

Wyoming and Utah Modernization that Supports Fish & Agriculture

Trout Unlimited is partnering with 5 large ranches along the Henry's Fork River to improve 12 irrigation diversions for fish passage. The Henry's Fork River supports native Colorado cutthroat trout, flannelmouth and bluehead suckers, but their habitat is fragmented seasonally due to these diversions. This project will restore passage to over 50 river miles and improve irrigation infrastructure for the benefit of local agriculture.



WYOMING & UTAH

Located in the mainstem and major tributaries of the Henry's Fork of the Green River in Uinta and Sweetwater Counties, Wyoming and Summit County, Utah

KEY PROJECT STATS

- 50** | Over 50 river miles on a mix of private, state and federal lands will be reconnected for native fish species.
- 5** | 5 agricultural ranches involved with the project
- 12** | 12 irrigation diversions will be improved for fish passage
- 3** | 3 species of special concern for Wyoming and Utah will benefit
- 1** | 1 educational program developed for project monitoring that involved the local school



Colorado River cutthroat trout located below one of the diversions. Photo credit: Trout Unlimited

The organizations that are involved with this project include: Trout Unlimited, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Uinta County Conservation District, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust, Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, Resources Legacy Fund, Natural Resources Conservation Service

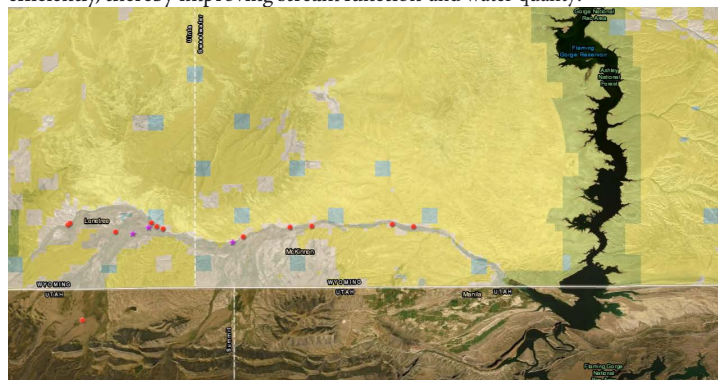
Funding partners include: Trout Unlimited, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Resources Legacy Fund, Uinta County Conservation District, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust, Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, Landowners, Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (Pending)

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Henry's Fork River contains limited habitat for native fish species in the mainstem due to fragmentation caused by scores of irrigation diversion dams. The mainstem and lower reaches of the tributaries are comprised primarily of local cattle ranches that rely on seasonal irrigation to grow hay. Each ranch uses push-up style diversions to transport water to their fields. This type of diversion causes many hydrological issues, including seasonal fish barriers, increased bank erosion, increased sedimentation, and reduced water quality caused by in-channel maintenance equipment. After improving a large irrigation diversion in 2018, local agriculture producers collaborated with Trout Unlimited to expand on that effort. Twelve diversion structures were identified as fish passage concerns and their improvement will reconnect over 50 river miles.

KEY PROJECT BENEFIT

This project presents a unique opportunity to address several resource concerns and provide targeted conservation benefits at a watershed-wide scale. Improving the diversions to natural channel design structures will reconnect native fish populations, open access to refuge habitat and benefit species resiliency. The improved structures will reduce soil and water quality degradation caused by the existing diversions. These structures, combined with re-vegetation efforts, will reduce velocity and erosion on the stream banks. They will also eliminate the need for producers to disturb the river for maintenance and allow them to manage their irrigation operations more efficiently, thereby improving stream function and water quality.



Map of Henry's Fork Fish Passage Project. Credit: Trout Unlimited

WACC MEMBERS

