

Mackay Bar Ranch

Live in comfort in one of the country's most wild and remote landscapes—the Frank Church Wilderness and on the Salmon River—at the 21-acre Mackay Bar Ranch.



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"A river really does run through here, but the magic is in the heart of Mackay Bar Ranch."



Mackay Bar Ranch

More people have walked on the moon (12) than have owned Mackay Bar Ranch (5). In central Idaho, this 21-acre Ranch has an unparalleled wilderness location—it's within the 2.36 million acre Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the largest contiguous wilderness in the Lower 48 states, and on the Salmon River, the longest undammed river in the Lower 48 states. Even getting here is an adventure—a twin-engine plane

can land on the Ranch's private, riverside airstrip, you can jet boat up the river, or, in the winter, snowmobile in. Despite this remote, off-the-grid location, life at the ranch is not rustic. The power is supplied by hydro, solar, and propane, and there's Internet and a professional kitchen. Mackay Bar Ranch is life in the wild, in total comfort.





“Where wilderness is paradise.”
—National Geographic, 1937

Historic Wilderness

It was Native Americans, including the Nez Perce and Mountain Sheepeater Shoshone, who first discovered how special this area—protected as the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness since 1980—was. Archaeological evidence shows they lived here as long ago as the 1700s. (A war in 1879 ended their permanent inhabitation here.) In the early 1800s Lewis & Clark’s Corps of Discovery almost came down the Salmon, but Shoshone guides convinced the expedition there was no way its dugout canoes could handle the river’s rapids. (Still, Clark was curious to see the Salmon for himself; he traveled down it for two days with a guide and came to the conclusion that avoiding the Salmon was definitely the right call.) The first white settler—the eponymous William Mackay—arrived here in the early 1900s. Then came miners and, in 1956, thanks to Albert Tice establishing Mackay—pronounced MAC-key—Bar, sportsmen and adventurers.

While today’s Mackay Bar Ranch has creature comforts unimagined in Tice’s time, the surrounding wilderness remains unchanged. The Ranch is an inholding in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, an area in which mechanized travel is prohibited. The Salmon River is a Scenic River and Recreational River within the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. Most people lucky enough to experience this Wilderness are backpackers, jet boaters, or rafters passing through. Mackay Bar Ranch allows you to have a home in a place that will be forever wild.



Accessible

While mechanized travel is prohibited within wilderness areas—“wilderness” is the strictest of any designation of federal lands; a greater variety of recreation is allowed in national parks than in wilderness areas—small airstrips, existing roads, and jet boats were grandfathered in when the area surrounding Mackay Bar Ranch was designated as Wilderness in 1980. A bumpy Forest Service road (#222) comes to the opposite side of the river just upstream from the Ranch, but the bridge built over the river in 1935 can’t handle today’s cars. So raft, jet boat, foot, horseback, or small aircraft—Mackay Bar Ranch has a 2,000-foot-long private airstrip—are the easiest ways to get here. The Ranch’s airstrip is one of the best on the Salmon River because pilots can land from upstream or downstream and because of its relatively low elevation (2,172 feet above sea level). The latter means it is snow-free later into the autumn and earlier at the end of winter than most of the other airstrips. The Ranch’s jet boat port is one of the few low-water ports on the Salmon. This makes it usable even when the river’s level drops, as it is sure to do in late summer because the surrounding 9,000- and 10,000-foot mountains are no longer holding any snow. While part of what makes Mackay Bar Ranch special is the adventure of getting here, there’s no other backcountry wilderness property that is as easily accessible.

See website for videos showing arrival by jet boat or airplane.



Magic in the Mountains

You don't think of building sandcastles or having a beach bonfire in Idaho, but Mackay Bar Ranch has a private white sand beach that, if you ignore the mountains rising around it and the occasional elk, bighorn sheep, or bear on the riverbank, could be in the Caribbean. Really. As wondrous as the existence of a white sand beach in the northern Rocky Mountains is the "riverhood" family you become a member of as the owner of Mackay Bar Ranch. Here, where the U.S. Postal Service contracts with an aviation company to deliver the mail weekly—the last airmail route in the Lower 48—the handful of residents are respectful, resourceful, and helpful neighbors, whether you need to borrow flour because you ran out in the middle of baking cookies (there's no quick trip to the grocery store from Mackay Bar; groceries come in on boat or aircraft) or need help picking cherries from the tree in your front lawn. A river really does run through here, but magic is the heart of Mackay Bar Ranch.







