

CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST FISHERIES PROGRAM 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

C-T Forest Fish Bios



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Featured External Partners



Trout Unlimited



Idaho Department of
Environmental Quality



Idaho Dept Fish & Game



Wyoming Department of
Game and Fish



Bureau of Land
Management



Henry's Fork Foundation



US Fish and Wildlife Service

Fish Passage Restored at Tablerock Creek

Upstream passage for Yellowstone cutthroat trout and stream hydrology was restored in Tablerock Creek (tributary to the South Fork Snake River). An impassable, under-capacity culvert under FS Road 217 was replaced with a bottomless arch between Kelly Canyon and South Fork Snake River. Tablerock Creek is considered by the Forest as a YCT stronghold stream. Grouting, placed in and around the stream at the crossing in the 1980's in an attempt to maintain stability, was removed from the stream channel and 2 illegal ATV trails were closed. The riparian area upstream and downstream of the road crossing was recontoured and planted with native



Tablerock Creek bottomless arch with restored riparian area.

vegetation. This project was a partnership between the Forest and Trout Unlimited.

Habitat Improved in Horseshoe Creek

Native Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Horseshoe Creek have been impacted for decades by roads and invading non-native fish. Horseshoe Creek is a tributary to the Teton River, a basin with limited remaining populations of native cutthroat trout. The Horseshoe Creek Project is a multiple year effort to benefit native fish and their habitat by reconnecting stream segments and replacing impassable

culverts, decreasing sedimentation by improving road drainage and surfacing, and decreasing the potential of non-native fish colonization by constructing barriers to upstream migration. In 2008, an undersized, barrier culvert was replaced with a bottomless arch by the Forest Road Crew. This project is a partnership between the Forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.



Horseshoe Creek culvert before replacement.



Crossing after culvert replacement.

BCT Restoration Initiated in Georgetown Canyon

The Caribou-Targhee National Forest initiated the relocation of approximately a 1/2 mile of road out of the valley bottom of Georgetown Creek to the upland. Georgetown Creek is a tributary to the Bear River south of Soda Springs, ID. The project will improve Bonneville cutthroat trout habitat by decreasing sedimentation and increasing fish access and water quality. The road fill, partially comprised of mine smelter slag, is actively eroding into the stream. It confines the stream and covers wetlands and springs and includes numerous migration barrier culverts. In 2008, the Forest constructed the replacement road in the upland and will initiate the removal of the valley bottom road fill and barrier culverts in 2009.



Pre-project Georgetown Road affects aquatic habitat by undersized and impassable culverts and encroachment upon the stream and its riparian area.



The new Georgetown Road (on the right) veers away from Georgetown Creek and the old road which closely paralleled the stream. The arrows direct users to the new segment road.

Project plans were conceived and developed by the Forest interdisciplinary team. The Forest Fisheries Program worked cooperatively with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, the City of Georgetown, and others during the planning of the project.

Downstream of the road relocation project and the Forest Boundary, on Bureau of Land Management land, a hydroelectric facility headgate blocks fish migration in Georgetown Creek. The Forest Fisheries Program worked cooperatively with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Attorney General's Office, Bureau of Land Management, the Bear River Environmental Coordinating Committee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Georgetown Irrigation District to secure funds, design fish passage around the headgate, and reserve a minimum flow for the fish ladder. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will construct the concrete fish ladder in 2009. This will help reestablish access for migratory Bonneville cutthroat trout to the Forest from the Bear River and back.



Georgetown Irrigation District Hydro headgate to be bypassed in 2009.

Deep Creek Restoration Project

Working cooperatively with the Forest Hydrology Shop, a private landowner, Trout Unlimited, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the C-T Forest Resource Advisory Committee, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Bonneville County, we replaced an impassable culvert at Deep Creek (a tributary to Jackknife Creek in the Salt River Drainage) and restored the down-cut stream channel downstream of the crossing. Deep Creek is a Yellowstone cutthroat trout stronghold stream and this project restores access to the stream for migratory cutthroat from Jackknife Creek and the Salt River.



New bottomless arch at county road crossing accommodates upstream fish passage and high flows



Prior to project implementation, the under-sized culvert at the county road crossing had caused this eroded gully downstream.



After the project, the stream grade, meander, and riparian vegetation were restored.

Wolverine Creek Crossing Returns to Natural Stream

An under-sized crossing under South Fork Snake River Road was replaced with a concrete component bridge, directly benefiting this Yellowstone cutthroat trout stronghold tributary to the South Fork Snake River. The concrete component bridge, delivered to the Forest from Portland, was the first of its type constructed on the Forest. Local concrete manufacturers have studied the components and expressed interest in local fabrication. This has the potential to facilitate an inexpensive fix to future road crossing problems throughout the Forest. This project was a partnership between the Forest, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Trout Unlimited.



