

WNTI Project Completion Report

Habitat Modification on the North Fork of the Middle Snake River

A natural waterfall on the North Fork Little Snake River approx 0.5 mi upstream CO state Line, the Little Snake River and the Three Forks Ranch is being navigated by large stocked or displaced resident rainbow trout during high water flows. The problem is two-fold: 1) hybridization and 2) introduction of whirling disease introduction.

It is believed that pure Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRC) occupy less than 1% of their historic range. Loss of this habitat will be a significant set-back. CRC now occur in 8 of 196 sixth level watersheds on the Medicine Bow N F. Where CRC occur, restoring populations is the highest fisheries priority on the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District.

The objective of the project was to enhance the characteristics of the natural waterfall (specifically the pool tail-out and channel restrictions below the waterfall pool. The project will also remove below pool boulders that are restricting the channel causing water to backup increasing the pool height and alternately decreasing the falls height.

In 2007, all the necessary NEPA, 404, or other permits were obtained and WNTI provided funds through the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Management plan tasks addressed included: Continued cooperative interagency work environment relations; securing CRCT conservation populations by restrict nonnative introductions, restrict spread of disease and invasive species , constructing in channel barriers and protection distinct life-history traits, and create .

The proposed action was to mechanically change a pool tail-out section of the stream using explosives to reduce channel side granite outcroppings to relieve the channel restriction to allow the evacuation of downstream water more effectively, and ultimately change the depth of the pool and through implementation the height of the falls.

The project was successfully completed in the fall of 2008. Before and after photos show that the large rock outcropping was successfully removed.

Project Information can be obtained from:

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Thunderbasin National Grasslands

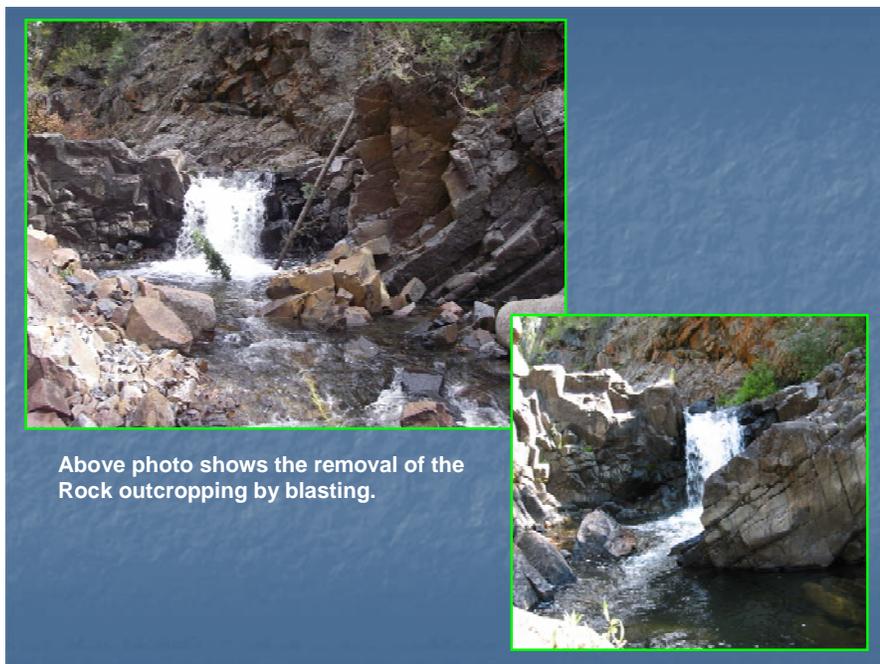
307-326-2541

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Photo 1. Obstructions to be removed



Photo 2. Completed project



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