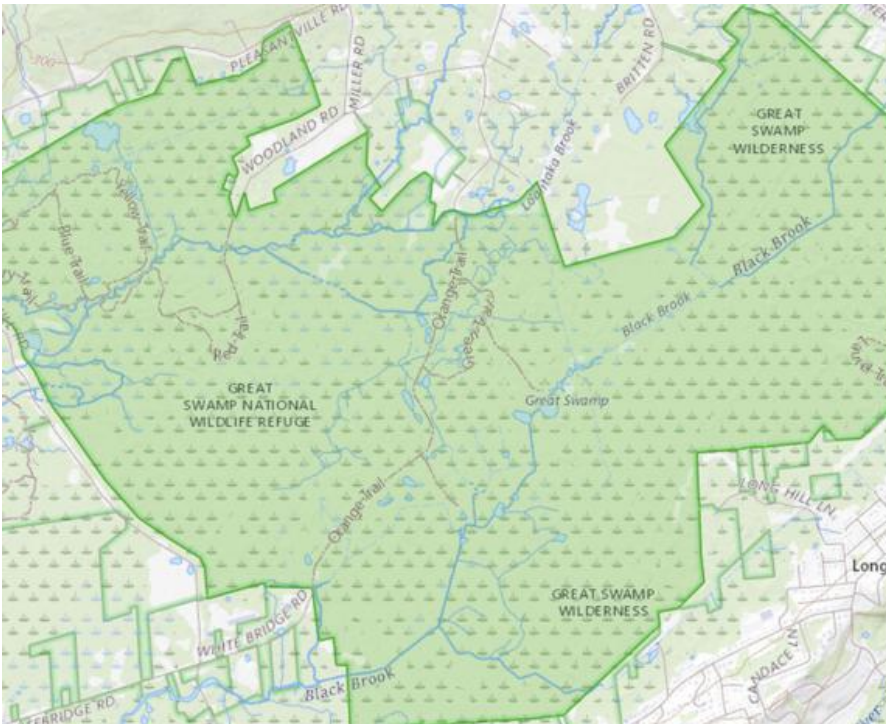


Great Sand Dunes Wilderness (CO)

Rio Grande Cutthroats occupy the lower portion of Little Medano Creek in Great Sand Dunes Wilderness; upper reaches of Little Medano and main Medano Creek are in Sangre de Cristo Wilderness (Bakevich et al 2019; TU RGCT 2019)

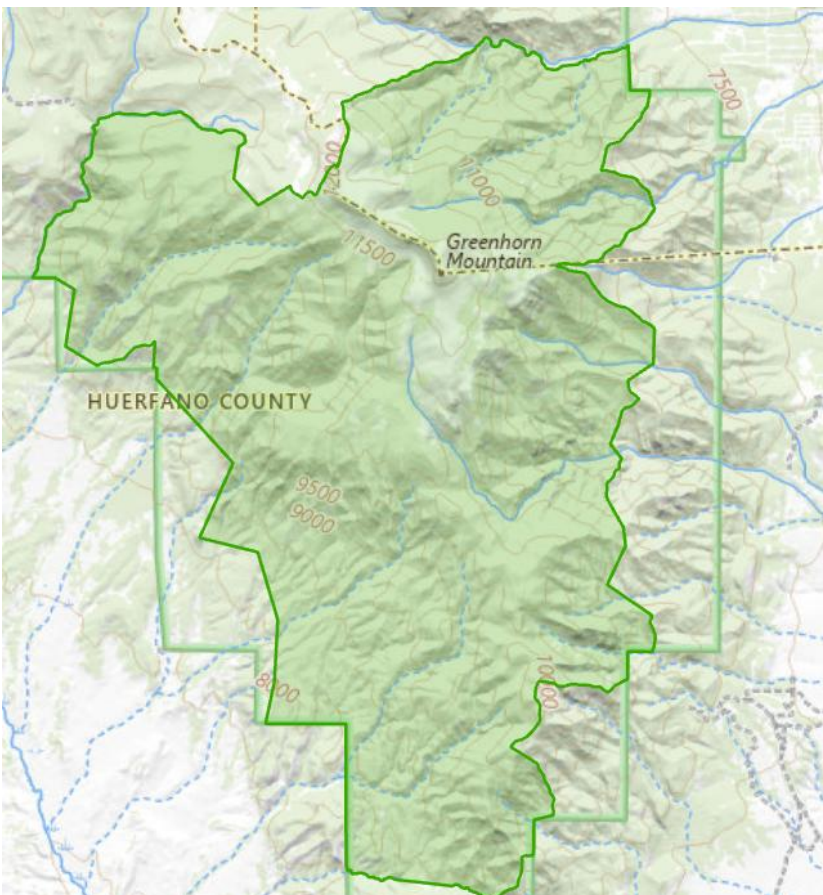


Great Swamp Wilderness (NJ)



