

## Whitewater-Baldy Fire Gila trout habitat assessment Phase 2

**State(s):** New Mexico

**Managing Agency/Organization:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Type of Organization:** Federal Government

**Project Status:** Underway

**Project type:** WNTI Project

**Project action(s):** Watershed, In-stream and riparian habitat

**Trout species benefitted:** Gila Trout

**Population:** Gila River Basin Gila Trout

The project will help to fund fish, habitat, and macroinvertebrate assessments of occupied and potential Gila trout recovery streams impacted by the 2012 Whitewater-Baldy Complex Fire that were not assessed in 2013. Four (4) occupied Gila trout streams and 7 potential recovery streams will be assessed in 2014 and 2015. Occupied recovery streams will be surveyed to determine Gila trout survival and abundance, aquatic macroinvertebrate abundance, and habitat characteristics such as suitable trout habitat availability, cover, substrate, burn severity, discharge, water quality, and temperature; permanent photo points will be established to monitor habitat recovery. This information will be used as baseline data to monitor future recovery of these streams and help the Gila Trout Recovery Team and management agencies determine management activities necessary to retaining and restoring these populations.

### Objectives:

- Survey occupied Gila trout recovery streams that were impacted by the Whitewater-Baldy Fire.
- Determine fish survival, species composition, and distribution of nonnative salmonids within potential recovery streams
- Determine Gila trout survival, abundance, and distribution within impacted streams.
- Develop baseline data on occupied Gila trout streams to monitor future recovery of these streams and help the Gila Trout Recovery Team and management agencies determine management activities necessary to retaining and restoring these populations
- Collect aquatic macroinvertebrates and determine abundance and species composition that can be monitored over time.
- Collect and analyze aquatic macroinvertebrate assemblage and habitat characteristics data to help the Gila Trout Recovery Team determine if the stream is suitable for Gila trout recovery.
- Survey/Inventory habitat characteristics in occupied and potential recovery streams such as; suitable trout habitat availability, cover, substrate, burn severity, bank cutting, discharge, water quality, and temperature.
- Establish permanent photo-points to monitor habitat recovery.

### Partners:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service New Mexico Fish and Wildlife
- University of New Mexico
- U.S. Forest Service Mora National Fish Hatchery
- Trout Unlimited Albuquerque Chapter
- Trout Unlimited national
- New Mexico Department of Fish and Game
- U.S. Forest Service Mimbres Wilderness District
- U.S. Forest Service Gila National Forest Supervisory Office
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

### Funding Source(s):

- National Fish Habitat Action Plan

**Project cost:** \$48,000.00

**Start Date:** 07/01/2014 **Completion Date:** 10/30/2015

### Project Contact:

Dustin Myers

Fisheries Biologist

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Albuquerque, New Mexico