

Pinedale Region Aquatic Habitat Priorities

Region: Pinedale

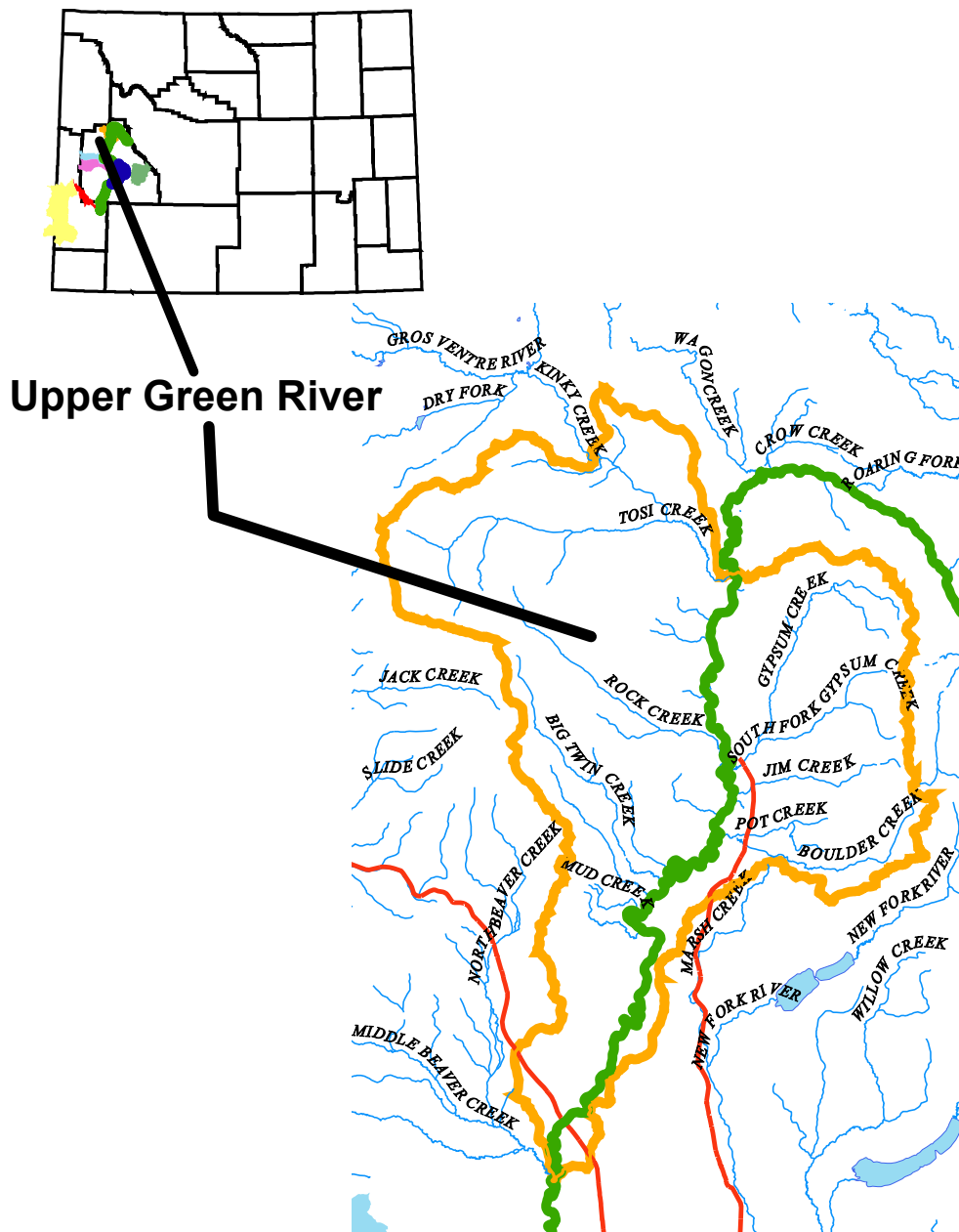
Priority: 7

Watershed Name: Tosi & Rock Creeks

HUC: 1404010102

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Two tributaries of the Upper Green River watershed, specifically Rock and Tosi Creeks, make up the Pinedale Region's fifth priority for the Fish Division. Native Colorado River Cutthroat trout (CRC) are found in these tributaries and are most limited by habitat degradation (grazing management and riparian/aspen community conditions) and competition with nonnative trout. These creeks drain the southeast flank of the Gros Ventre Range.



