

Project Title: Poudre Headwaters Project, Corral Creek Aquatic Organism Passage and Temporary Barrier

Grant Number:

- The Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) granted \$85,000 to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).
- The FWS then transferred those funds via an interagency agreement (22-IA-11021000-065) to the US Forest Service (FS) for the construction of an aquatic organism passage and temporary barrier at Corral Creek.
- The FWS previously provided \$50,000 of its own funding to the FS via another interagency agreement (21-IA-11021000-033).
- The WNTI and FWS funds were combined with \$25,000 of FS funding for a total of \$160,000 and then placed into a participating agreement between Colorado Trout Unlimited (CTU) and the FS (22-PA-11021000-069, Corral Creek Hybrid Aquatic Organism Passage and Fish Barrier Construction Partnership 2).
- Another participating agreement between CTU and the FS in the amount of \$600,000 had previously been executed (22-PA-11021000-039, Corral Creek Hybrid Aquatic Organism Passage and Fish Barrier Construction Partnership 1), for a **grand total of \$760,000 to fund this project.**

Report Submission Date: 06.04.2026

Project description:

The Poudre Headwaters Project is a large-scale effort to recover the federally threatened greenback cutthroat trout into 37 miles of interconnected stream and 317 acres of lake habitat. At Corral Creek, where it crosses under Long Draw Road on the Roosevelt National Forest, an undersized 7-foot culvert was replaced with an approximately 15-foot culvert, to which a temporary barrier was attached.

Project Goals/Objectives:

The Corral Creek temporary barrier is one of five barriers required for the completion of the Poudre Headwaters Project, a court-mandated project stemming from litigation over the environmental impacts that resulted from the enlargement of Long Draw Reservoir. Barriers are used to prevent upstream movement of nonnative fish so that they do not invade areas where native fish are established or have been reintroduced. Nonnative fish can outcompete or hybridize with native cutthroats.

In 2027 and 2028, a chemical reclamation above the temporary barrier will be completed to remove brook trout and other fish species from Corral Creek. After confirming successful removal of fish above the temporary barrier, greenback cutthroat trout will then be stocked into this location.

Subsequently, Corral Creek will be chemically reclaimed below the temporary barrier. Then, the temporary barrier will be removed to facilitate movement of greenback cutthroat trout throughout the creek, above and below the barrier. Exact timing of that reclamation and barrier removal is to be determined. The timeline of this project remains flexible as adjustments are made for staffing, funding, and competing priorities, but the project is required to be completed by 2047.

Colorado Trout Unlimited entered into a contract with Na' Ali'i to build the Corral Creek aquatic organism passage and temporary barrier. Completion of this temporary barrier and aquatic organism passage included, but was not limited to, the following activities:

- Removal of the undersized culvert
- Dewatering of Corral Creek
- Rerouting of Long Draw Road
- Placement of the foundation slab
- Assembly and installation of a culvert
- Placement of a nonpermeable geomembrane
- Construction of the downstream wing walls
- Placement of a steel barrier
- Installation of a splash pad and rock apron
- Return of the stream bypass to the original channel
- Return of the road from a temporary bypass path back to its main route
- Re-establishment of floodplain elevations and road width
- Re-vegetation of the disturbed site

Project Budget:

The overall project budget was \$760,000. WNTI's \$85,000 contribution was able to fully fund the following:

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| • Structural steel fish barrier wall | \$57,063 |
| • Removal of existing culvert | \$17,032 |
| • 15' culvert; galvanized, corrugated steel | \$7,795.20 |

The rest of WNTI's contribution (\$3,109.80) was used to fund 74% of the cost to return conserved topsoil to the construction site, a service that totaled \$4,223.

Project Outcomes:

- Next steps include collecting fish above and below the Corral Creek barrier early in the field season, marking them, placing them below the barrier, and surveying at the end of the field season to see if any of them were able to get up and over it. The Records of Decision (National Park Service 2010, US Forest Service 2010) require testing of all barriers to make sure that they effectively preclude fish from entering the project area prior to stocking greenbacks.
 - Completion of the Corral Creek aquatic organism passage and barrier allows us to proceed with chemically reclaiming the creek and then stocking it with greenback cutthroat trout. **Corral Creek will be the first area where greenback cutthroat trout will be stocked into the Poudre Headwaters Project footprint.** The Corral Creek sub-drainage will provide approximately 4.5 miles of total habitat and will provide for future connectivity of the Corral Creek population with the rest of the greenback cutthroat trout in the Cache la Poudre watershed metapopulation.
- Two of 5 barriers are now completed for this project.
- The project requires completion of two more temporary barriers and one permanent barrier, a suite of chemical reclamations, and stocking of greenback cutthroat trout.
- The USFS is lead on the project, although 85% of the project footprint occurs in Rocky Mountain National Park. Other partners that are key to project funding, support, and implementation include the following, in alphabetical order:
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 - Colorado State University
 - Colorado Trout Unlimited (a state chapter of Trout Unlimited)
 - National Park Service
 - National Stream and Aquatic Ecology Center within the FS
 - Rocky Mountain Conservancy
 - Rocky Mountain Flycasters (a local chapter of Trout Unlimited)
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service