

West Pass Creek Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Restoration
Final Report to WNTI
State of Wyoming

Background

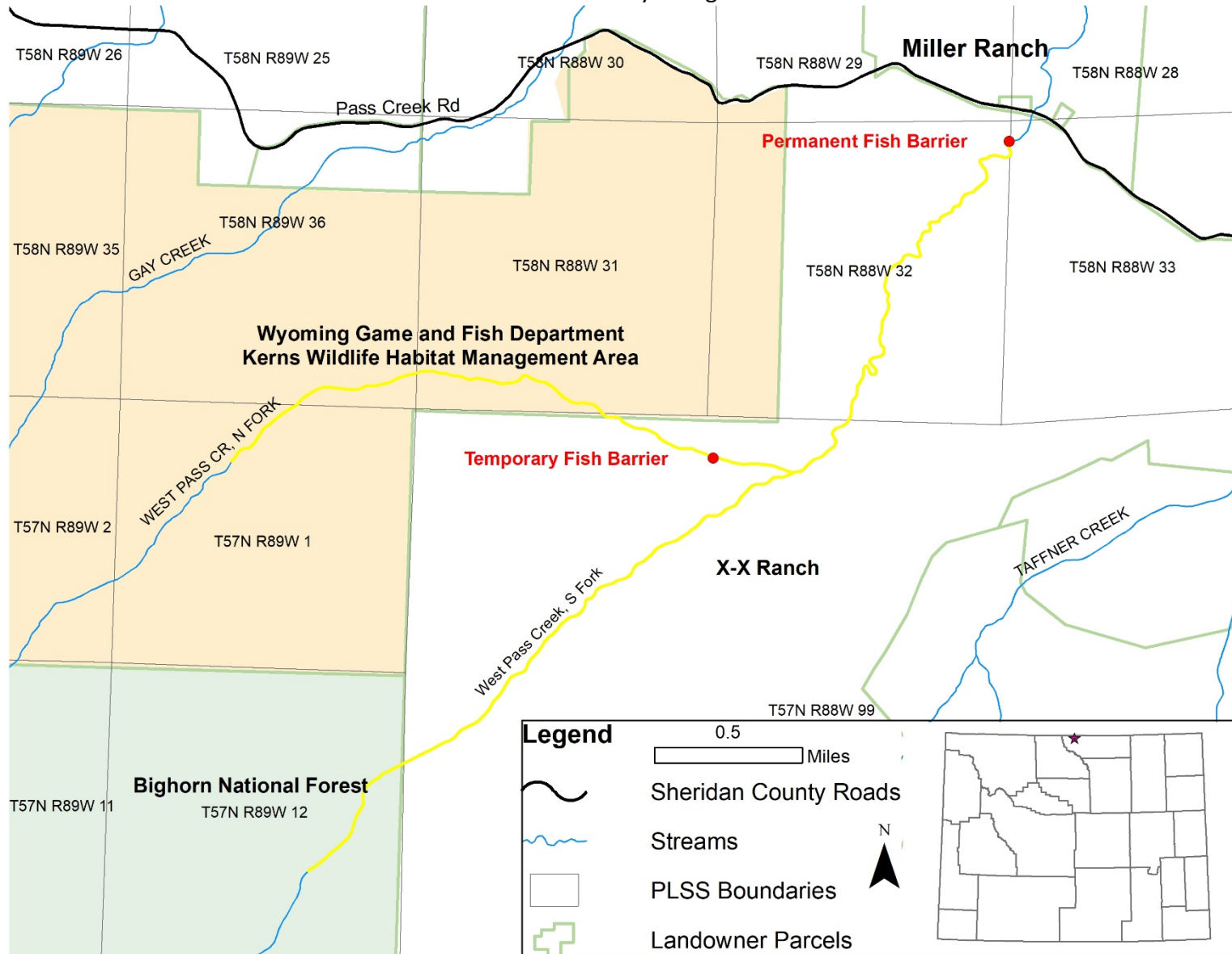
The West Pass Creek watershed is located about 13 air miles north west of Dayton, Wyoming. The North and South Forks, and main stem of West Pass Creek support native Yellowstone cutthroat (YSC) trout, and nonnative brown trout and brook trout. Historically, YSC occupied about 250 stream miles on the east slope of the Bighorn Mountains, but now occupy less than 10 percent of their historic range. The South Fork supports one of five remaining native YSC populations on the east slope.

Restoration

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has undertaken an effort to remove nonnative trout, secure the YSC population in the North and South Fork tributaries, and expand the YSC population to the main stem of West Pass Creek. This multi-phased effort includes removing nonnative trout from six stream miles of the West Pass Creek watershed through a series of rotenone treatments, establishing barriers in the watershed to protect native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, and restoring the cutthroat trout to the larger watershed following treatment. The temporary fish barrier on the North Fork of West Pass Creek was completed in Fall, 2018. The permanent fish barrier on the main stem of West Pass Creek and all site rehabilitation was completed in May, 2020 and satisfies the proposal funded through WNTI which was to assist in the funding of the barrier installations for an expansion of 6 miles of habitat.

The temporary fish barrier will protect native YSC during rotenone treatments and the permanent barrier will secure the distribution of YSC in the watershed. All infrastructure phases of the restoration are complete. Nonnative trout removal efforts are ongoing into 2021, along with YSC introduction in 2021 and monitoring of the population through 2026 by state biologists.

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West Pass Creek project area (yellow stream segments) map with barrier sites depicted with a red point.

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North Fork of West Pass Creek timber crib barrier structure completed in 2018.

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West Pass Creek fish barrier structure completed in 2020.