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Wildlife Habitat and Working Lands Preserved on the Cosumnes River

Recent efforts to protect a property known as Ervin Ranch on the Cosumnes River in El Dorado County reached a notable milestone on December 5, 2019. The cooperative effort by the American River Conservancy (ARC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has succeeded in protecting a total of 1,737 acres of oak woodlands, rangeland, riparian corridors and salmon-spawning habitat. This most recent conservation accomplishment, spearheaded by local land trust ARC, complements the recent multi-phased acquisition of 3,157-acres of the El Dorado Ranch, just upriver of the Ervin Ranch. Both ranches, once slated for residential development, will become the first Wildlife Area in El Dorado County.

WCB provided \$1,366,500 in purchase funding, while ARC raised \$1,000,000 in funds from the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Grant Program administered by CNRA. \$7,183,500 of purchase funding was provided by USFWS through Wildlife Restoration Act grant funds directed through CDFW. CDFW will own and manage the property as a unit of the El Dorado Ranch Wildlife Area.

Ervin Ranch is located just southwest of El Dorado Hills and southeast of Folsom along the Cosumnes River in western El Dorado County, California.

The acquisition protects nearly one mile of river frontage and spawning gravels for steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon. Portions of the property are identified as Priority Conservation Areas for Oak Woodlands in El Dorado County's General Plan, and the property is also a "working landscape", preserving seasonal rangelands in the western part of El Dorado County.



"The Ervin Ranch purchase protects an important wildlife movement corridor and a prime stretch of the Cosumnes River for wild salmon. The Cosumnes is unique in the Sierra because it is a free-flowing river system with no major dams," said Elena DeLacy, Executive Director of ARC.

According to CDFW’s Supervising Wildlife Biologist, Jason Holley, “conserving the Ervin Ranch is a win-win for wildlife, and outdoor enthusiasts alike. The new Wildlife Area will have something for everyone to enjoy, a true multi-use area (including hunting, fishing, hiking, and bird watching). We’re hoping to open the area for walk-in public use by 2022.”

American River Conservancy and numerous funding partners have protected over 8,800 acres of habitat in the Upper



Cosumnes River watershed. 2019 marks ARC’s 30th year of preserving rivers and land for life. Since 1989, ARC has worked with private landowners, public agencies and funding partners to preserve habitat, agricultural lands, recreational access and riparian corridors. ARC has protected over 27,500 acres through conservation easement and fee-title acquisition in the Upper American River and Upper Cosumnes River watersheds. Approximately 11,000 acres of land conserved by ARC since 1989 is classified as agricultural land – working farms and cattle ranches – while also serving as important wildlife corridors in the region.

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