



NATIONAL
FISH HABITAT
ACTION PLAN



Western Native
Trout Initiative

www.westernnativetrout.org

2008 Waters to Watch - South Fork Chalk Creek, Utah

Even in the best of times, good habitat for trout is a scarce commodity in northeastern Utah. But for the Bonneville cutthroat trout, Utah's state fish, a little more habitat is about to be accessible. The Bonneville cutthroat is one of 14 recognized subspecies of Cutthroat trout native to the western United States. Once also found in Idaho, Wyoming and Nevada, the fish is now limited to small isolated populations in the headwaters of mountain streams and lakes of Utah's Bonneville Drainage Basin. Recent declines in the population have been attributed to habitat loss and impacts from introduced nonnative rainbow trout. The status of the species is now being reviewed to determine if it should be listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Conservation efforts by a variety of partners, including the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Trout Unlimited, Forest Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service, are underway to help the fish before it needs formal protection under the ESA. This year, thanks to funding provided through the Western Native Trout Initiative, work will be completed on private lands in the South Fork of Chalk Creek in the Weber River Drainage to open up the stream for fish access. The Bonneville cutthroat trout has been blocked from the stream by culverts inadequately constructed to allow upstream fish passage. Now, by updating one culvert and constructing a small bridge in place of another, the road crossing will no longer be a barrier and 2.6 new miles of stream will be reconnected with downstream areas. And another step will be taken for the conservation of a unique native fish of the western United States.