Water

Even though the Salmon River runs through this area, neither water rights nor a hydro system are guaranteed. There are properties along the river that have to carefully track their water consumption. Mackay Bar Ranch comes with three sources of water rights and a permitted hydro system. (Two of the three water sources are gravity-fed.) Because running out of water is not an issue, almost all of the Ranch's 21 acres are covered by an underground sprinkler system. In summer, the front lawn and nearby gardens—including flower gardens and grape vines—are an oasis of greenery and blooms. If you want to lean into the Ranch's off-the-grid lifestyle and maintain a garden, go for it. Want to keep goats or horses? The fenced pasture is also irrigated.



Buildings

Mackay Bar Ranch is being sold fully furnished and includes a 3,000-square-foot main lodge overlooking the Salmon River; three stand-alone guest cabins, each with a bedroom and a loft; a residential lodge; staff quarters; a barn; a pantry; and power/hydro house. The two-

story residential lodge includes the two-bedroom, 1,120sqft River Suite, which is upstairs and overlooks the Salmon and Ranch, and four bedroom suites on the ground floor. All of these buildings have been renovated over the last seven years.



1,120sqft River Suite with two bedrooms, on the main level, 4 guest rooms that are en suite.



3 - 250sqft cabins with queen, single and two lofted single beds, and private bath.





Recreation

Hiking and horseback riding trails from the Ranch connect to 2,500 miles of additional trails in the Wilderness. (The Ranch has a corral.) The Salmon River has outstanding steelhead and smallmouth bass fishing. The South Fork of the Salmon, which is just upriver from the Ranch, has Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, and cutthroat catch-and-release fly fishing. The Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve, one of only two Dark Sky Reserves in the U.S. recognized by the International Dark-Sky Association, is nearby. The night sky at Mackay Bar Ranch is among the darkest in the country; that is the Milky Way above you. And then there's always relaxing in a hammock hung among the trees in the mature forest that surrounds the main lodge and guest quarters.



Flexibility

Since its founding in 1956, Mackay Bar Ranch has been run as a guest ranch, providing life-changing vacations to guests from around the world. Currently on TripAdvisor.com the Ranch is rated 5 stars. Review titles include “magical place,” “slice of heaven,” “big country,” “serene beauty,” and “you’ll want to stay longer.” Unlike many states with backcountry lodges, Idaho does not require a permit for a ranch to be run as a commercial enterprise. This means that if you agree with the reviewer who wrote they wanted to stay longer and buy Mackay Bar Ranch to use as a private retreat for your family and friends, this won’t lessen the property’s value when you’re ready to sell it to its next steward.

Of course, you also have the option of continuing to run Mackay Bar as a guest ranch. Current owners Buck and Joni Dewey created a lovely life for their family—they have a son Dax who is now 12 years old—by running the ranch themselves since they bought it in December 2012. If you want to keep Mackay Bar open, but aren’t interested in managing it yourself, the Deweys are open to staying on as managers. Or you can make the Ranch private but decide to host a handful of select events—it is a popular destination for weddings and corporate retreats—to help offset the operating costs.

Another commercial opportunity is Mackay Bar Outfitters. This established business run by the Deweys is not included in the sale, but can be purchased separately; it has permits with the Forest Service to run jet boat tours, horseback riding and fishing excursions, and do guided hunting trips.

There are also two homes adjacent to Mackay Bar Ranch that could be purchased separately.



Property Description

Location

- Main Salmon River, Idaho
- LAT: 45°22’35.5”N LONG: 115°30’23.2”W
- Elevation, 2,045’

Access

- Jet boat via Vinegar creek boat ramp, 23 miles to the ranch, about an hour ride
- Private airstrip to fly-in or fly-out
- ATV/UTV/4-wheel or Snowmobile in via Dixie, ID on FS road #222, approximately 25 miles

Airstrip

- 1,900’ x 75’ grass/dirt strip
- FAA Identifier: ID28
- Lat: 45.37907500000, Long: -115.50512361111
- Helicopter landing

The Setting

- 21.18 deeded acre in-holding that is off-grid
- Historic ranch property under a scenic easement
- Additional square footage for development
- Large west facing white sand beach
- Fully fenced pasture and corral for livestock and horses

Buildings

- Accommodations to sleep up to 34 guests
- 3,000 Main Lodge with a dining room, living room, new commercial kitchen, gift shop, 1-bedroom staff room, with attached full bath, 2-half baths for guests
- COUGAR LODGE –Top floor river suite 1,120sqft with 2 bedrooms and bath, main floor has 4-en suite guest rooms and the laundry and housekeeping facility.
- 3-GUEST CABINS (240sqft each, Bear, Bugle and Elkhorn) with private baths, 1-queen, 1-single, and 2-lofted singles, each cabin sleeps 2-5 guests
- STAFF QUARTERS – 2 bedroom and 1 bath
- SHOP – 2 bedroom and 1 bath

