

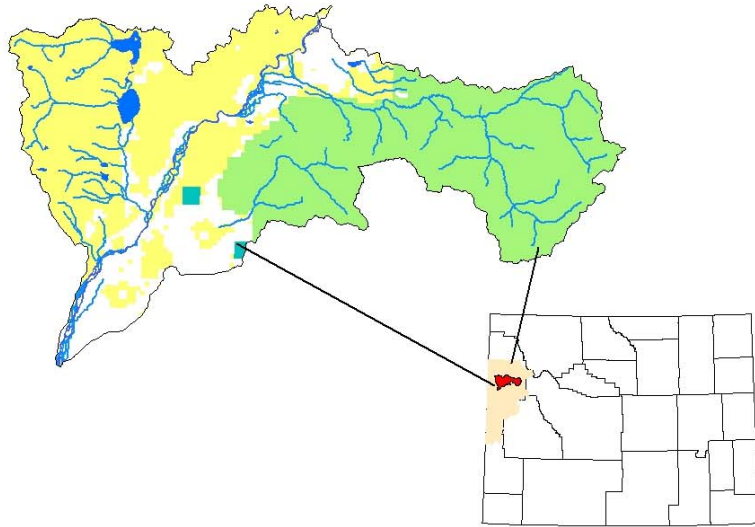
AQUATIC HABITAT PRIORITIES

REGION: Jackson

WATERSHED NAME: Buffalo Fork River

PRIORITY: 8

HUC: 1704010105



LAND STATUS: 5% Private, 95% Public

SPECIES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM ACTIVITY IN THIS WATERSHED:

Native fish: Snake River Cutthroat, mountain whitefish, Utah sucker, mountain sucker, Paiute sculpin, redbelt shiner, leatherside chub, longnose dace, speckle dace

Sport fish: lake trout, brook trout, rainbow trout

Big Game – Mule deer, elk, moose, bison, pronghorn and big horn sheep

Other – Beaver, grizzly bear, black bear, bald eagle, trumpeter swan, mountain lion

CURRENT HABITAT CONDITIONS/LIMITING FACTORS:

Native, sport & non-game fish– There is a general lack of watershed functionality due to advanced successional stages. Road construction along the North Fork of Spread Creek has impacted aquatic and riparian habitat quality.

Beaver- Lack of dam building material and forage (i.e. aspen, willow and cottonwood) due to advanced succession, fire suppression, and ungulate use have decreased available beaver habitat and thus the potential for creation of additional riparian/wetland habitats.

T & E, Trophy Game and Sensitive Species – Conflicts between large predators and livestock on private and public lands are relatively frequent, especially when Forest Service allotments are stocked. The result is often relocation or lethal removal of conflict individuals.

Big Game - Most of the transitional and winter ranges are in advanced successional stages, and lacking the historical mosaic of uneven vegetative age classes. This may also be contributing to reduced big game productivity (i.e. moose). Moreover, aspen and mountain shrub communities are mature to decadent, impacting a myriad of wildlife species. Private land parcels contribute to habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflicts.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS/AGREEMENTS:

Conservation easements with major landowners within Buffalo Valley would compliment habitat enhancement efforts on adjacent public lands and provide habitat continuity. The Jackson Hole Land Trust has consummated some easements in this area. Additional conservation easements are being negotiated. Thus, the opportunity exists for Wyoming

Game and Fish Dept. involvement, and the identification/acquisition of property rights addressing wildlife habitat needs.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES/PROPOSED PROJECTS:

Conservation easements have been initiated in the area and there appears to be an opportunity for Wyoming Game and Fish Department involvement/input.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest is near completion of a Landscape Scale Assessment (LSA), which includes the Buffalo Valley area. The purpose of the document is to identify needs and associated projects. Thus, the opportunity exists to tier habitat enhancement projects with the LSA planning document. WGFD habitat personnel have, and will continue, to provide input in this process. The Bridger-Teton National Forest Plan will be updated within the next 3-5 years. WGFD involvement will be a priority.