Aquatic organism passage and natural hydrology were restored at the South Fork Snake Road crossing of Wolverine Creek

Mesa Falls Interpretive Sign

The Forest created interpretive signs featuring Yellowstone cutthroat trout and posted it at Mesa Falls and Last Chance recreation areas in partnership with the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee and Trout Unlimited. The signs were constructed with quality high pressure laminate material. These recreational areas are the most highly visited areas on the Forest, averaging 125,000 visitors per year. The informative and handsome signs were placed at these strategic locations to maximize visitors' contact with the native fish conservation message.



New Mesa Falls Interpretive Sign.

Cooperative Range Monitoring

The Forest fisheries, hydrology, soils, and range staff have been cooperating with external partners to conduct post-grazing monitoring within Bonneville cutthroat trout stronghold streams in the Thomas Fork Drainage for over a decade. Typical participating partners included the livestock permittees, agencies such as Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and organizations such as Trout Unlimited and Western Watersheds Project. In 2007, this partnership was extended beyond the Thomas Fork throughout the range of the species on the Forest. The range reviews have evolved over the years from annual finger-pointing and agreeing to disagree to actual measurements, reports, and cooperative recommendations.

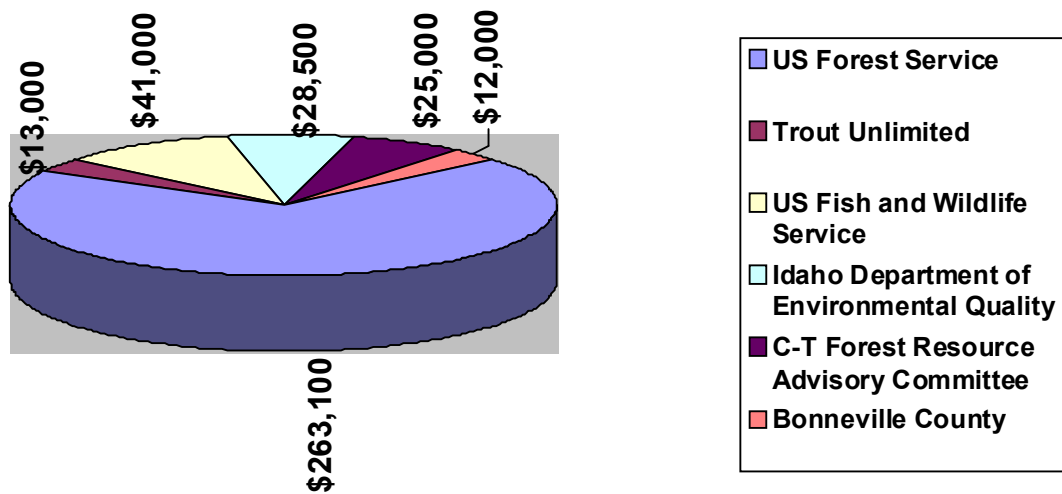
An additional development occurred in 2008, when an informal partnership was formed between the Forest fish, hydrology, and range programs and Western Watersheds Project to conduct pre-grazing and post-grazing monitoring on allotments within the range of Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The 2008



Lynn Van Every (DEQ), Wally Butler (Idaho Farm Bureau), John Carter (Western Watersheds Project), and others conduct a post-grazing review of Maple Creek, a Bonneville cutthroat trout stronghold stream.

effort concentrated on the North Fork of Tincup Creek and Bear Canyon. Surveys included the Multiple Indicator Monitoring protocol and utilization cages. The data has been compiled and the cooperative monitoring report, including recommendations, is currently being prepared.

2008 Caribou-Targhee Forest Fisheries Program Funding



Conservation Work Outside the Box

As you can see from this report, the C-T Fisheries Program achieved significant conservation accomplishments on the Forest in 2008. What is less evident in this report is the large amount of time and effort invested by the Forest fish folks this year at a Greater Yellowstone Area-wide and state-wide basis. Lee, Corey, and I are working with others throughout the State of Idaho and the Greater Yellowstone Area on issues that include aquatic nuisance species, Yellowstone and Bonneville cutthroat trout, Northern leatherside, and riparian management. It's our engagement in these wide-ranging issues that ensures our Forest is not surprised by them. These are the issues most likely to directly affect aquatic habitat and species conservation on our Forest. To participate in and/or lead these conservation efforts, contributing our energy and experience to the interagency partnerships, helps address these issues on our Forest and abroad.



Capurso, Lyman, and other Bonneville cutthroat trout biologists in the BCT spawning facility at Swan Creek, one of the most important native cutthroat trout tributaries to Bear Lake.

For a complete collection of the C-T Forest Fisheries Annual Reports, please visit:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee/fisheries/documents/annualreports/index.shtml>

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