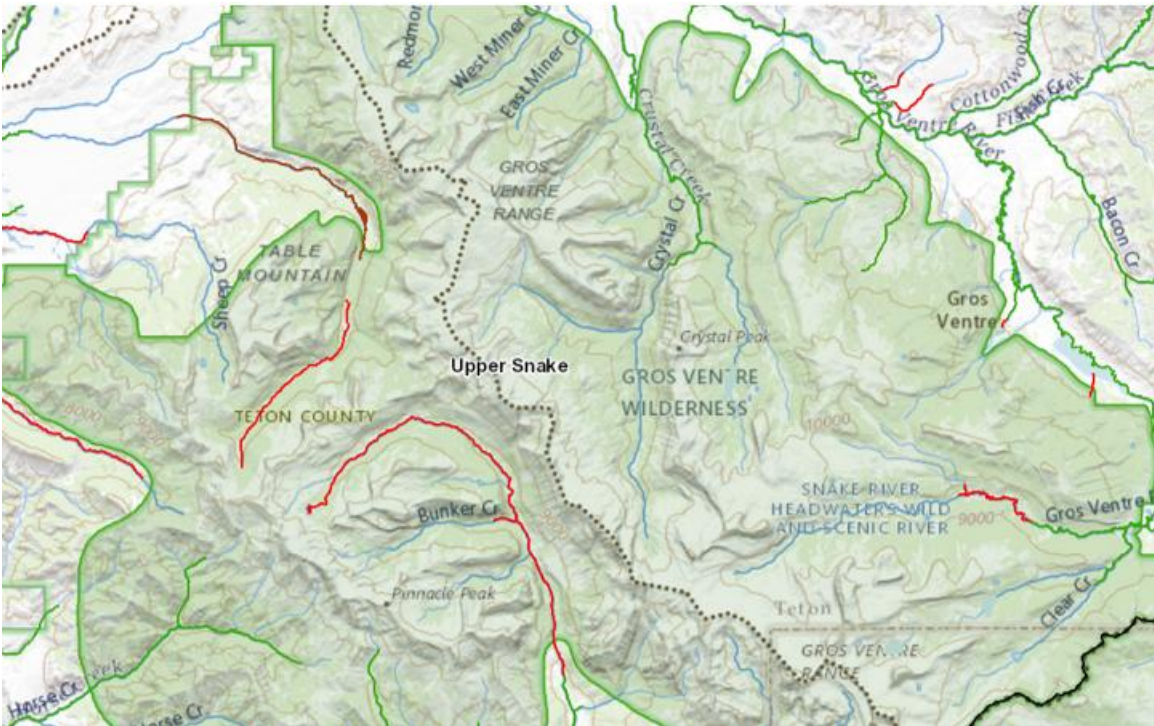
It's a swamp, of course it's full of fish. Great Brook and Black Brook cross the wilderness flowing west toward the Passaic River. Species found in the Passaic system include tessellated darter, Johnny darter, fallfish shiners, blacknose dace, American brook lamprey, banded sunfish, bridle shiner, chain pickerel, largemouth bass, black crappie and yellow perch. (USF&WS Great Swamp, 2014)

Greenhorn Wilderness (CO)



I discovered to my horror, after I thought I had every wilderness area either in The Book or in the no-fish list, that I did not have an entry for the Greenhorn Wilderness. I can't imagine how that happened, what with my excruciatingly intense level of quality control, but it happened. The crystal ball says I may have some trips up I-25 between Santa Fe and Denver in my near future, so I'll get this one covered. Until then, a placeholder.

