



# NEWS

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## **Mine for Sale!**

Wilderness Land Trust seizes opportunity to protect Salmon River in Idaho's Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness

CARBONDALE, COLORADO...If you've spent much time in the backcountry of the western US, you've likely stumbled across the remains of an abandoned mine. The Wilderness Land Trust completed purchase this week of one more of those abandoned mines, protecting its 90<sup>th</sup> wilderness area in the US.

This latest addition – the Painter Mine – is located in the heart of the rugged Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, the nation's second largest wilderness area. The purchase of this 38 acre mine will add valued riverfront acres to the wilderness and provide more public land for recreational boaters to explore as part of their adventures on the Wild and Scenic Salmon River.

The Wilderness Land Trust is no stranger to mine acquisition, having acquired long dormant mines in several states and even a permitted mine in the Sheep Mountain Wilderness in California. But what makes this mine purchase particularly interesting is the fact that it sits directly on the Salmon River, one of the most popular recreational boating rivers in the nation. Indeed, The Painter Mine is just upstream from the famous Buckskin Bill Cabin, a popular stop for rafting parties enjoying the whitewater of the Salmon River.

Many of the most remote of wilderness lands in the West have been explored at some time for their potential to produce gold, silver, copper and other precious metals and minerals. Whether it is old equipment and cables, recovered rock, or even open mine shafts, mining has been making its mark on land throughout the West for generations.

So what is the problem with old mines? Many sites present a safety concern, with open adits and shafts just awaiting an accident. Also, old mines have become prime real estate for private retreats, which was the case with the Painter Mine. Mine tailings can also threaten the health of nearby waterways, with minerals leaching from exposed rock decades after it is mined. Home to the majority of the salmon and steelhead habitat remaining in the Columbia River Basin, protection of the Salmon River is of critical importance.

Mike Wilson, who sold the property to the Wilderness Land Trust this week, expressed his enthusiasm for the sale. “The Painter Mine has a fascinating history of the people who worked on the mine long ago.” Mike noted. “We’re happy to see the land return to public ownership for the enjoyment of all.”

David Kirk, Idaho lead for the Trust, completed the purchase of the mine. “The Painter Mine will be a spectacular addition to the wilderness,” said David. “I am excited that boaters will now be able to stop and enjoy the shaded shoreline, experience the property’s mining history and hike to the rock outcroppings overlooking the Salmon River.”

Now that the Trust has purchased the Painter Mine, it will spend the next two years cleaning it up and eliminating major safety hazards before transferring it to the Forest Service for management as wilderness. “We look forward to working closely with the US Forest Service on the transfer of the property into their ownership,” noted David.

Jet boats are allowed in the Frank Church, used for recreation and to access privately owned land, but most agree that more isn’t better. Removing the threat of mining in the future, eliminating a home site and cleaning up the remnants of long abandoned mining activity on the banks of the Salmon River will protect the pristine water of the Salmon River, as well as the wilderness experience for the thousands of people who are lucky enough to float its waters each year.

### **The Wilderness Land Trust**

The Wilderness Land Trust is a small, highly specialized nonprofit organization established to buy and protect wilderness land. Since it was founded in 1992, the non-profit organization has preserved 409 parcels comprised of more than 41,000 acres of wilderness inholdings in 90 designated and proposed wilderness areas. The Wilderness Land Trust, a 501(c)(3) organization, has offices in California and Colorado. For more information visit our website [www.wildernesslandtrust.org](http://www.wildernesslandtrust.org).



The year 2014 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act, which designated 9.1 million acres as the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wilderness Land Trust’s work is more relevant than ever, striving to protect the integrity of what is now more than 109.5 million wilderness acres for current and future generations to enjoy.

The Wilderness Land Trust is an accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is a 1% for the Planet Non-Profit Partner. Visit [www.onepercentfortheplanet.org](http://www.onepercentfortheplanet.org) to learn how individuals and businesses can support our projects.



Painter Mine property on the Salmon River, Idaho

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Map showing Painter Mine parcel location

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