

2010 Waters to Watch - Green River Basin, Colorado/Wyoming/Utah

Both the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership and the Western Native Trout Initiative, under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, have recognized the outstanding aquatic resources of the Green River Basin. Both partnerships support projects, directly and indirectly, that benefit fish populations and habitat in ways that place local projects within a larger basin-wide perspective.

Projects initiated by the multiple agencies and partners to date include:

- 1) Restoring native cutthroat trout and habitat in LaBarge Creek, Muddy Creek, Severy Creek, the North Fork of the Little Snake River and Cottonwood Creek, Wyoming;
- 2) Reconnecting headwater and mainstem habitats of the Duchesne River, Utah for native suckers and chub, and
- 3) Restoring floodplain habitat to benefit native suckers, chub, and potentially Colorado River cutthroat, in the San Rafael River, Utah.

Each of these projects is supported by the partnerships and their members from the various State, federal, tribal, and non-governmental organizations that comprise them. Some of these projects focused on adapting existing protocols for basin-wide assessment of aquatic resource conditions, work that is currently being done through a partnership between Trout Unlimited (TU) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These projects are outstanding examples of on-the-ground work within the watershed and demonstrate the success of the DFHP and WNTI at joining together to facilitate leveraging of funding, technical expertise, and ideas to improve fish habitat for western native fishes within both partnerships.

Green River Basin Background:

The Green River is the largest tributary to the Colorado River, with headwaters in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. Native Colorado River cutthroat trout utilize headwaters and mainstem waters of the upper Green, while native razorback, bluehead and flannelmouth sucker, roundtail and humpback chub, bonytail, and Colorado pikeminnow inhabit more intermediate tributaries and mainstem habitats. All of these native fishes have declined from historic levels due to human impacts to aquatic habitats, including: dams, introduction of invasive species, water diversion, and land use.

Partners: Trout Unlimited (TU), Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), BLM, USFS, USFWS, USDA-NRCS, Wyoming Game and Fish, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Green River Valley Trust, The Conservation Fund, Wyoming Water Project, Cottonwood Ranch, Ute Indian Tribe, and Utah State University.