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LAND STATUS: 100% Public

SPECIES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM ACTIVITY IN THIS WATERSHED:

Habitat restoration efforts in these drainages would be focused on the native CRC. Long-term watershed restoration efforts could provide benefits to assemblages of both native aquatic and native terrestrial wildlife species through the enhancement of watershed health and function by improving management and addressing identified vegetative succession concerns.

CURRENT HABITAT CONDITIONS/LIMITING FACTORS:

The CRC population in this watershed is currently most limited by competition and hybridization with nonnative salmonid species (brook and rainbow trout). Less than optimal habitat conditions, resulting from a combination of vegetative succession and past and present human impacts (roads, grazing, timbering, fire suppression, etc.) could limit population recovery to desirable levels. Restoration of healthy and diverse plant communities, particularly aspen and riparian, would optimize trout habitat over the long-term while providing benefits to numerous other wildlife species.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS/AGREEMENTS

Restoration of the vegetative communities in these watersheds is most limited by the lack of the ability to control livestock grazing 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 watershed would provide greater opportunities for vegetation treatment/enhancement projects.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES/PROPOSED PROJECTS

Current watershed-scale habitat project planning efforts include a proposal to implement prescribed burns on roughly 5,000 to 8,000 acres of aspen, aspen/conifer mix, and sagebrush on Pinyon Ridge, The Hogsback, and the SW slope of Osborn Mountain. NEPA for this project is expected to be completed soon and a decision shortly thereafter. This area is one of the higher priorities identified by the B-T Forest. Conflicts with livestock management (resting treatments) exist on about 3,000 acres of the west side of this project area. Allowing prescribed burning within wilderness areas is another conflict within this area. The Upper Green River Landscape Assessment (LSA) identified the need for habitat improvements in the areas described above. Allotment Management Plan (AMP) review is currently being conducted on the Upper Green River Allotment.

Tosi Creek: The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed habitat improvement structures above the Moore Ranch in 1935. These structures were repaired and additional structures installed by the WGFD in 1981. Concentrated grazing use has been recorded in Teepee Creek, tributary to Tosi Creek. Efforts to resolve these problems included construction of an enclosure, installation of bank logs to exclude streamside grazing and planting willows. Roads also contribute to sediment loading along Teepee Creek and logging has been identified as a problem in the upper watershed. The CRC populations in Tosi and Tepee creeks could also be connected to create a metapopulation.

Rock Creek: The upper segment of this stream supports a self-sustaining CRC population. However, brook trout just downstream threaten this population. Habitat improvement structures were placed in the lower reach of Rock Creek in 1987. Trudy Creek, tributary to Rock Creek, had a self-sustaining, pure population of CRC in 1981. CRC in Trudy Creek probably migrate to and from Rock Creek.

Klondike Creek: This stream has a natural fish migration barrier in the upper reach. In 1985 habitat structures and two livestock enclosures were placed near the mouth of Klondike Creek.

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These streams are managed with emphasis on conservation of CRC populations. Conservation goals to assure the long-term prosperity of CRC include establishment of self-sustaining metapopulations, maintenance of the habitat in areas that currently support self-sustaining CRC populations, and management of other areas for increased abundance. The Forest Service has agreed, in principle, to this plan through the Tri-State CRC Conservation Agreement and Strategy.

Lime, Eagle and Whiskey Creeks are small tributaries of the Green River located between Klondike and Rock Creeks. A survey in 1973 documented brook, brown and rainbow trout in the lower mile of Lime Creek. Flowing water was reported 2.5 mi from the mouth but a barrier one mile upstream from the mouth could limit fish movement above that point. Eagle and Whiskey Creeks reportedly normally go dry annually. These streams were included within this priority area because of the close proximity to Rock and Klondike Creeks.