Bitterroot River (84 River Miles)

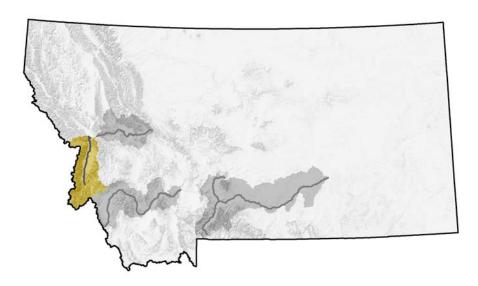


Figure 14. Bitterroot River Focus Area

The Bitterroot River originates in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness and the Bitterroot Mountains in Montana. As the primary tributaries flow together near Conner, Montana, it continues north along U.S. Highway 93 for 85 miles to where it empties into the Clark Fork River near Missoula. To the west is the glacial Bitterroot Range, and to the east rises the smoother and drier Sapphire Mountains. Just west of the Bitterroot Range lies the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, which encompasses more than 2.15 million acres. The river is characterized by constantly shifting stream channels among extensive cottonwood and ponderosa pine bottomland.

Associated Habitats

Habitat Type	Habitat Tier	Acres	Miles
Intermountain Valley Rivers	II		84
Intermountain Valley Streams	II		325
Lowland Lakes	III	1,260	
Mountain Lakes	III	2,946	
Mountain Reservoirs	III	27	
Mountain Streams	I		3,304

Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Tier I Species)

There are a total of 21 aquatic species that are found within the Bitterroot River Focus Area. Tier I species are listed below. All associations can be found in Table 20.

Invertebrates: Western Pearlshell

Fish: Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout

Conservation Concerns & Strategies

Conservation Concerns	Concernation Stratagies	
	Conservation Strategies	
Valley fragmentation as a result of	Pursue conservation easements within	
human population growth	the valley	
Presence of non-native aquatic species	Programs to control exotic species and	
including warmwater fishes, bullfrogs,	promote natural habitats that support	
crayfish, and milfoil	native species but not exotic species	
Water quality problems due to	Work with municipal government and	
municipal discharge, irrigation return	private landowners to reduce point	
water, and other sources	source pollutants	
Culverts, dams, irrigation diversions, and other instream barriers that fully or	Removal or modification of barriers in a manner that restores beneficial fish	
partially impede fish movement and	passage	
reduce connectivity of habitat		
Entrainment of juvenile and adult fishes	Screening or modification of irrigation	
by irrigation diversions or other water	diversions or other water intakes in a	
intakes	manner that prevents entrainment of	
	fishes	
Modification and degradation of stream	Restoration of stream channels or	
channels caused by various	streambanks to a condition that	
construction or land management	simulates their natural form and	
practices	function	
Riparian vegetation effected by range	Support government and private	
and forest management practices and	conservation activities that encourage	
streamside residential development	and support sustainable land	
(such activities destabilize	management practices in riparian	
streambanks, increase sediment	areas	
inputs, reduced shading, and remove		
woody debris)		
	Modification of riparian management	
	practices such that riparian vegetation	
	is allowed to recover	
	Develop statewide riparian best	
	management principles	

Alterations of the quantity or timing of stream flows, causing dewatering or unnatural flow fluctuations that diminish the quantity or quality of essential habitats

Implementation of various water conservation or flow management practices that restore essential habitats, simulate the natural hydrograph and also protect instream flows