

# Pinedale Region Aquatic Habitat Priorities

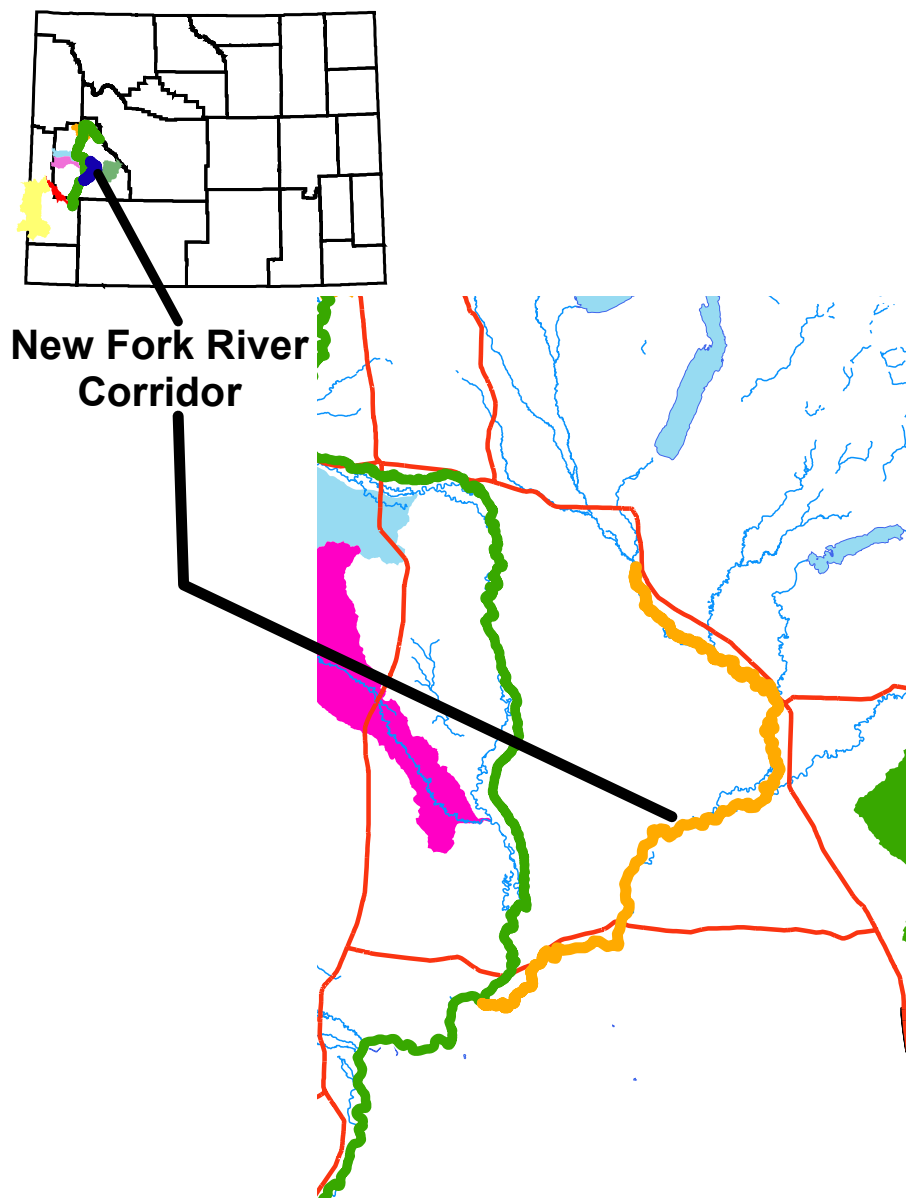
**Region:** Pinedale

**Priority:** 6

**Watershed Name:** New Fork Corridor

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The New Fork River Corridor focus area includes a 44-mile segment of the New Fork River (approximately 31 miles of the valley) starting approximately 2 miles south of Pinedale on S16, T33N, R109W and extending to the confluence with the Green River. The lateral boundaries generally lie within the approximate 100-year flood plain of the river. However, viable restoration / enhancement opportunities along this corridor influenced by irrigation activities are considered important as well as upland inclusions within this zone.



## **Pinedale Region Aquatic Habitat Priorities**

**LAND STATUS:** 93% Private ,7% Public (mostly state, with small amounts of BLM)

### **SPECIES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM ACTIVITY IN THIS WATERSHED:**

The primary focus in this area is on assemblages of riparian obligate species with secondary benefits to other species that benefit from healthy and diverse riparian communities. This river and associated riparian communities provides a locally important sport fishery, critical moose winter range and important transitional habitat for migrating mule deer, as well as supporting sage grouse broods.

### **CURRENT HABITAT CONDITIONS/LIMITING FACTORS:**

One important indicator of the riparian condition is the structural and age class diversity of the woody riparian vegetation, particularly willows and cottonwoods. Due to their importance to numerous wildlife species, and streambank stability, successful regeneration of these communities in the New Fork Corridor is of particular concern. Observations indicate adequate initial reestablishment of willows, but recruitment to medium and mature age classes is inconsistent and appears to be limited by browsing impacts. Cottonwood reestablishment is even less common, and recruitment to medium and mature age or height classes appears to be virtually nonexistent. Again, browsing impacts appear to be limiting recruitment. This situation has been observed throughout the New Fork River corridor.

### **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS/AGREEMENTS**

Restoration of the woody riparian vegetative communities in this corridor area is most limited by the ability to control ungulate browsing and to provide for rest of vegetation treatments and proper follow up management following treatments. Readily available alternative locations to alleviate grazing pressure/demands in this area would provide greater opportunities for vegetation restoration/enhancement projects.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITIES/PROPOSED PROJECTS**

The New Fork River Corridor Focus Area was originally defined as a “Priority Area” for a WHIP funding proposal in 1998 resulting from funding opportunities offered in the 1996 Farm Bill. The WHIP program within the 2002 Farm Bill was funded at an even higher level than in 1996 and numerous restoration and enhancement opportunities remain.