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**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
PARK OPERATIONS ~ PLANNING ~ CSU EXTENSION ~ COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ VETERANS SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES

Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI)  
Therese Thompson, Coordinator  
134 Union Boulevard, Suite 665  
Lakewood, CO 80228

March 23, 2018

Re: WNTI No: 2016-SG9 El Paso County Bear Creek Watershed/Jones Park Restoration

Dear Therese,

Thanks to WNTI funding, El Paso County Parks was able to purchase and install interpretive signage in the Bear Creek Watershed at Jones Park.

Restoration efforts and watershed awareness is a key project for many local stakeholders and is an ongoing collaboration between El Paso County Parks, the City of Colorado Springs, the Bear Creek Watershed Roundtable, and the US Forest Service. The Roundtable was instrumental in completing the interpretive signage project.

The interpretive panels incorporate educational information designed to show the relationship of the trout and its habitat to the surrounding ecosystems and recreational opportunities. It celebrates the unique nature of the trout and increases public awareness of the species.

Attached please find photos, receipts and an invoice for interpretive signage.

We are grateful for WNTI's support.

Thank you,

  
Tim Wolken, Executive Director  
2002 Creek Crossing  
Colorado Springs, CO 80905  
[timwolken@elpasoco.com](mailto:timwolken@elpasoco.com)  
719-520-6981



BEAR CREEK WATERSHED / JONES PARK RESTORATION: DIRECTIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PRO-

## COLORADO GREENBACK CUTTHROAT TROUT

### Bear Creek's "Comeback Kid"

#### PIKES PEAK GRANITE

The coarse gravel that crunches underfoot and lines the banks and bottom of Bear Creek is decomposed Pike's Peak granite. The crumbly granite is made of quartz, feldspar and flakes of mica. The granite makes up the monolithic Pike's Peak. In its fragmented form, it becomes one of the most significant threats to this rare trout.

As granite fragments enter the stream the channel is made shallower. The trout needs at least a foot of water to survive during the winter when the stream surface freezes and during drier periods of summer. The sharp edges of the granite also make life difficult for the plants that provide food for the trout.

**B**ear Creek is a small tributary of the Arkansas River west of Colorado Springs. It might be unremarkable — just another cold, clear stream among countless streams that carry water down Colorado's mountainsides — but it is important because of one of its inhabitants. In 2012, it was determined that the only pure greenback cutthroat trout population resided in Bear Creek.

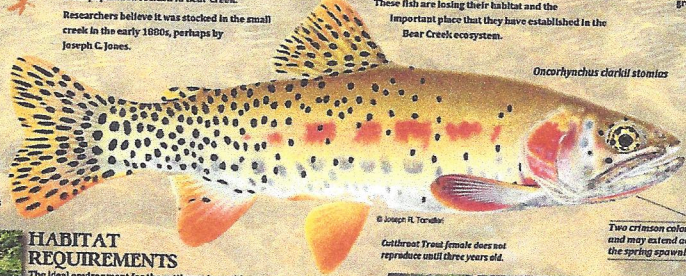
Researchers believe it was stocked in the small creek in the early 1880s, perhaps by Joseph C. Jones.

**S**IZE  
The cutthroat trout adults found in Bear Creek range from 5 to 10 inches long. In a more fertile environment, this species could grow to 18 inches.

**DIET**  
Aquatic and terrestrial insects, worms, snails, shrimp and small fish.

**APPEARANCE**  
The Greenback Cutthroat species has larger and fewer black spots than other trout lineages. Its color has adapted to camouflage them in their environment.

*The Greenback Cutthroat Trout was adopted as the official state fish of Colorado on March 15, 1994.*



*Oncorhynchus clarkii stansleyi*

#### HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

The ideal environment for the cutthroat is a cold, clear stream with a gravel bottom, well-oxygenated water, with a healthy riparian (wetlands) area at the border to support plant and insect growth. Natural barriers and cover, such as waterfalls, overhanging trees and bankside roots, can help protect the cutthroat from predators and other non-native trout species.




Photo courtesy USGS

© Joseph R. Tomberlin

Cutthroat Trout female does not reproduce until three years old.





Photo courtesy Pike's Peak Chapter of Trout Unlimited

#### HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

Over the past decade, government agencies and recreational and environmental groups have enlisted volunteers to work on trail repair, bridge building, and sediment control in an effort to improve the trout's habitat.



## COLORADO GREENBACK CUTTHROAT TROUT

### This small stream is home to a famous fish

#### The mysterious journey to Bear Creek

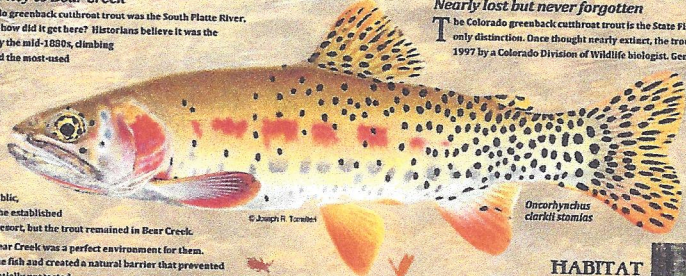
The native habitat for the Colorado greenback cutthroat trout was the South Platte River, many miles from Bear Creek. So how did it get here? Historians believe it was the work of an enterprising man with a plan. By the mid-1880s, climbing Pike's Peak had become a popular activity, and the most-used route started in Cheyenne Cañon and traveled alongside Bear Creek. Landowner Joseph C. Jones tried to build a hotel and restaurant on the route, and introduced the small spotted fish into ponds to make his resort even more appealing. The resort never materialized, but the fish thrived. Countless visitors and tourists continued to climb Pike's Peak, but in ensuing decades, the route changed. Water sources on the South Slope were closed to the public, and Barr Trail, on the other side of the peak, became the established route to the top. Jones abandoned his plans for the resort, but the trout remained in Bear Creek.

