

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Cutthroat Trout Conservation Capacity Building in Yellowstone National Park

Discipline: Natural
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Montana State University
Effective Dates: 9/15/2010 - 12/31/2013
Funding Amount: \$102,649

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) and westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) have largely been lost from stream systems in YELL. These species will be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) unless immediate action is taken. YCT are currently losing habitat in the northern regions of YELL due to invading brook trout and (hybridizing) rainbow trout. WCT have been reduced to only one remaining aboriginal population existing in a tiny isolated headwater stream. The goal of this project is to establish self-sustaining, genetically-pure cutthroat trout populations within YELL in an effort to restore and prevent the ESA listing of these unique native subspecies. The cutthroat trout are an important resource in Yellowstone because they are treasured by visitors and are a fundamental component of a relatively intact, naturally-functioning ecosystem that includes the ESA-listed grizzly bear and many other important and sensitive species.

Our specific objectives are to:

- 1) Serve as critical member of a team working to complete NEPA documentation for proposed native fish conservation activities in YNP.
- 2) Work with NPS fisheries leader and others to seek funding and build the capacity to preserve and restore cutthroat trout in streams, rivers and lakes of YNP, including Yellowstone Lake and tributaries.
- 3) Continue the on-going WCT restoration project on the East Fork Specimen Creek by re-stocking the system using multiple genetically pure WCT brood sources and multiple methods.
- 4) Other duties as assigned

Outcomes with Completion Dates: 31 December 2011

Chapters of Environmental Assessment. There will also be a completion report provided to the RM-CESU for posting.

Keywords: Montana State University, Yellowstone National Park, Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT), westslope cutthroat trout (WCT), habitat loss, restoration