Gros Ventre Wilderness (WY)

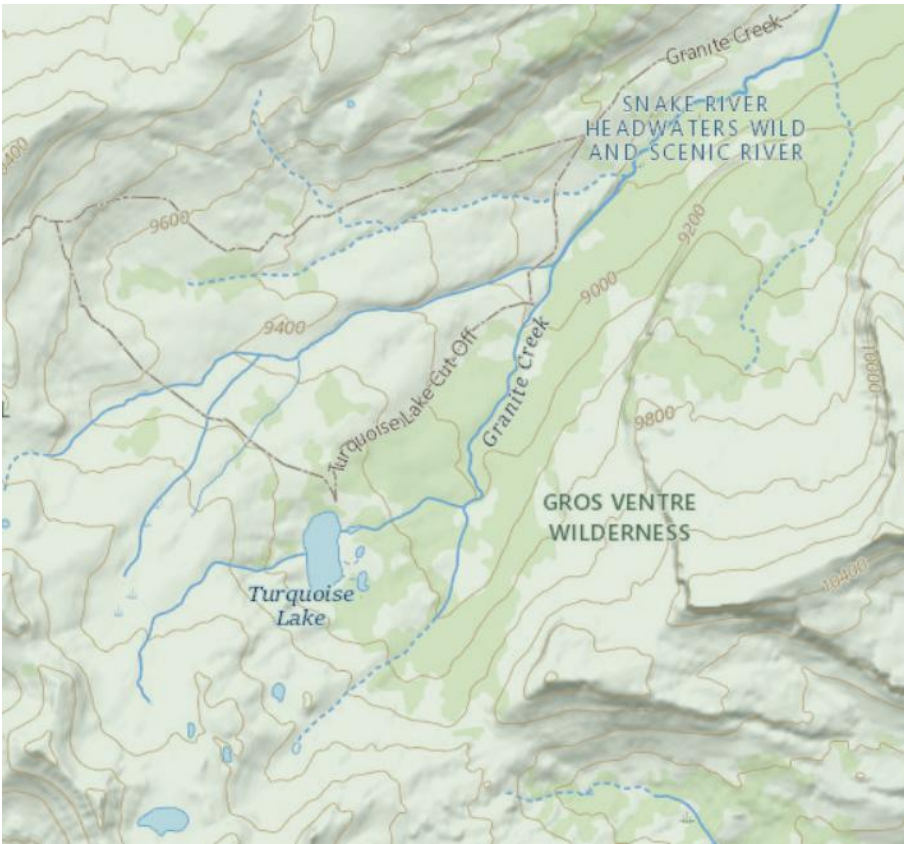


There are Yellowstone cutthroat conservation populations in Crystal Creek and upper Gros Ventre headwaters, also conservation populations in Granite Creek, Horse Creek and Little Horse Creek on the south side draining toward the Hoback. The status report calls them Yellowstone cutts, could they be Snake River fine-spotted cutts (behnkii)? I'll have to catch some to find out. (Endicott, Nelson et al 2016; TU YCT 2019) An article in NWFF seems to confirm that the cutthroats in Granite Creek are Snake River fine-spotted. (NWFF Nov-Dec 2011, p. 12)

I hiked two miles up the Crystal Creek trail on August 1, 2020 and came over a ridge to get my first look at this spectacular Crystal Creek basin. The creek should be full of cutthroats, and there were at least seven other anglers on this stretch while I was there, but I got nothing. In an effort to salvage the day, when I got back to the trailhead I hiked another couple hundred yards up the creek back into the wilderness and managed to catch a brookie or two. (Number 25)

