

Western Native Trout Initiative
Project Update for:
San Clara Creek Habitat Restoration for Rio Grande cutthroat trout



Instream habitat improvement structure in Santa Clara Creek

Background

The Pueblo of Santa Clara (Pueblo) was awarded a WNTI grant in 2009 to construct a barrier and habitat improvement structures for conservation of Rio Grande cutthroat trout. This project also requires the removal of nonnative trout.

Purpose

Construct a barrier to prevent upstream migration of nonnative trout and re-establish Rio Grande cutthroat trout.

Cooperators

- Pueblo of Santa Clara
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- Trout Unlimited
- USFWS, NM Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Project Status

- Partners met to discuss the development of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NMDGF and Pueblo regarding a donor stream for fish reintroduction on the Pueblo.
- In July 2009, the Tribal Council passed a resolution designating the entire headwaters of the Santa Clara Creek Drainage, including pond #4 as Rio Grande cutthroat trout (RGCT) waters.
- A cooperative agreement and sole source justification were completed to allow direct contracting with Santa Clara Pueblo for spillway reconstruction activities.
- The Pueblo and NMFWCO removed 700 to 800 nonnative trout and transplanted to non-project area waters.
- The Pueblo and NMFWCO constructed 20 habitat improvement structures within the designated RGCT waters. The habitat improvement structures were designed increase the amount of available pool habitat. These structures consisted of “W” rock weir, log-vane bank feature, random boulder placement (riffle), Cross-vane structure, “J” hook vane, step pool log structure, and rock channel constrictors.

- In October 2009, the Pueblo drained pond 4 in order to renovate the spillway structure, scheduled for Spring 2010.
- Mechanical removal effort will continue in Spring and Summer of 2010. Chemical renovation via rotenone is scheduled for August/September 2010.

Funding Status

- Original budget \$90,000
- Contract to Santa Clara Pueblo for \$45,000 for barrier construction
- Remaining funds administered by NMFWCO for habitat structure construction and nonnative trout removal



Pond 4 During Draining