



## South Fork Trinity River and Tributaries *PROPOSED WILD & SCENIC RIVERS*

The South Fork Trinity River is one of the largest undammed river systems in California. The river and its tributaries support important populations of threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead and old-growth forest dependent wildlife species. The river and tributaries also offer outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

**South Fork Trinity River** – The South Fork Trinity River flows north from its spring-fed sources in the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness to the Trinity River. The river provides critical habitat for spring Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead trout. It flows through diverse forests that shelter spotted owl, goshawk, bald eagle, fisher, marten, and several rare plants. The South Fork National Recreation Trail parallels much of the upper river and several other trails provide access to the lower river segments. The entire river is recommended for protection by the Forest Service.

**East Fork South Fork Trinity River** – Fish biologists identified the East Fork South Fork to be a high priority watershed for the recovery of depressed South Fork fish stocks. Although its watershed is recovering from past forestry abuses, the stream possesses the greatest amount of accessible fish habitat in the South Fork system and will play a key role in the recovery of the South Fork as one of the most productive steelhead and salmon streams in the region. The watershed also provides habitat for spotted owl, goshawk, Peregrine falcon, and Pacific fisher and several sensitive plants.

**Management Agency:**

U.S. Forest Service ~  
Shasta-Trinity National Forests  
Six Rivers National Forests

**Location:**

Trinity & Humboldt Counties  
CA 2nd Congressional District

**Watershed:** Trinity River

**Wild & Scenic River Miles:**

South Fork Trinity River – 68.5  
East Fork South Fork Trinity River – 11.8  
Rattlesnake Creek – 5.9  
Butter Creek – 7  
Eltapom Creek – 3.4  
Grouse Creek – 11.3  
Madden Creek – 8.4  
Hayfork Creek – 16.4  
Rusch Creek – 3.2  
Olsen Creek – 2.8

**Outstanding Values:**

Anadromous fisheries, wildlife, ecological, botanical, scenery, recreation.

**For More Information:**

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**Rattlesnake Creek** – The federal recovery plan for coho salmon identifies Rattlesnake Creek as a high priority for restoration. It's one of the few South Fork tributaries with several miles of accessible fish habitat without natural or man-made barriers.

**Butter Creek** – Butter Creek is a key tributary for the protection and restoration of South Fork anadromous fish stocks. The creek is an important source of cold water providing thermal refugia for rare summer steelhead and coho salmon in the South Fork. The watershed's serpentine soils support a unique assemblage of endemic plant species. Peregrine falcon and spotted owl nest in the watershed.

**Eltapom Creek** – A government fisheries report describes Eltapom Creek as the "gem" of the South Fork due to its excellent spawning gravel, holding pools, and dense riparian corridor. A critical thermal refuge, the creek supports endangered coho salmon and high densities of winter steelhead.

**Grouse Creek** – Grouse Creek is a high priority watershed for the restoration of coho and other South Fork fish stocks. The creek is also offers potential thermal refugia for fish migrating up the South Fork.

**Madden Creek** – Madden Creek is one of the few lower South Fork tributaries with good water quality due to its relatively undisturbed watershed. Cold water from Madden Creek creates a critical thermal refuge for coho salmon migrating up the South Fork.

**Hayfork Creek** – The South Fork's largest tributary, Hayfork Creek provides good steelhead habitat and historically supported coho and Chinook salmon. The creek carves a scenic gorge along the foot of Pattison Mountain. Hayfork Creek also offers class IV-V whitewater boating opportunities. Much of Hayfork Creek is recommended for protection by the Forest Service.

**Rusch Creek** – Rusch Creek is an important cold water contributor to Hayfork Creek and may provide a thermal refuge for anadromous fish. The creek supports moderate to high densities of steelhead.

**Olsen Creek** – The federal coho recovery plan identifies Olsen Creek as a high priority restoration target. This Hayfork Creek tributary may also provide important thermal refugia for coho and other anadromous fish.

Front Photo: *South Fork Trinity River at Mule Bridge*



*East Fork South Fork Trinity River*



*Hayfork Creek*



*Madden Creek*



*Rattlesnake Creek*



*Butter Creek*