Water

- 3 water right grandfathered permits supply from Mackay Spring, Mackay Creek and the Salmon River an abundant amount to the ranch for hydro, domestic and irrigation use
- Underground sprinkler system, including the pasture and airstrip

Power

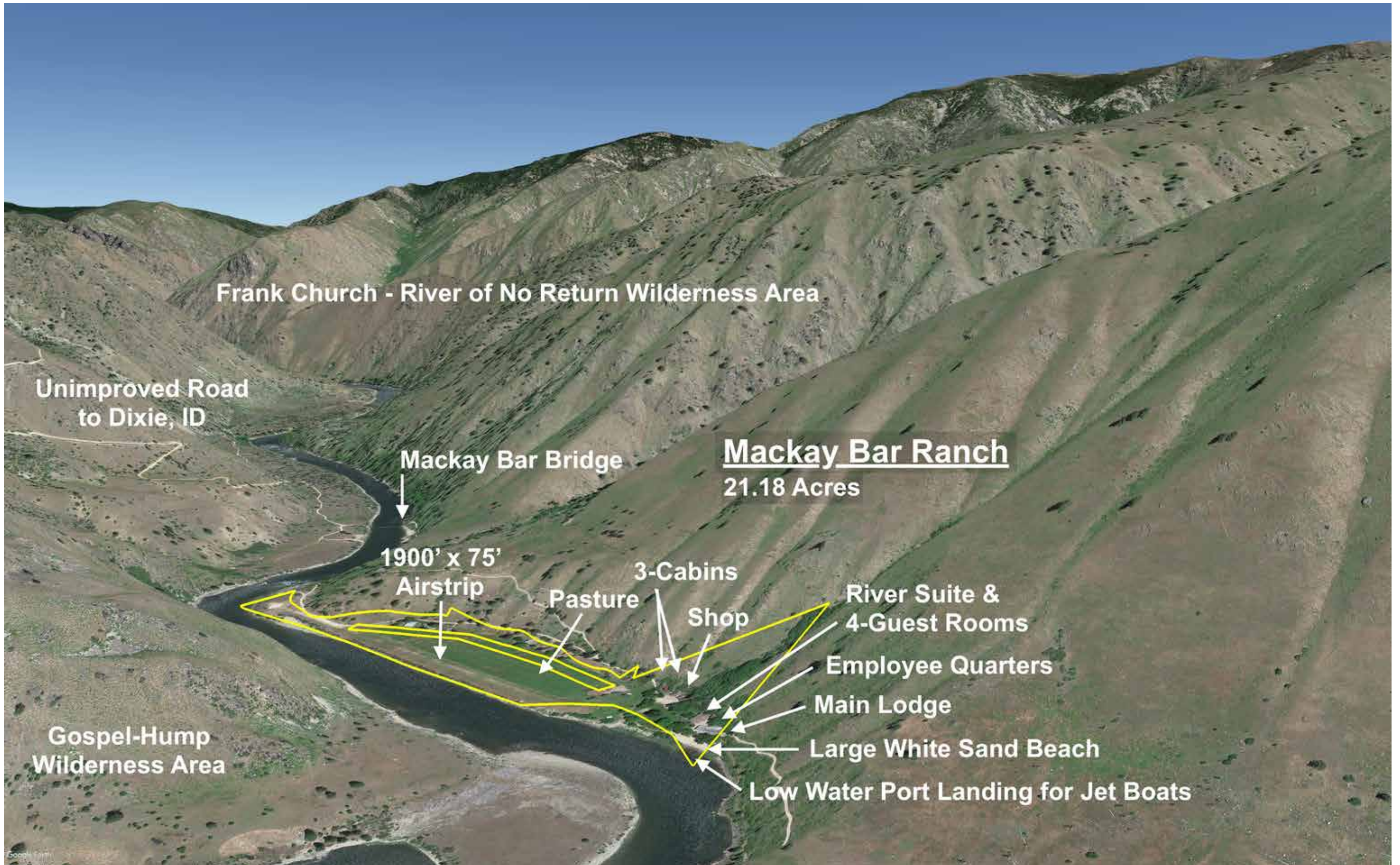
- Hydro, solar (new) and propane to fuel the new generator

Permits

- Forest Service ingress/egress jet boat permit

Information is deeded reliable, but not guaranteed; buyer to verify all information





Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness Area

Unimproved Road
to Dixie, ID

Mackay Bar Bridge

Mackay Bar Ranch
21.18 Acres

1900' x 75'
Airstrip

Pasture

3-Cabins

Shop

River Suite &
4-Guest Rooms

Employee Quarters

Main Lodge

Large White Sand Beach

Low Water Port Landing for Jet Boats

Gospel-Hump
Wilderness Area

Mackay Bar Ranch

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