Over time, some of them escaped the ponds, and Bear Creek was a perfect environment for them. Bear Creek's waterfall provided protection for the fish and created a natural barrier that prevented them from moving upstream. They were essentially protected.

#### Nearly lost but never forgotten

The Colorado greenback cutthroat trout is the State Fish of Colorado. But that isn't its only distinction. Once thought nearly extinct, the trout in Bear Creek was rediscovered in 1997 by a Colorado Division of Wildlife biologist. Genetic testing determined that this trout was different from the fish that were thought to be the Colorado greenback. A 2012 DNA study comparing samples collected 150 years ago determined that the trout in Bear Creek comprise the only remaining population of its kind.

*The Greenback Cutthroat Trout was adopted as the official state fish of Colorado on March 15, 1994.*



*Oncorhynchus clarkii stansleyi*

#### HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

The Colorado greenback cutthroat trout loves cold, clear water. Bear Creek runs over decomposed Pike's Peak granite and has a healthy wetlands area at its banks for plant and insect growth. Abundant cover — overhanging trees and roots bankside — is also important.




Photo courtesy USGS

#### HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

Over the past decade, government agencies and recreational and environmental groups have enlisted volunteers to work on trail repair, bridge building, and sediment control in an effort to improve the trout's habitat in Bear Creek.




Photo courtesy Pike's Peak Chapter of Trout Unlimited



BEAR CREEK WATERSHED / JONES PARK RESTORATION: DIRECTIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PRO-

## COLORADO GREENBACK CUTTHROAT TROUT

### Bear Creek's "Comeback Kid"

#### REROUTED TRAILS



Trails in this area date back to the 1800's, but in 2017, many of them were rerouted. The reason? To ensure a future for the Colorado greenback cutthroat trout. Bear Creek holds the only genetically pure population of this trout. In the past, recreation-related damage from erosion, bank degradation and sediment buildup in the creek contributed to the decline of this population, which was teetering on the brink of extinction. Reconfigured trails helped stabilize damaged portions of the stream bank to reduce sedimentation in the creek.

**Why do we care?**  
Extinction is a natural process, but the rate of extinction has been increasing at an alarming rate. Each extinction impacts the diversity and complexity of life on earth, and when a species disappears, a living connection is broken.



*Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias*

© Joseph H. Tompsett

#### SIZE

The cutthroat trout adults found in Bear Creek range from 5 to 10 inches long. In a more fertile environment, this species could grow to 18 inches.

#### DIET

Aquatic and terrestrial insects, worms, snails, shrimp and small fish.

#### APPEARANCE

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The Greenback Cutthroat Trout was adopted as the official state fish of Colorado on March 15, 1994.



#### HABITAT REQUIREMENTS



The ideal environment for the cutthroat is a cold, clear stream with a gravel bottom, well-oxygenated water, with a healthy riparian (wetlands) area at the border to support plant and insect growth. Natural barriers and cover, such as waterfalls, overhanging trees and bankside roots, can help protect the cutthroat from predators and other non-native trout species.

#### HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS



Over the past decade, government agencies and recreational and environmental groups have enlisted volunteers to work on trail repair, bridge building, and sediment control in an effort to improve the trout's habitat.

Photo courtesy Pike's Peak Chapter of Trout Unlimited.



## COLORADO GREENBACK CUTTHROAT TROUT

### Nearby stream is home to a famous fish

#### REROUTED TRAILS



Trails in this area date back to the 1800's, but in 2017, many of them were rerouted. The reason? To ensure a future for the Colorado greenback cutthroat trout. Bear Creek holds the only genetically pure population of this trout. In the past, recreation-related damage from erosion, bank degradation and sediment buildup in the creek contributed to the decline of this population, which was teetering on the brink of extinction. Reconfigured trails helped stabilize damaged portions of the stream bank to reduce sedimentation in the creek.

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#### LOCATION



#### HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS



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Photo courtesy Pike's Peak Chapter of Trout Unlimited.






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Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI)  
Therese Thompson, Coordinator  
134 Union Boulevard, Suite 665  
Lakewood, CO 80228

September 28, 2017

Re: WNTI No: 2016-SG9 El Paso County Bear Creek Watershed/Jones Park Restoration

Dear Therese,

Thanks to WNTI funding, El Paso County Parks was able to purchase and install directional signage along rerouted and decommissioned trail sections in the Jones Park region.

The project is an ongoing collaboration between El Paso County Parks and the US Forest Service. The Forest Service aided county staff with mobilization and installation efforts with signs, materials and hardware.

The directional signs aid trail users with navigating newly constructed trails and also help protect areas that are currently being restored to improve the habitat of the endangered greenback cutthroat trout. The new signage has allowed recreational opportunity to coexist with habitat restoration efforts in the Bear Creek Watershed within Jones Park.

Attached please find photos, receipts and an invoice for directional signage.

We are grateful for WNTI's support.

Thank you,



Christine Burns, Community Outreach Division Manager  
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BEAR CREEK WATERSHED / JONES PARK RESTORATION: DIRECTIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PROJECT

