|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Region:** | Pinedale |
| **Habitat Priority Area Name:** |  Upper Beaver-Trail Ridge Creek  |
| **Habitat Area Type (s):** | **[x]  Aquatic [ ]  Terrestrial [ ]  Combined**Stream, riparian, aspen, mountain shrub, sagebrush |
| **Habitat Values:** | Diverse upland and riparian plant communities, native Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRC) habitat, genetic purity, connectivity, water quality, riparian habitat, aspen, elk winter range |
| **Reason Selected:** | These watersheds are managed for a Colorado River cutthroat trout core conservation population as identified in the Conservation Strategy for Colorado River cutthroat trout in the states of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming (CRCT Coordination Team, 2006). These watersheds support a diverse assemblage of native aquatic and terrestrial species including conservation populations of CRC.  |
| **Area Boundary Description:** | Upper Beaver Creek and Trail Ridge Creek Watersheds (HUC 140401010809) drain the central portion of the east slope of the Northern Wyoming Range. |
| **Focal species or species assemblage(s) (limit 6):** **SWAP Tier 1 species:** |  Colorado River cutthroat trout (NSS2), mottled sculpin (NSS4), mountain sucker (NSS3)bluehead sucker, Colorado River cutthroat trout, flannelmouth sucker, boreal toad, Great Basin spadefoot |
| **Solutions or actions:** | Solutions and actions should emphasize: 1) restore, enhance, and maintain a diverse, productive and sustainable ecosystem with emphasis on high quality vegetation communities (e.g. aspen, riparian, tall forb, mountain shrub and sagebrush), 2) prevent/reduce competition between CRC and nonnative trout, 3) prevent/reduce oil and gas development impacts including the proposed Cimarex project, 4) evaluate and adjust livestock management.On a landscape scale livestock grazing is the primary factor currently and historically influencing habitats in these watersheds, and should be evaluated and adjusted to allow vegetative communities to improve to full ecological potential. This would provide numerous benefits to all other resources, including livestock forage. Stream habitat conditions are below potential because of eroded stream banks and high sediment levels contributed by degraded plant communities. To ensure vegetation treatment objectives can be met, progressive AMPs are needed, browsing by big game needs to be closely monitored, and big game populations (particularly elk) carefully managed. Alternative locations to alleviate grazing pressure/demands (i.e. forage reserves/grass banks) in or near these watersheds would increase opportunities to implement successful vegetation treatment/enhancement projects.Inventories and assessments of aspen communities should be completed, and an aggressive treatment plan implemented with a long-term goal of reestablishment to natural historic (pre-settlement) levels and conditions. Wildland management fires will be necessary to meet this goal. Aspen restoration near streams would provide dam building materials able to withstand high run-off conditions and increase beaver activity. Beaver ponds would provide cover for trout, holding areas during drought years, and wetland habitats.Pursue long-term protection for habitats by promoting property right arrangements with willing landowners (e.g., fee title acquisitions, conservation easements, purchase or trading of mineral rights/leases). Acquisitions could directly protect key parcels from development (i.e., subdivisions and oil and gas), and allow management practices that prioritize wildlife habitat values. |
| **Additional Information:** | In March 2000 the USFS began scoping for AMP revisions on 6 grazing allotments encompassing this area. An EIS is being developed for these allotments, and WGFD provided extensive comments.Currently, the primary factor limiting CRC populations is not nonnative competition and hybridization. However, Trail Ridge Creek does not have any natural or artificial upstream migration barrier so the potential for invasion is high. A man made migration barrier protects North Beaver Creek.Competition and hybridization with nonnative trout and deteriorated habitat conditions make this area a high priority for restoration and enhancement. CRC populations in Trail Ridge and North Beaver creeks are most limited by stream channel, riparian, and upland habitat conditions. Beaver dams are present in the both creeks, however most are filled with sediment. Sediments from the uplands impact water quality and fish habitat conditions. Large-scale projects addressing these issues have potential for success in these watersheds. |
| **General land ownership and surface area:** | BLM: 8,600 ac (59%), USFS: 3,495 ac (24%), State: 284 ac (2%), Private: 2,161 ac (15%), Total area: 14,540 ac |