



Western Native
Trout Initiative

www.westernnativetrout.org

2009 Waters to Watch - Teton Creek, Idaho

Degradation of stream channels has contributed to a 95% decline in native Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) numbers in the Teton River. Teton Creek, the largest of the Teton River headwater tributaries, is critical to YCT recovery since it is one of the only tributaries in Teton Valley that still has a YCT spawning run. Teton Creek also produces more juvenile YCT than any other tributary. Over a mile of Teton Creek was severely damaged when a developer straightened, widened, and dredged the stream.

Beginning in 1980 and continuing through 2004, these actions destabilized the stream, causing bank failure, sedimentation, and the loss of fish habitat and streamside vegetation. "The developer's work has directly compromised YCT populations in the Teton Watershed, caused the loss of property along nearly four miles of stream, and increased the risk of flooding. This has become a community problem that requires a community-based solution to fix," states Friends of the River (FTR) Stream Restoration Director Mike Lien.

For the past three years, FTR has been working with approximately sixty Teton Creek stakeholders from the private and public sectors on a project to restore the damaged channel. The project is designed to stabilize the channel, increase fish habitat, improve water quality, reduce the risk of flooding, and protect property. FTR will begin construction of the project this summer by re-shaping the channel, building pools and riffles, stabilizing banks using bio-engineering techniques, and planting native vegetation.

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) identifies the establishment of partnerships as one of its Teton Creek highest priorities and the Teton Creek project consists of many enthusiastic partners. The total cost of this project is \$1.65 million. This project is a true collaborative effort with many interested parties submitting time and resources; the total non-Federal match is over \$500,000, including \$20,000 from NFHAP.

The Teton Valley has been identified as a focal area under the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Strategic Plan, and within the Fish and Wildlife Service Cross Program Recovery initiative. Idaho and Wyoming recognize that YCT are a species of greatest concern. With all of the dramatic growth that Teton County is currently undergoing, this project would help stabilize habitat for YCT as well as other aquatic species in an important tributary of the Teton River.

Partners for the Teton Creek Project:

- Western Native Trout Initiative
- Friends of the Teton River
- Floyd Hill Family

- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Department of Water Resources
- Fran McKibben Family
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Natural Resources Conservation Services
- Teton County, Idaho
- City of Driggs, Idaho
- US Forest Service Eastern Idaho Regional Advisory Committee
- Western Native Trout Initiative
- USFWS Partners Program
- Orvis
- Mainstream Restoration Inc.
- Confluence Consulting Incorporated
- Harmony Engineering
- Nelson Engineering
- Arlin Grimes Excavation