In 2000, The Nature Conservancy purchased River Fork Ranch, protecting key wetland, meadow and riparian habitats along a two-mile section of the Carson River. Located at the confluence of the east and west forks of the Carson River near Genoa, NV, River Fork Ranch is both a nature preserve and a working cattle ranch, and is one of the only known nesting sites for sandhill cranes and bald eagles in the Carson Valley.

Stewardship and Recreation

A legacy of unrestricted grazing, water diversions, and channel dredging degraded the ecological condition of River Fork Ranch, impairing the alluvial function, introducing exotic plant species and reducing riparian viability. Today The Nature Conservancy is working to improve the ecological condition of River Fork Ranch by enhancing important riparian, meadow and wetland habitat and restoring important natural processes such as overbank flow and channel migration.

River Fork Ranch has supported cattle for over a century, and continues to do so today. The Nature Conservancy is partnering with Ranch One, Carson Valley’s historic first ranch, to raise all-natural grass-fed beef at River Fork Ranch using sustainable methods that meet both agricultural and conservation objectives. A rest-rotation grazing plan, and the exclusion of livestock from sensitive riparian and wetland areas, protects wildlife habitat. Keeping the ranch in production and selling local beef benefits the local economy.

The trail system at River Fork Ranch enables the public to access the Carson River, visit its wetlands, and enjoy the natural beauty of the Carson Valley.
wetland and wet meadow habitats, and see the Conservancy’s restoration work firsthand. The Ranch’s state-of-the-art LEED® Platinum Certified education center – the Whit Hall Interpretive Center – serves as a hub for the trail system, gives visitors access to the Carson River’s story and demonstrates a more sustainable way of life in the Carson Valley and beyond.

The trailhead and trails are open from dawn until dusk daily. The Interpretive Center is open for scheduled events and activities only.

The Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP) is a collaborative initiative to conserve, restore, and enhance the magnificent natural landscape of the northern Sierra Nevada, and build the foundation for sustainable rural prosperity.
Directions from Lake Tahoe

Travel around Lake Tahoe to Highway 50.

Follow Hwy 50 10 miles east to Carson Valley.

Turn right (south) on 395 and follow 8.7 miles to Genoa Lane/NV 206, just north of the town of Minden.

Turn right and follow 2.5 miles to the River Fork Ranch Preserve.

The preserve is located at 381 Genoa Lane, Minden, NV 89423. For more information, contact Duane Petite, Carson River Project Director at dpetite@tnc.org or 775-781-3505.

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