



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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### Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Conservation Team

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Dear Conservation Team,

This letter is intended to summarize the 2021 range-wide activities for the conservation of the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout (RGCT) and to provide that information to conservation team leaders. The activities below are divided into eight main categories identified in the RGCT Conservation Agreement

<http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Research/Aquatic/CutthroatTrout/2013RGCTConservationAgreement.pdf>.

#### **Population Inventory**

In 2021, 57 waters (146 individual surveys) were inventoried within the historical range of RGCT. The purpose of the inventories was to survey potentially occupied RGCT waters (5 waters, 5 sites), monitor known populations (27 waters, 59 sites), assess the genetic status of RGCT populations (19 AFLP tests), test for diseases (4 waters, 4 sites) and monitor habitat inventory (2 waters, 2 sites).

#### **Population Maintenance**

Sympatric non-native fish were mechanically removed from Jim Creek in Colorado and Placer and Tanques Creeks in New Mexico. In Great Sand Dunes National Park 69 RGCT were collected from the diversion ditch and placed back into Medano Creek below the diversion.



### **Population Expansion**

Nine events were classified as population expansion. In New Mexico, chemical treatments were completed on Ville Vidal (25 miles), and Willow Creek (8 miles). In Colorado, Haypress Lake was stocked with RGCT from spawning efforts of genetically pure fish. Upper and Lower Sand Creek Lakes were stocked with genetically pure progeny spawned at Haypress Lake. Upper and Lower Sand Creek Lakes were also stocked with sub-adult fish collected from Medano Creek. Fifteen high elevation lakes were also stocked in Colorado to provide angling opportunities.

### **Protecting/Restoring Habitat**

Habitat improvement was completed on Bitter Creek, Cabresto Creek, Vidal Creek, and McCrystal Creek/North Ponil in New Mexico. A prescribed burn was also undertaken on McCrystal Creek/North Ponil Creek.

In New Mexico, a fish migration barrier was removed on Costilla Creek to restore connectivity. In Colorado, two culverts were replaced in the Jim Creek Drainage to restore and protect connectivity.

### **Education**

CPW presented at Running Rivers Fly Shop in Round Rock, Texas, and at Colorado State University to promote RGCT conservation. Volunteers at Jim Creek were educated on habitat improvement and non-native fish removal as it relates to RGCT conservation.

### **Database Sharing**

The annual RGCT range-wide database workshop was attended by the GMU leaders from New Mexico and Colorado. The range-wide database was updated with the 2021 data using the online editor.

### **Coordination**

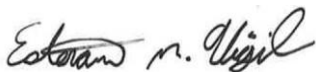
The annual rangewide meeting was held virtually and was well attended by all signatory agencies.

### **Miscellaneous**

Miscellaneous activities included continued wild and hatchery spawning operations.

Thank you for your participation in developing this report. The success of our work toward RGCT conservation would not be possible without the continued cooperation, dedication, and professionalism of all team members and their respective agencies and organizations.

Sincerely,



Estevan Vigil  
Aquatic Biologist  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife

### RGCT Rangewide Report 2016 - Summary by Strategy, January 1 to December 31, 2021

Strategy	Subhead	Title	Waters/Events	Total	Description
1	Survey	Population Inventory	5	5	Survey potential RGCT waters within historical range; maintain database
1	Monitor	Population Inventory	27	59	Monitor RGCT populations to detect changes; maintain database
1	Taxonomy	Population Inventory	19	19	Collect genetic information within historical range, maintain database
1	Habitat Inventory	Population Inventory	2	2	Collect habitat information within historical range; maintain database
1	Disease	Population Inventory	4	4	Conduct fish health surveys including WD
2	Identify	Population Maintenance	0	0	Identify Core Conservation and Conservation populations
2	Secure	Population Maintenance	4	4	Secure and enhance distribution and abundance of Conservation and Core Conservation populations
2	Metapopulation	Population Maintenance	1	1	Identify, maintain, and expand connectivity within metapopulations
3	Restore	Population Expansion	3	34	Increase RGCT populations by restoring RGCT habitat through chemical reclamation
3	Augment	Population Expansion	5	5	Augment pure populations within historical range by stocking or transplanting RGCT
3	Connectivity	Population Expansion	0	0	Promote and restore connectivity of populations to enhance metapopulation function
3	Stock RGCT	Population Expansion	1	15	Stock lakes and streams with RGCT for angler recreation (sum of lakes and streams stocked)
4	Improve	Protect sustaining habitat and restore degraded habitat	6	2	Inventory, maintain, protect, and improve existing habitat; improve fluvial/ hydrological processes
4	Unoccupied	Protect sustaining habitat and restore degraded habitat	0	0	Identify unoccupied habitat for restoration with RGCT
5	Education	Conservation Education and Interpretation	3	2	Subcommittee to develop education and interpretation program providing deliverables and a consistent message regarding RGCT conservation efforts
6	Database	Database Sharing	2	2	Summarize distribution, population genetics and habitat data; centralize data into a database; allow rangewide integrated data analysis, summaries, and comparisons
7	Coordinate	Planning/ Coordination	15	14	Share information; identify/ discuss/ solve common conservation problems; prioritize issues
A*	Miscellaneous	Other Activities/ Actions	1	1	Accomplishments that are not listed in the other titles or strategies
B	Habitat	Private Land Protection or Restoration (stream miles)	0	0	Landowner/ private land habitat protection or restoration