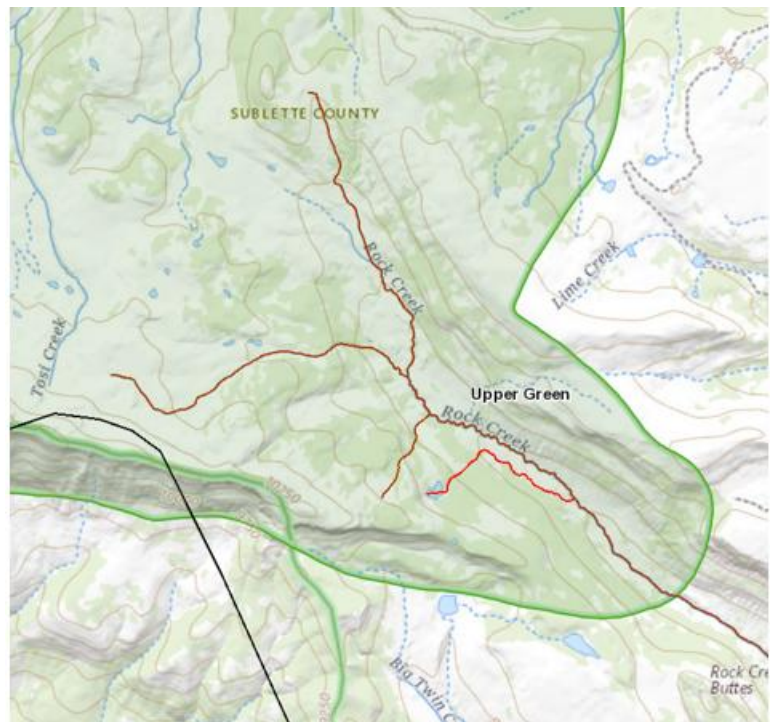
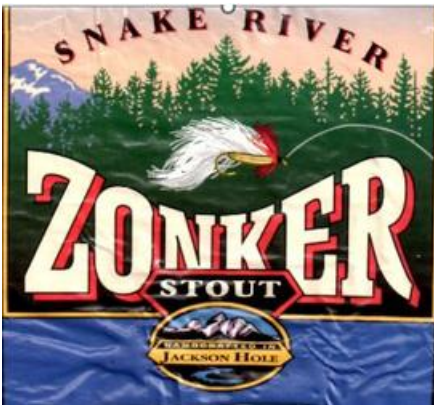


Gros Ventre Wilderness (WY)

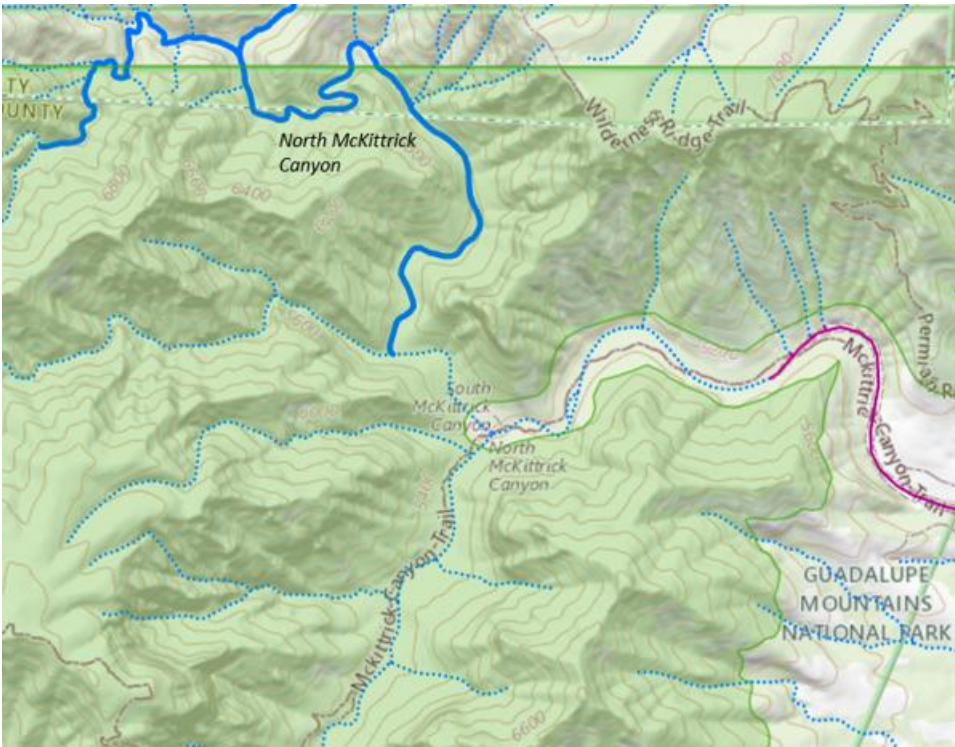


Turquoise Lake at the head of Granite Creek has cutthroats; the creek holds Snake River fine-spotted cutthroats as well as brook trout and whitefish. (NWFF, Nov-Dec 2017, p. 55)

