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| **Region:** | Pinedale |
| **Habitat Priority Area Name:** | LaBarge |
| **Habitat Area Type (s):** | **Aquatic  Terrestrial  Combined**  Mixed mountain shrub, aspen, riparian, willow, conifer, tall forb |
| **Habitat Issues:** | Poor condition of key plant communities (e.g. aspen, riparian, and tall forb), sediment from logging, channel conditions from historic tie-drives, sediment and runoff from roads, fish passage constraints from culverts, fish passage limitations at diversions, fish loss to diversions, threats from proposed extensive oil and gas development, habitat destruction from recreational activities |
| **Reason Selected:** | Opportunities for restoration of a self-sustaining population of CRC and the native fish assemblage in fifty-eight miles of stream habitat emphasizes the need to improve ecological conditions of aspen, tall forb, and riparian communities throughout the upper portions of this watershed. |
| **Area Boundary Description:** | The LaBarge Creek watershed (HUC 1404010111) on USFS land and the Rock Creek watershed on BLM and state land. |
| **Focal species or species assemblage(s) (limit 6):** | Mountain whitefish (NSS4), mountain sucker, rubber boa (NSS3), Northern leopard frog (NSSU), mottled sculpin, Boreal chorus frog. |
| **SWAP Tier 1 species:** | Colorado River cutthroat trout, boreal toad, Great Basin spadefoot |
| **Solutions or actions:** | Progressive AMPs are needed to ensure vegetation treatment objectives can be met, browsing by big game needs to be closely monitored, and big game populations (particularly elk) carefully managed. On a landscape scale livestock grazing is the primary factor currently and historically influencing habitats in this watershed. Management should be thoroughly 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. Protect and enhance remaining high priority tall forbs community types, common in the headwaters of this watershed. In healthy conditions these communities are a very important cover type that provides habitat for a variety of wildlife and protects streams from excess sediment loading. Some estimates indicate that approximately 50% of this vegetation type has been lost throughout its range due to past improper grazing and loss of deep soils. The remaining 50% is at extreme risk if current grazing practices continue to degrade its composition and structure. Because soil has been lost where these communities are degraded, restoration is very difficult and requires long time intervals and expensive efforts to restore to their historical condition. To effectively treat and enhance vegetation, identify and promote alternative grazing locations in or near the LaBarge watershed (i.e., forage reserves / grass banks) to alleviate grazing pressure.  Develop and implement aggressive watershed-scale treatment plans that include the use of wildland fires to regenerate aspen. Aspen declines are due to succession, fire suppression, and browsing. Lack of aspen limit beaver and associated species and wetland habitats. Inventories and assessments should be completed for all aspen communities. To reestablish these communities to natural historic (pre-settlement) levels and conditions, treatments should be prioritized in aspen communities where proper follow up management is in place.  Beaver reintroductions supplemented with aspen supplies for dam building materials and large-scale aspen regeneration projects would enhance habitat for fisheries and other wildlife. Over time, active and stable beaver dam complexes throughout the watershed would slow water velocities, reduce sediments, and increase meander patterns, water storage, and base level flows. Pursue long-term protection by promoting property right arrangements with willing landowners (e.g., fee title acquisitions, conservation easements, and 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. Other enhancement opportunities include working cooperatively with landowners and the NRCS to provide incentives to landowners to meet mutual restoration goals and objectives. |
| **Additional Information:** | For details on watershed condition, see: Roadifer, F. and H. Sexauer. 2008. LaBarge Watershed Habitat Assessment. Wyoming Game and Fish Department Administrative Report. Highest priority areas for aquatic habitat enhancement are the two upper HUC 12 basins: Coyote Park Ck. (140401011101) and Turkey Ck. (140401011102) |
| **General land ownership and surface area:** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | BLM: 4,269 ac (8%),  USFS: 52,363 ac (92%),  State: 113 ac (0%),  Private: 8 ac (0%),  Total area: 56,753 ac |  | |  |  | |