

AQUATIC HABITAT PRIORITIES

REGION: Jackson

WATERSHED NAME: Springs Creek System (Snake River)

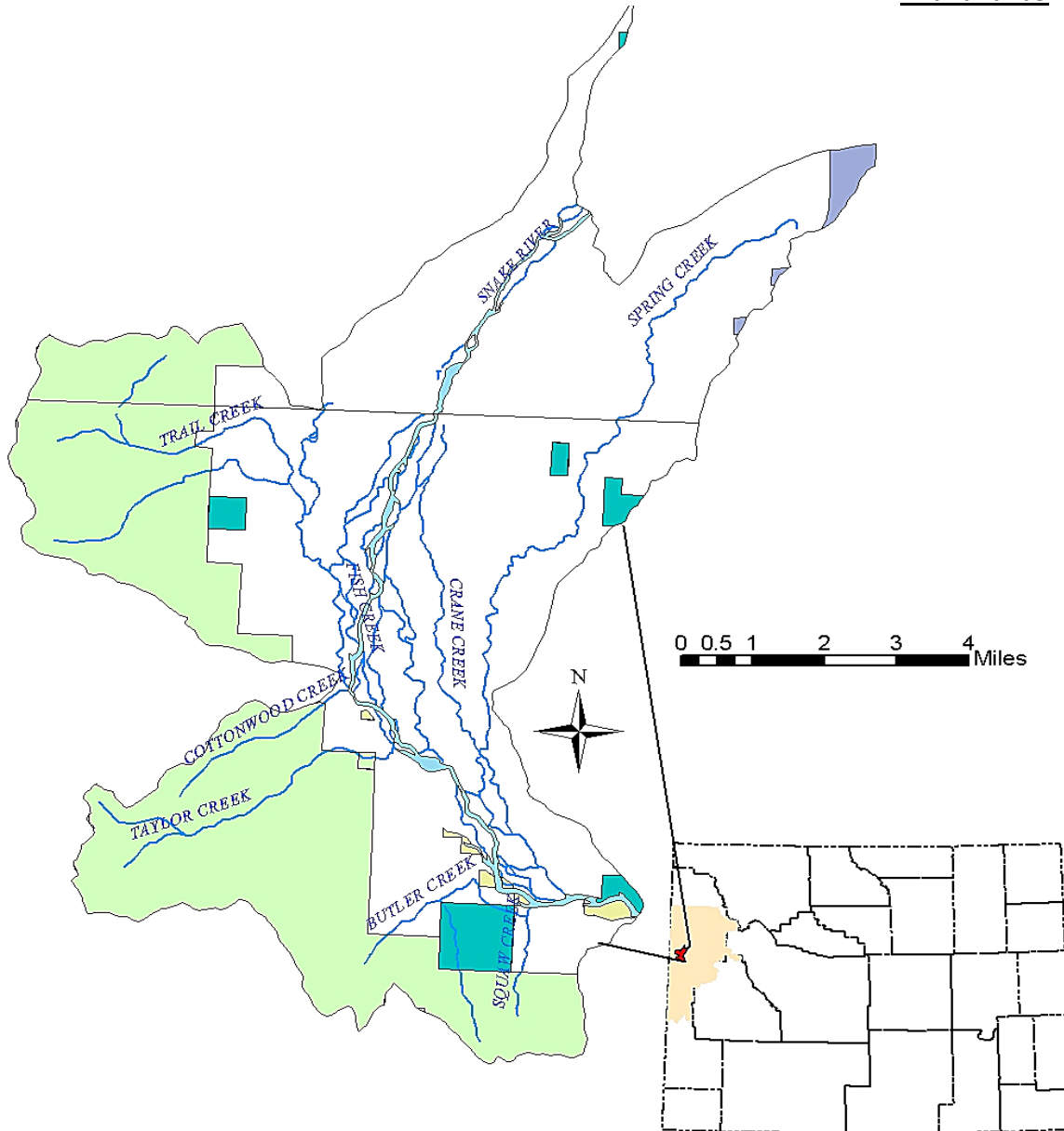
PRIORITY: 2

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LAND STATUS: 63% Private, 37% Public

SPECIES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM ACTIVITY IN THIS WATERSHED:

Native fish: Snake River Cutthroat, mountain whitefish, Utah sucker, mountain sucker, Paiute sculpin, redbreasted sunfish, longnose dace, speckle dace

Sport fish: lake trout, brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, Kokanee

Big Game: mule deer, elk, moose

Other: Beaver, black bear, bald eagle, big horn, trumpeter swan, goshawk, mountain lion

CURRENT HABITAT CONDITIONS/LIMITING FACTORS:

Native, sport & non-game fish—Trout spawning habitat is degrading where levee construction has eliminated flushing flows, cottonwood regeneration, gravel recruitment, and instream structure. Area residents have removed native riparian vegetation, which has weakened banks and compromised stream stability and have developed off stream ponds and reflecting pools. In addition, utilization by livestock and wildlife along springs creeks negatively impacts spawning habitats. Currently the channels have become inundated with sediment, wide, shallow, and saturated with aquatic vegetation. The majority of suitable spawning areas occur on deeded lands in spring creek tributaries between the Cottonwood Creek and the Hoback River.

T&E/Sensitive Species—Continued demands on the landscape (i.e. recreation on public lands, development on private lands) contributes to general habitat fragmentation and wildlife disturbance.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS/AGREEMENTS:

Conservation easements with the major landowners would compliment other habitat enhancement efforts on adjacent public lands. The Jackson Hole Land Trust has implemented several conservation easements in this area. Opportunities for the Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. to partner with such private conservation organizations on easements are apparent.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES/PROPOSED PROJECTS:

Fisheries staff has done extensive amount of coordination with private landowners, land managers, Teton Conservation District, conservation groups and GTNP in regards to improving spawning springs. Funding has become available to do Snake River cutthroat spawning habitat projects through the Wildlife Heritage Foundation, private landowners, Teton Conservation District and Trout Unlimited.