There is also a core conservation population of Colorado cutthroats in Rock Creek in far eastern corner of wilderness, Green River tributary. (Hirsch et al 2013; TU CRCT 2019)



Guadalupe Mountains Wilderness (TX)



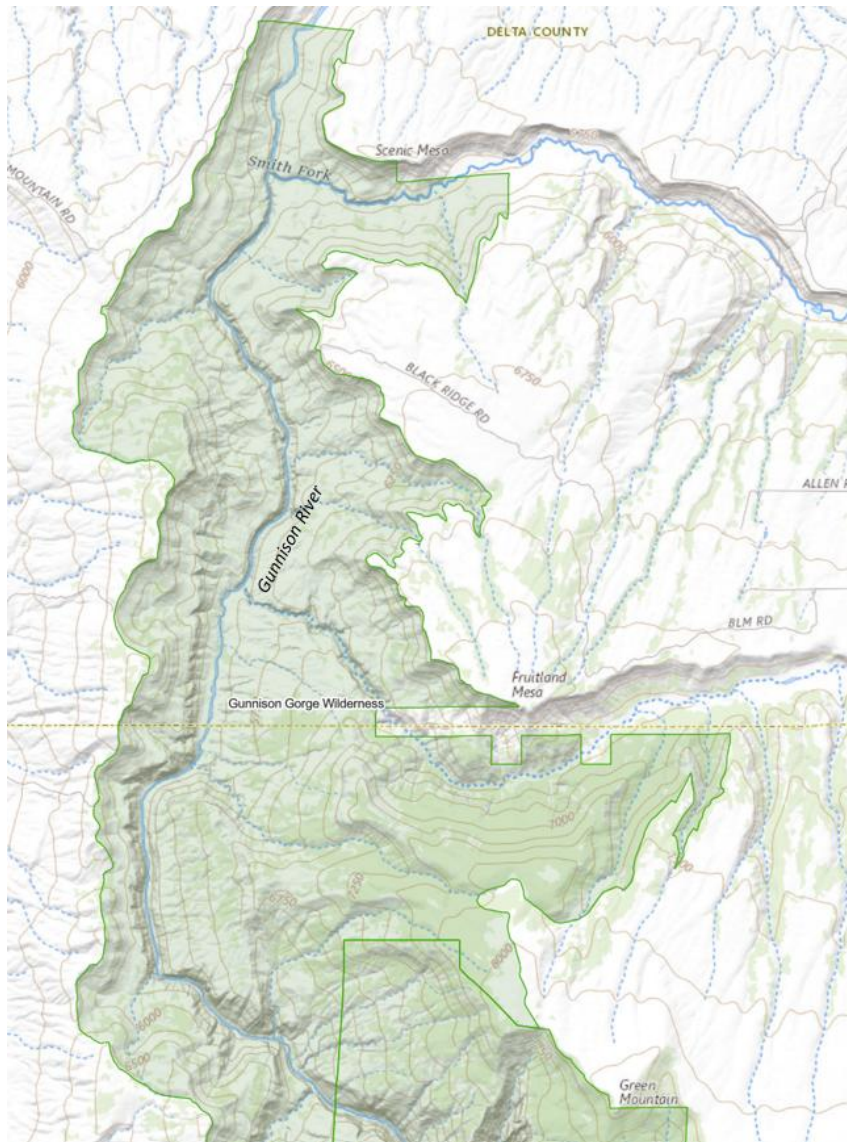
McKittrick Creek has perennial sections, with intervening sections underground in a travertine stream bed. Wild rainbow trout occupy perennial sections, although fishing is not allowed. As of 2018 National Park Service was considering killing off the rainbows and re(?)establishing Rio Grande cutthroats. (SWFF Jul-Aug 2017, p. 21)

Gulf Islands Wilderness (MS)

Atlantic stingray are common along the beaches of the wilderness. Other records include striped burrfish (Diodontidae), black drum and Atlantic spadefish. (iNaturalist 2022)



Gunnison Gorge Wilderness (CO)



Article identifies several trail accesses to Gunnison River in the gorge stretch downstream from the National Park. Guided floats are allowed here. (FF, May 2008, p. 61) Floats target brown and rainbow trout, some very large, in the gorge.